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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

PSYCHOLOGY **9990/11**

Paper 1 Approaches, issues and debates **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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Social Sciences-Specific Marking Principles
(for point-based marking)

1 Components using point-based marking:

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

a DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)
b DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct
c DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons …).
d DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)
e DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities
f DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
g DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. corrasion/corrosion)

2 Presentation of mark scheme:

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

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3 Calculation questions:

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

4 Annotation:

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	A creditworthy point made by the candidate A creditworthy 'what' for a generic everyday application question
	An incorrect response
BOD	Benefit of Doubt
REP	Repetition of a point
	Unclear response
I	The named issue in the 10-mark essay
L1 L2 L3 L4 L5	Levels used for the 10-mark essay (L1–L5) Levels used for the 8-mark similarity/difference question (L1–L4)

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Annotation	Meaning
NAQ	Not Answering the Question
SEEN	The blank page has been seen. An attached response has been seen.
	A creditworthy strength in the 10-mark essay. A creditworthy 'how' for a generic everyday application question
	A creditworthy weakness in the 10-mark essay.
	A creditworthy point in the 10-mark essay that is **b**rief
	A creditworthy point in the 10-mark essay that is **d**etailed The mark for data in **Q4**
	A creditworthy identification mark in **Q6(b)**
	A creditworthy example in **Q6(a)**

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	**From the study by Dement and Kleitman (sleep and dreams):** **Name the device used to measure brain waves.** 1 mark for the correct name. EEG / electroencephalogram / electroencephalograph.	**1**	Take the first answer only. Do **not** accept EOG, ECG or EGG.
1(b)	**Outline what is meant by an 'ultradian rhythm'. Include an example in your answer.** 1 mark for the correct definition 1 mark the naming an example e.g., (Biological) rhythms that last less than 24 hours (1 mark: definition). An example is our sleep cycle (1 mark: example).	**2**	Do **not** accept sleep-wake cycle. **Do** accept within 24 hours and any correct length of time that is less than 24 hours (e.g., 90 minutes for sleep cycle). **Do** accept 'deep sleep / REM / NREM' as the example. Example **must** be from sleep.
1(c)	**Outline one result in relation to dream recall in non-rapid eye movement (Non-REM) sleep.** 2 marks for the result with a meaningful comparison / correct data 1 mark for result with no meaningful comparison. e.g., 2 marks There were more instances of no dream recall compared to dream recall. Less dreams were recalled in NREM sleep (compared to REM). On 7% of awakenings, a dream was recalled in NREM. e.g., 1 mark There were less dreams recalled.	**2**	Do credit results from individual participants. If compared to REM then max 1 Do **not** credit less accurate/less vivid dreams occur in NREM / less Ps recalled / difficulty remembering or recalling dreams. Correct data = 1 mark [typically 11 dreams or 7% of NREM awakenings]

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)	**The sample in the study by Piliavin et al. (subway Samaritans) consisted of people travelling on a subway.** **Identify <u>three</u> features of the sample, other than they were people travelling on a subway.** 1 mark per correct point. Opportunity sample (Approximately) 4450. 45% black / 55% white. Unsolicited / never knew / never asked to participate. Males **and** females. Average of 43 participants per carriage.	**3**	List is definitive. Accept 4000–5000 for n=. Accept majority white / minority black if written in absence of a % Ignore comments about other races not being present. Ignore length of trip / names of stations. Accept 'from New York'.
2(b)	**Explain <u>one</u> weakness of the sample.** 1 mark for identifying the weakness of the sample. 1 mark for example from the study by Piliavin et al. e.g., The sample may lack some generalisability (1 mark). The sample were urban dwellers / in New York City / subway users, and this means that the helping behaviour seen might not represent people from other cities / cultures (1 mark).	**2**	Repeat the same route = max 1. Do **not** accept ethical weaknesses.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	**A local business wants to introduce activities to help its workers relax more at work and at home.** **Suggest what activities the local business could introduce, using your knowledge of the study by Hölzel et al.** 1 mark per correct suggestion based on Hölzel et al. The business could engage workers in mindful yoga with some stretching exercises. These are slow movement in conjunction with breathing. The workers could be taught to become 'fully aware' of their body sensations. The workers could begin to mentally note these feelings of stress, so they know when they feel them. The workers could begin 'observing' where / when they notice stressful stimuli. The workers could be encouraged to practice this for 45 minutes per day. The workers continue to engage in mindfulness for around 8 weeks. There are other creditworthy suggestions.	**4**	No credit for justifying advice as this is not what the question is about. 1 mark **max** can be awarded for identification of a relevant task, e.g., MBSR class, yoga, meditation, body scan, mindfulness etc. Only credit any timeframe **once**, e.g., 8-weeks, 45 mins, long-term, daily etc. e.g., he should attend an 8-week MBSR course = 2 marks total (1 for MBSR and 1 from the timeframe). Credit descriptions of what would happen in body scanning, yoga, meditation etc. Credit any concurrent activity where a relevant MBSR task can happen (e.g., doing the washing up, on a walk, at desk etc.) = max 1 mark

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(a)	**Outline <u>one</u> assumption of the learning approach, including an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman (button phobia).** 2 marks for full assumption. 1 mark for partial / brief assumption. 1 mark for example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman (must be linked to given assumption). e.g., 2 marks: assumption We all begin life as a blank slate. Experiences and interactions with the environment shape our behaviour and these changes are directly observable. We learn through the processes of operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and social learning (at least 2 mentioned). e.g., 1 mark: assumption We all begin life as a blank slate. We learn through the processes of operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and social learning (just one of these) We learn using a stimulus-response model. e.g., 1 mark example The boy got rewarded / had positive reinforcement throughout the study when he achieved a certain goal. The boy developed a phobia after a bowl of buttons fell on him at school.	**3**	The example mark can only be awarded if **one** component of operant conditioning or classical conditioning is explicitly stated. If the assumption is incorrect, but the example does identify a component of OC / CC then the example mark can be awarded. ✓e = example mark. Do **not** accept an assumption being [positive] reinforcement **Do** accept 'behaviours we are <u>not</u> born with' for max 1 mark.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(b)	**Outline <u>one</u> methodological strength of the study by Saavedra and Silverman (button phobia).** 1 mark for identifying the methodological strength. 1 mark for example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman. e.g., The study collected quantitative data that allows direct comparison / statistical analysis (1 mark: identification). The severity ratings for exposure to buttons could be compared across therapy sessions (1 mark: example). The study used a longitudinal design to allow a baseline comparison (1 mark: identification). This allowed the researchers to see the progression of the phobia from pre- to post-treatment / examine success of the treatment (1 mark: example). There are other creditworthy strengths, including reliability / standardisation.	**2**	Do **not** credit any ethical strengths or application strengths. Quantitative data / standardisation by itself cannot get the ID mark.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
5	**Suggest <u>two</u> applications to everyday life of the study by Perry et al. (personal space). Your suggestions <u>must</u> be ethical.** 1 mark for what the application is (clearly based on Perry et al). 1 mark for how it will be achieved. e.g., This can help companies with jobs that require regular invasion of personal space (1 mark: what). Applicants can be screened for high / low empathy / asked to take a CIDS and selected partly based on whether they would be able to cope with regular personal space invasion (1 mark: how). It can be used to help design the rooms for therapy (1 mark: what). Allow clients to choose their preferred chair angle/distance to allow them to be comfortable (1 mark: how). It can be used in jobs where interpersonal distance / empathy is important (1 mark: what). For example, nurses can take the IRI to measure empathy and this could be used to help select empathic staff (1 mark: how) There are other creditworthy suggestions.	**4**	Annotate in the following way: tick = what plus = how Do **not** credit answers about giving oxytocin to a population. Do **not** credit responses that simple state 'people / children / friends can' The application needs a specific population or specific scenario.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
6(a)(i)	**From the study by Bandura et al. (aggression):** **Explain whether each ethical guideline below was broken:** **minimising harm** 1 mark for explaining the guideline. 1 mark for an example from the study (showing broken or not). e.g., guideline Participants should leave a study in the same mental / physical state as entering. In a study participants should not be exposed to more harm than they would in everyday life. There should be an attempt at reversing possible harm from participating in a study. e.g., example from study Children were observing adults playing aggressively with toys including a Bobo Doll. This may have caused them stress, **or** the children witnessed and then repeated aggressive behaviours.	**2**	
6(a)(ii)	**right to withdraw** 1 mark for explaining the guideline. 1 mark for an example from the study (showing broken or not). e.g., guideline Participants should be free to leave the study at any time they want to. e.g., example from study The children could not leave the room when watching the models being aggressive / nonaggressive **or** the children were escorted from the aggression arousal room to the final room so could not refuse to continue.	**2**	Do **not** accept tautological responses, e.g., the children were not aware of their right to withdraw. Do accept children might see the researcher as an authority figure making it difficult to withdraw. Do accept a child / children could / could not decide to <u>leave</u> a / the study for the guideline mark.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
6(b)	**Explain how the ethical guideline of confidentiality was followed**. 1 mark for outlining the guideline of confidentiality. 1 mark for an example showing how the study adhered to confidentiality. Any data should not be identifiable as a single participants' responses / participants' data must not be named as theirs (outline). The identities of the children were not revealed – all we know is that they attended a Nursery at Stanford (how).	**2**	The **how** mark can only be awarded with a direct example from the study.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
7	**The debate about individual and situational explanations relates to the study by Hassett et al. (monkey toy preferences).** **Outline what is meant by this debate, including <u>one</u> example of the individual explanation and <u>one</u> example of the situational explanation.** **Both examples <u>must</u> be from the study by Hassett et al.** 1 mark for outlining individual explanation **plus** 1 mark for example from Hassett. 1 mark for outlining situational explanation **plus** 1 mark for example from Hassett. e.g., individual The individual side refers to behaviours from factors within the person / organism (dispositional) (1 mark: outline). Some monkeys were not used in the final analysis as they did not play with the toys which was their choice (1 mark: example). e.g., situational The situational side refers to behaviour from factors in the external environment (1 mark: outline). The situation was new and exciting for the monkeys as they had never seen the toys before, so this made them play (1 mark: example).	4	Ignore tautological definitions including 'individual differences or individual factors'. ✓e = example mark. Go with the intentions of the candidate. Do **not** credit gender of monkeys. Do **accept** social rank as either individual <u>or</u> situational but only <u>once</u> in the same response. Any example that portrays individual differences in toy choice is creditworthy for the example of an individual explanation.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
8	**Describe the background to the study by Pozzulo et al. (line-ups).** 1 mark per correct point made. e.g., Researchers have been interested in whether children are reliable / valid (eye)witnesses. Sometimes, children are the only witness to a crime. Children's eyewitness recall is known to be less reliable (than an adult). Mistaken eyewitness identification has led to wrongful convictions. Children and adults can identify from a target-present line-up with accuracy. Children are more likely, however, to pick out an innocent person as guilty. Both cognitive and social factors could affect / influence (false) identifications. Cognitive factors include matching a previous memory with a person in a line-up. Cognitive factors are more likely to affect target-present line-ups. Social factors include the presence / pressure of an authority figure/fear of getting into trouble Social factors are more likely to affect target-absent line-ups. Children are more likely to produce a false-positive response. A previous study showed that children are less likely to say 'I don't know' (compared to adults). There are other creditworthy points.	**5**	Ignore any reference to what Pozzulo did or found as this is about information prior to the study. Do **not** credit anything about false memories. 1 mark available for: **either** a definition of / issue with EWT **or** a definition of a false-positive response.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
9(a)	**In the study by Milgram (obedience), a 47-year-old man was trained for the role of the learner. The learner was the 'victim' in this study.** **Describe the feedback given by the victim during the procedure.** 1 mark per correct point. These were predetermined / standardised responses / following a script / trained to respond. There tended to be three wrong answers to one correct. No response is heard up until Shock Level 300. When 300 v given, the learner pounds on the wall. From this point on there are no answers from the learner. The learner pounds again at 315 v. After that there is no pounding / answers given.	**4**	List is definitive. Do **not** credit any verbal responses/word-pair responses. **Do** credit 'did not give any feedback until 300 v' Banged on the wall at 300 v and 315 v = 2 marks.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
9(b)	**Explain <u>two</u> similarities between the study by Milgram (obedience) and the study by Piliavin et al (subway Samaritans). Do <u>not</u> refer to the sample.** **Use the marking grid below.** 4 marks for the similarity, e.g., quantitative data collection, ethics, mundane realism, both social approach (must be about assumptions), use of stooges, both used observations. e.g., similarity 4 marks Both the Piliavin and Milgram studies have ethical issues. Both studies broke the guideline of deception and stressed participants [explanation]. In the Milgram study, participants believed they were giving real electric shocks to a stranger who could not remember word pairs. In the Piliavin study, the participants were led to believe that the drunk or ill victim needed help. 3 marks Both the Piliavin and Milgram studies had ethical issues. In the Milgram study, participants believed they were giving real electric shocks to a stranger who could not remember word pairs. Piliavin study, the participants were led to believe that the drunk or ill victim needed help. 2 marks Both the Piliavin and Milgram studies have ethical issues of deception. In the Milgram study, participants believed they were giving real electric shocks to a stranger who could not remember word pairs 1 mark Both the Piliavin and Milgram studies had ethical issues/broke ethical guideline of deception.	**8**	Award L1–L4 for each similarity. For Level 4 there must be some attempt at *explaining* the similarity. Max Level 3 can be awarded if the answer is just description with no explanation. Do **not** credit any responses about the sample or generalisations from the sample. Both social approach with correct assumptions = L3 max Both social approach but no assumptions = L1 Both have application to real world = L2 max (applications must be explicit to get L2 however). If the similarity is not explicitly stated by the candidate then L2 max. 'Easy to analyse / compare' is <u>not</u> an explanation for quantitative data.

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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th><th>Guidance</th></tr>
<tr><td>9(b)</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Mark/ Level</th><th>Description</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>The similarity / difference is well explained using both studies as examples.</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>The similarity / difference is well explained but only one study is used as an example OR
both studies are used briefly.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>The similarity / difference is brief with an attempt at using at least one study as an example OR
The similarity/difference is well explained but there is no study evidence.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>The similarity / difference is brief with no attempt at using the studies as examples.</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>No creditable response.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th><th>Guidance</th></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>
Evaluate the study by Andrade (doodling) in terms of <u>two</u> strengths and <u>two</u> weaknesses. At least one of your evaluation points <u>must</u> be about ecological validity.

Strengths include reliability, standardisation, validity (internal).
Weaknesses include validity (external), sample.

Example: in detail
In the study all were members of a participant panel / research group for participants. This could make it difficult to generalise to a wider population of those not interested in participating in research as they might have different levels of motivation / concentration / attention.

Example: brief but in context
There was a standardised procedure. For example, the mock telephone message was 227 words per minute. This increases the reliability of the study.

Example: no context
The study collected quantitative data which makes it more objective / allows us to make meaningful comparisons between groups / conditions.

<table>
<tr><th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Mark</th></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>• Very good evaluation including the named issue.
• Thoroughly addresses both strengths and both weaknesses in detail.
• Selection of evidence is very thorough and effective.</td><td>9-10</td></tr>
</table>
</td><td>10</td><td>Consult guidance document about how to place a response into an appropriate Level.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th><th>Guidance</th></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Mark</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>• Good evaluation including the named issue.
• Addresses strengths and weaknesses but may include three or four points. The majority of the points are in depth.
• Selection of evidence is thorough and effective.</td><td>7–8</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>• Mostly appropriate evaluation but may not include the named issue.
• Addresses either two strengths or two weaknesses in detail or one of each in detail or all four briefly.
• Selection of evidence is mostly effective.</td><td>5–6</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>• Weak evaluation and may not include the named issue.
• Addresses either a strength or a weakness. Evaluation points are brief.
• Some points may have no context.
• Selection of evidence is sometimes appropriate.</td><td>3–4</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>• Little or no evaluation.
• Discussion of strengths and weaknesses is absent or superficial.
• Selection of evidence is limited.</td><td>1–2</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>No creditable response.</td><td></td></tr>
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