

Notes

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Psychology · HL

IB psychology first assessment 2019; 2027 course tracked separately

Current core: biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches plus research. SL selects one option, HL two. The 2027 course adds concepts/contexts, class practicals and a research proposal, not the current experimental-study IA.

SL: Paper 1 120 min 50%, one-option Paper 2 60 min 25%, experimental IA 25%. HL: Paper 1 120 min 40%, two-option Paper 2 120 min 20%, methods Paper 3 60 min 20%, experimental IA 20%.

Biological and cognitive approaches · Explanations, studies and inference

Biological explanations examine physiological processes; cognitive explanations examine processes such as memory and attention.

A study tests a bounded claim through a method, sample and measurement; it does not prove an entire approach.

Checked example

An observational sleep-memory relation might also reflect stress, prior ability or study time.

An ethically approved experiment can control some factors, but its task and sample still limit generalization.

Limits and practice

Do not invent a published study or claim the original classroom scenario is one.

Add accurate aims, procedure, findings and evaluation for the teacher's selected studies before using them as examination evidence.

What can be concluded from the association alone?

Answer: Longer sleep is associated with higher scores in this sample, without establishing causation.

Sociocultural approach; options · Culture, social learning and application

Social learning involves learning through observing others and the consequences of their actions.

Sociocultural analysis examines social and cultural context; variation within a group matters as well as differences between groups.

Checked example

In the original classroom case, identify the model, observed behaviour and praise before explaining possible imitation.

To apply this to health or development, use an actual selected study and explain limits of transferring its evidence.

Limits and practice

Do not treat national identity as a complete explanation of behaviour.

SL chooses one and HL two options from abnormal, developmental, health and human relationships; this example does not cover all options.

Which detail most directly supports a social-learning explanation?

Answer: The learner observes both a model's strategy and the praise that follows.

Research; experimental IA · Ethical design, data and evaluation

The independent variable is deliberately changed; the dependent variable is measured.

Controls, standardized instructions, consent and withdrawal protect both participants and interpretation.

Checked example

Compare two approved presentation formats using a justified allocation method. Record recall consistently and retain anonymized raw data.

Describe the design before selecting suitable descriptive and inferential analysis with the teacher.

Limits and practice

Avoid deception, sensitive topics and unsupported statistical claims. The current IA is a real supervised experimental study.

For first assessment 2027 the IA becomes a research proposal: do not relabel this experiment as the new requirement.

Which variable is the dependent variable in this task?

Answer: The measured recall score.

HL research methods · Evaluating qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research examines meanings and experiences; quantitative research measures variables numerically.

Evaluate each method against its question, sampling, analytic process and ethical obligations.

Checked example

An interview may reveal how people interpret an experience, but volunteer recruitment can shape whose perspectives appear.

Compare themes with quoted evidence and reflect on the researcher's role, rather than judging credibility only by sample size.

Limits and practice

The current HL methods paper differs from the 2027 source-based data paper.

Do not apply experimental cause-and-effect standards indiscriminately to an inquiry about lived meanings.

What is a useful evaluation of the interview study?

Answer: Whether recruitment and analysis support its claims about the participants' experiences.