



SCHOOL OF THE NATIONS
聯合國學校

2023-2025 COURSE OUTLINE

**International Baccalaureate
Psychology
Form 5 and Form 6**

The School of the Nations course outline provides parents and students with information about the overall structure of the courses of study, the assessments and expectations.

1. Course Overview

Psychology is the rigorous and systematic study of mental processes and behavior. It is a complex subject which draws on concepts, methods and understandings from a number of different disciplines. There is no single approach that would describe or explain mental processes and behavior on its own as human beings are complex animals, with highly developed frontal lobes, cognitive abilities, involved social structures and cultures. The study of behavior and mental processes requires a multidisciplinary approach and the use of a variety of research techniques whilst recognizing that behavior is not a static phenomenon, it is adaptive, and as the world, societies and challenges facing societies change, so does behavior.

At the core of the DP psychology course is an introduction to three different approaches to understanding behavior:

- biological approach to understanding behavior
- cognitive approach to understanding behavior
- sociocultural approach to understanding behavior.

The knowledge, concepts, theories and research that have developed the understanding in these fields will be studied and critically evaluated to answer some of the questions being asked by psychologists today. Furthermore, the interaction of these approaches to studying psychology will form the basis of a holistic and integrated approach to understanding mental processes and behavior as a complex, dynamic phenomenon, allowing students to appreciate the diversity as well as the commonality between their own behavior and that of others.

The contribution and the interaction of the three approaches can be best understood through the options. There are four options in the course. They focus on areas of applied psychology:

- abnormal psychology
- developmental psychology
- health psychology
- psychology of human relationships.

The options provide an opportunity to take what is learned from the study of the approaches to psychology and put it into the context of specific lines of inquiry, broaden students' experience of the discipline and develop the students' critical inquiry skills.

Surrounding the approaches and the options are the overarching themes of research and ethics. A consideration of both is paramount to the nature of the subject.

Psychologists employ a range of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to test their observations and hypotheses. As a part of the core syllabus, DP psychology promotes an understanding of the various approaches to research and how they have been used in order to critically reflect on the evidence as well as assist in the design, implementation, analysis and evaluation of the students' own investigations.

Psychology studies human beings and as such it is paramount that the ethical implications in any line of investigation, and at all points in the course, are fully explored and understood to ensure that ethical guidelines are followed at all times.

International Mindedness

International-mindedness is an umbrella term through which the IB defines the goal of international education, and which is exemplified by the emphasis in all IB programmes on promoting global engagement, multilingualism and intercultural understanding.

The DP psychology course develops an understanding of how our behavior 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 behavior with all its nuances and flaws and supports the understanding that others can also be right.

2. Course Aims

The aims of the psychology course are to:

1. develop an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behavior
2. apply an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behavior to at least one applied area of study
3. understand diverse methods of inquiry
4. understand the importance of ethical practice in psychological research in general and observe ethical practice in their own inquiries
5. ensure that ethical practices are upheld in all psychological inquiry and discussion
6. develop an awareness of how psychological research can be applied to address real-world problems and promote positive change.

3. Core Components

3.1 Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

CAS plays a crucial role in the DP in the development of personal and interpersonal skills. It also provides an important counterbalance to the academic pressures of the DP, allowing and valuing exploration and engagement beyond the academic.

Examples of CAS experiences with links to psychology include the following:

- acting as a mentor to children in lower years
- designing a welcome pack for students new to the school
- promoting a healthy lifestyle.

3.2 Theory of Knowledge

TOK is invaluable for exploring some of the bigger questions relevant to the teaching, learning and practice of psychology. Questions that can be explored include the following.

- Can models and theories be used to understand and predict human behavior?
- Does a researcher's choice of methodology affect the reliability or credibility of research?
- Is what we know about human behavior limited by our ethical considerations?
- Are emotions universal?
- Are the methods of the natural sciences applicable in the social sciences?
- Are there human qualities or behaviors that will remain beyond the scope of science?

As with other areas of knowledge, there are a variety of ways of gaining knowledge in the social sciences, including observation and experimentation, inductive and deductive reasoning, and the collection of evidence.

Having followed a course of study in an individuals and societies subject, students should be able to reflect critically on the various ways of knowing and on the methods used in the social sciences, and in so doing become inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people, as described in the IB learner profile

3.3 Extended Essay

Psychology is a popular subject choice for extended essays. The research skills developed by students undertaking an extended essay in psychology not only benefit them in their study of DP psychology, but also prepare them for study in psychology and other subjects beyond the DP. Examples of topics for extended essays in psychology include:

- To what extent does emotional intelligence improve job performance in the workplace?
- To what extent is nudging useful in promoting healthy eating in adolescent boys?
- To what extent can acculturative stress be a risk factor for depression?

4. Course Content

Syllabus Component	Recommended Teaching Hours	
	SL	HL
Core	90	120
Biological approach to behavior		
Cognitive approach to behavior		
Sociocultural approach to behavior		
Approaches to researching behavior	20	60
Options	20	40
Abnormal psychology		
Developmental psychology		
Health psychology		
Psychology of human relationships		
Internal Assessment	20	20
Experimental study		
Total teaching hours	150	240

5. IB Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Approaches to teaching and learning are deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the IB teaching and learning environment.

The approaches to *teaching* are:

- focused on conceptual understanding
- developed in local and global contexts
- focused on effective teamwork and collaboration
- differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- informed by formative and summative assessment

The approaches to *learning* are:

- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Social skills
- Self-management skills
- Research skills

6. IB Learner Profile

The aim of the IB programme is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-Takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

The IB Learner Profile closely reflects the SON Learner Profile, identifying elements of identity which prepares world citizens who will become active, positive and conscientious participants in the advancement of society and in their own development. Each element is composed of a set of attitudes, qualities, understandings, skill and habits. These are incorporated in the teaching and learning process. The details of the SON Learner Profile can be found in the [Student and Parent Handbook](#).

7. Grading

7.1 School Internal Grades

7.1.1 Academic Achievement

The School's grading system for the IB Diploma Programme follows the IBO scale of 1 to 7. A student's performance in individual subjects is graded as follows:

Grade	Interpretation
7	Excellent
6	Very Good
5	Good
4	Satisfactory
3	Basic Standard
2	Poor
1	Very Poor

Note: Because of School's internal requirements such as attendance, timeliness and accuracy of homework, special projects, or performance on formative and summative tests in the classroom, students' performance may vary between School assigned grades and IB assessments.

7.1.2 Effort

Effort marks are given and recorded in the report cards for Forms 5 and 6 for all subjects.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Consistently demonstrating a high degree of effort in all areas of the subject
4	Frequently demonstrating a high degree of effort in all areas of the subject
3	Generally demonstrating a significant degree of effort in all areas of the subject
2	Occasionally demonstrating effort in some areas of the subject
1	Rarely, if ever, demonstrating effort in some areas of the subject

7.1.3 Project Week (Form 5 only)

The mid-year assessment is comprised of a full week of collaborative project-based learning. During the project week students develop various cross curricular soft skills. Assessment and reporting of learning is based on the following rubric.

Project Week Assessment Rubric						
Collaboration	She/he demonstrates effective collaboration skills by:	1	2	3	4	5

合作	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively contributing to the group's processes of planning, decision making and action being sensitive and respectful towards others and as well as responsive to their needs actively listening to others' points of view and considering others' perspective willingly fully supporting and whole-heartedly applying the decisions of the group completing assigned tasks effectively and using feedback from others to improve work supporting others to achieve their goal <p>她/他通過以下方式展示有效的合作技能：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 積極參與團隊的計劃、決策和行動流程 對他人善解人意和尊重，並回應他們的需求 積極傾聽他人的觀點，樂意地考慮他人的觀點 完全支持並全心全意地應用團隊的決定 有效完成分配的任務並利用他人的反饋改善工作成果 支持他人實現目標 	Emerging 萌芽	Achieving 實現中	Excelling 優秀
Organisation 組織	<p>She/he demonstrates effective organisation skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> having a clear goal and a thought-through plan of how to achieve it being methodical and systematic in approach following through with assigned tasks in a timely manner monitoring progress and addressing challenges staying focused on tasks and remaining positive despite challenges <p>她/他通過以下方式展示有效的組織技能：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 有一個明確的目標，並對如何實現目標有一個深思熟慮的計劃 方法有條理和系統化 及時完成分配的任務 監測進展並應對挑戰 專注於任務並在面臨挑戰時保持積極的態度 			
Research and Critical Thinking 研究及批判性思維	<p>She/he demonstrates critical thinking skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> striving to independently investigate and understand issues actively seeking answers to questions investigating the purpose, evidencing research and producing reasoning being open-minded and fair-minded when considering new ideas and perspectives making connections by looking for links between ideas and concepts seeking out reliable and accurate information through independent research <p>她/他通過以下方式展示批判性思維技能：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 努力獨立調查和理解問題 積極尋求問題的答案 調查目的、證明研究和推理 在考慮新想法和觀點時保持開放和公正的態度 通過尋找想法和概念之間的聯繫來建立連結 通過獨立研究尋找可靠和準確的信息 			
Presentation 報告及展示	<p>She/he demonstrates effective presentation skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring the group's presentation/project uses relevant, well-chosen descriptions/facts/details ensuring the group's presentation/project includes all the required elements ensuring the presentation/project is well structured and coherent ensuring the presentation stays within the allocated frame keeping eye contact with the audience (most of the time) using a clear voice with appropriate tone and volume using appropriate language, demonstrating command of formal English responding to questions from the audience <p>她/他通過以下方式展示有效的報告技能：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 確保小組的展示文稿/項目使用相關的、精心挑選的描述/事實/細節 確保小組的展示/項目包括所有必需的元素 確保展示/項目結構良好且連貫一致 確保展示文稿保持在分配的框架內 與觀眾保持目光接觸（大部分時間） 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 使用清晰的聲音和適當的語氣和音量 • 使用適當的語言，表現出對正式英語的掌握 • 回答觀眾的問題 			
Reflection 學生反思	<p>She/he demonstrates effective reflection skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively analysing experiences to identify those which have led to growth/learning • accurately identifying areas of strength and weakness • generating creative solutions to problems/ways to improve in the future • demonstrating the ability actively and effectively reflect with her/his team members <p>她/他通過以下方式展示有效的學生反思技能：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 有效地分析經驗以確定那些經驗導致成長/學習 • 準確識別優勢和劣勢領域 • 為問題提出創造性的解決方案/未來改善的方法 • 展示積極有效地與團隊成員進行反思的能力 			

7.2 IB Subject Grade Descriptors

The following outlines the IB subject specific grade descriptors:

Grade	Descriptor
7	Demonstrates: conceptual awareness, insight, and knowledge and understanding which are evident in the skills of critical thinking; a high level of ability to provide answers which are fully developed, structured in a logical and coherent manner and illustrated with appropriate examples; a precise use of terminology which is specific to the subject; familiarity with the literature of the subject; the ability to analyze and evaluate evidence and to synthesize knowledge and concepts; awareness of alternative points of view and subjective and ideological biases, and the ability to come to reasonable, albeit tentative, conclusions; consistent evidence of critical reflective thinking; a high level of proficiency in analyzing and evaluating data or problem solving.
6	Demonstrates: detailed knowledge and understanding; answers which are coherent, logically structured and well developed; consistent use of appropriate terminology; an ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize knowledge and concepts; knowledge of relevant research, theories and issues, and awareness of different perspectives and contexts from which these have been developed; consistent evidence of critical thinking; an ability to analyze and evaluate data or to solve problems competently. .
5	Demonstrates: a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject using subject-specific terminology; answers which are logically structured and coherent but not fully developed; an ability to provide competent answers with some attempt to integrate knowledge and concepts; a tendency to be more descriptive than evaluative (although some ability is demonstrated to present and develop contrasting points of view); some evidence of critical thinking; an ability to analyze and evaluate data or to solve problems.
4	Demonstrates: a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject going beyond the mere citing of isolated, fragmentary, irrelevant or “common sense” points; some ability to structure answers but with insufficient clarity and possibly some repetition; an ability to express knowledge and understanding in terminology specific to the subject; some understanding of the way facts or ideas may be related and embodied in principles and concepts; some ability to develop ideas and substantiate assertions; use of knowledge and understanding which is more descriptive than analytical; some ability to compensate for gaps in knowledge and understanding through rudimentary application or evaluation of that knowledge; an ability to interpret data or to solve problems and some ability to engage in analysis and evaluation.
3	Demonstrates: some knowledge and understanding of the subject; a basic sense of structure that is not sustained throughout the answers; a basic use of terminology appropriate to the subject; some ability to establish links between facts or ideas; some ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.

2	Demonstrates: a limited knowledge and understanding of the subject; some sense of structure in the answers; a limited use of terminology appropriate to the subject; a limited ability to establish links between facts or ideas; a basic ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.
1	Demonstrates: very limited knowledge and understanding of the subject; almost no organizational structure in the answers; inappropriate or inadequate use of terminology; a limited ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.

8. Assessments

8.1 Assessment Objectives

By the end of the psychology course at SL or at HL, students will be expected to demonstrate the following.

1. Knowledge and comprehension of specified content

- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of key terms and concepts in psychology.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of a range of psychological theories and research studies.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to mental processes and behavior.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of research methods used in psychology.

2. Application and analysis

- Demonstrate an ability to use examples of psychological research and psychological concepts to formulate an argument in response to a specific question.
- Demonstrate application and analysis of a range of psychological theories and research studies.
- Demonstrate application and analysis of the knowledge relevant to areas of applied psychology.
- At HL only, analyze qualitative and quantitative research in psychology.

3. Synthesis and evaluation


- Evaluate the contribution of psychological theories to understanding human psychology.
- Evaluate the contribution of research to understanding human psychology.
- Evaluate the contribution of the theories and research in areas of applied psychology.
- At HL only, evaluate research scenarios from a methodological and ethical perspective.

4. Selection and use of skills appropriate to psychology

- Demonstrate the acquisition of skills required for experimental design, data collection and presentation, data analysis and the evaluation of a simple experiment while demonstrating ethical practice.
- Work in a group to design a method for a simple experimental investigation, organize the investigation and record the required data for a simple experiment.
- Write a report of a simple experiment.

8.2 School-based Assessments

School-based assessments are ongoing and are intended to measure student learning and provide constructive feedback. These assessments include a variety of formative and summative assessments. Forms of assessment vary and may include but are not limited to assessment tools such as quizzes, topic tests, reports, essays, group projects and observational evidence during lessons.

For details about the assessment policy please refer to the  [SON Assessment System \(Policy\) updated JUNE2023](#)

8.2.1 Weightages

The following represents the percentage weight for each academic year:

	Term 1	Term 2	Mid-Year Assessment	Term 3	Final Exam
Form 5	28%	28%	Project Week See passing criteria	28%	16%
Form 6	30%	30%	Mid-Year Exam 15%	N/A	25%

8.2.2 Passing Criteria

F5 Students whose total score is 23 points or above in the six IB Subject Groups will be promoted to the next level, along with:

- satisfactory completion of the Extended Essay requirements for DP year 1
- a final mark of a C or higher in Theory of Knowledge for year 1
- satisfactory completion of CAS (Creativity, Action & Service) activities for year 1
- a total of 12 HL points for students who are on the full diploma track
- no grade 2 or lower in any Higher Level (HL) subject
- the grade for project week is a 3 (out of 5) or higher

To graduate from Secondary at the end of F6, students must gain 23 points or above in the six IB Subject Groups, along with:

- completion of the Extended Essay
- a final mark of a C or higher in Theory of Knowledge
- completion of CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) activities
- a total of 12 HL points for students who are on the full diploma track
- no grade 2 or lower in any Higher Level (HL) subject

Should a student's academic performance fall below standard, the School reserves the right of not registering a student for the full diploma track.

8.3 Official IBDP Assessments

8.3.1 Assessment Components

Standard Level (SL)

Component	Weighting	Duration
External assessment	75%	3 hours
Paper 1 Section A: Three short-answer questions on the core approaches to psychology (27 marks) Section B: One essay from a choice of three on the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to behaviour (22 marks) (Total 49 marks)	50%	2 hours
Paper 2 One question from a choice of three on one option (Total 44 marks)	25%	1 hours
Internal assessment	25%	20 hours
This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Experimental study A report on an experimental study undertaken by the student (22 marks)		

Higher Level (HL)

Component	Weighting	Duration
External assessment	80%	5 hours
Paper 1 Section A: Three short-answer questions on the core approaches to psychology (27 marks) Section B: One essay from a choice of three on the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to behaviour. One, two or all of the essays will reference the additional HL topic (22 marks) (Total 49 marks)	40%	2 hours
Paper 2 Two questions; one from a choice of three on each of two options (Total 44 marks)	20%	2 hours
Paper 3 Three short-answer questions from a list of six static questions on approaches to research (24 marks)	20%	1 hour
Internal assessment	20%	20 hours
This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Experimental study A report on an experimental study undertaken by the student (22 marks)		

8.3.2 External Assessment Details

Paper 1 – SL and HL

Duration: 1 hour

Marks: 49

- Section A

Paper 1 section A consists of three short-answer questions on the core approaches to psychology. All three questions are compulsory. Each question is marked out of 9 marks for a total of 27 marks.

- Section B

Paper 1 section B consists of one essay from a choice of three on the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to behavior. HL students will have at least one of the questions from the HL extension content. The essay is marked out of 22 marks.

Paper 2 – SL and HL

Duration: 1 hour (SL)

2 hours (HL)

Marks: 22 (SL)

44 (HL)

- Paper 2 consists of three essays per option. SL students answer one question from one of the options studied, while HL students answer two questions, one from each of the two options studied.

Paper 3 – HL only

Duration: 1 hour

Marks: 24

- Paper 3 is for HL students only and it focuses on the approaches to research. Students are given stimulus material to read, which may use qualitative or quantitative research methods, or a mixture of both.

Drawing from the stimulus material, students are required to answer three questions for a total of 24 marks.

8.3.3. Internal Assessment Details

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both SL and HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a separate activity conducted after the course has been taught.

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same. Students will investigate a published study, theory or model relevant to their learning in psychology by conducting an experimental investigation and reporting the findings.

Students are required to work as part of a group to plan and conduct the investigation. The research method, subjects and materials, as well as the operationalization of the Independent and Dependent Variables, will be the result of the group working together. Once the data has been generated the collaboration is complete. Each student will write up the report independently of other group members. The data will be analyzed and conclusions drawn independently. Likewise, the evaluation should be carried out independently. The report must adhere to the ethical guidelines in all aspects, including academic honesty.

9. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold a high standard of academic honesty and integrity. All homework, assignments, tests and exams are expected to represent the student's own effort. All forms of cheating or copying on assignments, tests or exams, plagiarism and other forms of deception to obtain credit are universally recognized as improper and dishonest conduct. Such behaviour is not acceptable and marks will not be awarded for work that does not represent the students' personal effort. For details of the policy regarding academic integrity please refer to [Student and Parent Handbook](#).

10. Late Submission of Work

Assignments and homework are an important component of the teaching-learning process and are expected to be completed with quality and submitted on time. Assignments and homework tasks will be posted on Managebac.

The following policy will apply for late work submission:

School-based Assessments

Late submission of work may result in a lower effort grade.

IB Official Assessments

Students may receive a zero for a given component of work if it is not submitted by the assigned deadline. Missing any of the required component grades may result in 'no grade' in the official IB results.

11. Classroom Materials and Procedures

Students will need to bring the following items to their lessons unless otherwise specified by the teacher:

- laptop*
- notebook
- assigned workbooks
- pen, pencil, eraser, ruler, highlighter
- flashcards

*Students must ensure they have a battery charger for their laptops at hand as we will be using an online textbook.