

4.3 Psychology of Social Situations

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **conformity** 从众, **obedience** 服从 and group effects.

You must be able to:

- distinguish **normative** 规范性 from **informational** 信息性 social influence
- state the factors that raise or lower **obedience**
- describe **social facilitation** 社会助长 and **social loafing** 社会惰化
- explain **groupthink** 群体思维, **group polarisation** 群体极化 and the **bystander effect** 旁观者效应

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Two reasons to conform

Normative influence: going along to be accepted, even when you privately disagree.

Informational influence: going along because you believe the group knows better.

■ What changes obedience

Obedience rises with a legitimate and physically present authority, and with distance from the victim; it falls sharply when the authority is remote, when a peer refuses, or when the victim is close and visible.

■ Facilitation and loafing

The presence of others **improves** performance on easy, well-learned tasks and **impairs** it on hard ones. In a group where individual effort is not identifiable, people contribute less —**social loafing**.

■ Three group effects

Groupthink: a cohesive group suppresses dissent to preserve agreement. **Group polarisation**: discussion moves a group toward a more extreme version of its initial leaning. **Bystander effect**: the more witnesses present, the less likely any one intervenes, because responsibility is diffused.

2 Practice

2.1 State the difference between normative and informational influence. [2]

2.2 State two conditions that reduce obedience. [2]

2.3 A student performs a well-practised piece better in front of an audience but a new one worse.

(a) Name the effect. [1]

(b) State the factor that decides the direction. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Failing to help because many others are present illustrates [1]

- **A** groupthink
- **B** the bystander effect
- **C** social facilitation
- **D** normative influence

3.2 A committee that suppresses doubts to preserve agreement shows [1]

- **A** group polarisation
- **B** groupthink
- **C** social loafing
- **D** informational influence

3.3 A group project is graded only as a whole.

(a) Name the likely effect on individual effort. [1]

(b) Suggest one change to the assessment and justify it.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.3 Psychology of Social Situations** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Social Psychology and Personality** section of the AP Psychology handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 normative: conforming to be accepted despite private disagreement; informational: conforming because the group is believed to be right.

2.2 any two of: the authority is remote rather than present; a peer refuses; the victim is close and visible; the authority lacks legitimacy.

2.3 (a) social facilitation. (b) task difficulty: easy or well-learned tasks improve, hard or new ones are impaired.

3.1 B. responsibility is diffused among the witnesses.

3.2 B. cohesion and the desire for agreement suppress dissent.

3.3 (a) social loafing. (b) assess individual contributions as well as the group product, because effort falls when individual contribution is not identifiable.