

## IB PSYCHOLOGY



### What is the course about?

“Psychology is the systematic study of behavior and mental processes. Psychology has its roots in both the natural and social sciences, leading to a variety of research designs and applications, and providing a unique approach to understanding modern society.

IB psychology examines the interaction of biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behavior, thereby adopting an integrative approach. Understanding how psychological knowledge is generated, developed and applied enables students to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and appreciate the diversity of human behavior. The ethical concerns raised by the methodology and application of psychological research are key considerations in IB psychology.”  
(Psychology Guide, 2009: 4)

In other words, IB Psychology is designed to teach and train the students to apply critical thinking to both life and the knowledge they will have learned. Students will go through three levels of analysis: biological, cognitive and sociocultural. They will then choose one (SL) or two options (HL), ranging from abnormal psychology to human relationships, to continue their know-how of the realms of the human behavior. HL students will also master their skills in qualitative research methods.

### How is the course structured?

In the first year both HL and SL students will explore, in an integrated manner, the three approaches to Psychology (cognitive, biological and sociocultural), while HL students will be going at the same time through qualitative research and one of the options they will have chosen. They will at the same time be instructed on the Internal Assessment, a first draft of which will be due by the end of the year.

In the beginning of the second year, SL students will have finished the sociocultural approach and they start the chosen option. HL students will be finishing their option and sharpening knowledge on qualitative research. By second term there is going to be plenty of time to revise all the material.

### **Are there any requirements?**

No prior knowledge is required. It tends to be easier for students who have done biology but it is not a requirement. The assessment is essay-based, so if you have no trouble putting your thoughts in writing you should enjoy psychology. However, you do have to show strong command of the language in order to pass the final exam.

### **What distinguishes this course from others**

The psychology teacher, apart from giving you the ropes and knowledge that you will need to pass the IB exam, will coach you into becoming a researcher not only of science but of life itself.

You will be understanding how do people function in the world that we live in, both through knowledge of research in Psychology and by putting those ideas and theories into practice.

### **What materials will I need?**

No materials are needed since the School will provide them to you.

### **What will I learn?**

The key theme not only in this course but in Psychology in general is behavior. Your behavior and the behavior of the ones who surround you. You will learn to analyze and understand the human behavior, without ignoring that of animals.

You will be instructed in analytic skills, critical thinking and, as a whole, to see the world (and yourself) in perspective.

There is actually a lot of material to learn, but we will tackle it in an interactive and practical manner.

### **How is the course assessed?**

There is an end of the year exam, which will cover paper 1 for SL and both paper 1 and 2 for HL. By the end of first year students will have started to work on their Internal Assessments, which are based on a replication of a scientific experiment.

In the second year students have finished their Internal Assessment and they write a mock exam which will prepare them for the IB exams.

### **In what ways does the psychology syllabus promote the attributes of the IB learner profile?**

The Psychology student will leave IB a new, internationally minded person, a responsible member of the society, thanks to developing the following attributes:

1. The *inquirer* attribute is reflected in their topic of choice for the IA and, eventually, the EE. Moreover, students will strengthen their curiosity about the questions that shape our world, through the eyes of Psychology.
2. The *knowledgeable* attribute is developed with their delving deeply into the understanding of human behavior not only through different approaches but also through different cultures and ages.
3. The *thinkers* attribute is developed by training the student's critical thinking skills to understanding behavior and to apply their knowledge to real life.
4. The *communicator* attribute is developed by interactive activities all course long that will challenge the student's ability to express his/her ideas and beliefs to the group and accept and understand those of the others.
5. The *principled* attribute is achieved by the students' ability to express their own opinions and understandings in an ethical and honest manner.
6. The *open-minded* attribute is developed by students learning to understand and observe human behavior through different lenses, aside from their own point of view.
7. The *caring* attribute is reflected in the students being involved in a range of CAS projects.
8. The *risk takers* attribute is reflected in the students' engagement with several research projects on human behavior.
9. The *balanced* attribute is developed through the three approaches in Psychology that the students will learn and the options that they will choose.
10. The *reflective* attribute must be the ultimate achievement in the Psychology course. The students will learn to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses to reach their life goals.

### **What from the course can make worthwhile extended essay questions?**

The Extended Essay in psychology is an independent piece of work that will lead the student to become a researcher, an autonomous thinker. The supervisor will help the student to find the path, will help him/her in the research process but it is the student who will shape the investigation and the reasoning behind it.

The range of topics that can be chosen for the EE is wide, but among them we can find memory and its reliability, thinking and decision making, psychopathology, development of personality, etc.

### **What is the relationship between TOK and History?**

Psychology constantly integrates ways of knowing, and vice versa. TOK students must think critically about behaviour and human mind, which is actually the ultimate goal of the psychology course. 'How do we know' is a ubiquitous question in psychology, it is more of a drive that psychology students must continuously experience in order to feel the thirst for knowledge that will let them to understand what really lies behind human behaviour.

### **What career paths are open to me?**

Since the psychology course takes an eminently holistic approach, having biological, cognitive and sociocultural levels seen in an integrated manner, the career paths are open to a wide range of possibilities: psychology, medicine, biology, sociology, anthropology, etc.