AAMC PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIOR (PS) FULL-LENGTH (FL) 5 PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Table of Contents

Copyright 1

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3

How to Use This Guide 4

Questions 5

Answers 8

Explanations 10

Next Steps 15

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. What does long-term memory branch into?

A. Structural and functional memory

B. Short-term and sensory memory

C. Explicit and implicit memory

D. Declarative and procedural memory

2. What processing type involves an individual's attitude formation driven by peripheral characteristics in a social setting?

A. Cognitive dissonance

B. Central route processing

C. High elaboration processing

D. Peripheral route processing

3. What does the prefrontal cortex primarily help regulate?

A. Emotional reactions

B. Basic instinctual drives

C. Higher-order cognitive functions

D. Physical coordination

4. What is a key characteristic of the central route processing in attitude formation?

A. Focus on social cues

B. Attention to surface details

C. Emphasis on logical reasoning

D. Reliance on emotional responses

5. What is a potential outcome of using cognitive-behavioral therapy?

A. Improvement in physical condition only

B. Increased emotional distress

C. Development of personal coping strategies

D. Reduction of trust in others

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6. What psychological phenomenon can result from holding two contradictory beliefs simultaneously?

A. Cognitive coherence

B. Semantic memory

C. Cognitive dissonance

D. Behavioral conditioning

7. Which type of memory holds a few items for a brief period, similar to recalling a phone number while dialing?

A. Long-term memory

B. Short-term memory

C. Implicit memory

D. Semantic memory

8. What is an outcome of cognitive dissonance in decision-making?

A. A commitment to one's initial beliefs

B. A decrease in critical thinking

C. A potential change in beliefs or attitudes

D. An increase in oppositional behavior

9. What does cognitive bias refer to in psychological terms?

A. Patterns of logical reasoning

B. Systematic patterns of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment

C. Clear decision-making processes

D. Uniform interpretation of data

10. How do "norms" differ from "values" in social psychology?

A. Norms are personal beliefs, while values are societal standards

B. Norms guide decisions, whereas values are universal

C. Norms are accepted behaviors, while values are beliefs

D. Norms vary by culture, while values remain constant

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What does long-term memory branch into?

A. Structural and functional memory

B. Short-term and sensory memory

C. Explicit and implicit memory

D. Declarative and procedural memory

Long-term memory branches into explicit and implicit memory, which is why this is the correct answer. Explicit memory pertains to information that can be consciously recalled, such as facts and events. This type of memory is further divided into episodic memory (personal experiences and specific events) and semantic memory (general knowledge and facts about the world). Implicit memory, on the other hand, involves skills and habits that are performed without conscious awareness, such as riding a bike or playing an instrument. The distinctions within long-term memory are essential for understanding how we retain various types of information and respond to different experiences based on our memory systems. This classification elucidates the complex nature of how memory operates in our daily lives and cognitive processes, highlighting the differences between consciously recalling information versus an automatic response based on past experiences.

2. What processing type involves an individual's attitude formation driven by peripheral characteristics in a social setting?

A. Cognitive dissonance

B. Central route processing

C. High elaboration processing

D. Peripheral route processing

The correct answer is peripheral route processing. This type of processing occurs when individuals form attitudes based on superficial or peripheral characteristics rather than engaging in deep, thoughtful consideration of the message itself. In social settings, this might involve being influenced by factors such as the attractiveness of the speaker, emotional appeal, or other contextual cues that do not relate to the actual argument or content of the message. Peripheral route processing is especially relevant when individuals are not motivated to engage with a topic or lack the ability to process complex information, leading them to rely on these peripheral cues. This can result in attitudes that are less stable over time since they are not rooted in a thorough evaluation of the information presented. Central route processing, on the other hand, involves careful and thoughtful consideration of the message's content and is more likely to lead to lasting attitude change because it requires higher levels of elaboration. Cognitive dissonance refers to the psychological discomfort that arises from holding conflicting beliefs or attitudes, which is unrelated to the way attitudes are formed. High elaboration processing is associated with central route processing, indicating a deep analysis of the arguments rather than reliance on superficial aspects.

3. What does the prefrontal cortex primarily help regulate?

A. Emotional reactions

B. Basic instinctual drives

C. Higher-order cognitive functions

D. Physical coordination

The prefrontal cortex plays a critical role in regulating higher-order cognitive functions, which include processes such as decision-making, problem-solving, planning, social behavior, and impulse control. This area of the brain is associated with the integration of complex thoughts and the management of behavior in relation to social norms and long-term goals. In essence, the prefrontal cortex allows individuals to think abstractly and process information in a way that is not merely reactive but more reflective and deliberative. This contributes to self-regulation, enabling a person to consider the consequences of actions before taking them, which is vital for effective functioning in society.

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4. What is a key characteristic of the central route processing in attitude formation?

A. Focus on social cues

B. Attention to surface details

C. Emphasis on logical reasoning

D. Reliance on emotional responses

Central route processing in attitude formation is characterized by a thorough consideration of the arguments and the content of the message. This involves an emphasis on logical reasoning, where individuals critically analyze the merits or drawbacks of information presented to them. When people engage in central route processing, they are more likely to be influenced by the strength and quality of arguments rather than superficial factors. This type of processing is typically seen in situations where individuals are motivated to think deeply and have the ability to process information carefully, leading to more durable and stable attitude change. In contrast, peripheral route processing might rely on other factors such as emotional responses, social status, or surface details, which are less about direct engagement with the argument itself.

5. What is a potential outcome of using cognitive-behavioral therapy?

A. Improvement in physical condition only

B. Increased emotional distress

C. Development of personal coping strategies

D. Reduction of trust in others

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a widely used therapeutic approach that focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors. One of the main outcomes of CBT is the development of personal coping strategies. Individuals learn to recognize unhelpful thoughts and behaviors, and in doing so, they can develop healthier ways to cope with stressors and challenges. This process often empowers individuals by equipping them with tools to handle difficult situations more effectively in the future. Additionally, CBT encourages individuals to engage in active problem-solving, which can lead to improved self-efficacy and resilience. As they practice these new strategies, clients often experience a more positive outlook on their ability to manage emotional distress. In contrast, the other potential outcomes listed are either negative or incomplete reflections of what CBT aims to address. For instance, improvement in physical conditions alone does not capture the full therapeutic impact of CBT, which also includes emotional and psychological aspects. Increased emotional distress would be contrary to the therapeutic goals of CBT, as the therapy is designed to reduce distress. Finally, a reduction of trust in others is not a typical or desired outcome of CBT, as the therapy often works to enhance interpersonal skills and build healthier relationships.

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6. What psychological phenomenon can result from holding two contradictory beliefs simultaneously?

A. Cognitive coherence

B. Semantic memory

C. Cognitive dissonance

D. Behavioral conditioning

Cognitive dissonance is the psychological phenomenon that occurs when an individual holds two contradictory beliefs or experiences conflicting thoughts, attitudes, or values. This state of discomfort leads the person to seek ways to reduce the dissonance, often by changing one of the beliefs, rationalizing the inconsistency, or adding new beliefs that help reconcile the opposing ideas. For example, if someone values health but smokes cigarettes, they may experience cognitive dissonance. To alleviate this discomfort, they might quit smoking, justify their behavior by downplaying the health risks, or convince themselves that they can quit at any time. This illustrates how cognitive dissonance drives behavior change or justification processes as individuals strive for mental harmony. The other terms do not accurately describe this particular phenomenon. Cognitive coherence relates to the consistency of beliefs or thoughts, semantic memory refers to the storage and recall of factual information, and behavioral conditioning pertains to learning associations between behaviors and outcomes, which is distinct from the internal conflict represented by cognitive dissonance.

7. Which type of memory holds a few items for a brief period, similar to recalling a phone number while dialing?

A. Long-term memory

B. Short-term memory

C. Implicit memory

D. Semantic memory

Short-term memory is the correct choice because it is specifically designed to hold a limited amount of information for a brief duration, typically around 20 to 30 seconds. This type of memory allows individuals to temporarily store small amounts of data, such as a phone number, while actively using it, like during dialing. Short-term memory is characterized by its capacity to hold about seven items (plus or minus two), making it suitable for tasks that require immediate recall. This contrasts with long-term memory, which involves the storage of information over extended periods and can hold much larger amounts of information. Implicit memory refers to skills and actions that are performed without conscious thought, and semantic memory involves the storage of facts and concepts. Both of these types of memory do not apply to the scenario of briefly recalling information like a phone number. Thus, short-term memory best describes the ability to hold and manipulate small pieces of information for immediate use.

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8. What is an outcome of cognitive dissonance in decision-making?

A. A commitment to one's initial beliefs

B. A decrease in critical thinking

C. A potential change in beliefs or attitudes

D. An increase in oppositional behavior

Cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual experiences discomfort due to holding two or more conflicting beliefs, attitudes, or values, particularly after making a decision. One of the key outcomes of this psychological phenomenon is a potential change in beliefs or attitudes in order to resolve the dissonance and reduce the discomfort. When faced with dissonance, individuals are motivated to restore harmony, which often leads them to rationalize their choices or shift their beliefs to align with their decisions. For example, after making a significant purchase, a person might emphasize the positive aspects of the product while downplaying any negative features they initially considered. This adjustment allows them to alleviate the discomfort caused by conflicting thoughts about their decision. This process illustrates how cognitive dissonance can influence decision-making by leading to changes in opinions or attitudes as a coping mechanism to maintain psychological consistency.

9. What does cognitive bias refer to in psychological terms?

A. Patterns of logical reasoning

B. Systematic patterns of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment

C. Clear decision-making processes

D. Uniform interpretation of data

Cognitive bias refers to systematic patterns of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment. This means that cognitive biases are tendencies in which people process information in a way that leads to illogical or flawed conclusions. These biases can affect decision-making, leading individuals to make judgments based on personal experiences, emotions, or misleading information rather than objective facts or statistical reasoning. Understanding cognitive bias is crucial in psychology because it helps explain why people might arrive at different decisions in identical situations, as their judgments are influenced by their mental shortcuts or heuristics. This concept plays a significant role in various domains, including behavioral economics, social psychology, and clinical psychology, as it reveals how human thought processes can be systematically skewed. The other options do not capture the essence of cognitive bias. Patterns of logical reasoning and clear decision-making processes imply a level of rationality that is the opposite of what cognitive bias represents. Uniform interpretation of data suggests a consistency that contradicts the inherent errors introduced by cognitive biases in judgment.

10. How do "norms" differ from "values" in social psychology?

A. Norms are personal beliefs, while values are societal standards

B. Norms guide decisions, whereas values are universal

C. Norms are accepted behaviors, while values are beliefs

D. Norms vary by culture, while values remain constant

Norms are established standards of behavior that are accepted within a particular group or society, which dictate how individuals are expected to act in specific situations. They can vary significantly across different cultures and contexts, indicating what is considered appropriate or acceptable behavior. Values, on the other hand, refer to deeply held beliefs about what is important or desirable in life. These are more personal and subjective, shaping an individual's attitudes and actions but not necessarily defining acceptable behavior in a societal context. Therefore, the distinction is clear: norms are a reflection of collective behavior expectations, while values represent individual belief systems. This understanding helps clarify how individuals navigate social interactions and conform to societal roles.

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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:

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

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