

AAMC Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior (PS) Full-Length (FL) 1 Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What was a key finding from the Stanford prison experiment regarding role assignment?**
 - A. Roles have no significant effect on behavior**
 - B. Individuals will resist roles that they disagree with**
 - C. Assigned roles can drastically alter behaviors and perceptions of authority**
 - D. Roles are simply about external behaviors**

- 2. What role does the amygdala play in emotional processing?**
 - A. It regulates physical movements in response to emotions**
 - B. It detects emotions such as fear and generates emotional responses**
 - C. It stores memories linked to emotional experiences**
 - D. It balances emotional health with cognitive functions**

- 3. Which type of analysis maps relationships among individuals in communicable disease studies?**
 - A. Social support analysis**
 - B. Social network analysis**
 - C. Social stratification analysis**
 - D. Social reproduction analysis**

- 4. Which research methodology involves the extended, systematic observation of a complete social environment?**
 - A. Comparative methods.**
 - B. Ethnographic methods.**
 - C. Experimental methods.**
 - D. Survey methods.**

- 5. What best describes the nature of cognitive appraisal?**
 - A. An emotional response to a situation**
 - B. A decision-making process regarding social interactions**
 - C. An evaluation process determining the significance of a situation**
 - D. A reflective process focused only on positive outcomes**

- 6. The research in the passage is best described as a:**
- A. Qualitative study.**
 - B. Quantitative study.**
 - C. Mixed-methods study.**
 - D. Case study.**
- 7. What are the health effects associated with chronic stress?**
- A. Only mental health issues, such as anxiety**
 - B. Physical and mental health issues, including hypertension and heart disease**
 - C. Improved health outcomes over time**
 - D. Only physical ailments, such as headaches and stomach issues**
- 8. What is the role of the frontal lobe in human behavior?**
- A. It processes visual information**
 - B. It is involved in decision making, problem solving, and controlling impulses**
 - C. It regulates emotional responses**
 - D. It coordinates motor functions**
- 9. What significance does the concept of 'emotional intelligence' have in interpersonal relationships?**
- A. It hinders effective communication**
 - B. It enhances understanding and empathy**
 - C. It focuses primarily on rational decision-making**
 - D. It discourages emotional expression**
- 10. If adults performed the block tapping task as a measure of working memory capacity, they would most likely replicate sequences of what length correctly?**
- A. 9 plus or minus 1**
 - B. 7 plus or minus 2**
 - C. 10 plus or minus 1**
 - D. 16 plus or minus 2**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What was a key finding from the Stanford prison experiment regarding role assignment?

- A. Roles have no significant effect on behavior**
- B. Individuals will resist roles that they disagree with**
- C. Assigned roles can drastically alter behaviors and perceptions of authority**
- D. Roles are simply about external behaviors**

The key finding from the Stanford prison experiment highlights how assigned roles can dramatically influence individuals' behavior and their perceptions of authority. This famous study, conducted by Philip Zimbardo in 1971, involved college students who were randomly assigned to the roles of prisoners and guards in a simulated prison environment. The results demonstrated that participants internalized their assigned roles to an alarming degree. The "guards" began to display aggressive and abusive behaviors toward the "prisoners," who in turn exhibited signs of extreme stress and helplessness. This stark transformation in behavior showcases the power of situational dynamics and the impact of perceived authority on actions. The findings underscore the idea that individuals can become enmeshed in roles, leading to behaviors that may contradict their personal morals or values. In this context, the experiment provides critical insight into social psychology, particularly regarding conformity, obedience, and the influence of situational factors on behavior.

2. What role does the amygdala play in emotional processing?

- A. It regulates physical movements in response to emotions**
- B. It detects emotions such as fear and generates emotional responses**
- C. It stores memories linked to emotional experiences**
- D. It balances emotional health with cognitive functions**

The amygdala is a critical structure within the brain that is primarily involved in the processing of emotions, particularly those associated with survival and threat, such as fear. It plays a key role in the detection of emotional stimuli in the environment and is responsible for generating appropriate emotional responses. This ability allows individuals to react quickly to potentially dangerous situations, ensuring a rapid response that is essential for survival. When a threat is perceived, the amygdala activates neural pathways that trigger physiological responses, such as increased heart rate and heightened alertness, which prepare the body for a "fight or flight" response. Thus, the amygdala's role in detecting emotions and generating these emotional responses is crucial in navigating interpersonal relationships and environmental challenges. While some of the other options touch on related concepts, they do not accurately capture the primary function of the amygdala in emotional processing. The regulation of physical movements or the balancing of emotional health and cognitive functions involves other areas of the brain and do not specifically describe the amygdala's primary function. Similarly, while the amygdala does indeed interact with memories linked to emotions, it is not primarily responsible for storing these memories; that function is more closely associated with the hippocampus.

3. Which type of analysis maps relationships among individuals in communicable disease studies?

- A. Social support analysis
- B. Social network analysis**
- C. Social stratification analysis
- D. Social reproduction analysis

The correct answer is social network analysis, which is crucial in mapping relationships among individuals, particularly in the context of communicable disease studies. This type of analysis focuses on understanding how individuals within a population are interconnected through social ties, which can involve family, friendship, work, or other social connections. In the context of communicable diseases, social network analysis allows researchers to identify how diseases spread among individuals and communities. By mapping these relationships, they can gain insights into transmission routes, identify key individuals who might serve as hubs for disease spread, and develop targeted interventions to control outbreaks. For instance, if a contagious disease is spreading rapidly, social network analysis can highlight influential individuals whose connections can facilitate further transmission. Understanding these dynamics is essential for public health initiatives aiming to interrupt disease transmission chains effectively. The other types of analysis listed do not focus specifically on the mapping of interpersonal relationships in the context of disease spread. Social support analysis looks at how support systems can help individuals cope with stress and health issues but does not map relationships per se. Social stratification analysis examines the hierarchical arrangement of individuals in society based on socioeconomic status, and social reproduction analysis deals with how societies maintain or change class structures over time, neither of which directly addresses the relationships that contribute to the

4. Which research methodology involves the extended, systematic observation of a complete social environment?

- A. Comparative methods.
- B. Ethnographic methods.**
- C. Experimental methods.
- D. Survey methods.

The correct choice is based on the definition and characteristics of ethnographic methods, which involve in-depth, detailed study and observation of people and their behaviors within their natural environment. Researchers using ethnographic methods immerse themselves in the culture or setting they are studying for an extended period, allowing them to gather rich qualitative data and a deeper understanding of the social dynamics at play. This methodology prioritizes a holistic view, capturing the complexities of social interactions, contexts, and meanings that might not be evident through other research approaches. Ethnography is often employed in anthropology and sociology to provide insights into social practices, norms, and rituals, making it a powerful tool for exploring human behavior in specific environments. In contrast, comparative methods focus on contrasting different populations or circumstances to draw conclusions, while experimental methods involve manipulation of variables to determine causal relationships, often in controlled environments. Survey methods rely on structured questionnaires or interviews to gather data from a large number of respondents, which, while effective for certain types of data collection, do not provide the in-depth contextual understanding that ethnography does. Thus, the emphasis on systematic, extended observation of a complete social environment distinctly aligns with ethnographic methods.

5. What best describes the nature of cognitive appraisal?

- A. An emotional response to a situation**
- B. A decision-making process regarding social interactions**
- C. An evaluation process determining the significance of a situation**
- D. A reflective process focused only on positive outcomes**

Cognitive appraisal refers to the mental process through which individuals evaluate and interpret a situation to determine its significance, relevance, and potential impact on their well-being. This process is critical in shaping emotional responses, as it influences how a person perceives stressors and challenges. Through this evaluation, individuals assess whether an event is a threat, a challenge, or something benign, which ultimately guides their emotional and behavioral responses. The nature of this appraisal is not strictly about being positive or negative but encompasses a range of emotional interpretations based on the specific context. While emotions are a product of cognitive appraisals, the defining aspect is the evaluative process itself, which considers various factors such as potential impacts and personal resources. Thus, the description as a process that determines the significance of a situation accurately captures the essence of cognitive appraisal.

6. The research in the passage is best described as a:

- A. Qualitative study.**
- B. Quantitative study.**
- C. Mixed-methods study.**
- D. Case study.**

The research in the passage is best described as a mixed-methods study because it combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In a mixed-methods study, researchers collect numerical data (quantitative) alongside descriptive narratives or themes (qualitative) to enrich the analysis and interpretation of findings. This approach allows for triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the results by providing different perspectives on the same research question. In contrast, a qualitative study typically focuses solely on non-numerical data to explore concepts, behaviors, or experiences in depth. A quantitative study relies entirely on measurable data, often seeking to establish relationships or test hypotheses through statistical analysis without running alongside qualitative insights. A case study examines a specific instance or individual in detail, offering a focused exploration rather than a broader mixed-methods approach that integrates multiple forms of data. Hence, the mixed-methods design is the most fitting description for the research outlined in the passage.

7. What are the health effects associated with chronic stress?

- A. Only mental health issues, such as anxiety
- B. Physical and mental health issues, including hypertension and heart disease**
- C. Improved health outcomes over time
- D. Only physical ailments, such as headaches and stomach issues

Chronic stress has been extensively studied, and research consistently shows that it has a wide range of adverse health effects that encompass both mental and physical health. When individuals experience prolonged stress, their body remains in a heightened state of alert, triggering physiological responses such as increased heart rate and blood pressure. This sustained activation of the stress response can lead to serious physical health problems, such as hypertension (high blood pressure) and heart disease. Additionally, chronic stress can contribute to other physical ailments, including a weakened immune system, gastrointestinal problems, and chronic pain conditions. Mental health is equally impacted by chronic stress. It can lead to an increase in anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders. The overlapping effects on physical and mental health highlight the interconnectedness of psychological well-being and physiological health. Improved health outcomes over time is inconsistent with existing research, as chronic stress typically exacerbates health issues rather than alleviates them. Similarly, focusing solely on either mental health issues or physical ailments neglects the comprehensive impact that chronic stress has on overall health. Therefore, the answer that includes both physical and mental health issues reflects the reality of how chronic stress affects the body and mind.

8. What is the role of the frontal lobe in human behavior?

- A. It processes visual information
- B. It is involved in decision making, problem solving, and controlling impulses**
- C. It regulates emotional responses
- D. It coordinates motor functions

The frontal lobe plays a crucial role in various higher cognitive functions, notably in decision-making, problem-solving, and impulse control. It is responsible for executive functions, which include planning, reasoning, and judgment. This area of the brain helps individuals evaluate different options when making decisions and allows for the consideration of long-term consequences. Additionally, the frontal lobe is integral in moderating social behavior and controlling impulses, enabling a person to behave appropriately in different social contexts. While other areas of the brain handle visual processing, emotional regulation, and motor coordination, the distinct functions of the frontal lobe emphasize its significant impact on behaviors that require thoughtful planning and self-regulation. This explains why the choice highlighting its involvement in decision-making and impulse control is the most accurate representation of the frontal lobe's role in human behavior.

9. What significance does the concept of 'emotional intelligence' have in interpersonal relationships?

- A. It hinders effective communication**
- B. It enhances understanding and empathy**
- C. It focuses primarily on rational decision-making**
- D. It discourages emotional expression**

Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in interpersonal relationships by enhancing understanding and empathy. This concept involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. When individuals possess high emotional intelligence, they are better equipped to perceive the emotional states of those around them, which fosters deeper connections and effective communication. Empathy, a key component of emotional intelligence, allows individuals to relate to others' experiences and feelings, facilitating support and collaboration. As a result, emotionally intelligent individuals can navigate social complexities more adeptly, leading to healthier and more fulfilling relationships. This ability to empathize and understand others' emotions is crucial for resolving conflicts, building trust, and promoting positive interactions in both personal and professional environments.

10. If adults performed the block tapping task as a measure of working memory capacity, they would most likely replicate sequences of what length correctly?

- A. 9 plus or minus 1**
- B. 7 plus or minus 2**
- C. 10 plus or minus 1**
- D. 16 plus or minus 2**

The block tapping task is a classic measure of working memory capacity that assesses an individual's ability to remember and replicate a sequence of taps on a set of blocks. In accordance with established findings in cognitive psychology, adults typically exhibit a span of working memory capacity that averages around 7 items, with a variability of plus or minus 2. This phenomenon is closely related to George Miller's famous concept of "the magical number seven, plus or minus two," which suggests that most people can hold approximately seven meaningful items in their short-term memory. Since the block tapping task requires participants to recall a sequence of taps, the working memory capacity indicated by this research aligns with the understanding that adults would most effectively replicate sequences of approximately 5 to 9 items. Therefore, the option indicating a span of 7 plus or minus 2 accurately reflects the typical limits of adult working memory as established in psychological literature. This is why this answer is considered the most appropriate choice for the question regarding the length of sequences adults could replicate successfully.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://aamcpsfl1.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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