

AAMC PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIOR (PS) FULL- LENGTH (FL) 4 PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

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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 term describes the psychological process of returning to earlier developmental stages in response to stress?**
 - A. Regression
 - B. Projection
 - C. Displacement
 - D. Rationalization

- 2. What is the significance of introspection in psychological studies?**
 - A. It provides a method to analyze the thoughts and feelings of others
 - B. It allows individuals to analyze their thoughts and feelings through self-reflection
 - C. It is mainly used in behavioral observation
 - D. It has limited application in psychology

- 3. Which economic factor is linked to a reduced likelihood of receiving a mammogram?**
 - A. Above poverty level
 - B. Below poverty level
 - C. Stable employment
 - D. College education

- 4. What does the term 'empathy' refer to in interpersonal relationships?**
 - A. The ability to ignore one's feelings.
 - B. The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
 - C. The capability to feel sorry for someone.
 - D. The capacity to manipulate emotions.

- 5. Which brain structure is primarily responsible for regulating emotions and forming memories?**
 - A. Hippocampus
 - B. Cerebellum
 - C. Amygdala
 - D. Thalamus

- 6. What is the role of reinforcement in behavior modification?**
- A. To decrease motivation for a behavior
 - B. To increase the likelihood of a behavior being repeated
 - C. To eliminate unwanted behaviors
 - D. To encourage random acts of behavior
- 7. How does the diathesis-stress model explain the development of psychological disorders?**
- A. It suggests that stress is the only factor in disorder development
 - B. It proposes that individual experiences play no role
 - C. It indicates that a predisposition may lead to disorders when exposed to stressors
 - D. It denies any biological factors affecting psychological disorders
- 8. What does 'extinction' mean in the context of classical conditioning?**
- A. The gradual disappearance of a conditioned response.
 - B. The reinforcement of a conditioned response.
 - C. The immediate response to an unconditioned stimulus.
 - D. The acquisition of a new conditioned response.
- 9. Which theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development?**
- A. Pavlov's Classical Conditioning
 - B. Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory
 - C. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory
 - D. Bandura's Social Learning Theory
- 10. According to Study 1, which symptom in childhood is most likely a risk factor for lower socioeconomic status in adulthood?**
- A. Feelings of worthlessness
 - B. Anxiety
 - C. Hyperactivity
 - D. Social withdrawal

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which term describes the psychological process of returning to earlier developmental stages in response to stress?

- A. Regression**
- B. Projection
- C. Displacement
- D. Rationalization

The term that describes the psychological process of returning to earlier developmental stages in response to stress is known as regression. This defense mechanism involves an individual subconsciously reverting to behaviors or thoughts typical of a younger age when faced with anxiety or overwhelming situations. For example, an adult experiencing severe stress might exhibit childish behaviors, such as throwing a temper tantrum or seeking comfort through habits learned in childhood, like sucking their thumb or seeking parental attention. This process provides a temporary escape from the pressures of the current situation by allowing the individual to cope using familiar, though less mature, strategies. It can manifest in various ways, such as engaging in fantasies, adopting childlike manners, or relying on others more heavily than usual. Understanding regression helps to identify how individuals cope with stress and the significance of developmental stages in psychological responses.

2. What is the significance of introspection in psychological studies?

- A. It provides a method to analyze the thoughts and feelings of others
- B. It allows individuals to analyze their thoughts and feelings through self-reflection**
- C. It is mainly used in behavioral observation
- D. It has limited application in psychology

Introspection plays a crucial role in psychological studies as it enables individuals to gain insights into their own thoughts, emotions, and mental processes through self-reflection. This practice allows individuals to examine their cognitive states and emotional responses in a structured manner, leading to a deeper understanding of their personal experiences. By focusing on one's inner experiences, introspection can reveal patterns of thought and feeling that are significant in understanding behavior and mental processes. The method emphasizes the subjective experience of the individual, which is fundamental in disciplines such as clinical psychology and cognitive psychology. It sets the foundation for various psychotherapeutic techniques that rely on understanding a person's internal landscape to facilitate healing and personal growth. This self-examination can uncover underlying motivations and conflicts, thus aiding in the development of more effective therapeutic approaches. In contrast, options that suggest it is primarily about analyzing the thoughts of others or being limited to behavioral observation do not capture the essence of introspection, which is fundamentally about the self. Additionally, stating that introspection has limited application in psychology overlooks its significant historical and contemporary relevance in fostering self-awareness and psychological insight.

3. Which economic factor is linked to a reduced likelihood of receiving a mammogram?

- A. Above poverty level
- B. Below poverty level**
- C. Stable employment
- D. College education

Individuals who are below the poverty level are often linked to a reduced likelihood of receiving preventive health services, such as mammograms, due to several factors related to economic disadvantage. Those living below the poverty line may have limited access to healthcare facilities and services, which can be influenced by a lack of health insurance, inability to afford copays, transportation challenges, or a lack of awareness about the importance of screening. Additionally, financial strain can lead individuals to prioritize basic needs over preventive healthcare, contributing to lower screening rates. Education about health services and availability may also be lacking for those in lower socioeconomic situations, further exacerbating the disparities in access to preventive care like mammograms. In contrast, factors such as above poverty level income, stable employment, and a college education generally correlate with higher rates of mammogram screenings, as these conditions typically provide greater access to healthcare resources and information. This highlights the significant impact economic status has on health behaviors and access to preventive measures.

4. What does the term 'empathy' refer to in interpersonal relationships?

- A. The ability to ignore one's feelings.
- B. The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.**
- C. The capability to feel sorry for someone.
- D. The capacity to manipulate emotions.

Empathy in interpersonal relationships refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. This involves not only recognizing emotional states but also connecting with and responding to those emotions, fostering a sense of closeness and compassion. When one practices empathy, they can put themselves in another's shoes, grasping the emotional experiences that person is going through. This deep emotional understanding helps in building trust and enhances communication between individuals. In contrast, the other options do not accurately capture the essence of empathy: ignoring one's feelings does not involve any emotional connection, feeling sorry for someone lacks the deeper engagement that empathy entails, and manipulating emotions is a self-serving behavior that undermines the authentic connection that empathy fosters. Thus, understanding and sharing feelings is central to empathetic interactions.

5. Which brain structure is primarily responsible for regulating emotions and forming memories?

- A. Hippocampus
- B. Cerebellum
- C. Amygdala**
- D. Thalamus

The amygdala plays a crucial role in the regulation of emotions and the formation of memories, particularly those related to emotional experiences. It is involved in processing emotions such as fear and pleasure and is essential for the emotional tagging of memories, enabling individuals to recall emotionally significant events more vividly. This emotional processing is vital for survival, as it helps organisms respond to threats and positive experiences effectively. The hippocampus is primarily associated with the formation of new memories and the consolidation of information from short-term to long-term memory. While it does play a role in emotional memory to some extent, the regulation of emotions is primarily mediated by the amygdala. The cerebellum is mainly involved in the coordination of voluntary movements and motor control, rather than in processing emotions or forming memories. The thalamus acts as a relay station for sensory information and is involved in sensory perception and regulation of motor functions, but it does not play a direct role in the regulation of emotions or the formation of memories. Thus, the amygdala stands out as the key brain structure linking emotion regulation and memory formation.

6. What is the role of reinforcement in behavior modification?

- A. To decrease motivation for a behavior
- B. To increase the likelihood of a behavior being repeated**
- C. To eliminate unwanted behaviors
- D. To encourage random acts of behavior

Reinforcement plays a crucial role in behavior modification by increasing the likelihood that a specific behavior will be repeated in the future. When a behavior is followed by a positive reinforcement, such as praise or a reward, the individual is more likely to engage in that behavior again because they associate it with a favorable outcome. This principle is fundamental in operant conditioning, where behaviors are shaped through consequences. Positive reinforcement strengthens the connection between the behavior and the reward, making it more likely that the behavior will occur again. This is key in various applications, including education, parenting, and therapy, as practitioners utilize reinforcement strategies to promote desired behaviors effectively. In contrast, options that suggest decreasing motivation for a behavior or eliminating unwanted behaviors do not align with the function of reinforcement, which focuses primarily on promoting and encouraging behavior repetition. Reinforcement does not foster random acts of behavior; rather, it is intentionally applied to specific actions to enhance their frequency.

7. How does the diathesis-stress model explain the development of psychological disorders?

- A. It suggests that stress is the only factor in disorder development
- B. It proposes that individual experiences play no role
- C. It indicates that a predisposition may lead to disorders when exposed to stressors**
- D. It denies any biological factors affecting psychological disorders

The diathesis-stress model is a psychological theory that explains how psychological disorders can develop through the interaction of predispositional factors (diathesis) and environmental stressors. According to this model, an individual's biological, psychological, or genetic predisposition is a critical factor that can make them more vulnerable to developing a psychological disorder. However, this vulnerability does not guarantee the onset of the disorder; rather, it emphasizes that a certain level of stress or adverse experiences is often necessary to trigger the development of the condition. The correct choice points out that a predisposition may lead to disorders when exposed to stressors. This reflects the essential concept of the model: both an inherent vulnerability (the diathesis) and an external stressor must typically be present for a psychological disorder to manifest. For example, a person with a genetic susceptibility to anxiety may never experience an anxiety disorder unless they encounter significant life stressors, such as trauma or chronic stress, that push them towards that threshold. This understanding highlights the importance of considering both biological and environmental factors in the assessment of mental health, providing a comprehensive view of how complex, multifactorial processes can contribute to the onset of psychological illnesses.

8. What does 'extinction' mean in the context of classical conditioning?

- A. The gradual disappearance of a conditioned response.**
- B. The reinforcement of a conditioned response.
- C. The immediate response to an unconditioned stimulus.
- D. The acquisition of a new conditioned response.

In the context of classical conditioning, 'extinction' refers to the process by which a conditioned response gradually diminishes and eventually disappears when the conditioned stimulus is presented repeatedly without being followed by the unconditioned stimulus. For example, if a dog has been conditioned to salivate at the sound of a bell (the conditioned stimulus) because it has been paired with food (the unconditioned stimulus), extinction would occur if the bell is rung many times without presenting the food. Over time, the dog would start to salivate less and eventually stop salivating altogether in response to the bell. This concept highlights the importance of the associated relationship between the conditioned stimulus and unconditioned stimulus. As the reinforcement provided by the unconditioned stimulus is removed, the learned behavior (the conditioned response) weakens and ultimately fades away. Understanding extinction is crucial for comprehending how learned behaviors can be modified or eliminated over time, demonstrating the malleability of learned associations in behavioral psychology.

9. Which theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development?

- A. Pavlov's Classical Conditioning
- B. Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory
- C. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory**
- D. Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the vital role that social interaction plays in cognitive development. According to this theory, learning is inherently a social process, where knowledge is constructed through interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as parents, peers, or educators. Vygotsky introduced key concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which defines the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and collaboration. This underscores the importance of collaboration and cultural context in learning, highlighting that cognitive development is not only an internal process but also heavily influenced by external social factors. In contrast, other theories do not focus specifically on social interaction as a cornerstone of cognitive development. For instance, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory examines individual stages of cognitive growth primarily from a constructivist perspective without emphasizing social influences to the same extent. Pavlov's Classical Conditioning pertains to associative learning through interaction with stimuli rather than cognitive development, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, while incorporating observation and imitation in learning, does not specifically address the structured development of cognitive abilities in relation to social interactions in the same way Vygotsky does.

10. According to Study 1, which symptom in childhood is most likely a risk factor for lower socioeconomic status in adulthood?

- A. Feelings of worthlessness**
- B. Anxiety
- C. Hyperactivity
- D. Social withdrawal

The correct answer highlights feelings of worthlessness as a significant childhood symptom associated with lower socioeconomic status in adulthood. This connection is grounded in the understanding of how emotional and psychological factors can influence long-term life outcomes. Feelings of worthlessness can detract from a child's self-esteem and motivation, potentially impacting their educational achievements and social relationships. This lack of self-worth may lead to difficulties in navigating social and professional environments later in life, which can contribute to a lower socioeconomic status. When children experience feelings of worthlessness, this can also be indicative of broader mental health struggles, which may lead to challenges such as avoidance of opportunities for growth or difficulty in forming supportive networks. All of these factors can compound, leading to a cycle where lower socioeconomic status persists into adulthood. In contrast, while other symptoms like anxiety, hyperactivity, and social withdrawal can also negatively impact a child's development and future opportunities, feelings of worthlessness have a particularly strong linkage to self-perception and overall life outlook that can affect socioeconomic status more profoundly. Thus, focusing specifically on feelings of worthlessness provides clearer insight into the psychological factors that can impact socioeconomic trajectories.

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://aamcpsfl4.examzify.com>

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

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