

THE EXAM

The AP Psychology Exam includes a 70-minute multiple-choice section that accounts for two-thirds of the exam grade and a 50-minute free-response section made up of two questions that accounts for one-third of the exam grade.

Multiple-choice scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect answers, and no points are awarded for unanswered questions. Because points are not deducted for incorrect answers, students are encouraged to answer all multiple-choice questions. On questions they do not know the correct answer to, students should eliminate as many choices as they can, and then select the best answer among the remaining choices.

Free-response questions are an appropriate tool for evaluating a student's mastery of scientific research principles and ability to make connections among constructs from different psychological domains (e.g., development, personality, learning). Students may be asked to analyze a general problem in psychology (e.g., depression, adaptation) using concepts from different theoretical frameworks or subdomains in the field, or to design, analyze, or critique a research study.

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

The following are examples of the kinds of multiple-choice questions found on the AP Psychology Exam. The distribution of topics and the levels of difficulty are illustrative of the composition of the exam. Answers to these questions can be found on page 22.

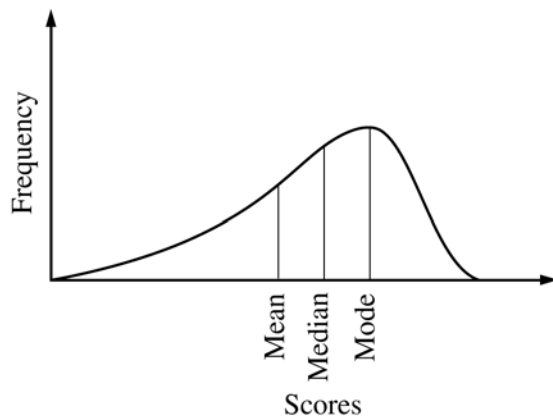
Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. According to one theory of psychology, many people have mental illnesses because their maladaptive behaviors have proven rewarding for them in the past and thus have been continued. This belief is consistent with which of the following models?
 - (A) Behavioral
 - (B) Biological
 - (C) Cognitive
 - (D) Psychodynamic
 - (E) Sociocultural
2. Malia is 10 years of age, and her grandmother, Anna Rosa, is 60 years old. Which statement is likely to be true concerning their sleep patterns?
 - (A) Anna Rosa is more likely than Malia to have night terrors.
 - (B) Anna Rosa sleeps fewer hours per day than Malia does.
 - (C) Anna Rosa spends more of her sleep time in deep sleep than Malia does.
 - (D) Anna Rosa spends more of the night dreaming than Malia does.
 - (E) Anna Rosa and Malia have the same sleep patterns.

3. People listening to rock music played backward often perceive an evil message if specifically told what to listen for. That phenomenon best illustrates
- (A) parapsychology
 - (B) complementary afterimages
 - (C) perceptual constancy
 - (D) perceptual adaptation
 - (E) top-down processing

4. Damage to the cerebellum would most likely result in which of the following problems?
- (A) Aphasia
 - (B) Increased aggression
 - (C) A loss of vision
 - (D) A loss of motor coordination
 - (E) A change in personality

5.



Which of the following best describes the graph above?

- (A) Histogram
 - (B) Frequency polygon
 - (C) Normal distribution
 - (D) Positively skewed distribution
 - (E) Negatively skewed distribution
6. A test that is valid must
- (A) have scores that fit a normal curve
 - (B) be reliable
 - (C) be normed on a random sample
 - (D) predict future behavior
 - (E) reveal important information

7. Jack believes that aliens are using electrical fields to steal thoughts from his head. It is most likely that Jack will be diagnosed with which of the following types of disorders?
- (A) Dissociative
 - (B) Psychotic
 - (C) Somatoform
 - (D) Anxiety
 - (E) Sleep
8. Emiko's cat often meows for food. Emiko decides to eliminate the behavior by feeding the cat only when it does not meow. Over the next few weeks, she sometimes ignores the cat when it meows. Other times, she feeds the cat when it meows. Which of the following is the most reasonable prediction to make about the cat's meowing for food?
- (A) It will disappear due to extinction.
 - (B) It will decrease overall but not extinguish.
 - (C) It will remain unchanged due to a continuous schedule of reinforcement.
 - (D) It will increase due to a variable schedule of reinforcement.
 - (E) It will increase due to positive punishment.
9. Lee is about to skydive for the first time. He interprets his racing heart to be the result of his eager anticipation and excitement. This best represents which theory of emotion?
- (A) Cannon-Bard
 - (B) James-Lange
 - (C) Drive reduction
 - (D) Schachter's two factor
 - (E) Arousal
10. Which of the following scenarios is the best example of the mere-exposure effect?
- (A) After tasting a soft drink for the first time, Frank immediately decides it is his favorite drink.
 - (B) A year after beginning her exercise program, Georgina wants to expand her regimen.
 - (C) Hal begins to like a certain sports car after seeing it frequently on the road, even though he did not like the car at first.
 - (D) Kristy initially thinks her new neighbor is attractive, but once she becomes better acquainted with him, she finds him less appealing.
 - (E) After going away to college, Joy finds she is less and less interested in spending time with her old friends from high school.

11. Georgi believes she is capable of playing extremely well in the volleyball game scheduled for tonight. Albert Bandura would most likely say that Georgi's expectations for this task reveal that she is exhibiting high
 - (A) self-esteem
 - (B) self-actualization
 - (C) self-efficacy
 - (D) self-monitoring
 - (E) self-observation

12. Treating a patient for Parkinson's disease includes administering a chemical that will lead to increases in the patient's
 - (A) monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)
 - (B) acetylcholine
 - (C) norepinephrine
 - (D) dopamine
 - (E) serotonin

13. Projective tests, such as the Rorschach inkblot test, have been justifiably criticized as tools for assessing personality because
 - (A) it is difficult for the examinee to deceive the examiner
 - (B) they elicit only obvious information from the examinee
 - (C) they have not been found to be reliable and valid
 - (D) the stimuli for the tests are not standardized
 - (E) they provide a label for one's psychological well-being

14. To determine whether a cause-effect relationship exists between two variables, a researcher must use
 - (A) descriptive statistics
 - (B) archival data
 - (C) naturalistic observation
 - (D) an experimental approach
 - (E) a correlational study

15. A basic assumption underlying the definition of groupthink is that
 - (A) more reasonable decisions are made by groups than by individuals
 - (B) group members desire peace and harmony within the group
 - (C) group members are primarily interested in their own advancement within the group
 - (D) decisions made by groups of people tend to be more extreme than those made by individuals
 - (E) leadership positions within a group should be rotated among all members

16. Which of the following concepts refers to the structure and organization of a sentence?
- (A) Phoneme
 - (B) Morpheme
 - (C) Syntax
 - (D) Semantics
 - (E) Lexicon
17. The overjustification effect has led some psychologists to question the value of
- (A) set point theory
 - (B) framing
 - (C) locus of control theory
 - (D) intrinsic motivation
 - (E) extrinsic motivation
18. Which of the following behaviors is most clearly associated with Jean Piaget's concrete operational stage?
- (A) Sally thinks everyone's favorite color is blue, because it is her favorite color.
 - (B) Tom received the highest grade in his philosophy course.
 - (C) Gracie forgets about her toy because it is under her blanket.
 - (D) Nikos can consider both the height and width of a container.
 - (E) Ava does not like being around unfamiliar people.
19. Matthew's parents are physicists, and so are the parents of several of his best friends. Therefore, Matthew believes that many people are employed as physicists. Matthew's reasoning is based on
- (A) the availability heuristic
 - (B) the conjunction fallacy
 - (C) the representativeness heuristic
 - (D) risky decision making
 - (E) a mental set
20. Harry Harlow found that when infant monkeys were startled or frightened, they preferred a cloth surrogate mother over a wire mother who had food. The baby monkeys' response indicated that
- (A) the amygdala develops earlier in rhesus monkeys than in humans
 - (B) contact comfort was more important to them than food
 - (C) rhesus monkeys do not develop normally with artificial food sources
 - (D) being raised with a terry cloth mother leads to an insecure attachment style
 - (E) they had not developed object permanence
21. Introspection, a research tool used by early psychologists, is a technique which involves
- (A) correlational analyses
 - (B) machines designed for cognitive analysis
 - (C) survey methodology
 - (D) self-examination of mental processes
 - (E) teaching participants to multitask

22. Research has shown that the optimal arousal level of an individual performing a given task is
- (A) the level at which the person feels most comfortable
 - (B) the level at which the person feels least comfortable
 - (C) seldom an intermediate level
 - (D) related to task difficulty
 - (E) unrelated to task difficulty
23. The right occipital lobe receives visual information from the
- (A) entire retina of the left eye
 - (B) entire retina of the right eye
 - (C) entire retina of both eyes
 - (D) left half of both retinas
 - (E) right half of both retinas
24. Which of the following types of intelligence would be most important in answering trivia questions?
- (A) Fluid
 - (B) Crystallized
 - (C) Bodily kinesthetic
 - (D) Creative
 - (E) Practical
25. A clinical psychologist believes that Caroline's problems stem from the lack of consistency between her self-concept and reality. According to the psychologist, this discrepancy makes Caroline feel anxious and threatened. Caroline's psychologist most likely adheres to which of the following orientations?
- (A) Client-centered
 - (B) Psychoanalytic
 - (C) Behavioral
 - (D) Gestalt
 - (E) Cognitive

Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 – A | 6 – B | 11 – C | 16 – C | 21 – D |
| 2 – B | 7 – B | 12 – D | 17 – E | 22 – D |
| 3 – E | 8 – D | 13 – C | 18 – D | 23 – E |
| 4 – D | 9 – D | 14 – D | 19 – A | 24 – B |
| 5 – E | 10 – C | 15 – B | 20 – B | 25 – A |

Sample Free-Response Questions

Directions: You have 50 minutes to answer both of the following questions. It is not enough to answer a question by merely listing facts. You should present a cogent argument based upon your critical analysis of the question posed, using appropriate psychological terminology.

Abstract

1. We conducted a variation of Asch's (1951) conformity study in which participants made judgments about the length of lines. We randomly assigned participants to one of two conditions and told them that the study involved perceptual abilities. In the first condition, participants estimated the length of lines after hearing five people pretending to be participants (confederates) give inaccurate estimates. In the second condition, participants estimated the length of lines without hearing estimates of confederates. As we expected, participants in the first condition were less accurate in their estimates of line length, demonstrating the tendency to conform to majority influence.
 - A) How would each element below be related to the specific content of the experiment reported in the abstract?
 - Control group
 - Deception
 - Operational definition of the dependent variable
 - Hypothesis
 - Debriefing
 - B) How might participants' estimates of line length in the study be related to the following?
 - Cognitive dissonance
 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs
2. Dimitri and Linda are trying to learn a new routine to compete successfully in a dance competition. Give an example of how each of the following could affect their performance. Definitions without application do not score.
 - Extrinsic motivation
 - Punishment
 - Proactive interference
 - Endorphins
 - Vestibular system
 - Divergent thinking
 - Introversion

AP Psychology Free-Response Question Writing Expectations

The free-response section of the AP Psychology exam consists of two questions worth 33% of the total exam score. The questions may require students to interrelate different content areas and analyze and evaluate psychological concepts and/or theoretical perspectives. Students are expected to use their analytical and organizational skills to formulate cogent answers in writing their essays.

To demonstrate an understanding of psychological concepts, perspectives, and research methodology, students must answer the questions clearly, in complete sentences, and within the context of the prompt. Outlines and lists alone are not acceptable responses. Providing definitions of the psychological terms alone may not score points but may help students better apply the concepts. Responses that contradict themselves, involve circular definitions, or simply restate the question are unacceptable.

The following are common directives used in the AP Psychology Free-Response Questions (FRQs).

- *Identify* requires that students name or point out psychological concepts as they pertain to the question.
- *Show or describe* requires students to detail the essential characteristics and/or examples of a particular concept, theory, or phenomenon.
- *Explain, discuss, and relate* require that students make logical and coherent connections among the prompt (or premise), question, and psychological concepts.

The above examples are not all inclusive. To gain a better understanding of the FRQ, it will be helpful to study previously released FRQs and their rubrics on the College Board website.