



20 AP-style MCQs across topics 2.1 to 2.8. Practice, review, revisit.

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

- ✓ 20 MCQs, four options each, in the style of the real AP exam
- ✓ Every question tagged to a Unit 2 topic so you know what to revise
- ✓ Full answer key with a short explanation for every question
- ✓ Mix of standalone and stimulus-style stems, matching real AP question formats

**HOW TO USE IT**

- 1. Untimed pass.** Work through slowly, aiming for around 90 seconds per question. Read every option before you commit.
- 2. Timed pass.** Redo the pack in 24 minutes. That matches AP exam pace (72s per MCQ) and builds stamina.
- 3. Review.** Check the answer key and mark every miss. Revise those topics on Cognito, then retry after a week.

**TOPICS COVERED**

- **2.1** Perception
- **2.2** Thinking, Problem-Solving, Judgments, and Decision-Making
- **2.3** Introduction to Memory
- **2.4** Encoding Memories
- **2.5** Storing Memories
- **2.6** Retrieving Memories
- **2.7** Forgetting and Other Memory Challenges
- **2.8** Intelligence and Achievement

**STRUGGLING WITH A TOPIC?**

**Any topic tricky? Scan the QR to jump straight to the Unit 2 notes on Cognito.** For the full AP Psychology course (all 5 units, lessons, quizzes, flashcards and past-paper FRQs), head to [cognitoedu.link/ap-psych-notes](https://cognitoedu.link/ap-psych-notes). Rework the questions you got wrong a week later to lock the concepts in.

**AP EXAM CONTEXT****15-25% 75**

UNIT WEIGHT (MCQ SECTION)

MCQS ON THE REAL EXAM

**72s**

AVERAGE TIME PER MCQ

# AP PSYCHOLOGY

## Unit 2: Cognition

### SECTION I · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Time—24 minutes

20 Questions

**Directions:** Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case and mark it clearly on your answer sheet or circle your choice below.

**Questions 1, 2 refer to the following information.**

A driver approaches a bridge at dusk. The two rails of the bridge appear to converge into a single point at the far end, and the trees along the roadside look progressively smaller as they recede toward that same point. Even so, the driver perceives the bridge as a normal three-dimensional structure and steers smoothly onto it.

1. Which monocular depth cue best explains the driver's ability to see the bridge as a three-dimensional structure even though the rails appear to meet at a single point?
  - (A) Linear perspective, in which parallel lines seem to converge as distance increases from the viewer.
  - (B) Retinal disparity, produced when the two eyes receive slightly different images of the same scene.
  - (C) Convergence, in which the eyes rotate inward to focus on objects that are physically close.
  - (D) Interposition, since the near section of the bridge partly hides the far section of the bridge itself.
2. Which Gestalt grouping principle best explains why the driver perceives the row of trees along the roadside as a single continuous line receding into the distance rather than as isolated trees standing on their own?
  - (A) Continuity, which favors smooth, uninterrupted patterns and lines over broken or interrupted ones.
  - (B) Closure, which fills in small gaps in an outline so an incomplete figure looks whole to the viewer.
  - (C) Convergence, in which the eyes rotate inward as objects get closer to the face of the viewer.
  - (D) Similarity, which groups items that share color, shape, or texture into a single visual set.
3. A radiologist and a first-year medical student view the same chest X-ray. The radiologist immediately spots a small nodule that the student misses, even though the student has slightly sharper vision on a standard eye test. Which of the following best explains the radiologist's advantage?
  - (A) A lower absolute threshold for detecting faint visual patterns anywhere in the visual field of the scan.
  - (B) Selective attention shaped by prior training that guides where the eyes fixate on the scan.
  - (C) Bottom-up processing that ignores expectations and reads the image feature by feature.
  - (D) Signal detection theory, which predicts equal hit rates for both viewers because they share the same underlying sensitivity.

## AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 2: Cognition · Section I (continued)

Questions 4, 5 refer to the following information.

Researchers assigned participants to one of two wording conditions before offering them a hypothetical medical decision. All participants were told that 600 people were expected to die from a disease outbreak without treatment. Group 1 chose between two programs described in terms of lives saved; Group 2 chose between the same two programs described in terms of lives lost. After choosing, participants rated how risky each option felt.

**Table 1. Percentage choosing the risk-averse (certain) option in each wording condition**

| Group   | Wording of outcomes                        | Chose the certain option |
|---------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Group 1 | Programs described in terms of lives saved | 72%                      |
| Group 2 | Programs described in terms of lives lost  | 22%                      |

4. Based on Table 1, which conclusion is best supported by the difference between the two groups?
- (A) Describing outcomes as losses makes people more risk-averse than describing them as gains for the same underlying choice.
- (B) The certain option was chosen far more often when outcomes were described as lives saved than as lives lost.
- (C) Participants in Group 2 were poor at basic arithmetic, so they picked randomly among the two choices.
- (D) The two programs had objectively different chances of saving lives across the two groups of people.
5. The pattern of choices across the two wording conditions is best explained by which cognitive bias?
- (A) Confirmation bias, the tendency to seek out and remember information that fits an existing belief.
- (B) The availability heuristic, in which vivid recent examples inflate estimates of how likely an event is to occur.
- (C) Belief perseverance, in which people cling to a claim even after its supporting evidence is discredited.
- (D) The framing effect, in which equivalent descriptions of the same options produce different choices.
6. After watching a week of vivid news coverage of a rare shark attack, a beachgoer estimates that the yearly risk of a shark attack in the United States is far higher than it actually is, and higher than the risk of a car crash on the drive to the beach. Which bias best explains this pattern?
- (A) The representativeness heuristic, in which likelihood is judged by how well an example matches a familiar prototype in memory.
- (B) The availability heuristic, in which ease of recalling vivid examples inflates estimates of how common an event is.
- (C) The gambler's fallacy, in which a run of one outcome is believed to make the opposite outcome more likely on the next trial.
- (D) Hindsight bias, the tendency to feel that a known outcome was predictable all along after it has occurred.

## AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 2: Cognition · Section I (continued)

Questions 7, 8 refer to the following information.

A shopper trying to remember a new nine-digit account number silently repeats it over and over while walking from the counter to the front door of the store. A different shopper, given the same nine-digit number, mentally breaks it into a three-digit area code, a three-digit exchange, and a three-digit line, and links each chunk to a familiar street address on the same block.

7. The second shopper's strategy is best described as which encoding technique?
  - (A) Rote maintenance rehearsal, repeating the digits without linking them to any meaningful referent.
  - (B) Iconic imagery, holding a brief snapshot of the number in visual sensory memory for a fraction of a second.
  - (C) Chunking, in which the digits are grouped into a small number of meaningful units tied to known referents on the block.
  - (D) Automatic encoding, in which the number is stored effortlessly and without any conscious strategy.
8. One week later, which shopper is more likely to recall the nine-digit number, and why?
  - (A) The second shopper, because grouping the digits into three units expands the storage capacity of long-term memory itself.
  - (B) The second shopper, because meaningful associations produce a deeper level of processing that supports later retrieval.
  - (C) Neither, because any nine-digit number will exceed the seven-item span of short-term memory regardless of the strategy used by the person.
  - (D) The first shopper, because drilling material through pure repetition tends to build the strongest long-term memory over a delay of days.
9. According to the multi-store model of memory, in what order does information typically flow before it becomes a lasting memory?
  - (A) Long-term memory to short-term memory to sensory memory during the very first exposure to a new event.
  - (B) Short-term memory to sensory memory to long-term memory across a few seconds of focused attention.
  - (C) Sensory memory to long-term memory, skipping short-term working memory for most incoming information.
  - (D) Sensory memory to short-term or working memory to long-term memory when the material is rehearsed.
10. A researcher wants to test whether a new eight-week training program improves short-term memory in high school students. Which of the following provides the clearest operational definition of the outcome variable?
  - (A) Whether participants describe their memory as feeling stronger in an open-ended interview held at the end of the training period.
  - (B) The researcher's overall impression of how much progress each participant seemed to be making during weekly training sessions.
  - (C) The average score on a standardized digit-span test given before and after training, with digits read aloud at one digit per second.
  - (D) How often participants report using memory strategies in their daily lives after the training program has finished for the year.

## AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 2: Cognition · Section I (continued)

11. A patient with severe damage to the hippocampus on both sides of the brain can still learn to trace a shape while watching their hand in a mirror, and gets faster each day. Yet, on each new visit, the patient claims never to have done the task before. This dissociation is best explained by which distinction?
- (A) The hippocampus supports new explicit memories, while procedural motor skills can be built through other pathways.
  - (B) The task did not require any conscious attention, so no long-term memory of any kind was formed during the sessions.
  - (C) Sensory memory was intact while short-term memory was damaged, so only very brief traces of the task survived across visits.
  - (D) The patient stored the new task in semantic memory instead of episodic memory, protecting it from the hippocampal damage.
12. A student can recite the words of the national anthem, describe what happened at their sixteenth birthday party, and tie their shoes without thinking about it. Which set of long-term memory systems is best matched to those three abilities, in the same order?
- (A) Episodic, procedural, semantic.
  - (B) Semantic, procedural, episodic.
  - (C) Procedural, semantic, episodic.
  - (D) Semantic, episodic, procedural.
13. Many adults report remembering exactly where they were when they first heard about a major national tragedy years earlier, and they feel highly confident that the memory is accurate. Careful follow-up work shows these vivid memories are held with confidence but are no more accurate than ordinary autobiographical memories. This pattern is best described as which of the following?
- (A) A prospective memory, which is a plan to perform an action at a future time or in response to a later situational cue.
  - (B) An implicit memory, which shapes behavior without any conscious awareness of the original triggering event or its details.
  - (C) A flashbulb memory, an emotionally vivid autobiographical memory that feels detailed but is not especially accurate.
  - (D) A repressed memory, which is pushed out of awareness in response to trauma and then recovered later in therapy.

**Questions 14, 15 refer to the following information.**

Students watch a short video of a two-car collision at an intersection. Students are randomly assigned to Group 1 or Group 2. One week later, Group 1 is asked, "About how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?" while Group 2 is asked, "About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?" A week after that, both groups return and are asked whether they remember seeing any broken glass in the video, even though no broken glass was ever shown.

14. Which feature of the study's design is most important for supporting a causal claim that the word used in the question changed later memory of the video?
- (A) The video was shown to a large convenience sample of undergraduate students at a single university on the same afternoon.
  - (B) The two questions differed by only one word, and participants were placed into the two conditions by a random process.
  - (C) Participants rated how confident they felt in their memory before being told the correct answer to the follow-up question.
  - (D) The researchers reported percentages of yes and no responses instead of raw counts of each choice in each group of participants.

## AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 2: Cognition · Section I (continued)

15. Participants in the smashed group later report seeing broken glass in the video more often than participants in the hit group, even though no glass was shown. Which memory process best explains this result?
- (A) Retroactive interference, in which newer learning disrupts the accurate recall of older material stored earlier.
  - (B) Source amnesia, an inability to remember where a specific fact or claim was first learned by the person.
  - (C) The misinformation effect, in which post-event information becomes incorporated into the memory of the event.
  - (D) Proactive interference, in which older learning disrupts the accurate encoding of newer material learned later.
16. A student learns Spanish vocabulary in the fall and French vocabulary in the spring. On a French quiz, they keep writing the Spanish word for the same object without realizing it. This pattern is best described as which of the following?
- (A) Source amnesia, in which the student cannot remember where each of the two vocabulary lists was first learned.
  - (B) Retroactive interference, in which newer French learning disrupts older Spanish memories on the vocabulary quiz.
  - (C) Encoding failure, in which the French words never entered long-term memory in the first place during study.
  - (D) Proactive interference, in which older Spanish learning disrupts the retrieval of newer French vocabulary.
17. A researcher reports that high school students who study in the school library score better on end-of-year exams than students who study at home, and concludes that library studying was the cause. Because location was not randomly assigned, which threat to internal validity is most important to rule out?
- (A) A confounding third variable, such as preexisting differences in motivation, prior grades, or sleep, could account for the gap in exam performance.
  - (B) A recording error, because the exam was scored by more than one teacher, so measurement noise might account for the small difference in scores.
  - (C) A publication issue, because the researcher shared the findings before the paper had been peer-reviewed by other researchers in the field of education.
  - (D) A scheduling detail, because the library was open only on weekdays while home study could happen on any day of the week for some participants.

**Questions 18, 19 refer to the following information.**

A school psychologist is preparing to use a new intelligence test with incoming students. Before adopting it, the psychologist reviews two pieces of technical evidence supplied by the publisher. The first shows that students who take the test on two separate weekends score almost identically each time. The second shows that scores on the test correlate strongly with end-of-year grade point average across a national sample of students in the same age range.

18. Which pair of psychometric properties is most directly demonstrated by the two pieces of evidence the psychologist reviewed?
- (A) Test-retest reliability from the weekend comparison and predictive validity from the grade correlation.
  - (B) Split-half reliability from the weekend comparison and content validity from the grade correlation.
  - (C) Standardization from the weekend comparison and construct validity from the grade correlation.
  - (D) Predictive validity from the weekend comparison and test-retest reliability from the grade correlation.

**AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 2: Cognition · Section I (continued)**

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19. The publisher also reports that scores on the new test are normally distributed with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 in the norming sample. Approximately what percentage of students in that sample scored between 85 and 115?
- (A) About 34%.
  - (B) About 50%.
  - (C) About 68%.
  - (D) About 95%.
20. A team wants to test whether a new after-school reasoning program improves fluid intelligence in middle school students. Which research method would provide the strongest evidence for a causal claim?
- (A) A one-year case study of a single motivated student enrolled in the program at the researchers' local school.
  - (B) An experiment that randomly assigns students to the program or a matched control activity, with pre and post tests.
  - (C) A cross-sectional survey asking parents whether their child has ever attended any similar reasoning program before.
  - (D) A correlational study relating self-reported enjoyment of the program to end-of-year school grades in the students.

**Q1. Answer: A**

Topic 2.1 · Perception

Linear perspective is the monocular cue in which parallel lines look as though they meet at a distant vanishing point, giving the brain a strong sense of depth from a single eye's image. Retinal disparity and convergence are binocular cues that need both eyes, and while interposition also helps with depth, it does not describe the converging-rails pattern the stimulus centers on.

**Q2. Answer: A**

Topic 2.1 · Perception

Continuity (also called good continuation) is the Gestalt principle in which the visual system prefers smooth, connected patterns over broken ones, so the row of trees is grouped into a single receding line rather than as separate objects. Closure works on gaps in a single outline. Convergence is a binocular depth cue in which the eyes rotate inward for near objects, not a Gestalt grouping principle. Similarity groups items by shared features, which does not capture the trees' alignment along a single receding path.

**Q3. Answer: B**

Topic 2.1 · Perception

The radiologist's expertise shapes a perceptual set that guides selective attention to diagnostic regions, so the eyes fixate on likely lesion sites first. Absolute threshold is about detecting the weakest possible stimulus. Bottom-up processing describes reading a scene without prior knowledge (the opposite of what expertise supplies). Signal detection theory does model hits and misses under uncertainty, but it does not predict equal performance between a trained expert and a novice on the same image.

**Q4. Answer: B**

Topic 2.2 · Thinking, Problem-Solving, Jud...

The table shows the certain option chosen 72% of the time in Group 1 and only 22% of the time in Group 2, a 50-point swing driven solely by wording since the programs were identical. B stays inside what the data actually show. A reverses the direction of the swing implied by the table (loss wording shifted people toward the riskier option, not away). C invents a claim the table cannot support. D contradicts the setup because the programs themselves were identical.

**Q5. Answer: D**

Topic 2.2 · Thinking, Problem-Solving, Jud...

The framing effect is the bias in which two logically equivalent descriptions of the same options produce different choices, exactly the pattern shown in the table. Confirmation bias is about information search rather than option wording, the availability heuristic is about how easily examples come to mind, and belief perseverance is about defending a discredited claim, none of which fit the gain-versus-loss wording swap.

**Q6. Answer: B**

Topic 2.2 · Thinking, Problem-Solving, Jud...

The availability heuristic is a mental shortcut in which events that come to mind easily, such as vivid recent news reports, feel more common than they actually are. Because shark attacks are unusually dramatic and heavily covered, they dominate memory and inflate the estimated risk relative to a much more common event like a car crash. The representativeness heuristic is about matching a case to a prototype, the gambler's fallacy is about misreading independent probabilities, and hindsight bias operates on judgments of past events rather than on frequency estimates.

**Q7. Answer: C**

Topic 2.4 · Encoding Memories

Chunking groups information into a small number of meaningful units, which is what the second shopper does by breaking the nine digits into an area code, an exchange, and a line and mapping them onto known addresses. Rote maintenance rehearsal describes the first shopper, iconic imagery is a very brief visual store rather than a memorization strategy, and automatic encoding covers information such as time and place that is stored without deliberate effort.

**Q8. Answer: B**

Topic 2.4 · Encoding Memories

The levels-of-processing framework predicts that deeper, more meaningful encoding produces stronger memory traces than shallow repetition, so the second shopper's grouped, associated encoding should support better recall a week later. Maintenance rehearsal (as in D) helps for a few seconds but rarely produces durable long-term memory. A picks the right shopper but for the wrong reason: grouping expands the effective span of short-term or working memory, not the capacity of long-term memory. C misapplies the short-term span limit, which grouping into meaningful units is specifically designed to work around.

**Q9. Answer: D**

Topic 2.3 · Intro to Memory

The multi-store model routes incoming information first into a brief sensory memory, then into a limited-capacity short-term or working memory, and finally into long-term memory if attention and encoding are sustained. A reverses the flow entirely, B places sensory memory in the middle, and C ignores the well-documented role of working memory as the gateway between the two ends.

**Q10. Answer: C**

Topic 2.3 · Intro to Memory

An operational definition specifies the measurement procedure precisely enough that another researcher could reproduce it, and a standardized digit-span test with a fixed presentation rate and a defined score meets that bar. Open-ended interviews (A), researcher impressions (B), and self-reported strategy use (D) are either subjective, unstandardized, or measure something other than short-term memory capacity itself.

**Q11. Answer: A**

Topic 2.5 · Storing Memories

The hippocampus is essential for consolidating new explicit (declarative) memories, so the patient cannot form conscious memories of the visits. Procedural learning depends on structures such as the cerebellum and basal ganglia, which are intact, so motor performance can improve even without any conscious recollection. B ignores the observed skill gain, C misidentifies the affected system, and D confuses two subtypes of explicit memory that are both hippocampus-dependent.

**Q12. Answer: D**

Topic 2.5 · Storing Memories

Semantic memory holds general facts such as the words of a well-known song, episodic memory holds personally experienced events such as a sixteenth birthday party, and procedural memory holds motor skills such as tying shoes. Only D matches those three examples in the order they appear in the stem; the other options scramble at least one pairing.

**Q13. Answer: C**

Topic 2.5 · Storing Memories

A flashbulb memory is a vivid autobiographical memory of the circumstances surrounding a highly emotional public event, which feels detailed and confident but is not more accurate than ordinary memories on follow-up testing. Prospective memory concerns future intentions, implicit memory operates without awareness of the source event, and repressed memory refers to a contested clinical claim about traumatic content, none of which fit the described pattern.

**Q14. Answer: B**

Topic 2.7 · Forgetting and Other Memory Ch...

A causal claim about the wording of the question needs random assignment to isolate the word swap as the only systematic difference between conditions, and a matched procedure so nothing else varies. Convenience sampling limits generalizability, self-reported confidence adds a measure but does not establish causation, and choice of statistic (percentages versus counts) does not affect internal validity.

**Q15. Answer: C**

Topic 2.7 · Forgetting and Other Memory Ch...

The misinformation effect describes the incorporation of misleading post-event information into a memory of the original event, which is exactly what a suggestive word like *smashed* produces on later recall. Interference effects (proactive and retroactive) involve competition between separate memory sets rather than distortion of a single event, and source amnesia is about forgetting where information came from, not about false details being added.

**Q16. Answer: D**

Topic 2.7 · Forgetting and Other Memory Ch...

Proactive interference is when older material (Spanish) disrupts recall of newer material (French), which fits the student pulling up Spanish words during a French quiz. Retroactive interference runs in the opposite direction, source amnesia is about forgetting where information was learned, and encoding failure would predict no memory of the French words at all rather than a Spanish substitute.

**Q17. Answer: A**

Topic 2.6 · Retrieving Memories

Because location was not randomly assigned, any preexisting differences between the library-studiers and the home-studiers act as a third-variable confound: motivation, prior grades, or sleep could drive both the choice of location and the exam score, so no causal claim about the library itself is supported. Scoring noise (B) and open-access days (D) are secondary concerns, and pre-print publication (C) is not a threat to internal validity at all.

**Q18. Answer: A**

Topic 2.8 · Intelligence and Achievement

Two testings that produce nearly identical scores demonstrate test-retest reliability, and a correlation between test scores and a later real-world outcome such as grade point average demonstrates predictive validity. B mislabels the reliability type (split-half compares halves of one testing) and misidentifies the validity type. C swaps in standardization, which is about a norming sample and consistent administration rather than repeated scoring, and D reverses the pairings entirely.

**Q19. Answer: C**

Topic 2.8 · Intelligence and Achievement

In a normal distribution, roughly 68% of scores fall within one standard deviation of the mean, roughly 95% within two, and roughly 99.7% within three. A range of 85 to 115 is one standard deviation on either side of a mean of 100, so about 68% of the norming sample falls in that band. The other percentages correspond to different portions of the curve, not the plus-or-minus one standard deviation range.

**Q20. Answer: B**

Topic 2.8 · Intelligence and Achievement

A causal claim about the program's effect on fluid intelligence requires random assignment to a treatment or a comparable control condition, with matched measures before and after, so an experimental pre-post design is the appropriate choice. A single case study cannot support a general causal claim, a cross-sectional parent survey provides only associations, and a correlational study of enjoyment and grades cannot rule out third variables such as prior ability.