FREE PREVIEW · 3 OF 18 ESSAYS INSIDE

MODEL ANSWERS

Cognitive Psychology

Description (AO1) + Evaluation (AO3) answers

18 MODEL ESSAYS

TOPIC B: COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

8 MARKS EACH

4 FOR AO1 · 4 FOR AO3

AO1 + AO3

DESCRIPTION + EVALUATION

a complete model answer for every question

2015–2026

COMPREHENSIVE PAST-PAPER

questions, most recent session first

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18 MODEL ESSAYS · 8 MARKS EACH

EVERY QUESTION, MOST RECENT EXAM SESSION FIRST

Q1	Schmolck et al. (2002): reliability and ethics	MAY 2026	
Q2	Ethics of case studies of brain-damaged patients: HM	MAY 2025	
Q3	Henry Molaison (HM): how useful is his case study?	JAN 2025	
Q4	Multi-store model (1968): serial position and levels of processing	MAY/JUN 2024	SAMPLE
Q5	Experimental methods in memory research: Loftus and Palmer (1974)	JAN 2023	
Q6	Experimental designs in memory research: repeated measures	MAY/JUN 2022	
Q7	Case studies of brain-damaged patients: HM and Schmolck et al.	JAN 2022	
Q8	Sacchi et al. (2007): reliability and validity	MAY/JUN 2021	
Q9	Laboratory experiments in memory research: Peterson and Peterson (1959)	OCT 2020	
Q10	Sacchi et al. (2007): doctored photographs and memory	JAN 2020	
Q11	Practical investigation: word length and short-term memory	JAN 2019	
Q12	Bartlett (1932): reconstructive memory and schema theory	MAY/JUN 2018	SAMPLE
Q13	Baddeley and Hitch (1974): is the working memory model complete?	JAN 2018	
Q14	Multi-store model (1968): HM, KF and the separate stores	MAY/JUN 2017	
Q15	Schmolck et al. (2002): semantic memory in HM and other patients	JAN 2017	
Q16	Working memory model: KF and the central executive	OCT 2016	
Q17	Bartlett (1932): the War of the Ghosts classic study	MAY/JUN 2016	
Q18	Reconstructive memory as a theory of everyday memory	SEP 2015 (SAM)	

MODELS OF MEMORY · RECONSTRUCTIVE MEMORY · BRAIN DAMAGE & CASE STUDIES · RESEARCH METHODS

Answers built to score full marks

Every page is one past-paper question and one complete 8-mark model answer.

18
MODEL ESSAYS
Topic B, every question

8
MARKS EACH
4 for AO1 · 4 for AO3

2015–26
PAST PAPERS
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COVERS ALL FOUR TOPIC AREAS

4 MODELS OF MEMORY

5 RECONSTRUCTIVE MEMORY

5 BRAIN DAMAGE & CASE STUDIES

4 RESEARCH METHODS

PAST PAPER · MAY/JUN 2018

Q12 Evaluate Bartlett's (1932) theory of reconstructive memory, including schema theory.

8 MARKS
AO1 4 · AO3 4

AO1 · DESCRIPTION

4 MARKS

Bartlett (1932) proposed that memory is **reconstructive**, not a perfect copy of events. When we recall something, we **rebuild** it using our existing knowledge. This knowledge is organised into **schemas**, which are mental packages of ideas built from experience. Schemas help us understand new information but can cause **distortion** when memories do not fit. In **War of the Ghosts**, English participants read a Native American folk story and recalled it several times. Recall became **shorter** and changed to fit their own culture, through **omissions**, **rationalisation** and **transformation**. Bartlett called this **effort after meaning**, because people try to make sense of unfamiliar information by changing it to fit their **schemas**.

AO3 · STRENGTH

LINK: VALIDITY

One strength is that **Loftus and Palmer (1974)** supports reconstructive memory. Participants who heard the verb 'smashed' estimated a higher speed, **40.8 mph**, than those who heard 'contacted', **31.8 mph**, and were more likely to report broken glass that was not in the film. This is a strength because the wording changed their **schema** of the crash, so their memory was **reconstructed**. Therefore, the theory has **supporting evidence** from controlled research, which increases its **validity**.

AO3 · WEAKNESS

LINK: VALIDITY

One weakness is that **schema** is a **vague concept**. Bartlett never defined exactly what a schema contains or how it works, so it is hard to test or falsify. His own data were also **qualitative** and scored by himself, which may have caused **researcher bias**. This is a weakness because the theory describes what happens but does not **explain** it fully. Therefore, the theory is **hard to test** and has limited **scientific validity**.

BALANCED CONCLUSION

Overall, reconstructive memory is supported by research showing that memory is influenced by prior knowledge. However, schema is vague and Bartlett's methods were poorly controlled, so the theory is influential but difficult to test.

EXAM TIP

Explain **schema theory** clearly in AO1, since the question names it, and use the three changes: **omission, rationalisation, transformation**.

MEMORY HOOK

Rebuild, don't replay

Memory is **rebuilt** from **schemas** each time, not **replayed** like a video.

KEY TERMS TO USE

- Reconstructive memory
- Schema
- Omission
- Rationalisation
- Transformation
- Effort after meaning
- Distortion

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✕ Describing War of the Ghosts without explaining schemas.
- ✕ Saying memory is an exact copy.
- ✕ Forgetting to link evaluation to the theory, not only the study.

WATCH

Still unsure how to write this answer?
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PAST PAPER · MAY/JUN 2024

Q4 Evaluate the multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

8 MARKS
AO1 4 · AO3 4

AO1 · DESCRIPTION

4 MARKS

Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) proposed the **multi-store model** to explain how memory is organised. Information from the environment enters the **sensory register**, which holds a large amount for a very short time. If it is **attended** to, it moves into **short-term memory**, which has a limited **capacity** of about seven items and a **duration** of around 18 to 30 seconds. **Maintenance rehearsal** keeps information in short-term memory and, if repeated enough, transfers it to **long-term memory**, which has unlimited capacity and can last a lifetime. Information is lost from the sensory register by **decay** and from short-term memory by **displacement** or decay. Long-term information must be **retrieved** to be used.

EXAM TIP

Describe how information **flows** through the stores, then use **capacity, duration and rehearsal** accurately.

MEMORY HOOK

Register, Short, Long
Attention moves it to

AO3 · STRENGTH

LINK: VALIDITY

One strength is that research supports **separate stores**. In Glanzer and Cunitz (1966), participants recalled word lists. When recall was delayed by 30 seconds of counting backwards, the recency effect disappeared, but the

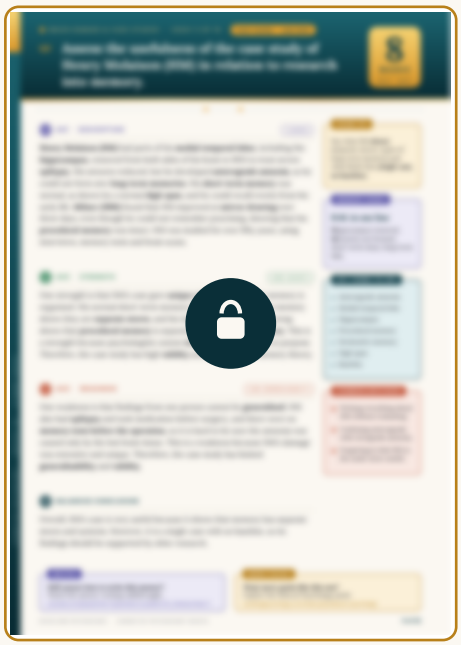
The rest of this answer is in the full pack

Strength · Weakness · Balanced conclusion
Memory hook · Key terms to use · Common mistakes

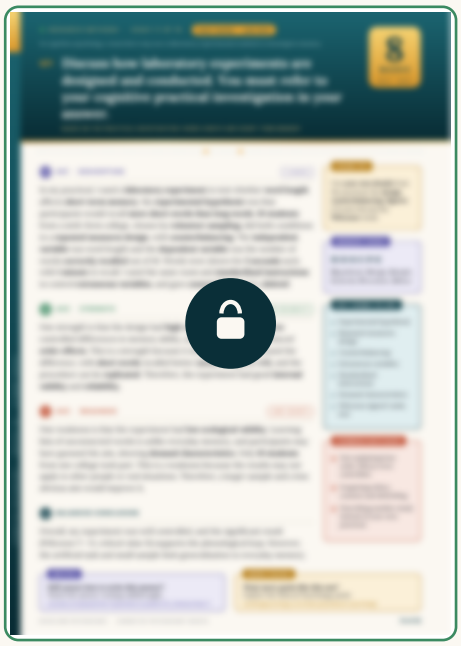
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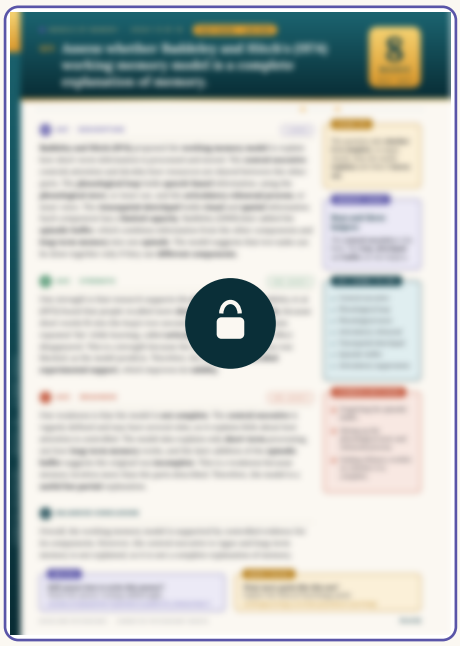
A glimpse of six more answers waiting in the full pack.



Q3
Henry Molaison (HM): how useful is his case study?



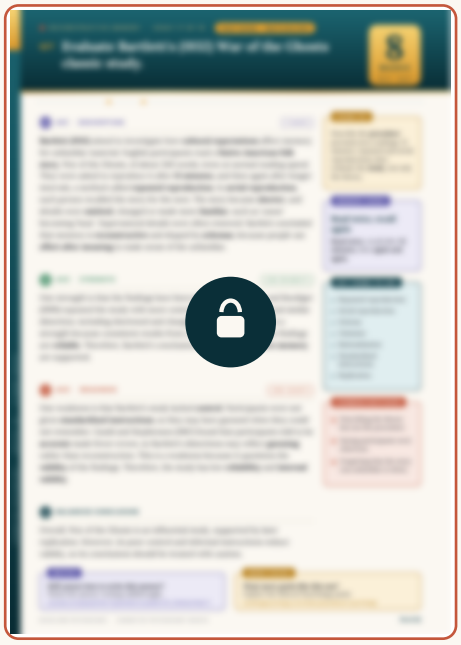
Q11
Practical investigation: word length and short-term memory



Q13
Baddeley and Hitch (1974): is the working memory model complete?



Q9
Laboratory experiments in memory research: Peterson and Peterson (1959)



Q17
Bartlett (1932): the War of the Ghosts classic study



Q16
Working memory model: KF and the central executive

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