

Explanations for Schizophrenia – Mark Scheme

Q1.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

[AO1 = 2, AO2 = 2]

AO1

Up to two marks for knowledge of one or more types of family dysfunction. Likely answers: double-bind; the schizophrenogenic mother; family schism and skew; communication difficulties; interpersonal conflict; high expressed emotion. Credit should be awarded for one type in some detail or for two (or more) done briefly. Candidates who simply name two types of dysfunction - credit one mark. No marks for simply naming one type.

AO2

Up to two marks for explanation of how the type(s) of dysfunction might be involved in schizophrenia. Candidates might consider the way in which the dysfunction could lead to the development of schizophrenia or might consider the possibility that schizophrenia in a child might lead to the family dysfunction.

Q2.

[AO2 = 4]

Level	Marks	Description
2	3 – 4	Knowledge of both components of the diathesis-stress model is clear and mostly accurate. The material is used appropriately to explain Louise's schizophrenia. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of terminology.
1	1 – 2	Some knowledge of the diathesis-stress model is evident. Links to Louise's schizophrenia are not always effective. The answer lacks accuracy and detail. Use of terminology is either absent or inappropriate.
	0	No relevant content.

Content:

Application of the diathesis-stress model as follows:

- genetic vulnerability interacts with stressful life events which trigger

- schizophrenia
- family background = genetic vulnerability
- losing parent / going to university = stressful events.

Q3.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

Although the essential content for this mark scheme remains the same, mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) take a different format as follows:

- A single set of numbered levels (formerly bands) to cover all skills
- Content appears as a bulleted list
- No IDA expectation in A Level essays, however, credit for references to issues, debates and approaches where relevant.

AO2 / AO3 = 16

Candidates are required to provide an evaluation of psychological explanations of schizophrenia. The question refers to **explanations** in the plural since it could be difficult for candidates to provide sufficient evaluative material on a single psychological explanation for full marks. However, given that evaluative points are often relevant to more than one explanation, no partial performance criteria apply for this question.

Candidates can legitimately refer to biological explanations but answers will only gain credit where the material is clearly used to offer commentary on the worth of psychological explanations. Detailed descriptions of biological explanations cannot gain credit. Similarly, detailed descriptions of psychological explanations cannot gain credit – the focus in this part of the question is on evaluation.

The evaluation can be both positive and negative:

One criticism of psychodynamic theory, for example, is that it places responsibility on mothers. The behavioural explanation is criticised, for example, because it is hard to accept that the bizarre and complex patterns of behaviour seen in people with schizophrenia can be acquired through simple learning processes; the cognitive explanation can be criticised for being descriptive rather than explanatory.

More general evaluations that apply to most psychological explanations include the following:

none of them can adequately account for the indisputable fact that schizophrenia runs in families and that the increased risk is directly associated with the degree of relatedness. There is a lack of strong empirical evidence to support the psychological explanations and there is also a problem of disentangling cause and effect (eg does faulty thinking cause schizophrenia or vice versa?). It is also legitimate to refer to therapies ie that treatments arising from psychodynamic and behavioural explanations appear to have little therapeutic effect in schizophrenia.

Another general point concerns the diversity of symptoms found in people diagnosed either with schizophrenia or a sub-type of schizophrenia – it may be the case, for example, that some explanations can account for certain symptoms better than others. Candidates might also use the diathesis-stress model as a way of reconciling biological and psychological explanations.

AO2/AO3 Mark bands	
16 – 13 marks Effective	Evaluation demonstrates sound analysis and understanding. The answer is well focused and shows coherent elaboration and/or a clear line of argument. Ideas are well structured and expressed clearly and fluently. Consistently effective use of psychological terminology. Appropriate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
12 – 9 marks Reasonable	Evaluation demonstrates reasonable analysis and understanding. The answer is generally focused and shows reasonable elaboration and/or a line of argument is evident. Most ideas appropriately structured and expressed clearly. Appropriate use of psychological terminology. Minor errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling only occasionally compromise meaning.
8 – 5 marks Basic	Analysis and evaluation demonstrate basic, superficial understanding. The answer is sometimes focused and shows some evidence of elaboration. Expression of ideas lacks clarity. Limited use of psychological terminology. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling are intrusive.
4 – 1 marks Rudimentary	Analysis and evaluation is rudimentary, demonstrating very limited understanding. The answer is weak, muddled and incomplete. Material is not used effectively and maybe mainly irrelevant. Deficiency in expression of ideas results in confusion and ambiguity. The answer lacks structure, often merely a series of unconnected assertions. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling are frequent and intrusive.
0 marks	No creditworthy material is presented.

Q4.

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO3 = 10

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. Evidence is clear. Discussion / evaluation / application is thorough and effective. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument sometimes lacking.
3	9 – 12	Knowledge is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. Evidence is presented. Discussion / evaluation / application is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	5 – 8	Some knowledge is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion / evaluation / application is

		only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 4	Knowledge is limited. Discussion / evaluation / application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Please note that although the content for this mark scheme remains the same, on most mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) content appears as a bulleted list.

AO1

Marks for knowledge of biological explanations for schizophrenia. Likely content: Schizophrenia – dopamine hypothesis – excess dopamine activity at the synapse; increased number of D2 receptors; genetic evidence eg Gottesman (2001) higher concordance for MZ pairs than DZ pairs; adoption studies (Tienara 1991); neuroanatomical correlates eg enlarged ventricles.

AO3

Up to 8 marks for evaluation of the biological explanation for schizophrenia. Likely content: other possible explanations eg role of social factors, possibly as a trigger; problems with the evidence, for example, issues with twin study evidence; reductionism – biological explanations – oversimplification to explain a complex multi-faceted disorder at the level of cells and chemicals; determinism – the extent to which the disorder might be avoidable, treatable etc. Other possible explanations eg role of social factors, possibly as a trigger; problems with the evidence, for example issues with twin study evidence; reductionism – biological explanations – oversimplification to explain a complex multi-faceted disorder at the level of cells and chemicals; determinism – the extent to which the disorder might be avoidable, treatable etc. Credit use of relevant evidence where used to evaluate the explanations.