

Phobias – Mark Scheme

Q1.

[AO1 = 2]

2 marks for a clear and coherent outline of flooding including all three bullet points.

1 mark for an outline that only includes one or two bullet points.

Content:

- immediate/direct/full exposure
- prevention of avoidance
- until they are calm/anxiety has receded/fear is extinguished

Q2.

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.

(a) **[AO1 = 2]**

Award up to two marks for an outline of a behavioural explanation of phobias. Likely content: the idea that phobias are learnt through classical conditioning; fear is acquired when a neutral stimulus becomes associated with a frightening event; description of the two-process theory; reference to avoidance learning; reference to generalisation.

Credit descriptions based on social learning theory.

Both of these marks may be awarded for an accurately labelled 'Pavlovian' diagram of how a phobia might develop.

Maximum 1 mark if outline does not refer to fear / phobias.

(b) **[AO1 = 1, AO2 = 2]**

AO1

One mark for identifying an appropriate limitation.

Likely answers: not all phobias are triggered by a traumatic experience; explanation cannot account for all phobias; fails to account for evidence that phobias may have a biological basis; difficulty explaining why some phobias are more common than others; the idea that the explanation can better account for specific phobias.

AO2

Up to 2 marks for discussion of the limitation which might include analysis / expansion; counter-argument; use of evidence; reference to alternative explanations.

Possible answer: Not all phobias are triggered by a traumatic experience (1),

where the initial association (between the phobic object / situation and fear) is formed (1), which suggests that alternative explanations are needed (1).

Accept limitations based on the methodology of individual studies eg Little Albert, but for full marks, these should be made relevant to discussion of the explanation.

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.

AO2 = 2

One weakness of SD is that it relies on the client's ability to be able to imagine the fearful situation. Some people cannot create a vivid image and thus SD is not effective. Another weakness is that while SD might be effective in the therapeutic situation, it may not work in the real world.

1 mark for a basic statement and a further mark for elaboration.

Q4.

(a) [AO2 = 4]

1 mark each for applied description of the following aspects of systematic desensitisation: relaxation, hierarchy development, gradual exposure.

Plus 1 further mark for some elaboration of any of the three aspects.

Content:

- Tommy would be taught relaxation techniques he could use when he encounters birds as part of the therapy.
- Tommy would devise his hierarchy so it reflects his least to most feared bird situation (for example, small picture of a sparrow, then a small bird through a window...).
- Tommy would then be exposed to birds gradually, ensuring he is relaxed at each stage.

(b) [AO3 = 2]

2 marks for a clear and coherent explanation of the benefits of systematic desensitisation over flooding as a treatment for a phobia for a child.

1 mark for a very brief, weak or muddled explanation.

Possible points:

- SD is gradual so the anxiety produced in the treatment is limited whereas in flooding the most feared situation is presented immediately which would be too traumatic for a small child.
- Tommy may not fully understand that consent to flooding would mean immediate exposure to his most feared situation so his consent to

systematic desensitisation increases his protection from harm.

Q5.

[AO2 = 4]

Level	Marks	Description
2	3 – 4	Knowledge of relevant aspects of the behavioural approach is clear and mostly accurate. The material is used appropriately to explain Kirsty’s phobia of balloons. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of behaviourist terminology.
1	1 – 2	Knowledge of aspects of the behavioural approach is evident although not always explicitly related to the acquisition of phobias. Links to Kirsty’s phobia are not always effective. The answer lacks accuracy and detail. Use of behaviourist terminology is either absent or inappropriate.
	0	No relevant content.

Credit features of classical and / or operant conditioning (the ‘two process model’) applied to Kirsty’s phobia of balloons.

Possible content:

- Kirsty’s phobia has developed through classical conditioning – she has formed an association between the neutral stimulus (balloon) and the response of fear
- the conditioned response is triggered every time she sees a balloon (or hears similar noises)
- her phobia has generalised to situations where balloons might be present, such as parties and weddings, and to similar noises, ‘banging’ and ‘popping’
- her phobia is maintained through operant conditioning – the relief she feels when avoiding balloons becomes reinforcing.

Credit other relevant features of conditioning applied to Kirsty’s phobia.

Q6.

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 = 6

Main techniques are: firstly, teach deep muscle or progressive relaxation. Then the therapist and client construct an anxiety hierarchy, starting with situations that cause a small amount of fear – in Hamish’s case this might be standing on a small stepladder – then listing situations that cause more fear, with the most frightening situation being at the top of the hierarchy, such as standing on top of a mountain. Finally, they work through this list, with the client remaining relaxed at each stage. The two main features are relaxation and working through the anxiety hierarchy.

6 marks Effective explanation Effective explanation of the main stages of systematic de-sensitisation demonstrating sound knowledge of the therapy as applied to fear of heights.
5 – 4 marks Reasonable explanation Reasonable explanation of the main stages of systematic de-sensitisation applied to fear of heights.
3 – 2 marks Basic explanation Basic explanation of systematic de-sensitisation with some attempt to apply to fear of heights.
1 mark Very brief/flawed or inappropriate Rudimentary, muddled explanation of systematic de-sensitisation demonstrating very limited knowledge
0 marks No creditworthy material.

Q7.

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

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. 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. 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

Remember not to credit information given in the quote

The emphasis of the behavioural approach is on the environment and how the behaviour is acquired, through classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning. For marks in the top two bands, the focus must be on explaining psychological abnormality, rather than on behaviour in general.

AO3

Discussion can include strengths; such as it has provided some convincing explanations for some disorders such as phobias and has also led to some very successful therapies (systematic desensitization). The weaknesses are that it ignores the role of biology and there is plenty of evidence to support a genetic transmission of some disorders. Studies (eg “Little Albert”) can be *used* as commentary.