

ETS Major Field Test Psychology Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

SAMPLE

- 1. What is the bystander effect?**
 - A. The likelihood of helping increases with the number of bystanders**
 - B. The likelihood of helping decreases when there are other bystanders**
 - C. People help more when they are in a group**
 - D. Bystanders always feel responsible to help**
- 2. What are Erik Erikson's theories primarily known for?**
 - A. The stages of moral development**
 - B. The stages of identity crisis development**
 - C. The stages of social learning theory**
 - D. The stages of personality traits development**
- 3. What does the Hawthorne Effect suggest about workers' behavior?**
 - A. Workers are less motivated when being observed**
 - B. Observation can lead to an increase in productivity**
 - C. Work efficiency is independent of observation**
 - D. Only external rewards influence worker motivation**
- 4. How is a hallucination defined?**
 - A. Hearing voices during sleep**
 - B. Perception without external stimuli**
 - C. Seeing images in dreams**
 - D. Encoding memories**
- 5. What is the primary outcome of the self-serving bias?**
 - A. A more critical self-view**
 - B. Unrealistic optimism**
 - C. A tendency to see oneself in a favorable light**
 - D. Heightened awareness of weaknesses**

- 6. Which bias involves assuming one could have predicted an event after it has occurred?**
- A. Just-world phenomenon**
 - B. Hindsight bias**
 - C. Illusion of control**
 - D. Frustration-aggression theory**
- 7. What does the false uniqueness effect cause individuals to believe?**
- A. They are inferior to others in abilities.**
 - B. They possess unique skills and favorable traits.**
 - C. Other people often agree with them.**
 - D. They are controlled by external circumstances.**
- 8. What scientific discipline combines biology and psychology to understand the biological bases of behavior?**
- A. Neuroscience**
 - B. Psychobiology**
 - C. Behavioral Science**
 - D. Cognitive Psychology**
- 9. What is described as a long-standing connection or bond with others?**
- A. Attachment**
 - B. Co-dependency**
 - C. Isolation**
 - D. Companionship**
- 10. Which of the following is NOT one of Erikson's developmental stages?**
- A. Identity vs. role confusion**
 - B. Trust vs. mistrust**
 - C. Self-actualization vs. stagnation**
 - D. Generativity vs. stagnation**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the bystander effect?

- A. The likelihood of helping increases with the number of bystanders
- B. The likelihood of helping decreases when there are other bystanders**
- C. People help more when they are in a group
- D. Bystanders always feel responsible to help

The bystander effect refers to the phenomenon where the presence of other individuals discourages an individual from intervening in an emergency situation. This effect often arises because individuals tend to assume that someone else will take action, leading to a diffusion of responsibility among the group. As the number of bystanders increases, each person's sense of personal responsibility diminishes, which ultimately decreases the likelihood that any one individual will offer help. In this context, the idea that the likelihood of helping decreases when there are other bystanders encapsulates the essence of the bystander effect. The reasoning behind this is rooted in social psychology research that has consistently shown that people are less likely to intervene when they perceive that others are available to assist, thereby shifting the responsibility away from themselves.

2. What are Erik Erikson's theories primarily known for?

- A. The stages of moral development
- B. The stages of identity crisis development**
- C. The stages of social learning theory
- D. The stages of personality traits development

Erik Erikson's theories are primarily known for outlining the stages of psychosocial development, particularly focused on identity crisis and the development of personal and social identity throughout the lifespan. His framework proposes eight distinct stages, each characterized by a central conflict or crisis that individuals must navigate in order to develop a healthy personality and contribute to society. These stages span from infancy through old age, with each stage presenting unique challenges that are crucial for establishing a sense of self and forming relationships with others. For example, during adolescence, the pivotal challenge is "identity vs. role confusion," where individuals explore their personal values, beliefs, and goals to form a coherent sense of identity. This emphasis on identity formation is foundational to Erikson's work and differentiates it from other developmental theories, such as those focused solely on moral reasoning or personality traits. By framing psychosocial development in terms of crisis and resolution, Erikson provides insights into how individuals progress through various phases of life and address their evolving needs and roles in society.

3. What does the Hawthorne Effect suggest about workers' behavior?

- A. Workers are less motivated when being observed**
- B. Observation can lead to an increase in productivity**
- C. Work efficiency is independent of observation**
- D. Only external rewards influence worker motivation**

The Hawthorne Effect refers to the phenomenon where individuals modify an aspect of their behavior in response to their awareness of being observed. This suggests that when workers know they are being watched or studied, they may increase their productivity as a reaction to the attention they receive. Consequently, the awareness of observation can lead to heightened work output and efficiency. In the context of workplace studies, this effect highlights the importance of psychological factors in worker motivation.

Observations made in the Hawthorne studies, which were conducted in the early 20th century at the Western Electric Hawthorne Works, indicated that simply being the subject of observation led to improved performance, regardless of any changes in physical working conditions. This underscores the significant relationship between observation and productivity, distinguishing it from notions that productivity remains unchanged or is solely driven by external incentives.

4. How is a hallucination defined?

- A. Hearing voices during sleep**
- B. Perception without external stimuli**
- C. Seeing images in dreams**
- D. Encoding memories**

A hallucination is defined as a perception that occurs without any external stimuli. This means that individuals experiencing hallucinations perceive things—such as sounds, sights, or even smells—that are not actually present in the environment. Hallucinations can occur in various sensory modalities, but they do not result from real external stimuli. This definition contrasts with other options provided. For example, hearing voices during sleep typically refers to vivid dreams rather than hallucinations, which are experienced while one is awake. Seeing images in dreams indicates the experience of dream-related imagery, which does not reflect reality in the waking state. Encoding memories pertains to the cognitive process of transforming experiences into long-term memory storage, which is unrelated to the phenomenon of perceiving things that are not there. Thus, the correct answer encapsulates the essence of hallucinations as perceptions devoid of external origins.

5. What is the primary outcome of the self-serving bias?

- A. A more critical self-view**
- B. Unrealistic optimism**
- C. A tendency to see oneself in a favorable light**
- D. Heightened awareness of weaknesses**

The primary outcome of the self-serving bias is a tendency to see oneself in a favorable light. This psychological phenomenon occurs when individuals take credit for their successes while attributing failures to external factors or other people. This bias is a fundamental aspect of self-perception, as it protects self-esteem and helps maintain a positive self-concept. When people experience success, they are likely to attribute it to their abilities, effort, or intelligence, which enhances their self-image. Conversely, when faced with failure, they may shift blame away from themselves, which helps to preserve their self-esteem and prevents feelings of inadequacy. This bias can be seen in various situations, such as academic settings where students might claim good grades result from their hard work but rationalize poor grades as being due to unfair grading practices or other external circumstances. Therefore, the self-serving bias leads individuals to view themselves more favorably, illustrating a core aspect of human psychology that emphasizes positive self-regard.

6. Which bias involves assuming one could have predicted an event after it has occurred?

- A. Just-world phenomenon**
- B. Hindsight bias**
- C. Illusion of control**
- D. Frustration-aggression theory**

Hindsight bias is a cognitive bias that occurs when individuals believe they could have predicted the outcome of an event after it has already happened. This phenomenon leads people to see events as having been more predictable than they actually were. For example, once a sports match has finished, fans might claim they "knew" the winning team would win, despite the uncertainty before the game started. This bias is significant in psychology because it can affect decision-making and perceptions of risk. People may judge past events more harshly or view their own predictive abilities as more competent than they truly are. Awareness of hindsight bias is important in fields such as research and clinical practice, as it can influence evaluations of past events, judgments of responsibility, and the learning process from experiences. The other concepts listed—like the just-world phenomenon, illusion of control, and frustration-aggression theory—deal with different psychological frameworks and do not specifically pertain to the perception of predictability after an event has occurred.

7. What does the false uniqueness effect cause individuals to believe?

- A. They are inferior to others in abilities.**
- B. They possess unique skills and favorable traits.**
- C. Other people often agree with them.**
- D. They are controlled by external circumstances.**

The false uniqueness effect leads individuals to believe that they possess unique skills and favorable traits compared to others. This cognitive bias occurs when people underestimate the commonality of their positive attributes, achievements, or qualities. For example, someone might believe that their intelligence, creativity, or work ethic is exceptional and not shared by others, when in fact many individuals may share similar positive characteristics. This belief can enhance self-esteem and contribute to a sense of individuality, but it may also prevent individuals from acknowledging how common certain positive traits can be among their peers. In contrast, the other options reflect different psychological constructs. The notion of feeling inferior in abilities (the first choice) is more aligned with low self-esteem or self-doubt, which contrasts with the belief in one's uniqueness. The idea that other people often agree with them (the third choice) relates more to social validation and consensus, rather than the belief in personal uniqueness. Lastly, the viewpoint of being controlled by external circumstances (the fourth choice) ties into a locus of control perspective, focusing on how much individuals feel they influence their lives, rather than how unique their traits are.

8. What scientific discipline combines biology and psychology to understand the biological bases of behavior?

- A. Neuroscience**
- B. Psychobiology**
- C. Behavioral Science**
- D. Cognitive Psychology**

The scientific discipline that combines biology and psychology to explore the biological bases of behavior is psychobiology. This field examines how biological factors, such as brain structure, neurotransmitters, and genetic influences, impact behavior, thoughts, and emotions. By integrating principles from both biology and psychology, psychobiology seeks to elucidate how physiological processes affect psychological phenomena, thus providing a more holistic understanding of behavior. Neuroscience also focuses on the brain and its role in behavior, but it encompasses a broader scope that includes various areas such as neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and neuropharmacology, and is often more specifically concerned with the neural mechanisms underlying various cognitive and emotional processes. Behavioral science typically emphasizes the study of observable behaviors and the processes that influence them, often without a direct reference to biological factors. Cognitive psychology primarily explores mental processes such as perception, memory, and problem-solving, and while it may consider biological influences, it does not primarily focus on the biological bases of behavior. Thus, the focus on biological processes directly linked to psychological functions firmly places psychobiology as the most fitting discipline in this context.

9. What is described as a long-standing connection or bond with others?

A. Attachment

B. Co-dependency

C. Isolation

D. Companionship

The concept of attachment refers to the deep emotional bond that develops between individuals, often beginning in infancy and shaping interpersonal relationships throughout life. This psychological framework is pivotal in understanding how people connect with others, including the formation of secure, anxious, or avoidant attachment styles. Secure attachment, for instance, fosters healthier relationships characterized by trust, comfort, and security, whereas insecure attachment forms can lead to difficulties in relationships. Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby and later expanded by Mary Ainsworth, emphasizes that these longstanding connections are crucial for emotional development and can influence behaviors and patterns in adult relationships. This framework highlights the importance of these connections in promoting social and emotional health. In contrast, co-dependency refers to a dysfunctional relationship pattern where one person may prioritize the needs of another to the detriment of their own, rather than reflecting a general bond. Isolation signifies a lack of connection, which is oppositional to the notion of a bond. Companionship, while related to relationships, often pertains to shared experiences or activities rather than the deeper emotional ties that attachment specifically denotes. Thus, attachment is the most fitting answer because it encapsulates the essence of long-standing emotional bonds with others.

10. Which of the following is NOT one of Erikson's developmental stages?

A. Identity vs. role confusion

B. Trust vs. mistrust

C. Self-actualization vs. stagnation

D. Generativity vs. stagnation

The correct answer, indicating which option does not represent one of Erikson's developmental stages, is that "self-actualization vs. stagnation" is not part of Erikson's framework. Erik Erikson was a developmental psychologist known for his theory of psychosocial development, which outlines eight stages that individuals typically go through from infancy to old age. The first stage, "trust vs. mistrust," addresses the development of trust when caregivers provide reliability and care. "Identity vs. role confusion," which occurs during adolescence, focuses on developing a personal identity and sense of self. The "generativity vs. stagnation" stage highlights the importance of contributing to society and feeling productive during middle adulthood. In contrast, "self-actualization," a concept most closely associated with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, refers to the realization of a person's potential, self-fulfillment, and seeking personal growth. It does not fit into Erikson's structure of psychosocial development, which centers around conflicts to be resolved at specific stages of life, making it the option that is not related to Erikson's developmental stages.