

Cambridge AS & A Level · Psychology 9990 · Notes

Motivation to work A2

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What you need to know

Motivation to work is the first topic of the Organisational psychology option (Papers 3 and 4). It asks what makes people want to work hard, and how an employer can use that. You should be able to:

1. **Need theories: Maslow's hierarchy of needs** with its **five needs**, plus a study that uses it, such as **Saeednia (2011)**; and **McClelland's theory of achievement motivation** with its three needs: **achievement, affiliation and power**.
2. **Cognitive theories: Latham and Locke's goal-setting theory**, with its **goal-setting principles** and **SMART goals**; and **Vroom's VIE (expectancy) theory**.
3. **Extrinsic motivators**: reward systems that use money, namely **pay, bonuses, profit-sharing** and **performance-related pay**.
4. **Intrinsic motivators**: rewards that cost no money, namely **praise, respect, recognition, empowerment** and **a sense of belonging**.
5. **Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory**, with its three needs, **competence, autonomy** and **relatedness**, and the key study **Landry et al. (2019)**, which applies it to rewards. Know **study 1** in detail; you don't need the method of study 2.
6. **Evaluate all of it** with the issues the syllabus names for this topic: application to everyday life, individual and situational explanations, cultural differences, determinism versus free will, validity, reductionism versus holism, idiographic versus nomothetic, and generalisations from findings.

Studies marked "e.g." in the syllabus can be swapped for another suitable one; the key study cannot. Before 2024 the topic also had **equity theory** (Adams) and **ERG theory** (Alderfer); they are under "Older syllabus content" because older questions ask about them.

Understand it

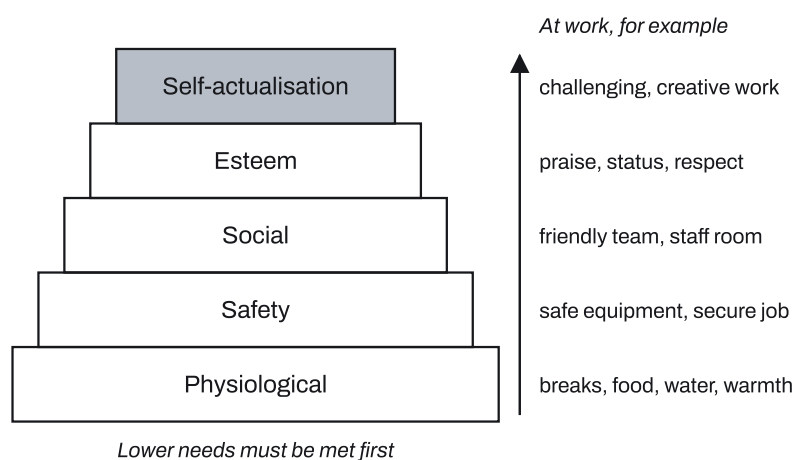
The topic at a glance

Part	Theory or idea	What it says drives effort
Need theories	Maslow's hierarchy; McClelland's achievement motivation	Needs inside the person that work can satisfy
Cognitive theories	Latham and Locke's goal setting; Vroom's VIE	How the person thinks about goals, effort and rewards
Motivators at work	Extrinsic (money) and intrinsic (non-monetary) rewards	What the organisation gives in return for work
Motivators at work	Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory; Landry et al. (2019)	Three basic needs, and whether a reward supports or threatens them

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside the job: you work for something you get in return, such as money. **Intrinsic** motivation comes from the work itself: you work because doing it well feels good. This distinction runs through the whole topic.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow arranged human needs in a **hierarchy**, from basic survival at the bottom to personal growth at the top. The key rule: a **lower need must be met before** the next one up starts to motivate. A hungry, exhausted worker will not care about status.



Need (bottom to top)	What it is	How a workplace could meet it
Physiological	survival: food, drink, warmth, rest	rest breaks, drinking water, a warm canteen
Safety	being secure and protected from harm	safety equipment and rules, a secure contract

Need (bottom to top)	What it is	How a workplace could meet it
Social (belonging)	relationships, affection, being part of a group	team activities, a room where staff can eat together
Esteem	achievement, mastery, status, being respected	praise, feedback, a job title, promotion
Self-actualisation	reaching your full potential, feeling fulfilled	creative or challenging projects, training to grow

Maslow later added **cognitive** (knowing and understanding), **aesthetic** (beauty, art, music) and **transcendence** (helping others reach their potential), giving eight needs. You need the five; knowing the extra three can help when a question lists them.

For a question about a workplace, remember that **pay already being good** does not finish the job: a manager can still work up the hierarchy with breaks, belonging, esteem and growth.

Saeednia (2011): measuring Maslow's needs

Aim: to develop a reliable way of measuring how well young children's **basic needs** are satisfied.

Procedure: first, **13** children each had an **open-ended interview**, and their **parent** and **educator** (teacher) were interviewed too, giving **qualitative** data. From this a measure was built covering Maslow's **five needs** plus a **need to know and understand**. It was then given to **300** participants.

Results: the measure was found to be **reliable** and fairly **valid**.

Evaluating it:

- **Validity:** checking each child's answers against a parent and an educator gives a fuller, more trustworthy picture than the child alone.
- **Generalisations and culture:** all the children came from one prosperous capital, **Tehran, Iran**, so children growing up in villages or poorer areas might answer differently, as the researcher pointed out.
- **Application:** a way of measuring which needs are met could be adapted to find which needs are unmet in a workplace.

McClelland's theory of achievement motivation

McClelland said every worker has three **work-related needs**, in different strengths:

Need	What the person wants	At work
Achievement	to succeed and master tasks through their own effort , not luck	wants targets, feedback and hard but possible tasks
Affiliation	to be liked and accepted ; to build friendships	values a friendly team; avoids conflict

Need	What the person wants	At work
Power	to influence and control others	wants responsibility for people; may enjoy keeping discipline

Unlike Maslow, these needs are **not a hierarchy**: a person can be high in one and low in another, in any combination. McClelland argued that effective **managers** are usually high in the **need for power**, rather than achievement, and low in affiliation. Need for affiliation can be measured with the **Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**, in which a person tells stories about a set of ambiguous pictures.

Comparing the two need theories

	Maslow	McClelland
Structure	a hierarchy: lower needs first	three separate needs, no order
Focus	human needs in general	needs at work
Determinism	more deterministic: you can't move up until lower needs are met	less: any mix of needs is possible
Individual differences	the same order for everyone	people differ in the strength of each need
Measurement	not usually measured at work	measurable, for example with the TAT

Latham and Locke's goal-setting theory

Latham and Locke found that **specific, difficult** goals lead to **better performance** than vague goals ("do your best") or easy ones. A goal motivates when it follows five **goal-setting principles** (the "four Cs and an F"):

1. **Clarity**: the goal is precise and can be measured, so there's no doubt what counts as success.
2. **Challenge**: hard enough that meeting it feels like an achievement.
3. **Commitment**: the worker understands and agrees to the goal.
4. **Feedback**: progress is reviewed, so the goal can be clarified or its difficulty adjusted, and success is noticed.
5. **Task complexity**: the worker has the skill and time to do it; an overly complex task demotivates.

SMART goals put the principles into practice. A goal should be:

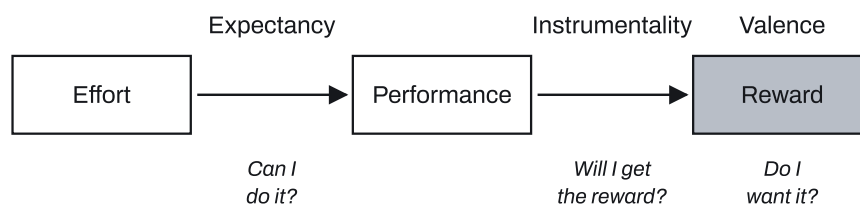
Letter	Meaning	Example: a library assistant
S	Specific	re-shelve returned books in the science section
M	Measurable	150 books a shift
A	Attainable (or agreed)	agreed with the assistant as possible in a 4-hour shift
R	Relevant (or realistic)	readers can find the books they're looking for

Letter	Meaning	Example: a library assistant
T	Time-bound	starting next Monday, reviewed after two weeks

Describing SMART goals alone is not the whole theory: also give the main finding (specific, hard goals beat vague, easy ones) and the five principles.

Vroom's VIE (expectancy) theory

Vroom's idea is that people act to get things they want and avoid things they don't. Before putting in effort, a worker (often without realising it) weighs up **three beliefs**:



$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Valence} \times \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality}$$

- **Expectancy (E):** "If I try, **can I do it?**" The worker's confidence that effort will lead to good performance. A worker who feels unable to do the task won't try.
- **Instrumentality (I):** "If I do it, **will I get the reward?**" The belief that performing well really does lead to the promised outcome.
- **Valence (V):** "Do I **want** the reward?" How much the worker values the outcome. A reward they don't care about has a valence of zero; the more they value it, the harder they will work for it.

$$\text{Motivation} = V \times I \times E$$

Because the three are **multiplied**, if any one is **zero**, motivation is **zero**: a huge bonus means nothing to someone who is sure they can't reach the target.

Using it as a manager: find out which rewards each worker actually values (valence; it is the worker's preference, not the organisation's, and it need not be money); make it clear that good work **will** be rewarded, and keep that promise (instrumentality); and give training and resources so workers believe they can succeed (expectancy).

Extrinsic motivators: reward systems

Reward system	What it is	Example
Pay	the wage or salary for the job, hourly or yearly	a raise for all warehouse staff
Bonuses	a one-off extra payment, for hitting a goal or at a set time of year	a payment when the team beats its quarterly sales goal

Reward system	What it is	Example
Profit-sharing	a percentage of the company's profit is shared among the staff, usually once a year	5% of the year's profit divided among all employees before the holidays
Performance-related pay	pay rises with performance against targets set for a person or a team	extra pay for each repair completed above the weekly target

These work through **reinforcement** (operant conditioning): behaviour that earns money is repeated.

Evaluating extrinsic motivators:

- **Strengths:** many people work mainly for money, and some people care more about their life outside the job than the job itself, so the wage is what keeps them coming in; money is clear and easy to measure; profit-sharing can make staff feel part of the company, raising commitment and cutting absence; performance-related pay can feel fair, since harder work earns more.
- **Weaknesses:** profit-sharing can't be used where there is **no profit** (a state school, the fire service); money can **crowd out intrinsic motivation**, so people work only for the reward, with less autonomy and enjoyment; individual bonuses can create rivalry; they cost the organisation money.

Intrinsic motivators: non-monetary rewards

Reward	What it is	Why it motivates
Praise	telling someone they've done well	it feels good, and costs nothing; it must be given fairly and consistently
Respect	being valued by managers and colleagues, for example asked for advice	the worker feels their skill is trusted
Recognition	the organisation formally noticing good work: an award, a certificate, "employee of the month"	hard work is seen and valued publicly
Empowerment	being given autonomy to make decisions and work independently	feeling trusted makes the worker want to do the job well
A sense of belonging	seeing yourself as one of the team, glad to say where you work	people who identify with their workplace tend to stay and put in effort for it

Holidays, bonuses and company cars are **not** non-monetary rewards: they have a cash value.

Evaluating intrinsic motivators:

- **Strengths:** little or no cost to the organisation, while still giving a keener workforce that can raise profits; they meet higher needs (esteem, social, self-actualisation).
- **Weaknesses:** **individual differences** (some people care little for praise); praise doesn't pay the bills; colleagues may resent a worker who is singled out.

- **Culture:** in **individualist** cultures people may value personal praise more; in **collectivist** cultures, praise of one person may seem immodest, and a **sense of belonging** may matter more.

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory

Deci and Ryan propose that everyone has **three innate psychological needs**. When work meets them, people grow, feel well and are **intrinsically** motivated:

Need	Meaning	At work
Competence	feeling skilled, and that your efforts make things turn out as you want; getting good at tasks	training, regular reviews and feedback
Autonomy	feeling in control of your own actions and goals	setting your own targets or schedule
Relatedness	having people around you who care about you and back you up	good leadership, a supportive team

The theory also predicts that a reward can **damage** intrinsic motivation if it feels **controlling**: someone already enjoying the work, who is then paid to do it, may start working only for the pay and feel less in charge of their own behaviour. Whether a reward helps or harms depends on how it is **presented**.

Key study: Landry et al. (2019), study 1

Aim: to find out whether the way a money reward is presented, as **supporting** autonomy or as **controlling**, changes need satisfaction, motivation and performance.

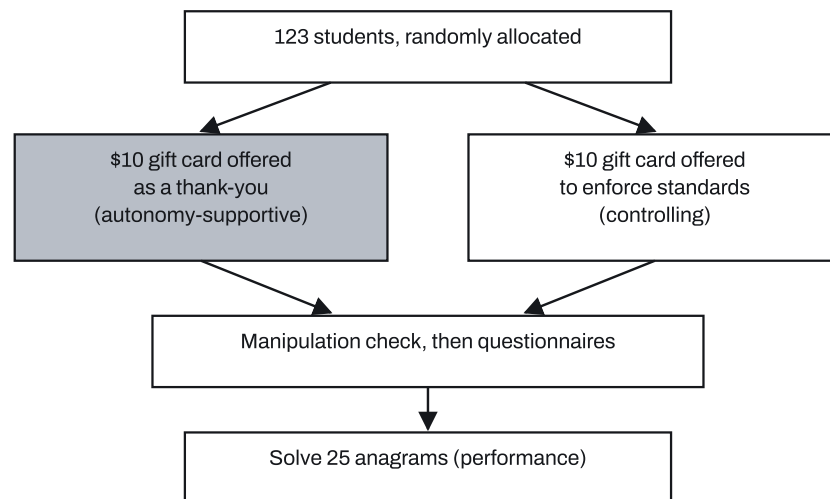
Participants: **123** French-speaking students (Canada), **60% female**, mean age **23**, **randomly allocated** to one of two conditions.

Design: a **laboratory experiment** with an **independent groups** design. The **IV** is how the reward was presented.

Procedure:

- Everyone was offered the **same reward**, a **\$10 gift card** for a local shop, and read a short paragraph about the task they were about to do. The wording of the paragraph made the two conditions:
 - **Autonomy-supportive:** the reward was presented as a **thank-you** for taking part, in an informational, encouraging tone.
 - **Controlling** (autonomy-threatening): the reward was presented as a way of **making them meet the task's performance standards**, in a pressuring tone.
- **Manipulation check:** participants rated how far they felt **encouraged** or **pressured**, to confirm the two paragraphs really created the two conditions.
- **Self-report measures:** how far their psychological needs felt **satisfied** and **frustrated** (a basic psychological needs scale); their **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** motivation.
- **Control measures**, to rule out individual differences between the groups:

- **Perceived value of the reward**, rated on a **3-item** scale, so differences in how much people wanted the gift card could be controlled for.
- **Positive and negative affect** (mood), on the short form of the **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule**: positive items such as feeling alert or inspired, negative items such as feeling upset or nervous. This controlled for mood changes caused by reading either paragraph.
- **Task (DV of performance)**: solving **25** four-letter **anagrams**.



Results:

- When needs felt **satisfied**, intrinsic motivation and anagram performance were **higher** and extrinsic motivation **lower**.
- When needs felt **frustrated**, the pattern reversed: **lower** intrinsic motivation and performance, **higher** extrinsic motivation.
- The **autonomy-supportive** group **performed better** on the anagrams than the controlling group.

Conclusion: the same reward can boost or harm motivation depending on how it is framed, which supports self-determination theory and the importance of **autonomy**.

Evaluating it:

- **Laboratory:** standardised instructions and controlled conditions (lighting, noise, the same anagrams), so the difference in performance can be put down to the reward's wording; participants gave **informed consent**. But a lab is not a real organisation: students knew the reward and task were artificial, so the findings may not apply to everyday work (low **ecological validity**), though small cash rewards for a short task, like a gift card for answering a questionnaire, do happen outside the lab too.
- **Independent groups:** no **order effects**, and fewer **demand characteristics**, since each person saw only one paragraph; but **participant variables** could explain differences, and more participants are needed. Random allocation and the control measures reduce this problem.
- **Manipulation check:** without it the IV might not be **valid**: one paragraph might not have created the feeling it was meant to.
- **Generalisations:** a decent sample size, but young, French-speaking students in one country, not workers; may not generalise to other ages, jobs or cultures.

- **Quantitative self-report:** easy to compare, but answers may be socially desirable.

Issues and debates for this topic

Issue	How it applies here
Application to everyday life	Managers can meet Maslow's needs (breaks, belonging, esteem), set SMART goals, design rewards workers value, and present rewards as thanks rather than control.
Individual and situational explanations	Rewards, goals and the work setting are situational (given by the organisation); but how much each person values a reward (valence), or which McClelland need is strongest, is individual . Goal setting mixes both: the employer sets the situation, but goals must fit the person. Relatedness depends on how colleagues behave (situational).
Cultural differences	All these theories are Western. Need theories stress the individual, so may fit collectivist cultures less well; praise versus belonging differs between cultures; Saeednia was in Tehran, Landry with French-speaking Canadian students.
Determinism versus free will	Maslow (from the humanistic approach, which favours free will) still has a deterministic element: you can't move up until lower needs are met. McClelland is less deterministic. Goal setting is fairly deterministic when the employer sets the goals, less so when the worker helps set them. In VIE theory the worker chooses what they value (free will), but once the employer knows, rewards can be used to cause effort. Extrinsic rewards determine effort from outside; in self-determination theory people seek competence, autonomy and relatedness for themselves.
Reductionism versus holism	VIE is fairly holistic : motivation depends on three beliefs combined. Self-determination theory considers three needs, some met outside work (holistic). Extrinsic rewards reduce motivation to money (reductionist).
Idiographic versus nomothetic	All the theories propose general laws for all workers (nomothetic): Maslow's order of needs, Vroom's equation, everyone's three needs in Deci and Ryan. But each person's goals, valued rewards and needs are unique (idiographic), studied through a case study or a diary .
Validity	Self-reports of needs or motivation may be untruthful; Saeednia's checks with parents and educators raise validity; a lab task lacks ecological validity.
Generalisations from findings	Landry: students, one country, a lab; Saeednia: children in one city.

Older syllabus content (2021–2023 questions only)

- **Equity theory (Adams, 1963):** workers judge **fairness** by comparing what they put **in** to the job (hours, effort, skill, knowledge) with what they get **out** (pay, recognition, status), and comparing that ratio with other workers'. A worker who feels they give more than colleagues for the same return loses motivation;

feeling fairly treated keeps them motivated. Strength: it can be applied (managers can discuss fairness with staff); weaknesses: an organisation can never make every worker's deal exactly equal, and some inputs (how good a report is, rather than how long) are hard to see and compare.

- **ERG theory (Alderfer, 1972)**: Maslow's needs regrouped into three: **Existence** (material and survival needs: Maslow's physiological and safety), **Relatedness** (relationships, at work and in private life) and **Growth** (self-development and advancement: Maslow's self-actualisation). It is **not a hierarchy**, which makes it more flexible than Maslow. Know what each letter stands for and how each need can be met at work. A 2022 question asked why it is more **reductionist** than Maslow: it reduces Maslow's five needs to three categories. Strengths: flexible, easy for employers to apply; weaknesses: employers can't see if needs are met outside work, it was written in the 1970s (temporal validity), and small firms can't offer much growth.

Key facts and formulas

There is no formula list in the 9990 exam. "Learn it" means you must remember it.

Fact	Status
Maslow's five needs, bottom to top: physiological, safety, social, esteem, self-actualisation; lower needs must be met before higher ones motivate	Learn it
Saeednia (2011): a measure of children's basic-need satisfaction built from open-ended interviews with 13 children, their parents and educators; Maslow's five needs plus the need to know and understand; given to 300 participants; reliable and fairly valid; carried out in Tehran	Learn it
McClelland: three work-related needs, achievement (success through effort), affiliation (being liked), power (influencing others); not a hierarchy; affiliation measured with the TAT	Learn it
Goal-setting theory (Latham and Locke): specific, difficult goals beat vague or easy ones; principles of clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity	Learn it
SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable (agreed), relevant (realistic), time-bound	Learn it
VIE theory (Vroom): expectancy (effort leads to performance), instrumentality (performance leads to reward), valence (how much the reward is wanted); $Motivation = V \times I \times E$	Learn it
Extrinsic reward systems: pay, bonuses, profit-sharing (a percentage of profit shared among staff), performance-related pay (pay linked to targets)	Learn it
Intrinsic (non-monetary) rewards: praise, respect, recognition, empowerment, a sense of belonging	Learn it
Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan): three innate needs, competence, autonomy and relatedness; a controlling reward can undermine intrinsic motivation	Learn it

Fact	Status
Landry et al. (2019) study 1: 123 French-speaking students, 60% female, mean age 23; a \$10 gift card framed as autonomy-supportive or controlling; manipulation check; perceived value (3 items) and positive and negative affect as control measures; 25 anagrams; the autonomy-supportive group performed better	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 45 questions on this topic, from 2021 to 2026 (Papers 3 and 4; 31 different questions, as variants repeat them). 17 of them have parts of more than one type, so the counts add up to 74.

Question type	Questions
Define or outline a term, need or motivator	14
Explain a strength or weakness of a theory or motivator	11
Describe a theory or two motivators	8
Describe and evaluate essay	8
Plan a study on motivation and justify it	8
Apply an issue or debate to a theory	6
Suggest how a manager could use a theory or motivator	6
To what extent essay	6
Suggest a research method or evaluate one	4
Questions on Landry et al.'s method	2
Explain differences between two need theories	1

1. Define or outline a term, need or motivator (14 questions)

Usually 2 marks: a basic outline (1), then a detail or example (1). Link it to **work** or **motivation**.

1. Say what the term means in your own words.
2. Add what it does to effort at work, or a workplace example.

Variations you will meet:

- **Valence:** how much a worker values the reward for a task (**1**), and the more they value it, the more effort they'll put in (**1**). Without the effort link, only 1 mark.
- **Vroom's equation:** $\text{Motivation} = V \times I \times E$; one wrong or missing term gets 1 of 2. Don't put "rewards" in it.
- **Intrinsic motivators:** the satisfaction that comes from doing the job well, with an example (praise, recognition). Only listing examples caps it at 1.

- **Non-monetary reward system:** "a reward without money" just repeats the question and scores 0; say it is **intrinsic**, and give an example such as praise.
- **Profit-sharing:** a **percentage** of the company's profit shared among the staff, plus a detail (usually yearly; an extrinsic motivator). "Profit is shared with workers" repeats the question.
- **Maslow's needs:** physiological = food, drink, warmth; social = relationships, affection, belonging; self-actualisation = reaching your potential, feeling fulfilled.
- **Empowerment:** being given autonomy to work independently (**1**), so the worker feels trusted and works harder (**1**). "The employee has power" scores 0.
- **McClelland's other needs:** affiliation and power.
- **Older:** two things workers compare in equity theory (inputs and outputs, such as effort and pay).

2. Explain a strength or weakness of a theory or motivator (11 questions)

Each point: state it (1), then **apply** it with detail or an example (1). The 6-mark versions in 2021–2022 were levels-marked: one strength and one weakness, both explained in detail, for 5–6.

1. Name the point.
2. Show it in a workplace: who, what, and what happens to motivation.
3. Make it clear whether it is a strength or a weakness: "profit-sharing is an extrinsic motivator" is neither.

Variations you will meet:

- **Maslow:** costly to change facilities while also paying good wages; self-actualisation is unrealistic for most jobs; needs unmet at home still block motivation; individualist (Western) bias.
- **Profit-sharing:** strength, staff feel they belong and are committed, and absence falls; or more output means more profit for them. Weakness, no profit in public services; it can reduce intrinsic motivation.
- **A strength of your own suggestion other than more output:** workers stay because they feel valued; a team bonus builds teamwork and feels fair; performance-related pay feels like fair pay for the work done; the extra pay comes from the extra profit, so it costs the firm little.
- **Non-monetary rewards:** strength, cheap; weakness, individual differences, resentment, praise doesn't pay bills.
- **"Discuss ... with a conclusion"** on monetary rewards [5]: 1 mark per relevant strength or weakness (at least two each side) up to 4, plus 1 for a conclusion that **decides** something; a summary scores 0.

3. Describe a theory or two motivators (8 questions)

4 marks, levels: a list of names is 1–2; each part explained, linked to work, is 3–4.

- **McClelland:** name all three needs and define each, with a work example.
- **Two non-monetary rewards (2 + 2):** name each and explain **how** it motivates (praise: a quick "well done" keeps a worker keen; empowerment: being trusted to decide). A cash reward (bonus, holiday) scores 0.
- **Older:** equity theory or ERG theory, explained **at work**, not just what the letters stand for.

4. Describe and evaluate essay (8 questions)

Paper 3 Section C, Q16 since 2024: (a) **describe** [6], (b) **evaluate** [10] with a **named issue** (before 2024, Q8 with 8 + 10).

1. **(a):** describe **both** parts the question names; one only caps it at 3–4 (or 4). Link them to **work**. The pairs asked: goal-setting **and** VIE; extrinsic motivators **and** self-determination theory (Landry can be used); Maslow **and** McClelland (Saeednia optional).
2. **Goal setting:** the main finding, the five principles **and** SMART; SMART alone caps it at Level 2. **VIE:** define E, I and V correctly and give the equation. **Extrinsic:** three or more reward systems and why they motivate (reinforcement). **Self-determination:** the three needs, applied to work, plus Landry's procedure and results.
3. **(b):** start with the **named issue** (idiographic versus nomothetic, individual versus situational, determinism versus free will), applied to **each** theory with an example from (a); then two or three other issues from the syllabus list (culture, reductionism, application, validity, generalisations), each with context and analysis (a contrast between the theories, a counter-point); then a judgement.
4. Go **issue by issue**, comparing both theories, not theory by theory. An issue the topic doesn't list (such as nature versus nurture) earns little.

5. Plan a study on motivation and justify it (8 questions)

Paper 4 Section B, with the research methods topic (see that note). The motivation part is the **psychological knowledge** behind the plan.

- **Since 2024** [24]: (a) a plan [10] using the named method and features (interview: format, technique, example questions; questionnaire: open or closed questions, examples, scoring); (b)(i) **describe** the knowledge [4]: McClelland's three needs, or praise and recognition; (b)(ii) **two features** of it and how each shaped your plan [2 + 2]; (c) a reason for and a weakness of your sampling, and a reason for your format or data type [2 each].
- **Ask about the theory, not motivation in general:** to find which McClelland need is strongest, the questions must name achievement, affiliation and power (for example, rank "getting the job done well", "being liked by colleagues" and "being in charge of others").
- Say **how** people are recruited (a notice in the staff room for volunteers; asking teachers present in a school for an opportunity sample).
- **Before 2024** [18]: a design [10] and its psychological **and** methodological evidence [8]; only one kind caps it at 5. Targets → goal-setting and SMART (not Maslow); bonuses versus performance-related pay → apply each concretely (extra pay for each sale above a weekly target); non-monetary rewards → ask about each one by name.

6. Apply an issue or debate to a theory (6 questions)

2 + 2 marks: define the term (1) and give the motivation example (1).

- **Nomothetic**: studies large groups to find general laws that apply to everyone (**1**); for example, Maslow says no one is motivated by esteem until physiological, safety and social needs are met, a law for all workers (**1**). Deci and Ryan: all workers need competence, autonomy and relatedness.
- **A strength of nomothetic** (Deci and Ryan): general laws can be applied by any organisation, for example presenting rewards as thanks to support autonomy; they can be tested scientifically.
- **Idiographic investigation of a need theory**: a worker keeps a **diary** of moments they felt a need for achievement, affiliation or power; or a **case study** of one company and how it meets Maslow's needs. It looks at one person or unit in depth.
- **Why VIE is holistic**: motivation depends on three beliefs combined (expectancy, instrumentality, valence), not one cause.
- **Why intrinsic motivators differ between cultures**: individualist cultures value personal praise; collectivist cultures may value belonging and contributing to the group, and see praise of one person as immodest.
- **Older**: how a Maslow need is individual (each person needs food, safety) or situational (safety depends on a stable society); why ERG is more reductionist (five needs squeezed into three).

7. Suggest how a manager could use a theory or motivator (6 questions)

A named manager and workplace. Each suggestion: what (1), then how, **in this workplace** (1). Two suggestions must be **different**.

1. Pick from the topic: a level of Maslow's hierarchy, a reward system, a SMART goal.
2. Say exactly what the manager does, for **these** workers.

Variations you will meet:

- **Extrinsic motivators for a factory** [4]: performance-related pay (more for each item above target); a team bonus when output rises; profit-sharing. Then a strength other than more output [2].
- **Maslow for a factory where pay is already good** [4]: rest breaks (physiological), a shared room for lunch (social), regular positive feedback (esteem). Wages don't count.
- **A SMART goal** [4]: cover **at least three** letters, each tied to the scenario.
- **Older**: link non-monetary rewards to two Maslow needs: esteem, social (belonging **at work**), self-actualisation; physiological or safety scores 0.

8. To what extent essay (6 questions)

Paper 4 Section C [12] (2021–2023 only), levels-marked: argue **both sides** with named theories, then a reasoned judgement. Not on 2024+ papers, but the arguments carry over to essays.

- **"Goal setting won't motivate; need theories explain everything"**: agree, goals don't meet Maslow's physiological needs or McClelland's affiliation and power; disagree, SMART goals can be tailored to each worker and help both worker and organisation. Use **both** goal setting and need theories.
- **"Workers don't need to achieve; they work for money"**: for, extrinsic reward, people who only want the wage; against, McClelland's need for achievement and affiliation, pride in work.

- **"No difference between ERG and Maslow"**: ERG regroups Maslow's needs into three; but ERG is not a hierarchy, and it has three categories where Maslow's later version has eight.

9. Suggest a research method or evaluate one (4 questions)

Paper 4 Section A: 1 mark for the idea, 2 when tied to motivation.

- **A closed question on profit-sharing** [2]: give **both** the question and its answer options: "Does profit-sharing make you want to work harder? Yes / No / Not sure" or a 1–5 rating scale.
- **Measuring social needs other than by interview**: a questionnaire on how far they feel part of a team; observing how a worker interacts with colleagues.
- **Telephone interviews on need theories**: strength, people know their own needs; a wide, varied sample can be reached; weakness, people may exaggerate or hide things; many drop out or give short answers.

10. Questions on Landry et al.'s method (2 questions)

Paper 4 Q7 [10]: recall details of **study 1**, then evaluate.

- **The IV's two conditions** [4]: name each (1) and describe its wording (1): autonomy-supportive (a thank-you, encouraging) and controlling (a way to enforce standards, pressuring).
- **The two control measures** [4]: perceived value of the reward (3-item scale) and positive and negative affect (short PANAS form), each with what it controlled for.
- **No manipulation check** [2]: the conditions might not have created the intended feelings, so the IV may not be valid.
- **Lab strengths and limits, independent groups** strength and weakness: see "Evaluating it" above; tie each to the reward paragraphs or the anagrams.

11. Explain differences between two need theories (1 question)

6 marks, levels: two differences explained in detail for 5–6. Use the comparison table: hierarchy versus separate needs; general versus work-focused; more versus less deterministic; same order for all versus individual differences; hard versus easier to measure (TAT). For each, say what each theory claims and give a work example.

Worked examples

Example 1

Bao works in a phone shop. His manager offers a free weekend at a theme park to anyone who sells 40 phone contracts this month. Bao has never sold more than 15 in a month, and last year a similar prize was promised but never given.

(a) Use Vroom's VIE theory to explain why Bao may not be motivated by this offer. [4]

(b) The manager asks staff to rate each belief from 0 (not at all) to 1 (completely). Bao rates expectancy 0.2, instrumentality 0.3 and valence 0.9. His colleague Ana rates expectancy 0.8, instrumentality 0.9 and valence 0.5. Calculate the motivation score for each, and say what the result shows. [3]

(a) *Expectancy* is low: Bao doubts his effort can produce 40 sales, since his best is 15 (**B1**), so he sees no point trying (**B1**). *Instrumentality* is low: the prize was not given last year, so he doesn't believe selling 40 would really earn it (**B1**), and even a prize he wants won't motivate him if one belief is weak, because the three are multiplied (**B1**).

(b) Bao: $0.9 \times 0.3 \times 0.2 = 0.054$ (**M1 A1**). Ana: $0.5 \times 0.9 \times 0.8 = 0.36$. Ana is far more motivated even though she values the prize less, because she believes she can succeed and will be rewarded (**B1**).

Example 2

Farida manages the kitchen of a hospital canteen. She wants her team to cut the amount of food thrown away over the next six weeks.

(a) Suggest a SMART goal Farida could set for her kitchen team. [4]

(b) Explain **one** weakness of goal-setting theory for motivating Farida's team. [2]

(a) *Specific*: weigh the leftover cooked food at the end of each lunch service (**B1**). *Measurable*: bring it down from about 20 kg to 15 kg a day (**B1**). *Attainable/agreed*: Farida agrees the figure with the cooks, who plan portions from the day's patient numbers (**B1**). *Time-bound*: reach it within six weeks, with a weekly check of the scales (**B1**).

(b) Goal setting helps the need for achievement, but a cook mainly motivated by **affiliation** may care more about getting on with the team than about a waste target (**B1**), so the goal may not motivate everyone in the kitchen equally (**B1**).

Example 3

(a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and
- Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. [6]

(b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about these two theories, including a discussion about determinism versus free will. [10]

(a) *Maslow*. Needs form a hierarchy of five levels: physiological (food, drink, warmth, rest), safety (security and protection from harm), social (relationships and belonging), esteem (achievement, status, respect) and self-actualisation (reaching your potential). A need only motivates once those below it are met, so a worker without proper breaks will not be driven by the chance of promotion. A firm can work up the hierarchy with rest breaks, safe equipment, a staff room, praise and challenging projects. Saeednia (2011) built a measure of children's basic-need satisfaction from interviews with 13 children, their parents and educators, gave it to 300 participants, and found it reliable.

Deci and Ryan. Everyone has three innate needs: competence (mastering tasks), autonomy (control over your own actions) and relatedness (feeling connected to others). Work that meets them produces intrinsic motivation; a reward that feels controlling can undermine it. Landry et al. (2019) offered 123 students a \$10 gift card, framed either as a thank-you or as a way to enforce performance standards. Need satisfaction went with higher intrinsic motivation and better performance on 25 anagrams, and the autonomy-supportive group performed better.

Why it reaches the top level: both theories, accurate terms, each linked to work, with a study for each.

(b) Determinism versus free will (the named issue). Maslow came from the humanistic approach, which stresses free will, yet the hierarchy is deterministic: a worker **cannot** be motivated by esteem until lower needs are met, whatever they choose. Self-determination theory gives the person a more active role: someone who feels unskilled or isolated can choose to do something about it, inside or beyond the job. Yet the theory is not free of determinism. In Landry et al., nobody chose how motivated to be: a few sentences of wording about the same gift card were enough to shift anagram scores, which suggests motivation can be caused from outside.

Application to everyday life. Both are widely used: managers can provide breaks and belonging (Maslow) or give staff some control over targets and present bonuses as thanks (Deci and Ryan), which costs nothing.

Individual and situational explanations. Maslow's needs are individual, since people differ in what makes them feel safe; but whether they are met depends on the situation, such as job security. Relatedness depends on how colleagues behave (situational), while how much each worker needs autonomy is individual.

Cultural differences. Both are Western theories that focus on the individual's needs; in collectivist cultures needs may be seen as the group's, so self-actualisation or autonomy may matter less. Saeednia's sample came from one wealthy city.

Generalisations and validity. Landry used students in a laboratory with an artificial reward, so it may not reflect real workers; but random allocation and a manipulation check give it good internal validity.

Overall, self-determination theory gives more room for free will and has experimental support, while Maslow is easier for managers to apply but more rigid, so the two work best together.

Why it reaches the top level: the named issue first, applied to both theories with context and contrast; several further issues with examples; a reasoned judgement.

Common mistakes

- **SMART goals only** for goal-setting theory, without the main finding and the four Cs and an F (March 2026 report).
- **Getting VIE wrong:** mixing up valence, instrumentality and expectancy, leaving out the formula, guessing it contains "rewards", or saying rewards must be money and that valence is controlled by the organisation (it is the worker's own value) (March 2026 and November 2022 reports).
- **Evaluation without context:** saying two theories are "similar" with no reason, or using an issue the topic doesn't list, such as nature versus nurture (March 2026 report).

- **Going theory by theory** in (b), or saying a theory "is deterministic" with no explanation; both stay in the lowest levels (November 2022 report).
- **Repeating the question**: "profit-sharing is when profit is shared" or "a reward without money" (March 2025 and June 2023 reports).
- **Facts that aren't a strength or a weakness**: "profit-sharing is extrinsic" says neither (March 2025 report).
- **A closed question without its answer options** (March 2025 report).
- **Generic plans**: a questionnaire on "motivation" that never asks about achievement, affiliation and power, or never says how teachers were recruited (March 2025 report).
- **Writing about Maslow when the question is about something else**: goal setting, targets or the need to achieve (McClelland) (November 2021 and June 2023 reports); and confusing McClelland with Maslow (June 2021 report).
- **Calling a cash reward non-monetary** (holidays, bonuses, company cars) (November 2022 report).
- **Maslow's social need not linked to work**: friends and family don't count when the question is about the workplace (June 2023 report).
- **Treating praise, respect and recognition anecdotally**, without saying they are intrinsic motivators or contrasting them with extrinsic ones (March 2021 report).
- **"Empowerment is having power"** scores 0; it is being given autonomy and trust (June 2021 report).

How to get the marks

- **"Outline", "explain what is meant by"**: your own definition plus a work example or the effect on effort; never just the question's words, and not only a list of examples.
- **"Describe"** a theory: every part named and defined (all five needs, all three of McClelland's, E, I and V plus the equation), linked to work.
- **"Suggest"** in a scenario: a named need, goal or reward from the topic, and exactly how **this** manager would use it with **these** workers; two suggestions must be different.
- **"Explain" a strength or weakness**: the point (1), then why it matters in this workplace (1); say clearly which it is.
- **Essays**: (a) both theories, accurate terms, linked to work; (b) the named issue first, applied to both, then other listed issues, each with context and analysis, then a judgement.
- **"Discuss ... include a conclusion"** and **"to what extent"**: both sides tied to the question, then a decision reached by reasoning, not a summary.
- **Plans**: the named method and its features; questions that use the theory's own terms; reasons tied to your plan.

Quick check

1. Name Deci and Ryan's three needs. Which one did the two conditions in Landry et al. (2019) set out to support or threaten?

2. Extrinsic or intrinsic? (a) 3% of the year's profit shared among all staff. (b) Being allowed to plan your own work schedule. (c) Extra pay for every order packed above a daily target.
3. A worker rates expectancy 0.6, instrumentality 0.5 and valence 0.9. A second worker rates them 1, 1 and 0. Calculate each worker's motivation score using Vroom's equation.
4. In Landry et al. (2019), 60% of the 123 students were female. About how many is that, to the nearest whole number?
5. Joel most enjoys organising his team's social events and dislikes arguments at work. Which of McClelland's needs is strongest in him?

Answers

1. **Competence, autonomy and relatedness**; the conditions targeted **autonomy** (the reward framed as a thank-you or as control).
2. (a) **Extrinsic** (profit-sharing). (b) **Intrinsic** (empowerment). (c) **Extrinsic** (performance-related pay).
3. $0.9 \times 0.5 \times 0.6 = \mathbf{0.27}$; $0 \times 1 \times 1 = \mathbf{0}$: the second worker doesn't want the reward, so is not motivated at all, however sure they are of succeeding.
4. $0.6 \times 123 = 73.8$, so about **74** students.
5. **Affiliation** (wanting to be liked and keep good relationships).

Past questions to try

- 9990/32/M/J/25 Q14: what valence means, and why VIE theory is holistic.
- 9990/32/F/M/24 Q13: a SMART goal for a sales team.
- 9990/32/O/N/24 Q15: using Maslow's hierarchy in a factory, and a weakness of it.
- 9990/42/M/J/24 Q7: Landry et al.'s IV conditions, the manipulation check and the experimental design.