IQM3008 A1 Teacher reference commentary

Sociology and Psychology presentation and viva

Selected synthetic examples for teacher standardisation. Review before distribution.

Use the approved question paper and marking guidance alongside these extracts. Consult this proposed commentary after independent marking. Partial excerpts cannot establish a whole-script or whole-portfolio mark.

Selected task Evidence and application

Compare how examples and research support the chosen claim. These extracts address different questions under the same AO2 and AO3 criteria.

Example X

PSY3 · Assess the extent to which social explanations account for conformity and resistance to conformity. Use research evidence and a realistic group situation.

Slide 3 Informational influence
Slide text: Other people can be treated as evidence when the answer is uncertain.
Speaker notes: Informational influence means using other people's responses to decide what is correct. If the student is unsure about the graph, several confident answers might make them reconsider. They may think the others understand the scale better. This could change both the public answer and the private belief. In a clear task, wanting acceptance may matter more; in a confusing task, wanting an accurate answer may matter more. I do not think it is always possible to identify the process just by observing agreement. A person could have both reasons at once.

Reference commentary: Good: a qualified extent judgement, an ally as a social explanation of resistance, and task-generalisation limits are developed. The evaluation rests mostly on one research tradition and does not weigh competing evidence extensively. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Example Y

PSY1 · Evaluate how biological and learning explanations contribute to understanding one clearly defined human behaviour. Use evidence to consider the interaction between nature and nurture.

Slide 3 Learning from others
Slide text: A person can observe another person's fear and copy avoidance.
Speaker notes: If a child watches an adult move away from a snake, the child might learn to move away too. The child does not have to be bitten first. Cook and Mineka investigated observational fear learning in rhesus monkeys. Their 1989 research compared responses to fear-relevant and fear-irrelevant stimuli. This makes learning relevant because the animals watched a model. I think it proves that children will acquire the same fear from watching adults, although I have not checked a study of children in the same situation.

Reference commentary: Adequate: identifies behavioural variation and the fear/avoidance distinction, and concedes major limits in the viva. No supported weighing of biological and learning contributions replaces the arbitrary fifty-fifty claim. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Example Z

PSY6 · Evaluate the strengths and limitations of experiments and correlational research for investigating the relationship between distraction and task performance. Use published research and propose a justified approach to a further study; do not conduct the study.

Slide 3 What a correlation measures
Slide text: Measure existing behaviour and performance. Consider direction and third variables.
Speaker notes: A correlational study might measure students' usual notification frequency and their performance on the same comprehension task. The researcher has not assigned their usual behaviour. Such a study can cover variation that an artificial experiment misses, but a relationship alone does not show which variable causes the other. Students who find a task difficult might check their phones more. Sleep, workload, motivation or prior reading ability could affect both checking and performance. Statistical adjustment can address measured variables under assumptions, but it cannot guarantee that every relevant alternative explanation has disappeared. A correlation is not useless; it is evidence about a pattern and a basis for more precise questions. It is simply weaker evidence for an unqualified causal claim.

Reference commentary: Excellent: sustained causal and ecological-validity evaluation, reverse causation, measured-confound limits, null-result interpretation and a reasoned experimental-first conclusion. The viva defends the main control trade-off. No study result is invented. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Selected task Viva refinement

Compare whether a viva answer defends, qualifies or repairs the presentation argument. Credit corrections, while judging the combined evidence.

Example X

PSY2 · How useful is social learning theory for explaining the acquisition of behaviour? Apply it to one everyday context and compare it with a behaviourist explanation.

Simulated viva
Q: How does the study distinguish observation from direct reinforcement?
A: The children saw a model before their later behaviour was measured. They had not all been directly rewarded for performing the model's exact actions. That makes observation relevant. I cannot say from this alone that every possible influence from the experimental situation was removed.
Q: What would you predict if the model changed?
A: A pupil might copy the new model if they paid attention and wanted to act like that person. I would not predict that every pupil must change immediately.

Reference commentary: Good: evaluates imitation versus durable learning and the laboratory-to-classroom gap; reaches a supported combined explanation. Alternative verbal instruction is recognised but not investigated in depth. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Example Y

PSY5 · How well do interference and retrieval failure explain forgetting? Apply both explanations to one learning situation and evaluate relevant research evidence.

Simulated viva
Q: Have you defined proactive interference correctly?
A: I have reversed it. Proactive is old learning interfering with new learning. Retroactive is new learning interfering with old. The example of an old-language word entering a new-language answer would be proactive.
Q: Does matching the room guarantee recall?

A: No. The study shows a context effect in its conditions, not a guarantee. My advice on that slide was too strong.

Reference commentary: Adequate: acknowledges context-generalisation limits, proposes cue-assisted recall as discriminating evidence and identifies a possible teaching-the-answer confound. Evaluation is uneven and has little interference research support. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Example Z

PSY4 · Compare the multi-store model and working memory model as explanations of short-term remembering. Which gives the more useful account for one everyday task, and why?
Simulated viva
Q: Which aspect of the task is difficult for one model to explain?
A: Selective interference is the key issue. If another spatial task disrupts map use more than a comparably demanding verbal task, a general short-term-store description is less informative. But the difference must survive controls for difficulty and switching; I cannot infer separate components from any difference at all.
Q: What limitation remains in your preferred account?
A: It can overuse the executive as an explanation. I would need to specify whether the difficulty concerns selecting a turn, switching attention or integrating words with locations, and identify evidence that distinguishes those possibilities.
Reference commentary: Excellent: sustained comparison, alternative explanations for dual-task costs, strategy variation and a task-dependent judgement. The viva reinforces the discriminating-evidence requirement. More detailed empirical weighing would support higher placement. This is commentary on the full alternative; the displayed extract alone cannot establish an AO mark. Compare it with the rest of the internal response before adopting the proposed judgement.

Controlled sources (SHA-256, 26 September 2026)
Candidate pack: 5b7fa93e75560d151b79840a871dc7d63f6902e2a01abf7290102890e44209e5
Delivery record: eba50bd77b3aa7bdd3d2dbe46c40110c21421ed4dc1bc11cd0e38face1af59e4
Topic/viva guidance: 6f34e1a688f63f9710b8ff90cc2e2876d4988af0bcaee83b3505ef3ba3e2fb1b