



AP PSYCHOLOGY

UNIT 4: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONALITY



COGNITOEDU.LINK/AP-PSYCH-U4

Scan for Unit 4 notes

20 AP-style MCQs across topics 4.1 to 4.7. 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 4 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

- **4.1** Attribution Theory and Person Perception
- **4.2** Attitude Formation and Attitude Change
- **4.3** Psychology of Social Situations
- **4.4** Psychodynamic and Humanistic Theories of Personality
- **4.5** Social-Cognitive and Trait Theories of Personality
- **4.6** Motivation
- **4.7** Emotion

STRUGGLING WITH A TOPIC?



Any topic tricky? Scan the QR to jump straight to the Unit 4 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**. 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 4: Social Psychology and Personality

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 commuter is running late on the subway platform when another passenger accidentally bumps into her and spills coffee on her jacket. She thinks to herself, 'What a careless person.' Later that same day, she trips over her own bag and spills water on a coworker, and thinks, 'The floor is so uneven near this desk.'

1. The commuter's judgment about the passenger who bumped into her, compared with her explanation of her own later spill, is the clearest example of which pattern?
 - (A) Just-world thinking, which is the belief that people generally receive the outcomes they truly deserve.
 - (B) Self-serving bias, in which people credit success to their own skill and blame outside factors when they fail.
 - (C) Actor-observer bias, in which people explain others' behavior with traits and their own behavior with the setting.
 - (D) Mere-exposure effect, in which repeated contact with a specific stimulus tends to increase liking for that stimulus.
2. A psychologist argues that adults raised in more collectivist cultural contexts often show a weaker version of the pattern in the commuter's first judgment. Which explanation best fits that observation?
 - (A) Collectivist norms weight the situation and social role over stable personal traits when explaining what a person does.
 - (B) Adults in those contexts lack trait vocabulary, so they cannot describe others in stable-personality language at all.
 - (C) Collectivism removes the tendency to notice other people's behavior, so daily events go unexplained by observers.
 - (D) Self-serving bias tends to be stronger in collectivist contexts, which makes trait-based judgments of others more common.
3. A charity asks a volunteer to display a small yard sign supporting a local safety campaign. Two weeks later they return and ask her to install a much larger sign. She agrees, even though she would have refused the large sign if asked first. Which persuasion technique does this pattern illustrate?
 - (A) Foot-in-the-door, where agreeing to a small first request raises later compliance with a larger, connected request.
 - (B) Door-in-the-face, where a large opening request is refused and then followed with a smaller, more reasonable ask.
 - (C) Central route to persuasion, which shifts attitudes through careful evaluation of the strength of an argument.
 - (D) Mere-exposure effect, in which liking for an object tends to grow with repeated exposure to that same object.
4. A voter who has campaigned against a policy for years reads a well-argued piece supporting that policy. To ease the tension between her long-held view and the strength of the new argument, she posts online that the author was paid by lobbyists and dismisses the piece. Which concept best explains her response?
 - (A) Central-route elaboration, based on effortful evaluation of the argument and its supporting evidence in the piece.
 - (B) Bystander effect, where the presence of many observers reduces any one person's felt responsibility to act on a problem.
 - (C) Groupthink, in which members of a cohesive decision-making group suppress dissent to protect a shared outlook.
 - (D) Cognitive dissonance reduction, in which a person restores consistency after facing a clash with a prior view.
5. An advertisement for a new running shoe features a well-known athlete and dramatic music but says little about the shoe's design. A viewer who is tired and not shopping for shoes ends up liking the brand more anyway. Which route best explains this shift in her attitude?
 - (A) Central route to persuasion, driven by a careful review of the strength of the arguments in the message.
 - (B) Peripheral route to persuasion, driven by surface cues in the ad such as source appeal and emotional tone.
 - (C) Reciprocity norm, driven by the pressure a viewer feels to return a favor received directly from the advertiser.
 - (D) Scarcity principle, driven by a viewer's sense that a limited-time offer from the seller will soon be gone.

AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality · Section I (continued)

Questions 6, 7 refer to the following information.

A student joins a large online chat during a live event with several hundred participants. A user posts a distressing message about being alone that evening. Many viewers see the message, but no one replies for a long stretch. The student notices the message but assumes someone else, closer to the situation, will step in first.

6. The student's assumption that someone else will reply to the distressing post is the clearest example of which social phenomenon?
(A) Group polarization, in which group discussion tends to strengthen the leanings already held by members of the group.
(B) Deindividuation, in which anonymity in a crowd loosens a person's usual sense of individual self-restraint in behavior.
(C) Bystander effect, where a larger audience of possible helpers lowers any one person's felt responsibility to act.
(D) Social loafing, in which members of a group tend to put in less individual effort on a shared task than on a solo one.
7. Which change to the online setting would most likely reduce the pattern described and raise the chance that a viewer will reply to the distressing post?
(A) Increasing the number of viewers who can see the chat so more possible helpers view each message on the screen.
(B) Removing all names and profile photos from the chat so no user's identity is visible to any other user present.
(C) Directly tagging one specific viewer by name to acknowledge the sender's message and check in with the sender.
(D) Adding fast-scrolling ads next to the chat to draw viewer attention away from the incoming messages on the screen.

Questions 8, 9, 10 refer to the following information.

Researchers want to test whether the mere presence of an audience improves performance on a simple, well-practiced task. They recruit 120 experienced cyclists and randomly assign each to ride a familiar 1-kilometer route either alone or in front of a small audience of onlookers. Times are recorded to the nearest second.

Table 1. Mean 1-kilometer cycling time (seconds) by condition

Condition	n	Mean time (s)	SD (s)
Alone	60	112.4	6.8
With audience	60	104.1	7.1

8. Which conclusion is best supported by the mean cycling times shown in Table 1?
(A) Riders were slower with an audience present, which suggests the presence of others impaired performance on this route.
(B) Audience presence produced no meaningful difference in performance, since the two mean times fall within about one SD of each other.
(C) Riders were faster with an audience present than they were alone, in line with the boost seen when others watch someone perform a well-learned skill.
(D) The audience group showed lower variability than the alone group, which indicates the audience reduced individual differences.
9. Which limitation most weakens the researchers' ability to generalize the audience-presence finding to riders in general?
(A) The two conditions produced standard deviations that were similar in size, which limits how confidently mean differences can be interpreted.
(B) Only riders who already have extensive practice took part, so the pattern may not extend to novices attempting a route for the first time.
(C) Both groups completed the same physical route, which prevents any comparison across terrain and rules out a broader conclusion.
(D) Times were reported to the nearest second, which is too coarse a measure to justify any general claim about audience effects.
10. Which feature of the design most strengthens a causal claim about audience presence and cycling time on the familiar route?
(A) The recruitment of a self-selected sample of experienced cyclists who volunteered to complete the study on the familiar route.
(B) The reporting of the standard deviations alongside the mean cycling times to describe the spread of scores in each condition.
(C) The use of the same physical route in both conditions so that terrain is held constant between alone and audience trials.
(D) The random assignment of each cyclist to one of the two audience conditions before any cycling times were recorded.

AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality · Section I (continued)

Questions 11, 12 refer to the following information.

In a therapy session, a client says, 'I only feel like I matter when I do well at work. If I have a bad month, I feel like my family will stop caring about me.' The therapist responds by accepting and valuing the client without any conditions tied to performance, and works to help the client build a more secure sense of self.

11. The therapist's response is the clearest example of which humanistic concept?
 - (A) Unconditional positive regard, the offering of full acceptance and warmth to a client regardless of behavior or achievement.
 - (B) The unconscious mind, which is the store of thoughts and desires held outside of a person's everyday awareness in daily life.
 - (C) Behavior modification, in which desired responses in a client are shaped through carefully scheduled reinforcement over time.
 - (D) Reciprocal determinism, the two-way influence among a person, their observable behavior, and features of their environment.
12. A different therapist working from a psychodynamic perspective would most likely explain the client's remarks by pointing to which of the following?
 - (A) A relatively low score on the conscientiousness dimension of a Big Five personality inventory given to the client.
 - (B) Learned helplessness produced by a documented history of uncontrollable negative events in the client's earlier years.
 - (C) A poor match between the client's current environment and her long-term career and personal-development goals in life.
 - (D) Early experiences that shape adult feelings of worth in ways that lie outside a person's everyday conscious awareness.

Questions 13, 14 refer to the following information.

A psychologist gives 500 adults a validated personality questionnaire that scores each person on five broad dimensions. She then asks the same adults, one year later, to report how often they attended community events over the past year. She examines whether each personality score predicts community attendance.

Table 2. Correlations between each personality score and community-event attendance (r)

Personality dimension	Correlation with attendance (r)
Extraversion	0.42
Agreeableness	0.18
Conscientiousness	0.11
Neuroticism	-0.09
Openness	0.14

13. Based on the correlations in Table 2, which personality dimension is the strongest positive predictor of the community attendance measure?
 - (A) Extraversion, tied to sociability, outward energy, and enjoyment of active social settings and gatherings.
 - (B) Agreeableness, which reflects warmth, cooperation, and pleasant interactions with others in most settings.
 - (C) Conscientiousness, which reflects organization, self-discipline, and task follow-through over time and effort.
 - (D) Openness to experience, which reflects curiosity, imagination, and interest in new ideas and activities.
14. Which statement about this study design is most accurate?
 - (A) This is a true experiment, since participants completed the questionnaire well before the researcher measured attendance.
 - (B) This is a case study, since the researcher followed one identified group of adults across a full year of their lives.
 - (C) The design uses random assignment to personality dimensions, which lets the researcher draw a causal claim about traits.
 - (D) This design is correlational, so a positive association would not on its own show that a trait causes attendance.

AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality · Section I (continued)

15. A high school junior starts a new part-time job. Because he believes he is generally capable of handling hard tasks, he takes on extra shifts, which then reinforce his belief in that same capacity. Bandura would describe the belief that carries him into new tasks as which of the following?
- (A) Self-efficacy, a confidence in one's ability to succeed at a given task or situation one is currently facing.
 - (B) Self-esteem, which is an overall evaluation of one's worth as a person across many roles and settings in life.
 - (C) Self-concept, which is a descriptive account of who a person is across the many roles and settings they occupy.
 - (D) Locus of control, a general belief about whether control over life outcomes lies within the person or outside.

Questions 16, 17 refer to the following information.

A middle school introduces a program that pays students a small cash reward for every book they finish reading over the summer. Before the program, one seventh grader used to read on her own for fun most afternoons. After a summer of the paid program, when the payments end in the fall, she stops picking up books on her own and says reading feels 'like a job now.'

16. The drop in the student's reading behavior once the payments end is best explained by which concept?
- (A) The Yerkes-Dodson relationship between overall arousal level and performance on a familiar cognitive activity.
 - (B) Overjustification, in which an external reward can weaken the person's own interest in a task they already enjoyed.
 - (C) Drive-reduction, in which meeting a physiological need lowers the motivation to repeat the behavior that met it.
 - (D) Homeostasis, which is the maintenance of a stable internal biological state through automatic negative feedback loops.
17. Before the program started, the student's afternoon reading was primarily driven by which type of motivation?
- (A) Extrinsic motivation, which arises from external rewards or pressures outside the activity itself being performed.
 - (B) Achievement motivation, which reflects a stable desire to meet the high standards set by other people in one's life.
 - (C) A drive to reduce a specific internal biological deficit through the behavior being performed by the person.
 - (D) Intrinsic motivation, arising from personal interest and satisfaction inside the activity itself for the person doing it.

Questions 18, 19 refer to the following information.

During a championship soccer match a striker suddenly sees the goalkeeper charging at her. Her heart rate spikes, her palms sweat, and her stomach clenches. A moment later, she interprets that surge of arousal as excitement about the chance to score rather than as fear, and she feels confident as she strikes the ball.

18. The striker's shift from physical arousal to a labeled feeling of excitement is best explained by which idea about emotion?
- (A) Bodily arousal on its own produces a specific emotion without any input from thinking or interpretation of the situation.
 - (B) Bodily arousal and a felt emotion arise at the same moment but are not connected in any causally meaningful way.
 - (C) Cognitive appraisal of the arousal, given the situation, shapes which specific emotion the person experiences in the moment.
 - (D) The prefrontal cortex simulates likely future emotions well before any bodily arousal begins in a current situation.
19. A sport psychologist plans a follow-up study to test whether coaching athletes to relabel their pre-competition arousal reduces reported anxiety. She schedules the coached group's testing session right before a home match and the untrained comparison group's session right before an away match. Which threat to a causal conclusion does this scheduling introduce?
- (A) Match location becomes a confound because it varies together with the coaching, so any group difference cannot be traced to the coaching alone.
 - (B) The design has no threat, because both groups will complete the same self-report anxiety scale immediately before their scheduled match.
 - (C) The scheduling affects reliability but not validity, because the two groups still measure the same underlying construct with the same instrument.
 - (D) The main threat is placebo response, because athletes who receive any instruction expect to feel less anxious regardless of what the coaching says.

AP PSYCHOLOGY · Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality · Section I (continued)

20. During a class project, one student privately disagrees with the plan the rest of the group has chosen, but says nothing because everyone else seems on board. When asked afterward, she says she went along because she did not want to stand out. Which social influence process best fits her behavior?
- (A) Obedience to authority, in which a person follows a direct order from a legitimate authority figure in a defined role.
 - (B) Normative social influence, in which a person publicly agrees with a group in order to fit in with its members.
 - (C) Informational social influence, in which a person adopts a group's view because they think the group is more accurate.
 - (D) Fundamental attribution error, in which observers overweight traits when they explain another person's specific actions.

Q1. Answer: C

Topic 4.1 · Attribution Theory and Person ...

The commuter attributes the other person's spill to a stable trait (carelessness) while attributing her own spill to the setting (the floor). That flip between traits for others and situation for the self is the actor-observer pattern. Just-world thinking is about deserved outcomes, self-serving bias is about success and failure, and mere-exposure is about liking a repeated stimulus.

Q2. Answer: A

Topic 4.1 · Attribution Theory and Person ...

Cross-cultural work on attribution points out that collectivist contexts weight role, relationship, and situation more heavily when explaining a person's behavior. B overclaims by denying trait vocabulary exists, C wrongly claims observers stop noticing behavior, and D reverses the direction of the effect on trait attributions.

Q3. Answer: A

Topic 4.2 · Attitude Formation and Attitud...

Agreeing to a small first request and then a bigger second one is the foot-in-the-door pattern, driven by a shift in self-perception as a supporter of the cause. Door-in-the-face runs the other way (large refused, then smaller), central route is about weighing arguments, and mere-exposure is about liking a repeated stimulus.

Q4. Answer: D

Topic 4.2 · Attitude Formation and Attitud...

The clash between a strong prior attitude and a persuasive counter-argument creates the tension the theory of cognitive dissonance describes, and discrediting the source is a common way to relieve it. Central-route persuasion would mean weighing the argument on its merits, the bystander effect is about diffusion of responsibility, and groupthink is a group dynamic.

Q5. Answer: B

Topic 4.2 · Attitude Formation and Attitud...

When motivation to think carefully is low, attitudes shift through the peripheral route, where cues like a famous face and mood do the work. Central-route persuasion requires careful evaluation of message content, which the stem rules out. Reciprocity and scarcity are separate influence principles that the scenario does not describe.

Q6. Answer: C

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

The bystander effect describes how a large audience reduces any one person's felt responsibility to help, exactly the pattern the student shows. Group polarization is about attitudes hardening after discussion, deindividuation is about lowered self-restraint in anonymous crowds, and social loafing is about effort on a joint task.

Q7. Answer: C

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

Naming a specific person shifts responsibility from a diffuse crowd to one identifiable helper, which is the most reliable way to overcome bystander diffusion. A raises crowd size and worsens the effect, B increases anonymity and can deepen it, and D adds distraction that competes with the message.

Q8. Answer: C

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

Riders were about 8 seconds faster with an audience than alone on this familiar route, which fits the classic boost from an audience when the skill is well-learned. A reverses the direction, B ignores the size of the mean difference, and D misreads the standard deviations (they are similar, not smaller in the audience group).

Q9. Answer: B

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

The sample is limited to experienced cyclists on a familiar route, so the finding may not extend to less-practiced riders. A treats similar spread as a threat to generalization when it is simply descriptive information. C describes a design strength for internal validity, not a limit on generalization. D confuses precision of measurement with breadth of the sample.

Q10. Answer: D

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

Random assignment is what lets researchers claim that the difference in times is caused by the audience manipulation rather than pre-existing differences between riders. Self-selection weakens generalizability, reporting standard deviations describes the data, and shared route is helpful for control but not the key causal lever.

Q11. Answer: A

Topic 4.4 · Psychodynamic and Humanistic T...

Offering acceptance and valuing that does not depend on performance is Carl Rogers' concept of unconditional positive regard, a core piece of the humanistic approach to therapy. The unconscious mind belongs to the psychodynamic tradition, behavior modification to the behavioral tradition, and reciprocal determinism to the social-cognitive approach.

Q12. Answer: D

Topic 4.4 · Psychodynamic and Humanistic T...

Psychodynamic accounts locate current emotional patterns in earlier experiences and processes outside everyday awareness, which fits the client's fragile sense of worth. A uses a trait vocabulary from a different theory, B is a specific learned-helplessness account, and C uses a career-fit lens that does not match the psychodynamic frame.

Q13. Answer: A

Topic 4.5 · Social-Cognitive and Trait The...

Extraversion shows the strongest positive correlation with attendance in Table 2 ($r = 0.42$), well above agreeableness (0.18), conscientiousness (0.11), and openness (0.14). Extraversion is the Big Five dimension most closely tied to seeking out social contact, which matches the pattern in the data.

Q14. Answer: D

Topic 4.5 · Social-Cognitive and Trait The...

The researcher measures both variables and looks at their association over time without manipulating anything, so the design is correlational and any link would leave open other explanations. A ignores the absence of manipulation, B misuses the case-study label for a 500-person sample, and C claims a random assignment that is impossible when personality is a measured attribute.

Q15. Answer: A

Topic 4.5 · Social-Cognitive and Trait The...

Self-efficacy is Bandura's term for a person's belief that they can succeed at a specific task or situation. Self-esteem is a broader evaluation of worth, self-concept describes who a person is across settings, and locus of control refers to a general orientation about control over outcomes rather than task confidence.

Q16. Answer: B

Topic 4.6 · Motivation

Introducing a cash reward for an activity a person already enjoyed can shift the perceived reason for doing it from personal interest to the reward, so pulling the reward often leaves the person less inclined to keep doing it. Yerkes-Dodson concerns arousal and performance, drive-reduction is about physiological needs, and homeostasis is a broader self-regulation concept.

Q17. Answer: D

Topic 4.6 · Motivation

The stem describes a student who read on her own without any outside reward, which is the textbook picture of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation depends on external rewards or pressures, drive-based motivation is about biological deficits, and achievement motivation is a broader trait tied to standards from others.

Q18. Answer: C

Topic 4.7 · Emotion

Two-factor accounts of emotion argue that physical arousal is interpreted through a cognitive appraisal of the situation, which determines whether the same arousal is felt as fear or excitement. A leaves out cognition, B denies any link between arousal and the felt emotion, and D describes a purely predictive process.

Q19. Answer: A

Topic 4.7 · Emotion

Location varies systematically with the coaching, so it is a confound: any difference in reported anxiety could reflect where the match is played rather than the intervention itself. B ignores that shared measurement does not fix the systematic difference between conditions. C misreads the problem as reliability when the issue is what the group difference actually reflects. D describes a separate threat that is not the one the scheduling creates.

Q20. Answer: B

Topic 4.3 · Psychology of Social Situations

Going along with a group in order to be accepted, while privately holding a different view, is the textbook picture of normative social influence. Obedience involves a direct order from an authority figure, informational influence is about accepting a group's view as correct rather than fitting in, and the fundamental attribution error is a judgment bias unrelated to conformity.