IB Psychology Assessment Guide (First Assessment 2027)

Overview of Components, Times and Weighting

Standard Level Assessments

Paper 1 – 1.5 hours (35%).
Paper 2 – 1.5 hours (35%).
Internal Assessment (30%).

Higher Level Assessments

Paper 1 – 1.5 hours (25%).
Paper 2 – 1.5 hours (25%).
Paper 3 – 1.75 hours (30%).
Internal Assessment (20%).

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Paper 1

Section A – content.

- Two compulsory 4-mark questions.
- Each question contains one piece of content from two different approaches.
- Describe or explain command term.
- Answers should reference one example of human behaviour (this does not need to be a study).
- The questions assess AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (application and analysis).
- Approximately 10 minutes should be spent on each question.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The response demonstrates limited knowledge relevant to the question. • The example is relevant but is not explained.
3–4	• The response demonstrates detailed knowledge relevant to the question. • The example is relevant and explained.

Example mark scheme:

Biological approach to human behaviour

1. Describe how one chemical messenger plays a role in one human behaviour. [4]

Refer to the paper 1 section A markbands when awarding marks.

The command term "describe" requires candidates to give a detailed account of the role of one chemical messenger in one human behaviour.

Chemical messengers include hormones, neurotransmitters and putative pheromones. Identification of the classification of chemical messenger is not required for top marks.

A description of the role of the chemical messenger may include how the chemical messenger

interacts with the brain or nervous system and how this affects a specific human behaviour.

Relevant examples may include but are not limited to:
• dopamine as part of the reward circuit and habitual or addictive behaviour
• oxytocin, interacting with the amygdala, on trust behaviour
• testosterone, interacting with the amygdala and frontal lobe, on aggressive behaviour.

Although a study may be used as the example, a hypothetical example that is linked to the chemical messenger is equally acceptable.

If a candidate refers to more than one chemical messenger, credit should be given only for the first chemical messenger.

If a candidate refers to more than one human behaviour, credit should be given only for the first human behaviour.

What this means

- *Students need to know all the content (Biological, Cognitive and Sociocultural Approaches).*
- *Students need to be made aware of when content is being taught.*
- *Students also need to be made aware of how crucial it is that they only focus on one prescribed piece of content and one example.*
- *Students do not need to know studies.*

Section B – content and contexts.

- Two compulsory 6-mark questions.
- Each question contains a piece of content from two different approaches.
- In each question, the content is linked to an unseen situation from one of the four contexts.
- Explain is the only command term??? (I will check this).
- The questions assess AO2 (application and analysis).
- Approximately 15 minutes should be spent on each question.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• Knowledge and understanding of the question are limited. • The application of knowledge is relevant but limited.
3–4	• Knowledge and understanding have some detail and are mostly accurate. • The application of knowledge is relevant and partially developed.
5–6	• Knowledge and understanding are accurate and detailed. • The application of relevant knowledge is well developed.

Example mark scheme:

4. As the school psychologist, you have been asked to suggest a strategy to promote empathy and/or prosocial behaviour among children at your school.

Explain how social learning theory could be used to achieve this goal. [6]

Refer to the paper 1 section B markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires candidates to give a detailed account, including reasons or causes, for how social learning theory could be used to promote empathy and/or prosocial behaviour.

Responses should demonstrate a clear understanding of social learning theory. This may include but is not limited to:

• vicarious reinforcement
• the role of self-efficacy
• identification with models
• mediating factors (attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation)
• influences on social learning (e.g., liking the model, in-group identification).

Candidates must apply the theory in suggesting a strategy. Potential strategies may include but are not limited to:
• Adults and role models should consistently demonstrate empathy/prosocial behaviour in their interactions with others.
• Watch movies or read books that depict characters going through emotional experiences or who need help. Characters in the media used should reflect the diversity of the school community.
• Encourage interactions with peers who exhibit prosocial behaviour.
• Empathy training – involve children and teens in community service or volunteering opportunities.
• Have students share stories or news articles about acts of kindness and prosocial behaviour.
• Develop a school television show that models prosocial behaviour.
• Publicly praise those in the school who show empathy and/or prosocial behaviour.

The explanation of the choice of strategy should be explicitly linked to relevant aspects of social learning theory.

What this means

- *Students need to know all the content (Biological, Cognitive and Sociocultural Approaches).*
- *Students need to be made aware of when content is being taught.*
- *Students will need to complete activities that allow them to practise answers to questions with unseen situations.*
- *Students so not need to know studies.*

Section C – contexts and concepts.

- One 15-mark question from a choice of two.
- Each question focuses on a different context.
- Discuss and evaluate are the only command terms??? (I will check this).
- The question aims to encourage critical thinking about a topic in relation to a concept.
- The question assesses AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO3 (synthesis and evaluation).
- Approximately 37.5 minutes should be spent on the question.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	• The response indicates little understanding of the demands of the question. Knowledge and understanding of specific content/concept(s) are very limited and contain inaccuracies. • The response is descriptive. Any analysis present is superficial or incoherent. Links between concepts are not stated, or they are not relevant. Where a conclusion is included, this is very superficial or is not consistent with the rest of the response. • Psychological terminology is not used or is consistently used inappropriately. Points are frequently inaccurate and unclear.
4–6	• The response indicates some understanding of the demands of the question. Relevant knowledge and understanding of content/concept(s) are described. • There is limited analysis present and overall the response is more descriptive than it is analytical. Links between concepts are stated, and they are partly relevant. A simplistic conclusion is included. • Psychological terminology is used, but often inappropriately. Points are frequently imprecise or vague.
7–9	• The response indicates understanding of the demands of the question, but these demands are only partially addressed. Relevant knowledge and understanding of content/concept(s) are partly explained. • The response contains analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Links between concepts are explained, and they are partly relevant. A conclusion is included but it is not always consistent with the arguments presented.

Mark	Level descriptor
	• Psychological terminology is used sometimes appropriately. Relevant points are made but lack accuracy and development.
10–12	• The demands of the question are addressed. Relevant knowledge and understanding of content/concept(s) are mostly explained. • The response contains critical analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Links between concepts are included and explained. The response argues to a conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented. • Psychological terminology is used, mostly appropriately. Points made are relevant and accurate but lack detail.
13–15	• The demands of the question are addressed. Relevant knowledge and understanding of content/concept(s) are fully explained. • The response contains well-developed critical analysis. Links between concepts are included throughout the response and fully explained. The response argues to a reasoned and clearly stated conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented. • There is accurate and precise use of psychological terminology. Points are relevant, accurate and detailed.

Example of mark scheme:

6. One claim in the psychology of health and well-being is that a single perspective is not enough to explain mental health. Discuss this claim with reference to one biological explanation of one or more disorders. [15]

Refer to the paper 1 section C markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “discuss” requires candidates to offer a considered review of the claim that one perspective is not enough with regard to one biological explanation.

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding through one biological explanation of disorders and at least one non-biological perspective.

Discussion may include but is not limited to:
• The use of a reductionist vs. holistic approach to understanding mental health.
• Biological explanations may be seen as deterministic and lead to stigma; however, biological explanations have also led to an increase in human rights and the declassification of some disorders.

• The value of an interactionist approach; the diathesis stress model argues that biological factors alone do not lead to disorders, but the interaction of biological and environmental/cognitive factors.
• Biological predisposition on its own has low predictive validity.
• Biological research has led to drug treatment that has led to less institutionalization of those with mental illness; however, other perspectives have sometimes led to more effective treatment than biological treatments.
• Biological perspectives tend to focus on universal physiological traits and cannot account for individual differences (e.g., differences in symptom manifestation in different cultures).
• Biological explanations are often based on animal models, which may not reflect the actual disorder in humans.

Candidates may refer to one disorder to show depth of understanding or more than one to demonstrate breadth of knowledge and understanding. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

If a candidate refers to more than one biological explanation, credit should be given only for the first biological explanation.

What this means

- *Students do not need to learn all four contexts as long as the content is covered.*
- *Students need to practise evaluating and discussing topics using the concepts.*
- *Students need to know how to tackle different command terms.*
- *Students so not need to know studies.*

Paper 2

Section A – practicals.

- Two compulsory 4-mark questions and two compulsory 6-mark questions.
- Questions are focused on the research methods used in class practicals.
- Questions follow a very rigid format and order.
- Describe, explain, compare and contrast and design are the command terms (in that order).
- Questions assess AO1 (knowledge and understanding), AO2 (application and analysis) and AO3 (synthesis and evaluation).
- Approximately 10 minutes should be spent on questions 1 and 2.
- Approximately 15 minutes should be spent on questions 3 and 4.

Question 1 – knowledge and understanding of the practicals.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The response demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the research methodology relevant to the class practical. • Psychological terminology is limited or contains some inaccuracies.
3–4	• The response demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of the research methodology relevant to the class practical. • Psychological terminology is used accurately.

Example mark scheme:

Describe how you used an interview or focus group in your class practical and its aim and procedure. [4]

The command term “describe” requires candidates to give a detailed account of how an interview or focus group was used to carry out the class practical.

Candidates should describe the aim and procedure of the interview or focus group that they used in the class practical. The aim may be written either as a research question or a statement of the aim of the study.

A description of an interview or focus group may include but is not limited to:
• the type of interview – semi-structured, focus group
• piloting of the interview
• training for the interview/focus group
• ways that interviewer effects were controlled
• types of questions – open vs. closed questions
• how the data were recorded/transcribed
• interview schedules/guides
• focus group questions – engagement questions, exploration questions, exit questions
• focus group seating plan.

Responses that only reference the research method, but not how the method was used in the class practical, may only achieve marks in the low band.

What this means

- *Students need to be able to describe the details of each of their practicals.*

Question 2 – application of concept to the practicals.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The knowledge and understanding of the concept are relevant but limited. • There are some relevant links between the concept and the class practical.
3–4	• The knowledge and understanding of the concept are well developed. • There are clear and detailed links between the concept and the class practical.

Example mark scheme:

2. Explain the concept of bias in relation to the interview or focus group in your class practical. [4]

The command term "explain" requires candidates to give a detailed account, including reasons or causes, for how bias is related to the class practical.

Examples of how bias many affect an interview or focus group include but are not limited to:
• Sampling bias. The selection of participants can introduce bias if the researcher only includes individuals from a particular demographic or background.
• Interviewer bias. The interviewer's personal beliefs, attitudes, and preconceptions can impact the questions they ask and how they interpret the responses.
• Question wording bias. The phrasing of interview questions can inadvertently introduce bias by leading participants to respond in a certain way or by framing issues in a particular light.
• Response bias. Participants may provide responses that they believe the interviewer wants to hear, which can result from social desirability bias.
• Cultural bias. If interviewers and participants come from different cultural backgrounds, there may be misunderstandings or misinterpretations of responses due to cultural differences in communication styles and norms.
• Recall bias. Participants may not accurately recall past events or experiences, which can lead to inaccurate or incomplete information in the interviews.

Candidates may also explain how biases may have been avoided, including but not limited to:
• Pilot testing. Conducting pilot interviews to refine questions and identify potential sources of bias.
• Training interviewers. Providing training to interviewers to minimize their biases and ensure consistency in data collection.
• Using open-ended questions. Formulating open-ended questions that allow participants to express their thoughts freely.

Candidates may explain a small number of biases in order to demonstrate depth of knowledge or may explain a larger number of biases in order to demonstrate breadth of knowledge. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

What this means

- *Students need activities to evaluate their practicals in relation to all concepts.*

Question 3 – compare and contrast two research methods used.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• Similarities or differences are described in limited detail or contain errors. • There is limited psychological terminology relevant to the research methods.
3–4	• Similarities and differences are explained in limited detail and may lack clarity or either similarities or differences are discussed in detail. • Psychological terminology relevant to the research methods is used, but with some inaccuracies.
5 – 6	• Similarities and differences are discussed in detail. • Psychological terminology relevant to the research methods is used effectively.

Example mark scheme:

3. Compare and contrast the research methodology of an interview or focus group used in your class practical with the research methodology of an experiment. [6]

The command term "compare and contrast" asks candidate to give an account of similarities and differences between two or more items or situations.

Comparisons of an interview or focus group and an experiment include but are not limited to:
• Both require planning and may have a pilot study.
• Both must meet ethical considerations of informed consent, protection from harm, and the anonymity of the participants.
• Both require a consideration of the representativeness of the sample.
• Interviews may involve structured questions aimed at answering specific research questions, and experiments are often designed to test hypotheses about the causal relationships between variables.

Contrasts of an interview or focus group and an experiment include but are not limited to:
• Interviews and focus groups typically generate qualitative data, whereas experiments generate quantitative data.
• The data collected in interviews and focus groups rely on participants' subjective experiences and interpretations; experimental data are often more objective, as they are based on controlled conditions and measures.

• Interviews and focus groups have limited control over variables; experiments strive for high internal validity.
• Interviews and focus groups are often conducted in natural settings; experiments are often carried out under controlled lab conditions.
• Interviews and focus groups often use purposive, non-random sampling; experiments often involve random sampling and random allocation to conditions to ensure representativeness and reduce bias.
• Interviews and focus groups allow researchers to understand individual perspectives, emotions, and experiences; experiments attempt to determine causal relationships.

Candidates may compare and contrast a small number of similarities/differences in order to demonstrate depth of knowledge or may compare and contrast a larger number of similarities/differences in order to demonstrate breadth of knowledge. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

Although a discussion of both similarities and differences is required, it does not have to be evenly balanced to gain high marks.

What this means

- *Students need to do activities to practise comparing and contrasting all research methods used in their practicals.*

Question 4 – design a study using one of the research methods and the topic you investigated.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The procedure of the research method is described in limited detail or contains inaccuracies. • There is limited use of psychological terminology relevant to the research method.
3–4	• The procedure of the research method is explained in some detail but lacks clarity. • Psychological terminology relevant to the research method is used, but with some inaccuracies.
5–6	• The procedure of the research method is explained with accuracy and detail. • Psychological terminology relevant to the research method is used effectively.

Example mark scheme:

4. Design an observation to investigate the same topic you investigated in your class practical. [6]

The command term "design" asks candidates to produce a plan for how an observation could be used to investigate the same topic as their class practical.

Designing an observation may include but is not limited to:
• choice of the observation setting (naturalistic or under controlled conditions)
• type of observation – overt or covert; participant or non-participant;
controlled or naturalistic
• type of data collection – time, event, or point sampling
• use of a behavioural checklist
• behavioural categories and operationalization
• establishing inter-rater reliability
• recording behaviour
• ethical considerations of the design
• selecting a sample.

What this means

- *Students should practice designing each of their practicals using the other three research methods.*

Section B – evaluation of an unseen study.

- One compulsory 15-mark question.
- The question requires students to apply two of four specified concepts to an unseen stimulus study.
- Discuss is the only command term??? (I will check this)
- The question focuses on an unseen study linked to one of contexts.
- The question assesses AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO3 (synthesis and evaluation).
- Approximately 37.5 minutes should be spent on the question.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	• The response indicates little understanding of, and critical engagement with, any of the specified concepts in relation to the study. • The response is descriptive. Any analysis present is superficial or incoherent. Links between concepts and source material are not included or are irrelevant to the discussion. Where a conclusion is included, this is very superficial or is not consistent with the rest of the response. • Psychological terminology is not used or is consistently used inappropriately. Points are frequently inaccurate and unclear. There are few, if any, references to the study.
4–6	• The response indicates a basic understanding of, and critical engagement with, at least one of the specified concepts in relation to the study. • There is limited analysis present and overall the response is more descriptive than it is analytical. Links between concepts and the study are of limited relevance or ineffectively support the discussion. A simplistic conclusion is included. • Psychological terminology is used, but often inappropriately. Points are frequently imprecise or vague. There are occasional references to the study.
7–9	• The response indicates some understanding of, and critical engagement with, one or more of the specified concepts in relation to the study. • The response contains analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Links between concepts and the source material are relevant, but they lack development in support of the discussion. A conclusion is included.

	• Psychological terminology is used, sometimes appropriately. Relevant points are made but lack accuracy and development. Specific references to the study are made, although these are sometimes ineffective.
10–12	• The response indicates good understanding of, and critical engagement with, at least two of the specified concepts in relation to the study. • The response contains critical analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Links between concepts and the study are used to support the discussion. The response argues to a conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented. • Psychological terminology is used, mostly appropriately. Points made are relevant and accurate but lack detail. There are specific references to the study.
13–15	• The response indicates very good understanding of, and critical engagement with, two or more of the specified concepts in relation to the study. • The response contains well-developed critical analysis. Links between concepts and source material are relevant and well developed and effectively support the discussion. The response argues to a reasoned and clearly stated conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented. • There is accurate and precise use of psychological terminology. Points are relevant, accurate and detailed. There are specific and effective references to the study.

Example mark scheme:

5. Discuss the following study with reference to two or more of the following concepts: bias, causality, measurement, and/or responsibility. [15]

Refer to the paper 2, section B markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “discuss” requires candidates to offer a considered review of the concepts with regard to the study.

Examples of how the concepts may be linked to the study include but are not limited to the following.

Bias
There are several aspects of bias that could be discussed. There is an assumption that IQ testing is valued by all individuals and cultures and that it is linked to self-esteem. There is also a gender bias (only focusing on men’s self-esteem); the cultural bias that men should want to speak to an “attractive woman” in a public space; and a Western bias that promotes extraverted behaviour.

Causality
The researchers attempted to establish causality by manipulating the IV and measuring the DV while keeping other variables constant. However, individual differences may have affected the findings.

Introverted individuals or men who have higher-than-average (or lower-than-average) self-esteem may compromise internal validity.

Measurement

It is not clear in this study how a person's level of self-esteem is measured; it is assumed that the news that one scores high or low on an IQ test will have an effect. The dependent variable is the amount of time to engage and the detail of the conversation with the woman. A discussion of why these may not be reliable or objective measures is appropriate.
In addition, as the results are not blinded, objectivity of measurement could be affected.

Responsibility

It is debatable whether the lowering of a participant's self-esteem is a form of undue stress. Debriefing would be important to alleviate feelings of low self-esteem, but finding out that one did not score high on the test may lead to embarrassment. The use of an attractive woman could be seen as objectification or culturally inappropriate.

In discussing how concepts may interact regarding this study, candidates may consider:
• The lack of clear operationalization of variables (measurement) could compromise internal validity (causality).
• Gender and cultural biases may lead to concerns about the level of responsibility taken by the researchers.
• Cultural assumptions (bias) about human behaviour may affect the objectivity of the researchers (measurement).

Candidates may discuss two concepts to show depth of understanding or more than two to demonstrate breadth of understanding. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

What this means

- *Students need activities to practise applying all the concepts to other studies they learn on the course.*
- *Students also need to know how to link concepts.*

Paper 3

- Four compulsory questions with 3, 3, 6 and 15-marks.
- Questions focus on data analysis and interpretation of five sources.
- Question 4 allows students to bring in their own knowledge.
- All sources will be linked to one of the three HL extensions.
- Questions follow a very rigid format and order.
- Explain, analyse, discuss and to what extent are the command terms (in that order).
- The questions assess AO2 (application and analysis) and AO3 (synthesis and evaluation).
- Approximately 10.5 minutes should be spent on question 1.
- Approximately 21 minutes should be spent on questions 2 and 3.
- Approximately 52.5 minutes should be spent on question 4.

Question 1 – one issue with interpretation of a graph.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	• A relevant issue is identified.
2	• A relevant issue is described.
3	• A relevant issue is explained.

Example mark scheme:

1. Explain one issue that limits the interpretation of the data in source 1. [3]

Refer to the paper 3 question 1 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires candidates to give a detailed account, including reasons or causes, for the issue found in interpreting the data from source 1.

Relevant issues may include but are not limited to:
• The title does not specify that this is a study of the role of technology. Although it may seem obvious that technology may play a role, the data includes many other factors.
• The use of a limited range of the y-axis leads to a distortion in the representation of the data.
• It is unclear from the graph how “healthy” and “unhealthy” work–life balance was determined.

• It is also unclear what percentage of the students have both anxiety and depression (comorbidity).
• We do not know the size of the sample, and this would affect whether the results can be generalized (population validity).

If a candidate refers to more than one issue, credit should be given only for the first issue.

What this means

- *Students need activities to practise identifying, describing and explaining problems with graphs.*

Question 2 – data analysis of one of the sources and conclusion to be given.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• There is limited analysis of the data or the analysis contains inaccuracies. • A conclusion is attempted but it is not relevant.
3–4	• Analysis of the data is accurate but lacks detail or development. • A conclusion is stated but the link to the findings lacks clarity.
5 – 6	• The data is analysed in detail. • A conclusion is stated that is explicitly linked to the findings.

Example mark scheme:

2. Analyse the findings from source 2 and state a conclusion linked to the claim that the use of technology in education may have a negative effect on the mental health of students. [6]

Refer to the paper 3 question 2 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “analyse” requires candidates to break down the findings in order to bring out essential elements of the study.

The analysis may include but is not limited to:
• Both the median and the mean score on the test is lower in the high screen time condition.
• The standard deviation is higher in the no screen time condition, indicating that there was a greater variation in the scores than in the high screen time condition.
• The range of the two sets of data are very similar. The high screen time condition has a range of 14 and the no screen has a range of 12. (Or, formula for interval level data: highest – lowest + 1.)
• In the box plot, as the median of each condition does not overlap with the box of the other condition, it is likely that the findings are significant.
• According to the box plot, the data is skewed to the right, indicating a greater variation of scores above the mean than below the mean. It also means that the data is not normally distributed.

Candidates should draw a conclusion with regard to the data in this study.

• It can be concluded that students who engaged in six hours of screen time were more likely to have lower scores on the mental health test than those who did the same task offline.
• Screen time has a negative effect on students' mental health, and it is better for your mental health to not spend time looking at a screen.

What this means

- *Students need activities to practise analysing all types of data.*
- *Students also need to know how to write appropriate conclusions that are explicitly linked to data.*

Question 3 – research considerations in qualitative research.

Three possible questions:

1. Discuss how the researcher could improve the credibility of the findings.
2. Discuss how the researcher could avoid bias.
3. To what extent are the findings transferable to other populations or contexts?

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• Discussion shows limited understanding of the research consideration. • Reference to relevant supporting evidence from the source is limited or missing.
3–4	• Discussion shows some understanding of the research consideration, but with some inaccuracies. • Reference to relevant supporting evidence from the source is implicit.
5 – 6	• Discussion shows detailed understanding of the research consideration. • Reference to the relevant supporting evidence from the source is explicit.

Example mark scheme:

3.Discuss how the researcher could improve the credibility of the findings in source 3. [6]

Refer to the paper 3 question 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “discuss” requires candidates to offer a considered review of how the researcher could improve the credibility of their findings.

In a discussion of credibility, candidates may include but are not limited to:
• Consider conducting member checking, where participants review and confirm the findings.
• Combine focus group data with other research methods or data sources to validate findings and enhance credibility.
• Have colleagues or experts review the focus group methods and findings to provide an external perspective.
• Be transparent about any conflicts of interest or potential biases that may affect the research.

- Review the use of different methods/techniques to create transcripts.
- Consider the use of more than one researcher to collect or interpret data.

What this means

- *Students need activities to discuss improving credibility, avoiding bias and the transferability of findings of qualitative data.*

Question 4 – synthesis of knowledge from any three of the sources and own knowledge to assess validity of a given statement.

Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	• The response indicates little understanding of the demands of the question. Knowledge and understanding relevant to the claim are anecdotal or of very marginal relevance. • The response is mostly descriptive. Any analysis present is superficial or incoherent. Knowledge relevant to one or more of the sources is included but there is no clear link to the claim. • There is little or no discussion of different points of view. Where a conclusion is included, it is superficial or is not consistent with the rest of the response.
4–6	• The response indicates some understanding of the demands of the question. Knowledge and understanding relevant to the claim are limited or of marginal relevance. There is limited discussion of the extent to which the claim is valid. • The response contains limited analysis and overall is more descriptive than analytical. Relevant knowledge is used to interpret one or more of the sources but with inaccuracies or without a clear link to the claim. • There is little relevant discussion of different points of view. A simplistic conclusion is included.
7–9	• The response indicates understanding of the demands of the question, but these demands are only partially addressed. Knowledge and understanding relevant to the claim are limited or lack clarity. There is some discussion of the extent to which the claim is valid. • The response contains analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Relevant knowledge is used to interpret at least two of the sources but the link to the claim is limited. • There is some discussion on relevant and different points of view. The response includes a conclusion that is only partially supported by evidence.

10–12	• The demands of the question are understood and addressed. Knowledge and understanding relevant to the claim have some detail with some development. There is discussion of the extent to which the claim is valid, but the response lacks some detail. • The response contains critical analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Relevant knowledge is used to interpret two or more of the sources to support the discussion of the claim. • There is some discussion of different points of view. The response argues to a conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.
13–15	• The demands of the question are understood and addressed. Knowledge and understanding relevant to the claim are detailed and well developed. There is detailed relevant discussion of the extent to which the claim is valid. • The response contains well-developed critical analysis. Relevant knowledge is used to interpret at least three of the sources and is used effectively to support the discussion of the claim. • Different points of view are identified and evaluated. The response argues to a reasoned and clearly stated conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.

Example mark scheme:

4. To what extent can we conclude that the use of technology in education may have a negative effect on the mental health of students? In your answer, use your own knowledge and at least three of sources 2-5. [15]

Refer to the paper 3 question 4 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “to what extent” asks candidates to consider the merits or otherwise of the stated claim. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.

Use of sources

Candidates should make use of at least three of the sources 2–5 to discuss the claim.
• Source 2 concludes that there is a difference in mental health scores for those that spent six hours on screen vs. those who were off screen. However, this was a single day and a single task; it is not clear that there was a pre-test, post-test design.
• Source 3 concludes that online learning led to negative feelings. However, it should be noted that the online learning took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and that this is a significant confounding variable when interpreting the findings.
• Source 4 concludes that there is a correlation between amount of time doing homework online and both depression and general anxiety. Correlational research, however, does not indicate causality, as other variables are not controlled.

• Source 5 concludes that streaming and smart phone use may have a greater negative impact on mental health than gaming. So we cannot generalize about the effects of screentime.
• Source 5 does not link directly to education, which is the theme of the discussion and therefore means this source only suggests screentime can affect mental health, but we don't know how much of it is related to education.

Discussion

Discussion of the claim may include but is not limited to:
• positive effects of technology use in education – including equity in access to information, ability to accommodate different types of learners, and promoting independent learning
• the difficulties of establishing causality in a naturalistic setting
• biases of researchers when carrying out research difficulties of measuring time on screen
• extraneous variables that may affect learning besides technology
• the operationalization of technology
• limitations of correlational findings
• the lack of data on individual mental health before exposure to technology
• lack of longitudinal research
• the validity of self-reported data about time on screen and/or mental health
• relevant research studies may be included to support the argument for and against the use of technology in education.

What this means

- *Students could do a project on each of three HL extension topics to learn some theories and studies to use in this question.*
- *Students will also need the skills to answer a 'to what extent..' question.*

Internal Assessment

- The IA is a research proposal with the aim of improving people's lives.
- The IA must focus on a population of interest.
- The research proposal can include procedures not previously allowed or practical for IAs but must not be on the banned list (abuse, self-harm, sex or serial killers).
- The research proposal must be ethically sound, suitable for approval by an ethics committee, and must not involve ingestion or the use of animals.
- The IA is to be a maximum of 2200 words.
- Each section is worth 6 marks (24 in total).

Checklist

Title Page

- Title of the investigation.
- IB student code (alphanumeric, e.g. xyz123).
- Date, month and year of submission.
- Number of words.

Introduction

- An aim that is relevant and clearly focused on the population of interest.

The aim should be relevant to the stated real-life problem and focused on the impact on the population of interest.

- A description of a real-life problem and an explanation of its impact on a population of interest.

The IA is an opportunity for students to investigate an area of interest to them, to enrich their studies and stimulate their curiosity. Examples of topics which could be explored include sleep and mental health, body image and self-esteem, or stress and memory. Students are encouraged to seek out research associated with the population that they are investigating. They should explain why this research is important to the current proposal.

- The findings and key conclusions of two pieces of relevant research.

Students should include abstracts (findings and key conclusions) of two pieces of relevant research. This should be in the form of a brief literature review. No procedural details are required, unless they are directly relevant to the current proposal (for example, it is planned to be conducted on a similar sample). It is recommended that students read broadly around psychological investigations relevant to their real-life problem before selecting two studies for their introduction.

Research Methodology

- A justification of the choice of research methods from the following list.

Experiment (true or quasi-)

Interview (structured, semi-structured or focus group)

Observation (naturalistic or controlled, overt or covert, participant or non-participant)

Survey/questionnaire

- An explanation of why the proposed research method is appropriate for the investigation.

The choice of procedure should be explained. The procedure refers to all decisions about planning and carrying out the investigation, including, but not limited to, sampling technique, sample characteristics, design (if experimental), setting and process.

- An explanation of the relevant ethical considerations in conducting the study.

Students should explain ethical considerations relevant to their investigation. In addition, they should explain steps that can be taken to minimize or address ethical issues. Particular attention should be paid to the ethical issues of working with vulnerable populations and/or investigating sensitive topics if this is relevant to the students' proposal.

Data Collection

- The choice of one data collection tool to measure behaviour relevant to the aim of the investigation.

Acceptable tools may include but are not limited to:

1. a measurement tool such as a questionnaire or Likert-type scales
2. an observation checklist or an interview schedule.

The data collection tool should contain a minimum of five items and a copy of the tool should be provided in the appendix. For example, for a questionnaire there should be at least five questions. This is necessary for completing the IA task. Students are not required to provide completed material beyond the data collection tool. For example, there is no requirement for an informed consent form or standardized instructions.

- An explanation of the decisions made when creating the data collection tool.

Students are required to explain why they created the data collection tool. This may include but is not limited to selection or categorization of variables (identifying and operationalizing variables from the topic of interest), types of questions, use of measures, links to existing measures or materials, and an explanation of how the tool measures what is intended to be measured.

A discussion of potential challenges when collecting data. Students should discuss factors that could potentially affect their data collection and their findings.

These may include, but are not limited to the following.

1. Participant variability
2. Practice effects (fatigue/boredom)

3. Order effects
4. Researcher bias
5. Response bias
6. Validity of the data collection tool
7. Controlling variables
8. Demand characteristics/social desirability bias

Discussion

- A discussion of the potential findings of the investigation and the implication(s) for policy/practice.

Students are asked to discuss how these findings may have wider implications for future research, policies and/or practices. Policies may be small scale (for example a student health and well-being policy) or larger scale (such as a national health campaign). Practices refers to practical applications of the findings to benefit the population of interest and or others.

- A discussion of how researcher bias may have affected the investigation.

Students could address the following types of question.

1. How has my personal history influenced the choice of topic?
2. How do my gender, culture and/or background and my relation to my potential participants influence my position on this topic?
3. How might my personal values or beliefs influence my interpretation of the data and/or my conclusions?

- A discussion of one additional method for investigating the same topic.

No research method is perfect, and we can gain a more holistic picture of any psychological topic by studying it from multiple methodological perspectives. Students should suggest a different additional research method to further investigate the same research question. They should discuss why this additional research method would increase understanding of the topic.

Rubrics

A - Introduction Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The aim or research question is stated but not clearly expressed or is too broad. • The real-life problem is stated. • The findings and conclusions of two pieces of research are not clearly stated and are not made relevant to the investigation, or only one piece of research is included.
3–4	• The aim or research question is clearly stated but only partially focused. • The real-life problem is described, but the impact on the population of interest is not addressed. • Relevant findings and conclusions of two pieces of research are described and linked to the investigation or only one is explained and linked to the investigation.
5 – 6	• The aim or research question is clearly stated and focused. • The real-life problem is described and the impact on the population of interest is explained. • Relevant findings and conclusions of two pieces of research are explained and linked to the investigation.

B – Research Methodology Rubric

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• The research method is described with errors in understanding. • The procedure is described but is unclear due to errors or omissions. • Ethical considerations are described but not linked to the investigation.

3–4	• The choice of research method is described. • The procedure is described but lacks detail. • Relevant ethical considerations are described but some are not linked to the investigation.
5 – 6	• The choice of research method is explained. • The procedure is explained. • Relevant ethical considerations are described and explicitly linked to the investigation.

C – Data Collection Rubric

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• An appropriate data collection tool has been created to measure behaviour, but it contains errors. • Decisions made when creating the data collection tool are in limited detail or have limited relevance to the aim or research question of the investigation. • Potential challenges when collecting data are described in limited detail and/or are not relevant to the investigation.
3–4	• An appropriate data collection tool has been created to measure behaviour. • Decisions made when creating the data collection tool are described and relevant to the aim or research question of the investigation. • Potential challenges when collecting data are described and relevant to the investigation.
5–6	• An appropriate and effective data collection tool to measure behaviour has been created. • Decisions made when creating the data collection tool are explained and relevant to the aim or research question of the investigation. • Potential challenges when collecting data are explained and relevant to the investigation.

D – Discussion Rubric

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• Potential findings of the investigation are described but the implication(s) for policy/practice are not addressed. • One or more examples of researcher bias are identified. • The usefulness of one relevant additional research method is described, without reference to increasing the understanding of the area of investigation.
3–4	• Potential findings of the investigation are described and the implication(s) for policy/practice are partially addressed. • One or more relevant examples of researcher bias are described. • The usefulness of one relevant additional research method is discussed without reference to increasing the understanding of the area of investigation.
5–6	• Potential findings of the investigation are described in detail and the implication(s) for policy/practice are explained. • One or more relevant examples of how researcher bias may affect the investigation are discussed. • The usefulness of one relevant additional research method is discussed with reference to increasing the understanding of the area of investigation.

What this means

- *Students must work independently.*
- *Students need two background studies.*
- *Students should choose one of the research methods from their class practicals.*
- *Students need a data collection tool that collects at least five pieces of information.*

Command Terms

Assessment objective 1—knowledge and understanding.

Command term	Definition
Describe	Give a detailed account.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.

Assessment objective 2—application and analysis.

Command term	Definition
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Apply	Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue.
Comment	Give a judgement based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Design	Produce a plan, simulation or model.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information.
Predict	Give an expected result.
Suggest	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.

Assessment objective 3—synthesis and evaluation.

Command term	Definition
Compare and contrast	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
To what extent?	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.