

5 Steps to a 5 – AP Psych Practice Exam – Explanations

1. A Olfactory smell receptors in the nasal passages would detect the gas molecules and send impulses directly to the brain for fast perception and response.
2. A Identical twins. Since they share the same genes, the differences between them would be a result of nurture. Identical quadruplets would be extremely rare, and so it would be difficult to find a large enough sample size for a study.
3. C The children's more aggressive behavior following the more violent cartoon supports Albert Bandura's social learning theory of aggression studied in the Bobo doll study.
4. D A morpheme is the smallest unit of language that carries meaning. Although a phoneme is the smallest unit of language, it may have no meaning.
5. E Systematic desensitization is a behavior therapy especially effective in the treatment of phobias such as claustrophobia in this question. The patient learns through classical conditioning to replace the fear with relaxation.
6. A Humanistic perspective pioneer Abraham Maslow places self-esteem and finally self-actualization as higher needs in his hierarchy of needs theory of motivation.
7. A The Rorschach inkblot test is a projective test designed to reveal the unconscious mind and is a technique quite useful to the psychoanalytic therapist.
8. A When the pigeon sees the yellow light instead of the green one, he generalizes his pecking response to a similar stimulus. The pigeon can be taught to discriminate between the two colored lights, but has not yet been trained to do so.
9. D Carl Rogers is a humanistic psychologist who believes like Maslow that people are born good and that only the conditions of worth placed on the individual by society change this natural tendency.
- 10.A Over half of the brain's volume is composed of the cerebral cortex. The cerebral cortex is the section of the brain thought to be responsible for higher thought processing and covers all of the other structures of the brain.
- 11.A Joey seems to have antisocial personality disorder. He shows no guilt when he hurts others. The condition is first evident in teen years, as in this case, and the criminal behavior often accelerates over time.
- 12.D Modeling is a social cognitive process in which new behavior is learned by watching others and then imitating their actions.
- 13.D Freud's superego operates on the morality principle and, thus, overrides the impulse to cut class in this example and causes Andy to do the right thing by attending class.
- 14.A Prejudice is the unjustifiable negative attitude toward a group and its members, while discrimination would be acting upon this attitude.
- 15.C One technique used by Carl Rogers in his client-centered humanistic therapy is to give unconditional positive regard to his clients to undo the effects of conditions of worth and to allow the individual to realize his or her positive actualizing potential.
- 16.D People dressed alike or disguised can easily lose their sense of identity and become less self-aware, which are characteristics of deindividuation.
- 17.D Piaget's formal operational thought is the final stage of reasoning, characterized by hypothetical thought, systematic planning, and abstract, logical reasoning abilities.
- 18.B In patients with Parkinson's disease, damage occurs in the dopamine-rich substantia nigra. With the degeneration of these neurons, movement problems begin to occur. A synthetic drug known as L-dopa is able to alleviate some of their movement problems. Schizophrenics' problems are related to an excessive amount of dopamine.
- 19.B Watson and Raynor's classic study involving classical conditioning of fear in 9-month-old baby Albert would today violate the APA ethical guidelines that prohibit physical or mental suffering by subjects.
- 20.C Adler's classic theory of birth order has suggested that since oldest children grow up in a world of adults, they often show responsibility for younger siblings and develop into responsible adults.
- 21.D Brenda's constant attention-seeking and egotistical attitudes are classic markers of the narcissistic personality.
- 22.C Behaviorists discount the role of "mentalist" aspects that cannot be directly observed.
- 23.A Erikson's sixth stage of psychosocial development occurs during young adulthood and is marked by the crisis of intimacy vs. isolation a desire to form closer bonds to others. Many marriages are the result of this growing sense of intimacy, and difficulty in forming relationships may indicate tendencies toward isolation.
- 24.C The height of the wave or its amplitude allows us to perceive loudness from sound waves.
- 25.B Shannon's inability to think of using her jeans and sweater as a pillow is an example of functional fixedness not seeing unusual uses for familiar objects.
- 26.C In his hierarchy of needs, Maslow theorizes that lower level needs must be met before higher level needs can be attained. Self-actualization is the uppermost need and cannot be attempted until esteem needs, the need level below it, are satisfied.
- 27.A The MMPI-2 is the most widely used self-report inventory for personality assessment.
- 28.C Behaviorists believe that we learn new behavior through rewards and punishment. Any maladaptive behavior can be changed by altering the consequences of that behavior.
- 29.D Insight learning is the sudden appearance of a solution when directed thinking is no longer being utilized. As Scott consciously shifted his attention to other matters, the solution to the anagram came to him.
- 30.A Paranoid schizophrenics suffer from disordered thinking and often have delusions of persecution and hallucinations.
- 31.A Jyoti is utilizing the naturalistic observation technique frequently used by behaviorists.

- 32.B White is the appearance of reflected wavelengths of all colors.
- 33.C Used on the old Stanford-Binet intelligence tests, the Intelligence Quotient originally coined by William Stearns represents your mental age divided by your chronological age multiplied by 100. Your mental age is a measure of your intellectual development relative to others.
- 34.D Kubler-Ross's classic study of 200 terminal cancer patients determined their emotional reactions followed a similar pattern. Denial is followed by the emotions of anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
- 35.C The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the autonomic nervous system activated in stressful situations. When Jared realizes the shadows are just that, the parasympathetic nervous system will be activated to return his body to homeostasis.
- 36.E Narcotics or opiates are the classification of drugs most used to relieve patients' pain. Because they are highly addictive, a doctor must prescribe their limited use.
- 37.A One of the characteristics of the manic high is an inflated ego and sense of euphoria. The patient has little need for sleep during this phase of the condition.
- 38.A According to the serial positioning effect, words at the beginning of the list are stored in your long-term memory. Words remembered at the end of the list are in your short-term memory, which lasts only 20 + seconds and would be forgotten 2 days later. Poorest recall would occur for words in the middle of the list.
- 39.A Tony's sense of self-efficacy or belief in his abilities to accomplish tasks should be maximized by all of these accomplishments.
- 40.B Fixed-action patterns are species-specific innate behaviors unaffected by learning.
- 41.B To standardize a test, each of the actions mentioned would be taken pretesting of a sample population for whom the test is intended under uniform instructions.
- 42.B Compulsive hand washing is a common experience of those suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder. A compulsion is the repetition of some action over and over even though it serves no useful purpose.
- 43.D The survey technique is being utilized here. It is a research method that obtains large samples of responses through questionnaire or interview. No variables have been manipulated as in an experiment.
- 44.C Sensory adaptation is the lessening of perception of a stimulus with repeated stimulation, like the temperature of the pool water. You perceive the pool water as cold when you first jump in, but the neural firing decreases over time with repeated stimulation and you no longer notice it.
- 45.E DSM-IV is a diagnostic guide used by mental health professionals to diagnose patients. It lists symptoms of these disorders, but does not list the causes of mental disorders.
- 46.C According to set point theory, an individual's regulated weight is balanced by adjusting food intake and metabolic rate.
- 47.C Only the PET scan images function of the brain. The CAT and MRI both show the structures of the brain in good detail. The fMRI, like the PET, can show both structure and function.
- 48.A To have been diagnosed with disorganized schizophrenia, Aaron would have had to have a break with reality and probably been unable to tell the difference between right and wrong. A person who is legally insane during the commission of acts constituting an offense is unable to appreciate the nature and quality, or the wrongfulness, of his acts. According to law, "Mental disease or defect does not otherwise constitute a defense."
- 49.C Group A is likely to become more entrenched. This is an example of group polarization.
- 50.C Penfield's studies suggest that the old memories are still present and probably have not been stimulated or needed to be retrieved recently.
- 51.B Displacement, a Freudian defense mechanism, allows us to express feelings toward a group or individual perceived to be less threatening to us, rather than the direct target or ourselves.
- 52.D Longitudinal studies follow the same group of people for a longer period of time. They are tested at several points, thus providing reliable data about age effects. Cross-sectional studies may be confounded by the cohort effect and are not as valid for measuring age effects.
- 53.B Their goal seems more related to successful completion of the course with a passing grade than learning the material. Grades represent extrinsic rewards, while learning for pleasure and internal satisfaction represent intrinsic rewards.
- 54.B Repeated presentations of the conditioned stimulus without the unconditioned stimulus brings about extinction in classical conditioning. The conditioned response will disappear.
- 55.B The median is a measure of central tendency achieved by ordering the numbers consecutively and determining the middle number. Here there are nine numbers, so the 5th number, 8, is the median of the scores.
- 56.C Because the AP exam in Psychology is supposed to measure what you have learned in a course already taken, it is an achievement test.
- 57.C Transduction is the conversion of physical stimuli into changes in the activity of receptor cells of sensory organs. The rods and cones are stimulated by photons of light, while the hair cells in the cochlea are stimulated by sound waves.
- 58.C When our interest decreases, we often daydream about seemingly irrelevant ideas.
- 59.E The availability heuristic is a tendency to estimate the probability of certain events in terms of how readily they come to mind. Each time any of these events do occur, the media publicize the information very thoroughly.
- 60.D Although largely discredited, Whorf believed that language determines the way we think. He cited studies of bilingual people who said that they experienced a different sense of self when thinking in two different languages.

- 61.C A lesion in the ventromedial hypothalamus would cause a rat to continue to eat. It is theorized to be the “satiety” center, or off button, for hunger sensation, so if it were lesioned, the rat would continue to eat as long as the food supply was available.
- 62.C Martina Horner’s studies concluded that bright women fear success because it is correlated with masculinity in our culture. Maria would attend a community college rather than a very competitive college. Those with fear of success tend to select easy or noncompetitive goals.
- 63.A David McClelland and others used the TAT to assess achievement motivation in their subjects. The stories that subjects told interpreting the pictures displayed were rated for achievement themes.
- 64.D In data sets that have a few outliers like the 42 and 38 here, the median is a better measure of central tendency than the arithmetic mean.
- 65.E The medical model attributes mental illness to faulty processes in neurochemistry, brain structures, and genetics. Social circumstances would not be considered causative factors.
- 66.B According to Kohlberg, most teens follow a conventional level of morality. Stage IV, or the law and order stage, says that you understand the need for laws and, thus, conform to them for the good of the community.
- 67.B Irving Janis described the dangerous implications of groupthink during the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion. The top executives may want to preserve group harmony, so they would tend to self-censor opposing viewpoints to those of the president. Bringing in outside consultants to play devil’s advocate will increase the likelihood that more possibilities will be explored and the pros and cons will be discussed before the decision is made.
- 68.C Although Javier found someone who teaches the same subject at both time periods, confounding variables, such as the mean GPA of both groups, if left uncontrolled, are likely to give him faulty results.
- 69.A Heritability is the percentage of variation among individuals that is caused by genes. Since clones have exactly the same genes, none of their differences can be attributed to heredity.
- 70.D Telegraphic speech, or shortened two-word sentences, are characteristic of children’s language development, at around age 2.
- 71.A Though Type A individuals tend to have each of these traits, further research showed that the Type A traits of anger, hostility, and cynicism were the ones most correlated with heart disease.
- 72.A The limbic system is considered to be “emotion central” of the central nervous system. The amygdala is a structure within the limbic system that has been found to be very active in strong emotional responses, such as fear.
- 73.E The reticular formation arouses our attention, but not specifically our sexual behavior. It keeps us alert to incoming stimuli and filters out stimuli when we are asleep. Each of the other answers is more directly involved in some action of sexual behavior, especially in humans.
- 74.A The color of the paper is the independent variable. How long it takes students to answer questions is the dependent variable.
- 75.A Hostile aggression is defined as inflicting pain upon an unwilling victim. The man is slapping his wife out of anger and consciously choosing to display it in this fashion.
- 76.E Upon further investigation of Pavlov’s findings in classical conditioning, Rescorla and others found that conditioning occurs because of the expectation that follows the conditioned stimulus more so than just their pairing in time. This revised cognitive view is called the contingency model of conditioning.
- 77.B In late adult development, fluid intelligence or abstract, flexible reasoning declines somewhat, but most people’s crystallized intelligence for concrete information continues to increase.
- 78.C Tommy’s blindness and deafness are the result of a conversion disorder. Excessive anxiety over witnessing the murder has caused these symptoms, which have no organic basis.
- 79.B The peripheral nervous system is made up of all nervous tissue outside the central nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord. Each of the other answers includes aspects of the central nervous system.
- 80.E The inability to understand language suggests damage to Wernicke’s area, located in the left temporal lobe. If the problem had been an inability to speak or find words, damage to Broca’s area in the left frontal lobe would have been the likely cause.
- 81.C The Japanese culture is a collectivist society, which would blame the group or parents specifically for a child’s behavior. The other countries are individualistic societies, which would tend to blame the behavior on the individual, especially a 17-year-old capable of intelligent thought.
- 82.D Body awareness and positioning are regulated by the kinesthetic or proprioceptive sense, whose receptors are found in the muscles and joints of the skeleton, as well as in the tendons, ligaments, and skin.
- 83.E Jen’s egocentrism allows her to see things from only her own point of view; thus, her failure to understand that her mother’s sister is also her aunt’s sister.
- 84.A Proactive interference is forgetting new information because of prior information that blocks its encoding. In this case then, list 1 interferes with your recall of list 2.
- 85.E Unfortunately, the newspaper took Dr. Ramchandran’s finding and made correlational data into cause and effect data, which can only be determined by a controlled experiment.
- 86.B The pituitary gland secretes thyroid-stimulating hormone. The hypothalamus produces releasing factors.
- 87.E All three of these findings are possible. Though the mean score may be higher for Asian Americans, the range of scores *within* a particular group (African Americans is always much greater than is the mean score *between* two different groups (African Americans and Asian Americans)). Neither of these tells us how any one individual will do.

- 88.B** Each of the other answers involves a genetic disorder that is irreversible. PKU is a recessive trait that results in severe, irreversible brain damage unless the baby is fed a special diet low in phenylalanine.
- 89.B** Harlow's study showed that contact comfort touch was more important than the feeding situation for normal physical and psychological development.
- 90.B** Context is an important stimulus variable in determining what we perceive.
- 91.A** Average ranking would be the 50th percentile, so the 65th percentile is above that point. Emily scored better than 64 out of every 100 students who took that test.
- 92.D** Accommodation is a change in the shape of the lens that occurs when an object moves closer or farther away, and relative size is a monocular cue for depth. Abdul would use both of these to judge the distance of vehicles when he is driving. Retinal disparity requires binocular vision.
- 93.D** Positive symptoms indicate the presence of symptoms and negative symptoms the absence of symptoms. A flat affect is a lack or absence of an emotional response to stimuli.
- 94.B** Schachter and Singer's two-factor theory says that when physiologically aroused for no apparent immediate reason, we tend to look to environmental factors for an explanation. Susan's change in emotional response was caused more by the situation she found herself in.
- 95.A** Although continuous reinforcement is used for the quickest learning, it also is the fastest to extinguish. Variable schedules of reinforcement are the more resistant to extinction.
- 96.A** By gauging the emotional impact of the words, the class was making a connection to them and, thus, ensuring more meaning (semantic), deeper processing, and greater retention in long-term memory.
- 97.A** The hypnagogic state occurs as we are about to fall asleep, when we are very relaxed and alpha waves are present.
- 98.C** The focus of structuralists like Wundt and Titchener was on the units of consciousness and identification of elements of thought using introspection. This led to the present-day cognitive exploration of the thinking process.
- 99.B** Sand and platinum are not soluble in water and, thus, cannot be tasted or smelled.
- 100. B** By accepting the gift of the greeting cards, many recipients felt obligated to send a donation when it was requested later. This is known as the foot-in-the-door technique of compliance often used by organizations.