

PSYCHOLOGY · CHAPTER 2

Methods of Enquiry in Psychology

A 1-page guide for parents · 90-second read.

EXPECTED MARKS

A well-prepared student should comfortably score 7-8 out of 8 on this chapter. Below 4 usually means the IV/DV distinction, the correlation rule, or the list of methods was never properly understood — all recoverable with a few worked examples and daily quizzing.

TIME TO MASTER

6-8 hrs

HELPLINE

70330 05444

WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS, IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Chapter 1 told your child WHAT psychology is; this chapter teaches HOW psychologists actually find things out — the scientific 'toolkit' of the subject. Your child learns the goals of research (to describe, predict, explain and control behaviour, and to apply that knowledge to help people), and the step-by-step method scientists follow. They study the main ways of collecting evidence: watching behaviour carefully (observation), running controlled experiments (where the researcher changes one thing — the 'independent variable' — to see its effect on another — the 'dependent variable'), measuring how two things move together (correlation), and asking people questions through surveys, interviews, case studies and psychological tests. A key big idea they must grasp is that 'correlation does not mean causation' — just because two things happen together doesn't mean one caused the other. Finally, they learn the ethics every researcher must follow: taking people's consent, not harming them, and keeping their information private. It is a method-heavy, vocabulary-heavy chapter, usually worth 6 to 8 marks.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- What are the goals of psychological research? (describe, predict, explain, control, apply)
- What is the difference between the independent variable and the dependent variable?
- Why does 'correlation not mean causation'? Can you give an example?
- What is the difference between a survey and a case study?
- What are the main ethical rules a researcher must follow? (consent, no harm, debriefing, confidentiality)

WEAK-SPOT INDICATORS

- Swaps the independent and dependent variables, or cannot say which one the experimenter changes.
- Thinks that if two things are correlated, one must be causing the other.
- Says the control group also gets the treatment, just less of it.
- Confuses a survey (many people, little detail) with a case study (one person, lots of detail).
- Cannot list the basic ethical safeguards (informed consent, debriefing, confidentiality).

WHEN TO WORRY — AND WHAT TO DO

If your child cannot explain the IV/DV difference AND cannot say why correlation is not causation, they will struggle in every later research-based question in the course, because these two ideas underpin all of psychology's evidence. The fix is not re-reading — it is active recall and worked examples: ask them to label the IV and DV in everyday situations ('Does more sleep improve test scores?') until it is automatic.

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