



AP[®] Psychology 2012 Scoring Guidelines

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AP[®] PSYCHOLOGY

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Question 1

- A. Annabelle is planning to apply to college but has not yet decided where she will apply. Describe how the following psychological concepts and terms relate to her choice.
- Availability heuristic
 - Compliance
 - Prefrontal cortex
 - Prospective memory
- B. Explain how the following psychological concepts could relate to how well Annabelle adapts when she begins her college career.
- Agoraphobia
 - Crystallized intelligence
 - Ethnocentrism

General Considerations

1. Answers must be presented in sentences, and sentences must be cogent enough for students' meaning to be apparent. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce students' scores, but spelling must be sufficiently accurate for the reader to be convinced of the intended word.
2. Do not score students' notes made in the question section of the booklet. Score only what has been written in the blanks provided.
3. Within a point, students will not be penalized for misinformation unless it *directly contradicts* correct information that would otherwise have scored a point.
4. Students can score points only if they clearly convey which part of the question is being answered. However, it is also possible to infer which part of the question is being answered if the responses are consistent with the order of the question.
5. Definitions alone are not sufficient to score points.
6. Examples provided for each of the following points are not to be considered exhaustive.

Part A

Responses must explain the concepts in the context of Annabelle's decision-making and choices about college.

Point 1: Availability heuristic

Students must establish that Annabelle's decision-making processes or her choices about college, or both, are influenced by information that comes most readily to mind (e.g., "pops into her mind," "first thing she thinks of," "automatically," "immediately").

Notes

- The example must include a cognitive component.
- The emphasis must be on the "immediacy" of the solution, not why it comes to mind. Recency, vividness, or distinctiveness, without a reference to "immediacy," does not score.

Examples

Score

"Annabelle hears an ad for State U. When it's time to decide on a college, State U will be the first one she thinks of."

Do not score

"She went there because her brother went there."

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Question 1 (continued)

Point 2: Compliance

Students must explain that a demand, request, or rule from another person, group, or institution influences Annabelle's decision-making processes or her choices about college, or both. Responses may also reflect the perspective of compliance by the college with Annabelle's requests.

Notes

- The "request" must either be directly communicated or reasonably inferred by the use of terms such as "encourage," "want," or "persuade." "Advice" or "suggestion" will not score.
- References to conformity or a simple mention of "peer pressure" will not score, as they imply a change in behavior owing to implicit group pressure, not a direct request.

Examples

Score

"Annabelle's parents tell her to go to State U, so she goes there."

Do not score

"Annabelle thinks her friends want her to go to State U, so she goes there."

"I am going to apply to State U because everyone else is."

Point 3: Prefrontal cortex

To earn this point students must describe a way in which Annabelle's prefrontal cortex influences her decision-making processes or her choices about college, or both. Students may demonstrate this by referring to any cognitive or affective process of her prefrontal cortex (e.g., reasoning, judgment, emotional control, planning, or personality).

Notes

- Students must go beyond mentioning "decision" or "choice," as these terms are part of the question. They must provide an explanation of how the prefrontal cortex helps Annabelle choose a school or decide where to apply.
- If a student refers to a process that is specific to a different brain region, it will not score.

Examples

Score

"Annabelle's prefrontal cortex allows her to think about college choices."

Do not score

"Annabelle's prefrontal cortex would help her decide about college."

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Question 1 (continued)

Point 4: Prospective memory

To earn this point students must state that Annabelle remembers to perform a future task that is relevant to the decision-making process or to her choices about college, or both.

Note: Because prospective memory involves the memory for future events, do not score applications that relate to the first time that Annabelle thinks about something.

Examples

Score

“Annabelle remembers to mail her college applications by the due date.”

Do not score

“Annabelle imagines herself at each college to help her decide if she would like it there.”

“When Annabelle sees her friend signing up for the SAT, she decides to sign up for the SAT.”

Part B

Responses must explain the concept in the context of how Annabelle adapts to college life. This adaptation, or change, must be an experience or behavior that might plausibly relate to college.

Point 5: Agoraphobia

To earn this point students must explain *how* Annabelle’s fear inhibits her from engaging in college life. Responses could also explain how Annabelle’s fear is reduced, thus facilitating her engagement in college life.

Notes

- Responses must include some reference to fears associated with agoraphobia, such as being in public places, crowds, open spaces, away from secure places or persons; in situations where she cannot escape; or of having a panic attack.
- Students must go beyond merely labeling agoraphobia as an “anxiety disorder”; some mention of a fear of public places, or the like, must be included.
- Do not score social phobias. References to “experiencing embarrassment” only score if they are specifically linked to panic attacks.
- Do not score specific phobias (e.g., “fear of people,” “fear of high places”). A “fear of people,” a “fear of a group of people,” or a “fear of social situations” is not precise enough, but a “fear of crowds” denotes a large group.

Examples

Score

“Annabelle becomes very anxious in crowds, so she doesn’t go to her classes.”

Do not score

“Annabelle has a fear of public places so she doesn’t adapt well.”

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Question 1 (continued)

Point 6: Crystallized intelligence

To earn this point students must explain *how* Annabelle's acquired skills, knowledge, or experiences relate to how she adapts to college life.

Notes

- Do not score “fluid intelligence” or references to “high IQ,” as intelligence test scores include both crystallized and fluid intelligence.
- References to mental set and functional fixedness do not score.

Examples

Score

“Annabelle's knowledge allows her to do well on tests.”

“What Annabelle learns in her college introductory psychology class helps her make friends.”

Do not score

“Because Annabelle's crystallized intelligence will increase, she will do better in her classes.”

Point 7: Ethnocentrism

To earn this point students must demonstrate *how* Annabelle's belief that her own ethnic group is superior to others impacts her ability to adapt to college life OR that Annabelle's understanding, appreciation, or increasing knowledge of different ethnic groups impacts her ability to adapt to college life.

Note: Responses must include a reference to ethnicity. Terms such as “culture,” “ethnicities,” “language,” “religion,” “nationality,” or “races” can also be used for “ethnic group.” References to “any group,” such as a “group of friends,” “club,” or “sports team” cannot be used to describe an ethnic group.

Examples

Score

“Annabelle meets students from different cultures but doesn't think they are as smart as people from her culture, so she doesn't study with them.”

“Because Annabelle is exposed to so many different ethnic groups at school, she becomes less ethnocentric and interacts more with other students.”

Do not score

“Annabelle believes that her group is best so it stops her from meeting new people.”

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Question 2

For each of the following pairs of terms, explain how the placement or location of the first influences the process indicated by the second.

- Rods, peripheral vision
- A list of unrelated words, word recall
- Serotonin, reduction of depression
- Retinal disparity, depth perception
- Motor cortex, body movement
- Presence of others, performance
- Proximity, perception

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1. Answers must be presented in sentences, and sentences must be cogent enough for students' meaning to be apparent. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce students' scores, but spelling must be sufficiently accurate for the reader to be convinced of the intended word.
2. Do not score students' notes made in the question section of the booklet. Score only what has been written in the blanks provided.
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Point 1: Rods, peripheral vision

Rods are located away from the center of the retina (the term “retina” is not required) and are responsible for peripheral vision.

Notes

- Students must specify the placement of rods *in the eye*. They may not simply say rods are “in the periphery” without referring to the periphery of the eye or retina.
- Students must use the term “peripheral vision” or describe peripheral vision (e.g., “outer edges of the visual field”). It is not enough merely to say that rods allow us to detect movement and form or to see in dim light or in black and white, because the question specifies peripheral vision.

Examples

Score

“Rods on the side of the eye produce peripheral vision.”

Do not score

“Rods on the edge of the pupil allow for peripheral vision.” (Rods are not located in the pupil.)

Point 2: A list of unrelated words, word recall

Any of the following are acceptable responses:

- A. Description of how primacy, recency, or serial position influences word recall (these precise terms are not required).
- B. Description of a strategy (e.g., mnemonic device) to mentally rearrange, relocate, or manipulate unrelated words to enhance recall. Or, students can address the inability to rearrange or manipulate unrelated words, which will reduce recall.
- C. Explanation of the location of a word in a list of unrelated words in working/short-term memory or in long-term memory and how this influences recall.

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Question 2 (continued)

Examples

Score

“The serial-position effect is demonstrated when people remember words at the beginning of the list.”

Do not score

“Unrelated words can’t be recalled.” (No cognitive manipulation is explained.)

Point 3: Serotonin, reduction of depression

Increased serotonin in the brain (any part of the brain, even if inaccurate) or in neuron-related locations (synapses, receptors, neurons, neural pathways, or the nervous system) reduces depression.

Notes

- Students must indicate that the increase of serotonin reduces depression.
- Students may say that this theory has been questioned by recent research, but the original theory must be explained.
- References to “reuptake” can score only if an acceptable location for this process is also offered within the answer.
- Students may NOT indicate that serotonin is a substance originating outside of the body.

Examples

Score

“More brain serotonin leads to less depression.”

Do not score

“More serotonin in the body reduces depression.” (No acceptable location has been identified.)

Point 4: Retinal disparity, depth perception

Any of the following are acceptable responses:

- A. Each eye sees a slightly different view, which facilitates perception of depth, distance, or three dimensions.
- B. Location/separation of the two eyes (or retinas) facilitates depth perception.
- C. Two slightly different images of an object facilitate depth perception.
- D. Retinal disparity provides a binocular cue that facilitates depth perception.

Examples

Score

“Distance between the eyes creates two different images needed for good depth perception.”

Do not score

“Retinal disparity, which helps depth perception, occurs in the brain.” (The response does not refer to the eye.)

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Question 2 (continued)

Point 5: Motor cortex, body movement

Any of the following are acceptable responses:

- A. The motor cortex is *in the frontal lobe* and controls movement.
- B. Adjacent parts of the brain can compensate for damage in the motor cortex, allowing body movement (plasticity).
- C. The brain (or any part of the brain, even if inaccurate) is directly linked with movement in a specific part of the body or a specific voluntary action. Specificity can be established by one of the following:
 - i. Identifying a body part that moves (such as the legs) or specific action (such as walking).
 - ii. Saying that a “particular muscle” moves.
- D. The brain (or any part of the brain) corresponds to specific areas of the body. A link can be established by one of the following:
 - i. A “map” of the body (or homunculus) represented in the brain.
 - ii. Crossing over to the opposite side (contralateral control).

Note for options C and D: Students MUST identify the motor cortex as a brain area. The use of “motor cortex” alone repeats a term from the question without offering a location.

Examples

Score

“The brain controls the leg.”

Do not score

“The motor cortex is what allows the body to move.” (The brain — or specific brain area other than the motor cortex — has not been mentioned.)

Point 6: Presence of others, performance

Students must *name and accurately describe* a psychological concept tied to how the presence of others can affect performance. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Social facilitation
- Social loafing
- Bystander effect
- Conformity

Note: Students must clearly connect the psychological concept to the presence of others.

Examples

Score

“Social loafing affects performance. Leah works hard on a project when she has to do it herself, but if she’s involved in a group project, she lets the others do most of the work.”

Do not score

“The presence of others can increase performance if the task is easy, but the presence of others may damage performance if the task is difficult.” (This response does not *name* a psychological concept.)

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Question 2 (continued)

Point 7: Proximity, perception

Students must indicate an understanding of proximity and its impact on a specific perceptual process.

Pathways include the following:

- A. Near versus far objects, people, or sounds affect perception of a specific quality of objects, people, or sounds.
- B. When objects, people, or sounds are close to each other, we perceive a whole (Gestalt).
- C. People or objects in close proximity to the observer are perceived more positively over time (mere exposure).

Examples

Score

“When you look at a bunch of trees, the ones that are smaller and blurrier will seem to be farther from you.”

“If you see the same person over and over again, like in your class, after a while you start to like them.”

Do not score

“If objects have proximity, it affects perception.” (An understanding of proximity is not indicated.)