

AMSCO AP Psychology - Cognitive Psychology / Cognition Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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Questions

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- 1. What cognitive process allows for faster relearning of previously learned information?**
 - A. Relearning**
 - B. Long term potentiation**
 - C. Primacy effect**
 - D. Savings score**
- 2. Which type of sensory memory specifically retains visual images for a brief period?**
 - A. Echoic memory**
 - B. Iconic memory**
 - C. Short-term memory**
 - D. Working memory**
- 3. Which type of memory is related to the way memories are reconstructed from various cues during recall?**
 - A. State-dependent memory**
 - B. Memory reconstruction**
 - C. Pseudomemories**
 - D. Prospective memory**
- 4. What is the focus of concepts in cognitive psychology?**
 - A. Their complexity in usage.**
 - B. Their inherent structures and relations.**
 - C. Their situational variability.**
 - D. Their universal application across cultures.**
- 5. Which perspective emphasizes the role of environment and reinforcement in the acquisition of language?**
 - A. Cognitive perspective**
 - B. Behavioral perspective**
 - C. Neuroscience perspective**
 - D. Developmental perspective**

- 6. In decision-making, what does loss aversion suggest about a person's response to potential losses?**
- A. They are likely to take greater risks to avoid loss**
 - B. They often ignore losses when making decisions**
 - C. They are more sensitive to losses than equivalent gains**
 - D. They tend to embrace losses as part of their strategy**
- 7. Which of the following accurately describes the outcome of the anchoring effect?**
- A. Decisions become easier with clearer options**
 - B. Initial presentations greatly influence final judgments**
 - C. Recent information holds no weight in decision-making**
 - D. Complex choices are always simpler to evaluate**
- 8. What is the term for the longest list of numbers that can be remembered and repeated back?**
- A. Digit span**
 - B. Sequential memory**
 - C. Chunks**
 - D. Verbal memory**
- 9. Which of the following statements best describes a forgetting curve?**
- A. A gradual decline in memory over time**
 - B. An immediate loss of all memory**
 - C. A slow and steady memory retention**
 - D. A linear increase in memory recall**
- 10. Which problem-solving method involves testing various solutions until one is found that works?**
- A. Intuition**
 - B. Algorithm**
 - C. Trial and Error**
 - D. Cognitive Biases**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What cognitive process allows for faster relearning of previously learned information?

- A. Relearning**
- B. Long term potentiation**
- C. Primacy effect**
- D. Savings score**

The correct answer highlights a fundamental concept in cognitive psychology known as relearning. This process refers to the ability to learn information more quickly the second time around, demonstrating that previously acquired knowledge or skills can be retained to some extent in memory over time. When individuals revisit information, the cognitive process of relearning allows them to access prior knowledge, often with less effort and in less time than the initial learning. This phenomenon is crucial in educational settings and contributes to the understanding of how memory works. The concept of savings score, while related, specifically quantifies the efficiency of relearning by measuring the reduction in time or effort needed to relearn the material compared to the initial learning. Long-term potentiation relates to the strengthening of synapses based on recent patterns of activity, a biological basis for learning and memory, but does not directly reference the cognitive process of relearning. The primacy effect pertains to better recall of the first items in a sequence, emphasizing different aspects of memory retention rather than the reinforcement of past learning. Thus, the cognitive process of relearning is vital for understanding how we can more efficiently recall and utilize information we have encountered before.

2. Which type of sensory memory specifically retains visual images for a brief period?

- A. Echoic memory**
- B. Iconic memory**
- C. Short-term memory**
- D. Working memory**

Iconic memory is the type of sensory memory that specifically retains visual images for a brief period, typically lasting only a fraction of a second. This form of memory allows individuals to hold onto visual information, such as a scene or an object, just long enough to process and understand it before it fades away. Iconic memory captures the fleeting impressions of what we see, facilitating the transition between perception and more complex cognitive processing. In contrast, echoic memory pertains to auditory information and retains sounds for short durations, while short-term memory encompasses a broader capacity for temporarily holding various types of information, though for a limited duration. Working memory, on the other hand, involves the manipulation and use of retrieved information rather than just storage. Each of the other types plays a distinct role in our cognitive processes, differentiating them from the specific function of iconic memory.

3. Which type of memory is related to the way memories are reconstructed from various cues during recall?

- A. State-dependent memory**
- B. Memory reconstruction**
- C. Pseudomemories**
- D. Prospective memory**

The correct response highlights the concept of memory reconstruction, which refers to the process of recalling memories that can be influenced by various cues and contextual factors. During recall, our brains do not retrieve memories as static recordings but rather reconstruct them by integrating existing knowledge, beliefs, and the present context. This implies that the act of remembering is not just a straightforward retrieval but a dynamic process where information can be altered or framed by new associations or cues at the time of recall. For example, when recalling an event, an individual might be influenced by their current emotional state or by additional information received after the event. This can lead to the creation of memories that may not accurately reflect the original experience, but rather a blend of the original memory with current influences. While state-dependent memory refers specifically to the influence of one's physical or emotional state on memory retrieval, and prospective memory concerns the ability to remember to perform actions in the future, these concepts don't capture the broader process of how memories are actively reconstructed during recall. Pseudomemories deal with false memories that can arise from suggestive cues, but they don't encapsulate the reconstruction process in the same way. Therefore, memory reconstruction is the concept that best fits the description of how memories are reconstructed from various cues during recall.

4. What is the focus of concepts in cognitive psychology?

- A. Their complexity in usage.**
- B. Their inherent structures and relations.**
- C. Their situational variability.**
- D. Their universal application across cultures.**

The focus of concepts in cognitive psychology is on their inherent structures and relations. This perspective emphasizes how concepts are organized in the mind and how various concepts relate to one another, influencing thought processes, categorization, and problem-solving. Cognitive psychology seeks to understand the mental activities involved in processing information, which includes how we form, retrieve, and apply concepts based on their relationships and structures. Inherent structures refer to the features and attributes that define a concept, while relations explore how different concepts can be interconnected—such as through hierarchies or associative links. This understanding helps explain how we categorize objects, make decisions, and apply knowledge in different contexts. While complexity in usage, situational variability, and universal application are relevant considerations in cognitive psychology, they don't capture the primary focus on the underlying structure and relation of concepts themselves. Instead, cognitive psychology aims to dissect how these foundational elements influence broader cognitive functions and behaviors.

5. Which perspective emphasizes the role of environment and reinforcement in the acquisition of language?

A. Cognitive perspective

B. Behavioral perspective

C. Neuroscience perspective

D. Developmental perspective

The behavioral perspective emphasizes the role of environment and reinforcement in the acquisition of language. This viewpoint, largely associated with the theories of B.F. Skinner, suggests that language is learned through interactions with the environment, particularly through processes such as imitation, repetition, and reinforcement. Children learn to speak and construct sentences by mimicking the speech they hear around them and receiving positive feedback (reinforcement) when they correctly use language, which encourages further attempts at communication. This approach contrasts with other perspectives that focus on different aspects of language acquisition. For instance, the cognitive perspective emphasizes internal mental processes and the innate cognitive abilities that contribute to language learning. The neuroscience perspective looks at the biological and neurological mechanisms underlying language, while the developmental perspective considers the changes and milestones in language development across different stages of a child's life. Each of these perspectives provides valuable insights but does not primarily highlight the role of reinforcement and environment in the way that the behavioral perspective does.

6. In decision-making, what does loss aversion suggest about a person's response to potential losses?

A. They are likely to take greater risks to avoid loss

B. They often ignore losses when making decisions

C. They are more sensitive to losses than equivalent gains

D. They tend to embrace losses as part of their strategy

Loss aversion is a key concept in behavioral economics and psychology, which posits that individuals experience losses more intensely than they experience equivalent gains. This means that the negative impact of losing a certain amount of money or resources is perceived as stronger and more distressing than the positive impact of gaining the same amount. As a result, when faced with decisions that could lead to a gain or a loss, people tend to be more affected by the possibility of loss. This sensitivity to losses can lead to conservative or risk-averse behavior in decision-making scenarios, as individuals may prioritize avoiding losses over securing gains. Therefore, the correct understanding of loss aversion is that people will steer their choices in a way that minimizes potential losses, reflecting their greater emotional reaction to losing rather than winning. This is why option C accurately captures the essence of loss aversion in the context of decision-making.

7. Which of the following accurately describes the outcome of the anchoring effect?

- A. Decisions become easier with clearer options**
- B. Initial presentations greatly influence final judgments**
- C. Recent information holds no weight in decision-making**
- D. Complex choices are always simpler to evaluate**

The anchoring effect refers to the cognitive bias where individuals rely heavily on the first piece of information they encounter (the "anchor") when making decisions. This initial information sets a reference point that influences how subsequent information is interpreted and how decisions are made. As a result, even if the subsequent details are irrelevant or less significant, the anchor can unduly impact the final judgment. In practical scenarios, if someone is presented with a high initial price for an item, their perception of what constitutes a reasonable price for that item will be anchored around that higher price, even if they later see lower prices. This tendency illustrates how initial presentations shape and influence our judgments, demonstrating the lasting impact that the first impressions or pieces of information can have on our decision-making processes.

8. What is the term for the longest list of numbers that can be remembered and repeated back?

- A. Digit span**
- B. Sequential memory**
- C. Chunks**
- D. Verbal memory**

The term that refers to the longest list of numbers that can be remembered and repeated back is known as digit span. This concept is a standard way to measure working memory capacity, particularly in cognitive psychology assessments. It involves presenting a series of digits to a participant, who must then recall them in the correct order. The number of digits that can be accurately remembered typically ranges between 5 to 9 for most individuals. Digit span highlights the limits of short-term memory and is often used in psychological testing to gauge memory function. It can serve as an indicator of cognitive abilities, such as attention and working memory. In contrast, the other terms do not specifically refer to this aspect of memory. Sequential memory refers more generally to the ability to remember sequences but does not specifically involve digits. Chunks pertain to the process of grouping information to enhance memory retention, while verbal memory focuses on the recall of words and language rather than specific numerical sequences.

9. Which of the following statements best describes a forgetting curve?

- A. A gradual decline in memory over time**
- B. An immediate loss of all memory**
- C. A slow and steady memory retention**
- D. A linear increase in memory recall**

The statement that defines a forgetting curve as a gradual decline in memory over time accurately portrays how information is retained and forgotten according to research in cognitive psychology. The forgetting curve, first identified by Hermann Ebbinghaus, illustrates that memories fade at an exponential rate after the initial learning. This means that shortly after learning new information, a significant portion of it is lost, and the rate of forgetting decreases over time. This concept highlights the idea that while we may recall information immediately after learning it, our ability to retain that information diminishes as time passes without reinforcement or review. Thus, the correct answer encapsulates the essence of the forgetting curve, which emphasizes the decline in memory retention as a function of time.

10. Which problem-solving method involves testing various solutions until one is found that works?

- A. Intuition**
- B. Algorithm**
- C. Trial and Error**
- D. Cognitive Biases**

The method that involves testing various solutions until a successful one is found is known as trial and error. This approach is characterized by trying out different possibilities and learning from mistakes or failures after each attempt. It is particularly useful in situations where there is no clear strategy or solution available, allowing the problem-solver to explore multiple avenues until the right one is discovered. This method is often employed in practical tasks, such as trying different combinations to open a lock or figuring out how to assemble furniture without clear instructions. In contrast, intuition relies on instinctive feelings or gut reactions rather than systematic problem-solving. An algorithm is a step-by-step procedure that guarantees a solution if followed correctly but does not involve testing multiple options independently. Cognitive biases refer to the systematic patterns of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment, which can cloud decision-making but do not specifically address a method for solving problems through trial and error.