

# CLEP® Introductory Psychology: At a Glance

## Description of the Examination

The Introductory Psychology examination 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 examination contains approximately 95 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored.

## Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the Introductory Psychology examination 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 examination 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

# CLEP® Introductory Psychology: At a Glance

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

Mental handicapping conditions

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 CLEP® Introductory Psychology exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found for sale online or in most college bookstores. You may also find it helpful to supplement your reading with books listed in the bibliographies that can be found in most psychology textbooks.

A recent 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. HINT: When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the Knowledge and Skills Required for this test.

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. The College Board has no control over their content and cannot vouch for accuracy.

# CLEP® Introductory Psychology: At a Glance

<http://www.psywww.com>

(Psych Web — includes resource links and an introductory psychology textbook)

<http://psychexps.olemiss.edu>

(PsychExperiments on the Internet)

<http://psych.athabascau.ca/html/aupr/demos.shtml>

(Centre for Psychology Resources)

<http://www.apa.org/topics>

(American Psychological Association Resources)

Visit [www.collegeboard.com/clepprep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clepprep) for additional psychology resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

## Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and info about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

1. The behavioral research perspective is similar to the sociocultural research perspective because both focus on how behavior and mental processes are explained by

- (A) internal factors such as genes
- (B) the external environment
- (C) memory systems
- (D) evolution
- (E) problem-solving skills and reasoning

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

# CLEP® Introductory Psychology: At a Glance

- (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

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The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant 3 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 examination, 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.