



AP[®] Psychology 2008 Scoring Guidelines

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AP[®] PSYCHOLOGY

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Question 1

The Smith-Garcias are planning for their first baby. Both parents-to-be have had a psychology course and are looking forward to applying the principles they learned from theories and research that address child development.

A) Summarize one main idea or finding of each of the following four researchers.

- Skinner's operant conditioning
- Bandura's social learning theory
- Ainsworth's attachment research
- Baumrind's research on parenting styles

B) Provide a specific example of actions the Smith-Garcias might take to raise their child to produce positive outcomes using each of the theories below to address the corresponding psychological concept.

- Skinner's operant conditioning: tantrum management
- Bandura's social learning theory: sharing behavior
- Ainsworth's attachment research: self-reliance
- Baumrind's research on parenting styles: self-esteem

Scoring Criteria

General Considerations

1. Answers must be presented in sentences, and sentences must be cogent enough for the student's meaning to be apparent. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce a student's score, but spelling must be close enough so that the reader is convinced of the word intended.
2. Within a point, students are not penalized for misinformation unless it *directly contradicts* correct information that would otherwise have scored a point.
3. Students can only score points if information is presented in *context*. This means that they must clearly convey which part of the question is being answered before a point may be scored.
4. The lists of terms in these guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive but rather to represent the principal psychological terms and concepts that earn a point.

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2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

Part A: Theories/Research (Points 1–4)

In general, students *must* provide and describe a key term, idea, or method of the named researcher.

Point 1: Skinner

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms: reinforcement, punishment, shaping, schedules of reinforcement, extinction, Skinner Box, operant chamber, air crib, stimulus generalization, stimulus discrimination, token economy

AND must provide a description of a correct relationship to behavior—for example, reinforcing wanted behavior or punishing unwanted behavior.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide this general Skinnerian idea: “Behavior is a function of its consequences.”

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- a. “Behaviors are determined by reinforcers and punishers.” (This response does not score via Path 1 without providing the relationship between these consequences and behaviors. It does not score on Path 2 because “reinforcers and punishers” is not an exhaustive list of consequences.)
- b. “People learn from experience” (too vague)
- c. Any clear reference to classical conditioning or other nonoperant concept
- d. Law of effect
- e. Reward (without reference to any of the terms above)

Point 2: Bandura

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms: vicarious reinforcement, vicarious punishment, observational learning, Bobo doll studies, modeling, cognitive mediation, reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, efficacy or outcome expectations, self-regulation of behavior

AND must relate this term to learning.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide this general Banduran idea: “People learn by observing others.”

Note

Do not score: social norms, conformity.

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Question 1 (continued)

Point 3: Ainsworth

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms related to attachment: secure attachment, insecure attachment, anxious-resistant, anxious-avoidant, resistant, avoidant, ambivalent, disorganized, disoriented

AND must provide a description that includes *one* of the following ideas:

- a. Securely attached children are more likely to use/perceive their primary caregiver as a secure base, or more likely to explore surroundings, or more likely to have positive reactions to a parent.
- b. Insecurely attached children are less likely to explore their surroundings, or more likely to have negative reactions to a parent, or more likely to cling to a parent.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide an accurate description of the strange situation. (Simply using the term strange situation does not score.) This description must clearly discuss Ainsworth's research paradigm and include separation and reunion with a parent.

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- a. Parental responsiveness, without the use of any of the acceptable terms (e.g., "Sensitive mothering leads to good attachment.")
- b. Other terms related to attachment, such as temperament, Harlow, critical periods, bonding, imprinting
- c. Separation anxiety

Point 4: Baumrind

Students must use one of the following terms related to parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, indulgent, neglectful, indifferent, rejecting, uninvolved

AND must describe some accurate aspect of the designated parenting style.

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2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

Part B: Applications (Points 5–8)

Students must provide a description of a *specific action* that the *parents* might take to *address each target issue*. They may provide an appropriate example or use an appropriate term correctly and in context.

Point 5: Application of Skinner's operant conditioning to manage a tantrum

This point scores if the example is a correct application, even if the term used to describe the mechanism is incorrect (e.g., "The parents use negative reinforcement by taking a toy away from the child after a tantrum occurs").

- "Parents extinguish the tantrum" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents reinforce the child for a different behavior" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents punish the tantrum" (or student provides an example of this).

Note

Do not score: "Parents negatively reinforce the tantrum" (if used alone).

Point 6: Application of Bandura's social learning theory to sharing

- "Parents provide a model for sharing" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents increase sharing via vicarious reinforcement or vicarious punishment" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents increase child's self-efficacy for sharing" (or student provides an example of this).
- Parents share a behavior with their child via some social-learning mechanism, which results in a positive outcome.

Note

Do not score: "Parents use positive reinforcement to increase sharing behavior."

Point 7: Application of Ainsworth's attachment styles to increase self-reliance

"Parents promote secure attachment to increase self-reliance" (or student provides an example of this).

Examples may include behaviors such as nurturing, support, encouragement, sensitivity and response to signals, interactional synchrony, availability.

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- "Parents need to love the child" ("love" is not a specific action).
- ". . . by giving their child freedoms bit by bit so he or she is reliant by the time he or she is an adult"
- The idea that parents intentionally limit the behaviors that promote secure attachment

Point 8: Application of Baumrind's parenting styles to increase self-esteem

"Parents use authoritative style (or student provides an example of a parenting style with high control/discipline/expectations)

AND high warmth/love/communication/responsiveness to increase self-esteem."

Note

Do not score: Behaviors that may be aspects of more than one parenting style (e.g., "The parents must love their child")

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2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

Abstract

We conducted a variation of Asch's (1951) conformity study in which participants made judgments about the length of lines. We randomly assigned participants to one of two conditions and told them that the study involved perceptual abilities. In the first condition, participants estimated the length of lines after hearing five people pretending to be participants (confederates) give inaccurate estimates. In the second condition, participants estimated the length of lines without hearing estimates of confederates. As we expected, participants in the first condition were less accurate in their estimates of line length, demonstrating the tendency to conform to majority influence.

- A) How would each element below be related to the specific content of the experiment reported in the abstract?
- Control group
 - Deception
 - Operational definition of the dependent variable
 - Hypothesis
 - Debriefing
- B) How might participants' estimates of line length in the study be related to the following?
- Cognitive dissonance
 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs

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2. Within a point, students are not penalized for misinformation unless it *directly contradicts* correct information that would otherwise have scored a point.
3. Students can only score points if information is presented in *context*. This means that they must clearly convey which part of the question is being answered before a point may be scored. For example, if a student correctly explains that participants should be informed afterward that the experiment was really about conformity but does not identify this as debriefing, the point is not earned. In some cases, it is possible to infer context from the structure of the essay.
4. Throughout the essay, definitions alone are not sufficient to score points. Every point requires students to relate their answers to information in the abstract.

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Question 2 (continued)

Part A: Research Elements (Points 1–5)

To score any point in part A, students must *relate their answers to specific content from the experiment*.

Point 1: Control group

To score this point, students must establish that the control group

- a. consists of participants who did not hear inaccurate estimates or
- b. is the second condition (accept “group B”) or
- c. is the group without confederates

Point 2: Deception

To score this point, students must establish that deception occurs

- a. because the participants were not told the experiment was about conformity or
- b. because the participants were told the experiment was about perceptual abilities (or line length) or
- c. when inaccurate information is given about the length of the lines or
- d. because of the use of confederates

Note

Do not score: Statements such as “The experimenter lied,” because there is no specific information from the experiment.

Point 3: Operational definition of the dependent variable

To score this point, students must describe a measurement of line length (accuracy) or how many participants agreed with confederates.

Notes

- a. Good answer: “The participants’ estimates of the lengths of lines.”
- b. Acceptable answer: “The participants’ answers.”
- c. Do not score: “The participants’ reactions,” because the word “reaction” is too broad.
- d. Do not score: “The participants’ tendency to conform,” because there is no sense of an *operational* definition.
- e. Score the point if the student discusses the measurement only with regard to one group (“the answers of the experimental group”).

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Question 2 (continued)

Point 4: Hypothesis

To score this point, students must present the hypothesis—an expectation about the relationship between variables—in either general terms (“People have a tendency to conform in groups”) or specific terms (“The first condition will have more inaccurate estimates of line length than the second condition”).

Note

Do not score the point if

- a. the student phrases the hypothesis in the *past tense*, because this represents the results and not the hypothesis (“The hypothesis is that people in the first condition were less accurate”). Accept the present tense, future tense, or subjunctive mood (indicated by the word “would”). The student may begin by saying, “The hypothesis was” and correctly write the hypothesis in an appropriate tense.
- b. the student provides a research question rather than a hypothesis (“The hypothesis is, ‘Do participants conform in groups?’”).
- c. the student discusses only one variable (“Participants will conform”).

Point 5: Debriefing

To score this point, students must explain that researchers need to inform participants (**after** the experiment) that

- a. the experiment is actually about conformity or
- b. the experiment really is not about perceptual abilities (or line length) or
- c. they were misled by confederates or
- d. the confederates were not actually participants

Note

- a. Do not score the point if the student merely states that debriefing occurs after the experiment.
- b. Do not score the point if the student simply discusses deception and not the need to clear up the deception (“Debriefing occurs when deception is used in an experiment”).
- c. Do not score the point if the student limits the discussion of debriefing to a summary of the results of the experiment.
- d. Score the point if a student says that debriefing is not mentioned in the abstract.

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Question 2 (continued)

Part B: Relation of Line Length Estimates to Concepts (Points 6 and 7)

To score either point in part B, students must *relate their answers to participants' responses or conformity*.

Point 6: Cognitive dissonance

To score this point, students must describe

- a. a tension or discomfort created when a participant questions his or her own estimate of line length in light of the confederates' responses or
- b. conflicting (accept mismatched, discrepant, different, etc.) thoughts within a participant or between a participant's thoughts and behaviors ("The thoughts of the participants conflicted with the length estimates they gave").

Note

Do not score the point if the student describes a conflict between a participant and confederates ("Dissonance occurs when a participant disagrees with the confederates about line length"), because cognitive dissonance is intrapersonal, not interpersonal.

Point 7: Maslow's hierarchy

To score this point, students must *relate* some aspect of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to participants' answers or conformity.

Note

Students typically do this by

- a. *relating* love, belonging, acceptance, fitting in, affiliation (or a similar term) to participants' being more likely to conform in their estimates of line length or
- b. *relating* self-actualization to participants' being less likely to conform in their estimates of line length.