CAMBRIDGE
International Education

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

**PSYCHOLOGY** **9990/13**

Paper 1 Approaches, issues and debates **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

**Published**

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.



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**General marking principles**

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Examiners must award marks for each response in line with:<br><br>• the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme<br>• the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions<br>• the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts. |
| 2 | Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions). |
| 3 | Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that:<br><br>• marks are not deducted for errors or omissions<br>• marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate<br>• the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous. |
| 4 | Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly. |
| 5 | Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen. |
| 6 | Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind. |

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**Social Sciences-Specific Marking Principles**
**(for point-based marking)**

**1 Components using point-based marking:**

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

**a** DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)
**b** DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct
**c** DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons …).
**d** DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)
**e** DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities
**f** DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
**g** DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. corrasion/corrosion)

**2 Presentation of mark scheme:**

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

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**3 Calculation questions:**

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

**4 Annotation:**

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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## Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

## Annotations

| Annotation | Meaning |
|---|---|
|  | A creditworthy point made by the candidate<br>A creditworthy 'what' for a generic everyday application question |
|  | An incorrect response |
| BOD | Benefit of Doubt |
| REP | Repetition of a point |
|  | Unclear response |
| I | The named issue in the 10-mark essay |
| L1<br>L2<br>L3<br>L4<br>L5 | Levels used for the 10-mark essay (L1–L5)<br>Levels used for the 8-mark similarity/difference question (L1–L4) |

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| Annotation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| NAQ | Not Answering the Question |
| SEEN | The blank page has been seen.<br>An attached response has been seen. |
| + | A creditworthy strength in the 10-mark essay.<br>A creditworthy 'how' for a generic everyday application question |
| – | A creditworthy weakness in the 10-mark essay. |
| b | A creditworthy point in the 10-mark essay that is **b**rief |
| d | A creditworthy point in the 10-mark essay that is **d**etailed<br>The mark for data in **Q4** |
| i | A creditworthy identification mark in **Q6(b)** |
| e | A creditworthy example in **Q6(a)** |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1(a) | **From the study by Milgram (obedience):**<br><br>**State the maximum level of voltage labelled on the shock generator.**<br><br>1 mark for correct answer.<br><br>450 (volts/v). | **1** | Take the first answer only. |
| 1(b) | **One way that participants were deceived was when they were choosing to be the learner or the teacher. The participant had to choose a piece of paper from a hat, but both pieces of paper had the word 'teacher' written on them.**<br><br>**Outline two other ways that participants were deceived.**<br><br>1 mark per way deceived.<br><br>They thought the shocks given were real/shock generator was real.<br>They thought that the shocks would be extremely painful but cause no tissue damage.<br>They thought the learning task responses from the learner were real.<br>They thought that the feedback from the learner (pounding on the wall) was real.<br>They thought that the learner was also a 'real' participant.<br>They thought they had a genuine choice to be the teacher or the learner.<br>They thought the study was about the effects of punishment on memory. | **2** | Do **not** accept thought verbal responses were real. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1(c) | **Explain <u>one</u> reason why the participants were obedient in this study.**<br><br>2 marks for a full reason (must explain why).<br>1 mark for a partial/brief reason (might be a description only).<br><br>e.g., 2 marks<br>The experimenter was a legitimate authority figure. Wearing the technician's coat made him look authoritative.<br>The study took place at a prestigious university. It was presumed that the researchers were reputable.<br>The participant might have perceived the victim to have voluntarily agreed to his role. Therefore, he consented/understood he could have been the learner.<br>The participant had volunteered to participate so feels obliged to. As he has chosen, he might not want to disrupt the experiment.<br><br>e.g., 1 mark<br>The experimenter wore a technician's coat which made him look authoritative.<br>They had been paid to participate.<br>The study took place at a prestigious university.<br>The participant might have perceived the victim to have voluntarily agreed to his role.<br>The participant volunteered to participate so felt obliged to obey.<br><br>There are other creditworthy reasons, including the use of prods. | **2** | There are more explanations in the original journal paper.<br><br>For 2 marks there must be a valid reason/example given. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2(a) | **The sample in the study by Perry et al. (personal space) consisted of university students.**<br><br>**Identify <u>three</u> features of the sample, other than that they were university students.**<br><br>1 mark per correct feature.<br><br>n = 54<br>Males.<br>University of Haifa.<br>Age 19-32/average age 25.29<br>Gained course credit/volunteer sample.<br>Normal/corrected to normal vision.<br>No history of psychiatric/neurological conditions.<br>5 were left-handed. | **3** | List is definitive.<br><br>Tolerance for average age is 25–26. |
| 2(b) | **Explain <u>one</u> weakness of the sample.**<br><br>1 mark for identifying the weakness in relation to the sample.<br>1 mark for example from the study by Perry et al.<br><br>e.g.,<br>The study lacks generalisability (1 mark). The sample was all males so we cannot generalise the findings to females (1 mark).<br><br>There are other creditworthy weaknesses. | **2** | Accept weaknesses based on sampling technique. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | **A local newspaper has published a story about a young boy who needs therapy to help him overcome a unique phobia.**<br><br>**Suggest the therapy that the young boy could receive to help with his unique phobia, using your knowledge of the study by Saavedra and Silverman.**<br><br>1 mark per correct suggestion.<br><br>He may have been asked to describe any event that he felt caused his phobia.<br>He may have been interviewed using DSM to ensure he met the criteria for a specific phobia.<br>He may be asked to produce a Feelings Thermometer of distress ratings for his phobia.<br>He could be gradually exposed to the actual phobia.<br>And given positive reinforcement for completing tasks that gradually expose him to his phobia.<br>His mother might get involved in the gradual exposure sessions to give encouragement.<br>He could be asked to visualise his phobia.<br>He could be asked if there is anything that disgusts him about his phobia.<br>He may have some follow-ups after the therapy was completed.<br><br>There are other creditworthy suggestions. | **4** | If the candidate provides a specific unique phobia then this is perfectly fine.<br><br>ID mark available for 'exposure therapy' [imagery or behavioural].<br><br>Do **not** credit direct descriptions of Saavedra and Silverman. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4(a) | **Outline <u>one</u> assumption of the biological approach, including an example from the study by Dement and Kleitman (sleep and dreams).**<br><br>2 marks for full assumption.<br>1 mark for partial/brief assumption.<br>1 mark for example from the study by Dement and Kleitman (must be linked to given assumption).<br><br>e.g., 2 marks<br>Behaviour, cognition, and emotions can be explained in terms of the working of the brain and the effect of hormones, genetics, and evolution (any two of these needed)<br>Similarities and differences between people can be understood in terms of biological factors and their interaction with other factors.<br><br>e.g., 1 mark<br>Behaviour, cognitions, and emotions can be explained in terms of the working of the brain.<br>Similarities and differences between people can be understood in terms of biological factors.<br><br>e.g., example from Dement and Kleitman (applies to both assumptions)<br>In Dement and Kleitman REM/NREM sleep were identified by different brain waves.<br><br>There are other creditworthy responses. | **3** | Go with the intention of the candidate.<br><br>✓e = example mark.<br><br>The example mark for the first assumption can only be awarded if brain is mentioned in the assumption presented. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4(b) | **Outline <u>one</u> methodological strength of the study by Dement and Kleitman (sleep and dreams).**<br><br>1 mark for identifying the methodological strength.<br>1 mark for example from the study by Dement and Kleitman.<br><br>e.g.,<br>The procedure was standardised to make replication easier (1 mark: identification). For example, participants were woken up with a loud doorbell and asked to recall their dream so reliability can be tested (1 mark: example).<br><br>Other creditworthy strengths include: use of objective measures (EEG), quantitative data. | **2** | Do not accept any ethical strength.<br><br>Quantitative/standardisation/ validity by themselves is not enough for the ID mark. |

| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | **Suggest <u>two</u> applications to everyday life of the study by Pozzulo et al. (line-ups). Your suggestions <u>must</u> be ethical.**<br><br>1 mark for what the application is (clearly based on Pozzulo).<br>1 mark for how it will be achieved.<br><br>e.g.,<br>Can be useful for the police to improve children's eyewitness testimony (what) by not making it an expectation that they must choose someone from a line-up (how).<br><br>Can be used in interviewing children as witness (what) by dressing the interviewer in casual/less authoritative/less formal clothing (how) **or** do not question a decision to make a child doubt what they have chosen/said (alternative how).<br><br>There are other creditworthy applications. | **4** | Annotations:<br><br>Tick = what<br>Plus = how<br><br>Do **not** credit responses that simply state 'people/friends can…..' The application needs a specific population or specific scenario. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6(a)(i) | **From the study by Piliavin et al. (subway Samaritans)**<br><br>**Explain whether each ethical guideline below was broken:**<br><br>**minimising harm**<br><br>1 mark for explaining the guideline.<br>1 mark for an example from the study (showing broken or not).<br><br>e.g., guideline<br>Participants should leave a study in the same mental/physical state as entering.<br>In a study participants should not be exposed to more harm than they would in everyday life.<br>There should be an attempt at reversing possible harm from participating in a study.<br><br>e.g., example from study<br>Subway passengers/participants witnessed what they thought was someone collapsing and needing help, which could have been stressful. | **2** | |
| 6(a)(ii) | **right to withdraw**<br><br>1 mark for explaining the guideline.<br>1 mark for an example from the study (showing broken or not).<br><br>e.g., guideline<br>Participants should be free to leave the study at any time they want to.<br><br>e.g., example from study<br>The participants were not able to escape or leave the witnessed event as they were in a subway / car, **or** the participants could leave the critical area and move to the adjacent area. | **2** | Do **not** accept tautological responses, e.g., the passengers were not aware of their right to withdraw.<br><br>Do accept a/the people could/could not decide to <u>leave</u> a/the study for the guideline mark. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6(b) | Explain how the ethical guideline of confidentiality was followed.<br><br>1 mark for outlining the guideline of confidentiality.<br>1 mark for an example showing how the study adhered to confidentiality.<br><br>Any data should not be identifiable as a single participants' responses/participants' data must not be named as theirs (outline).<br>All we know is that they were passengers on a subway in New York/travelling between Harlem and Bronx (how). | **2** | The **how** mark can only be awarded with a direct example from the study. |

| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | **The debate about individual and situational explanations relates to the study by Andrade (doodling).**<br><br>**Outline what is meant by this debate, including <u>one</u> example of the individual explanation and <u>one</u> example of the situational explanation.**<br><br>Both examples **must** be from the study by Andrade.<br><br>1 mark for outlining individual explanation **plus** 1 mark for example from Andrade.<br>1 mark for outlining situational explanation **plus** 1 mark for example from Andrade.<br><br>e.g., individual<br>The individual side refers to behaviours from factors within the person/organism (dispositional) (1 mark). There were individual differences in the amount of doodling that each participant engaged in. (1 mark)<br><br>e.g., situational<br>The situational side refers to behaviour from factors in the external environment (1 mark). The situation of a boring/monotonous telephone message made the participants doodle (1 mark).<br><br>There are other creditworthy examples. | **4** | Ignore tautological definitions.<br><br>✓e = example mark.<br><br>Any example that portrays individual differences in doodling or cognitive process is creditworthy for the example of an individual explanation. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | **Describe the background to the study by Hölzel et al. (mindfulness and brain scans).**<br><br>1 mark per correct point.<br><br>e.g.,<br>Mindfulness has been shown to have positive psychological/mental effects.<br>Mindfulness has been increasingly used in therapy to help patients.<br>Mindfulness has been shown to help reduce anxiety/depression/pain.<br>Neuroimaging has been used to explore (neural) mechanisms linked to mindfulness.<br>These include using EEGs/fMRIs.<br>Previous research showed anatomical differences in grey matter/brain structure in people who have been engaged in meditation for a long time (cross-sectional).<br>The hippocampus is an area of interest as it is one area that 'changes' during meditation/mindfulness practice.<br>Research has been clearly showing that neural systems can be modified/changed in people engaging in mindfulness-type activities.<br>There had been no/limited studies looking at the effect longitudinally.<br><br>There are other creditworthy responses. | **5** | Ignore any reference to what Hölzel did or found as this is about information prior to the study.<br><br>Do **not** credit any response related to stress, hormones and mindfulness.<br><br>1 mark available for the aim of the study. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9(a) | **In one part of the study by Bandura et al. (aggression), the children used potato prints and stickers to design pictures. While each child was doing this, a model was taken to the opposite corner of the room. In the aggressive condition and the non-aggressive condition, the model behaved differently.**<br><br>**Describe how the model behaved in the aggressive condition.**<br><br>1 mark per correct point.<br><br>The model began assembling tinker toys.<br>The model would lay the Bobo doll on its side/sat on it.<br>The model would then punch the Bobo doll in the face/nose.<br>The model would then hit the Bobo doll on the head with a mallet/hammer.<br>The model would then throw the Bobo doll in the air.<br>The model would kick the Bobo doll.<br>The sequence of physical aggression was repeated (approximately) three times/lasted for 10 minutes.<br>Saying things like 'hit him down'/ 'throw him in the air'/'kick him'/'pow' (max 1 mark). | **4** | List is definitive. |

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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9(b) | **Explain <u>one</u> similarity and <u>one</u> difference between the study by Bandura et al. (aggression) and the study by Perry et al (personal space). Do <u>not</u> refer to the sample <u>or</u> approaches in your answer.**<br><br>Use the marking grid below.<br><br>4 marks for the similarity, e.g., experimental, lack mundane realism, quantitative data collection, ethics, reliability,<br>4 marks for the difference, e.g., validity, ethics, use of a model.<br><br>e.g., similarity<br>4 marks<br>Both studies collected quantitative data. This allowed direct/statistical comparisons to be made across groups and conditions (explanation). In the Perry study, the percentage distance from the centre of the room was measured for four objects/people. In Bandura, all children were rated before the study for levels of aggressiveness on a numerical scale.<br><br>3 marks<br>Both studies collected quantitative data. In the Perry study, the percentage distance from the centre of the room was measured. In Bandura, all children were rated before the study for levels of aggressiveness.<br><br>2 marks<br>Both studies collected quantitative data. In the Perry study, the percentage distance from the centre of the room was measured.<br><br>1 mark<br>Both studies collected quantitative data. | **8** | Award L1-L4 for similarity.<br>Award L1-L4 for difference.<br><br>For Level 4 there must be some attempt at *explaining* the similarity or difference.<br><br>Max Level 3 can be awarded if the answer is just description with no explanation.<br><br>Do **not** credit responses about the sample, sampling technique, generalisations from the sample or approaches.<br><br>Different aim = L1<br><br>If the similarity/difference is not explicitly stated by the candidate then L2 max.<br><br>'Easy to analyse/compare' is <u>not</u> an explanation for quantitative data. |

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<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th><th>Guidance</th></tr>
<tr><td>9(b)</td><td>
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<tr><th>Mark/ Level</th><th>Description</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>The similarity/difference is well explained using both studies as examples.</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>The similarity/difference is well explained but only one study is used as an example OR<br>both studies are used briefly.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>The similarity/difference is brief with an attempt at using at least one study as an example OR<br>The similarity/difference is well explained but there is no study evidence.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>The similarity/difference is brief with no attempt at using the studies as examples.</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>No creditable response.</td></tr>
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| Question | Answer | Marks | Guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | **Evaluate the study by Hassett et al. (monkey toy preferences) in terms of <u>two</u> strengths and <u>two</u> weaknesses. At least one of your evaluation points <u>must</u> be about generalisations.**<br><br>Strengths include reliability, standardisation, validity (internal), observations, ethics<br>Weaknesses include validity (external), sample, categorisation of toys.<br><br>Example: in detail<br>The sample only had 34 rhesus monkeys as part of it. This could make generalisations difficult. This is because some of the troop were not used in the study as they were too young to be reliably identified and these may have played differently/chosen different toys/from a captivity troop. Therefore, the findings about monkey toy preferences may only apply to those in the sample/not apply to monkeys who live in the wild where toy choice is not available.<br><br>Example: brief but in context<br>The sample only had 34 rhesus monkeys as part of it. This could make generalisations difficult as they might not represent the whole troop.<br><br>Example: no context<br>The study followed a standardised procedure making it easier to replicate. | **10** | Consult guidance document about how to place a response into an appropriate Level.<br><br>Ignore arguments about the ethics of not being in the wild. They were captive bred.<br><br>The list of ethical guidelines that are creditworthy are:<br><br>Minimising harm<br>Replacement<br>Species<br>Numbers<br>Pain/Distress<br>Housing<br>Reward/deprivation/aversive.<br><br>Ignore human ethical guidelines.<br><br>Main evidence includes:<br><br>Housing<br>• Size of enclosure (25 × 25)<br>• Fed monkey chow every day/ water present/fruit and veg available.<br>• Socially housed in troop<br>• Temperature controlled |

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<tr><th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Mark</th></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>• Very good evaluation including the named issue.<br>• Thoroughly addresses both strengths and both weaknesses in detail.<br>• Selection of evidence is very thorough and effective.</td><td>9–10</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>• Good evaluation including the named issue.<br>• Addresses strengths and weaknesses but may include three or four points. The majority of the points are in depth.<br>• Selection of evidence is thorough and effective.</td><td>7–8</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>• Mostly appropriate evaluation but may not include the named issue.<br>• Addresses either two strengths or two weaknesses in detail or one of each in detail or all four briefly.<br>• Selection of evidence is mostly effective.</td><td>5–6</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>• Weak evaluation and may not include the named issue.<br>• Addresses either a strength or a weakness. Evaluation points are brief.<br>• Some points may have no context.<br>• Selection of evidence is sometimes appropriate.</td><td>3–4</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>• Little or no evaluation.<br>• Discussion of strengths and weaknesses is absent or superficial.<br>• Selection of evidence is limited.</td><td>1–2</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>No creditable response.</td><td></td></tr>
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<td>Minimising harm/distress<br>• Use of video cameras.<br>• Familiarity with keepers in enclosure/lived in enclosure for 25+ years.<br>• One monkey tore toy apart (broken)<br><br>Observer bias – needs a specified behaviour from the checklist to be explained as to how it could be observed with bias to get tick-d, otherwise tick-b</td>
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