

General Psychology Unit 4 Short Answer Questions

Chapter 6

1. Both instincts and reflexes are innate (unlearned) behaviors that organisms are born with.

Reflexes are motor or neural reactions to a specific stimulus in the environment. They tend to be simpler than instincts, involve the activity of specific body parts and systems (the knee-jerk reflex and the contraction of the pupil in bright light), and involve more primitive centers of the central nervous system (the spinal cord and the medulla). In contrast, instincts are innate behaviors that are triggered by a broader range of events, such as maturation and the change of seasons. They are more complex patterns of behavior, involve the movement of the organism as a whole (sexual activity and migration), and involve higher brain centers.

2. A fixed interval reinforcement schedule is when behavior is rewarded after a set amount of time; the result is a moderate response rate with significant pauses after reinforcement. A

variable interval reinforcement schedule is when the person or animal gets the reinforcement based on varying amounts of time, which are unpredictable; the result is a moderate yet steady response rate. In a fixed ratio reinforcement schedule, there are a set number of responses that must occur before the behavior is rewarded; the result is a high response rate with pauses after reinforcement. In a variable ratio reinforcement schedule, the number of responses needed for a reward varies; the result is a high and steady response rate.

10. Latent learning is learning that occurs but is not observable in behavior until there is a reason to demonstrate it. For example, children may learn by watching the actions of their parents but only demonstrate it at a later date, when the learned material is needed. For example, suppose

that child's dad drives him to school every day. In this way, he learns the route from his house to his school, but he has never driven there himself, so he has not had a chance to demonstrate that he has learned the way. One morning his dad has to leave early for a meeting, so he cannot drive Ravi to school. Instead, he follows the same route on his bike that his dad would have taken in the car. This demonstrates latent learning. The boy had learned the route to school but had no need to demonstrate this knowledge earlier.

17. Negative punishment is when something is removed to decrease the likelihood of a behavior. For example, when a child misbehaves, a parent can take away a favorite toy. In this case, a stimulus (the toy) is removed to decrease the behavior. Positive punishment is when something is added to decrease the likelihood of a behavior. An example of positive punishment is scolding a student to get the student to stop texting in class. In this case, a stimulus (the reprimand) is added to decrease the behavior (texting in class).

23. Observational learning extends the effective range of both classical and operant conditioning. In contrast to classical and operant conditioning, in which learning occurs only through direct experience, observational learning is the process of watching others and then imitating what they do. For example, a child watches their parent folding the laundry. They later pick up some clothing and imitate folding the clothes. Another example is when a young couple goes on a date to an Asian restaurant. They watch other diners in the restaurant eating with chopsticks and copy their actions to learn how to use these utensils.

Chapter 7

35. IQ stands for intelligence quotient and describes a score earned on a test designed to measure intelligence. The IQ test is supposed to gauge how well someone can use information and logic to answer questions or make predictions. The value of IQ testing is most evident in educational or clinical settings. Children who seem to be experiencing learning difficulties or severe behavioral problems can be tested to ascertain whether the child's difficulties can be partly attributed to an IQ score that is significantly different from the mean for their age group. Without IQ testing or another measure of intelligence, children, and adults needing extra support might not be identified effectively. In addition, IQ testing is used in courts to determine whether a defendant has special or extenuating circumstances that preclude them from participating in some way in a trial. People also use IQ testing results to seek disability benefits from the Social Security Administration.

37. A prototype is the best example or representation of a concept. For example, what comes to your mind when you think of a dog? Most likely your early experiences with dogs will shape what you imagine. If your first pet was a Golden Retriever, there is a good chance that this would be your prototype for the category of dogs.

38. Natural concepts are created “naturally” through your experiences and can be developed from either direct or indirect experiences. For example, if you live in Buffalo, New York, you have probably had a lot of direct experience with snow. You've watched it fall from the sky, you have seen lightly falling snow that barely covers the windshield of your car, and you have

shoveled out 18 inches of fluffy white snow as you've thought, "This is perfect for skiing." You've thrown snowballs at your best friend and gone sledding down the steepest hill in town. In short, you know snow. You know what it looks like, smells like, tastes like, and feels like. However, if you have lived your whole life on the island of The Bahamas in the Caribbean, you may never have actually seen snow, much less tasted, smelled, or touched it. You know snow from the indirect experience of seeing pictures of falling snow or from watching films that feature snow as part of the setting. Either way, snow is a natural concept because you can construct an understanding of it through direct observations, experiences with snow, or indirect knowledge (such as from films or books).

39. An artificial concept is a concept that is defined by a specific set of characteristics. For example, a triangle always has three angles and three sides. A square always has four equal sides and four right angles. Mathematical formulas, like the equation for area ($\text{length} \times \text{width}$), are artificial concepts defined by specific sets of characteristics that are always the same.

45. An event schema, also known as a cognitive script, is a set of behaviors that can feel like a routine. For example, while it is quite common for people to greet one another with a handshake in the United States, in Tibet, you greet someone by sticking your tongue out at them, and in Belize, you bump fists.