# DSST LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

## STUDY GUIDE



## SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

**VISIT US ONLINE FOR THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

https://dsstlifespandevpsych.examzify.com

**Copyright © 2026 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 accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

# 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 ..... 16


SAMPLE

# 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.

SAMPLE

# 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!

SAMPLE

# Questions

SAMPLE

1. **The early stages of Alzheimer's disease are often confused with which other disorder?**

   A. Anxiety

   B. Depression

   C. Obsessive-compulsive disorder

   D. Schizophrenia

2. **At what age do most children begin to identify specific best friends?**

   A. 5 years old

   B. 7 years old

   C. 10 years old

   D. 12 years old

3. **What is a main characteristic of the latency stage in child development?**

   A. Increased sexual exploration

   B. Focus on social skills and peer relationships

   C. Egocentric behavior

   D. Development of abstract reasoning

4. **What does trust vs mistrust focus on in Erikson's theory?**

   A. Connection with friends

   B. Reliance on caregivers

   C. Understanding emotions

   D. Developing social skills

5. **What is described by primary circular reactions (2-4 months)?**

   A. Repetitive reflexive behaviors like opening and closing fingers

   B. Simple reflex actions

   C. Coordination of actions for intentionality

   D. Discovery of new ways to achieve goals

6. **Which stage is associated with the development of initiative in children?**

   A. Infancy

   B. Preschool years

   C. School age

   D. Adolescence

SAMPLE

**7. What is the process of relating new information to something familiar called?**

A. Encoding

B. Elaboration

C. Assimilation

D. Accommodation

**8. A parent who makes few demands on a child typically shows which parenting style?**

A. Authoritative

B. Neglectful

C. Permissive

D. Authoritarian

**9. Organized, logical thought is characteristic of which of Piaget's stages of development?**

A. Preoperational

B. Concrete operational

C. Formal operational

D. Sensorimotor

**10. What role does a psychiatrist fulfill in relation to a clinical psychologist?**

A. Conducts therapy sessions without a medical degree

B. Prescribes medications and provides psychotherapy

C. Focuses solely on research without patient interaction

D. Evaluates educational interventions for students

SAMPLE

# Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

# Explanations

SAMPLE

## 1. The early stages of Alzheimer's disease are often confused with which other disorder?

A. Anxiety

B. Depression

C. Obsessive-compulsive disorder

D. Schizophrenia

*In the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, symptoms can often be misinterpreted as signs of depression. Both conditions can present with memory issues, difficulty concentrating, and changes in mood or behavior, which can make distinguishing between the two particularly challenging. Individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's may experience feelings of sadness, withdrawal from social interactions, and an overall decline in motivation, which are also common characteristics of depression. Furthermore, both disorders can include cognitive decline, such as forgetfulness or confusion, which can lead to similar clinical presentations. Healthcare professionals must carefully evaluate these symptoms to determine whether they are a normal part of aging, indicative of depression, or the early signs of Alzheimer's disease. This overlap emphasizes the importance of comprehensive assessments in accurately diagnosing and effectively treating individuals showing these signs. By understanding this relationship, caregivers and healthcare providers can better support affected individuals and offer appropriate interventions.*

## 2. At what age do most children begin to identify specific best friends?

A. 5 years old

B. 7 years old

C. 10 years old

D. 12 years old

*Children typically begin forming and identifying best friends around the age of 10. At this stage, they have developed the cognitive and social skills necessary to understand more complex relationships. By this age, children are starting to value companionship based on shared interests, emotional support, and loyalty. They also begin to comprehend the nuances of friendship, such as trust and acceptance, which are crucial for identifying someone as a "best friend." Friendship at this age often shifts from being more superficial playmates to deeper emotional connections. Children start to prioritize spending time with their chosen friends over interacting with larger groups. This ability to select close friends over acquaintances reflects both cognitive and social advancements that occur during middle childhood. As they grow older, friendships become more significant and impactful on their social development, paving the way for more mature relationships in adolescence.*

SAMPLE

## 3. What is a main characteristic of the latency stage in child development?

A. Increased sexual exploration

B. Focus on social skills and peer relationships

C. Egocentric behavior

D. Development of abstract reasoning

*The latency stage, as proposed by Sigmund Freud in his psychosexual theory of development, is characterized primarily by a focus on social skills and peer relationships. This stage, which occurs roughly during the ages of 6 to puberty, is marked by a relative calm in terms of psychosexual development. Children typically redirect their energies from sexual feelings to social and intellectual pursuits. During this period, children often form friendships and learn to navigate social interactions outside of the family unit. They engage in group play, develop skills in cooperation, and build empathy towards peers. As children explore relationships and learn to work together with others, they also develop an understanding of social norms and values, which are crucial for their later development. The focus on social skills during latency serves as a foundation for healthy relationships in adulthood and emphasizes the role that social interactions play in overall developmental psychology. This stage is essential as it prepares individuals for the more intense social and sexual developments that occur in adolescence.*

## 4. What does trust vs mistrust focus on in Erikson's theory?

A. Connection with friends

B. Reliance on caregivers

C. Understanding emotions

D. Developing social skills

*The focus on trust vs. mistrust in Erikson's theory centers on the reliance on caregivers, particularly during the infancy stage of development, which ranges from birth to approximately 18 months. During this critical period, infants learn to trust their caregivers based on the consistency and quality of care they receive. When caregivers provide reliable support, nourishment, and comfort, infants develop a sense of trust that the world is a safe place, fostering a positive foundation for future relationships and emotional health. Conversely, if caregivers are inconsistent, neglectful, or abusive, infants may develop a sense of mistrust, leading them to perceive the world as unsafe and uncertain. This foundational stage is essential, as it influences an individual's ability to form secure relationships later in life, impacting their emotional and social development. Trust vs. mistrust sets the groundwork for subsequent stages in Erikson's theory, highlighting the importance of caregiver relationships in early development.*

## 5. What is described by primary circular reactions (2-4 months)?

A. Repetitive reflexive behaviors like opening and closing fingers

B. Simple reflex actions

C. Coordination of actions for intentionality

D. Discovery of new ways to achieve goals

*Primary circular reactions, occurring between the ages of 2 to 4 months, are characterized by the repetition of actions that are centered around the infant's own body. This developmental stage involves the infant engaging in reflexive behaviors that are pleasurable or interesting to them, such as repeatedly opening and closing their fingers. These actions are not merely reflexive but begin to evolve into more intentional behaviors as the infant discovers that certain movements can be repeated and enjoyed. The focus during this stage is specifically on acquiring coordination of simple actions rather than the coordination of multiple actions for intentional purposes, which would be characteristic of later developmental stages. Primary circular reactions represent a key stage in cognitive development, indicating that infants are beginning to understand their bodily actions and their effects, laying the groundwork for further complexity in their interactions with the world around them.*

SAMPLE

## 6. Which stage is associated with the development of initiative in children?

A. Infancy

B. Preschool years

C. School age

D. Adolescence

*The development of initiative in children is primarily associated with the preschool years, which typically encompass ages three to six. During this stage, children begin to assert control over their environment by initiating activities, exploring their surroundings, and interacting more with peers and adults. This is a critical time when they start to develop a sense of purpose and the ability to engage in playful, imaginative activities. In this developmental phase, children are encouraged to take initiative through play, which fosters creativity and decision-making skills. They learn to plan and carry out tasks, which supports their developing sense of self and confidence. Additionally, when caregivers and educators promote initiative by allowing children to explore and take risks in a safe environment, they help children build a strong foundation for future development. In contrast, the other stages referenced do not focus primarily on the development of initiative. Infancy is primarily concerned with trust and attachment; school age focuses on competence and achievement; and adolescence centers around identity formation and independence. Therefore, the preschool years are distinctly marked by the child's burgeoning ability to take initiative.*

## 7. What is the process of relating new information to something familiar called?

A. Encoding

B. Elaboration

C. Assimilation

D. Accommodation

*The process of relating new information to something familiar is called elaboration. This cognitive strategy involves connecting new ideas or concepts to existing knowledge or personal experiences, which enhances understanding and retention. By elaborating on new information, learners create a richer mental representation, making it easier to recall later. For example, if someone is learning about a new concept in psychology, they might relate it to their previous experiences or knowledge in the field. This not only aids in comprehension but also helps in embedding the new information more deeply in memory. Elaboration goes beyond simply memorizing facts; it encourages deeper thinking and integration of information. This process can lead to better learning outcomes as it engages various cognitive processes that enhance understanding.*

SAMPLE

## 8. A parent who makes few demands on a child typically shows which parenting style?

A. Authoritative

B. Neglectful

C. Permissive

D. Authoritarian

*The correct answer is permissive parenting style. This approach is characterized by a low level of demand and a high level of responsiveness. Parents who adopt this style often allow their children considerable freedom and autonomy, making few rules or imposing strict guidelines. They tend to be nurturing and accepting, but they do not enforce discipline or expectations consistently. Permissive parents prioritize their child's emotional well-being and seek to maintain a close and friendly relationship, often at the expense of structure and discipline. This can lead to children growing up with a lack of boundaries, which might impact their ability to follow rules and respect authority figures later in life. In contrast to permissive parenting, authoritative parents typically promote a balanced approach that combines setting reasonable expectations with emotional support. Authoritarian parents, on the other hand, impose strict rules and expect obedience, while neglectful parents show low levels of both responsiveness and demandingness, often leading to a lack of interaction or engagement with their children. These distinctions clarify why permissive is the correct choice in this context.*

## 9. Organized, logical thought is characteristic of which of Piaget's stages of development?

A. Preoperational

B. Concrete operational

C. Formal operational

D. Sensorimotor

*In Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the Concrete Operational stage is characterized by organized and logical thought processes. This stage typically occurs between the ages of 7 to 11 years. During this period, children begin to think more logically about concrete events and can perform operations that require them to manipulate and examine tangible objects. They develop skills such as conservation, which is the understanding that quantity does not change even when its shape does, and can classify objects and understand the relationships between them. Children in the Concrete Operational stage are able to think systematically about the physical world, allowing them to solve problems in a clear, organized manner. This includes understanding principles of cause and effect, which leads to more effective problem-solving skills compared to earlier stages. The cognitive abilities in this stage lay a critical foundation for the subsequent development of abstract thinking that occurs in the Formal Operational stage. Thus, the hallmark of logical thought that can be observed in the Concrete Operational stage distinctly sets it apart from the earlier stages of development.*

SAMPLE

## 10. What role does a psychiatrist fulfill in relation to a clinical psychologist?

A. Conducts therapy sessions without a medical degree

B. Prescribes medications and provides psychotherapy

C. Focuses solely on research without patient interaction

D. Evaluates educational interventions for students

*A psychiatrist plays a pivotal role in mental health care, particularly in relation to a clinical psychologist, by having the authority and training to prescribe medications and provide psychotherapy. Psychiatry is a medical field, and psychiatrists are medical doctors who have completed training in both medicine and psychiatry. This medical background enables them to understand the complex biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to mental health disorders, allowing them to prescribe medication when necessary. In addition to medication management, many psychiatrists also engage in psychotherapy, offering patients therapeutic support and counseling. This dual ability to prescribe medication and conduct therapy distinguishes psychiatrists from clinical psychologists, who typically focus more on providing psychological assessments and psychotherapy but do not prescribe medications. This comprehensive approach enables psychiatrists to treat mental health conditions that may require a combination of medication and therapy, making them crucial in the coordination of mental health treatment.*

SAMPLE

# 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://dsstlifespandevpsych.examzify.com

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

SAMPLE