

ETS MAJOR FIELD TEST PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

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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 a delusion?**
 - A. A false belief despite evidence
 - B. An illusion of smell or taste
 - C. A state of extreme happiness
 - D. A normal cognitive process
- 2. Which term refers to the mental discomfort experienced when holding two conflicting beliefs?**
 - A. Cognitive dissonance
 - B. Confirmation bias
 - C. Attitude inoculation
 - D. Behavioral confirmation
- 3. What type of analysis would be performed to assess communication patterns in media?**
 - A. Case study research
 - B. Experimental research
 - C. Content analysis research
 - D. Longitudinal research
- 4. What is the relationship between culture and psychology?**
 - A. Culture has no impact on psychological theories.
 - B. Culture shapes individual psychological experiences.
 - C. Psychology is solely based on biological factors.
 - D. Negative cultural experiences have no psychological effects.
- 5. 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

- 6. Cognitive dissonance can lead to which of the following outcomes?**
- A. A change in beliefs to reduce discomfort
 - B. An increase in conflicting beliefs
 - C. A reinforcement of the original beliefs
 - D. No significant effect on behavior
- 7. Dependence on a substance can also be referred to as what?**
- A. Withdrawal syndrome
 - B. Hypersensitivity
 - C. Addiction
 - D. Social anxiety
- 8. Which psychologist is known for developing key stages of cognitive development in children?**
- A. Sigmund Freud
 - B. Jean Piaget
 - C. Lev Vygotsky
 - D. Erik Erikson
- 9. What role do dendrites play in the functioning of a neuron?**
- A. They send messages to other neurons.
 - B. They process and maintain vital life functions.
 - C. They receive initial messages from other neurons.
 - D. They release neurotransmitters to facilitate communication.
- 10. Which research design primarily uses historical records and data for analysis?**
- A. Cross-sectional
 - B. Longitudinal
 - C. Case study
 - D. Available data

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is a delusion?

- A. A false belief despite evidence**
- B. An illusion of smell or taste
- C. A state of extreme happiness
- D. A normal cognitive process

A delusion is defined as a firmly held false belief that persists despite clear evidence to the contrary. Individuals experiencing delusions have convictions that are inconsistent with reality, and these beliefs are typically resistant to reason or factual disproof. For instance, a person might believe they are being persecuted or that they possess extraordinary abilities, even when confronted with evidence that contradicts these beliefs. This characteristic of delusions distinguishes them from ordinary mistakes or misperceptions; delusions are robust and can significantly impair functioning and perception of reality.

2. Which term refers to the mental discomfort experienced when holding two conflicting beliefs?

- A. Cognitive dissonance**
- B. Confirmation bias
- C. Attitude inoculation
- D. Behavioral confirmation

The term that refers to the mental discomfort experienced when holding two conflicting beliefs is cognitive dissonance. This psychological phenomenon occurs when an individual encounters a situation where their beliefs, attitudes, or values are inconsistent with their actions or with other beliefs they hold. The resulting discomfort often motivates the individual to resolve the inconsistency, leading to changes in beliefs, justifications, or behaviors to restore harmony. Cognitive dissonance is a fundamental concept in psychology and helps explain why people often seek to justify their decisions or change their beliefs in order to reduce the discomfort of the internal conflict. This can manifest in various ways, such as rationalizing behavior that is at odds with one's values, or adjusting beliefs to align more closely with actions taken. In contrast, confirmation bias refers to the tendency to search for, interpret, and remember information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs, but it does not involve the conflict of holding two opposing beliefs. Attitude inoculation involves exposing someone to a weak form of an argument in order to prepare them to resist stronger arguments that might challenge their beliefs. Behavioral confirmation, also known as self-fulfilling prophecy, describes a process where expectations about an individual lead to behavior that confirms those expectations. These concepts do not

3. What type of analysis would be performed to assess communication patterns in media?

- A. Case study research
- B. Experimental research
- C. Content analysis research**
- D. Longitudinal research

Content analysis research is the correct choice for assessing communication patterns in media because it involves systematically analyzing the content of communication, such as text, images, or audio, to identify patterns, themes, and trends. This method allows researchers to quantify and interpret the presence of certain words, phrases, or concepts, providing insights into how information is conveyed and the overall messaging strategies employed in various media. Content analysis can be applied to understand how often specific topics are covered, the tone of media messages, and the framing of issues across different types of media. For example, it can be used to analyze news articles, social media posts, television programs, or advertisements, thereby enabling researchers to draw conclusions about societal attitudes and cultural norms as reflected in those communications. Other methods, like case study research, focus on in-depth exploration of a single case or a few cases, typically lacking the broad applicability needed for generalizable communication patterns. Experimental research tests causal relationships by manipulating variables and is less suited for analyzing pre-existing media communication. Longitudinal research examines changes over time but does not inherently analyze communication content. Thus, content analysis is uniquely positioned to explore the details of communication patterns in media effectively.

4. What is the relationship between culture and psychology?

- A. Culture has no impact on psychological theories.
- B. Culture shapes individual psychological experiences.**
- C. Psychology is solely based on biological factors.
- D. Negative cultural experiences have no psychological effects.

The relationship between culture and psychology is profoundly interconnected, with culture playing a critical role in shaping individual psychological experiences. Culture encompasses the shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices that characterize a group of people. These cultural elements influence how individuals think, feel, and behave, as well as how they perceive themselves and their relationships with others. When discussing psychological phenomena, it is essential to recognize that individuals do not experience emotions, develop identities, or navigate social interactions in a vacuum. For example, various cultural contexts can dictate expressions of emotion, coping mechanisms for stress, and approaches to mental health. Cultural frameworks can also influence the interpretation of psychological concepts, such as happiness or success, which can vary widely across different societies. In contrast, the other options suggest a limited view of the interplay between culture and psychology. Some imply that psychological theories are unaffected by cultural context or reduce psychological phenomena solely to biological underpinnings, disregarding the significant influence of social and cultural factors. Additionally, dismissing the impact of negative cultural experiences on psychological well-being overlooks the profound effects adverse cultural experiences—such as discrimination or trauma—can have on mental health and psychological development. By understanding that culture profoundly shapes psychological processes, we can appreciate the rich diversity of human experience and develop

5. 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.

6. Cognitive dissonance can lead to which of the following outcomes?

- A. A change in beliefs to reduce discomfort**
- B. An increase in conflicting beliefs
- C. A reinforcement of the original beliefs
- D. No significant effect on behavior

Cognitive dissonance refers to the psychological discomfort experienced when a person holds two or more contradictory beliefs, values, or attitudes. This state of dissonance creates a tension that individuals are motivated to reduce, often leading them to adjust their beliefs or attitudes to restore harmony. Changing beliefs to alleviate this discomfort is a common response. For instance, if someone values honesty but finds themselves lying, the dissonance they feel might lead them to either change their view on lying, justify the lie (perhaps by arguing it was a "white lie"), or adopt new beliefs that align with their actions. This tendency to shift beliefs or attitudes as a means of reducing dissonance is well-documented in psychological literature and is a central aspect of how cognitive dissonance operates. The other options depict effects that do not align with the typical outcomes of cognitive dissonance. For instance, increasing conflicting beliefs would likely heighten discomfort rather than resolve it, reinforcing original beliefs would not alleviate the dissonance but maintain the conflict, and not experiencing any significant effect would contradict the fundamental nature of cognitive dissonance as a motivator for belief adjustment. Therefore, the outcome of changing beliefs to reduce discomfort is a hallmark characteristic of how individuals respond to cognitive dissonance.

7. Dependence on a substance can also be referred to as what?

- A. Withdrawal syndrome
- B. Hypersensitivity
- C. Addiction**
- D. Social anxiety

Dependence on a substance is primarily referred to as addiction. Addiction represents a chronic condition characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behavior, along with the continued use of a substance despite negative consequences. It often involves physical dependence, which can manifest as withdrawal symptoms when the substance is not available, but addiction encompasses a broader range of behaviors and consequences associated with the substance use. Users may develop a psychological dependence as well, where they feel a strong craving for the substance. While withdrawal syndrome refers to the physiological symptoms that can occur when an individual stops taking a substance, it is not synonymous with dependence itself; it's just one aspect of the overall addiction process. Hypersensitivity and social anxiety are unrelated concepts. Hypersensitivity generally pertains to an exaggerated response to stimuli, while social anxiety focuses on the fear of social situations, neither of which directly relates to substance dependence. Thus, addiction is the most accurate term to describe a state of dependence on a substance.

8. Which psychologist is known for developing key stages of cognitive development in children?

- A. Sigmund Freud
- B. Jean Piaget**
- C. Lev Vygotsky
- D. Erik Erikson

Jean Piaget is recognized for his pioneering work on cognitive development in children. He proposed a theory outlining how children's thinking evolves through distinct stages as they grow. Piaget identified four main stages: the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage. Each stage represents different capabilities in cognitive processes, including how children perceive and interact with the world around them. His emphasis on the active role of children in constructing their understanding, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, was groundbreaking. This developmental framework has had a significant influence on education, child psychology, and our overall understanding of cognitive development in early life. Piaget's work remains foundational in the field, shaping both theoretical perspectives and practical applications in educational settings.

9. What role do dendrites play in the functioning of a neuron?

- A. They send messages to other neurons.
- B. They process and maintain vital life functions.
- C. They receive initial messages from other neurons.**
- D. They release neurotransmitters to facilitate communication.

Dendrites are critical components of neurons that play a primary role in receiving information from other neurons. They are tree-like structures that extend from the cell body of the neuron and are equipped with specialized receptors that bind to neurotransmitters released by nearby neurons. When these receptors are activated, dendrites can generate electrical signals that contribute to the overall processing of information within the neuron. This function is fundamental because it enables the neuron to integrate signals from multiple sources before transmitting a response. The more dendrites a neuron has, the greater its capacity to receive input, making this structure essential for effective communication within the nervous system. Thus, the correct answer emphasizes the importance of dendrites in forming connections and gathering information, setting the stage for the neuron to properly function and send its own messages onward.

10. Which research design primarily uses historical records and data for analysis?

- A. Cross-sectional
- B. Longitudinal
- C. Case study
- D. Available data**

The choice that primarily uses historical records and data for analysis is indeed available data. This design involves utilizing pre-existing data collected by other researchers or organizations, which often includes historical records, documents, statistics, and previously gathered survey results. This methodology is beneficial for researchers who wish to explore patterns and relationships without the need for primary data collection. In the context of research designs, available data allows for a broad examination of trends and variables over time, especially when examining past events or phenomena where direct data collection would not be feasible or practical. This approach is often employed in retrospective studies and can provide valuable insights into a variety of fields by analyzing trends that have already occurred. Other research designs, such as cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, typically involve collecting new data specifically for the study at hand. A cross-sectional design examines a population at a single point in time, while a longitudinal design follows the same subjects over an extended period to observe changes and developments. Case studies focus on an in-depth examination of a single individual or group, often gathering detailed qualitative data rather than relying on pre-existing records. Thus, while these methods have their own strengths, they do not primarily utilize historical records and data like the available data design does.

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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