

ETS Major Field Test Psychology Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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. What aspect of learning did Lev Vygotsky emphasize?**
 - A. Genetic predispositions**
 - B. The role of experience and social interaction**
 - C. Innate biological processes**
 - D. Behavioral conditioning alone**

- 2. Social learning theory suggests behavior is influenced by what variables?**
 - A. Biological factors only**
 - B. Observing others and experiencing rewards or punishments**
 - C. Individual choices without external influence**
 - D. None of the above**

- 3. What methodology did Piaget use to assess children's cognitive abilities?**
 - A. Standardized tests**
 - B. Observational studies**
 - C. Interactive experiments**
 - D. Longitudinal research**

- 4. What does ordinal measurement focus on?**
 - A. Quantitative data only**
 - B. Data that has a defined absolute zero**
 - C. Categorizing data without rank**
 - D. Ranking data where distance between ranks is not uniform**

- 5. What is the major limitation of convenience sampling?**
 - A. It cannot yield a diverse sample**
 - B. It is often time-consuming**
 - C. It guarantees representativeness**
 - D. It is overly complex to implement**

6. At what age is a child's self-concept typically considered to be more concrete?

- A. 6 years**
- B. 12 years**
- C. 10 years**
- D. 14 years**

7. Which of the following describes a characteristic of social learning theory?

- A. It emphasizes the role of innate behaviors**
- B. It focuses on learning through observation and imitation**
- C. It suggests that learning occurs only through direct reinforcement**
- D. It disregards the influence of social contexts on behavior**

8. What is the primary goal of content analysis in research?

- A. To measure the opinions of survey respondents**
- B. To evaluate the effectiveness of treatments**
- C. To analyze communication artifacts and media**
- D. To compare multiple studies in a meta-analysis**

9. During which sleep phase is the body's physiological activity generally reduced?

- A. REM sleep**
- B. Awake state**
- C. Non-REM sleep**
- D. Hypnagogic state**

10. Which approach focuses on the influence of social interaction on learning?

- A. Cognitive development theory**
- B. Behaviorist theory**
- C. Social learning theory**
- D. Humanistic theory**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What aspect of learning did Lev Vygotsky emphasize?

- A. Genetic predispositions
- B. The role of experience and social interaction**
- C. Innate biological processes
- D. Behavioral conditioning alone

Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of experience and social interaction in the learning process, highlighting how these factors influence cognitive development. He is well-known for his concept of the "social constructivist" approach, which suggests that learning occurs predominantly through social interactions and cultural context. Vygotsky argued that individuals learn by engaging with more knowledgeable others, such as peers or adults, who facilitate the process of understanding and acquiring new skills. His key contributions include the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which indicates the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. This emphasizes that learning is not merely an individual endeavor but is deeply embedded in social contexts and collaborative experiences. While other options touch upon different theoretical perspectives — genetic predispositions, innate biological processes, and behavioral conditioning — they do not encapsulate Vygotsky's focus. Instead, his work centers around the understanding that learning is a fundamentally social activity that thrives on interaction and collaboration, making the role of experience and social interaction paramount in his theory of cognitive development.

2. Social learning theory suggests behavior is influenced by what variables?

- A. Biological factors only
- B. Observing others and experiencing rewards or punishments**
- C. Individual choices without external influence
- D. None of the above

Social learning theory, primarily associated with Albert Bandura, posits that behavior is significantly influenced by both observation of others and the consequences of those observed behaviors, such as rewards and punishments. This theory emphasizes that individuals can learn new behaviors not just through direct experience but also by watching others, which is known as observational learning. When an individual sees someone else rewarded for a behavior, they are more likely to imitate that behavior themselves. Conversely, if they observe someone being punished for a behavior, they are less inclined to adopt that behavior. This concept is a departure from traditional behaviorist theories, which suggest that learning occurs solely through direct reinforcement or punishment. By recognizing that behaviors can be learned vicariously, social learning theory highlights the role of social context and cognitive processes in understanding behavior. Thus, the influence of observing others and the outcomes associated with those behaviors forms the cornerstone of this theoretical framework.

3. What methodology did Piaget use to assess children's cognitive abilities?

- A. Standardized tests**
- B. Observational studies**
- C. Interactive experiments**
- D. Longitudinal research**

Piaget's methodology primarily involved interactive experiments, which were crucial in assessing children's cognitive abilities. By engaging children in tasks designed to elicit specific cognitive responses, he was able to observe how they think, reason, and problem-solve. Through these experiments, Piaget could assess developmental stages in cognition, as children interact directly with materials or problems presented to them, allowing for a more profound insight into their understanding and mental processes. For instance, Piaget famously used tasks involving conservation, such as liquid quantity in different shaped glasses, to evaluate children's understanding of concepts like volume and number. This hands-on approach enabled him to see children's thought processes in real-time, highlighting the active role of children as they construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. This methodology was distinct from standardized tests, which typically rely on fixed questions and do not allow for the exploration of children's reasoning processes. Observational studies, while valuable, would not necessarily yield the same focused insights into the cognitive processes as interactive tasks tailored to challenge children at various developmental stages. Longitudinal research involves observing the same subjects over time, which can provide insights into changes in cognitive abilities but does not specifically capture the interactive nature of cognitive assessment that Piaget employed.

4. What does ordinal measurement focus on?

- A. Quantitative data only**
- B. Data that has a defined absolute zero**
- C. Categorizing data without rank**
- D. Ranking data where distance between ranks is not uniform**

Ordinal measurement is a type of measurement scale that is primarily concerned with ranking data. It allows researchers to organize items or observations in a specific order based on a particular attribute. However, in ordinal measurement, while the data does have a rank, the intervals or distances between these ranks are not uniform or consistently defined. For instance, if you survey participants about their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied), you can say that a rating of 4 is higher than a rating of 2. However, the difference in satisfaction between 2 and 3 may not be the same as the difference between 4 and 5. This lack of equal intervals is a characteristic that distinguishes ordinal measurement from other types, such as interval or ratio measurement, where the distances are consistent and meaningful. In summary, ordinal measurement specifically attends to the ranking of data while recognizing that the differences between ranks cannot be accurately quantified, which aligns perfectly with the notion of ranking data where the distance between ranks is not uniform.

5. What is the major limitation of convenience sampling?

- A. It cannot yield a diverse sample**
- B. It is often time-consuming**
- C. It guarantees representativeness**
- D. It is overly complex to implement**

Convenience sampling involves selecting individuals who are easiest to reach, resulting in a sample that may not effectively represent the broader population. This limitation arises because those readily accessible may share similar characteristics or experiences, leading to a lack of diversity in the sample. As a result, the findings derived from convenience samples can be biased, reducing their generalizability to the entire population. Researchers often aim for a diverse sample to ensure that various perspectives and characteristics are represented, which is particularly important in social sciences and psychology for the validity of conclusions drawn. On the other hand, the other options point to various misconceptions about convenience sampling. It is not inherently time-consuming, nor is it complex to implement; in fact, it is typically one of the simplest sampling methods. Additionally, convenience sampling does not guarantee representativeness, which is crucial for ensuring the findings can be applied to a larger group. Thus, the major limitation remains its inability to produce a diverse and representative sample.

6. At what age is a child's self-concept typically considered to be more concrete?

- A. 6 years**
- B. 12 years**
- C. 10 years**
- D. 14 years**

A child's self-concept is typically considered to be more concrete around the age of 6 years. At this stage of development, children begin to form a clearer understanding of themselves based on observable attributes and characteristics. This includes aspects such as physical traits, abilities, and competencies, leading to a more straightforward self-assessment. From around ages 3 to 5, children's self-concept is often more superficial and tied to their immediate experiences and possessions, such as "I have a toy" or "I can run fast." However, as they approach age 6, they start to integrate more complex traits into their self-view, such as their social roles and relationships with others, reflecting more stable aspects of their identity. As children grow older, their self-concept becomes increasingly abstract and nuanced. By ages 10 and 12, they begin to consider internal characteristics, values, and feelings as part of their identity. However, the foundational changes that mark the transition to a more concrete self-concept typically occur around age 6, setting the stage for later development. Therefore, the age 6 reflects a pivotal moment in a child's social and self-awareness development.

7. Which of the following describes a characteristic of social learning theory?

- A. It emphasizes the role of innate behaviors**
- B. It focuses on learning through observation and imitation**
- C. It suggests that learning occurs only through direct reinforcement**
- D. It disregards the influence of social contexts on behavior**

Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also by observing others. This approach highlights the importance of observational learning, where individuals can acquire new behaviors and information simply by watching the actions of others, as well as the consequences that follow those actions. Imitation is a key component, as people often replicate behaviors they see in models, especially when those behaviors appear to yield positive results. This mechanism accounts for a significant portion of learning in social contexts and contributes to the development of social norms and behaviors. The emphasis on observation and imitation distinguishes social learning theory from theories that stress only direct reinforcement or punishment as determinants of behavior, making it a foundational concept regarding how individuals can learn without firsthand experience. This perspective integrates cognitive processes, such as attention and memory, into the understanding of behavior, showing that learning can also be a result of cognitive evaluation of observed events. In contrast, the incorrect options relate to more traditional learning paradigms or suggest a limited view of behavior that does not align with the broader implications of social learning theory.

8. What is the primary goal of content analysis in research?

- A. To measure the opinions of survey respondents**
- B. To evaluate the effectiveness of treatments**
- C. To analyze communication artifacts and media**
- D. To compare multiple studies in a meta-analysis**

The primary goal of content analysis in research is to analyze communication artifacts and media. Content analysis is a systematic and objective method that researchers use to quantify and evaluate the content of various forms of communication, such as texts, audio, video, and other media. This technique allows researchers to identify patterns, themes, or trends within the data, making it particularly useful for understanding the presence, meanings, and implications of specific concepts or messages within media and communication. By focusing on the content itself rather than personal opinions or experiences, researchers can gain insights into how particular topics are represented in media and how these representations might influence public perception or behavior. This method is instrumental in fields such as psychology, sociology, communication studies, and media studies, where understanding the nuances of communication can provide valuable information about cultural and social dynamics.

9. During which sleep phase is the body's physiological activity generally reduced?

- A. REM sleep**
- B. Awake state**
- C. Non-REM sleep**
- D. Hypnagogic state**

Non-REM sleep is characterized by a reduction in physiological activity, which includes a decrease in heart rate, breathing rate, and overall brain activity. Throughout the stages of non-REM sleep—particularly in deep sleep, also known as slow-wave sleep—there is a significant drop in metabolic activity, making this phase restorative for the body.

During non-REM sleep, the body enters a state where it is less responsive to external stimuli, allowing for crucial processes such as tissue repair and growth to occur. This contrasts sharply with REM sleep, during which brain activity is heightened and the body experiences rapid eye movements, with dreams typically occurring. The awake state has high physiological activity, and the hypnagogic state, which refers to the transitional phase between wakefulness and sleep, does not represent a stable sleep phase with consistent physiological reduction. Thus, non-REM sleep is the stage where the body's physiological activity is most reduced.

10. Which approach focuses on the influence of social interaction on learning?

- A. Cognitive development theory**
- B. Behaviorist theory**
- C. Social learning theory**
- D. Humanistic theory**

The focus on the influence of social interaction on learning is central to social learning theory. This approach, pioneered by Albert Bandura, emphasizes that individuals learn not only through direct experience but also by observing and imitating the behaviors of others. Bandura's work demonstrated that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching others—what he termed "observational learning." The social context is crucial, as it provides models through which individuals can understand and internalize behaviors, values, and social norms. In social learning theory, the interplay between social interaction and learning occurs through mechanisms such as imitation, modeling, and reinforcement. For example, when a child observes a peer successfully solving a problem, they may be motivated to attempt the same solution themselves. This process highlights the importance of social environments in shaping learning outcomes, making social learning theory particularly relevant in educational settings and developmental psychology.

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://etsmajfieldtestpsych.examzify.com>

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

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