FREE PREVIEW

Cambridge International AS & A Level • Psychology 9990 • Paper 4

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY · SECTION B

Planning a Study

Model answer booklet

Every health **plan-a-study** question from the 2024–2026 papers and the specimen paper, answered in full and annotated.

June 2026 · Mar 2026 · Nov 2025 · June 2025 · Mar 2025 · Nov 2024 · June 2024 · Mar 2024 · Specimen 2024

14	316	(a)(b)(c)	★
Full-mark model answers	Annotations showing what earns marks	Every part of every question	Examiner tips and mistakes to avoid

Design a study packs for all four options

Clinical · Consumer · Health · Organisational

By Jyotika Sharmani

PAPER 4 · SECTION B · HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

The plan-a-study question is worth 24 marks. This pack shows you how to earn every one.

Every Health Psychology plan-a-study question from 2024 to 2026, plus the specimen paper, answered in full and annotated mark by mark.

14	79	316	4
questions	pages	annotations	options available

14

Every question, 2024 to 2026

All 14 Health plan-a-study questions, every variant, plus the specimen paper. The most recent paper comes first, including March 2026.

a·b·c

Full answers to every part

Complete plans, psychological knowledge and justified choices, written in full, the way an A* student writes in the exam.

316

Annotations that show the marks

Colour-coded comments point to exactly where each method feature, ethical guideline and reliability step earns credit.

2/2

(c) answers built for both marks

Every (c) answer shows the general point and the applied point that turns one mark into two.

NEW

A guide before you start

Two new pages up front: what each research method needs, and the principles behind a strong plan. Syllabus terms only.

★

Examiner tips and traps

Every question flags the mistakes that cost candidates marks, so you avoid them on the day.

> Most students know the research methods. What they lack is a clear picture of what a **full-mark plan** looks like. Each answer here gives you that picture, then shows you **why** each sentence earns its place.

Jyotika Varmani
Cambridge A Level Psychology teacher and subject expert. Her blog is cited in the official Cambridge teachers' manual.

Get the full pack →

NEW IN EVERY PACK

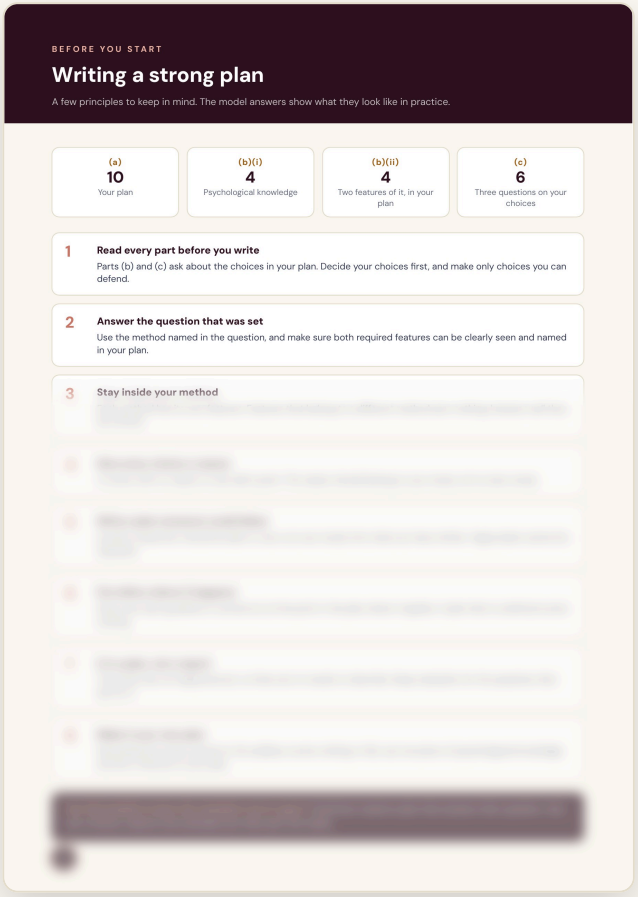
Before you start: a two-page guide

Before the first model answer, two pages set out the standard every plan is marked against. Here is a glimpse.



What every plan needs

The general features, then the features of each of the seven methods, side by side.



Writing a strong plan

How the 24 marks are shared, and eight principles behind a strong plan.

METHOD CARDS IN THE GUIDE

Experiment · Questionnaire · Interview · Observation · Longitudinal study · Case study · Correlation

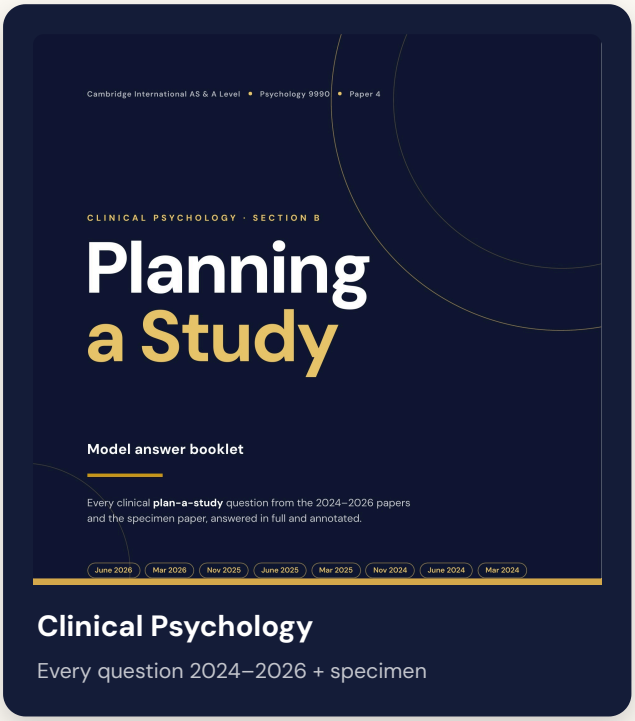
The full guide is in the pack. Every method card and all eight principles, at the front of the booklet.

Unlock →

ONE SERIES · FOUR OPTIONS

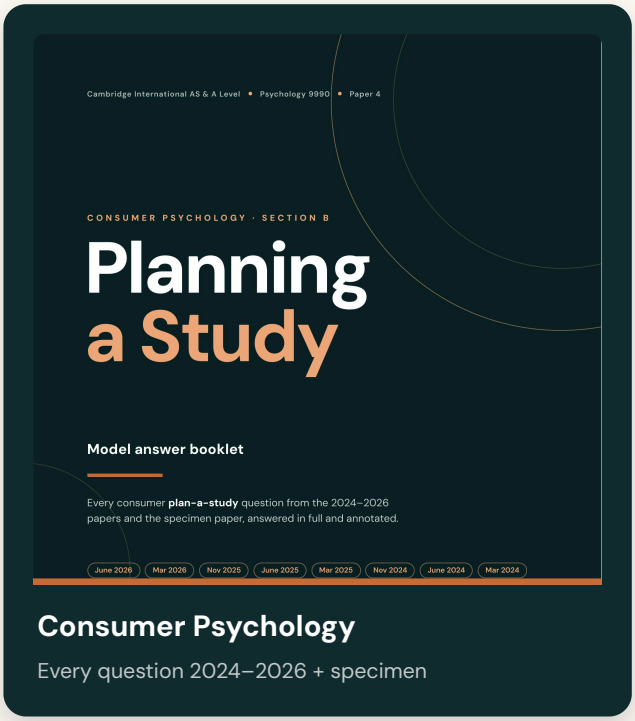
Design a study packs are available for all four options

Whichever two options you are sitting, the same full-mark approach is waiting for you. Every pack covers every plan-a-study question from 2024 to 2026 and the specimen paper.



Clinical Psychology

Every question 2024–2026 + specimen



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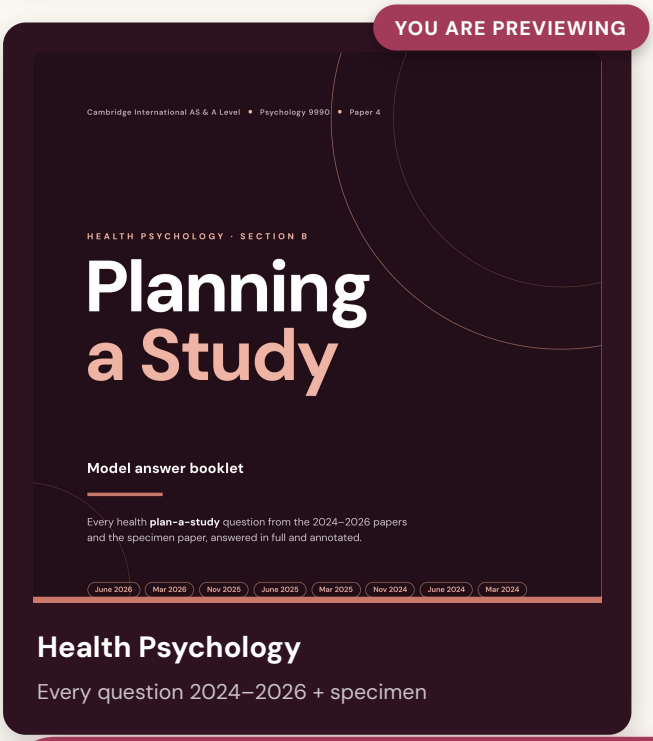
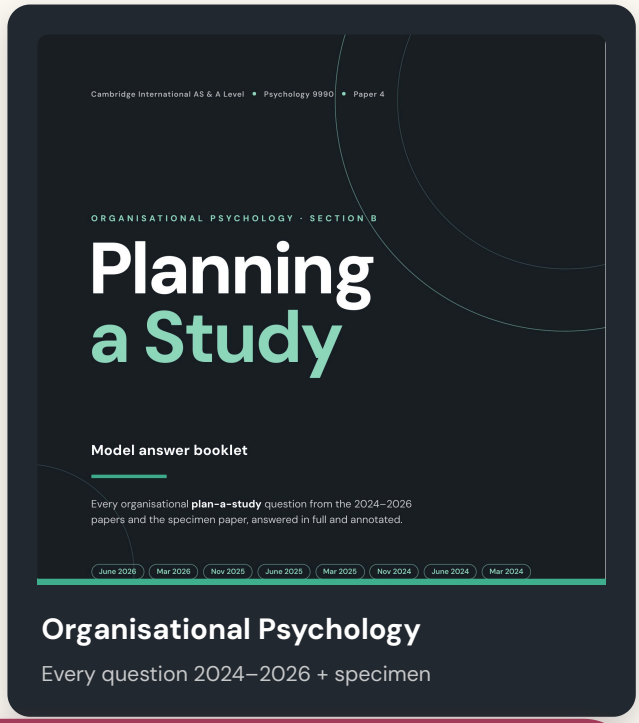
Every question 2024–2026 + specimen

YOU ARE PREVIEWING



Health Psychology

Every question 2024–2026 + specimen



Organisational Psychology

Every question 2024–2026 + specimen

See all four packs in the store →

CONTENTS OF THE FULL PACK

14 questions. Here is what you can see today.

In this preview · Sneak peek · In the full pack

★	New Before you start	What every plan needs · Writing a strong plan Two-page guide	2	Sneak peek pp. 2–3
01	June 2026 Paper 41 & 43	Diagnostic features of Munchausen syndrome Closed questionnaire	5	In this preview pp. 5–9, partly locked
02	June 2026 Paper 42	How men and women describe pain Telephone interview	10	Full pack
03	March 2026 Paper 42	Mirror treatment for phantom limb pain Controlled observation	16	Full pack
04	November 2025 Paper 41 & 43	Biofeedback for student stress Experiment	21	Sneak peek p. 22
05	November 2025 Paper 42	Unrealistic optimism about health Interview	26	Full pack
06	June 2025 Paper 41 & 43	TENS for acute pain Face-to-face interview	32	Full pack
07	June 2025 Paper 42	Gender and rational non-adherence Online questionnaire	38	Full pack
08	March 2025 Paper 42	Painkillers or TENS for chronic pain? Experiment	43	Full pack
09	November 2024 Paper 41 & 43	What should doctors wear? Face-to-face interview	48	Full pack
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11	June 2024 Paper 41 & 43	Why people miss medical appointments Postal questionnaire	58	Full pack
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14	Specimen 2024 Paper 4	Age and rational non-adherence Interview	73	Full pack

Page numbers refer to the full pack. Tap a locked row to go to the store.

01

June 2026 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 11

Diagnostic features of Munchausen syndrome

SYLLABUS 3.1 The patient–practitioner relationship · 3.1.3 Misusing health services

Closed questionnaire

The question

Plan a study using closed questions to investigate which diagnostic features of Munchausen syndrome are most common.

Your plan must include details about:

- sample of participants
- descriptive statistics

a	The plan	10 marks	6
b	Psychological knowledge	8 marks	8
c	Explaining your choices	6 marks	9

Preview · full pack p. 5

The plan

10 marks

(a) Plan a study using closed questions to investigate which diagnostic features of Munchausen syndrome are most common. **10 marks**

Your plan must include details about:

- **sample of participants**
- **descriptive statistics**

The aim is to find out which diagnostic features of Munchausen syndrome are seen most often by doctors who have treated patients with the condition. Munchausen syndrome is rare, and patients rarely admit to it, so asking the doctors who diagnosed them is the most practical way 1 to collect information about many cases.

1 **AIM** Explains **why** doctors, not patients, are asked.

The **sample of participants** 2 is 60 hospital doctors, 30 emergency medicine consultants and 30 psychiatrists, from hospitals across the UK. Each must have diagnosed at least one patient with Munchausen syndrome in the last five years. Two specialities are used because 3 emergency doctors see the patients first, while psychiatrists usually confirm the diagnosis. I will use **volunteer sampling** 4: an invitation is sent through two national medical associations, and the first 60 eligible doctors who reply take part.

2 **SAMPLE** ★ **Number**, **specialities** and who qualifies, all stated.

3 **SAMPLE** ★ A **reason** for using two specialities.

4 **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE** **Volunteer**: an invitation through medical associations.

The questionnaire is **online** 5, on a secure website, so busy doctors can complete it in about 15 minutes at a time that suits them. Each doctor answers about the most recent patient they diagnosed, so answers are based on one real case rather than a general impression. No patient names, dates of birth or hospitals are asked for 6, so patients cannot be identified, and doctors are identified only by a code.

5 **TECHNIQUE** **Online**, so busy doctors can fit it in.

6 **ETHICS** Patients cannot be **identified**, so confidentiality is kept.

Preview · full pack p. 6

There are 15 **closed questions** 7. For each feature, the doctor answers Yes, No or Not sure. Examples are "Did the patient give false or exaggerated accounts of their history?" 8, "Had the patient attended several different hospitals?", "Did the patient show a detailed knowledge of medical terms?", "Did the patient ask for invasive tests or surgery?" and "Was there evidence that test results had been tampered with, such as blood added to a urine sample?"

The answers give **quantitative data**. For **descriptive statistics**, I will calculate the **percentage** of doctors 9 who answered Yes for each feature, because this shows clearly how common each one is. I will also find the **mode** 10 for each question, because the answers are categories rather than numbers. The features are then ranked from most to least common, and shown on a bar chart with the 15 features on the x-axis and the p[illegible]tage of Yes answers on the [illegible]

7 **QUESTION FORMAT** **Closed**: Yes, No or Not sure, and how many.

8 **EXAMPLE QUESTIONS** Each question is one **diagnostic feature**.

9 **DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS** ★ A **percentage** shows how common each feature is.

10 **DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS** ★ The **mode**, because the answers are categories.

The rest of this plan is in the full pack

Including the sampling, the ethics and how the conclusion is reached, with every annotation.

Unlock the full pack →

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Partly locked · full pack p. 7

Psychological knowledge

8 marks

(b)(i) For one piece of psychological knowledge on which your plan is based, describe this psychological knowledge. — 4 marks

Munchausen syndrome [14] is when a person deliberately fakes or causes illness in themselves so that they can take on the role of a patient. Unlike malingering, there is no outside reward such as money. Essential features include pathological lying about symptoms and history, and travelling from hospital to hospital [15]. Supporting features include a detailed knowledge of medical terms, asking for invasive tests or surgery, tampering with test results, and having few visitors [16]. It is a type of factitious disorder, and patients often leave hospital when their story is questioned.

14 THEORY Defines Munchausen and how it differs from **malingering**.

15 THEORY The **essential** features.

16 THEORY The **supporting** features.

See how both features link to the plan

Part (b)(ii) for every question, each feature linked directly to the plan.

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C

June 2026 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 11

Explaining your choices

6 marks

(c)(i) Explain one reason for your choice of sample of participants. 2 marks

I chose doctors who have diagnosed the condition because they have **direct experience** of it 19. Munchausen is rare, so only these doctors can report the features of real cases 20.

19 1ST MARK The general reason: **direct experience**.

20 2ND MARK Applied: a rare condition.



Part (c), built for both marks

Every (c) answer shows the general point and the applied point, side by side.

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Locked · full pack p. 9

a

November 2025 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 11

The plan

10 marks

(a) Plan an experiment to investigate the effectiveness of biofeedback to manage stress in university students.

10 marks

Your plan must include details about:

- experimental design
- dependent variable

The aim is to find out whether biofeedback reduces stress in university students. My hypothesis is directional [1]: "Students who receive biofeedback training will show a significantly greater fall in muscle tension and stress ratings than students who do not."

[1] HYPOTHESIS **Directional**: biofeedback should **reduce** stress.

13 more questions like this

Field experiments, interviews, questionnaires and observations, all annotated.

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b

June 2024 · Paper 42 · Question 11

Psychological knowledge

8 marks

(b)(i) For one piece of psychological knowledge on which your plan is based, describe this psychological knowledge.

4 marks

Stress inoculation training (SIT), developed by **Meichenbaum (1985)** 13, aims to prevent stress by preparing people to cope before stressful events happen. It is based on the idea that stress comes from thinking about events in catastrophising ways. SIT has three phases: **conceptualisation**, where the person learns how they think about stress; **skill acquisition and rehearsal**, where they learn coping statements and relaxation; and **application and follow-through**, where they use the skills in real situations 14. N... lf-

13 THEORY Names SIT and who developed it.

...e phases,

Psychological knowledge, done properly

One piece of knowledge per answer, with two features linked straight into the plan.

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