

# 1

**2005 AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS****PSYCHOLOGY****SECTION II****Time—50 minutes****Percent of total grade— $33\frac{1}{3}$** 

**Directions:** You have 50 minutes to answer BOTH of the following questions. It is not enough to answer a question by merely listing facts. You should present a cogent argument based on your critical analysis of the questions posed, using appropriate psychological terminology.

1. Describe a specific example that clearly demonstrates an understanding of how each of the following concepts can lead to an inaccurate perception, cognition, or conclusion. Each example must include an explanation of the relationship between the concept and the inaccuracy.

- Afterimage effect
- Availability heuristic
- Ethnocentrism
- Groupthink
- Lack of object permanence
- Nonrandom assignment of research participants
- Optimistic explanatory style
- Proactive interference

# AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY

## 2005 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1

Describe a specific example that clearly demonstrates an understanding of how each of the following concepts can lead to an inaccurate perception, cognition, or conclusion. Each example must include an explanation of the relationship between the concept and the inaccuracy.

- Afterimage effect
- Availability heuristic
- Ethnocentrism
- Groupthink
- Lack of object permanence
- Nonrandom assignment of research participants
- Optimistic explanatory style
- Proactive interference

#### General Issues

1. Answers must be written in sentences (subject and verb), not outlines.
2. Expect answers to use psychological, not merely common, knowledge.
3. Defining a concept is not sufficient. However, a well-formed definition can provide the framework to interpret an example.
4. The answer for each point must contain two parts:
  - Specifics of a situation relevant to the concept—the origin of the inaccuracy.
  - A specific inaccuracy produced as a result of the situation.

#### POINT 1: Afterimage Effect

Requires:

- a. An example of misperception due to a sensory experience.
  - The example should use opponent process language and concepts (e.g., fatigue, passage of time, staring, stimulus intensity, complementary colors of red-green, blue-yellow, or black-white) OR mention a sensory or iconic event.

HINT: Watch for language that describes a sensory event over a memory.
- b. Description of a specific afterimage.
  - The example does not have to specify opponent color; it can be “different” color or a positive afterimage.

#### POINT 2: Availability Heuristic

Requires:

- a. An example of information that is salient or readily available, whether derived from personal experience, the news, etc.
  - The origin of the information must be clear, e.g., the answer cannot just assert that a person “believes” planes are unsafe.
- b. An incorrect prediction based on information.
  - Overestimation is the typical direction, but underestimation could be valid example.

**AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY  
2005 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 1 (continued)**

**POINT 3: Ethnocentrism**

Requires:

- a. Identification of shared cultural characteristic.
  - Ethnocentrism refers to cultural perspectives of the perceiver, whether tied to racial/ethnic groups or not; it cannot be a personal circle of friends or local group.
  - The example must be of a cultural judgment, not simply an attitude based on ignorance.
- NOTE: In some cases, a definition contains elements of an example.
- b. An example that uses judgmental language (e.g., "superior to" or "looks down on" counts as the inaccuracy).

**POINT 4: Groupthink**

Requires:

- a. Identification of specific group decision and group dynamics.
  - Group members must desire harmony, be unwilling to dissent, or *ignore* or *dismiss* reasonable alternatives.
  - NOTE: The group must dismiss the alternative view, not just decide differently, e.g., by majority rules or by consensus.
  - There must be a *group process*, not just one individual feeling pressure to conform.
- b. A specific group decision that was in error, led to a major mistake, or was a disaster.
  - Classic examples, e.g., Bay of Pigs or *Challenger* (shuttle) explosion, are assumed to be errors. Other examples must be represented explicitly as mistakes.

**POINT 5: Lack of Object Permanence**

Requires:

- a. Identification of an object viewed by child.
  - The child must have seen the object before it disappeared.
- b. A statement that the child believes the object of the example no longer exists.

**POINT 6: Nonrandom Assignment of Research Participants**

Requires:

- a. Identification of nonrandom assignment of participants into *two (or more) groups*.
  - It must be participant assignment, *not sampling* (must discuss groups).
- b. A specific statement of the error related to a subject or grouping variable.
  - The word "confound" is sufficient in characterizing the inaccuracy resulting from nonrandom assignment. Otherwise, the specific error must be described. For example, if all boys are shown a violent film while all girls are shown a neutral film, it would be an error to conclude that boys are more violent than girls.

**AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY**  
**2005 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 1 (continued)**

**POINT 7: Optimistic Explanatory Style**

Requires:

- a. An example of a personal, pervasive, or permanent attributional/behavioral style used in explaining a behavior of the person in the example.  
NOTE: The example cannot be just an optimistic perspective.
  - It must be a good thing described as stable, internal/dispositional, or global, OR a bad thing described as unstable, external/situational, or specific.
- b. Acknowledgment that there is an inaccuracy in the explanation.

**POINT 8: Proactive Interference**

Requires:

- a. Identification of two learning tasks where memory of old information interferes with learning or recall of new information.
  - Information in two learning situations must be similar in category (learning French, then Spanish).
  - Tasks must be sequential; one task cannot simply be a distraction to learning the second task.
- b. Identification of specific learning or memory deficit.
  - Interference can be in acquisition or retention (failure to learn or inability to remember or recall).

**AP® PSYCHOLOGY**  
**2005 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 1**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was not only to provide broad coverage of specified content in introductory psychology but to challenge students a bit more than in the past by increasing the cognitive level of the free-response questions. Rather than simply require a definition of eight concepts, as students might have expected from past practices, Question 1 asked students to provide examples of those concepts, thereby demonstrating a higher-order ability to apply psychology terminology. The committee purposefully selected terms to represent a full range of discrimination, including easy, medium, and more challenging terms; however, based on student performance, the question may have been perceived as harder than the committee intended in design.

**Sample: 1A**  
**Score: 7**

Point 1 was earned because the student provides a specific example of the afterimage effect leading to a misperception. The student describes a person staring at a blue-red flag, and then looking away to a blank area and perceiving (seeing an afterimage of) a green-yellow flag. The student accurately uses opponent process theory of color vision in the explanation. Point 2 was earned because the student provides a solid example of an availability heuristic leading to misperception. The student notes that plane crashes are dramatic events that leave "dominant" memories that are "easily retrieved." This may lead someone to overestimate the frequency of plane crashes. Point 3 was earned because the essay details a shared cultural misperception and an improper judgment made by Nazis as they "perceived themselves as better than all the other races," which is a clear example of ethnocentrism. Point 4 was earned because the student identifies an instance in the Kennedy administration where "everyone claimed they gave in to the affirmative opinion of the other people." As a result of this groupthink, a "flawed plan" was approved. Point 5 was not earned because the student provides an example of a child's misperception caused by a lack of conservation, not by a lack of object permanence. Point 6 was earned. In describing an inaccurate conclusion resulting from nonrandom assignment, the student illustrates an experiment where a researcher is studying the effects of tea on memory. Two groups are used for the experiment; the researcher administers tea to an AP class and water to a "regular class." The AP class performed better on a subsequent memory test, and the researcher concludes that tea helps memory. The student notes that this conclusion is wrong because the AP class may have had better memorization skills in the first place. Point 7 was earned. The student describes a musician who "attributes his poor performances in concerts to a lack of practice, even though he practices many hours a day." (Lack of practice would be an *unstable* cause of poor concert performance.) The student comments that the musician's "optimistic explanatory style" can lead to a "false conclusion." He thinks he can improve with practice, but in reality, he may "simply lack musical talent." (Lack of musical talent would be a *stable* cause of poor concert performance.) The student further comments that the musician's optimistic explanatory style (a permanent attributional style) may prevent him "from moving on to areas where he is more suited." Point 8 was earned by describing how "proactive interference contributes to inaccurate cognition." The student describes two learning tasks (lists to remember) and notes that the memory of the first list interferes with the ability to remember items on the second list.

**AP® PSYCHOLOGY**  
**2005 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 1 (continued)**

**Sample: 1B**

**Score: 4**

The essay earned point 1. It gives an example of a misperception due to a sensory experience, and a specific afterimage is described ("when a person stares at a red spot and looks away he or she will see an after-image of green"). Point 2 was earned. The example describes information that is readily available and indicates an incorrect prediction based on this knowledge: "a woman might be terrified of planes because of her knowledge of plane crashes based on disaster movies ... despite the greater likeliness of a car crash." Point 3 did not earn credit because there is no attempt to answer. The essay earned point 4. It notes the "Bay of Pigs decision" as an example and suggests that dissent was actively suppressed to the point where advisors did not voice their concerns. Point 5 was earned because the student provides an identification of an object viewed by a child and indicates that the child "incorrectly assumes that when he can't see an object anymore it no longer exists." Point 6 was not earned because the essay does not provide a specific example of nonrandom assignment. Instead, it simply states that a researcher who "fails to randomly assign test subjects ... is working under biased conditions." Point 7 was not awarded because no relevant example is given. Point 8 did not earn credit because there is no attempt to answer.

**Sample: 1C**

**Score: 1**

Point 1 did not earn credit. The essay provides an example of a free-recall exercise, not the afterimage effect. Point 2 was not awarded. The student states that "a rule of thumb ... is not always accurate" but does not provide an example of specific, incorrect perception, cognition, or conclusion. Point 3 did not earn credit because there is no attempt to address ethnocentrism. Point 4 was not awarded because the student does not acknowledge a group's desire for harmony or the group's failure to acknowledge reasonable alternatives in an incorrect decision. Point 5 earned credit because the essay correctly describes a lack of object permanence as resulting in a child's misconception that a ball that has rolled under a couch has "disappeared [sic] into thin air" and "no longer exists." The essay did not receive credit for point 6 because it gives an example of a biased sampling procedure, not nonrandom assignment. Point 7 was not earned. The essay provides a contradictory "pass the class/fail the class" example and offers no personal attributional classification for a teacher's style of explanation for class performance. Point 8 was not earned. The student describes proactive interference as a "disturbance" but does not demonstrate a comprehension of the concept through a valid example of an incorrect perception resulting from this memory-related phenomenon.

2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2A

Diagnostic labeling has its advantages. For one, it allow psychologists & psychiatrists to label their patients with certain conditions and disorders, ~~the~~ making it easier for them to prescribe a treatment. However, diagnoses are not always correct, and a false or inaccurate diagnosis could lead to ~~the~~ ineffective ~~care~~ or, worse yet, more harmful treatments. Some believe that we should not be so quick to "label" patients with a certain disorder. I disagree: for the most part, diagnostic labeling is effective, not only providing doctors with a more helpful and accurate look at the disorder, but patients as well. The only disorders where it is harder to see the value of diagnostic labelling is with diseases such as schizophrenia, where it is harder to tell

exactly what is wrong.

While some believe that children's acquisition of language must occur during a "critical period" that ends at a very young age, others believe that the ability to learn a language can occur at any time. ~~Children are like sponges~~ ~~Some use the~~ Psychologists who use the biological approach would argue that certain connections in the brain die when not used, which is what would occur when children ~~do~~ did not speak a language before the age of about 12. However, a psychologist who took a "learning" approach would say that the learning of language could be based on rewards + punishments; it has nothing to do with biological factors. ~~The fact~~ However, it seems that there is a proven "critical period" in which it is easier for children's "sponge-like" minds to learn a



language: it has nothing to do w/ their learning capabilities. It just so happens that the brain loses connections after a certain age.

There are several theories of hypnosis, such as the role theory, (which says that the hypnotized person is listening to the "hypnotizer" and ~~feels~~ feels social pressure to conform), and the State theory, (which states that the hypnotized is in an altered state of consciousness). I think that the explanation lies in both: hypnosis ~~is~~ does not take control of your mind, and you can "snap out of it" if you feel the need to do so. However, it is a state of extreme relaxedness, and so in that respect, it is an altered state consciousness.

→

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering  
on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2

2A

If I had to choose, however,  
I would say that the  
state theory is more accurate  
because people are able to  
come back from their  
hypnotic trance refreshed,  
relaxed, and altered.

People favor diagnostic labels because it puts a label and definition of psychological disorders, making them easy to understand and ~~use~~ treat. Opponents to diagnostic labeling believe that many psychological disorders such as bipolar and anxiety disorders can overlap, making it difficult to label and treat. They also feel that labels dehumanize the clients.

~~Some~~ <sup>Some</sup> believe that children are born with a language acquisition device, that Chomsky described in his research. This device allows children to learn language independently from their parents and culture. Others believe that children learn language from reinforcement and modeling. ~~Learning is like a~~

Some supporters of hypnosis believe it to be an accurate way of exploring repressed Freudian desires and emotions. They believe that hypnosis really works. Those that oppose hypnosis as a psychological treatment see it as a form of pop psychology, or psychology for fun or that has no scientific basis.

I believe that diagnostic labels should be used simply because combining, classifying, and treating such an array of combined disorders would be too difficult. Also, there are many success stories to be found in the annals of psychology to prove that diagnostic labeling and treatment are helpful and do work.

2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2B

I believe that Noam Chomsky was correct in his assumption that children have a language acquisition device. Language learning is a complex process that children seem to find easy until the age of 7 or 8. Even if children are raised in unling homes that do not teach language, their mastery of the language still comes easily.

I support the idea that hypnosis is false and cannot be used as a treatment of psychological disorders. Those that do find success in hypnosis already believed in hypnosis and its abilities to begin with. This is a priming effect: they already believe it will work, so they believe and experience it to work for them. Whereas those who have doubts and speculate the validity of hypnosis do not experience its effects.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

# 2

2C

Children can be taught to acquire language skills through example as well as experience. Studies show that children learn best by example. Just as they learn things such as object permanence they learn to communicate their desires to those who have the power to fulfill them, namely their parents. At this point in a child's life they have not had enough ~~experience~~ experience to learn such a vital thing. Hypnosis is a very controversial issue because sometimes the way these experiments are conducted, ethics are questioned. Hypnosis has been under scrutiny before due to the validity of such a procedure. The patients, if they expect to go in there and be changed (~~go~~ go in as a smoker and come out a non smoker) most likely the change will work. If a skeptic goes in more than likely their suspicions will be confirmed. With hypnosis it is all in the way your mind perceives things. I personally do not think hypnosis works.