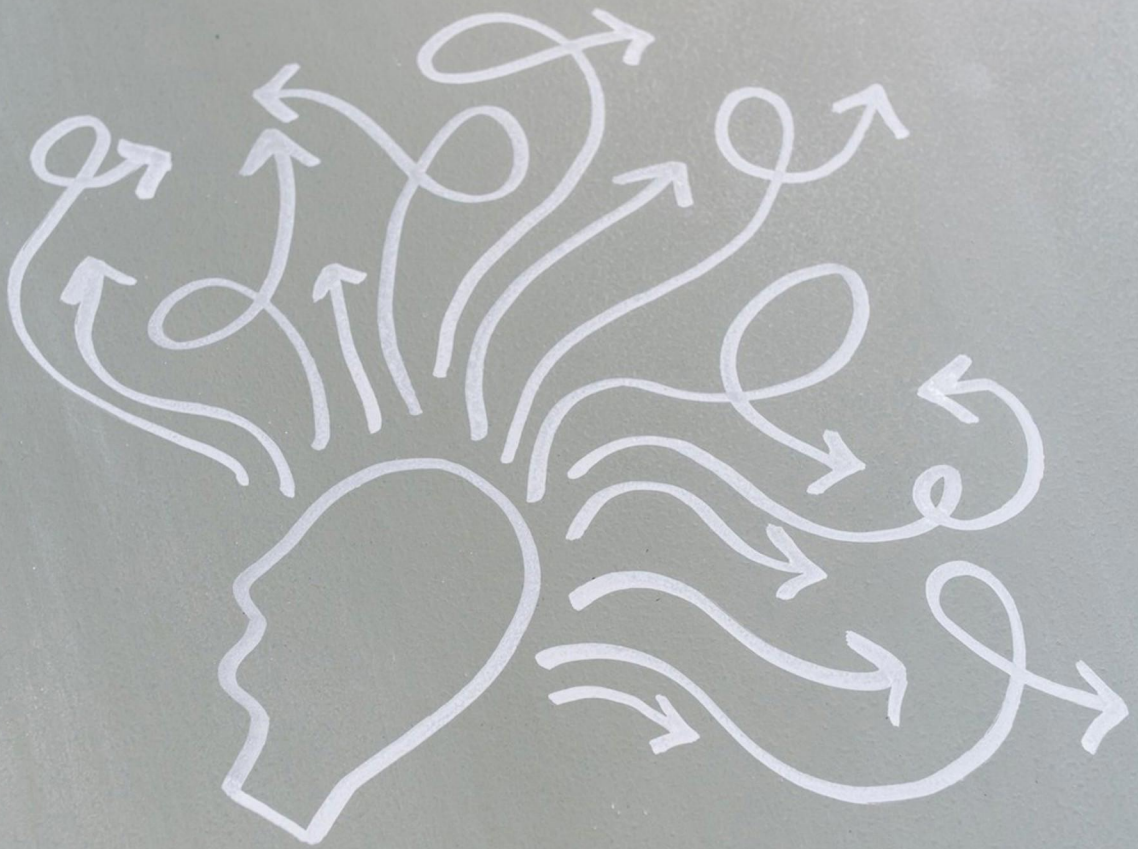


AP PSYCHOLOGY – COMMON PSYCHOLOGY TERMS (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



Prepare with structure. Pass with confidence



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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. The measured outcome in a study, representing the responses of participants, is known as what?**
 - A. Dependent Variable (DV)
 - B. Independent Variable (IV)
 - C. Operational definition
 - D. Random variable
- 2. The phenomenon describing our tendency to judge stimuli relative to a neutral reference point based on prior experience**
 - A. Absolute threshold
 - B. Adaptation level phenomenon
 - C. Agoraphobia
 - D. Algorithm
- 3. What ethical principle requires researchers to tell participants enough about a study to decide whether to participate?**
 - A. Informed consent
 - B. Debriefing
 - C. Assent
 - D. Institutional review
- 4. A desire to perform a behavior to receive promised rewards or avoid threatened punishment.**
 - A. Intrinsic motivation
 - B. Extrinsic motivation
 - C. Motivation by curiosity
 - D. Social motivation
- 5. The regular bodily rhythms that regulate sleep-wake cycles are called?**
 - A. Executive Functioning
 - B. Circadian Rhythm
 - C. Cerebellum
 - D. Bystander Effect

- 6. What term describes the tendency to overestimate the accuracy of our beliefs and judgments?**
- A. Overconfidence
 - B. Hindsight Bias
 - C. Confirmation Bias
 - D. Anchoring
- 7. Which term describes sleepwalking that occurs during deep sleep (NREM3)?**
- A. Night Terrors
 - B. REM Sleep Behavior Disorder
 - C. Somnambulism
 - D. Sleep Apnea
- 8. Judging the likelihood of events by how well they match a prototype describes which heuristic?**
- A. Availability heuristic
 - B. Anchoring heuristic
 - C. Representativeness heuristic
 - D. Simulation heuristic
- 9. Which term describes a tendency for group members to prioritize consensus over critical evaluation?**
- A. Groupthink
 - B. Confirmation bias
 - C. Social loafing
 - D. Group polarization
- 10. The brain's 'little brain' at the rear of the brainstem that coordinates movement and balance is the?**
- A. Cochlea
 - B. Cerebellum
 - C. Circadian Rhythm
 - D. Cognitive Dissonance

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. The measured outcome in a study, representing the responses of participants, is known as what?

- A. Dependent Variable (DV)**
- B. Independent Variable (IV)
- C. Operational definition
- D. Random variable

The measured outcome is the dependent variable—the variable researchers observe and record as the responses of participants. In an experiment, you change something (the independent variable) to see how it affects these responses. The dependent variable captures that effect and is what you analyze to determine whether the manipulation produced a change. Examples include test scores, reaction times, the number of correct responses, or self-report ratings. The other terms refer to different ideas: the independent variable is what you deliberately vary; an operational definition explains how you concretely measure a concept in the study; and a random variable is a statistical idea about outcomes from a random process, not the specific measured outcome in a psychology experiment.

2. The phenomenon describing our tendency to judge stimuli relative to a neutral reference point based on prior experience

- A. Absolute threshold
- B. Adaptation level phenomenon**
- C. Agoraphobia
- D. Algorithm

This is adaptation-level phenomenon—the idea that we judge stimuli relative to a baseline or reference point shaped by our prior experiences and current context. Our perception of how strong or intense something is depends on the neutral point we've developed from what we've just experienced. That baseline shifts with changes in environment, mood, or recent events, so the same stimulus can feel stronger or weaker depending on what our adaptation level is at the moment. For example, after being in a quiet room, a normal sound seems loud, while after a loud event, the same sound seems less noticeable. This contrasts with absolute threshold, which is about the minimum detectable stimulus, agoraphobia, a fear disorder, or an algorithm, a step-by-step procedure.

3. What ethical principle requires researchers to tell participants enough about a study to decide whether to participate?

- A. Informed consent**
- B. Debriefing
- C. Assent
- D. Institutional review

Informed consent is the principle that researchers must provide enough information about a study for people to decide whether to participate. This means communicating what the study involves, any potential risks or discomfort, possible benefits, what will be done with the data, how confidentiality will be handled, and the fact that participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time without penalty. This respects individuals' autonomy by allowing a knowledgeable, free choice about joining the research. Debriefing occurs after participation to explain the study in more detail or reveal deception. Assent is agreement from someone who cannot legally give full consent (often a minor), and institutional review is the ethics board process that oversees research, not the act of obtaining consent.

4. A desire to perform a behavior to receive promised rewards or avoid threatened punishment.

- A. Intrinsic motivation
- B. Extrinsic motivation**
- C. Motivation by curiosity
- D. Social motivation

Extrinsic motivation is a drive to perform a behavior in order to receive external rewards or to avoid external punishment. The scenario describes doing something because of promised rewards or to dodge punishment, which is textbook extrinsic motivation. This stands in contrast to intrinsic motivation, which comes from doing an activity for its own sake or personal satisfaction. Motivation by curiosity would be about satisfying a desire to know or explore, not about rewards or punishment. Social motivation centers on gaining approval or belonging, rather than external incentives or deterrents. In this case, external outcomes are the key factor driving the behavior.

5. The regular bodily rhythms that regulate sleep-wake cycles are called?

- A. Executive Functioning
- B. Circadian Rhythm**
- C. Cerebellum
- D. Bystander Effect

Regular bodily rhythms that regulate sleep-wake cycles are circadian rhythms. These are internal, roughly 24-hour cycles that organize when we feel awake and when we feel sleepy, along with other processes like hormone release and body temperature. The clock resides in the brain's suprachiasmatic nucleus, and light cues help keep it in sync with the day-night cycle through signals from the retina. This synchronization—entrainment—explains why light exposure can shift our sleep timing and why disruption to this rhythm, such as jet lag or night-shift work, makes sleep feel off. Executive functioning refers to higher-level thinking and planning; the cerebellum coordinates movement and balance (and some cognitive roles, but not sleep timing); the bystander effect is about how the presence of others influences helping behavior. Circadian rhythm is the best fit because it specifically describes the timing mechanism behind the sleep-wake cycle.

6. What term describes the tendency to overestimate the accuracy of our beliefs and judgments?

- A. Overconfidence**
- B. Hindsight Bias
- C. Confirmation Bias
- D. Anchoring

Overconfidence is the tendency to overestimate how accurately we understand our beliefs and judgments. People often feel sure about their answers or decisions, even when their actual accuracy is lower. This mismatch between confidence and correctness explains why overconfidence can lead to sticking with wrong ideas or making flawed choices. It differs from hindsight bias (thinking outcomes were predictable after they happened), confirmation bias (seeking information that supports our beliefs), and anchoring (relying too heavily on an initial piece of information), which describe other ways our thinking can mislead us.

7. Which term describes sleepwalking that occurs during deep sleep (NREM3)?

- A. Night Terrors
- B. REM Sleep Behavior Disorder
- C. Somnambulism**
- D. Sleep Apnea

Somnambulism describes sleepwalking that occurs during deep non-REM sleep (NREM3). In this stage, slow-wave sleep, people can perform complex activities without fully waking and usually have little to no memory of the event afterward. That makes somnambulism the term that best fits the scenario of walking or moving about while still asleep in deep sleep. Night terrors are episodes of intense fear and autonomic arousal that happen during NREM sleep, often with screaming and confusion, but they don't involve purposeful wandering or complex actions like sleepwalking. REM Sleep Behavior Disorder occurs during REM sleep when dream enactment happens because muscle paralysis is incomplete. Sleep apnea involves pauses in breathing during sleep, leading to fragmentation of sleep, not to sleepwalking.

8. Judging the likelihood of events by how well they match a prototype describes which heuristic?

- A. Availability heuristic
- B. Anchoring heuristic
- C. Representativeness heuristic**
- D. Simulation heuristic

Judging the likelihood of events by how well they match a prototype shows the representativeness heuristic. People rely on how closely something fits their mental image of a category when estimating probability. If a description or scenario looks like the stereotype of a group, we tend to treat it as more probable, often ignoring actual base rates or statistical information. This can lead to base-rate neglect, where we overestimate the likelihood of something because it seems to fit our prototype, even when the overall odds are low. For example, a description that matches the stereotype of a librarian might lead someone to guess that outcome is more likely than a more statistically probable option, simply because it aligns with the prototype. The tendency to rely on similarity to a familiar pattern is what drives this heuristic, distinguishing it from other quick judgments like ease of recall (availability), sticking to an initial anchor (anchoring), or imagining outcomes through mental simulation (simulation).

9. Which term describes a tendency for group members to prioritize consensus over critical evaluation?

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

Groupthink describes the tendency for group members to prioritize consensus over critical evaluation. When a group cares more about harmony and unity than about thoroughly examining ideas, members may mute doubts, assume agreement, and downplay warning signs to avoid conflict or rock the boat. This often happens in highly cohesive groups, under time pressure, or when a leader is directive, and it can lead to flawed decisions because critical scrutiny is suppressed in favor of immediate agreement. Irving Janis popularized the term to explain how these dynamics undermine sound judgment. This differs from confirmation bias, which is the tendency to favor information that confirms preconceptions rather than challenge them. It also isn't about individuals slacking off in a group (social loafing) or about a group moving to more extreme positions after discussion (group polarization).

10. The brain's 'little brain' at the rear of the brainstem that coordinates movement and balance is the?

- A. Cochlea
- B. Cerebellum**
- C. Circadian Rhythm
- D. Cognitive Dissonance

The cerebellum is the brain region at the rear of the brainstem known as the "little brain," and it coordinates movement and balance. It integrates sensory input from muscles, joints, and the eyes to fine-tune motor commands, helping movements be smooth, precise, and well-timed, while also supporting posture and equilibrium. It's also involved in motor learning—practice improves coordination as you learn new skills like riding a bike or playing a instrument. When the cerebellum isn't functioning properly, movements can become unsteady and awkward, illustrating its key role in timing and coordination. The other terms refer to different functions: the cochlea is involved in hearing, circadian rhythm relates to the body's 24-hour clock and sleep–wake cycles, and cognitive dissonance is a psychological idea about holding conflicting beliefs.

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://appsychcommonterms.examzify.com>

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

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