



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Psychology

National 5

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for National 5 Psychology

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment
- (d) We use the term 'or any other acceptable answer' to allow for the possible variation in candidates' responses. Credit should be given according to the accuracy and relevance of candidates' answers. The skill of using appropriate psychological terminology and relevant research evidence is reflected in exemplar responses. However, at this level candidates may be awarded marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.
- (e) Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information. For example, if **2 marks** are available award a mark for making the main point and a **further mark** for developing the point by giving additional or related information.
- (f) Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' or 'use' require the candidate to apply their psychological knowledge and understanding to give further information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections. This may include explaining features of a theory, or explaining behaviour using approaches, concepts or theories, or relating a theory to a scenario. For example, if **3 marks** are available for an 'explain' question, award **1 mark** for making a key point of explanation and a **further mark** for each additional correct key point of explanation.
- (g) For credit to be given, points must relate to the question asked. If within a structured question of, say, two or three parts, a candidate gives more information in the first part than is required and inadvertently has given the answer to the second part, then although the candidate has given the answer for part (b) in part (a), award the marks if the answer is relevant and correct.
- (h) Each question is structured to assess the candidate's breadth of psychological knowledge and understanding and their skill in using this. Within the structure of some questions short stimulus pieces or scenarios are used, requiring the candidate to use their skills, knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts. The candidate can respond by drawing on learning where personalisation and choice have been exercised. If you are not familiar with the topic chosen, you must seek guidance from your team leader.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Individual behaviour

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
1.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidates to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	4	A maximum of 3 marks can be awarded for a description of either non-REM or REM. non-REM sleep • there are 3/4 stages of non-REM sleep (1) • sleep progressively gets deeper (1) • heart rate/blood pressure drops (1) • during non-REM sleep the brain is less active (1) • delta waves/slow brain waves occur (1) Functions of non-REM sleep will also be credited: • non-REM sleep repairs the body (1), eg, removing waste chemicals in the muscles. (1) REM sleep • characterised by rapid eye movements (1) • beta waves/fast brain waves occur (1) • dreaming is more likely to occur (1) • temporary muscle paralysis occurs (1) Functions of REM sleep may also be credited: • REM sleep plays a role in psychological repair (1), eg, regulating emotions (1)

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(b)	(i)	Questions that ask the candidates to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	3	- to investigate the relationship between eye movement and dreaming (1) - to investigate the relationship between estimates of the duration of dreams and the actual duration of the dream (1) - to identify at which stage dreaming occurs (1) Any other valid response.
		(ii)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths, candidates should state the strength then give a commentary on why this is a strength.	3	Candidates must refer to specific aspects of the study to gain full marks. If they give a generic strength of a laboratory experiment only 2 marks can be given. Dement and Kleitman controlled extraneous variables (1) eg participants were asked to refrain from caffeine and alcohol consumption/consistent lighting was applied. (1) This means a clearer cause-effect relationship could be established between sleep stage and dreams (1) therefore increasing the validity of the study (1) Any other valid response.
	(c)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths, candidates should state the strength then give a commentary on why this is a strength.	2	- ultra-marathon runners slept for 90 minutes longer than usual in non-REM sleep (1) because their muscles needed repair (1) - studies show an increase in sleep following sleep deprivation (1) which shows the restorative effects of sleep (1) Any other valid response

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(d)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections.	8	Award a maximum of 4 marks if psychoanalytic theory is explained without reference to the scenario. • when we are dreaming our id is dominant (1) • the ego defence mechanisms transform the latent content of a dream into the manifest content (1) • the content of dreams comes from the unconscious mind (1) • Dreams represent our unfulfilled desires/unresolved conflicts (1) • Lucy is anxious about her presentation (1) which is the latent content of her dream (1) • in her dream Lucy is unable to speak (1) which is the manifest content of her dream (1) • being unable to speak is symbolic of her fears (1) • Lucy's ego's defence mechanisms have transformed anxiety into an inability to speak (1) in order to allow her to have a restful sleep (1) Any other valid response. Research evidence can be credited.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
2.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this by giving further information.	2	Personality is a set of characteristics unique to an individual (1) that are relatively stable over time. (1) Any other valid response.
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this by giving further information.	3	• individuals are likely to have a criminal personality type (1) • individuals are likely to lack empathy (1) • individuals are likely to have an inability to feel guilt (1) • individuals are likely to be more prone to risk taking (1) • Individuals are less likely to be emotionally stable (1) Any other valid response.
	(c)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths or weaknesses, candidates should state the strength or weakness, then give a commentary on why this is a strength or weakness.	4	Candidates can be awarded up to three marks for one fully developed strength or weakness. Strength: • the theory takes into account biological, social and psychological factors when explaining personality. (1) This reduces the danger of it being reductionist (1) • Eysenck's research used standardised questions, (1) adding to the reliability of his results (1) Weakness: • the theory assumes that your personality is always consistent and doesn't change over time (1) therefore the theory is not flexible/doesn't take into account situational factors (1) • the theory could be seen as reductionist (1) as it tells us the traits that an individual may have but not why they have those traits (1) Award marks for research evidence. Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(d)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections.	6	Candidates can gain a maximum of 3 marks for descriptions. • mothers who smoked while pregnant increase the risk of their child developing APD (1), this is because it would have changed the overall structure of the child's brain (1) • deprivation of oxygen in the womb (1) makes a child 4 times more likely to develop APD (1) • brain injury, particularly to the prefrontal cortex increases the risk of developing APD (1). The prefrontal cortex regulates mood and inhibition. (1) This can result in increased impulsivity, which is associated with APD • Raine et al. (2000) found that prefrontal grey matter was reduced by about 11% in those with APD in comparison to the control group (1) Award marks for research evidence. Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
3.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	2	- an overwhelming and debilitating fear (1) of an object/place/situation/feeling/animal (1) - it is irrational (1) and out of proportion to the threat (1) Any other valid response.
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	3	- the person avoids public/social spaces (1) - the person fears places they think are unsafe (1) - the person fears places from which they perceive they cannot escape (1) - it is more common in women (1) Any other valid response.
	(c)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections.	6	Candidates can gain a maximum of 3 marks for descriptions. - we may inherit genes from our parents which make us more susceptible to develop phobias, (1) but our own experiences shape exactly what we are afraid of (1) - a lack of the neurotransmitter GABA may make us more prone to a fear response (1) - we have a genetic predisposition to fear of certain things – eg heights. (1) This would have given our ancestors an evolutionary advantage (1) - The more closely related we are to someone with a phobia the more likely we are to inherit the phobia (1) - Torgersen (1983) found that concordance rate was 31% for MZ, 0% for DZ (1) - Harris et al (1983) found that close relatives of agoraphobic patients were more likely to study from agoraphobia than close relatives of non-agoraphobic individuals (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(d)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths and weaknesses, candidates should state the strength and weakness then give a commentary on why this is a strength/weakness.	4	Award a maximum of 3 marks for a strength/weakness. Strength: - it is a highly effective treatment (1), as shown by it having a 75% success rate (1) - systematic desensitisation is more effective in the long term than other treatments. (1) Eg, flooding. (1) Therefore, it is a reliable source of treatment. (1) Weakness: - systematic desensitisation is not effective for all phobias, (1) eg those not created through classical conditioning (1), so it cannot be applied to all phobias (1) - research has found that exposure therapy alone is just as effective, (1) without the relaxation or hierarchy (1) Any other valid response.

Section 2 – Social behaviour

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
4.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'use' their knowledge require the candidate to apply their psychological knowledge to explain the behaviour in a given scenario.	3	If the candidate only gives a description of minority influence a maximum of 1 mark can be awarded eg if the candidate only states that the minority should demonstrate commitment, flexibility and consistency. - minority influence is when a small group changes the attitudes/behaviours of the majority (1) - the minority needs to be committed, (1) eg suffering some personal loss or sacrifice in order to uphold their view (1) Any other valid response. Research evidence may be credited.
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections.	6	A maximum of 4 marks can be awarded if candidates only explain informational social influence and internalisation. To gain more than 4 marks they must explain how informational social influence leads to internalisation. A maximum of 3 marks can be awarded if candidates explain only one of the concepts. - over time, the individual privately and publicly adopts the behaviour/attitudes/beliefs of the majority (1) to align with what they perceive as being the correct thing to do (1) - this is a long-term/permanent change (1) as the individual genuinely believes the majority has more reliable information (1) - in the Jenness study participants internalised the group's estimate as their own (1) as they believed that others were more accurate in their judgements (1) - a new employee observes colleagues carrying out tasks and is keen to do the tasks well so follows their methods (1) and does so even when the colleagues are not present because they believe this is the best way to carry out the tasks (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(c)	(i)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this by giving further information.	3	• Mori and Arai (1) – both names are required • to replicate the Asch study without the use of confederates (1) to ensure nobody was acting unnaturally (1) • to replicate the Asch study with males and females (1) to understand the individual differences in conformity (1) Any other valid response.
		(ii)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections.	3	• in collectivist cultures such as Japan where the study took place (1), conformity is more valued in women than in men. (1) This occurs through early socialisation. (1) Therefore, in this study the women conformed and the men didn't (1). As Japan is a collectivist society cooperation is valued therefore participants were more likely to conform (1). Deviance from norms is frowned upon therefore making participants more likely to conform (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
5.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' or 'use' require the candidate to apply their psychological knowledge and understanding to give further information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	4	Candidates can gain a maximum of 3 marks for each concept. • pluralistic ignorance: Obi does not help because nobody else is helping. (1) He does not help because others appear to be calm so he assumes it is not an emergency (1) • diffusion of responsibility: Obi does not help because he assumes someone else would be more qualified to step in. (1) He does not feel accountable/personal responsibility (1) The more people there are, the lower the likelihood of an individual stepping in (1) Any other valid response.
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' or 'use' require the candidate to apply their psychological knowledge and understanding to give further information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	8	Candidates can only be awarded a maximum of 4 marks if no reference is made to the scenario. Award a maximum of 6 marks if no research evidence is given. Award a maximum of 4 marks if no reference is made to the scenario. • Lena perceives the child as being in need (1) • Lena experiences empathy (1) • she has a deep understanding of the child's situation (1) • her emotional response motivates Lena to help (1) • she wants to alleviate the child's suffering (1) • she sacrifices going home (1) • she gets no reward/benefit for helping (1) • 'Elaine Electric Shock Study'/Batson et al (1981) (1) • suggests that the participants who empathised with/were similar to Elaine were more motivated to help (1) • they wanted to alleviate Elaine's distress (1) • this supported the theory that empathy increases the chances of altruism (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(c)	(i)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	4	• 1 mark for researcher name(s)/name of study • 2 marks (maximum) for giving a description of the aim/s • 2 marks (maximum) for giving a description of the results All 3 components are required for full marks Example: Name: Pollet, Roberts and Dunbar (2013) (1) Aim: To test the kin selection hypothesis (1) to see if closeness of kin impacts on how far someone is willing to travel for face-to-face contact. (1) Results: Participants were willing to travel further to see relatives who were more closely related to them, (1) eg parents, children and siblings. (1) Any other valid response.
		(ii)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths or weaknesses, candidates should state the strength or weakness, then give a commentary on why this is a strength or weakness.	4	Candidates are asked to explain one strength and one weakness of this study. Maximum of 3 marks may be awarded for one strength or one weakness. Strength: • the researchers used questionnaires, which ensured a high response rate. (1) This increased reliability (1) Weakness: • using time travelled was not a good indicator, as it depends on the mode of transport, (1) eg a 2-hour flight versus a 2-hour drive (1) • findings may not be applicable to all cultures (1) so low population validity (1) Any other valid response.

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6.	(a)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	4	A maximum of 3 marks can be awarded for eye contact or facial expression. • eye contact: Toby should maintain eye contact with his friend (1) without staring too intently. (1) To show he is genuinely pleased Toby should give a small nod while maintaining eye contact (1) • facial expression: Toby should give a natural smile/a Duchenne smile (1) to show that his reaction is sincere. (1) The smile should reach his eyes (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' or 'use' require the candidate to apply their psychological knowledge and understanding to give further information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	8	Candidates can only be awarded a maximum of 4 marks if no reference is made to the scenario. Candidates can gain full marks by only focusing on one aspect of nurture. A maximum of 4 marks can be awarded for research evidence. Award a maximum of 6 marks if no research evidence is given. NVC is learned through our experiences/socialisation as we grow (1). People in different cultures will have different experiences, (1) leading to differences in NVC and misunderstandings. (1) Cultural differences: - the senior manager is from Japan and so would expect the junior employee to bow (1) in order to show respect (1) - in many collectivist cultures like Japan (1) people suppress facial emotions so the Brit would not know he was perceived as being disrespectful (1) - the Brit may value his personal space more as he is from an individualistic culture (1) therefore may feel uncomfortable if the manager stands/sits too close to him (1) - Yuki et al (1) found that Japanese and American students interpreted facial expressions differently (1) - the Japanese participants rated happiness higher than Americans when happy eyes were shown (1) whereas the Americans gave a higher happiness rating when mouths were shown (1) Personal space/status differences: - as the senior manager has higher status the junior employee may be more likely to respect her personal space (1) - Pfeffer (1) found that people of higher status are more likely to initiate touch (1) and take up more space with larger gestures/postures (1)

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					Gender differences: - the male would be more likely to suppress his expressions (1) therefore the female manager may not understand how the male employee is feeling (1) - The female manager may use more eye contact when listening due to socialisation and the emphasis on building relationships (1) whereas the male employee may perceive this to be confrontational (1) - LaFrance et al (1) found that women displayed more facial expressions to demonstrate happiness/sadness (1) while men were more likely to express anger/contempt (1) Any other valid response.
	(c)	(i)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'describe' require the candidate to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information.	4	1 mark for researcher name(s)/name of study 2 marks (maximum) for giving a description of the aim/s 2 marks (maximum) for giving a description of the results All 3 components are required for full marks. Example: Name of researcher: Matsumoto (1) Aim of study: To compare the facial expressions of blind and sighted athletes (1) in the 2004 Paralympic games. (1) Results: There were no differences between blind and sighted athletes (1) in how their facial expressions conveyed emotion. (1) Blind athletes produced more overall facial activity. (1) Any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
		(ii)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require them to give reasons or show connections. In the case of strengths or weaknesses the candidate should state the strength or weakness, then give a commentary on why this is a strength or weakness.	4	Maximum of 3 marks may be awarded for one strength or one weakness. Strength: - the study was conducted in a real-life setting (1) enhancing ecological validity (1). It was therefore high in mundane realism (1) Weakness: - the study relied on observer ratings of facial expressions (1) which could be subjective (1) especially when presented with subtle expressions of emotions (1) therefore findings may be unreliable (1) Any other valid response.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]