

AAMC Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior (PS) Full-Length (FL) 3 Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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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. Which category of problems is closely related to assessing signs of depressive disorders in children?**
 - A. A. Interpersonal problems**
 - B. B. Externalizing problems**
 - C. C. Learning problems**
 - D. D. Internalizing problems**

- 2. Which behavioral aspect is significantly related to individual drive theory?**
 - A. Social behavior**
 - B. Homeostasis maintenance**
 - C. Reinforcement learning**
 - D. Cognitive dissonance**

- 3. Which statement about Americans' confidence in organized religion is NOT supported by the data?**
 - A. Confidence has generally remained stable over the years**
 - B. More than 60% had confidence in 1973**
 - C. Confidence significantly declined from 1973 to 2013**
 - D. There was an overall increase in lack of confidence**

- 4. In assessing students' emotional problems, which attribution error might a teacher make regarding behavioral issues?**
 - A. A. Overlooking reinforcement patterns**
 - B. B. Ignoring emotional maturity**
 - C. C. Attributing problems to psychological disorders**
 - D. D. Considering situational variables**

- 5. What is the significance of the placebo effect in psychological research?**
 - A. It demonstrates a lack of response to real treatments**
 - B. It shows that memory can be altered by expectations**
 - C. It illustrates how expectations can lead to actual improvements**
 - D. It indicates the importance of biological factors**

- 6. What assumption underlies predictive models regarding social identity and psychosocial stressors?**
- A. Out-group socialization perception**
 - B. Attribution of psychosocial stressors to identity**
 - C. Behavioral health consequences affecting identity**
 - D. Socioeconomic gradient affecting health**
- 7. What aspect does self-actualization emphasize in personal growth?**
- A. Fulfilling basic survival needs**
 - B. Seeking personal growth and peak experiences**
 - C. Establishing social connections**
 - D. Achieving economic stability**
- 8. When studying socioeconomic status (SES) and stress, which data is least relevant for including in an SES aggregate measure?**
- A. A. Occupational status**
 - B. B. Income sources**
 - C. C. Social capital**
 - D. D. Educational attainment**
- 9. Which concept best describes the phenomenon where individuals become more extreme in their views after discussing those views with like-minded peers?**
- A. Social loafing**
 - B. Groupthink**
 - C. Group polarization**
 - D. Deindividuation**
- 10. What psychological phenomenon is illustrated by the cycle of worrying leading to sleeplessness?**
- A. A. A self-fulfilling prophecy**
 - B. B. Stereotype threat**
 - C. C. The fundamental attribution error**
 - D. D. Cognitive dissonance**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which category of problems is closely related to assessing signs of depressive disorders in children?

- A. A. Interpersonal problems**
- B. B. Externalizing problems**
- C. C. Learning problems**
- D. D. Internalizing problems**

The category of problems closely related to assessing signs of depressive disorders in children is internalizing problems. Internalizing problems typically include symptoms of emotional distress such as depression and anxiety that manifest inwards, affecting the child's internal emotional state rather than their outward behavior. Children facing depressive disorders may display changes in mood, social withdrawal, or a lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities, all of which align with the characteristics of internalizing problems. These symptoms contrast with externalizing problems, which are more associated with outward behaviors such as aggression or conduct disorders. Learning problems focus on academic skills and may not directly correlate with emotional disturbances. Interpersonal problems could involve difficulties in relationships but do not necessarily indicate a depressive disorder. Thus, internalizing problems serve as a precise category for assessing depressive disorders in children.

2. Which behavioral aspect is significantly related to individual drive theory?

- A. Social behavior**
- B. Homeostasis maintenance**
- C. Reinforcement learning**
- D. Cognitive dissonance**

Individual drive theory is primarily concerned with the motivation behind behaviors as they relate to biological needs. The theory posits that humans are motivated to satisfy basic physiological needs, such as hunger and thirst, and that a drive is established when these needs are unmet. When individuals experience a deficit in a basic need, such as the need for food or water, they feel a drive that prompts them to engage in behavior aimed at fulfilling that need, thus restoring homeostasis. Homeostasis refers to the body's ability to maintain stable internal conditions necessary for survival. In the context of individual drive theory, the drive arises from a need to return to a state of homeostasis. For example, hunger creates a drive to eat, which helps re-establish a balanced state. Therefore, the concept of homeostasis maintenance is central to understanding how individual drive theory explains behavioral motivation and action. The other options, while related to different aspects of behavior and motivation, do not capture the essence of individual drive theory's focus on physiological needs and the resulting drives that lead to behavior aimed at achieving homeostasis. Social behavior, reinforcement learning, and cognitive dissonance address different psychological theories and motivations that do not center directly on the fundamental biological drives as outlined in individual drive theory.

3. Which statement about Americans' confidence in organized religion is NOT supported by the data?

- A. Confidence has generally remained stable over the years**
- B. More than 60% had confidence in 1973**
- C. Confidence significantly declined from 1973 to 2013**
- D. There was an overall increase in lack of confidence**

The statement that confidence significantly declined from 1973 to 2013 is not supported by the data. Historical data typically indicate that while there may have been fluctuations in confidence levels throughout the years, the overall trend from 1973 to 2013 does not show a consistent or significant decline. The decline in confidence in organized religion has been observed in specific contexts or amongst certain age groups rather than as a blanket trend over the entire population during those years. This suggests that while a decline might occur among some segments of the population, it does not reflect the overall confidence levels across all Americans, thus making this statement inconsistent with the broader data on public confidence in organized religion.

4. In assessing students' emotional problems, which attribution error might a teacher make regarding behavioral issues?

- A. A. Overlooking reinforcement patterns**
- B. B. Ignoring emotional maturity**
- C. C. Attributing problems to psychological disorders**
- D. D. Considering situational variables**

Attributing students' behavioral problems to psychological disorders reflects an inclination to internalize the cause of these issues. This phenomenon is often referred to as the fundamental attribution error, which occurs when individuals place undue emphasis on personal characteristics rather than considering external situational factors. In this context, a teacher might overlook the importance of environmental influences, such as home life, peer relationships, or educational pressures, which can significantly affect a student's behavior and emotional state. While psychological disorders are certainly relevant in some cases, attributing behavior solely to them can lead to an incomplete understanding of the complexities behind a student's emotional challenges. Instead, it's crucial for educators to adopt a more holistic approach that appreciates the various external factors at play, promoting a deeper empathy and support tailored to each student's needs. Understanding this nuance can enhance a teacher's ability to address behavioral issues more effectively and compassionately.

5. What is the significance of the placebo effect in psychological research?
- A. It demonstrates a lack of response to real treatments
 - B. It shows that memory can be altered by expectations
 - C. It illustrates how expectations can lead to actual improvements**
 - D. It indicates the importance of biological factors

The placebo effect is significant in psychological research because it illustrates how expectations can lead to actual improvements in a person's condition even when they receive a treatment that has no therapeutic effect. This phenomenon highlights the power of the mind and its ability to influence physical health outcomes based solely on the individual's belief in the treatment's efficacy. When participants believe they are receiving an effective treatment, their expectations can trigger physiological responses in the body, leading to real improvements in symptoms, whether those symptoms are physical or psychological. This effect underscores the importance of psychological factors—such as belief and expectation—in health and healing, emphasizing that our mental state can significantly affect our physical health outcomes. Understanding the placebo effect not only has implications for the design and interpretation of clinical trials, but it also calls attention to the complex interplay between psychological and physiological processes. Research that accounts for the placebo effect can assist in more accurately assessing the effectiveness of actual treatments by ensuring that the effects being measured are beyond what can be attributed to patient expectations.

6. What assumption underlies predictive models regarding social identity and psychosocial stressors?
- A. Out-group socialization perception
 - B. Attribution of psychosocial stressors to identity**
 - C. Behavioral health consequences affecting identity
 - D. Socioeconomic gradient affecting health

The assumption that underlies predictive models regarding social identity and psychosocial stressors is the attribution of psychosocial stressors to identity. This perspective emphasizes that individuals often experience stressors—such as discrimination, stigma, or social rejection—based on their social identity (which can include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and more). This attribution helps explain how these stressors can lead to mental health issues and overall psychological distress. When individuals perceive that their social identity is the source of the stress they face, it can create a feedback loop where their experiences further reinforce their social identity, leading to chronic stress and negative health outcomes. Therefore, understanding this connection allows researchers and practitioners to develop interventions that are tailored to address the specific psychosocial challenges faced by different identity groups, ultimately improving outcomes for those affected. This model informs the ways in which social identity interacts with social systems and stresses, impacting individuals' health and well-being. It is integral to comprehending how different social identities navigate societal pressures and stressors, underlining the importance of considering identity in health and psychosocial research.

7. What aspect does self-actualization emphasize in personal growth?

- A. Fulfilling basic survival needs**
- B. Seeking personal growth and peak experiences**
- C. Establishing social connections**
- D. Achieving economic stability**

Self-actualization focuses on the realization of one's potential and the pursuit of personal growth and peak experiences. This concept is grounded in humanistic psychology, particularly as articulated by Abraham Maslow in his hierarchy of needs, where self-actualization represents the highest level of psychological development. When someone is engaged in self-actualization, they seek to achieve their fullest potential and are motivated to pursue personal goals that align with their values and passions. This can include engaging in creative endeavors, experiencing new activities that lead to personal insight, and striving for self-improvement. The emphasis is on achieving a deep sense of fulfillment through experiences that challenge and expand one's understanding of oneself and the world. The other options revolve around more basic needs or external factors that do not capture the essence of self-actualization. Fulfilling basic survival needs pertains to the foundational requirements for life, while establishing social connections relates more to social belonging rather than personal growth. Achieving economic stability, while important for an individual's overall well-being, is also a more practical consideration than the pursuit of self-actualization, which is about inner growth and authentic self-expression.

8. When studying socioeconomic status (SES) and stress, which data is least relevant for including in an SES aggregate measure?

- A. A. Occupational status**
- B. B. Income sources**
- C. C. Social capital**
- D. D. Educational attainment**

In the context of forming an aggregate measure of socioeconomic status (SES), social capital is the least relevant compared to the other options. SES is typically evaluated based on quantifiable factors that directly reflect economic conditions and opportunities. Occupational status provides insight into the type of job a person holds, which can indicate income potential and stability. Income sources help to determine the financial resources available to an individual or household, which is a direct measure of economic capability. Educational attainment reflects the level of education achieved, which often correlates with job prospects and earning potential. While social capital—referring to the networks of relationships among people in a society, contributing to social and economic benefits—does play a role in overall well-being, it is more abstract and less directly measurable in economic terms. It encompasses the potential benefits from social networks but does not directly contribute to the financial indicators that traditionally form the basis of SES measurements. Thus, in this context, it is considered less relevant for aggregating SES compared to the tangible metrics of occupational status, income sources, and educational attainment.

9. Which concept best describes the phenomenon where individuals become more extreme in their views after discussing those views with like-minded peers?

- A. Social loafing
- B. Groupthink
- C. Group polarization**
- D. Deindividuation

The concept that best describes the phenomenon where individuals become more extreme in their views after discussing those views with like-minded peers is group polarization. This occurs when members of a group share similar opinions, leading to discussions that reinforce their beliefs and push them towards more extreme positions. As they engage in dialogue, they often amplify their arguments and feelings, resulting in a stronger collective stance on the issue at hand. Group polarization can be observed in various contexts, such as political discussions, social movements, or even within smaller groups of friends. The dynamics of consensus and validation within the group contribute to the shift, where individuals feel encouraged to express more radical viewpoints as they gain support from others who share their perspectives. Social loafing refers to a tendency for individuals to exert less effort when working in a group compared to working alone, which is distinct from the idea of opinion extremity. Groupthink describes a scenario where the desire for harmony or conformity in a group results in dysfunctional decision-making, preventing critical evaluation of alternative viewpoints. Deindividuation involves a loss of self-awareness and individual accountability in group settings, which can lead to behaviors that individuals might not exhibit alone, but it is not specifically about the extremity of views. Therefore, group polarization accurately captures the essence of

10. What psychological phenomenon is illustrated by the cycle of worrying leading to sleeplessness?

- A. A self-fulfilling prophecy**
- B. B. Stereotype threat
- C. C. The fundamental attribution error
- D. D. Cognitive dissonance

The correct answer highlights the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy, which occurs when an individual's expectations or beliefs about a situation influence their behaviors and actions in ways that ultimately lead to the fulfillment of those expectations. In this case, the cycle of worrying about not being able to sleep can create anxiety and stress that makes it even more difficult to fall asleep, thus reinforcing the belief that sleeplessness is inevitable. When someone expects that their worrying will lead to sleeplessness, the resulting behavior—such as increased anxiety—can indeed prevent them from sleeping, ultimately confirming their initial worry. This dynamic showcases how our thoughts and beliefs can shape our experiences in a reciprocal manner. The other options represent different psychological concepts. Stereotype threat refers to the fear of confirming negative stereotypes about one's social group, which is unrelated to the concerns of an individual's sleep patterns. The fundamental attribution error involves misjudging the causes of others' behaviors, attributing their actions to their inherent characteristics instead of considering situational factors. Cognitive dissonance is the psychological discomfort experienced when one holds contradictory beliefs or attitudes, which does not directly relate to the phenomenon of worrying leading to sleeplessness. These distinctions clarify why self-fulfilling prophecy is the most

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://aamcpsfl3.examzify.com>

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

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