

# Sample Exam Questions

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The sample exam questions that follow illustrate the relationship between the course framework and the AP Psychology Exam and serve as examples of the types of questions that appear on the exam. After the sample questions is a table that shows which skill, learning target(s), and unit each question relates to. The table also provides the answers to the multiple-choice questions.

## Section I: Multiple-Choice

1. Ivan Pavlov is best known for his research that involved pairing the ringing of a bell with the presentation of food. Food naturally caused the dogs to salivate, and eventually the dogs salivated to the sound of the bell alone. Pavlov named this phenomenon
  - (A) cognitive development
  - (B) classical conditioning
  - (C) operant conditioning
  - (D) humanism
  - (E) behaviorism
2. Gestalt psychologists studied how
  - (A) people see a triangle with missing corners as a complete triangle because of the principle of closure
  - (B) giving someone a reward after a behavior increases the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated in the future because of the principle of positive reinforcement
  - (C) pairing a neutral stimulus with a stimulus that reflexively produces a response eventually leads to the neutral stimulus producing the response because of the principles of classical conditioning
  - (D) supporting someone no matter what they do leads to a strong self-concept for the person as a result of unconditional positive regard
  - (E) dream analysis brings unconscious conflicts to the surface because of psychoanalytic principles

3. One advantage of experiments over correlational studies is that experiments generally allow one to
- (A) study a large group of people
  - (B) study changes in people over time
  - (C) infer cause and effect
  - (D) study an individual in depth
  - (E) observe people in their natural setting

2, 3, 17, 10, 2, 3, 8, 2, 7

4. What is the mode of the set of scores above?
- (A) 2
  - (B) 3
  - (C) 6
  - (D) 7
  - (E) 15
5. The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for helping
- (A) David become aware of his thirst while running a marathon
  - (B) Tamara transfer sensory information into the other parts of her brain
  - (C) Riaesha get ready to fight or flee when seeing a bear
  - (D) Anthony calm down after watching a scary movie
  - (E) Jamika pull her hand back when she touches a hot stove
6. Many common antidepressants ease symptoms of depression by
- (A) inhibiting serotonin reuptake, which makes serotonin more available
  - (B) inhibiting serotonin reuptake, which makes serotonin less available
  - (C) releasing endorphins, which makes endorphins more available
  - (D) inhibiting dopamine reuptake, which makes dopamine more available
  - (E) inhibiting dopamine reuptake, which makes dopamine less available
7. Split-brain research has illustrated which of the following?
- (A) The right hemisphere of the brain is responsible for language in most people.
  - (B) The left hemisphere of the brain is responsible for language in most people.
  - (C) The occipital lobe is responsible for color vision.
  - (D) The prefrontal cortex is responsible for thinking, planning, and decision making.
  - (E) The brain functions normally after the corpus callosum is cut.

8. Which of the following explains transduction?
- (A) The process by which sensory stimuli are converted into neural signals
  - (B) The degree of stimulation needed for a signal to be detected 50 percent of the time
  - (C) The difference in signal strength needed for that difference to be detected
  - (D) The process by which a person's eyes adapt to the dark
  - (E) The process by which a false negative is identified
9. Which of the following is the best example of the opponent process theory?
- (A) Fred stares at a green book for a minute, and then when he looks at a white page, he sees the color red.
  - (B) The more time Stanley spends in the dark, the better he can see in the dark.
  - (C) Esther can see all the colors of the leaves during the autumn.
  - (D) When it gets brighter outside, Tyrone's pupils dilate.
  - (E) Frances's irises are a different color than Wendy's irises.
10. Which of the following is the best example of a learning predisposition?
- (A) Pigeons can be trained to play tic-tac-toe.
  - (B) Cats become quicker at escaping out of boxes with practice.
  - (C) A chimpanzee suddenly realizes it can use a stick to retrieve an out-of-reach banana.
  - (D) Rewarding a person for a behavior leads to an increase in that behavior.
  - (E) It is easier to condition a person to be fearful of rats than of cars.
11. Immediately after coming home from work each day, Susie puts her keys down on the table. She then feeds the dog and the dog runs to the bowl to eat. After the same sequence of events has been repeated many times, the dog begins to run to the bowl to eat as soon as Susie puts her keys on the table. In this scenario, putting the keys on the table is the
- (A) unconditioned stimulus
  - (B) conditioned stimulus
  - (C) conditioned response
  - (D) unconditioned response
  - (E) positive reinforcer
12. Seven-year-old Raj never wants to clean his room. His parents always tell him he can watch television after cleaning his room. According to operant conditioning theory, Raj is most likely to
- (A) refuse to clean his room
  - (B) watch television without cleaning his room
  - (C) scream at his parents
  - (D) clean his room
  - (E) lose interest in watching television

13. Hermann Ebbinghaus' research would most likely predict that
- (A) it is possible to implant false memories about being lost in a shopping mall in participants' minds
  - (B) children will learn best when they are challenged by a task that they cannot do on their own but can do with guidance
  - (C) a student who only studies the night before a test will very rapidly forget most of the information studied after the test is over
  - (D) cats can learn to free themselves from puzzle boxes and eventually become faster at freeing themselves
  - (E) rats will learn to navigate mazes even if they are not given a reward
14. Which of the following occurs during long-term potentiation?
- (A) Memory improves because neural pathways are strengthened.
  - (B) Rehearsal is used to keep information in short-term memory.
  - (C) Mnemonic devices are used to help retrieve information.
  - (D) Memories are formed as a result of transduction.
  - (E) Information is more easily remembered as a result of deep processing.
15. Colleen received a score of 100 on an IQ test. The mean for the test is 100 and the standard deviation is 15. Assume the test had a normal distribution of scores. Colleen's score on the test was equal to or greater than the scores of what percent of people?
- (A) 100
  - (B) 50
  - (C) 68
  - (D) 84
  - (E) 15

## Section II: Free-Response

The following are examples of the free-response questions found on the exam.

### QUESTION 1: CONCEPT APPLICATION

Todd needs to visit his pediatrician, Dr. Lazarus, for his annual checkup. Todd is afraid to go to see Dr. Lazarus, because he has received shots in her office before. Todd's mother is ambivalent about bringing Todd to see Dr. Lazarus, because she knows he does not like it, but she brings him anyway. In order to entice Todd to go see the doctor, Todd's mother first asks Todd if he wants to go for a ride in the car. After he says yes, she asks him if he wants to go to the park that is near the doctor's office. Finally, she asks Todd if he would be good while they went to the doctor. Todd reluctantly agrees. Todd is cooperative while in the office, so Dr. Lazarus gives him a lollipop after the visit.

Explain how each of the following concepts relates to the scenario.

- Conditioned response
- Episodic memory
- Positive reinforcement
- Amygdala
- Approach-avoidance conflict
- Secure attachment
- Foot-in-the-door phenomenon

### QUESTION 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

A researcher was interested in studying whether participants who were angry would become less angry if they had a chance to release their anger. At 10:00 in the morning, 6 students met individually with a confederate named Steve. They were each asked to write an essay, which Steve evaluated. He told each student, “This is the worst essay I ever read.” They were then asked to sit in a room quietly for 10 minutes. At 1:00 in the afternoon, a second group of 6 students each wrote an essay, and Steve once again said the essays were the worst he had ever read. This second group was then asked to punch a punching bag. After either sitting quietly or punching the punching bag, the students were given the opportunity to blast a horn when Steve entered the room. The researcher operationally defined anger as the length of time that the students blasted the horn. The researcher assumed students who were given an opportunity to punch the punching bag would be less likely to blast the horn in Steve’s presence. The table below indicates how long, in seconds, each subject blasted the horn when Steve was present. Assume all differences are significant.

Sat Quietly	Punched Punching Bag
0	30
0	60
10	15
0	30
0	60
5	15

#### Part A

Identify each of the following in this study.

- Control group
- Confounding variable
- Independent variable

#### Part B

Explain how the concept of catharsis applies to this research study.

Explain whether or not the researcher’s hypothesis was supported.

Describe how to correct one ethical flaw in this study.

Calculate the mean length of time the horn was blasted for the group that punched the punching bag.

# Answer Key and Question Alignment to Course Framework

Multiple-Choice Question	Answer	Skill	Learning Target	Unit
1	B	1.C	1.B	1
2	A	1.C	1.C	1
3	C	3	1.F	1
4	A	2	1.L	1
5	C	1.A	2.E	2
6	A	1.A	2.H	2
7	B	2	2.K	2
8	A	1.A	3.F	3
9	A	1.A	3.F	3
10	E	1.B	4.E	4
11	B	1.B	4.F	4
12	D	1.B	4.H	4
13	C	1.A	5.C	5
14	A	1.A	5.H	5
15	B	3	5.Q	5

Free-Response Question	Question Type	Skill	Learning Target	Unit
1	Concept Application	1.B, 1.C	2.I, 4.F, 4.H, 5.B, 5.I, 6.D, 9.E	2, 4, 5, 6, 9
2	Research Design	1.B, 2, 3	1.H, 1.I, 1.L, 1.N, 9.K	1, 9

The scoring information for the questions within this course and exam description, along with further exam resources, can be found on the [AP Psychology Exam Page](#) on AP Central.



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