

AQA PSYCHOLOGY – RESEARCH METHODS PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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. A significance level of 0.01 is sometimes used instead of 0.05 in situations requiring greater confidence. Which scenario best illustrates this?**
 - A. When data are non-normally distributed
 - B. When the p-value is exactly 0.05
 - C. When human lives are involved
 - D. When researchers want less stringent criteria
- 2. Which statement is true about graph construction?**
 - A. It is enough to plot data without a title
 - B. A title, axis labels, and accurately plotted data
 - C. Only the axes labels
 - D. A graph should show raw scores as points only
- 3. What best describes a quasi-experiment?**
 - A. The IV is randomly assigned
 - B. The IV has not been determined by anyone; variables simply exist
 - C. The IV is manipulated by the researcher
 - D. They require ethical approval
- 4. Which statement about the mode is true?**
 - A. It is very easy to calculate.
 - B. It is always the most representative measure.
 - C. It is not useful for categorical data.
 - D. It cannot identify the most common value.
- 5. Which of the following is an advantage of Repeated Measures Design?**
 - A. Randomization is not needed.
 - B. No individual differences.
 - C. More time consuming.
 - D. Fewer participants are required.
- 6. Inter-observer reliability is demonstrated when...**
 - A. Two or more researchers observe the same behaviour and compare results.
 - B. A single researcher records data across time.
 - C. Using a fixed coding scheme but no cross-check.
 - D. Analyzing content only after data collection.

- 7. Naturalistic observation takes place in what kind of setting?**
- A. In a laboratory
 - B. In a highly controlled environment
 - C. In a setting where behaviour would usually occur
 - D. In a simulated classroom
- 8. What does random allocation of participants refer to in a lab experiment?**
- A. Participants are randomly allocated to a condition
 - B. Participants choose their condition based on preference
 - C. Conditions are assigned based on pretest scores
 - D. The researcher assigns conditions to equalize groups
- 9. Which of the following is an advantage of a lab experiment?**
- A. Lacks ecological validity
 - B. Demand characteristics are common
 - C. Behaviour in a lab is often different
 - D. Can establish cause and effect
- 10. Which sampling method is designed to ensure that subgroups are represented in proportion to their size in the population?**
- A. Stratified Sampling
 - B. Random Sampling
 - C. Systematic Sampling
 - D. Volunteer Sampling

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. A significance level of 0.01 is sometimes used instead of 0.05 in situations requiring greater confidence. Which scenario best illustrates this?

- A. When data are non-normally distributed
- B. When the p-value is exactly 0.05
- C. When human lives are involved**
- D. When researchers want less stringent criteria

Lowering the significance level to 0.01 makes it harder to claim an effect exists because you need stronger evidence (a smaller p-value) before rejecting the null hypothesis. This reduces the chance of a false positive (concluding there is an effect when there isn't one). In situations where human lives are involved, the cost of acting on a false positive is very high, so adopting a stricter criterion helps protect against dangerous decisions. That's why the scenario where human lives are involved best illustrates using a more stringent 0.01 level. The other options don't fit as well: changing the data distribution doesn't by itself require a stricter alpha; a p-value being exactly 0.05 is just a borderline case and doesn't justify lowering the threshold; and wanting less stringent criteria would mean a higher alpha, not a lower one.

2. Which statement is true about graph construction?

- A. It is enough to plot data without a title
- B. A title, axis labels, and accurately plotted data**
- C. Only the axes labels
- D. A graph should show raw scores as points only

Graphs should communicate information clearly and accurately. A title gives the context of what the graph is showing, the axis labels identify what is being measured on each axis and often include the units, and the data must be plotted accurately so the graph truly represents the values or trends in the data. When any of these elements are missing or wrong, the graph can be misinterpreted or leave readers unsure about what they're looking at. For example, without a title and labeled axes, a reader wouldn't know what comparison or time period the graph represents, and plotting data inaccurately can distort conclusions. A properly constructed graph, with a descriptive title, clear axis labels, and correctly plotted data, is easy to read and interpret, making it the best choice.

3. What best describes a quasi-experiment?

- A. The IV is randomly assigned
- B. The IV has not been determined by anyone; variables simply exist**
- C. The IV is manipulated by the researcher
- D. They require ethical approval

The key idea is that quasi-experiments study cause-and-effect without random assignment of participants to groups. In these designs, the independent variable isn't allocated by the researcher in a random way, often because it's a pre-existing or naturally occurring condition rather than something the researcher can assign. That's why the description that the independent variable has not been determined by anyone and the variables simply exist fits best: it captures the lack of random assignment or full experimental control over how groups are formed. If the IV were randomly assigned, you'd be looking at a true experiment. The requirement for ethical approval is separate and not what defines a quasi-experiment, and an IV that is clearly manipulated by the researcher with randomization missing is still characterized by the lack of random assignment rather than by the existence of the variable itself.

4. Which statement about the mode is true?

- A. It is very easy to calculate.
- B. It is always the most representative measure.
- C. It is not useful for categorical data.**
- D. It cannot identify the most common value.

The mode is the value that occurs most often, so finding it is basically a matter of counting how frequently each value appears and picking the highest frequency. That straightforward counting makes the mode very easy to calculate, especially in small data sets or when you have a clear frequency table. It's also particularly useful for categorical data (nominal data) because you can simply see which category occurs most often. Keep in mind, though, that the mode isn't always the best summary of a data set. It can be unstable if there are several values with the same highest frequency (multi-modal distributions), and it doesn't tell you anything about how the rest of the data are spread or how large or small the values are. The other statements are misleading: the mode does identify the most common value, and it can be useful for categorical data, so those points aren't accurate.

5. Which of the following is an advantage of Repeated Measures Design?

- A. Randomization is not needed.
- B. No individual differences.
- C. More time consuming.
- D. Fewer participants are required.**

Repeated measures design uses the same participants across all conditions, so individual differences between participants don't add as much uncontrolled noise to the data. That means the manipulation's effect is easier to detect because the error variance is reduced. With this greater sensitivity, you can achieve reliable results with fewer participants, which is why the advantage is described as needing fewer participants. Note that order effects can still occur, so researchers usually counterbalance the order of conditions to control for that, rather than assuming randomness alone fixes the issue. Also, while individual differences between people still exist, they are held constant across conditions, not eliminated, and the claim that there are no individual differences isn't accurate. The idea that it is more time consuming isn't an inherent advantage; in fact, this design can be more efficient in participant numbers even if it requires more management of order effects.

6. Inter-observer reliability is demonstrated when...

- A. Two or more researchers observe the same behaviour and compare results.**
- B. A single researcher records data across time.
- C. Using a fixed coding scheme but no cross-check.
- D. Analyzing content only after data collection.

Inter-observer reliability is about how consistently different researchers observe and record the same behaviour. It is demonstrated when two or more researchers independently observe the same event and compare their results to see how much they agree. High agreement shows that the measurement or coding is reliable across observers, not just subjective to one person. Researchers typically train observers, calibrate them on a sample, and quantify agreement (like percent agreement or Cohen's kappa) before coding the full dataset. The other options describe different ideas: one researcher recording data across time reflects intra-rater stability, not cross-observer reliability; using a fixed coding scheme without cross-check means reliability isn't tested; analyzing content only after data collection relates to timing of analysis, not observer agreement.

7. Naturalistic observation takes place in what kind of setting?

- A. In a laboratory
- B. In a highly controlled environment
- C. In a setting where behaviour would usually occur**
- D. In a simulated classroom

Naturalistic observation focuses on studying behavior in the setting where it would normally occur, so the observed actions reflect real-life responses rather than artificial tasks or tasks designed by researchers. This approach maximizes ecological validity and reduces the likelihood that participants change their behavior because they know they're being watched or because the environment is artificial. Observers are usually passive and unobtrusive to keep natural behavior intact. In a laboratory or highly controlled environment, or in a simulated classroom, the setting itself is artificial and can influence how people behave, making the results less reflective of everyday life.

8. What does random allocation of participants refer to in a lab experiment?

- A. Participants are randomly allocated to a condition**
- B. Participants choose their condition based on preference
- C. Conditions are assigned based on pretest scores
- D. The researcher assigns conditions to equalize groups

Random allocation means assigning participants to the different conditions by chance, so everyone has an equal chance of being in any group. This helps create comparable groups at the start of the experiment, reducing the influence of individual differences on the results and strengthening internal validity. It avoids self-selection or bias from pretest-based assignment, which can distort cause-and-effect conclusions. Choosing a condition based on preference, or assigning based on pretest scores, or deliberately balancing groups by the researcher without chance, all introduce systematic differences that can confound results.

9. Which of the following is an advantage of a lab experiment?

- A. Lacks ecological validity
- B. Demand characteristics are common
- C. Behaviour in a lab is often different
- D. Can establish cause and effect**

Lab experiments enable researchers to establish cause and effect because the environment is tightly controlled and the independent variable can be deliberately manipulated while extraneous variables are kept constant. This tight control, often with random assignment, reduces confounding factors, making it much easier to attribute any observed changes in the dependent variable to the manipulation itself. That clear link between cause and outcome is what sets lab experiments apart as an approach that can demonstrate causality. In contrast, commonly cited limitations like lower ecological validity, the presence of demand characteristics, and the possibility that behavior in a lab doesn't fully reflect real-world behavior are not advantages of lab studies.

10. Which sampling method is designed to ensure that subgroups are represented in proportion to their size in the population?

A. Stratified Sampling

B. Random Sampling

C. Systematic Sampling

D. Volunteer Sampling

Stratified sampling is designed to ensure subgroups are represented in proportion to their size in the population. It works by creating separate groups (strata) based on a relevant characteristic, like age or gender, and then sampling from each stratum in proportion to that group's share of the population. This keeps the overall sample reflective of the population's structure and reduces the risk that important subgroups are under- or over-represented. In contrast, random sampling gives equal chance to all individuals but doesn't guarantee proportional representation of subgroups; systematic sampling selects every nth person from a list without addressing subgroup sizes; volunteer sampling relies on who volunteers and can bias the sample toward certain traits, not reflecting population proportions.

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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://aqapsychresearchmethods.examzify.com>

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

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