

MCAT PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



**SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE
WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS**

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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. Which memory phenomenon includes enhanced recall of items from the beginning and end of a list?**
 - A. Primacy Effect
 - B. Recency Effect
 - C. Serial Position Effect
 - D. Group Polarization
- 2. Stereotype threat is a situational predicament in which people are at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their social group, affecting performance.**
 - A. Self-fulfilling prophecy
 - B. Stereotype threat
 - C. Social loafing
 - D. Confirmation bias
- 3. Which neurotransmitter pathway is most closely linked to reward and motivation and is often implicated in addiction and psychosis when dysregulated?**
 - A. The GABAergic striatal pathway
 - B. The serotonergic raphe pathway
 - C. The glutamatergic corticopontine pathway
 - D. The dopaminergic mesolimbic pathway
- 4. What term refers to a form of power that rests in the legitimacy of an individual?**
 - A. Charismatic Authority
 - B. Traditional Authority
 - C. Rational-Legal Authority
 - D. Legal Authority
- 5. Which sociological theory argues that the mind and self emerge from social processes of communication and the use of symbols?**
 - A. Structural Functionalism
 - B. Social Exchange Theory
 - C. Symbolic Interactionism
 - D. Conflict Theory

- 6. Which term describes organized information about the order of actions in a familiar situation?**
- A. Script
 - B. Schema
 - C. Stereotype
 - D. Prejudice
- 7. A group with identifiable membership that engages in a concerted action to achieve a common purpose is called what?**
- A. Latent Learning
 - B. Anomie
 - C. Proactive Interference
 - D. Organization
- 8. Which theory posits that people avoid information that would increase cognitive dissonance?**
- A. Social identity theory
 - B. Bystander effect
 - C. Cognitive dissonance theory
 - D. Social exchange theory
- 9. Denying or distancing from the reality of the disease or situation is most characteristic of which coping approach?**
- A. Problem-focused coping
 - B. Emotion-focused coping
 - C. Avoidance coping
 - D. Appraisal-focused coping
- 10. Procedural memory is created through which process?**
- A. Elaborative rehearsal
 - B. Maintenance rehearsal
 - C. Priming
 - D. Procedural learning

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which memory phenomenon includes enhanced recall of items from the beginning and end of a list?

- A. Primacy Effect
- B. Recency Effect
- C. Serial Position Effect**
- D. Group Polarization

The serial position effect explains why people remember items from the beginning and end of a list better than those in the middle. It has two parts: the primacy effect and the recency effect. The primacy effect is the better recall of early items, because they receive more time and opportunity for rehearsal and transfer into long-term memory. The recency effect is the better recall of the most recent items, since they're still in short-term or working memory at the moment of recall. Because the question points to memory for items at both the start and the end, this phenomenon is the serial position effect. The primacy or recency effects alone wouldn't capture memory for both ends, and group polarization is about shifts in attitudes within a group, not memory.

2. Stereotype threat is a situational predicament in which people are at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their social group, affecting performance.

- A. Self-fulfilling prophecy
- B. Stereotype threat**
- C. Social loafing
- D. Confirmation bias

Stereotype threat is the situation where people from a stigmatized group fear that their performance will confirm negative stereotypes about their group, and this fear can actually undermine performance on the task. The description given matches this exactly: the focus is on the risk of confirming a stereotype in a challenging situation, which can consume attention and increase anxiety, leading to poorer outcomes even when ability is the same. This phenomenon is distinct from a self-fulfilling prophecy in general, which is about beliefs shaping behavior to bring about a predicted outcome, whereas stereotype threat specifically centers on the pressure tied to identity and negative stereotypes in a performance context. It also differs from social loafing, which involves reduced effort in group settings, and confirmation bias, which is the tendency to seek information that supports preconceptions.

3. Which neurotransmitter pathway is most closely linked to reward and motivation and is often implicated in addiction and psychosis when dysregulated?

- A. The GABAergic striatal pathway
- B. The serotonergic raphe pathway
- C. The glutamatergic corticopontine pathway
- D. The dopaminergic mesolimbic pathway**

The key idea is that dopamine signaling in the brain's reward system drives motivation and the reinforcing value of rewarding stimuli. The dopaminergic neurons from the ventral tegmental area project to the nucleus accumbens in the mesolimbic pathway, and dopamine release here reinforces behaviors that lead to rewards. This system also codes reward prediction error, helping you learn which actions are worth pursuing. When this mesolimbic dopamine system becomes dysregulated, it's closely linked to addiction and the emergence of psychotic symptoms. Drugs of abuse raise dopamine in the nucleus accumbens, strengthening drug-seeking and craving. In psychosis, excess dopaminergic activity in the same ventral system is associated with positive symptoms like delusions and hallucinations. Other options don't fit as closely: the GABAergic striatal pathway is more about inhibitory control and motor functions, not primarily reward; the serotonergic raphe system influences mood and arousal broadly but isn't the main driver of reward/motivation; the glutamatergic corticopontine pathway is involved in cortical communication rather than reward processing. The dopaminergic mesolimbic pathway best matches the description.

4. What term refers to a form of power that rests in the legitimacy of an individual?

- A. Charismatic Authority**
- B. Traditional Authority
- C. Rational-Legal Authority
- D. Legal Authority

Charismatic authority is power rooted in the leader's personal charisma and the belief of followers in that individual's extraordinary qualities or mission. This form of legitimacy comes from people's devotion to the person, not from customs or formal rules. In contrast, traditional authority derives legitimacy from long-standing customs and roles, while rational-legal authority rests on a system of laws and offices. So, when power hinges on the individual's personal charm and perceived exceptional gifts, it's charismatic authority. This type can be powerful but is often unstable, because it relies on continued perception of that charisma and the leader's ability to maintain it.

5. Which sociological theory argues that the mind and self emerge from social processes of communication and the use of symbols?

- A. Structural Functionalism
- B. Social Exchange Theory
- C. Symbolic Interactionism**
- D. Conflict Theory

Symbolic Interactionism argues that the mind and self arise through social interaction and the use of symbols. Through everyday communication—gestures, language, and shared meanings—people interpret experiences and shape their internal thoughts. The self develops as individuals take on the perspectives of others and see themselves from those viewpoints, with the “I” representing spontaneous action and the “Me” reflecting how society expects them to behave. This micro-level focus on how social interaction constructs meaning explains how identity and thought are formed through symbolic exchange in daily life. Other theories look at society from different angles: Structural Functionalism emphasizes how institutions and norms keep society stable, not how individual minds are built from social signaling; Social Exchange Theory centers on cost-benefit calculations in relationships, not on symbol-driven self-construction; and Conflict Theory examines power and inequality at a broad level, rather than the micro-level process of meaning-making through interaction.

6. Which term describes organized information about the order of actions in a familiar situation?

- A. Script**
- B. Schema
- C. Stereotype
- D. Prejudice

Scripts are mental representations that encode the expected sequence of actions in familiar situations. They act as a plan for behavior, guiding what you do next and what to anticipate at each step. For example, a dining-out script includes entering, being seated, looking at the menu, ordering, eating, paying, and leaving. This organized information about the order of actions helps us navigate routines smoothly and with less cognitive effort in predictable contexts. Schemas are broader knowledge structures about concepts or events, of which scripts are a specific kind that emphasizes sequence. Stereotypes involve generalized beliefs about groups of people, and prejudice is an attitude toward a group; neither describes the ordered actions in a routine.

7. A group with identifiable membership that engages in a concerted action to achieve a common purpose is called what?

- A. Latent Learning
- B. Anomie
- C. Proactive Interference
- D. Organization**

An organization is a group with identifiable membership that coordinates actions to pursue a common goal. This means there are defined members, roles, and a structured effort guided by rules and procedures toward a shared objective. The other terms don't fit: latent learning is knowledge acquired without obvious reinforcement and shown later, not a formal group; anomie is a state of normlessness or social instability; and proactive interference is a memory phenomenon where old information disrupts new learning. So the scenario described aligns with an organization.

8. Which theory posits that people avoid information that would increase cognitive dissonance?

- A. Social identity theory
- B. Bystander effect
- C. Cognitive dissonance theory**
- D. Social exchange theory

Cognitive dissonance theory explains why people avoid information that would increase dissonance. When individuals hold conflicting beliefs or when their behavior contradicts their attitudes, they feel psychological discomfort. To ease this tension, they engage in dissonance-reduction strategies, including selective exposure—avoiding or discounting information that would amplify the conflict. For example, someone who sees themselves as health-conscious might avoid articles that challenge their eating habits, or they might reinterpret data to align with their beliefs. The other theories describe different social processes (group identity and self-esteem, diffusion of responsibility in emergencies, or cost-benefit calculations in social interactions) and don't specifically focus on avoiding dissonant information.

9. Denying or distancing from the reality of the disease or situation is most characteristic of which coping approach?

- A. Problem-focused coping
- B. Emotion-focused coping
- C. Avoidance coping
- D. Appraisal-focused coping**

Denying or distancing from the reality of what's happening fits with avoidance coping. This style reduces distress by steering away from the stressor or its emotional impact rather than tackling the problem itself. It contrasts with problem-focused coping, which aims to solve the issue; emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional responses (often through reappraisal or venting); and appraisal-focused coping, which changes how one interprets the situation. So, avoiding or denying the reality is a classic avoidant strategy.

10. Procedural memory is created through which process?

- A. Elaborative rehearsal
- B. Maintenance rehearsal
- C. Priming
- D. Procedural learning**

Procedural memory is the memory for how to do things—skills, habits, and actions. It's created through procedural learning, the practice-driven process that strengthens motor and sequence patterns until they become automatic. With repeated performance, you don't consciously recall each step; you just do it, often without awareness of the rules you learned. This kind of memory relies on motor circuits in the brain (like the basal ganglia and cerebellum) and underpins tasks from riding a bike to typing. Elaborative rehearsal helps encode facts by linking new information to meaning, which strengthens declarative memory rather than skill-based procedures. Maintenance rehearsal keeps information active in working memory but doesn't convert it into long-term skills. Priming changes how we respond based on prior exposure but doesn't build a stored sequence of actions for a task.

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://mcatpsychologysociology.examzify.com>

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

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