

VirtualSC Psychology Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

Copyright © 2025 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain from reliable sources accurate, complete, and timely information about this product.

SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What is systematic desensitization?**
 - A. A technique to enhance creativity in children**
 - B. A method to gradually expose a person to anxiety-provoking stimuli to reduce anxiety**
 - C. A strategy for managing aggressive behavior**
 - D. A form of cognitive therapy focusing on self-reflection**
- 2. Who is known for his theory of cognitive development in children?**
 - A. Sigmund Freud**
 - B. Jean Piaget**
 - C. Erik Erikson**
 - D. Lev Vygotsky**
- 3. What does the term "cognitive dissonance" refer to?**
 - A. A stable reinforcement of behavior**
 - B. The discomfort from holding conflicting beliefs**
 - C. A method for alleviating anxiety**
 - D. A principle of group dynamics**
- 4. The term "nature vs. nurture" discusses which of the following?**
 - A. Environmental influences**
 - B. Genetic contributions**
 - C. Both genetic and environmental factors**
 - D. Socioeconomic impacts**
- 5. A person who refuses to fly due to severe anxiety may be diagnosed with which phobia?**
 - A. Ailurophobia**
 - B. Agoraphobia**
 - C. Aerophobia**
 - D. Acrophobia**

- 6. What does developmental psychology primarily study?**
- A. How individuals interact in social settings**
 - B. How people grow and change throughout their lifespan**
 - C. The impact of genetics on personality**
 - D. The effects of trauma on behavior**
- 7. Which of the following is NOT a typical method used in psychological research?**
- A. Observation**
 - B. Experimental manipulation**
 - C. Descriptive statistics**
 - D. Extracurricular activities**
- 8. Which aspect of memory involves the duration information is retained in short-term storage?**
- A. Retention time**
 - B. Encoding failure**
 - C. Memory span**
 - D. Storage capacity**
- 9. What does behaviorism primarily focus on?**
- A. Unconscious thoughts**
 - B. Observable behavior**
 - C. Emotional experiences**
 - D. Social interactions**
- 10. What distinguishes classical conditioning from operant conditioning?**
- A. Classical conditioning focuses on voluntary behavior**
 - B. Operant conditioning does not involve any stimulus**
 - C. Classical conditioning associates an involuntary response with a stimulus**
 - D. Operant conditioning emphasizes cognitive processes**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. What is systematic desensitization?

- A. A technique to enhance creativity in children
- B. A method to gradually expose a person to anxiety-provoking stimuli to reduce anxiety**
- C. A strategy for managing aggressive behavior
- D. A form of cognitive therapy focusing on self-reflection

Systematic desensitization is a psychological treatment specifically designed to help individuals overcome phobias and anxiety disorders. It involves a gradual and controlled exposure to the anxiety-provoking stimuli that the person fears, combined with relaxation techniques. The goal is to help the individual face the source of their anxiety in a safe and structured manner, allowing them to become desensitized to the stimulus over time. This process typically involves several key components: the development of a hierarchy of fears related to the stimulus, teaching relaxation techniques (such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation), and then gradually exposing the individual to each level of fear while using the relaxation techniques. As the person progresses through this hierarchy, their anxiety diminishes, and they learn to associate the previously feared stimulus with relaxation rather than panic. The other options do not accurately reflect the purpose or methodology of systematic desensitization. While creativity enhancement, managing aggression, and cognitive therapies may be valuable in their own right, they do not pertain to the established framework and functioning of systematic desensitization, which is focused on reducing anxiety through exposure and relaxation.

2. Who is known for his theory of cognitive development in children?

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

Jean Piaget is recognized for his seminal theory of cognitive development in children, which has profoundly influenced our understanding of how children think and learn. Piaget proposed that cognitive development occurs in four distinct stages: the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages. Each stage represents a different level of thinking and understanding of the world, characterized by specific cognitive abilities. Piaget's theory emphasizes that children are active participants in their own learning process. They construct knowledge through interactions with their environment and through experiences. This constructivist perspective suggests that children's thinking evolves and becomes more complex as they progress through the stages. His work laid the foundation for understanding how cognitive skills develop over time and has had a lasting impact on education and developmental psychology, helping teachers and psychologists devise methods that cater to the cognitive abilities of children at various ages. Other theorists, while also influential, focus on different aspects of child development. Sigmund Freud concentrated on psychosexual development, Erik Erikson emphasized psychosocial development across the lifespan, and Lev Vygotsky focused on the sociocultural influences on learning and development, which are distinct from Piaget's focus on cognitive processes.

3. What does the term "cognitive dissonance" refer to?

- A. A stable reinforcement of behavior
- B. The discomfort from holding conflicting beliefs**
- C. A method for alleviating anxiety
- D. A principle of group dynamics

Cognitive dissonance refers to the psychological discomfort that arises when an individual holds two or more contradictory beliefs, values, or attitudes simultaneously. This discomfort often compels people to find a way to resolve the inconsistency, which can lead to changes in beliefs or behaviors to restore harmony. For instance, if someone values health but smokes cigarettes, they may experience cognitive dissonance because their actions (smoking) conflict with their beliefs (valuing health). To alleviate this dissonance, they might choose to quit smoking, change their beliefs about the health risks of smoking, or rationalize their behavior in some way. The other concepts, such as stable reinforcement of behavior, methods for alleviating anxiety, and principles of group dynamics, do not accurately capture the essence of cognitive dissonance and its focus on the internal conflict and mental struggle that arises from holding opposing beliefs.

4. The term "nature vs. nurture" discusses which of the following?

- A. Environmental influences
- B. Genetic contributions
- C. Both genetic and environmental factors**
- D. Socioeconomic impacts

The term "nature vs. nurture" refers to the debate surrounding the relative contributions of genetic inheritance (nature) and environmental factors (nurture) to human development, behavior, and personality. This concept encapsulates the ongoing discussion about how much of an individual's traits, behaviors, and choices are determined by their biological makeup versus the experiences and environment they are exposed to throughout their life. Choosing both genetic and environmental factors as the answer recognizes that this is not an either/or proposition; rather, it acknowledges that human development is influenced by an intricate interplay of both aspects. For instance, while genetic predispositions can shape certain traits, the environment can enhance, inhibit, or modify the expression of those traits. This dual influence highlights the complexity of human psychology and the need to consider both nature and nurture in understanding behavior and development. In contrast, focusing solely on environmental influences, genetic contributions, or socioeconomic impacts would overlook the holistic and multifaceted nature of human development discussed in the "nature vs. nurture" debate.

5. A person who refuses to fly due to severe anxiety may be diagnosed with which phobia?

- A. Ailurophobia**
- B. Agoraphobia**
- C. Aerophobia**
- D. Acrophobia**

The correct diagnosis for a person who refuses to fly due to severe anxiety is aerophobia. This phobia specifically refers to an intense fear of flying, which can manifest in various ways, including anxiety or panic attacks at the thought of boarding an aircraft. People with aerophobia may experience symptoms such as a rapid heartbeat, sweating, and a feeling of dread when facing the prospect of flying. Other phobias mentioned relate to different fears: ailurophobia pertains to a fear of cats, agoraphobia involves fear and avoidance of situations where escape might be difficult or help unavailable (often related to open or crowded spaces), and acrophobia is the fear of heights. Each of these phobias addresses distinct aspects of anxiety and fear, but none align with the fear of flying as closely as aerophobia does.

6. What does developmental psychology primarily study?

- A. How individuals interact in social settings**
- B. How people grow and change throughout their lifespan**
- C. The impact of genetics on personality**
- D. The effects of trauma on behavior**

Developmental psychology primarily focuses on how individuals grow and change throughout their lifespan. This field examines the psychological, emotional, cognitive, and social development from infancy through old age. Developmental psychologists study various factors that influence development, including biological, environmental, and cultural influences. They analyze milestones such as language acquisition, motor skills, and social interactions, along with how these elements evolve and impact individuals over time. The other options, while related to specific aspects of human behavior and psychology, do not capture the comprehensive scope of developmental psychology. For instance, studying interactions in social settings pertains more to social psychology. The impact of genetics on personality is primarily the domain of behavioral genetics, and understanding the effects of trauma on behavior is typically explored within clinical psychology or trauma psychology. These areas provide valuable insights into human behavior but do not embody the overarching goal of exploring developmental changes throughout a person's life, which is central to developmental psychology.

7. Which of the following is NOT a typical method used in psychological research?

- A. Observation**
- B. Experimental manipulation**
- C. Descriptive statistics**
- D. Extracurricular activities**

Extracurricular activities do not fit within the standard methodologies used in psychological research. In psychological studies, researchers typically employ methods such as observation, experimental manipulation, and descriptive statistics to gather data, analyze behavior, and draw conclusions about psychological phenomena. Observation involves systematically watching and recording behaviors in a natural or controlled environment, which is crucial for understanding participants in real-world contexts. Experimental manipulation refers to the process where researchers introduce specific changes in controlled environments to observe the effects on behaviors or outcomes, providing a strong basis for establishing causal relationships. Descriptive statistics enable researchers to summarize and interpret data collected from various sources, enhancing the overall understanding of trends and patterns within their findings. Extracurricular activities, while they can be relevant in a broader educational or developmental context, are not a recognized method for conducting psychological research. They lack the structured approach and scientific rigor that are fundamental to research methodologies in psychology.

8. Which aspect of memory involves the duration information is retained in short-term storage?

- A. Retention time**
- B. Encoding failure**
- C. Memory span**
- D. Storage capacity**

The aspect of memory that pertains specifically to how long information can be held in short-term storage is known as retention time. This concept refers to the duration that information remains accessible before it is either forgotten or moved to long-term storage. In short-term memory, the retention time is generally brief, typically lasting only about 15 to 30 seconds without rehearsal. This characteristic is crucial for understanding how short-term memory functions, as it highlights the limitations of this memory system in retaining information over extended periods. While other terms such as memory span and storage capacity also relate to aspects of memory, they address different features. Memory span refers to the amount of information that can be accurately recalled after a single presentation, while storage capacity indicates the total amount of information that can be held in memory at any given time. Encoding failure, on the other hand, relates to the process of transforming sensory input into a format suitable for storage, rather than the duration of information retention.

9. What does behaviorism primarily focus on?

- A. Unconscious thoughts
- B. Observable behavior**
- C. Emotional experiences
- D. Social interactions

Behaviorism primarily focuses on observable behavior as it emphasizes the study of actions that can be measured and recorded, rather than internal mental states. Founded by figures such as John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner, behaviorism posits that behavior can be studied scientifically without consideration of internal mental processes, which are often seen as subjective and difficult to measure. This approach is grounded in the belief that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning, which could be either classical or operant. Classical conditioning involves creating associations between a naturally occurring stimulus and a previously neutral stimulus, while operant conditioning involves modifying behavior through reinforcement or punishment. By concentrating on observable behaviors, behaviorists argue that psychological research can be more objective and empirical. This focus enables the development of practical applications, such as behavior modification techniques that can help alter undesirable behaviors effectively. The other options refer to aspects of psychology that are less emphasized within behaviorism. Unconscious thoughts relate more to psychoanalytic theories, whereas emotional experiences can be more aligned with humanistic or cognitive perspectives. Social interactions are addressed in fields such as social psychology, which looks at how individuals influence and are influenced by others. Thus, while all aspects of psychology are important, behaviorism's primary focus distinctly centers on observable behavior.

10. What distinguishes classical conditioning from operant conditioning?

- A. Classical conditioning focuses on voluntary behavior
- B. Operant conditioning does not involve any stimulus
- C. Classical conditioning associates an involuntary response with a stimulus**
- D. Operant conditioning emphasizes cognitive processes

Classical conditioning is distinguished by its focus on the association between a neutral stimulus and an involuntary response. This learning process involves pairing a stimulus that naturally evokes a response (the unconditioned stimulus) with a neutral stimulus, leading to the neutral stimulus eventually eliciting that same response on its own. For example, in Pavlov's experiments, the sound of a bell (neutral stimulus) was paired with food (unconditioned stimulus), leading dogs to salivate (involuntary response) at the sound of the bell alone. In contrast, operant conditioning revolves around the concept of voluntary behavior and the consequences that follow those behaviors. It emphasizes how rewards and punishments influence the likelihood of a behavior being repeated. The other options do not accurately reflect the core distinctions between these two forms of conditioning, reinforcing the importance of recognizing involuntary responses in classical conditioning.