

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 is the term for the belief that outgroup members are perceived as more similar to one another than in-group members?**
 - A. In-group bias**
 - B. Outgroup homogeneity effect**
 - C. Social comparison**
 - D. Self-fulfilling prophecy**

- 2. The lowball technique is best described as what?**
 - A. Agreeing to an initial request followed by a larger request.**
 - B. A method for improving self-esteem.**
 - C. A technique for controlling perceptions.**
 - D. A way to enhance preferences for familiar items.**

- 3. What disorder is characterized by disturbed thought processes and unusual emotions?**
 - A. Depression**
 - B. Schizophrenia**
 - C. Generalized anxiety disorder**
 - D. Panic disorder**

- 4. In research methodologies, what does "sampling" refer to?**
 - A. The method used to analyze collected data**
 - B. Choosing a representative group from a population**
 - C. Identifying the entire population for study**
 - D. Dividing a population into smaller subsets**

- 5. What does conceptualization in research refer to?**
 - A. Selecting research participants effectively**
 - B. Clearly defining and structuring concepts or ideas**
 - C. Using multiple methods for data collection**
 - D. Limiting the study to specific case studies**

- 6. Which hormones are primarily responsible for the autonomic response in stressful situations?**
- A. Insulin and glucagon**
 - B. Serotonin and dopamine**
 - C. Adrenaline and norepinephrine**
 - D. Cortisol and testosterone**
- 7. What does physiological psychology study?**
- A. The relationship between human behavior and societal norms**
 - B. How physiology, genetics, and biology affect mental processes and behavior**
 - C. The cognitive processes involved in human development**
 - D. Neuroscience as it relates to emotional disorders only**
- 8. What distinguishes bipolar disorder from other mood disorders?**
- A. It consists solely of depressive episodes**
 - B. It involves both mania and depression**
 - C. It is only characterized by anxiety symptoms**
 - D. It does not include any mood changes**
- 9. What was the outcome of Zimbardo's prison study regarding social roles?**
- A. Social roles have no impact on behavior**
 - B. Individuals behave consistently regardless of their roles**
 - C. Behavior heavily depends on the roles individuals are assigned**
 - D. People overact in roles they find uninteresting**
- 10. What was a significant finding from Harlow's monkey studies?**
- A. Monkeys preferred their mothers made of food**
 - B. Monkeys showed no preference for maternal figures**
 - C. Monkeys preferred the soft cloth mother over the wire mother**
 - D. Monkeys only attached to their biological mothers**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the term for the belief that outgroup members are perceived as more similar to one another than in-group members?

- A. In-group bias**
- B. Outgroup homogeneity effect**
- C. Social comparison**
- D. Self-fulfilling prophecy**

The belief that outgroup members are perceived as more similar to one another than in-group members is known as the outgroup homogeneity effect. This phenomenon occurs when individuals view members of their own group as diverse and varied, while simultaneously seeing members of an outgroup as more uniform or homogeneous. This perception can lead to stereotypes and generalized beliefs about outgroup members, which can have significant social implications, such as prejudice or discrimination. In contrast, people tend to recognize the unique characteristics and differences among those who belong to their own group, showcasing an inherent bias that arises from social categorization processes. Understanding the outgroup homogeneity effect is vital as it informs how we perceive others in social contexts and contributes to intergroup dynamics, helping to explain why prejudice may become entrenched in societal interactions. The other options, while related to social psychology and group dynamics, do not specifically address the perception of similarity among outgroup members in the same way.

2. The lowball technique is best described as what?

- A. Agreeing to an initial request followed by a larger request.**
- B. A method for improving self-esteem.**
- C. A technique for controlling perceptions.**
- D. A way to enhance preferences for familiar items.**

The lowball technique is best described as agreeing to an initial request followed by a larger request. This psychological strategy involves making an attractive offer to secure compliance, often at a low cost or with minimal commitment. Once the initial agreement is reached, the terms are then altered, typically to make the deal less favorable, which leads the individual to follow through with the larger commitment because they have already committed to the original request. This technique relies on the principle of cognitive dissonance, where individuals strive to maintain consistency in their beliefs and actions. After initially agreeing to the lesser request, they are likely to feel compelled to agree to the larger request in order to justify their previous commitment. Hence, the lowball technique effectively increases compliance through the initial acceptance, even when the terms change unfavorably afterward.

3. What disorder is characterized by disturbed thought processes and unusual emotions?

- A. Depression**
- B. Schizophrenia**
- C. Generalized anxiety disorder**
- D. Panic disorder**

The disorder characterized by disturbed thought processes and unusual emotions is schizophrenia. This condition is marked by symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking. Individuals with schizophrenia often experience significant impairments in reality testing, which can lead to detached or distorted perceptions of reality. In addition, they may exhibit a range of emotional responses that are inappropriate or seem unrelated to the context of their thoughts or behaviors. Depression, while it can certainly involve disturbances in thought and emotional regulation, primarily affects mood, leading to symptoms like persistent sadness or loss of interest and does not typically involve the more severe cognitive distortions seen in schizophrenia. Generalized anxiety disorder and panic disorder are primarily characterized by excessive anxiety and panic attacks, respectively, without the profound thought disturbances that define schizophrenia.

4. In research methodologies, what does "sampling" refer to?

- A. The method used to analyze collected data**
- B. Choosing a representative group from a population**
- C. Identifying the entire population for study**
- D. Dividing a population into smaller subsets**

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population in order to draw conclusions about that population. The goal of sampling is to choose a representative group that reflects the characteristics of the entire population, which enables researchers to make inferences without needing to study every individual. A well-chosen sample can help ensure that the results of a study are generalizable and valid. To understand sampling better, it's important to recognize how it contrasts with other terms related to research methodologies. Analyzing collected data pertains to the statistical methods used after data is gathered, while identifying the entire population (which refers to a census) would not involve sampling at all. Dividing a population into smaller subsets describes a process known as stratification, which can be part of sampling but does not define what sampling itself is. Thus, selecting a representative group from a population is foundational to the concept of sampling in research methodologies.

5. What does conceptualization in research refer to?

- A. Selecting research participants effectively
- B. Clearly defining and structuring concepts or ideas**
- C. Using multiple methods for data collection
- D. Limiting the study to specific case studies

Conceptualization in research is a fundamental process that involves clearly defining and structuring concepts or ideas that will be studied. This process is crucial because it provides the necessary clarity and precision needed to understand and measure variables within a study. For example, if a researcher aims to study "intelligence," it is essential to define what intelligence means in the context of the research to ensure that everyone involved understands and interprets the concept in the same way. This quality of conceptualization helps to avoid ambiguity and facilitates better communication of the research findings. Furthermore, well-defined concepts are pivotal in crafting hypotheses and selecting appropriate methodologies, ultimately influencing the reliability and validity of the research outcomes.

6. Which hormones are primarily responsible for the autonomic response in stressful situations?

- A. Insulin and glucagon
- B. Serotonin and dopamine
- C. Adrenaline and norepinephrine**
- D. Cortisol and testosterone

The autonomic response in stressful situations is largely driven by adrenaline and norepinephrine, which are hormones that play a crucial role in the body's 'fight or flight' response. When an individual encounters a stressful event, the adrenal glands release these hormones into the bloodstream, leading to various physiological changes. These include increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and heightened senses, all designed to prepare the body for rapid action. Adrenaline (also known as epinephrine) quickly mobilizes energy supplies, while norepinephrine enhances alertness and readiness to respond. This immediate response is essential for survival, as it enables individuals to react swiftly to threats. The other hormone pairs mentioned do not primarily regulate the acute stress response. Insulin and glucagon are primarily involved in regulating blood sugar levels. Serotonin and dopamine are neurotransmitters that influence mood, emotion, and behavior but are not directly responsible for the autonomic stress response. Cortisol and testosterone also have important roles in the body; cortisol is associated with the stress response but operates on a slower scale compared to adrenaline and norepinephrine, contributing to longer-term stress adaptations rather than immediate reactions.

7. What does physiological psychology study?

- A. The relationship between human behavior and societal norms
- B. How physiology, genetics, and biology affect mental processes and behavior**
- C. The cognitive processes involved in human development
- D. Neuroscience as it relates to emotional disorders only

Physiological psychology focuses on understanding how physiological processes, including genetics and biology, influence mental processes and behavior. This field encompasses the study of the brain, nervous system, and other bodily systems as they relate to psychological functions. By examining these connections, researchers can better understand how physical factors like neurotransmitter levels, hormonal changes, or structural brain abnormalities impact thoughts, emotions, and actions. The other options, while related to fields within psychology, do not encapsulate the essence of physiological psychology. The first option discusses the interplay between behavior and societal norms, which is more aligned with social psychology. The third option emphasizes cognitive processes, indicating a focus on cognitive psychology rather than physiological influences. The last option narrows the scope to emotional disorders in neuroscience, which is a more specific aspect of the broader field and doesn't represent the comprehensive study of physiology in psychology.

8. What distinguishes bipolar disorder from other mood disorders?

- A. It consists solely of depressive episodes
- B. It involves both mania and depression**
- C. It is only characterized by anxiety symptoms
- D. It does not include any mood changes

Bipolar disorder is characterized by the presence of both manic and depressive episodes, which is a defining feature that distinguishes it from other mood disorders. In bipolar disorder, individuals experience extreme mood swings that include highs (mania or hypomania) and lows (depression). This cyclical nature of moods is pivotal to the diagnosis, as it sets bipolar disorder apart from unipolar disorders, which typically involve only depressive episodes without the manic phases. The presence of these alternating states not only affects an individual's emotional state but also impacts their behavior, thought processes, and overall functioning. This duality of symptoms - experiencing both the euphoria or irritability during manic episodes and the deep sadness or lack of interest during depressive episodes - is what fundamentally defines bipolar disorder and differentiates it from other mood disorders that may be characterized by a single mood state.

9. What was the outcome of Zimbardo's prison study regarding social roles?

- A. Social roles have no impact on behavior**
- B. Individuals behave consistently regardless of their roles**
- C. Behavior heavily depends on the roles individuals are assigned**
- D. People overact in roles they find uninteresting**

The outcome of Zimbardo's prison study, known as the Stanford prison experiment, emphasizes that behavior heavily depends on the roles individuals are assigned. This study demonstrated how quickly and profoundly people conform to the expectations associated with their assigned roles, particularly in a simulated prison environment. Participants who were assigned the role of guards began to exhibit authoritarian and abusive behaviors toward those assigned as prisoners, while the prisoners showed signs of extreme stress and emotional distress. The rapid shift in behavior highlights the powerful influence social roles can have on individual actions and interactions. This observation supports the idea that situational factors and designated roles can significantly shape behavior, often outweighing personal characteristics or ethical standards. In contrast, the other possible responses do not accurately reflect the findings of the study. Social roles do impact behavior significantly, individuals do not behave consistently regardless of their roles, and the idea that people overact in roles they find uninteresting contradicts the findings that indicated individuals can dramatically embody roles that exert considerable influence over their actions and attitudes, often in unexpected ways.

10. What was a significant finding from Harlow's monkey studies?

- A. Monkeys preferred their mothers made of food**
- B. Monkeys showed no preference for maternal figures**
- C. Monkeys preferred the soft cloth mother over the wire mother**
- D. Monkeys only attached to their biological mothers**

Harlow's monkey studies provided profound insights into the nature of attachment and its significance in development. The finding that monkeys preferred the soft cloth mother over the wire mother highlighted the importance of comfort and emotional security over the mere provision of nourishment. In Harlow's experiments, one mother was made of soft cloth while the other was a bare wire figure that provided food. The monkeys consistently spent more time clinging to the cloth mother, seeking warmth and comfort, despite the fact that the wire mother could offer them food. This preference underscores the emotional and social components of attachment, indicating that the need for comfort and security can be more critical than the basic physiological needs, such as hunger. Harlow's work emphasized that relationships and emotional bonds are essential for the healthy psychological development of young animals—and by extension, humans—shaping our understanding of attachment theory and the importance of nurturing in child development. The other options do not accurately reflect the findings of Harlow's research on the nature of attachment and maternal preference in primate behavior.

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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