



Independent Study in Psychology

Rationale

Why do you have homework/independent work in this subject?

- To allow students to assess their own learning and explore what they do and don't understand.
- To allow students the opportunity to consolidate their learning.
- To allow the teacher to review student progress and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in relation to the specification.
- To encourage students to personalise their learning and develop their own independent skills.

Why does it matter?

Independent study is a vital opportunity for you to assess your own progress in Psychology. It is the best exam preparation you can undertake as you will not have your teacher's/peer's guidance when working with you in the exam. You will understand where your own individual strengths and weaknesses lie and can tailor your learning to focus on the areas you struggle with.

How does it connect with the learning students do in school?

Independent study tasks are always designed to help you develop your exam skills and to give you the opportunity to review and refine your classroom learning. Re-visiting content that we have covered in class may allow you to realise where you need to focus your learning on an individual level.

What do you know about the impact homework has on student progress?

Students who complete homework to a high standard and submit work in a timely manner achieve more highly in their exams. Students who complete additional independent learning as directed by the teacher (for example, who submit practice essays when advised to do so by the teacher OR who re-submit work following teacher feedback) improve at a much faster rate than students who are more passive or fail to engage fully in independent learning. The students who achieve A* grades consistently submit essays for marking and always re-submit work that falls below their TMG.

Quantity and frequency of homework

How much independent work should students expect in your subject?

As part of their independent learning, students in Year 12 should expect to complete at least two 12 mark essays per topic area, which will need to be submitted to a deadline. Each 12 mark essay should take no more than 1 hour to complete, with 30 minutes being dedicated to reviewing relevant content and planning a response and the final 30 minutes to the writing of the essay.

Alongside this, students will be expected to complete additional independent learning tasks, for example SAQ for peer, self or teacher marking or completing evaluation questions from lesson time. It is assumed that Year 12 students will spend approx. 1 – 2 additional hours each week consolidating their notes and extending their learning in ways suggested on the 'Learning to Fly in Psychology' document.



Students in Year 13 should expect to complete at least two 16 mark essays per topic area, which will need to be submitted to a deadline. Each 16 mark essay should take no more than 1 hour to complete, with 30 minutes to review content and plan a response and the final 30 minutes to the writing of the essay.

Alongside this, students will be expected to complete additional independent learning tasks, for example SAQ, Application Tasks and Research Methods questions for peer, self and teacher marking. Students may also be required to complete tasks relating to the evaluation of content covered in lesson time. It is assumed that all Year 13 students will spend at least 2 – 3 additional hours each week consolidating their notes and extending their learning in ways suggested in the 'Learning to Fly in Psychology' document.

How much directed by the teacher and how much self-directed?

In total students should be spending approximately 3 hours per week in Year 12 and 4 hours per week in Year 13 completing independent learning tasks. This breaks down to approximately 1 hour of directed homework tasks and then a further 1 hour (Year 12) or 2 hours (Year 13) of independent learning that is self-directed as advised in the 'Learning to Fly' document.

Quality and impact of homework

What kinds of homework task can students expect?

Students can expect to be set regular teacher-directed independent learning tasks that will mainly focus on the development of essay writing skills. In year 12 this will take the form of 12 mark essays and in year 13 this will take the form of 16 mark essays.

Students can expect to be set additional short answer questions based on specification content.

At the end of each topic students will sit an exam-conditions End of Unit assessment, based on exam style questions and marking. This will take place in lesson times and students will be set independent learning prior to this in the form of revision.

The recommendation is that you use your revision time to complete practice questions and plan essay responses for all areas of the topic and submit these to your teacher. These can either be questions taken from exemplar/past papers on the AQA website or from your textbook examples.

How/when will it be assessed?

Students can expect directed independent learning tasks e.g. essays to be marked and returned within one week. The same turnaround time can be expected for End of Unit assessment and Mock Examinations. Marking will be done using examination guidelines and will be assessed against marking criteria. In Year 12 this will come in the form of written feedback and comments on the work along with an overall mark for the different exam skills e.g. AO1 (red) and AO3 (green). In Year 13 feedback will come in the form of written feedback and comments on the work alongside general guidelines provided on the Essay Marking Sheet in relation to the different exam skills.

How will it connect to the learning of the lesson?

Independent learning will always be set in a timely manner so as to match the learning that is occurring in the classroom and to develop specific examination skills.

Student expectations



What do you expect of your students in their approach to homework?

You should always dedicate sufficient time to your homework and make sure you approach it in a timely manner so that if you are stuck or have any questions you have time to address this before the deadline. Make sure you complete your homework in an environment that is conducive to learning and free from distractions. Ensure you hand in your work to meet the deadline set.

Always review your feedback from the most recently marked work – what target did you set yourself? Write this target at the top of your current piece of work and do your best to address it.

What kinds of learning behaviours will help them get the most out of homework?

Look back at your previous pieces of work and the targets you have set yourself as a result of teacher feedback – consider whether you can meet that target in the current work and show that you have acted upon the advice you have been given.

Try to ensure you do not just copy from the textbook as this will not get you good grades in your exam – if you've engaged in wider reading, show evidence of this.

Dedicate some time to reviewing content and planning your work before completing it – this will help to ensure your work is well structured.

What resources will they need to complete the homework?

Usually you will be able to complete your homework using resources from the classroom and your textbooks. However, particularly in Year 13 you will need to access wider resources e.g. other textbooks and current research to develop your learning.

For revision purposes you may need to access the AQA website to find exemplar papers, past papers and examiners reports to guide you in your revision.

What should they do if things go wrong?

Email your teacher will in advance of the deadline – if an extension is needed you need to agree this with your teacher in advance of the deadline. Alternatively, if there is time you may be able to speak to your teacher before/after a lesson or arrange a convenient time to seek further help.