1a) **Outline two assumptions of the Psychodynamic Approach (4 marks)**

One assumption of the Psychodynamic Approach (PA) is that our unconscious mind motivates our behaviour. Freud suggested the mind was split into three parts; unconscious, pre-conscious and conscious. The unconscious drives our behaviour, and we are never aware of what is contained in our unconscious.

Another assumption of the PA is childhood experiences affect how we are as adults. Freud said we pass through a series of stages (psychosexual stages). If trauma or excessive pleasure occurs it is reflected in an adult personality.

1b) **Describe the Psychodynamic theory of Personality Development (8 marks)**

The Psychodynamic theory assumes the personality is split into three; the id (most primitive, instinctive part we have from birth), the ego (logical, balances out the id and superego) and the superego, the moral part of our personality. These areas influence our behaviour, as well as the defence mechanisms of the ego, and the psychosexual stages of development.

Defence mechanisms are used by the ego to help balance out the id and superego to make sure the person isn’t overly impulsive and behaves in a socially acceptable way, without being overly self-conscious. If a person’s superego majorly outweighs the ego, the person may be depressed and not feel good enough for anything. If the person’s id outweighs, they are likely to be more aggressive and immoral as their superego doesn’t have much control.

Defence mechanisms such as repression put bad memories into the unconscious to try to get rid of the bad memory to help reach a balance, but depression can occur from this. Depression, anxiousness and aggressiveness are results of imbalances of the id and superego, and the defence mechanisms work to fight against the imbalance. Denial is another example of a defence mechanism, and this is where we refuse to accept/admit something unpleasant/embarrassing which is occurring.

The psychosexual stages of development (oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital) also affect personality as if someone experiences trauma, certain behaviours occur as a result (e.g. over tidiness at the anal stage). This links back to the assumptions of the approach, where childhood experiences may have an effect on the adult personality. People who suffer trauma during the oral stage (0-1 years old, where the id is developed) can become excessively dependant on others and have psychological problems with food or drink e.g. bulimia or anorexia. Trauma during the anal stage (1-3 years old, where the ego is developed) can result in stubbornness and stinginess, whereas problems during the phallic stage (3-6 years old, where the superego is developed) can cause a weak superego (no guilt or shame), a strong superego (excessive guilt) or tendencies to be overly sexual.
Describe how the Psychodynamic Approach has been applied to either Dream Analysis or Free Association (12 marks)

The aim of dream analysis is to make unconscious material conscious. It is used to treat mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and provide an explanation for it. It links back to the assumptions of the psychodynamic approach as it says that our mind and behaviour is controlled mostly by our unconscious, and if a traumatic event is experienced, memories can be repressed into the unconscious, possibly leading to mental health problems. Dream analysis is a form of therapy that enables the unconscious material accessible in order to deal with painful repressed memories and explain an individual’s depression.

Dream analysis works by a patient visiting a therapist whose job it is to listen to them and provide an explanation or theory for what they are dreaming about. The manifest content is what is remembered as soon as you wake up and is irrelevant, but the latent content is what is important because this is what is used to explain what is going on. Freud described dreams as ‘the royal road to knowledge of the activities of the unconscious mind’. There are four dream work components; symbolisation, condensation, displacement and secondary elaboration that are used as part of the explanation. Symbolisation is associating an object with someone/something else, secondary elaboration is piecing things together and sequencing them, displacement is dreaming of one person even though it really means someone else similar to them, and condensation is combining two things together.

Dream analysis has been shown to work, as Sandell conducted some research whereby over 750 patients had dream analysis and their illness became much better. Dream analysis works, but there are some things that aren’t good about it. It is very expensive as often the therapy is longitudinal – making it cost more, and any theories about dreams are very subjective as one therapist could have a different suggestion/explanation to another.

3a) Evaluate two strengths of the Psychodynamic Approach (6 marks)

One strength of the Psychodynamic Approach (PA) is its practical application (psychotherapy). An example of a technique that the approach uses is dream analysis. Research has shown that psychotherapy can be successful in treating people with mental illness such as depression. For example, Sandell conducted a large scale study in Scandinavia and found that psychoanalysis is very successful in reducing the symptoms of a variety of mental illnesses.

Another strength of the PA is that it uses case studies as its methodology. Freud conducted clinical interviews with his patients. Listening to his patients and exploring their problems allowed him to develop his theories of human behaviour. For example, Little Hans helped develop his theory of the ‘Oedipus Complex’. Another advantage of case studies is that highly detailed and in-depth data (qualitative) is provided which the experimental (quantitative) method might neglect, e.g. feelings, emotions and personal experiences etc.
3b) **Evaluate two weaknesses of the Psychodynamic Approach (6 marks)**

One weakness of the Psychodynamic Approach (PA) is that it uses case studies as its methodology. Disadvantages of this include that Freud would see several clients a day and write up notes from his clinical interviews in the evening. He may have forgotten important information or got muddled between patients. Retrospective data is unreliable and open to bias. Also, it is possible that Freud changed his case studies to fit in with his existing theories. For example he said Little Hans was scared his dad might castrate him to fit in with the ‘Oedipus Complex’, when it was his mother who threatened to chop his ‘widdler’ off.

Another weakness of the PA is that it is reductionist. This means it over-simplifies the explanation of human behaviour down to the hypothetical constructs of the psychosexual stages (oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital) and says we are motivated by basic biological drives. It ignores other factors that may cause behaviour.

5) **Explain and Evaluate the methodology used by the Psychodynamic Approach (12 marks)**

The psychodynamic approach (PA) uses the case study research method. A case study is a detailed description of an individual or event. The case study is said to be an idiographic method because it is an in-depth study of an individual. Freud used the clinical interview method with his case studies where he asked his patients questions during therapy sessions.

One example of a case study by Freud is that of Little Hans. He was a young boy who was scared of horses, and Freud analysed the case and deduced that his case was evidence for his Oedipus Complex. The horse Little Hans was scared of represented his father who he was scared of because, according to Freud, he feared being castrated by due to his love for his mother.

The strengths of case studies are they are in-depth studies of an individual that gather qualitative data. This means they take people’s thoughts, feelings and personal experiences into account. Freud gathered much information on Hans through Hans’ father. Case studies can also both give rise to new theories and support existing ones (as Hans’ case supported, in Freud’s eyes) the Oedipus theory.

However, there are many weaknesses with Freud’s use of case studies. Freud’s interpretations were very subjective. There may have been many interpretations of Hans’ phobia. Freud was probably biased by what he expected to see – i.e. creating evidence for his pre-existing theory. He also did not meet Little Hans personally at the time he was studying his case, he just corresponded by letter with Hans’ father. This is an unreliable method of gathering data. Freud also saw many cases a day and didn’t make notes until the evening as he thought it might jeopardise the relationship he could build with his patients. This is retrospective data – there is a chance Freud may have forgotten information or got muddled between his clients.

It is also difficult to generalise from a single case – how many other cases would have the exact same details as Hans? Freud however did just this, generalising Hans’ case and the Oedipus Complex to all boys. Finally, replication of case studies is difficult or impossible. Though it may be argued that their whole purpose is that they are for one person at one time (or over a certain period of time), scientific psychology requires that evidence must come from a variety of sources over a variety of times.