

GCSE PSYCHOLOGY

Personality

Student: _____

Tutor: _____



Unit 1:

Making sense of other people

What is Personality?



Our personality is who we are as a person. It is made up of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It is unique; it makes us individual and distinguishes us from other people. Personality can develop throughout our lifetime and can be shaped by experience.

How would you describe your personality?

Can personality change or is it fixed?

Are you still the same as you were when you were 10 years old?

Temperament refers to inherited aspects of personality. It describes the different ways that a person responds to their environment. Understanding temperament can be important in helping people to deal with situations that they may find difficult. For example, Kevin is quiet and shy, how do you think he will deal with facing new people, new places, and new experiences? How will he become comfortable?



Key Study
Thomas (1977)

Aim: To conduct a longitudinal study into personality and temperament.



Method: The study began in 1956 using a sample of 133 babies between the ages of two and three months. They were observed during different stages of their development from infancy to early adulthood. Their parents were interviewed about their child's development on several occasions. Nine categories of behaviour were assessed including quality of mood and attention span.

Results: It was found that the children fell into three types of temperament. These were 'easy', 'difficult' and 'slow to warm up'.

Look on p41 of your course textbook and fill in the descriptions about the three types of temperament.

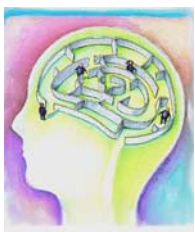
1. Easy temperament - _____

2. Difficult temperament - _____

3. Slow to warm up temperament - _____

Conclusion: These ways of responding to their environment stayed with the children as they developed. Therefore, Thomas concluded that temperament is **innate**.

Evaluation point - Can you give one strength and one weakness of a longitudinal study?



Personality tests - Are you loving and kind-hearted? Or maybe funny and inspiring? Find out your temperament style at:

www.ptypes.com/temperament_test.html

Do you agree with your results? Briefly explain why.

Another study into temperament was conducted by Arnold Buss and Robert Plomin in 1984. They defined temperament as 'traits observable by two years of age that are genetic in origin'.

Key study

Buss and Plomin (1984)

Aim: To see if traits of temperament can be seen in childhood.

Method: Rating scales were given to parents to describe their children. The children were either monozygotic (MZ) or dizygotic (DZ) twins. Temperament was rated when they were five years old.



Results: Look on p42 of your course textbook to complete the results section.

1. Emotionality - _____

2. _____ - _____

3. Sociability - _____

4. _____ - _____

There was also a closer correlation between the scores of the MZ twins than the DZ twins.

Conclusion: Temperament has a genetic basis.

Discuss with a partner any strengths and weaknesses that you can think of with using twins in Psychological research. Make a list then report your answers to the class.





Key study
Kagan and Snidman (1991)

Aim: To compare inhibited and less inhibited young children.

Method: They studied the reactions of nine month old babies to new situations and compared the behaviours of the emotionally reserved (shy)

children with the sociable (non-shy) children.

Results:

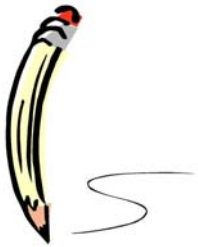
- ◆ Twenty percent of the babies showed high levels of motor activity, for example they cried, their muscles tightened and their pupils became dilated. They were known as high reactive.
- ◆ Forty per cent of the babies showed little movement or emotion - they were emotionally shy and reserved. They were known as low reactive.
- ◆ These reactions remained the same as the babies developed. The high reactives were shy and the low reactives were calm. This was shown when they were tested again at fourteen months of age.

Conclusion: Kagan and Snidman concluded that these two temperaments are due to inherited differences.

In this study, behaviour was observed and recorded by researchers. Can you think of two criticisms of this type of method?

Kagan and Snidman used 500 babies in their study. What is the advantage of having a large sample? _____

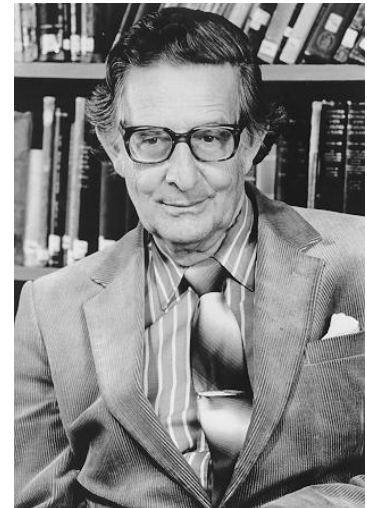




Briefly summarise what Kagan and Snidman (1991) say about the role of the amygdala in shyness. (See p42 of your course textbook)

Eysenck's Type Theory

Over the years many theories have been proposed to try to explain personality. One of the most well known theories is the 'type theory' proposed by Hans Eysenck in 1952. Eysenck believed that personality consisted of permanent traits or characteristics. Research he conducted led him to three personality types. These are extroversion, introversion and neuroticism.



Complete the table below: Under each of the personality types write the traits that you think go with each. An example has been done for you.

Extrovert	Introvert	Neurotic
lively	serious	irritable

Personality Scales

How do we measure personality? One way is to complete a personality scale. We are going to explore two types of personality scale.

The **Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)** was developed in 1964. This scale was to measure introversion- extroversion and neuroticism- stability. This was done by asking a series of yes/no questions. Have a look at the diagram below and have a go at creating one question to assess each area of personality, as proposed by Eysenck.



1.

2.

3.

4.

The second personality scale is the **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ)** (1975). This scale, like the previous, was to measure extroversion, introversion and neuroticism. Furthermore, **psychoticism** was measured.



Personality tests - You can carry out Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) online:

www.similarminds.com/eysenck.html

Have a go! Do you agree with the results?

Antisocial Personality Disorder

In recent years there has been a great deal of research into antisocial personality disorder (APD). Characteristics, as stated by the **DSM IV** (the official manual of the diagnostics of mental disorders) include the following criteria:



- ◆ Not following social norms and the laws of society
- ◆ Being deceitful and lying
- ◆ Not planning ahead and being impulsive
- ◆ Being irritable and aggressive
- ◆ Being careless with regards to the safety of themselves and others
- ◆ Showing a lack of remorse with regards to stealing and hurting others

Furthermore, APD cannot be diagnosed until the age of eighteen although these patterns of behaviour will have been present since the age of fifteen.

Case Study - Sarah is 34 years old. Throughout her childhood she was always called the 'naughty one' as she was often in trouble in school and at home. As an adult she has had trouble keeping a job. She has difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships, but she is good at manipulating others and getting what she wants. She often steals and has been arrested for shoplifting, although she hasn't been convicted due to lack of evidence.

In pairs, list why you think that Sarah would be diagnosed with APD.

What causes Antisocial Personality Disorder?

Do you think that a serial killer is born with Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD) or do you think that is a result of their upbringing? Discuss.

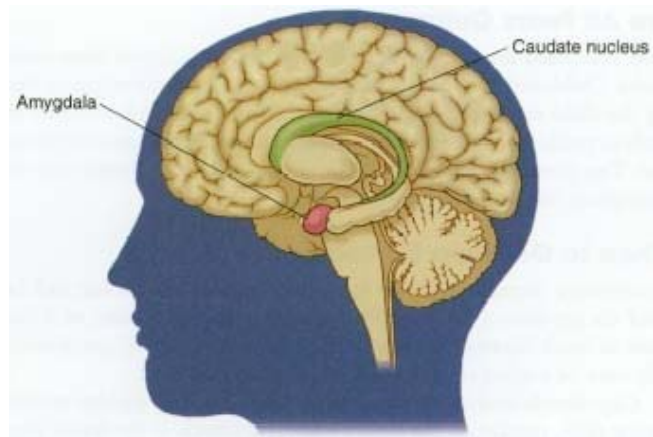
Biological Explanations

The biological perspective suggests that our behaviour is a result of bodily (biological) functions such as hormones, brain structure and genetics. Some researchers believe that brain abnormalities are the main cause of APD. They suggest that the **amygdala** may play a role. The amygdala is responsible for us learning from the negative consequences of our actions and it responds to negative and fearful facial expressions in others. We therefore learn to avoid activities that we can see cause distress in others. It has been shown in cases of APD that the amygdala is smaller than it is in non-APD people. As a result, people with APD do not learn to avoid behaviour that harms other people. This is because they are not affected in the same way by the suffering or distress of another person.

Key study
Raine (2000)

Aim: To find out if criminals brains were any different than non-criminals brains.

Method: There was a sample of 41 criminals, and a control group that was used as a comparison to the criminal (experimental) group. A PET scan (type of brain scan) was used to compare the level and location of brain activity in the left and right hemispheres (sides) of the brain.



Results: Look on p47 of the course textbook and complete the results section.

Conclusion: What does this research mean? Complete the conclusion section including evaluations of this research.

Situational explanations of Antisocial Personality Disorder

As we have learnt, Raine (2000) suggests that personality is a result of our biology. Another perspective is that the situation that we are brought up in plays a role in who we are and therefore APD may be a result of our childhood and/or upbringing.

Farrington (1995) conducted longitudinal research to see whether adult APD could be predicted by psychosocial factors present during childhood.



Psychosocial means a mixture of psychological and social factors. Psychosocial factors include:

- ◆ Low family income and/or poor housing
- ◆ Quality of life at home which may include poor parenting
- ◆ Educational factors such as poor schooling or poor attendance at school

Key study

Farrington (1995)

Aim: To conduct a longitudinal study to investigate whether adult APD could be predicted from psychosocial factors present during childhood.

Method: A sample of 411 male participants aged between eight and 10 years old were studied until the age of 50 to assess the development of antisocial behaviour. This was done by interviewing the participants, as well as their families, and contacting the Criminal Records Office. All of the participants lived in a deprived, inner-city area of London.



Results: Nearly half of the boys with antisocial parents at the age of 10 were antisocial in later life. 41% of the boys were convicted of at least one criminal offense by the ages of 10 and 50.

Conclusion: This research supports the idea that antisocial behaviour is a result of our environment, situation and psychosocial factors.



Evaluation - Turn to p49 of your course textbook and note down some evaluations of this research.

Key study
Elander (2000)

Aim: To investigate if childhood risk factors can be used to predict antisocial behaviour in adulthood.

Method: The histories of 13 individuals who had all committed crimes after the age of 22 were analysed.



Results: It was found that there was evidence of minor juvenile delinquency in 12 of the 13 participants. Their childhood had also included some antisocial behaviour as well as mental illness.

Conclusion: What can you conclude from these results?

Implications of the research into Antisocial Personality Disorder



The practical implications of this research are extremely important. This is because, as we have learnt, there may be a number of reasons why a person commits a crime. If a person is psychologically ill then isn't treatment a better answer than punishment? Here are some more implications for you to think about:

- ◆ Researchers cannot decide on the cause of APD, therefore it is difficult to know how to successfully prevent and treat it
- ◆ If APD has a biological cause (e.g. role of the amygdala) then it cannot be prevented
- ◆ If APD has a situational cause (related to psychosocial development) then reducing childhood problems should lower the risk of APD developing
- ◆ Children who have had a stable upbringing can still develop APD. What does this say about the research that suggests that a poor upbringing causes APD?
- ◆ APD is very difficult to treat. Discuss with your partner why you think this might be and make a list below.

KEY POINTS TO STRUCTURE REVISION - Personality

Can you define these terms?

Personality

Temperament

Examiners tip: When defining a term, do not use the term from the question

Can you describe and evaluate studies of temperament, including the work of the following?

◆ Thomas

◆ Bus and Plomin

◆ Kagan and Snidman

Examiners tip: When you describe a study, remember to state the aim, method, results and

Can you describe and evaluate Eysenck's type theory? This includes:

◆ Extroversion

◆ Introversion

◆ Neuroticism

◆ Personality scales - EPI, EPQ

Can you state **at least two** characteristics of Anti-social Personality Disorder (APD)?

Examiners tip: An exam question will never ask you to recall more than two

Can you describe causes of APD?

◆ Biological - The role of the amygdala

◆ Situational

Examiners tip: You may need to label the amygdala on a diagram of the brain.

Can you describe and evaluate studies that investigated each of these theories?

- ◆ Biological - Raine
- ◆ Situational - Farrington, Elander

Examiners tip: If you are asked to describe a study, you do not need to evaluate it.

Can you explain **at least two** implications of research into APD?

Acknowledging: *Understanding Psychology*, 3rd Edition by Barbara Woods, Nigel Holt, Rob Lewis and Victoria Carrington, published by Hodder Education.

GCSE Psychology, Mike Stanley, Karen Boswell, Sarah Harris, Dominic Helliwell and Joanne McKenzie (23 Jul 2009), published by Nelson Thorne.

Glossary

- write a definition for these key terms

Personality	
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Temperament	
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Innate	
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Monozygotic twins	
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Dizygotic twins	
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Motor activity	
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Introvert	
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Extrovert	
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Neurotic	
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Emotionally Stable	
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Psychotic	
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Some useful websites and other resources:

Personality testing

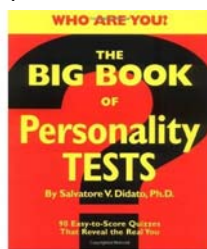
www.ptypes.com/temperament_test.html

Eysenks personality test

www.similarminds.com/eysenck.html

The big book of personality tests

By Salvatore V. DiDato. ISBN: 1-57912-281-7



What makes people tick?

By Susan Quilliam ISBN: 0-7225-3990-8

