

# Social Psychology

Throughout your A level psychology course, we will look at several different **areas** of psychology.

The first area that we are going to look at is **social psychology**. Social psychologists are interested in the effect of **other people** on our behaviour.

This includes studying behaviour such as obedience, conformity and helping behaviour.

## Obedience

*Find a definition for obedience:*

Specifically, as part of your course, we will look at the responses to people in **authority**.

*Find a definition for authority:*

There are some very famous examples of research into obedience that have told us a lot about people's behaviour. We will look at two in particular as part of your course – Milgram and Bocchiaro et al – but it is useful to be aware of other studies on this topic.

*Use the internet to find out about the work of the following psychologists:*

1. Hofling et al (1996) obedience of nurses  
(<https://www.simplypsychology.org/hofling-obedience.html>)

2. Sheridan and King (1972) obedience to a scientist  
([http://www.madsciencemuseum.com/msm/pl/shock\\_puppy](http://www.madsciencemuseum.com/msm/pl/shock_puppy))

*Are you surprised by the findings of Hofling et al (1966) and Sheridan and King (1972)?  
Why/why not?*

## Conformity

*Find a definition for conformity:*

Specifically, conformity refers to the way in which a **majority** can influence our behaviour. When we are outnumbered, can people sway our opinions and our behaviour to match theirs?

Social psychologists have researched this at great length, and found two types of social influence from the majority:

1. Informational social influence- when we are not sure of an answer, so we go along with others to help us to find the correct answer.
2. Normative social influence- when we feel alone, so we go along with others to help us to be liked and accepted by the group.



## Helping Behaviour

For years, psychologists have researched why people show **altruistic behaviour**.

*Find a definition for altruism:*

Sometimes, human beings choose not to help. These people are known as **bystanders** (i.e. people who stand by and do nothing!) and psychologists have been trying to find causes for why people might behave in this way.

One of the key suggestions for why this might be the case is a term called **diffusion of responsibility**.

*Find a definition for the term diffusion of responsibility:*

*Use the internet to find out about the work of the following psychologist:*

Latane and Darley (1968)- Diffusion of responsibility

(<http://www.apppsychology.com/IB%20Psych/IBcontent/Studies/Latane%20and%20Darley.htm>)

*Are you surprised by Latane and Darley's findings? Why/why not?*

## Summer Task Part 2 - Preparation for your A Level psychology course

### **Step 1: Purchase a lever arch folder**

You will need a folder of this size to be able to hold all of your material for the year. Anything smaller than this will not be enough.

### **Step 2: Purchase dividers**

You will need a pack of 20 dividers to use for your folder. It may be useful to buy a pack that has a front sheet where you can write the full title of the section, and then the dividers are numbered, as this gives you plenty of space to label the dividers appropriately. Please label each of them with the following:

1. Social – Responses to people in authority
2. Social – Responses to people in need
3. Developmental – external influences on behaviour
4. Developmental – moral development
5. Individual differences – understanding disorders
6. Individual differences – measuring differences
7. Cognitive – memory
8. Cognitive – attention
9. Biological – regions of the brain
10. Biological – brain plasticity
11. Areas and perspectives
12. Debates
13. Practical applications practice
14. Experimental method
15. Self-report method
16. Observational method
17. Correlational method
18. Planning and designing research
19. Analysing data
20. Marked work and research reports

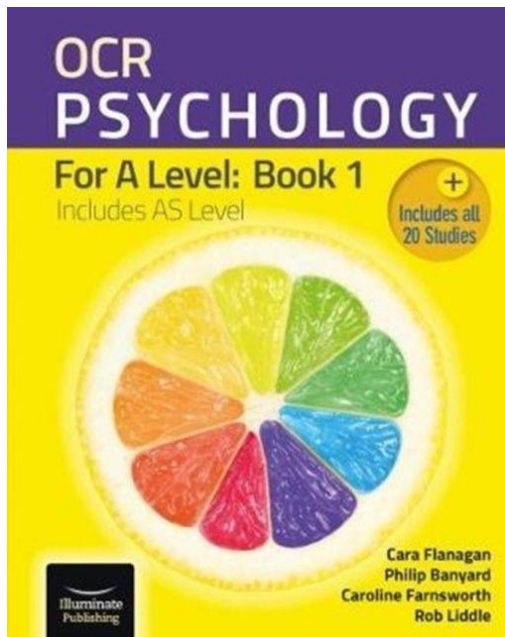
### **Step 3: Purchase an A4 lined notebook**

Ideally, your notebook should have pages that you can take out. Students are encouraged to file their notes away regularly to keep all of their information in one place (your folder). We also sometimes ask you to complete assessments/essays in these that we will need to collect, so we need to be able to remove them from the notebook.

### **Step 4: Purchase a textbook**

The core text that we use during the first year of psychology is:

OCR Psychology for A Level: Book 1 by Cara Flanagan, Philip Banyard, Caroline Farnsworth, Rob Liddle (ISBN: 978 1911 208181)



It is a course requirement that you purchase this textbook as we use it consistently throughout the course. You are expected to bring this, and your (neatly organised) folder to every psychology lesson.

### **Step 5: Print the year 1 study summaries**

In September, you will be emailed an electronic document that contains a double-sided summary of each of the core studies that you will learn about over the course of the year. Please print the entire document and then put the studies in the appropriate place in your folder.

E.g. the first study in the document is Milgram which is labelled as 'Social Area – Responses to People in Authority' so please place it in the divider for 'Social – Responses to people in authority'.

*Over the course of the A level, we have generally found that students who manage to remain consistently organised throughout the course, and who bring all of their resources with them to each lesson, perform better in the exams. This is because they have easy access to all of the material that they need to succeed and they know exactly where to find the information that they need.*