



Subject: Psychology Pre-A-level

Know It (Knowledge)	Use It (Application)	Stretch It (Development)
<p>Read the textbook spreads looking at biological explanations of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and the use of drugs as a therapy (see digital textbook details below)</p> <p>Use this information to complete the OCD worksheet. This task will give you an insight into the disorder and also the prominence of biological content in the A-level psychology course.</p>	<p>Watch the BBC documentary 'Extreme OCD Camp'. As you watch, make notes in a table on the Obsessions (negative thoughts) and subsequent compulsions (behaviours) that are shown by each participant.</p> <p>In contrast to the knowledge task, this programme addresses the non-biological aspects of the disorder.</p>	<p>Research the issue of comorbidity and OCD. This is when a person has more than one chronic condition at the same time (see link below for a starting point).</p> <p>Create a diagram that illustrates the links between OCD and other disorders such as depression and eating disorders</p>
<p>Research the main approaches that are adopted in psychology (e.g. cognitive, biological...see section in Year 1 textbook as a starting point)</p> <p>Create a mind-map that summarises the main assumptions of each approach and how these link to their subsequent therapies (eg. biological assumptions leading to drug therapies).</p>	<p>Watch the documentary 'Deranged Killers: Charles Whitman' (link below).</p> <p>As you watch the documentary, note down how his behaviour might be explained by at least two different approaches.</p> <p>Write an explanation of which factors you believe were the most/least influential in his behaviour and why.</p>	<p>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) combines two approaches and can be an effective form of treatment for a variety of issues and disorders.</p> <p>Research what CBT involves and create an information leaflet for people who have been offered this intervention. Include some of the strengths and limitations of CBT.</p>
<p>The free will vs determinism debate runs throughout much of the course. This raises the question of the extent to which we govern our own behaviour – do we choose our actions or are they driven by factors beyond our control? Read the textbook spread in the Year 2 textbook (p 98-99) and make notes on what is meant by free will and the various types of determinism.</p>	<p>Apply these concepts to the choices that you have made in the past and in the future in relation to your studies and career. Complete free will? Or were your decisions driven by internal or external factors?</p> <p>Write a short essay discussing the extent to which your academic and vocational pathways are your own personal choice.</p>	<p>Watch the TED talk 'The Paradox of choice' from Psychologist Barry Schwartz. In this talk he considers the question of whether choice makes us happier or can lead to us feeling paralysed and more dissatisfied.</p> <p>Write an article on 'choice' and the extent to which you see it as something that we should value.</p>

Links:

Extreme OCD Camp Episode 1 – BBC documentary 2013 journey to the American wilderness.

Comorbidity and OCD: <https://www.madeofmillions.com/ocd/comorbidity-and-ocd>

Deranged Killers: Charles Whitman – Dark Documentaries 2009

TED Talk 'The Paradox of Choice'

https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_the_paradox_of_choice?referrer=playlist-how_we_make_choices#t-39877

Digital Textbook (Please request the password directly from Mr Webb)

Year 1 <https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych1/>

Year 2 <https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych2/>



Introduction to Psychology: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Task Sheets

It is likely that you will have heard of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and you would probably be able to offer an explanation of what the disorder involves. However, people often use the term OCD in very general ways (“I’m a bit OCD when it comes to that,”) without really understanding what the condition involves.

This leads to our first question: ‘What are the symptoms of OCD’?

We refer to the characteristics of a disorder, and break them down into three parts:

Behavioural characteristics – the ways in which people act

Emotional characteristics – the what that people feel

Cognitive characteristics – the way in which people process information (their thoughts)

Complete the table below by summarising the information on pages 142-143 of the textbook

Characteristics of OCD

Behavioural	
Emotional	
Cognitive	

Now use this information to answer the ‘Apply it’ questions at the bottom of p142 relating to Jaz:

Behavioural = _____

Emotional = _____

Cognitive = _____



Explaining OCD

There are a number of different approaches in Psychology which will explain people's behaviour in very different ways. These include the cognitive approach which focuses on our thought processes, behavioural approach which looks at how our behaviour is shaped by our environment, and the psychodynamic approach which considers unconscious processes. However, one of the most important approaches is the biological approach which looks at factors such as genetic inheritance, brain structures and the influence of hormones and neurotransmitters.

Our second question is therefore: 'How does the biological approach explain OCD?'

Answer the following questions using pages 152-153 in the textbook.

- 1) What evidence did Lewis (1936) provide to suggest that there may be a genetic component to OCD?
- 2) Twin studies are often used to investigate genetic factors in a disorder. These involve comparing pairs of identical twins (who share 100% of their genes) and non-identical twins (who share approx. 50%). We look at the concordance rate – the likelihood of the second twin sharing the same disorder as the first. What did Nestadt (2010) find in their review of previous twin studies?
- 3) We often consider the interaction of genes and environment in the development of a disorder. What does the diathesis-stress model propose?
- 4) OCD is thought to be polygenic. What does this mean?
- 5) What did Taylor (2013) find in relation to genetic factors in the development of OCD?
- 6) What term means that different groups of genes may cause OCD in different people?

Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers that either amplify or inhibit the transmission of signals between neurons in the brain. It is likely that the genes associated with OCD affect the levels of these neurotransmitters and also structures within the brain.

- 7) The neurotransmitter serotonin is believed to help regulate our mood. Why do antidepressants provide evidence to support the role of serotonin in OCD?
- 8) Name two parts of the brain which have been associated with OCD
- 9) What does co-morbidity mean? Why is co-morbidity an issue in relation to biological explanations of OCD?



Treating OCD

Each different approach will come with a different form of therapy. For example, if you believe that a disorder is the result of the way a person is processing information then you will look at a form of cognitive therapy that aims to change these processes. As you might expect, biological explanations will lead to biological therapies, most commonly drug therapy.

Answer the following questions using pages 154-155 of the textbook.

- 1) What do the initials SSRI stand for?

- 2) Name one type of SSRI that is used in the treatment of OCD. How long might it take for the drug to have an effect on symptoms?

- 3) Why might it be necessary for a patient to have drug therapy before they can start cognitive therapy?

- 4) Name two different types of drug that may be used if SSRIs are not effective

- 5) Drug therapies have a number of advantages and disadvantages. Complete the table below, using only very brief points from the information on p 155.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Drug therapy can be effective...	Drugs can have side-effects...
Drugs are cost-effective and non-disruptive...	You may become reliant on the drugs (not in the textbook – think about this one!)

Please bring your completed worksheets to your first lesson (with Mr Webb or Mrs Kerr). E-mail Mr Webb if you have any questions: webb@highsted.kent.sch.uk