

CLEP Introductory Psychology

AT A GLANCE

Description of the Examination and Perception

The CLEP® Introductory Psychology exam covers material that is usually taught in a one-semester undergraduate course in introductory psychology. It stresses basic facts, concepts, and generally accepted principles in the 13 areas listed in the following section.

The exam contains approximately 95 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that won't be scored.

The questions on the CLEP Introductory Psychology exam adhere to the terminology, criteria, and classifications referred to in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5).

Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the Introductory Psychology exam require candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Knowledge of terminology, principles, and theory
- Ability to comprehend, evaluate, and analyze problem situations
- Ability to apply knowledge to new situations

The subject matter of the Introductory Psychology exam is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the main topics indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

8–9% HISTORY, APPROACHES, METHODS

- History of psychology
- Approaches: biological, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic
- Research methods: experimental, clinical, correlational
- Ethics in research

8–9% BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR

- Endocrine system
- Etiology
- Functional organization of the nervous system
- Genetics
- Neuroanatomy
- Physiological techniques

7–8% SENSATION AND PERCEPTION

- Attention
- Other senses: somesthesia, olfaction, gustation, vestibular system
- Perceptual development
- Perceptual processes
- Receptor processes: vision, audition
- Sensory mechanisms: thresholds, adaptation

5–6% STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- Hypnosis and meditation
- Psychoactive drug effects
- Sleep and dreaming

10–11% LEARNING

- Biological bases
- Classical conditioning
- Cognitive process in learning
- Observational learning
- Operant conditioning

8–9% COGNITION

- Intelligence and creativity
- Language
- Memory
- Thinking and problem solving

7–8% MOTIVATION AND EMOTION

- Biological bases
- Hunger, thirst, sex, pain
- Social motivation
- Theories of emotion
- Theories of motivation

8–9% DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Dimensions of development: physical, cognitive, social, moral
- Gender identity and sex roles
- Heredity–environment issues
- Research methods: longitudinal, cross-sectional
- Theories of development

7–8% PERSONALITY

- Assessment techniques
- Growth and adjustment
- Personality theories and approaches
- Research methods: idiographic, nomothetic
- Self-concept, self-esteem

8–9% PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AND HEALTH

- Affective disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Dissociative disorders
- Health, stress, and coping
- Personality disorders
- Psychoses
- Somatoform disorders
- Theories of psychopathology

7–8% TREATMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

- Behavioral therapies
- Biological and drug therapies
- Cognitive therapies
- Community and preventive approaches
- Insight therapies: psychodynamic and humanistic approaches

7–8% SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Aggression/antisocial behavior
- Attitudes and attitude change
- Attribution processes
- Conformity, compliance, obedience
- Group dynamics
- Interpersonal perception

3–4% STATISTICS, TESTS, AND MEASUREMENT

- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics
- Measurement of intelligence
- Reliability and validity
- Samples, populations, norms
- Types of tests

Study Resources

Most textbooks used in college-level introductory psychology courses cover the topics in the outline above, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. To prepare for the Introductory Psychology exam, it's advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found in most college bookstores or libraries. You may also find it helpful to supplement your reading with books listed in the bibliographies found in most psychology textbooks. When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the knowledge and skills required for this test.

A survey conducted by CLEP found that the following textbooks are among those used by college faculty who teach the equivalent course. Most of these have companion websites with practice test questions and other study resources.

Brannon and Lefton, <i>Psychology</i> (Allyn & Bacon)
Coon, <i>Psychology: A Modular Approach to Mind and Behavior</i> (Wadsworth)
Feldman, <i>Essentials of Understanding Psychology</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Gerrig and Zimbardo, <i>Psychology and Life</i> (Allyn & Bacon)
Hockenbury and Hockenbury, <i>Psychology</i> (Worth)
Huffman, <i>Living Psychology</i> (Wiley)
Kowalski and Westen, <i>Psychology</i> (Wiley)
Lahey, <i>Essentials of Psychology: An Introduction</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Meyer and Ciccarelli, <i>Psychology</i> (Prentice Hall)
Myers, <i>Exploring Psychology</i> (Worth)
Nairne, <i>Psychology: The Adaptive Mind</i> (Wadsworth)
Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo, <i>What Is Psychology?</i> (Wadsworth)
Rosenberg and Kosslyn, <i>Psychology in Context</i> (Allyn & Bacon)
Santrock, <i>Psychology Essentials</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Smith and Passer, <i>Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behavior</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Wood et al., <i>The World of Psychology: Portable Edition</i> (Allyn & Bacon)
Zimbardo et al., <i>Psychology Core Concepts</i> (Allyn & Bacon)

In addition, the following resources, compiled by the CLEP test development committee and staff members, may help you study for your exam. However, none of these sources are designed specifically to provide preparation for a CLEP exam. College Board has no control over their content and can't vouch for their accuracy.

American Psychological Association Resources
apa.org/topics/index.aspx

Centre for Psychology Resources
psych.athabascau.ca/html/aupr/demos.shtml

Free CLEP Psychology Course from Modern States Education Alliance
modernstates.org/course/introductory-psychology/

Psych Web—includes resource links and an introductory psychology textbook
psywww.com

Visit clep.collegeboard.org/earn-college-credit/practice for more psychology resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions don't appear on an actual CLEP exam. They're intended to give potential test takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the exam and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and information about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

1. A researcher randomly assigns one group of high school students to innovative, active study groups, while another group studies alone. She then compares the scores on the exam, finding that those who studied in groups did better than those who studied alone. Which of the following was her dependent variable?
 - A. High school students
 - B. Scores on the exam
 - C. Students in the innovative, active study groups
 - D. Students who studied alone
 - E. Type of group
2. Which of the following cortical areas is most closely associated with vision?
 - A. Frontal
 - B. Prefrontal
 - C. Temporal
 - D. Occipital
 - E. Parietal
3. Frequency theory and place theory attempt to explain how the inner ear registers the pitch of sound. Which statement best reflects current opinion about frequency theory and place theory?
 - A. Evidence strongly supports frequency theory.
 - B. Evidence strongly supports place theory.
 - C. Place theory explains the perception of complex sounds well, whereas frequency theory explains the perception of simple sounds well.
 - D. Place theory explains the perception of high-frequency sounds well, and frequency theory explains the perception of low-frequency sounds well.
 - E. There is little evidence to support either theory.
4. After initial conditioning, an unconditioned stimulus is no longer presented with the conditioned stimulus, and the conditioned response gradually stops occurring. This change in behavior is called:
 - A. Extinction
 - B. Counterconditioning
 - C. Higher-order conditioning
 - D. Stimulus discrimination
 - E. Stimulus generalization
5. Priming is considered part of implicit memory because it:
 - A. Occurs without conscious awareness
 - B. Often involves emotions
 - C. Helps in recognition but not in recall
 - D. Plays an important role in autobiographical memory
 - E. Requires deep encoding
6. Which of the following is a disadvantage of relying on external rewards to motivate behavior?
 - A. There is potential to reduce extrinsic motivation.
 - B. There is potential to reduce intrinsic motivation.
 - C. It increases fear of failure.
 - D. It increases fear of success.
 - E. It decreases competency.
7. Researchers know that infants' sense of smell is fairly well developed at birth because newborns prefer the smell of:
 - A. Sweet-smelling to the smell of sour-smelling foods
 - B. Meat to the smell of fruits
 - C. A nursing pad from their mother to the smell of a pad from another mother
 - D. An acid to the smell of a base
 - E. A baby's clothing to the smell of an adult's clothing
8. Amy appears to have an irrational and maladaptive fear of flying. She will not fly to visit her children and grandchildren, and she has even lost a job because she refused to fly to meet clients. Amy would most likely be diagnosed with which of the following anxiety disorders?
 - A. Generalized anxiety
 - B. Specific phobia
 - C. Social phobia
 - D. Obsessive-compulsive
 - E. Panic

9. Tom fails his math exam. If he explains his failure by using an internal attribution, his reason for failing might be which of the following?
- A. The teacher was unclear when presenting the material in class.
 - B. Tom's job did not leave him enough time to study.
 - C. The person sitting next to Tom during the exam was very distracting.
 - D. There was not enough time allotted to complete the exam.
 - E. Tom is not smart or not good at math.
10. In order to illustrate how often a particular score occurs in a given data set, researchers use:
- A. Inferential techniques
 - B. Cognitive mapping
 - C. Cluster analysis
 - D. The median
 - E. A frequency distribution

Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant three credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the CLEP Introductory Psychology exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the Introductory Psychology exam, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted, and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

Answers to Sample Questions:

1-B; 2-D; 3-D; 4-A; 5-A; 6-B; 7-C; 8-B; 9-E; 10-E