

# IBDP PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE OUTLINE

# OUTLINE

The course can be modified to suit school preferences such as adding an additional Topic in Paper 2 or changing an Approach in Paper 1 to ERQ level. Or other Options can be taught (such as Human Relationships and Developmental Psychology). Or more than one HLE can be taught giving the students more choice.

Our school has been running this program for many years and our grades are extremely high. For example, 2022 our cohort of 10 students all received IB 7s. This is also the approach I, and other WSLs, recommend in workshops.

I would be happy to discuss these modifications with you should you need to. Or, if any school wants to see a course with all the content put back in, then I can also remove the modifications.

To be clear: The modifications presented here are only slight and benefit student learning and are what we recommend in workshops. If we put them back, the course becomes rushed with less time on each unit. However, there are areas of discussion whereby the course can be modified to suit specific needs and interests.



# INTRODUCTION

Exam skills are broken down into two types of Questions — Short Answer Questions (SAQs) and Extended Response Questions (ERQs). Course structure (Topics and Content headings) feeds into Assessment structure. In the Course outline I have replicated what we teach at our school and what is recommended in workshops which is to:

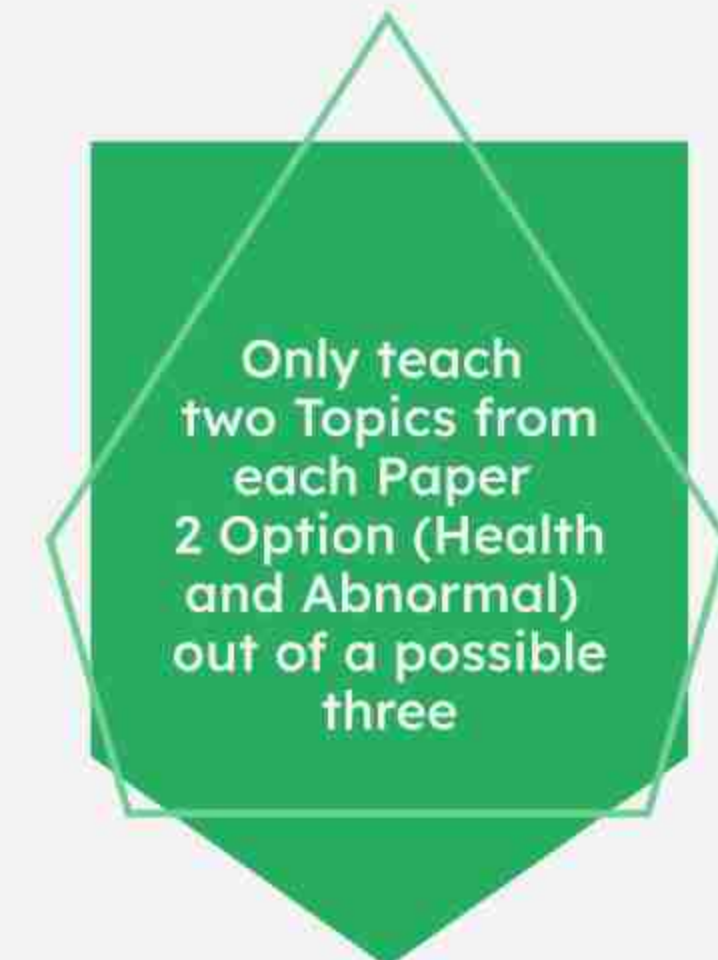
Re-use studies in as many areas as possible. These modifications save time but the main benefit is to reduce content. Psychology is a content heavy subject and content reductions are highly recommended.



In the example below, the Sociocultural Approach is taught at the SAQ level only.



Despite each approach having an HLE option. This is because they can only answer one HLE question in the exam.



This is because the questions are formulated under Topics in the exam and they can only answer one question from each Option.



# PAPER 1 APPROACHES

Approaches are broken down into Topics with Content Subheadings and 'italics'. All of which can be assessed, three Topics per Approach.

Students need to learn every Approach to SAQ level but not to ERQ level as they will only answer one ERQ in the exam (from a choice of three from the three Approaches).

Approach	Level	Weeks	Hours
Sociocultural (SCA)	SAQ only	5	15
Biological (BA)	SAQ and ERQ	10	30
Biological Higher Level Extension (HLE)	ERQ only	3	9
Cognitive (CA)	SAQ and ERQ	10	30

Options are broken down into Topics with Content Subheadings. All of which can be assessed to ERQ level only. Students do not need to learn every Topic as they will only answer 1 ERQ in the exam from one Topic/- content for each Option.

Option	Level	Weeks	Hours
Health	All ERQ	6 (3 weeks per Topic = 2 in total out of a possible 3)	18
Abnormal	ERQ only	6 (3 weeks per Topic = 2 Topics in total out of a possible 3)	18



# PAPER 1 APPROACHES

**Week:** Number of weeks out of 33 for Year 1.

**Content:** Course content copied and pasted directly from the Guide.

**Aims:** Suggested lesson aims for the week (3 per week).

**Assessment:** Students do not need to be assessed every lesson.

Formative assessment = practice in extended time frames (e.g. 30 minutes for an SAQ rather than 20 minutes); Summative assessment = IB Grading with IB Exam expectations (e.g. writing an SAQ in 20 minutes and graded with IB Rubrics).

Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
1	Introduction to Psychology and Assessment	What is Psychology? What is IB Psychology? How will I be assessed? Exam technique: How to write an SAQ; How to write an ERQ.	N/A
Sociocultural Approach (SAQ level only)			
2	Topic 1: The individual and the group	Explain Social Identity Theory (SIT); Explain Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).	Practice SAQ (1x30 minutes)
3	Topic 1 (continued): Research Methods and Ethical Considerations studied at Topic Level	Explain the formation of stereotypes; Explain the effects of stereotypes on behaviour.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
4	Topic 2: Cultural origins of behaviour and cognition	Culture and its influence on behaviour and cognition: Explain one example of culture and its influence on behaviour and cognition; Cultural dimensions: Explain one cultural dimension (these are combined as the content can be used for either).	Summative SAQ assessment (one SAQ written in 30 minutes). Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
5	Topic 3: Cultural influences on individual behaviour	Enculturation: Explain one effect enculturation has on human cognition and behaviour; Acculturation: Explain one effect acculturation has on human cognition and behaviour.	Formative SAQ assessment (20 minutes x2 = 40 minutes). Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
<b>Biological Approach (SAQ and ERQ levels)</b>			
6	Topic 1: The relationship between the brain and behaviour	Techniques used to study the brain in relation to behaviour: Evaluate one technique used to understand the brain and behaviour.	SAQ Practice (Formative).
7		Localisation of function: Evaluate/discuss one example of localisation of function.; Neuroplasticity: Study one example of neuroplasticity.	ERQ Practice (Formative).
8		Neurotransmitters and their effects on behaviour: Evaluate/discuss one neurotransmitter and its effect on behaviour.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
9	Topic 2: Hormones and pheromones and their effects on behaviour	Topic 2: Hormones and pheromones and their effects on behaviour	SAQ Practice (Formative).



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
10		Pheromones and their effects on behaviour: Evaluate/discuss one pheromone and its effect on behaviour.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
11	Topic 3: The relationship between genetics and behaviour.	Genes and their effects on behaviour: Evaluate/ discuss one gene and its link to behaviour.	SAQ Practice (Formative).
12		Genetic similarity: Evaluate/discuss genetic similarity (twins, siblings, parents, adopted children) for one behaviour.	ERQ Practice (Formative).
13		Evolutionary explanation for behaviour: Evaluate/ discuss one example of an evolutionary explanation for behaviour.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
14	Biological Approach Revision and Assessment	Revision.	One SAQ and One ERQ Summative Assessment: 90 minutes.
<b>Biological Approach HLE (ERQ level only)</b>			
15	The role of animal research in understanding human behaviour	Topic 1: The relationship between the brain and behaviour. Evaluate/discuss the value of animal models in research to provide insight into human behaviour; Evaluate/discuss ethical considerations in animal research.	ERQ Practice (Formative).
16		Topic 2: Hormones and pheromones and their effects on behaviour. Evaluate/discuss the value of animal models in research to provide insight into human behaviour; Evaluate/discuss ethical considerations in animal research.	ERQ Practice (Formative).



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
17		Topic 3: The relationship between genetics and behaviour. Evaluate/discuss the value of animal models in research to provide insight into human behaviour; Evaluate/discuss ethical considerations in animal research.	ERQ Summative.
18	Revision		
<b>Cognitive Approach (SAQ and ERQ level)</b>			
19	Topic 1: Cognitive processing	Models of memory: Evaluate/discuss/contrast two memory models.	SAQ Practice (Formative).
20		Schema theory: Evaluate/discuss one example of schema theory.	ERQ Practice (Formative).
21		Thinking and decision-making: Evaluate/discuss one model in thinking and decision-making.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
22	Topic 2: Reliability of cognitive processes	Reconstructive memory: Evaluate/discuss one example of reconstructive memory.	SAQ Practice (Formative).
23		How can we use our current content to create an experiment testing it?	Mini-practice IA (Formative).
24		Biases in thinking and decision-making: Evaluate/discuss one bias in thinking and decision-making.	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
25	Topic 3: Emotion and cognition	The influence of emotion on cognitive processes: Evaluate/discuss one example of the effect of emotion on a cognitive process	ERQ Practice (Formative). Research Methods and Ethical Considerations chosen and applied to Topic Level.
26	Cognitive Approach Revision and Assessment	Revision.	One SAQ and One ERQ Summative Assessment: 80 minutes.
Internal Assessment			
27	Planning	Planning document — decisions on theory, base study, aims, Hypotheses, IV, DV.	N/A
28	Introduction and References	To complete the Introduction and References.	N/A
29	Exploration and collection of data	To collect data using a minimum of 10 data points per IV condition (20 in total).	N/A
30	Analysis	Descriptive and Inferential Statistics; Graphing; justifications.	N/A
31	Evaluation and Peer review	To evaluate the IA in terms of design, sample, procedure.	N/A
32	Appendices	To create appendices for the IA.	N/A
33	IA Mopping Up	To mop any areas that need it.	N/A



# YEAR 2: PAPER 2 OPTIONS AND PAPER 3 APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

**Week:** Number of weeks out of 26 for Year 2.

Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
1	IA: Revision after formal teacher feedback	Teacher feedback: Revisions to work after Examiner's Report from the middle IB Summer	Formative IA Grade.
2	IA: Revision and final draft	Complete the final draft	Summative IA Grade.
The IA process is complete			
3	Mock Exams	To complete mock exams regarding the content from Year 1	Summative
Option 1: Health Psychology (HL students complete both options: SL student complete one option)			
4	Topic 1: Determinants of health	Biopsychosocial model of health and well-being: Evaluate/discuss the Biopsychosocial model of health and well-being.	ERQ Practice (Formative)



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
5		Dispositional factors and health beliefs: Evaluate/- discuss Dispositional factors and health beliefs. Example Health Issue: Obesity.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
6		Risk and protective factors: Evaluate/discuss Risk and protective factors. Example Health Issue: Obesity.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
7	Topic 2: Health problems	Explanations of health problem(s): Evaluate/- discuss Explanations of health problem(s): Example Health Issue: Obesity.	Summative IA Grade
8		Prevalence rates of health problem(s): Evaluate/discuss Prevalence rates of health problem(s): Example Health Issue: Obesity.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
9	End of Topic Test	To complete mock exams regarding the content from Option 1: Health Psychology.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
<b>Option 2: Abnormal Psychology (HL students complete both options: SL student complete one option)</b>			
10	Topic 2: Etiology of abnormal psychology	Explanations for disorder(s): Evaluate/discuss Explanations for disorder(s): Example disorder Anxiety/PTSD.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
11		Prevalence rates and disorder(s): Evaluate/discuss Prevalence rates and disorder(s): Example disorder Anxiety/PTSD.	ERQ Practice (Formative)



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
12	Topic 3: Treatment of disorder(s)	Biological treatment: Evaluate/discuss Biological treatment: Example disorder Anxiety/PTSD; Example treatment: SSRIs.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
13		Psychological treatment: Evaluate/discuss Psychological treatment. Example disorder: Anxiety/PTSD; Example treatment: CBT.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
14		The role of culture in treatment: Evaluate/discuss The role of culture in treatment: Example disorder Anxiety/PTSD; Example cultural roles: Religious practices/individualism/collectivism.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
15		Assessing the effectiveness of treatment(s): Evaluate/discuss Assessing the effectiveness of treatment(s): Example disorder Anxiety/PTSD.	ERQ Practice (Formative)
16	End of Topic Test	To complete mock exams regarding the content from Option 2: Abnormal Psychology.	ERQ Practice (Summative)
<b>Paper 3: Approaches to Research</b>			
17	Question 1: Identify the research method used and outline two characteristics of the method; Describe the sampling method used in the study.	To introduce stimulus material and discuss exam approaches; To explain research methods and how they can be applied to stimulus material.	Question Practice (Formative); Stimulus material practice.



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
18	Question 1: Suggest one alternative or one additional research method that could be used to investigate the aim of the original study, giving one reason for your choice.	To explain research methods and how they can be applied to stimulus material.	Question Practice (Formative)
19	Question 2: Describe the ethical considerations that were applied in the study and explain if further ethical considerations could be applied.	To explain how ethical considerations are applied in research; to learn how to spot the lack of ethical considerations in research.	Question Practice (Formative)
20	Question 2: Describe the ethical considerations in reporting the results and explain additional ethical considerations that could be taken into account when applying the findings of the study.	To explain how ethical considerations are applied in reporting the results of research; to learn how to spot the lack of ethical considerations in reporting the results of research.	Question Practice (Formative)
21	Question 3: Discuss the possibility of generalizing/transferring the findings of the study.	To discuss generalizing/transferring the findings of research.	Question Practice (Formative)
22	Question 3: Discuss how a researcher could ensure that the results of the study are credible; Discuss how the researcher in the study could avoid bias.	To discuss how credibility can be improved in research; to discuss types of bias and how it can be avoided.	Question Practice (Formative)
23	End of Topic Test	To complete mock exams regarding the content from Paper 3: Approaches to Research	Question Practice (Summative)



Week	Content	Aims	Assessment
Revision and Exam Preparation (Note: Revision exercises are set throughout the year)			
24	Paper 1 Question Blitz	To practise past questions and discuss exam strategies.	N/A
25	Paper 2 Question Blitz	To practise past questions and discuss exam strategies.	N/A
26	Paper 3 Question Blitz	To practise past questions and discuss exam strategies.	N/A

## IA Rationale

The IA is delivered immediately after the Cognitive Approach (CA) as the content they will learn in the CA feeds into the content of IA. During the CA they will be asked to complete a 'practice mini-IA' whereby they will be asked to label and operationalise variables, adapting studies and linking it to previous theories they have learned. The IA will be addressed with clear writing frames, past examples. It will be completed in first draft before the summer of Year 1 but not marked and revised until after the summer to take account of the Examiner's Reports from the previous years cohort.

Weeks	IA Section	Hours
1	Planning	3
2	Introduction and References	3
3	Exploration and collection of data	3
4	Analysis	3
5	Evaluation and Peer review	3
Summer break		
6	Teacher feedback: Revisions to work	3
7	Revision and final draft	3



# Links to TOK

All of the following apply to the Psychology course. However, some have more resonance at different content points. For example: **What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human Sciences** — has particular resonance during the delivery of the Cognitive Approach while: **Are observation and experimentation the only two ways in which human scientists produce knowledge** — has particular resonance during the delivery of the Paper 3 component and the Topic Headings throughout.

## TOK knowledge questions

1.

Are predictions in the human sciences inevitably unreliable?

2.

What are the main difficulties that human scientists encounter when trying to provide explanations of human behaviour?

3.

Is it possible to discover laws of human behaviour in the same way that the natural sciences discover laws of nature?

4.

To what extent is it legitimate for a researcher to draw on their own experiences as evidence in their investigations in the human sciences?

5.

Is it possible to eliminate the effect of the observer in the pursuit of knowledge in the human sciences?

6.

If two competing paradigms give different explanations of a phenomenon, how can we decide which explanation to accept?

7.

What role do models play in the acquisition of knowledge in the human Sciences?

8.

What are the moral implications of possessing knowledge about human behaviour?

9.

Are observation and experimentation the only two ways in which human scientists produce knowledge? To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings?



# Approaches to learning.

## Example unit — Biological approach

The biological approach to understanding behaviour is largely an investigation into to what extent behaviours and biological processes are correlations or determined. Do areas of the brain correlate with behaviour and to what extent can we claim cause and effect? When changes take place in the brain, do changes take place in behaviour or is the reverse the case? Could an individual's behaviour be predicted from their genes? Is human behaviour subject to natural selection?

The relationship between biology and behaviour is a complex one of mutual causality and students are expected to evaluate biological determinism. This can be partially achieved by asking them to reflect on sociocultural influences ('alternative explanations') and feed into a traditional nature/nurture debate.

Students are expected to assess how research methods (e.g. experiments) and ethical considerations (e.g. informed consent) influence research processes and the knowledge they produce and communicate.

# International mindedness.

## Example unit — Sociocultural approach

The DP psychology course develops an understanding of how our behaviour is shaped by the societies and cultures we experience and how we in turn shape our environment. The course also aids in the understanding of individual mental processes and behaviour with all its nuances and flaws and supports the understanding that others can also be right. The course also develops the idea that there are biological universals which may shape similar behaviour across cultures and populations — giving both a sense of human diversity as well as universality.

The sociocultural approach to behaviour investigates the role of social and cultural influences in shaping thinking and human behaviour. An increasing body of culturally informed research has made cross-cultural psychology as well as cultural psychology a contemporary topic of debate among psychologists working in the field. Theories, concepts and research studies provide the background for a more nuanced understanding of the variety and complexity of human behaviour. This is important in the modern globalized world where issues related to migration and integration are on the rise. The sociocultural approach asks students to consider to what extent behaviour is shaped by sociocultural processes and allows them to counterclaim with alternative theories from the biological approach. An example of behaviours that can be approach in this way are: Aggression; Gender norms.

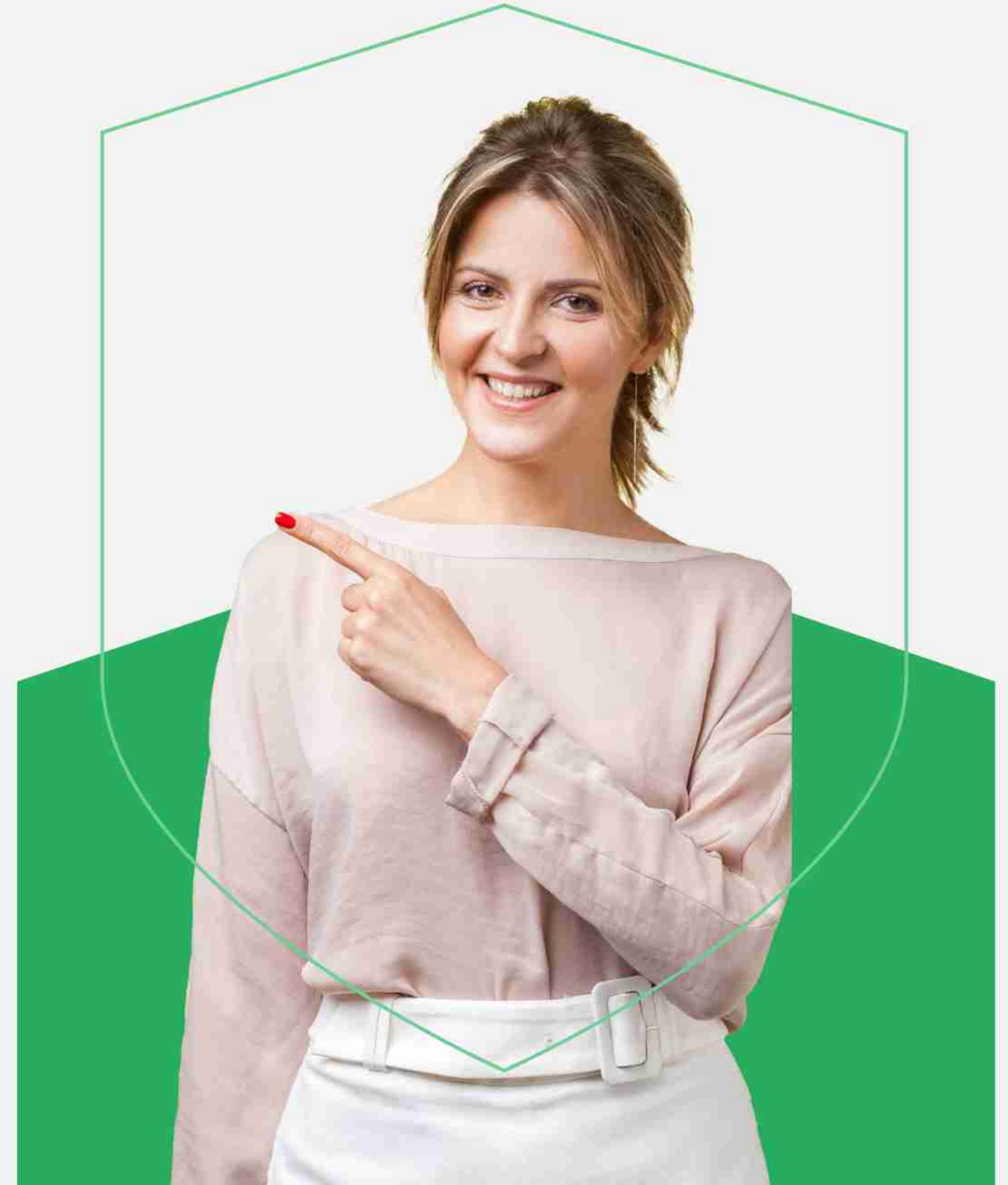


# Development of the IB learner profile

**Risk-takers:** by encouraging students to engage with new information and take a risk with their approach to debate. For example, some issues are quite contentious (e.g. gender biological determinants versus sociocultural determinants) and debating these issues allows students to pose questions and research areas that might be seen as quite risky in the present political climate.

**Inquirers and Knowledgeable:** The IA means they have to replicate authentic inquiry, resulting in them become very knowledgeable about the topics covered in this course as well as familiar with how human scientists collect, process and communicate data.

**Communicators:** Psychology is a content heavy and a traditionally examined course. Students learn how to articulate their thoughts and ideas in a variety of different formats. This may be as part of a discussion, or writing an essay. However, good teaching will focus on succinct and effective exam writing styles that allow the rubric points to be addressed within the time limit and in a way that takes account of a variety of language and academic abilities.





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