

West Notts College and psychology

The basics

The course is two years long from the start in September through to results day. Psychology at West Notts College involves a variety of topics and not all will be appealing to you, but that's just a fact of life in general and you have to suck it up and keep moving on to get to the good bits - trust me there are good bits!

Be assured if you have any pending questions about your work and studying within psychology, you can always ask your tutors and they won't make you feel like you've just tripped over your own feet and made a spectacle of yourself in front of a large crowd.

They're here to help you grow an understanding of the backbone of psychology and know you might not be the most knowledgeable person in the world just yet. Studying psychology can help in a multitude of ways, from expanding your understanding of human behaviour to helping you reach that next step in your life, whether that be work, an apprenticeship or university and that's all up to you.

Something useful to know is what kind of things you'll be studying, these can include but aren't limited to:

• Social psychology	• Biopsychology
• Memory	• Research methods
• Attachment	• Issues and debates
• Psychopathology	• Cognition and development
• Approaches	• Eating behaviour
	• Aggression

The last three topics have been the options taught at West Notts College in recent years, although if you do find that some of them are particularly triggering for you, don't hesitate to ask if you can learn another of the available topic options in its place, there's no judgement as your health comes first, something to keep in mind for later in life as well.

Life as a West Notts College psychology student - things you should know

A levels are NOT the same as GCSEs. This point cannot be stressed enough. If you found you could do the bare minimum and pass your GCSEs, I'm going to tell you now that will NOT happen with A levels. Psychology has various bits of information that you'll need to remember for your exams and even specific advice on how to answer exam questions to the best of your abilities. Turning up to lesson isn't the end to the work you have to put into this A level.

Now, no one's suggesting that you give up your entire life and devote every waking moment to study and revision on let's say the psychosexual stages or Bowlby's theories, because honestly there are better things you can be doing with your time. What can be said by many past students is that taking half an hour out of your day to revise your topics is going to help you in the trek you take to exams, especially when there are different little pockets of information you somehow have to jumble together to create some sense out of everything.

Psychology itself is a science, whether you like it or not and there are topic areas that I would say definitely show that more widely accepted notion of what science is. A great example of that would

be biopsychology, as the name suggests you will learn some biology, but fret not it isn't too detailed just yet at A level and with a bit of time and well placed revision it is possible to remember this stuff. Maths - science sure does love it's self some maths... now not everyone is particularly amazing at this lovely subject and it can be a really off-putting idea, you definitely need to know the basics, like the measures of central tendency - mean, median and mode - at least for psychology at A level. Other than that there isn't too much addition to the idea, but there's a chance you're going to learn a few new things along the way.

One thing I am recommending that you do, having studied A level psychology, is a little extra research around studies you learn, even the ones you'll touch on as evaluation points. This is because you might find that sometimes what's being said doesn't quite make sense and that little bit of extra knowledge can be the difference between you achieving a C or an A, just by helping you understand a concept. If you're struggling to find this extra knowledge by yourself, ask your tutors, they are likely to be able to point you in the right direction – after all they are there to help.

Speaking to others who have chosen to study psychology with you is also helpful. Often revising alone can be challenging – at least it was for me. When you start learning or adding onto your knowledge of a subject and psychology isn't an exception. Revise knowing that you can ask a friend about a particular aspect of something, such as Skinner's theory on conditioning. This is reassuring and often it's easier than asking tutors, especially if you need an answer now or you're perhaps less anxious asking friends for help. Another good revision tip is to revise with these friends in a group, this doesn't mean you have to be doing the exact same thing as each other, just that you'll all be able to ask questions open to several people and the chance being someone can give you the answer. If not then you all end up looking for the answer and just so happen to revise something together that showed to be a gap in your knowledge.

Psychology is an interesting subject, showing us how shocking the reality of our world is sometimes or providing us with the completely strange ideas hypothesised by a few of the world's most well-known figures to have aided psychology – Sigmund Freud. Even if you decide not to go further with psychology as a subject into the future, there is a benefit in knowing a small sample of how and why different psychologists propose the reason for people's behaviour.