



AP Psychology 2001 Scoring Guidelines

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Question 1

Context must be established, both in relation to whether a part of the response refers to cause or treatment and whether a part of the response refers to the proper perspective. This means the reader must be able to tell whether the student is discussing cause or treatment and which perspective is being discussed in order to award points. Context is best established with direct statements by the student (“The cause of anxiety from the behavioral perspective is . . .”), but it may also be inferred from the order or paragraph sequence of the answer. Since the entire essay is about anxiety, the context of anxiety is assumed throughout.

In the scoring of essays, spelling does not count, and points are not subtracted for misinformation. To be scored, answers must be in sentences, not bulleted lists or outlines.

Part a: Cause Points

1. Behavioral Cause

Award this point if the student:

- A. Names classical conditioning, operant conditioning, observational learning, or any related concept related to them. Examples include anxiety as related to a conditioned response, positive reinforcement (or reward), punishment, and modeling.
- B. Refers to (but does not name) a type of learning and explains that learning is governed by the environment or stimulus-response relationships.

Do not award this point if the student makes only a general reference to learning (e.g., “anxiety is learned”) or the environment or stimulus-response relationships.

2. Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Cause

Award this point if the student:

- A. Explains that repression or suppression of some event or memory might realistically cause anxiety. Repression alone is not sufficient unless there is mention of what is being repressed.
- B. Refers to the unconscious/subconscious mind and links it to tension, conflict, trauma, or some other factor that may be related to anxiety. Reference to the unconscious/subconscious mind alone is not sufficient without an additional factor.
- C. Discusses another psychoanalytic concept (e.g., id, ego, superego, preconscious) if the student explains a process/mechanism by which that concept could reasonably lead to anxiety.

Do not award this point if the student simply refers to repression or the unconscious without meeting the additional requirements of A or B above.

3. Biological Cause

Award this point if the student explains that:

- A. Anxiety can result when there is an imbalance of a chemical that influences the nervous or endocrine system. The student can identify this chemical by using words like “neurotransmitter,” “brain chemical,” or “hormone.” The student may also earn the point by mentioning an imbalance of any specific neurotransmitter (e.g., GABA, serotonin) or hormone (e.g., adrenaline) even if that chemical is not actually related to anxiety.

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Question 1 (cont.)

- B. One may inherit a predisposition for anxiety. The mention of “predisposition” is sufficient even without the use of terms like genetic or hereditary. It is also sufficient to say that anxiety “runs in the family,” but *not* that “anxiety is inherited.”
- C. There is an evolutionary predisposition to fear specific stimuli, such as heights.
- D. The anxiety results as a plausible outcome of brain damage, stroke, tumor, etc.

Do not award this point if the student:

- A. States that anxiety or specific fears are inherited per se (i.e., absolute inheritance vs. conditional).
- B. Refers to a chemical imbalance *not* specified as neural or hormonal.

4. Cognitive Cause

Award this point if the student establishes a relationship between the *way* one thinks/interprets (not what one thinks about) and anxiety. It is sufficient to say that “anxiety is caused by the way one thinks.”

The student may also do this by referring to thoughts/interpretations that are:

- A. Negative
- B. Irrational
- C. Faulty or distorted
- D. Self-defeating
- E. Unrealistic

Do not award the point for a *single* negative thought or a *single* distorted interpretation. Plurality is important for thoughts and interpretations.

Part b: Treatment Points

The student **must** follow one of the following pathways to earn treatment points:

1. Describe or define a specific treatment technique. The student may mislabel or not name the technique and still receive credit.
2. Name a specific treatment *without* a description or definition *if* a basis for that treatment was presented for the appropriate perspective in the answer to Part a. For example, Point 7 should be awarded for “the biological perspective would treat anxiety by prescribing Xanax,” if Point 3 was awarded for describing the cause of anxiety as a neurochemical imbalance. Point 7 should not be awarded if the student wrote the same thing but had described the cause as a genetic predisposition.
3. Provide a term (name of treatment) and establish a relationship with the outcome, purpose, or goal of the treatment. For example, Point 6 should be awarded if a student writes “free association can be used to help a patient uncover unconscious material.” Do not accept “reducing anxiety” as the outcome or purpose of treatment because it merely parrots the question.

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Question 1 (cont.)

5. Behavioral Treatment

Award this point if the student follows any of the three pathways regarding appropriate behavioral treatments for anxiety, anxiety disorders, or fear, such as:

- A. Systematic desensitization
- B. Extinction
- C. Modeling
- D. Counter conditioning
- E. Aversion therapy
- F. Biofeedback training (may also be used for Point 7, in context)
- G. Stress inoculation (may also be used for Point 8, in context)

6. Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic Treatment

Award this point if the student follows any of the three pathways regarding appropriate psychoanalytic treatments such as:

- A. Free association
- B. Dream analysis
- C. Hypnosis
- D. Insight therapy
- E. Interpretation of resistance/transference
- F. Psychoanalysis or the “talking cure” used as a specific descriptor of psychoanalytic therapy

7. Biological Treatment

Award this point if the student follows any of the three pathways regarding appropriate biological treatments such as:

- A. Specific antianxiety drugs (e.g., Xanax, Valium) or antidepressant drugs (e.g., Prozac, Zoloft), mention of these categories, or mention of drugs, drug therapy, medication, etc. For example, it is sufficient, under Pathway 3, to state that a drug “has a calming influence” on the individual.
- B. Use of aerobic exercise or improved nutrition as a method of relieving stress through a clear biological mechanism.

Do not award this point for the use of lobotomy or electroconvulsive therapy.

8. Cognitive Treatment

Award this point if the student follows any of the three pathways regarding appropriate cognitive treatments such as:

- A. Rational-Emotive Therapy.
- B. Beck’s Cognitive Therapy (mentioning “cognitive therapy” alone without Beck’s name is not sufficient).
- C. Discussion of strategies such as changing one’s *way* of thinking (not just “think different thoughts”), learning more adaptive ways of thinking, replacing self-defeating dialogs, etc.

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Question 2

General Considerations

1. **This is a mental set (cognitive) question, not one dealing with motivations or social expectations.**
2. Good answers emphasize cogent arguments, critical analysis, and the appropriate use of psychological terminology.
3. In most cases a point once awarded cannot be lost. However, if the answer immediately contradicts the correct statement, we presume a lack of cogency and the point is lost.
4. The points are not linked. Each point is evaluated on its own merits.
5. Questions must be answered in relatively complete sentences (i.e., subject/verb). Outlines are not acceptable.
6. Restating the stem (using “expectation” and “expectancy” to explain the stem) to describe the concept is insufficient.

Point #1: Description of expectancy or set

1. Answers may use the terms expectancy and set as interchangeable.
2. The description must identify both the source/origin of the expectancy and an appropriate outcome or effect.
 - a. Source/Origin
 - The source of the expectation must come from prior experience or an inherited ability: accept “preexisting,” “preconceived,” “predisposition,” “schema,” and “knowledge” as implying prior experience.
 - “Belief systems” are more likely to represent mental sets than simple “I believe that” statements.
 - TRAP
feelings, emotions, and other affective or motivational constructions usually are not acceptable sources of an expectation.
 - b. Outcome
 - Specifying outcomes helps us see that the student is thinking of a conceptual category (mental set) rather than making a simple prediction from a previously experienced event. E.g., “A preconceived notion causes you to interpret a new situation in a certain way” scores the point, while “My previous dealings with John allows me to predict his current behavior” (no mental set needed) does not score the point.
 - Belief systems are acceptable outcomes when derived from prior experience.
 - Outcomes must follow logically from the mental set.

TRAP (for both source/origin and outcome portions of point)

Simple predictions are not sufficiently complex to be mental sets (e.g., “Expectancy is what a person believes will happen after some event” does not score).

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Question 2 (cont.)

HINTS

1. Descriptions of the concept of expectancy or set (point #1) cannot be derived from definitions or examples provided in answers to subsequent points unless the answers makes it explicit that the definition is the focus of that part of the answer.
2. If answer begins with expectation of others or standards of behavior as the source, it may be hard to justify the source as a mental set or to link it to an outcome (e.g., parent’s expectations that a student will do well in school do not automatically produce the desired outcome of good grades).

General Considerations for Points 2 – 6:

1. Points #2 – 5 require either:
 - a. A specific example that shows how an expectation involving a *psychological process appropriate to the question* leads to a cognitive or behavioral outcome. (Point #6 can be answered only this way.)
- OR**
- b. The use of a specific psychological term *appropriate to the question* that is tied to a cognitive or behavioral outcome. (It is inferred from the use of the term that the student knows the concept is an expectation or mental set.)
2. The thrust of all answers must demonstrate expectancy as the cause and producing an effect on cognitions, attitudes, or behavior as the outcome, not the other way around.

Point #2: Human Perception

1. Answer must provide a specific example of :
 - a. A sensation/perception phenomenon that results in a specific outcome.
(e.g., We misread “Paris in the the spring” because we expect sentences to flow in a particular way.)

OR

- b. A mental set that influences how persons, objects, or situations are perceived that results in a specific outcome.
(e.g., “I expect all postal workers are homicidal so I avoid the mail carrier”)

OR

2. Use of a specific psychological term relating to:
 - a) S&P (e.g., closure, Gestalt principle, top-down processing) that influences an identified outcome

OR

- b) Person/object/situation perception (e.g., stereotyping, schema, availability heuristic, fundamental attribution error) that influences an identified outcome
(e.g., “Because of the availability heuristic, plane crash reports make me think plane travel is dangerous.)

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Question 2 (cont.)

TRAPS

1. Self-fulfilling prophecies cannot be used to earn this point because it's not an appropriate concept for human perception.
2. Simple learning examples (e.g., responding to a discriminative stimulus) cannot be used to earn this point (e.g., "Whenever my girlfriend sighs, I know we are going to have a fight.").

Point #3: Drugs

1. Example where a placebo produces a drug-like effect consistent with the expectation.
TRAP: References to experimental procedures designed to control for placebo effects are not sufficient unless the response of the subject is specifically linked to the placebo (double-blind experiments that include a placebo group do not, by themselves, constitute a point).

OR

2. A specific example where an expectancy enhances or diminishes the effects of a drug (a *drug-centered* effect).
 - a. The drug chosen need not be psychoactive.
 - b. The postulated effects of the drug do not need to be accurate.

TRAPS:

- The expectation must alter the drug experience, the drug cannot alter an expectation (e.g., "If you give a person LSD, it distorts their thinking" does not score)
- The expectancy must alter the effects of the drug, not produce other, unrelated behaviors (e.g., conforming to expectation of physicians to improve).

Point #4: Performance in the Classroom

1. Answer must provide three parts in a specific example: an *expectation* leads to behavior that produces an *outcome* appropriate to the expectation. The person holding the expectation must be the one behaving.
NOTE: Examples using a personality construct (e.g., self-efficacy, locus of control, optimistic explanatory style) is scored when it identifies both a behavior and outcome or effect on classroom performance.

OR

2. Answer must name one of the following psychological concepts, and tie it to student performance.
 - a. Self-fulfilling prophecy
 - b. Learned helplessness
 - c. Rosenthal effect, Pygmalion effect
 - d. Teacher expectancy effect

NOTE: Use of one of these concepts establishes the existence of a mental set and precludes the need to identify a behavior that produces the outcome appropriate to the expectation. *An appropriate outcome tied to student performance is still required.*

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Question 2 (cont.)

Point #5: Problem Solving

1. Complete, specific example that ties a problem solving mental set to successful or unsuccessful problem-solving (e.g., “a person who has learned to solve a type of problem a certain way may misapply the problem solving technique to a new problem with poor results”)

OR

2. Identify a problem-solving concept (e.g., heuristics, functional fixedness, divergent thinking, confirmation bias, hindsight bias, belief bias) and tie it to a cognitive or behavioral outcome (e.g., “functional fixedness can hinder performance on a current task”).
3. The direction of the effect must be appropriate to the technique (i.e., functional fixedness hinders problem solving).

TRAPS:

1. Outcome must be specified (“Previous experience with a type of problem leads to functional fixedness” is not sufficient).
2. Knowing when to use a specific problem-solving approach (e.g., applying a theorem, solving for “x”) is not an example of a mental set.
3. Expectations that a task will be difficult don’t count (e.g., “I expect problems in a calculus text to be hard, so I don’t do well” is not scored).
4. Watch out for motivational drift. “I expect to solve the problem so I do” is not scored.

Point #6: Memory

HINT: Unlike points #2 – 5, this point is awarded only for a specific example. There is no list of appropriate psychological terms that, when named, provide an alternative to giving a complete example.

1. Specific example of how an expectancy or mind set can alter memory processes (e.g., encoding, rehearsal, retrieval). Acceptable examples include eyewitness testimony where memory is altered by how the question is framed or by the misinformation effect, priming, semantic organization of memory, schemas and stereotyping, and reconstructive memory.

TRAPS:

1. Look carefully at motivational and affective examples for the expectancy (e.g., “A boy can’t remember because he is made anxious by his parent’s expectations that he should remember” does not identify an expectancy or mental set in the son).
2. Enhanced memory storage based on perceived future value of information, perceived difficulty, or interest in subject does not establish sufficient mental set (motivational drift). E.g., “I’m hungry so I’ll more likely remember the phone number of the pizza place I just saw on television” is not scored.
3. There must be specificity in the example. “We remember what we expect to remember” does not score.