

A HODDER EDUCATION PUBLICATION

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AQA
A-level

YEAR 1 & AS

Psychology

Third Edition

REVISION GUIDE

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Contents

Introduction: Exam advice 4

Chapter 1 Social influence 10

Chapter 2 Memory 26

Chapter 3 Attachment 42

**Chapter 4 Approaches in Psychology
(including Biopsychology) 58**

**Chapter 5 Clinical Psychology
and Mental Health 76**

Chapter 6 Research methods 94

Glossary/Index

For a free download of the Student's Book Glossary/Index and suggested answers to the Knowledge Check feature in this Revision Guide, please visit <https://www.hachettelearning.com/answers-and-extras>

Introduction: Exam advice

AO stands for 'assessment objective'.

Apply it

The 'Apply it' questions throughout this book aim to help you practise assessment objective 2 (AO2) skills – about 30% of the marks in the exam are AO2.

The AS exam papers are divided into sections (Section A, Section B, etc).

In Section A on Paper 1 there are questions on Social influence – but the type of question is unpredictable. You might have any of the question types described on the right. There is no pattern to the way the types of questions are distributed in the exam.

Research methods questions will be in every section in addition to the Research methods section on Paper 2.

25%

At least 25% of the marks for your AS exam will come from questions on research methods.

Types of exam questions

A01	Identify, Outline, Describe, Explain	Explain what is meant by 'obedience'. (2 marks)
		Outline one emotional characteristic of depression. (2 marks)
		Outline van IJzendoorn's investigation of cultural variations in attachment. (4 marks)
A02	Application	[Stem] <i>Tulisa has started at a new school and notices that all the girls are wearing long skirts. She doesn't want to be different and wants the girls to like her, so the next day she also wears a long skirt.</i> [Question] Identify which type of conformity Tulisa is showing. Explain your answer. (3 marks)
A03	One strength/ limitation	Outline one limitation of the multi-store model of memory. (2 marks)
	Evaluation	Evaluate Bowlby's monotropic theory of attachment. (6 marks)
A01 + A03	Mini-essay	Discuss one explanation for conformity. (8 marks)
	Essay	Outline and evaluate a dispositional explanation for obedience. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL) Describe and evaluate the English and Romanian Adoptees project. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)
A01 + A02 + A03	Essay + Application	[Stem] <i>Maria recently failed her driving test. She says the test was unfair and the examiner was 'out to get her'. She thinks she's a failure and never wants to try anything again. Before the test, Maria told her friend that if she didn't pass, she'd never get over it. Maria's friend thinks she might be showing signs of depression.</i> [Question] Describe and evaluate the cognitive approach to explaining depression. Refer to Maria in your answer. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)

Research methods questions

A01	Outline	Outline what is meant by a 'behavioural category'. (2 marks)
A02	Application	[Stem] <i>Participants were given a list of organised and unorganised words and their recall was tested.</i> [Question] Explain how randomisation could have been used in this experiment. (2 marks)
A03	Evaluate	Explain one strength of an independent groups design. (2 marks)

What to do for a Grade A

- Top class A01
- Top class A01 ... includes details and specialist terms.
- This is good → Milgram (in the 1960s) described the agentic state as an explanation ...
 - This isn't good → One study found people obeyed someone who was in charge...

You don't need to write more, you just need to include specialist terms, researcher's names, percentages and so on.

- Top class A02
- Top class A02 ... uses text or quotes from the stem of the question.
- This is good → Tulisa is showing normative social influence because she wears a long skirt so she is like the other girls and therefore they will like her.
 - This isn't good → One type of conformity is normative which is wanting to be liked, like Tulisa.

It's not enough to just mention a few key words – you must really engage with the stem.

This is a skill that needs practice.

- Top class A03
- Top class A03 ... is elaborated and therefore effective.
- 1 **Beginner** level: State your **point**: One limitation is ... or ... This theory is supported by ... or ... One strength is
 - 2 **Intermediate** level: Add some **context**.
 - This is good → One limitation is that artificial materials were used. The study by the Petersons used consonant syllables.
 - This isn't good → One limitation is that artificial materials were used. *This doesn't tell us about everyday life.*
The second sentence in italics is generic – it could be used anywhere.
Context is king.
 - 3 **Expert** level: Add further **explanation** to make the point **thorough** or add a **counterpoint**.
 - 4 Finish with a **conclusion** e.g. 'This shows that ...'
Read the evaluations throughout this book as examples of expert level.

If you find expert level difficult then just do intermediate.

Whatever you do, **AVOID** a list of beginner level evaluations.

- Top class essays
- Make it organised – it helps the examiner see the separate elements of your answer. Use paragraphs.
- There is more advice on essay (extended writing) questions on the next page ...



Describe **FEWER** studies but describe them in detail.

Identify **FEWER** critical points, but explain each one thoroughly.



List-like is bad.

It's actually quite easy to list lots of points – explaining them is challenging.



Context is king

Good evaluation points must contain evidence (context). Your point may be well-elaborated but if the same elaborated point can be placed in many different essays then it is too **EASY**. Good evaluation points must have **CONTEXT**.

Knowledge Check



The Knowledge Check questions throughout this book should help you identify many of the different ways that questions will be asked in the exam.



On each of the two AS papers, there are 72 marks and it is a 90-minute exam, which gives you 1¼ minutes for each mark.

On each of the two A level papers, there are 96 marks and it is a 120-minute exam which also gives you 1¼ minutes for each mark.

Just because you have written lots doesn't mean you will get high marks.

Students who write a long answer often do poorly.

- Your answer may not fit the demands of the question because it lacks focus.
- Spending too much time on one question means less time elsewhere.
- Your answer may lack detail – lists of studies and lists of critical points don't get high marks.
- Long essays are often very descriptive and there are never more than 6 marks for description in any question.

Download suggested answers to the Knowledge Check questions from
<https://www.hachettelearning.com/answers-and-extras>

More information (if you can bear it)

There are lots of little rules

One or more Describe **one or more** explanations of obedience. (6 marks)

Two or more *Advice: 'One or more' means you can potentially gain full marks for just one explanation (this gives you time to describe it fully, which is important so you can show detail).*

Or you can elect to do more explanations – but too many explanations is not good because your answer becomes list-like (no details and no elaboration).

Distinguish between Outline **one or more** differences between insecure-resistant and insecure-avoidant attachment types. (4 marks)

Advice: The danger is that you will simply describe each item. You must find a way to contrast them both, for example considering how each attachment type responds to stranger anxiety.

Questions with extra information Discuss the behaviourist approach. Refer to the work of Pavlov in your answer. (12 marks)

Describe **one** animal study of attachment. Include details of what the researcher(s) did **and** what they found. (4 marks)

Advice: Make sure you satisfy the demands of ALL parts of the question.

How much should I write?

In general 25–30 words per mark is a good rule – as long as your answer is focused on the topic.

For an AS essay of 12 marks you might therefore write:

AO1 150–200 words AO3 150–200 words

For an AL essay of 16 marks you might therefore write:

AO1 150–200 words AO3 250–300 words

Here are two ways to produce top class AS essays:

Route 1

6 marks AO1

Six paragraphs/points, write about 150 words in total.

6 marks AO3

Three paragraphs/evaluations at *intermediate level*, write about 150 words.

Route 2

6 marks AO1

Six paragraphs/points, write about 150 words in total.

6 marks AO3

Two paragraphs/evaluations at expert level. Doing just two gives you time to elaborate. Write about 150 words.

Effective revision

Create revision cards.

For **description** the maximum you need is about 150 words.

- Identify 6–8 points on the topic.
- Record a cue word/phrase in left-hand column.
- Record about 25–30 words in right-hand column.

For example:

AO1 Key point	Description
Locus of control (LOC)	Rotter suggested people have a sense of what controls their behaviour.
Internals	Some people believe that the things that happen to them are largely controlled by themselves. For example, if you do well in an exam it is because you worked hard.
Externals	Other people believe that things happen without their control. If they do well in an exam they might say it was good luck or the textbook. If they fail it was bad luck or the questions were hard.

Reduce your cards to the minimum.

Cue words	Description
Rotter LOC	A sense of what controls your behaviour.
Internal	Own control, e.g. poor exam mark due to lack of effort.
External	Outside our control, e.g. bad luck, bad teacher.

For **evaluation** the maximum you need for AS extended writing questions is about 150 words.

- Identify 2–3 evaluation points (remember LESS IS MORE).
- Record a cue word/phrase in left-hand column.
- For intermediate level, record evidence in the middle column.
- For expert level, add further evidence.

For example:

AO3 Key point	Intermediate level evaluation	Expert level evaluation
Low internal validity	Perry (2013) listened to tapes of Milgram's participants and reported that only half of them believed the shocks were real.	Two-thirds of these 'disbelievers' were disobedient.

- In the exam remember to add a conclusion (e.g. 'This shows that ...').

Look at the conclusions we have written in this book – they start with 'This means that' or 'Therefore we can conclude'.

Rehearse the content.

Cover up the right-hand column and try to recall what is there using the cue word/phrase.

Rehearse the cue words/phrases.

When you are standing at a bus stop (or anytime you are unoccupied), see if you can remember all the cue words/phrases for one topic.

Practise writing timed answers

Write an essay answer with your revision card in front of you.

Give yourself 15 minutes for a 12-mark answer.

Give yourself 20 minutes for a 16-mark answer.

If you learn too much you will just try to squeeze it into the exam and you don't have time.

Focus on fewer points and make sure you explain them in detail. That's where the marks are.

In this book we have generally provided 6 points of AO1 for each topic, consisting of a cue word/phrase (on the left) and an explanation (on the right).

For example, on page 28, we have seven phrases (cues) about the multi-store model of memory in the left-hand column (e.g. 'Separate memory stores', 'Sensory register (SR)' and so on).

Use our table to produce your own revision cards.

Test your memory, using your cue words/phrases.



No athlete would dream of running a race without doing many practice runs of the right distance and within a set time.

Introduction: Exam advice

Understanding marking

A01 question: Outline the procedure used in **one** study of animal attachment. (4 marks)

Answer Harlow's study was with baby monkeys. He had observed that baby monkeys often survived better in cages without their mother if you gave them a soft cloth to cuddle. He set up an experiment to test this where there were two wire mothers. In one condition, one of the mothers had a feeding bottle attached while the other one was covered in cloth. The monkeys were kept all the time in a cage just with these two wire mothers. The monkeys spent their time with the cloth-covered mother not the other one, which shows that contact comfort is important in attachment. (101 words)

A02 question: Some friends are planning what they might do at the weekend. Most of them want to try out a new nightclub. But Sam fancies going to see a band he likes instead.

Briefly explain how each of the factors of group size, unanimity and task difficulty might influence whether or not Sam conforms to the majority. (6 marks)

Answer Sam is likely to conform if more than three of his friends want to go to the new club. Asch found, in his research, that levels of conformity rose when there were three confederates but it didn't get more after that. So a majority of three is probably enough – but in Asch's research that led to 32% conformity so Sam might still not conform.

If one of his friends decided not to go to the club then Sam might feel more likely to dissent too. Asch found that even if the dissenter gave a different answer from the real participant this was enough to break the conformity. So Sam might go to see the band even if the dissenting friend wasn't going to do that either.

In terms of task difficulty it sounds like the band is something he knows well (a band he likes) whereas the nightclub is new and a less safe option which makes it a difficult decision. Asch found that conformity rose when people had to make judgements that were more difficult so Sam might just conform. (181 words)

A03 question: Briefly evaluate learning theory as an explanation of attachment. (4 marks)

Answer Learning theory is the behaviourist explanation of attachment, based on classical and operant conditioning. Harlow's study with monkeys showed that this explanation was wrong. In this study, in one condition, baby monkeys had a choice of a wire mother with a feeding bottle or one covered in cloth. They chose the one covered in cloth. This shows that attachment is not related to feeding as the behaviourists predicted.

Another limitation of the learning theory of attachment is that it is only focused on behaviour and does not include other factors that may influence attachment. (94 words)

Examiner comments

Level/Mark	Knowledge	Clarity and organisation	Coherence	Specialist terminology
Level 2 3–4 marks	Accurate, some detail	Clear	Coherent ✓	Effective use
Level 1 1–2 marks	Limited ✓	Lacking ✓	Lacking	Absent or inappropriate ✓

A summary of the criteria for 4-mark A01 exam questions.

Examiner comment The first two sentences contribute nothing and the final sentence is on findings. That leaves some fairly limited description about the methods. The answer is mostly accurate but lacks clarity because of the irrelevant material. The important text about the procedure is coherent. The specialist terminology (e.g. 'wire mothers') is present. Level 1, towards the top. 2 marks.

Level/Mark	Application of knowledge	Clarity and coherence	Specialist terminology
Level 3 5–6 marks	Clear and effective ✓	Generally coherent ✓	Effective use
Level 2 3–4 marks	Some appropriate ✓	Lacks clarity in places	Some appropriate use ✓
Level 1 1–2 marks	Limited	Lacking, has inaccuracies	Absent or inappropriate

A summary of the criteria for 6-mark A02 exam questions.

Note that there is no credit for description unless the exam question includes the command term 'Description'.

Examiner comment A thorough answer where the student has focused very clearly on the stem at the beginning of each paragraph and linked the description to Asch's research.

With reference to the mark scheme we can see that the application of knowledge is mostly clear and effective. The first paragraph focuses more on knowledge than application of knowledge though the paragraph ends by applying the knowledge.

In the other two paragraphs the application is more effective – focusing on *applying* the knowledge rather than describing the knowledge first and then applying it.

The answer is coherent with some use of specialist terminology (e.g. dissenter, task difficulty).

Level 3 response but we are tempted by the band below, therefore 5 marks.

Level/Mark	Evaluation	Effectiveness	Focus	Specialist terminology
Level 2 3–4 marks	Some elaboration	Some effectiveness	Focused, not generic ✓	Effective use ✓
Level 1 1–2 marks	Limited, muddled ✓	Lacking ✓	Generic	Absent or inappropriate

A summary of the criteria for 4-mark A03 exam questions.

Examiner comment The first sentence is irrelevant. Harlow's study is an appropriate evaluation and the description of findings is necessary in order to be able to draw the conclusion. It is reasonably explained – between Level 1 and 2.

The second evaluation is briefer and lacks clarity. This pulls the mark into a Level 1 response. 2 marks.

Understanding marking

A01 + A03 question: Outline and evaluate the behavioural approach to treating phobias. (12 marks)

Answer Phobias are a class of mental health condition associated with high levels of anxiety and avoidance of the phobic object. The behavioural approach to treating phobias is based on explaining phobias using the principles of conditioning. Classical conditioning can be used to explain how they are acquired and the same thing can be used in their treatment. The method is called systematic desensitisation. This is based on the principles of conditioning, which is a behaviourist idea.

The steps involved are (1) Client taught to relax, (2) Create a hierarchy, (3) Start with least feared object and relax, (4) Work way up to most feared. This can be done through flooding instead where the hierarchy is missed out and you just go straight to the most feared object. This has the difficulty of being quite traumatic and then the client may just withdraw from the treatment, meaning that the therapy is not successful at all.

Systematic desensitisation has proved to be a good therapy and it makes sense because if people learn a phobia because of conditioning then it can be unlearned. Many people like this kind of therapy because you don't have to think about it. It's also good because you don't actually need a therapist to do it. If you read about it you could use it yourself to overcome a phobia.

On the negative side, as I have already said, some people may find it quite unpleasant and if they choose to stop this means it won't be a very useful therapy. Behaviourist ideas are based on research with animals. In fact systematic desensitisation comes from experiments that were first done with cats, so the question is whether it really can be applied to humans. But often this is not true. An alternative might be to use drug therapies or CBT, both of which are effective ways to treat some mental health conditions.

A real problem for systematic desensitisation is that it may just cure the symptoms. It could be that there was some deeper psychological cause of the condition and this is not tackled using systematic desensitisation. All that is cured is the fear of an object rather than actual cause. (364 words)

Level/Mark	Knowledge	Accuracy	Evaluation/discussion	Focus	Clarity and organisation	Specialist terminology
Level 4 10–12 marks	Accurate, generally well-detailed	Accurate	Thorough, effective	Focused	Organised, generally coherent	Effective use
Level 3 7–9 marks	Evident, occasional omissions	Some inaccuracies	Mostly effective	May lack focus	Organised	Appropriate use
Level 2 4–6 marks	Limited	Poor	Limited effectiveness	Lacks focus, mainly description	Lacks clarity and organisation in places	Inappropriate on occasions
Level 1 1–3 marks	Very limited	Many inaccuracies	Limited or absent	Poorly focused	Lacks clarity, poor organisation	Inappropriate or absent

A summary of the criteria for 12-mark A01 + A03 exam questions.

Examiner comments

Introduction contains little of merit, basic scene-setting in mentioning classical conditioning and identifying systematic desensitisation.

Very brief outline of an anxiety hierarchy which could be more clearly linked to phobias by using examples. Thus this is *lacking detail*.

The paragraph also contains a mention of flooding along with a limitation.

A number of positive points strung together, only partly effective because there is not much explanation of the evaluation points.

Seeing how questions are marked helps you know how to improve your own answers. Try marking a friend's essays.

The fourth paragraph starts with a repeat of a previous point.

Second sentence onwards is a reasonably developed point, i.e. *mostly effective*.

Final paragraph is also *mostly effective* as the point is explained/elaborated.

Overall comments

Knowledge: limited, not detailed.

Accuracy: reasonable.

Discussion: two points that are mostly effective and a number that are partly effective. Ratio of A01 to A03 is good.

Focus: lacks focus at the start.

Clarity and organisation: mostly clear but towards lower end of Level 3.

Specialist terminology: mostly used appropriately but towards lower end of Level 3.

Overall the level that best describes this answer is Level 3 but we are tempted lower, making this 7 marks (58%), probably a Grade B or C.

Spec spotlight

Types of conformity:
Internalisation and compliance.
Explanations for conformity:
Informational social influence and
normative social influence.



Have you heard? Conformity is all about following the others.

Revision BOOSTER

Feel free to include examples as part of your AO1 description. It's an excellent way to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of key concepts in conformity, such as internalisation and compliance.

Two-process theory

Deutsch and Gerard (1955) brought ISI and NSI together in their two-process theory of social influence.

They argued that people conform because of two basic human needs: the need to be **right** (ISI) and the need to be **liked** (NSI).

Types of conformity

Internalisation.

Think the group is right.

When a person genuinely accepts group norms. It results in a private as well as public change of opinions/behaviour.

The change is usually permanent and persists in the absence of group members because attitudes have become part of how the person thinks (**internalised**).

Compliance.

Temporary agreement.

Involves 'going along with others' in public, but privately not changing opinions/behaviour.

This results in only a superficial change and the opinion/behaviour stops as soon as group pressure ceases.

Explanations for conformity

Informational social influence (ISI)

ISI is about information, a desire to be right.

Often we are uncertain about what behaviour or beliefs are right or wrong. You may not know the answer to a question in class, but if most of your class gives the same answer, you go along with them because you feel they are probably right.

ISI is a **cognitive** process – people generally want to be right. ISI leads to internalisation.

ISI occurs in situations that are ambiguous.

ISI is most likely in situations which are new or where there is some ambiguity, so it isn't clear what is right. It may happen when decisions have to be made quickly, when we assume the group is likely to be right.

Normative social influence (NSI)

NSI is about norms, a desire to be liked.

NSI concerns what is 'normal' behaviour for a social group (i.e. norms). Norms regulate the behaviour of groups and individuals.

NSI is an **emotional** rather than cognitive process – people prefer social approval rather than rejection. NSI leads to **compliance**.

NSI occurs in unfamiliar situations and with people you know.

NSI is most likely in situations where you don't know the norms and look to others about how to behave. NSI occurs in situations with strangers if you don't want to be rejected. Or NSI occurs with people we know because we are concerned about the social approval of friends.

It may be more pronounced in stressful situations where people have more need for **social support**.

One strength of internalisation is that it has research support.

Bokemper *et al.* (2021) told one group of participants, during COVID, that other community members were wearing masks.

Later these participants were more likely to wear a mask correctly and more likely to express disapproval towards people not wearing masks correctly.

This shows that at least some **conformity** involves acceptance of the norms of mask-wearing (internalisation) and not just compliance.

Another strength is research support for ISI.

Lucas *et al.*'s. (2006) participants conformed more to incorrect answers when maths problems were difficult (with easy problems, participants 'knew their own minds').

For hard problems the situation was ambiguous (unclear) so participants relied on the answers they were given.

This supports ISI because the results are what ISI would predict.

Counterpoint

It is unclear if NSI or ISI operate in studies and real life. A dissenter may reduce the power of NSI (social support) or reduce the power of ISI (alternative source of social information).

Therefore ISI and NSI are hard to separate and operate together in most real-world situations.

One limitation is individual differences in NSI.

nAffiliators have a strong need for 'affiliation' (need to relate to other people).

McGhee and Teevan (1967) found that students who were nAffiliators were more likely to conform.

This shows that NSI underlies conformity for some people more than for others – an individual difference not explained by a theory of situational pressures.

Evaluation extra: Is the ISI/NSI distinction useful?

Lucas *et al.*'s study shows that the ISI/NSI distinction may not be useful because it is impossible to work out which is operating (see counterpoint above).

However, Asch's research (see next spread) supports both NSI (disapproval of a **unanimous** group motivates conformity) and ISI (you assume the unanimous group knows better than you).

Therefore, overall, both concepts are useful because they can be identified and used to explain the reasons for conformity in studies and real-world situations.

Apply it

A man is lying on the pavement in a busy street. People are walking round him and ignoring him. No-one stops to see if there is anything wrong.

Bailey hated reading The Midwich Cuckoos for her book group, but at the meeting said she loved it along with everyone else.

1. Which of these scenarios shows ISI and which NSI? Give some reasons for your choice.
2. Can you think of any more examples?



Sometimes it's tough swimming against the tide.

Knowledge Check

1. Explain what is meant by 'internalisation' and 'compliance'. (4 marks)
2. Outline informational social influence **and** normative social influence as explanations of conformity. (6 marks)
3. Evaluate informational social influence **and** normative social influence as explanations of conformity. (6 marks)
4. Discuss what research has told us about why people conform. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)

Conformity: Variables affecting conformity

Spec spotlight

Variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.

Note that exam questions will focus on the **variables that affect conformity** not on Asch's procedure or baseline findings.

You must read any exam question carefully – only describe procedures if the question specifically asks for them.

Asch's baseline procedure

123 American male participants were tested individually, sitting last or (as here) next-to-last in a group of six to eight confederates.



The participants were shown two large cards. On one was a 'standard line'. On the other were three comparison lines.



One of the three lines was the same length as the standard line and the other two were always clearly different. Each group member stated which of the three lines matched the standard.

There were 18 'trials' involving different pairs of cards. On 12 of these ('critical trials'), the confederates all gave the same clearly wrong answer.

Asch (1951) Baseline procedure

AIMS	Solomon Asch (1951) devised a procedure to measure the extent that people conformed to the opinion of others, even in a situation when the other people's answers were clearly wrong.
FINDINGS OF BASELINE STUDY	<p>In the baseline procedure, Asch found that the naïve participants conformed 36.8% of the time. This shows a high level of conformity when the situation is unambiguous.</p> <p>There were individual differences, 25% of the participants never gave a wrong answer (i.e. never conformed). 75% conformed at least once.</p> <p>Asch conducted further studies where he showed that certain variables lead to less or more conformity. The details are given below.</p>

Variables investigated by Asch

Variable 1 Group size.	<p>Procedure – There were between 1 and 15 confederates in each group (total group size between 2 and 16).</p> <p>Findings – the relationship between group size and level of conformity was curvilinear.</p> <p>If there were two confederates, conformity to the wrong answer was 13.6%. When there were three confederates, conformity rose to 31.8%.</p> <p>Above three confederates, the conformity rate levelled off. Adding more than three confederates made little difference.</p> <p>Explanation – people are very sensitive to opinions of others because just one confederate was enough to sway opinion.</p>
Variable 2 Unanimity.	<p>Procedure – Asch introduced a dissenting confederate. Sometimes they gave the correct answer and sometimes a different wrong answer (but always disagreed with majority).</p> <p>Findings – in the presence of a dissenter, conformity reduced on average to less than a quarter of the level it was when the majority was unanimous.</p> <p>Conformity reduced if a dissenter gave right or wrong answer.</p> <p>Explanation – having a dissenter enabled the naïve participant to behave more independently.</p>
Variable 3 Task difficulty.	<p>Procedure – Asch made the line-judging task harder by making the standard line and comparison lines more similar in length. Thus it was difficult to see a difference between the lines.</p> <p>Findings – conformity increased.</p> <p>Explanation – the situation is more ambiguous, so we are more likely to look to others for guidance and assume they are right. This is informational social influence – it plays a greater role when the task becomes harder.</p>

One limitation is that the situation and task were artificial.

Participants knew they were in a research study (**demand characteristics**). The task was trivial and there was no reason *not* to conform.

Also, Fiske (2014) argued that 'Asch's groups were not very groupy' (not like real-life groups).

This means the findings do not **generalise** to everyday life (especially where the consequences of conformity are important).

Another limitation is that Asch's findings have limited application.

Only American men were tested by Asch. Neto (1995) suggested that women might be more conformist, possibly because they are more concerned about social relationships (and being accepted).

Also the US is a fairly individualist culture and studies in more collectivist cultures (e.g. China) have found higher conformity rates (Bond and Smith 1996). (See page 50 for note on individualist/collectivist cultures.)

This means Asch's findings tell us little about conformity in women and people from some cultures.

One strength is other evidence to support Asch's findings.

Wijenayake *et al.* (2020) gave participants a quiz and then showed fake results from fellow respondents. Participants were offered a chance to change their answers.

The results were similar to Asch's: 78% conformed to a wrong answer at least once.

This confirms Asch's original findings and suggests that the findings are still valid in modern society.

Counterpoint

However, Wijenayake *et al.* also found that participants who scored high on the personality traits of conscientiousness and neuroticism conformed to a greater extent than others.

This shows that individual differences as well as **situational variables** are important variables for conformity. (Asch did not research the role of individual differences.)

Evaluation extra: Asch's research raises ethical issues.

Asch's research increased our knowledge of why people conform, which may help avoid mindless destructive conformity.

But when participants are deceived they cannot give their informed consent to take part and may have a negative experience.

Therefore, we might still argue that the research was justified because there are a wide range of potential applications and the stress caused was minimal.

Apply it

Magnus has been studying conformity as part of his A level. His group of friends are planning a holiday and most of them want to go abroad but Magnus fancies doing something closer to home.

How might Magnus use his knowledge about why people conform, to encourage the others to support his view?

Revision BOOSTER

When you evaluate Asch's research, don't be sidetracked into describing it first. It can be tempting to do this just to 'set the scene'. There is virtually no description of Asch's procedures or findings on this AO3 page. Follow our example, and stick to evaluation.



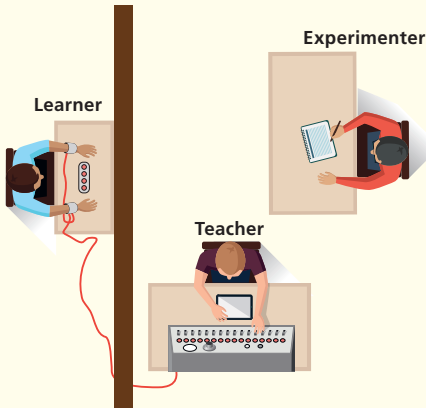
And they say social networking is killing the art of conversation.

Knowledge Check

1. How did Asch measure the effect of task difficulty on conformity, and what did he find? (4 marks)
2. Referring to Asch's research, briefly explain how group size, unanimity and task difficulty affect conformity. (6 marks)
3. Evaluate Asch's research into conformity. (6 marks)
4. Outline and evaluate Asch's research. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)

Spec spotlight

Obedience, as investigated by Milgram.



Milgram's experimental set-up

The Learner ('Mr Wallace') was strapped into a chair in a separate room and wired with electrodes. The Learner's task was to remember word pairs. The Teacher delivered shocks by pressing switches on a 'shock machine' labelled from 'slight shock' to 'danger – severe shock'.

Revision BOOSTER

Exam questions on Milgram's research rarely require any description of the procedure – yet students can't resist reporting all the details. At most you need 100 words on procedural details – don't waste exam time doing more.

Focus on what the findings tell us about obedience.

Milgram (1963) Baseline obedience study

BASILINE PROCEDURE

Stanley Milgram recruited 40 American male participants supposedly for a study of memory.

Each participant arrived at Milgram's lab and drew lots for their role. A confederate ('Mr Wallace') was always the 'Learner' while the true participant was always the 'Teacher'.

An 'Experimenter' (another confederate) wore a lab coat.

The procedure is shown in the diagram (left) and described in the text below. The Teacher could hear but not see the Learner.

The Teacher had to give the Learner an increasingly severe electric 'shock' each time he made a mistake on a task. The shocks increased in 15-volt steps up to 450 volts.

The shocks were fake but the shock machine was labelled to make them look increasingly severe.

If the Teacher wished to stop, the Experimenter used a sequence of verbal prods:

- (Prod 1) 'Please continue' or 'Please go on.'
- (Prod 2) 'The experiment requires that you continue.'
- (Prod 3) 'It is absolutely essential that you continue.'
- (Prod 4) 'You have no other choice, you must go on.'

FINDINGS

Baseline findings

12.5% (five participants) stopped at 300 volts.

65% continued to 450 volts (highest level).

Observations (**qualitative data**) – participants showed signs of extreme tension. Three had 'full-blown uncontrollable seizures'.

Other findings

Before the study Milgram asked 14 psychology students to predict how they thought the naïve participants would respond. The students estimated no more than 3% would continue to 450 volts (so the baseline findings were unexpected).

After the study, participants were debriefed. A follow-up **questionnaire** showed 84% were glad they had participated.

CONCLUSIONS

We obey legitimate authority even if that means that our behaviour causes harm to someone else.

Certain situational factors encourage **obedience** (Milgram investigated these, see next spread).

One strength is replications supporting Milgram's research findings.

Many studies have successfully replicated Milgram's findings using a more ethical 'Obedience Lite' method in which the procedure is stopped after 150 volts (first 10 switches).

Grzyb *et al.* (2023) used this procedure and found that 90% of participants obeyed orders up to 150 volts (this was true with human or robot experimenter).

This supports Milgram's original findings about high levels of obedience to authority.

One limitation is that Milgram's study lacked internal validity.

Orne and Holland (1968) argued that participants guessed the electric shocks were fake. So they were 'play-acting'.

This was supported by Perry's (2013) discovery that only half of the participants believed the shocks were real (see top right).

This suggests that participants may have been responding to **demand characteristics**.

Counterpoint

However, Sheridan and King's (1972) participants gave real shocks to a puppy; 54% of men and 100% of women delivered what they thought was a fatal shock.

This suggests the obedience in Milgram's study might be genuine.

Another limitation is that blind obedience is not the only explanation.

Haslam *et al.* (2014) found that every participant given the first three prods obeyed the Experimenter, but those given the fourth prod disobeyed.

According to social identity theory (see page 21), the first three prods required identification with the science of the research but the fourth prod required blind obedience.

This shows that the findings are best explained in terms of identification with scientific aims (one of Milgram's claims) and not as blind obedience to authority.

Evaluation extra: Ethical issues.

The participants in this study were deceived e.g. they thought the shocks were real. Milgram dealt with this by debriefing participants.

Baumrind (1964) felt this deception could have serious consequences for participants and researchers e.g. no informed consent possible.

Therefore this research may damage the reputations of psychologists and their research in the eyes of the public.

Not everyone agrees with this conclusion. What do you think?

Perry's research

Perry (2013) analysed Milgram's archive of tape recordings. She made several discoveries that undermine the validity of Milgram's findings and conclusions, including:

- The 'Experimenter' frequently went 'off-script', for example he would vary the wording of the four prods and use them excessively (26 times with one unfortunate participant).
- Participants often voiced their suspicions about the shocks. Perry concluded that most of Milgram's participants realised that the shocks were fake.



Most people would look up to their boss as an example of an authority figure – though it obviously helps if your boss is thirteen feet tall.

Knowledge Check

1. Briefly describe the procedure used by Milgram to investigate obedience. (4 marks)
2. Explain what Milgram's research showed about obedience. (4 marks)
3. Explain **two** limitations of Milgram's research into obedience. (6 marks)
4. Outline and evaluate Milgram's research. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)

Obedience: Situational variables

Spec spotlight

Explanations for obedience: Situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform.

Apply it

Think of a real-life situation (or more than one) in which proximity, location and uniform play a role in whether or not someone decides to obey an order.

Using evidence from Milgram's research, explain how each of these situational factors influences the decision to obey. Make sure your explanations are closely related to the situation(s).



Superman discovered that not all uniforms are equally authoritative.

Explanations for obedience based on situational variables

Proximity.

Closeness of Teacher and Learner.

In the baseline study, the Teacher (T) could hear the Learner (L) but not see him.

In the *proximity* variation, T and L were in the same room and the **obedience** rate dropped from 65% to 40%.

In the *touch proximity* variation, the T forced the L's hand onto a shock plate. The obedience rate was 30%.

In the *remote instruction* variation, the Experimenter (E) left the room and gave instructions by telephone. The obedience rate was 20.5% and participants often pretended to give shocks.

Explanation – decreased **proximity** allows people to psychologically distance themselves from the consequences of their actions.

For example, when the T and L were physically separated, the T was less aware of the harm done, so was obedient.

Location.

Prestige of setting.

The study was conducted in a run-down building rather than at the prestigious Yale University (as in the baseline).

Obedience dropped to 47.5%.

Explanation – obedience was higher in the university because the setting was legitimate and had authority (obedience was expected).

Uniform.

Communicates authority.

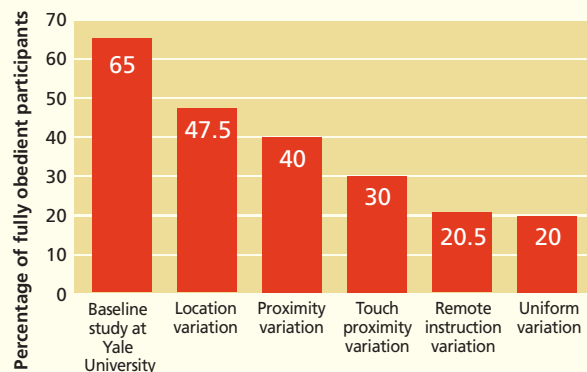
In the baseline study, the E wore a grey lab coat (a kind of **uniform**).

In one variation, he was called away by a phone call at the start of the procedure. His role was taken over by an 'ordinary member of the public' in everyday clothes.

Obedience fell to 20%, the lowest of these variations.

Explanation – a uniform is a strong symbol of legitimate authority granted by society. Someone without a uniform has less right to expect obedience.

Graph showing all the variations.



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