

Holism and Reductionism – Questions by Topic

Q1.

Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of a reductionist approach in psychology.

(Total 4 marks)

Q2.

Briefly outline what psychologists mean by 'levels of explanation'.

(Total 2 marks)

Q3.

Read the item and then answer the questions that follow.

Dr Grant and Dr Austin both study people with depression. Dr Grant carries out experimental research to investigate the brain chemistry of people with depression. Dr Austin carries out unstructured interviews with people with depression to find out about their symptoms and various aspects of their lives, including their general behaviour and their relationships.

(a) Referring to the item above, explain what is meant by holism and reductionism.

(4)

(b) Suggest **one** way in which Dr Austin might take account of ethical considerations when carrying out the interviews.

(1)

(Total 5 marks)

Q4.

A psychology student carried out a study of excitement at a theme park. She measured the heart rate of people waiting in the queue for a roller coaster.

The student's tutor said, 'Using heart rate as a measure of excitement is an example of biological reductionism.'

(a) Explain why measuring heart rate in this situation could be an example of biological reductionism.

(2)

(b) Outline **two** non-biological ways of measuring excitement that the student could also use in this situation.

(4)

(Total 6 marks)

Q5.

'The best way to understand and explain behaviour is to reduce it to the simplest component parts.'

In the context of the holism-reductionism debate, discuss this view. Refer to **at least one** topic in your answer.

(Total 16 marks)