

AP Psychology rewards precision, not length. A free-response point is earned by defining the term correctly AND applying it to the scenario – a definition alone scores nothing, and a application without the term scores nothing either. Learn each sentence below, then practise finishing it with "in this case, ...". 定义要准确, 并且必须结合题目情境作答, 只写定义不得分。

Biological bases of behaviour

Neuron 神经元 — a nerve cell; the basic building block of the nervous system

Synapse 突触 — the gap between the axon terminal of one neuron and the dendrite of the next, across which neurotransmitters travel

Neurotransmitter 神经递质 — a chemical messenger released at a synapse that crosses to the next neuron and excites or inhibits it

Myelin sheath 髓鞘 — a fatty layer around an axon that speeds up the transmission of the neural impulse

Action potential 动作电位 — the brief electrical charge that travels down an axon, fired only when the threshold is reached

All-or-none principle 全或无法则 — a neuron either fires at full strength or does not fire at all; a stronger stimulus does not produce a stronger impulse

Plasticity 可塑性 — the brain's ability to change and reorganise, especially after damage or through new experience

Hippocampus 海马体 — the brain structure that processes conscious, explicit memories for storage

Amygdala 杏仁核 — the brain structure involved in the processing of emotion, especially fear and aggression

Circadian rhythm 昼夜节律 — the body's roughly 24-hour biological clock, governing sleep and wakefulness

Sensation, perception and cognition

Sensation 感觉 — the process by which receptors detect stimulus energy from the environment

Perception 知觉 — the process by which the brain organises and interprets sensory information so it has meaning

Absolute threshold 绝对阈限 — the minimum stimulation needed to detect a stimulus 50% of the time

Encoding 编码 — the process of getting information into the memory system

Working memory 工作记忆 — the limited-capacity store that actively holds and manipulates information for a short time

Long-term potentiation 长时程增强 — the lasting strengthening of a synaptic connection after repeated stimulation; the neural basis of learning

Schema 图式 — a mental framework built from experience that organises and interprets new information

Heuristic 启发式 — a mental shortcut that allows a fast judgement, at the cost of being sometimes wrong

Confirmation bias 确认偏差 — the tendency to search for and favour evidence that supports what one already believes

Functional fixedness 功能固着 — the tendency to see an object as having only its usual function, which blocks a novel solution

Development and learning

Classical conditioning 经典条件作用 — learning in which a neutral stimulus, paired repeatedly with an unconditioned stimulus, comes to trigger a conditioned response

Operant conditioning 操作性条件作用 — learning in which behaviour is strengthened by reinforcement or weakened by punishment

Reinforcement 强化 — any consequence that makes the behaviour it follows more likely to happen again

Punishment 惩罚 — any consequence that makes the behaviour it follows less likely to happen again

Shaping 塑造 — reinforcing successively closer approximations of a target behaviour until that behaviour is produced

Observational learning 观察学习 — learning by watching and imitating the behaviour of others

Attachment 依恋 — the strong emotional bond between an infant and its caregiver, shown by seeking closeness and distress on separation

Assimilation 同化 — interpreting new experience in terms of an existing schema

Accommodation 顺应 — changing an existing schema so that it fits new experience

Social psychology and personality

Fundamental attribution error 基本归因错误 — over-estimating personality and under-estimating the situation when explaining another person's behaviour

Cognitive dissonance 认知失调 — the discomfort felt when actions and attitudes conflict, which motivates a change in the attitude

Conformity 从众 — adjusting one's behaviour or thinking to match a group standard

Obedience 服从 — complying with the direct command of an authority figure

Groupthink 群体思维 — the desire for harmony in a group overriding realistic appraisal of the alternatives

Social facilitation 社会助长 — improved performance on a simple or well-learned task when others are present

Self-efficacy 自我效能感 — a person's belief in their own capability to carry out the actions a task requires

Defence mechanism 防御机制 — in psychoanalytic theory, an unconscious strategy the ego uses to reduce anxiety by distorting reality

Research methods and assessment

Reliability 信度 — the extent to which a measure gives consistent results when repeated

Validity 效度 — the extent to which a measure actually measures what it claims to measure

Standardization 标准化 — defining meaningful scores by comparison with the performance of a pretested group

Operational definition 操作性定义 — a statement of the exact procedures used to define and measure a variable, so the study can be replicated

Mental and physical health

Stressor 应激源 — an event or condition that a person appraises as threatening or challenging

Resilience 心理韧性 — the capacity to adapt and recover after significant adversity

Tolerance 耐受性 — needing progressively larger doses of a drug to obtain the original effect

Withdrawal 戒断反应 — the discomfort and distress that follow stopping an addictive drug