

ETS Psychology Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

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- 1. In Freud's theory, what is the term for becoming fixated at a particular psychosexual stage?**
 - A. Internal Conflict**
 - B. Overindulgence**
 - C. Personality Pattern Development**
 - D. Displacement**
- 2. What is the last stage of Freud's psychosexual development?**
 - A. Genital Stage**
 - B. Latency Stage**
 - C. Phallic Stage**
 - D. Anal Stage**
- 3. What method involves reinforcing the desired response while extinguishing others?**
 - A. Observational learning**
 - B. Fixed-action pattern**
 - C. Differential reinforcement**
 - D. Cognitive maps**
- 4. Which of the following theories emphasizes the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate behavior?**
 - A. Behaviorism**
 - B. Cognitive psychology**
 - C. Psychoanalytic theory**
 - D. Humanism**
- 5. Which neurotransmitter is involved in muscle movement and cognitive functions?**
 - A. Norepinephrine**
 - B. Acetylcholine**
 - C. Dopamine**
 - D. Serotonin**

- 6. What is the absolute refractory period in the context of neuron firing?**
- A. The neuron can fire again immediately**
 - B. The neuron is un-reactive to new stimuli**
 - C. The neuron begins to repolarize**
 - D. It is when neurotransmission occurs**
- 7. What is the focus of the post-conventional phase in Kohlberg's theory of moral development?**
- A. Punishment and Obedience**
 - B. Social Contracts and Universal Ethical Principles**
 - C. Social approval and relational ethics**
 - D. Authority-based moral reasoning**
- 8. Who is credited with the study of proxemics and the ways individuals space themselves in relation to others?**
- A. William James**
 - B. Edward Hall**
 - C. Albert Bandura**
 - D. Sigmund Freud**
- 9. What does induced motion refer to?**
- A. The movement of objects in relation to a stationary background**
 - B. The illusion of movement in a still light when surrounding objects are moved**
 - C. The perception of motion based on changes in the observer's position**
 - D. The direct movement of the light source itself**
- 10. Which of the following correctly describes color constancy?**
- A. Color perception changes with distance**
 - B. Color appearance alters under different lighting conditions**
 - C. Perception of color remains stable across varying contexts**
 - D. Color can always be accurately identified**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. In Freud's theory, what is the term for becoming fixated at a particular psychosexual stage?

- A. Internal Conflict**
- B. Overindulgence**
- C. Personality Pattern Development**
- D. Displacement**

In Freud's theory, fixation occurs when an individual becomes overly involved or stuck at a particular psychosexual stage of development, which directly influences their personality and behaviors in adulthood. This concept aligns closely with the idea of personality patterns developing as a result of unresolved conflicts or challenges during those stages. According to Freud, these stages include oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital, and each stage is characterized by specific challenges and experiences that shape a person's psyche. If these experiences are not properly resolved, an individual may exhibit certain personality traits or behaviors that are indicative of that specific stage, resulting in a pattern that can be understood through the lens of Freud's developmental stages. The other terms mentioned do not capture this specific idea of fixation in relation to psychosexual development. Internal conflict refers more to the struggles between different parts of the psyche rather than being related to a developmental stage. Overindulgence may contribute to fixation but is not the term used by Freud to describe the phenomenon itself. Displacement is a defense mechanism involving transferring emotions from one object to another, which does not align with the concept of psychosexual fixation.

2. What is the last stage of Freud's psychosexual development?

- A. Genital Stage**
- B. Latency Stage**
- C. Phallic Stage**
- D. Anal Stage**

The last stage of Freud's psychosexual development is the Genital Stage. This stage begins in adolescence, typically around the onset of puberty, and continues into adulthood. During this phase, the focus of interest is on mature sexual intimacy. Freud posited that individuals seek to develop healthy sexual relationships and establish a balance between various aspects of life, including love and work. In this stage, sexual impulses that may have been dormant during the Latency Stage are reawakened and become increasingly pronounced. This is where individuals start to navigate and explore their sexual orientation and relationships more fully, integrating their experiences from earlier developmental stages. The emphasis is on the formation of a genuine sexual relationship that leads to reproduction, thereby fulfilling one of the primary drives of human life according to Freud. The other stages, such as Latency, Phallic, and Anal, represent earlier phases in the development process that focus on different aspects of personality and conflict resolution. Each of these earlier stages lays the foundation for healthy sexual and emotional relationships in the final stage, but they do not encompass the complete and mature sexual identity that characterizes the Genital Stage.

3. What method involves reinforcing the desired response while extinguishing others?

- A. Observational learning**
- B. Fixed-action pattern**
- C. Differential reinforcement**
- D. Cognitive maps**

The concept of differential reinforcement is crucial in behavior modification and learning. It specifically refers to the method of reinforcing a particular desired response while simultaneously discouraging (or extinguishing) other, undesired behaviors. This technique emphasizes rewarding the behavior that is sought after, which increases the likelihood of the reoccurrence of that behavior, while withholding reinforcement or applying negative consequences to the behaviors that are being targeted for reduction. The effectiveness of differential reinforcement lies in its ability to shape behavior in a more nuanced manner. Rather than punishing or merely ignoring unwanted behaviors, this method actively promotes the behaviors that are favored, making it a positive strategy for behavior change. In various settings, such as in education or behavior therapy, differential reinforcement can lead to improved outcomes by focusing on positive reinforcement and gradually reducing less desirable behaviors. The other methods mentioned do not share this specific focus on behavior modification through reinforcement. Observational learning pertains to learning that occurs through observing the behaviors of others rather than through direct reinforcement. Fixed-action patterns refer to instinctual behaviors that are performed in a specific way and are not shaped through reinforcement. Cognitive maps involve mental representations of physical space or concepts and are unrelated to reinforcement strategies in modifying behavior.

4. Which of the following theories emphasizes the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate behavior?

- A. Behaviorism**
- B. Cognitive psychology**
- C. Psychoanalytic theory**
- D. Humanism**

Psychoanalytic theory is centered on the idea that much of human behavior is influenced by unconscious internal states, such as desires, fears, and motivations. Developed by Sigmund Freud, this theory posits that individuals may not be fully aware of these underlying forces, which can manifest in various ways, including dreams, slips of the tongue, and neurotic behaviors. These unconscious motivations are seen as key drivers of behavior, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of human personality and conflicts. In contrast, behaviorism focuses on observable behaviors and external stimuli, denying the importance of internal mental states. Cognitive psychology seeks to understand the processes behind thought and perception but does not primarily emphasize the unconscious. Humanism, on the other hand, highlights personal growth and self-actualization, prioritizing conscious choice and free will rather than unconscious influences. Thus, psychoanalytic theory is unique in its emphasis on the significance of the unconscious in motivating behavior, making it the accurate answer to the question.

5. Which neurotransmitter is involved in muscle movement and cognitive functions?

- A. Norepinephrine
- B. Acetylcholine**
- C. Dopamine
- D. Serotonin

Acetylcholine is the neurotransmitter that plays a crucial role in both muscle movement and cognitive functions. It is the primary neurotransmitter at the neuromuscular junction, where it activates muscles by binding to receptors on muscle fibers. This leads to muscle contraction, highlighting its importance in motor control. In addition to its role in muscle movement, acetylcholine is also involved in various cognitive processes, including attention, memory, and learning. It influences functions in the central nervous system and is associated with enhancing alertness and activating the areas of the brain responsible for processing information. While other neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine are important for various functions in the brain and body, they do not directly facilitate the same motor functions as acetylcholine nor do they share its dual role in cognitive processes. Dopamine, for instance, is critical for reward processing and movement regulation, and serotonin is primarily linked to mood regulation and emotional states. Norepinephrine is more associated with arousal and alertness. Thus, acetylcholine stands out as the key neurotransmitter involved in both muscle and cognitive functions.

6. What is the absolute refractory period in the context of neuron firing?

- A. The neuron can fire again immediately
- B. The neuron is un-reactive to new stimuli**
- C. The neuron begins to repolarize
- D. It is when neurotransmission occurs

The absolute refractory period refers to the phase during which a neuron is completely unresponsive to any new stimuli, regardless of the strength of that stimulus. This period occurs after an action potential has taken place. During this time, the sodium channels that opened to allow positive ions to enter the neuron are inactivated. As a result, the neuron cannot generate another action potential, no matter how much excitatory input it receives. This characteristic is crucial for ensuring that action potentials are distinct events and do not overlap, allowing for proper signaling between neurons. As the neuron recovers from the action potential, it transitions to the relative refractory period, where it can fire again but only in response to a stronger-than-normal stimulus. The clarity of the refractory periods is fundamental for the proper timing of neuronal signaling and communication within the nervous system. In contrast, other options do not accurately represent this concept. For example, the ability of the neuron to fire immediately does not account for the restoration process that must occur after an action potential. The process of repolarization is part of the recovery phase, but it does not encompass the entire absolute refractory period. Additionally, neurotransmission involves communication between neurons, which occurs after the refractory periods when a neuron is prepared to fire again, thus

7. What is the focus of the post-conventional phase in Kohlberg's theory of moral development?

- A. Punishment and Obedience**
- B. Social Contracts and Universal Ethical Principles**
- C. Social approval and relational ethics**
- D. Authority-based moral reasoning**

The focus of the post-conventional phase in Kohlberg's theory of moral development is centered around the concepts of social contracts and universal ethical principles. In this stage, individuals begin to recognize that while laws and rules are important, they are also subject to scrutiny based on human rights and ethical considerations. At this level, moral reasoning is guided by abstract principles, such as justice, equality, and the greater good, rather than merely adhering to societal rules or authority figures. Individuals in the post-conventional phase evaluate laws and rules based on their ability to promote fairness and human dignity. They understand that moral decisions can transcend legal obligations and are rooted in a more comprehensive ethical framework that considers the well-being of all individuals, thereby fostering an awareness that moral actions should be consistent with universal human rights. This stage represents a shift towards a more complex understanding of morality, reflecting the ability to think critically about one's own beliefs and the betterment of society as a whole.

8. Who is credited with the study of proxemics and the ways individuals space themselves in relation to others?

- A. William James**
- B. Edward Hall**
- C. Albert Bandura**
- D. Sigmund Freud**

The study of proxemics, which examines how people use space in social interactions, is attributed to Edward Hall. He introduced the term in the 1960s and conducted extensive research on personal space and the ways in which different cultures perceive and utilize space. Hall identified various zones of personal space - intimate, personal, social, and public - and highlighted how cultural contexts can influence these spatial preferences. His work has had a significant impact on fields such as psychology, anthropology, and communication, helping to deepen our understanding of nonverbal communication and social behavior. Understanding proxemics is crucial for interpreting social interactions and relationships in various cultural settings.

9. What does induced motion refer to?

- A. The movement of objects in relation to a stationary background
- B. The illusion of movement in a still light when surrounding objects are moved**
- C. The perception of motion based on changes in the observer's position
- D. The direct movement of the light source itself

Induced motion refers to the illusion of movement in a still object as a result of the movement of surrounding objects. When a stationary object appears to move due to the motion of its background, it creates a perceptual effect where the viewer's focus on the stationary object leads them to perceive it as being in motion. This phenomenon can occur in various contexts, such as when viewing the night sky where clouds move past stars, giving the impression that the stars are moving. This understanding highlights the complexity of visual perception, illustrating how our perception of motion is not solely dependent on the actual movement of objects but is also significantly influenced by the context and background elements in the environment.

10. Which of the following correctly describes color constancy?

- A. Color perception changes with distance
- B. Color appearance alters under different lighting conditions
- C. Perception of color remains stable across varying contexts**
- D. Color can always be accurately identified

Color constancy refers to the ability of the visual system to perceive the colors of objects consistently, even under varying lighting conditions. This phenomenon occurs because the brain adjusts and compensates for the different wavelengths of light that may impact how colors are perceived in different environments. When an object is viewed under different types of lighting—such as sunlight, fluorescent light, or incandescent light—its color can appear different if we do not account for the light source. However, thanks to color constancy, our perception of that object's color remains stable, allowing us to recognize that it is the same color despite changes in illumination. This understanding plays a crucial role in how we interpret our surroundings and recognize objects, ensuring that colors remain consistent and identifiable as contextual factors change. Therefore, the description that aligns with the concept of color constancy is that perception of color remains stable across varying contexts.