PSYCHOLOGY MCAT PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

https://psychologymcat.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. What distinguishes PTSD from acute stress disorder?

A. PTSD symptoms are milder

B. PTSD symptoms last longer and are more persistent

C. PTSD does not include flashbacks

D. PTSD only occurs in children

2. Which factor can have a positive impact on working memory capacity?

A. High levels of anxiety

B. Mindfulness meditation practices

C. Distractions from the environment

D. Multitasking

3. What are the primary functions of the peripheral nervous system?

A. To process and store information

B. To regulate immune responses

C. To connect the central nervous system to limbs and organs

D. To control involuntary muscle movements

4. What factor is most emphasized by behaviorism in understanding behavior?

A. Innate personality traits

B. The influence of past experiences

C. The observable behavior and its modification through learning

D. The overall mental state of an individual

5. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the nature of short-term memory (STM)?

A. STM and long-term memory (LTM) are interconnected

B. STM is a type of implicit memory

C. STM and LTM function as separate memory systems

D. STM is predominantly used in procedural tasks

SAMPLE

6. Which psychological approach focuses on observable behaviors instead of internal processes?

A. Humanistic psychology

B. Behaviorism

C. Cognitive psychology

D. Psychodynamic theory

7. What type of reinforcement involves removing something unpleasant to increase desired behavior?

A. Positive reinforcement

B. Negative punishment

C. Negative reinforcement

D. Positive punishment

8. What is an essential component of psychological assessment?

A. To produce experimental results

B. To establish a person's social standing

C. To inform diagnosis and treatment of individuals

D. To ensure compliance with academic standards

9. Which personality disorder is characterized by extreme mood swings and impulsivity?

A. Narcissistic personality disorder

B. Borderline personality disorder

C. Antisocial personality disorder

D. Schizotypal personality disorder

10. What phenomenon describes the error in recalling a memory by attributing it to the wrong source?

A. Confabulation

B. Spreading activation

C. Source monitoring error

D. Memory distortion

SAMPLE

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. What distinguishes PTSD from acute stress disorder?

A. PTSD symptoms are milder

B. PTSD symptoms last longer and are more persistent

C. PTSD does not include flashbacks

D. PTSD only occurs in children

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) are both conditions that can arise after experiencing or witnessing traumatic events, but they differ primarily in the duration of their symptoms. PTSD is characterized by symptoms that persist for more than a month and can last for months or even years, impacting a person's ability to function in daily life. In contrast, ASD symptoms typically occur within three days to four weeks after the trauma and may resolve as time passes. The distinction in duration highlights why the choice regarding the persistence and longevity of PTSD symptoms accurately differentiates it from acute stress disorder. PTSD's enduring symptoms can encompass a range of experiences, including flashbacks, nightmares, hyper-arousal, and avoidance behaviors, which may not be present in the acute phase observed in ASD. Other options presented do not convey accurate differences between the two disorders. For example, PTSD symptoms are not inherently milder than those of ASD; rather, they can be equally severe or more profound due to their chronic nature. Furthermore, PTSD does include flashbacks and is not limited to children; it can affect individuals of any age.

2. Which factor can have a positive impact on working memory capacity?

A. High levels of anxiety

B. Mindfulness meditation practices

C. Distractions from the environment

D. Multitasking

Mindfulness meditation practices can positively impact working memory capacity by enhancing cognitive functions through focused attention and awareness. Regular engagement in mindfulness training has been shown to improve attention regulation, reduce stress levels, and increase cognitive flexibility. By practicing mindfulness, individuals learn to concentrate on the present moment, which can lead to a more effective allocation of cognitive resources. This improved focus allows for better encoding and retrieval of information, thereby enhancing working memory performance. High levels of anxiety tend to impede cognitive processes, often leading to decreased concentration and impaired memory function. Distractions from the environment can similarly disrupt cognitive activities, making it more challenging to hold and manipulate information in working memory. Multitasking is often detrimental to working memory because it requires switching attention between different tasks, which can overload cognitive resources and reduce overall effectiveness in retaining information.

SAMPLE

3. What are the primary functions of the peripheral nervous system?

A. To process and store information

B. To regulate immune responses

C. To connect the central nervous system to limbs and organs

D. To control involuntary muscle movements

The primary functions of the peripheral nervous system (PNS) center around its role in connecting the central nervous system (CNS) to the limbs, organs, and other parts of the body. The PNS serves as a communication system that transmits sensory information from the body back to the CNS, and conversely, it conveys motor commands from the CNS to the body. This connection is essential for initiating and controlling bodily functions, movement, and responding to environmental stimuli. By acting as a relay between the brain and spinal cord and the rest of the body, the PNS plays a crucial role in coordinating voluntary and involuntary actions, thereby allowing for appropriate responses to various situations. This vital function of the PNS includes both the somatic nervous system, which manages voluntary muscle control, and the autonomic nervous system, which governs involuntary actions such as heartbeat and digestion.

4. What factor is most emphasized by behaviorism in understanding behavior?

A. Innate personality traits

B. The influence of past experiences

C. The observable behavior and its modification through learning

D. The overall mental state of an individual

Behaviorism emphasizes the importance of observable behavior and how it can be modified through learning. This psychological perspective focuses on actions that can be measured and analyzed, rather than internal mental states or biological predispositions. One of the foundational concepts in behaviorism is that behavior is learned through interaction with the environment. Techniques such as reinforcement and punishment are central to how behaviors can be shaped or changed. By concentrating on observable behavior, behaviorists argue that psychology can be a more scientific discipline, akin to the natural sciences, where observable phenomena can be studied, quantified, and predicted. To understand behavior through a behaviorist lens means looking primarily at how external stimuli influence an individual's actions and how these actions can be conditioned or reinforced over time. This focus allows behaviorists to develop strategies for behavior modification, which has practical applications in various fields, including education and therapy. Thus, the emphasis on observable behavior and its modification through learning is what distinctly defines behaviorism in the study of psychology.

SAMPLE

5. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the nature of short-term memory (STM)?

A. STM and long-term memory (LTM) are interconnected

B. STM is a type of implicit memory

C. STM and LTM function as separate memory systems

D. STM is predominantly used in procedural tasks

The accurate statement regarding short-term memory (STM) is that it functions as a distinct memory system separate from long-term memory (LTM). This delineation between STM and LTM is supported by research indicating that these two types of memory operate differently in terms of duration, capacity, and function. Short-term memory is characterized by its limited capacity, typically able to hold information for only a brief period—around 20 to 30 seconds—unless actively rehearsed. In contrast, long-term memory allows for the storage of information over extended periods and has a much larger capacity. Studies have shown that different neurological processes are involved in the encoding and retrieval of information within these two systems, demonstrating their separation. This distinction implies that while STM may influence the creation of long-term memories through processes like rehearsal, they remain distinct entities. Other options fail to capture this essential difference; for example, STM is not classified as a type of implicit memory, as implicit memory involves skills and conditioned responses that are often outside conscious awareness. Additionally, STM is not primarily utilized for procedural tasks, which are more closely associated with implicit memory systems such as non-declarative memory. Thus, recognizing STM as a separate memory system helps clarify its unique role in the broader context of

6. Which psychological approach focuses on observable behaviors instead of internal processes?

A. Humanistic psychology

B. Behaviorism

C. Cognitive psychology

D. Psychodynamic theory

Behaviorism is the psychological approach that focuses on observable behaviors rather than internal mental processes. It emerged in the early 20th century as a reaction against introspective methods that emphasized mental states and thoughts. Behaviorists, such as John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner, argued that psychology should study only those phenomena that can be observed and measured. They believed that behaviors can be conditioned through interactions with the environment, hence emphasizing the importance of external stimuli in shaping behavior. This approach involves concepts like reinforcement and punishment, and it often relies on experimental methods to observe and quantify behaviors. In behavioral therapy, for example, techniques are designed to directly modify specific behaviors rather than delve into internal thoughts or feelings. Behaviorism has had a significant impact on various fields, including education, therapy, and even marketing, through its principles of behavior modification. In contrast, humanistic psychology emphasizes personal growth and self-actualization, cognitive psychology investigates mental processes like thinking and memory, and psychodynamic theory focuses on unconscious motives and conflicts. These approaches all consider internal processes to varying degrees, distinguishing them from the behaviorist focus on observable actions.

SAMPLE

7. What type of reinforcement involves removing something unpleasant to increase desired behavior?

A. Positive reinforcement

B. Negative punishment

C. Negative reinforcement

D. Positive punishment

The correct answer is negative reinforcement, which is a concept in operant conditioning. Negative reinforcement involves the removal of an aversive or unpleasant stimulus in order to increase the likelihood that a desired behavior will occur again in the future. This process works on the premise that by taking away something undesirable, the behavior that leads to the removal of that unpleasant factor is encouraged and strengthened. For example, if a student studies to avoid the unpleasant feeling of anxiety before an exam, the removal of that anxiety reinforces the studying behavior. Thus, the student is more likely to study again in the future to achieve the same removal of anxiety. This concept is often confused with punishment, which has a different impact on behavior. Positive reinforcement is about adding something desirable to reinforce behavior, while negative punishment involves taking away something desirable to decrease behavior. Positive punishment adds an unpleasant consequence to reduce undesired behavior, but in the case of negative reinforcement, the focus is on the removal of an unpleasant experience to promote a desirable action.

8. What is an essential component of psychological assessment?

A. To produce experimental results

B. To establish a person's social standing

C. To inform diagnosis and treatment of individuals

D. To ensure compliance with academic standards

An essential component of psychological assessment is to inform the diagnosis and treatment of individuals. Psychological assessments are designed to evaluate mental processes, emotions, behaviors, and personality traits, helping mental health professionals make informed decisions about a person's psychological health. By gathering qualitative and quantitative data, these assessments provide a comprehensive understanding of an individual's functioning, which is critical for developing effective treatment plans. The process usually involves standardized tests, interviews, and observations that lead to identifying psychological disorders or issues, determining their severity, and informing subsequent therapeutic interventions. Proper assessments ensure that individuals receive tailored support and treatment based on their unique psychological profiles, fostering better outcomes. In contrast, producing experimental results primarily relates to research methodologies rather than direct clinical applications. Establishing a person's social standing is more aligned with sociological evaluations than psychological assessments, which focus on individual psychological functioning. Ensuring compliance with academic standards is pertinent in educational contexts but does not directly pertain to the goals of psychological assessment itself.

SAMPLE

9. Which personality disorder is characterized by extreme mood swings and impulsivity?

A. Narcissistic personality disorder

B. Borderline personality disorder

C. Antisocial personality disorder

D. Schizotypal personality disorder

Borderline personality disorder is characterized by significant emotional instability, which manifests as extreme mood swings. Individuals with this disorder often experience intense emotions such as anger, anxiety, and depression, which can change rapidly, sometimes within a matter of hours. This emotional tumult can lead to impulsive behaviors, including reckless spending, substance abuse, or self-harm. People with borderline personality disorder have difficulty maintaining stable relationships, partly due to their tendency to view experiences in an all-or-nothing manner. This leads them to idealize someone one moment and then suddenly devalue them the next. The impulsivity combined with emotional dysregulation is a hallmark of this disorder, distinguishing it from the other listed personality disorders. In contrast, narcissistic personality disorder focuses more on a pervasive pattern of grandiosity and an excessive need for admiration, often lacking the emotional instability seen in borderline personality disorder. Antisocial personality disorder is marked by a disregard for the rights of others and lacks the intense emotional experiences central to borderline disorder. Lastly, schizotypal personality disorder is characterized by eccentric behaviors and cognitive distortions rather than the emotional instability and impulsivity found in borderline personality disorder.

10. What phenomenon describes the error in recalling a memory by attributing it to the wrong source?

A. Confabulation

B. Spreading activation

C. Source monitoring error

D. Memory distortion

The phenomenon that best describes the error in recalling a memory by attributing it to the wrong source is source monitoring error. This occurs when an individual has a memory for an event but fails to accurately remember where that information came from, leading to confusion about the origin of the memory. It can happen when a person mixes up details from different events or mistakenly attributes a memory to the wrong time, place, or person. For example, someone might recall a conversation they had, but later mistakenly believe they had it with a different person rather than the actual individual involved. Source monitoring errors highlight the importance of how we process and retrieve memories, indicating that memory is not always a perfect reflection of past experiences, but rather can be influenced by various factors, including present context and interactions. This understanding distinguishes source monitoring errors from other concepts such as confabulation, which involves the creation of false memories without the intention to deceive, and memory distortion, which generally refers to the alteration of a memory's content over time. Spreading activation relates to the way concepts in memory are interconnected, influencing how we retrieve information but not specifically addressing the source attribution error.

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://psychologymcat.examzify.com

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

SAMPLE