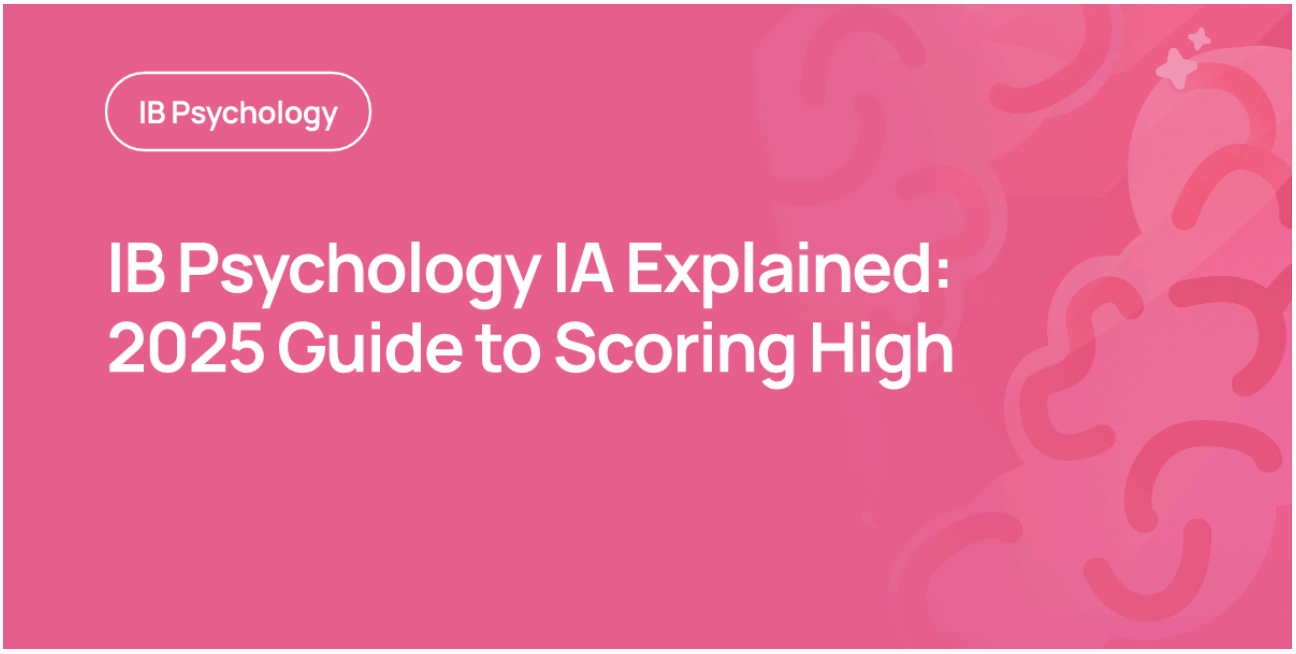
IB Psychology IA Explained: 2025 Guide to Scoring…

revisiondojo.com/blog/ib-psychology-ia-explained-complete-2025-guide-to-scoring-high

RevisionDojo Team July 7, 2025

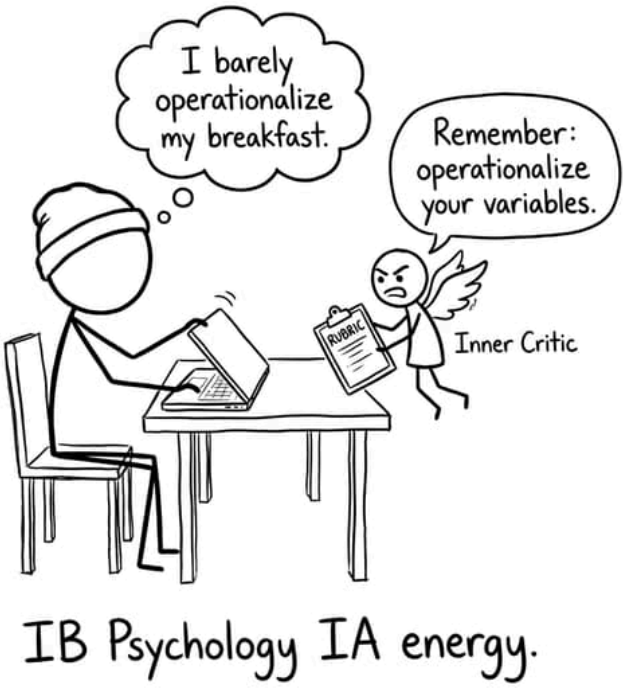


IB Psychology IA Explained: what high scores actually feel like

The night you start your **IB Psychology** IA, you can feel it: your topic is interesting, your brain is busy, and your document is empty. That gap between curiosity and clarity is where most marks quietly disappear.

The good news is that the **IB Psychology** IA is not a creativity contest. It is a controlled demonstration of research thinking: define one thing clearly, measure it sensibly, analyse it honestly, then evaluate it like a psychologist (not a salesperson). If you do that, your work reads calm and convincing; and examiners reward that.

If you want a fast way to check you are meeting the rubric while you draft, open RevisionDojo's IB Psychology IA examples and rubric grader alongside this guide.



A student vs the rubric

IB Psychology IA quick checklist (copy into your draft)

Before you write another paragraph, run this checklist. It keeps your **IB Psychology** IA "markable" from the start.

- A single, specific aim with one clear IV and DV
- Operational definitions that are measurable (not "more focused" or "less stressed" without a scale)
- A replicable method: participants, materials, procedure, controls
- Ethics described clearly: consent, withdrawal, confidentiality
- Results: descriptive statistics plus one appropriate inferential test
- Evaluation: strengths, limitations, and realistic improvements that match your method

For research method wording and definitions, RevisionDojo's IB Psychology Research Methods notes are an easy reference when your phrasing starts to drift.

Understanding the four criteria (22 marks) in plain English

The **IB Psychology** IA is marked out of 22, split into four criteria. Think of each one as a different promise you are making to the reader.

Introduction (6 marks): promise clarity

Your introduction is not a mini textbook chapter. It is a contract.

- **State an aim** that could fit on one line and still be precise.
- **Anchor the aim to one theory or concept** you will actually use later.
- **Operationalize IV and DV** so the reader could replicate your work without guessing.
- **Write a hypothesis (or null)** that matches the design and variables.

A practical trick: if your hypothesis contains words like “better,” “worse,” or “more stressed,” translate them into what you will measure (time, score, number of items recalled, rating scale total). That one move often lifts an **IB Psychology** IA from “interesting” to “credible.”

Exploration (4 marks): promise replicability

Exploration marks go to students who write like researchers, not like diarists.

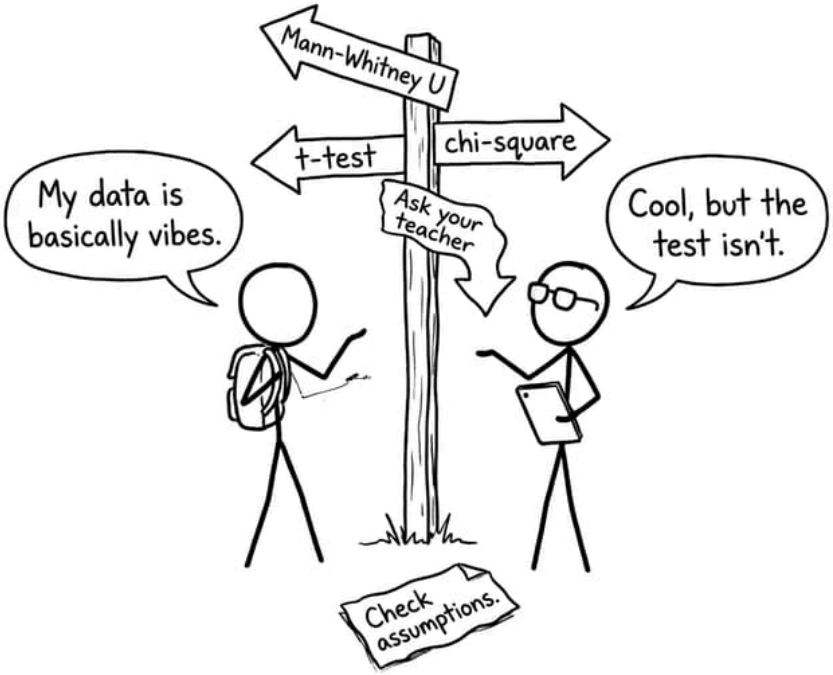
- **Name the design** (independent measures, repeated measures, matched pairs) and justify it.
- **Sampling**: say who, how many, how you recruited them, and why that choice is reasonable.
- **Controls**: identify the most important extraneous variables and what you did about them.
- **Materials**: list what you used and why it fits the task.

Analysis (6 marks): promise honesty with numbers

This is where many **IB Psychology** IAs lose easy marks: students either overcomplicate statistics or under-explain them.

You want three layers:

- **Descriptive statistics**: mean, median, range, standard deviation (as appropriate).
- **A suitable inferential test** that matches your design and data type.
- **Interpretation in context**: what the numbers suggest about your hypothesis.



Two students arguing about stats

Evaluation (6 marks): promise mature judgment

Evaluation is not “here are ten limitations.” It is: what mattered most, what it did to your conclusions, and what you would change next time.

A high-scoring evaluation usually includes:

- **Link back to the theory** you used in the introduction.
- **Two to four major limitations** (design, sampling, controls, demand characteristics, measurement issues).
- **Specific improvements** that actually fix those limitations.
- **A conclusion** that matches your results, without overstating causality.

If you want to see what “examiner-friendly” evaluation looks like, browse one strong model in RevisionDojo’s coursework library: Psychology exemplar on anchoring bias.

Common mistakes in IB Psychology IA (and quick fixes)

Most students do not fail the **IB Psychology** IA because they are careless. They fail because they rush decisions that should be made slowly.

- **Mistake: Aim is broad.** Fix: cut to one IV and one DV, then rewrite the aim as a single sentence.

- **Mistake: Variables are not operationalized.** Fix: add units, scales, and exact procedures (what is timed, counted, or scored).
- **Mistake: Stats are performed but not explained.** Fix: add a short paragraph that explains what the test examines and what p-value implies in your context.
- **Mistake: Evaluation is generic.** Fix: pick the biggest limitation and show how it changes confidence in your conclusion.



Ethics table joke

How RevisionDojo helps you score higher (without adding stress)

When your **IB Psychology** IA draft starts to feel messy, it helps to have one place that behaves like a calm second brain.

- Use the **AI Chat** to pressure-test whether your operational definitions are measurable and replicable.
- Use the **Coursework Library** to compare structure, tone, and evaluation depth.
- If you are preparing for finals while drafting, build exam stamina with RevisionDojo's **Questionbank**, **Mock Exams**, and **Predicted Papers** so your IA does not steal all your revision time.

FAQ: IB Psychology IA (2025)

How long should an IB Psychology IA be?

Most schools aim for a full investigation report that is long enough to address all four criteria with clarity, usually around 1,800 to 2,200 words. The important point is not the number but the coverage: each section must do its job. If your introduction is a page of theory that never returns in the discussion, you are spending words but not earning marks. If your method is too brief to replicate, you will lose marks even if the idea is strong. A helpful approach is to draft slightly long, then cut repetition and keep only what supports the rubric. In **IB Psychology**, concise writing often reads more scientific, which helps your evaluator trust you.

Do I have to run a real experiment for IB Psychology?

In most current classrooms, students complete an experimental investigation, often as a controlled replication or simplified version of a known effect. The reason is practical: experiments make it easier to define IVs and DVs, control extraneous variables, and use a clear inferential test. That said, syllabus updates can shift emphasis over time, so always follow your teacher's guidance for your cohort. Even when the task evolves, the examiner logic stays similar: your method must be justified, ethical, and replicable. If you treat the work as a research argument rather than a school project, you will be safe across formats. RevisionDojo's IB Psychology (First Exam 2027) Internal Assessment Guide is also useful for understanding how expectations may evolve.

Which statistical test should I use in my IB Psychology IA?

The best test depends on your design and data type, not on what looks impressive in a spreadsheet. If you are comparing two means from different groups, a t-test may be appropriate, provided assumptions are reasonably met and your teacher approves. If your data are categorical counts (choices, categories, frequencies), chi-square is often a better match. Some investigations require non-parametric tests when data do not meet normality assumptions, and that decision can be part of a thoughtful evaluation. What matters is that you can explain what your test is checking and what your result implies for your hypothesis. In **IB Psychology**, clear justification beats complicated calculation every time.

Conclusion: score high by being simple on purpose

A strong **IB Psychology** IA is built like a quiet experiment: one clear question, one clean method, one honest analysis, one mature evaluation. The students who score highest are not the ones with the most dramatic topics. They are the ones who make fewer promises, and keep every single one.

If you want to finish your **IB Psychology** IA with confidence, use RevisionDojo as your home base: the **Questionbank** for exam practice, **Study Notes** and **Flashcards** for theory, **AI Chat** for fast clarity, **Grading tools** for rubric alignment, the **Coursework Library** for models, plus **Tutors**, **Mock Exams**, and **Predicted Papers** when you need structure under pressure.