



AP Psychology 2000 Scoring Guidelines

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2000 AP Psychology Question #1 Rubric

Your high school is proposing moving to a system in which grades are no longer given or used to evaluate student progress.

Define each of the following concepts and state how each might either positively or negatively change student behavior under such a system.

- a. *Extrinsic motivation*
- b. *Arousal theory (Yerkes-Dodson Law)*
- c. *Learned helplessness*
- d. *Self-fulfilling prophecy*

Overall Issues

1. Answers must be written in sentences, not pictures or outlines.
2. Watch for motivational drift: Answers that discuss arousal, learned helplessness, and self-fulfilling prophecies in terms of changes in motivation are not awarded points.
3. Definition Points:
 - a. Good definitions are those that don't repeat the terms from the question in the definition.
 - b. In the absence of a definition, a robust example can be used to earn a point.
5. Application Points:
 - a. The question asks for a change in a student behavior. However, if the answer provides a rationale for how removing grades would break the cycle of an existing system, the maintenance of behavior is acceptable.
 - b. Acceptable behaviors are those that can be observed and measured, typically related to academic performance. Acceptable terms include studying, working, learning, succeeding academically, and becoming a better or worse student. Changes in predispositions to behave are not sufficient (e.g., "removing grades would make students *feel* like not studying").
 - c. Definition and application points are independent. Application points may be awarded without a complete definition of the concept.

Point #1: Extrinsic Motivation Definition

- a. Clear definition NOT using words extrinsic and motivation (e.g., external reward, desire to avoid punishment).
- b. "Incentive" or the identification of a correct external reward (e.g., money, grades).
- c. Robust example ("extrinsic motivation is an employee working for a pay check").

Point #2: Extrinsic Motivation Application

- a. Example showing relationship between absence of grades and change in student behavior.
- b. Substitutes a successful motivational system and shows any impact on student behavior.
 - i. intrinsic motives (e.g., "students must now work for intrinsic reasons")
 - ii. another extrinsic reward (e.g., "offering free lunch for academic achievement")

Point #3: Arousal Theory (Yerkes-Dodson Law) Definition

- a. Concept of inverted-U relationship of arousal to performance.
 - i. use of term “inverted-U” to describe relationship of arousal to performance
 - ii. description of inverted-U relationship of arousal to performance (need 3 points on curve)
 - iii. statement that performance on most tasks is best at moderate levels of arousal
- b. “Optimal level” of arousal if tied to performance.
- c. Correctly combines arousal level, behavior, and task difficulty (e.g., “Performance is best on easy tasks under high arousal”).
- d. Acknowledges individual differences in relationship of arousal level to performance.

Point #4: Arousal Theory (Yerkes-Dodson Law) Application

- a. Example based on arousal theory showing relationship between arousal and behavioral change (e.g., “For students who were too anxious, removing grades may help them relax, thus improving their performance”).

Point #5: Learned Helplessness Definition

- a. Clear definition shows no contingency or consistent relationship between behavior and outcome that leads to reduced performance in later situation (behavioral interpretation): e.g., “Rats are shocked despite what they do, and eventually stop behaving.”
- b. Clear definition shows no contingency or consistent relationship between behavior and outcome that leads to perceived loss of control that makes people stop trying in the future (cognitive interpretation): e.g., “No matter what I do I still get bad grades and so I give up.” (“No matter what I do” implies different behaviors always leading to the same outcome, so there is no contingency.)
- c. Robust example (e.g., “Learned helplessness is when rats forced to swim without escape stop trying to escape”).

TRAP (No point awarded): Answer must distinguish between punishment and learned helplessness. For example, “I always try my hardest, but I continue to fail, so I give up” says that one behavior is consistently punished, a negative contingency, therefore it is not scored.

Point #6: Application

- a. Students, who have become helpless under a grading system, can over time begin to study when grades are gone (removing grades breaks the cycle).
- b. Students may become helpless if grades are removed because they depend on grades for feedback, so they stop studying.
- c. Not giving grades may prevent incoming students from ever experiencing the conditions that produce learned helplessness, and they do better (prevention strategy).

Point #7: Self-fulfilling Prophecy Definition

- a. Student as prophet (believer):
 student belief about self --> student behavior --> prophecy-confirming consequence
 e.g., "I believe I'm a poor student, so I don't study and become a poor student."
- b. Teacher as prophet:
 teacher belief about student --> teacher behavior --> student behavior (confirms belief)
 e.g., "The teacher thinks a student is gifted and gives the student extra attention. The student works harder." (It is assumed that the student's behavior will confirm the teacher's belief.)
- c. Robust example (e.g., complete description of Rosenthal study or the "Pygmalion" effect).

TRAP (No point awarded): The Peter Pan principle is NOT enough (I think I can therefore I can) because there is no student behavior identified.

Point #8: Self-fulfilling Prophecy Application

- a. Break-the-cycle: without grades, expectations about grades are lost, resulting in a change in the student's behavior.
- b. Without grades, teachers may create new prophecies that students will act on.

TRAP (No point awarded): Self-actualization is not the same as self-fulfilling prophecy.

2000 A. P. Psychology Exam: Free Response Question 2

The police chief of New City states publicly that she sees a direct relationship between teenage arrests in New City for violent crimes and the popularity among New City teens of especially violent television shows.

- A. Design a correlational study to research this claimed relationship, being sure to address how each of the following design elements would apply to your study.
- operational definition of variables
 - selection of participants
 - generalizability
 - two ethical considerations
- B. The police chief concludes that watching violent television shows leads to teens' committing violent crimes in New City. Do you support her conclusion? Explain your response.
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All points must be earned *in context*. This means the student must make it clear he or she is responding to a particular part of the essay. The best way for a student to do this is to use language from the question (e.g., "variables" implies discussion of point 2, "ethics" implies discussion of points 5 and 6, etc.). A student may also establish context by answering the question in order, or if the transitions between points can be inferred by the reader.

Point 1: Correlational Design

Award this point if the student proposes the design of any correlational study (*not an experiment*). Examples are surveys, questionnaires, interviews, case studies, and so on. The student may supply this information at any point in the essay.

Do not score this point if the student proposes an *experiment* by:

- a) explaining the design of an experiment
- b) describing the creation of groups
- c) calling for the random assignment of participants to conditions
- d) using other language that implies an experimental rather than correlational design

If the student proposes an experiment instead of a correlational design, the remaining points may still be awarded.

Point 2: Operational Definition of Variables. A student may earn this point two ways:

Method A. Award this point if the student identifies two or more specific *variables* (not groups) appropriate for the study he or she designs.

The two most common variables will be television violence (typically the predictor or independent variable) and violent crime (typically the outcome or dependent variable). Do not count the outcome variable unless it relates specifically to violent crime; it is not sufficient to express it in vague terms like “the actions displayed.” One (and only one) identified variable may be a specific extraneous variable that might potentially confound the study, such as child abuse or poverty. For one of the variables, the student may define teens.

Students do not need to identify variables as independent, predictor, dependent, or outcome. If the student does use such labels *in a correlational design*, it does not matter which one is applied to television violence and which one is applied to violent crime. However, if the student proposes *an experimental design* and misidentifies television violence as the dependent variable or violent crime as the independent variable, do not award the point.

Method B. This point should also be awarded if the student provides a general explanation of the importance of operational definitions even though specific variables like violent television or crime are not described. For example, the student might explain that operational definitions allow for careful measurement or increased reliability.

Point 3: Selection of Participants

Award this point if the student proposes any procedure designed to increase the randomness or representativeness of the selected participants. The student may specify random sampling, random selection, representative sampling, stratified sampling, placing newspaper ads, or similar methods. A student may also earn this point by proposing that the entire teenage population of New City be selected. Do not award the point if the student simply proposes “seeking volunteers” unless there is an implication that this will somehow increase the representativeness of the sample.

The student may also specify any procedure that would control for a demographic variable (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, or neighborhood) as long as the specific variable is mentioned and it is not a variable mentioned in the question (TV watching or criminal activity). It is not sufficient to make a vague statement like “different kinds of people must be included.”

This point may be awarded if the student has presented an experimental design, but not by describing random *assignment* to groups. The student must explain a procedure that allows for the random *selection* of participants. If a student proposes an experiment and describes both random sampling and random assignment, award the point. Students frequently confuse the terms “random sampling” and “random assignment,” but this point should be awarded or not awarded based on the procedure described rather than the term used.

Point 4: Generalizability

Award this point if the student makes an appropriate statement about how the results of this study can or cannot be applied to a population larger than or different from the participant sample (e.g., all New City 7th graders, all New City teenagers, teenagers in similar cities, etc.). In order to make this determination, it may be necessary to consider the sampling procedure described for point 3. Do not award this point if the generalizability statement contradicts the sampling statement.

Note that this point relates to the generalizability of results, not other kinds of generalization (for example, of violent behaviors).

Points 5 and 6: Two Ethical Considerations

Award one point each for two ethical considerations. These may include:

- a) Any aspect of informed consent. The participants' permission, or their parent's (or guardian's) permission, must be obtained before the study. The participants must receive general information about the nature of the study before it begins. Participation must be voluntary.
- b) Participants have a right to withdraw from participation or have data about them withdrawn at any time.
- c) Information about individual participants must be confidential.
- d) Participants must be debriefed.
- e) An analysis of whether the potential benefits of the research outweigh the potential risks. This includes considering, *when designing the study*, the potential perpetuation of stereotypes related to teens or ethnic groups.
- f) Participants have a right not to be harmed. This includes protection from negative states such as "being upset" *as long as the condition extends beyond the time frame of the study*. Award a point for statements like "this study is unethical because a participant exposed to violent television shows might experience bad dreams" or "might continue to be upset by the experience," but don't award a point for statements like "this study is unethical because it's upsetting to watch violent television shows." This point can only be awarded for students who propose an experimental design.
- g) Ethical concerns that exist because the study might cause participants to be violent. This point can only be awarded for students who propose an experimental design.

Point 7: Support for Police Chief's Conclusion

Because of the wording of the question, this part of the answer does not have to be linked with the student's response to Part A. The student may receive credit for either supporting or not supporting the police chief's conclusion.

When the student does not support the police chief's conclusion:

Award the point if the student indicates that the results of correlational studies may not be used for cause and effect conclusions. The student may also do this by mentioning that variables not controlled in a correlational study (such as family environment or peer relationships) could possibly account for different levels of violent crime. These other variables do not need to be specified.

When the student supports the police chief's conclusion:

There are two methods whereby the student may earn the point.

Method A. Award the point if the student argues that the police chief's conclusion is supported by research indicating that violent media can indeed lead to aggressive behavior. This requires the student to both indicate the research basis and use terminology specified below. The research basis may be established through the use of phrases like "Bandura showed," "there is evidence that," or "based on research." The terminology must include "observational learning," "imitation," or "modeling." Students may also use a discussion of desensitization if it is explained. Do not accept statements like "there is evidence teenagers copy what they see."

Method B. Award the point if the student described an experiment and indicates that the results of the experiment support such a cause and effect conclusion.