

# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED

## Overview

The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the assessment objectives used in the AQA Specification from 2015.

### Resources Required

- Sample answer to the question '**Discuss two explanations of depression. As part of your discussion refer to Julie in your answer.** (12 marks for AS / 16 marks for A-Level)' handout (one each).

## Teacher Instructions

### Teaching and Learning Strategy A

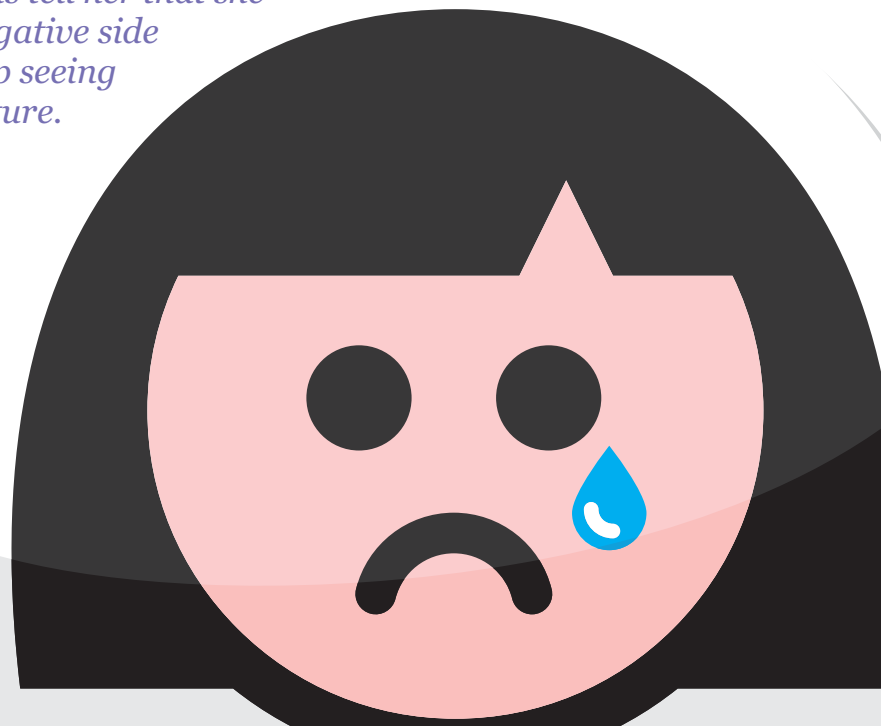
Firstly, students should be introduced to the assessment objectives:

- AO1** = Knowledge and understanding
- AO2** = Application of knowledge and understanding
- AO3** = Analysis, interpretation and evaluation

At AS there will be 12 mark essays, 6 marks for AO1 and 6 marks for AO3. At A-level there will be 16 mark essays, 6 marks for AO1 and 10 marks AO3. However, at both AS and A-Level students may have to use stems/scenarios, to apply their knowledge. An example of this can be found below.

*Julie has been diagnosed with depression. She understands this disorder and what treatments are available as both her mother and identical twin sister both suffer from depression. However, some of her friends tell her that she is very negative and always sees the negative side of events. They say that she needs to stop seeing herself as useless and that she has no future.*

Discuss two explanations of depression. As part of your discussion refer to Julie in your answer. (12 marks for AS / 16 marks for A-Level).



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The allocation of marks for an application essay are:

- AS = AO1 – 6, AO2 – 2, AO3 – 4
- A-Level = AO1 – 6, AO2 – 4, AO3 – 6

Once students have been introduced to the assessment objectives, provide each student with a copy of the sample answer to the above question. Student should highlight the different learning objectives in three different colours, for example AO1 = Red, AO2 = Green and AO3 = Blue.

Thereafter, using an interactive whiteboard (if possible) the teacher should invite students to highlight the different assessment objective to assess understanding and check that students have correctly identified the assessment objectives, within the sample answer.

## Teaching and Learning Strategy B

If students have already been introduced to the 'peer-marking essays' activity. Students should be provided with a copy of the 'essay marking grid' and work in pairs to determine what mark band and grade this essay would achieve at AS and A-Level.

## Stretch & Challenge

Students who complete the first part of this task quickly, should be instructed to annotate the answer with suggestions on how to improve the quality of the AO1/2/3 content.



# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED

## STUDENT ANSWER 1

One explanation of depression is the **genetic explanation**. This suggests that depression is **inherited** through the genes. This explanation could explain why Julie has depression as the stem refers to the fact that her mother and identical twin sister both have depression. This would suggest that Julie has inherited the disorder from her mother as she shares 50% of her DNA with her and this is further supported by the fact that her identical twin sister also has the disorder, as Julie shares 100% of her DNA with her identical twin sister.

One study that supports the genetic explanation is the study carried out by McGuffin et al (1996). They compared 214 twin pairs whose parents had depression. They found that the concordance rate for MZ twins was 46% and the concordance rates for DZ twins (twins who only share 50% of their DNA) was 20%. This supports the genetic explanation of depression because both of these concordance rates are higher than what you would find in the general population (5%).

However, one issue with attributing that the higher concordance rates in MZs is due to genetics alone is that if depression is solely down to a genetic component, then the concordance rates should be 100%, as the MZs share 100% DNA, so if one twin has depression the other should also have the disorder. In this study the results are 46% which is less than half of all twin pairs suggesting that genetics alone cannot explain what causes depression. Another reason for the higher concordance rates could be that MZ twins are more likely to share a very similar environment when compared to DZs or other siblings. This similarity in environment could affect the psychosocial wellbeing of the twins so if there is a stressful event in one of their lives it would affect the other twin in the same way and could lead to them both developing depression. This makes the genetic argument **reductionist** as it is reducing a complex disorder down to genetics and is completely ignoring the role of the environment and how that could lead to similarities in twin behaviour or to the onset of depression.



# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED

## STUDENT ANSWER 1

Cognitive psychologists such as **Beck** would also be able to give an explanation why Julie has depression. It states that her friends think she is negative and only sees the negative side of events. The description of her thoughts links with Beck's negative triad. Beck 1976, stated that one reason why people become depressed is due to negative thinking patterns in what he called his **negative triad**. This is when the individual has negative thoughts about themselves, the world and their future. This could explain Julie's depression as Julie seems to have negative thoughts about herself, she is "useless", and her future "she has no future".

An issue with explaining Julie's behaviour using the cognitive explanation is that it is hard to establish cause and effect. Are Julie's negative thought patterns causing her to be depressed as Beck would suggest, or are they just a symptom of depression, so they are caused by the disorder. This idea is supported by evidence that negative thought patterns seem to disappear when the person is not depressed showing that they are able to think "normally".

However, one strength of the cognitive explanation in comparison to the genetic explanation is that this could be used to develop a treatment programme for Julie. **Cognitive behavioural therapy** has been used to change negative thinking patterns and help people who suffer from depression, like Julie, to help to improve her quality of life and provide her with strategies to deal with her depression. The fact that cognitive explanations lead to practical applications in terms of treatment is a strength of this approach as the genetic explanation does not offer any treatment options only an explanation.



# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED

## THE ANSWERS

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