

# AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY

## 2010 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 2

At a schoolwide pep rally preceding a big game at Williams James High School, each grade has a designated t-shirt color and seating area in the bleachers. Student leaders organize classes so that their colored shirts combine to form the school flag. The coach gives an exciting speech, the cheerleaders perform a routine, and the band plays the school song while the students sing in unison.

Explain the behavior and perceptions of the participants in the pep rally using the concepts below. Be sure to apply the concepts to the scenario in your explanation.

- Cocktail party effect
- Conformity
- Deindividuation
- Figure ground
- Occipital lobe
- Procedural memory
- Sympathetic nervous system

#### ***General Considerations***

1. Answers must be presented in sentences, and sentences must be cogent enough for students' meaning to be apparent. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce students' scores, but spelling must be close enough so that the reader is convinced of the word intended.
2. Within a point, students will not be penalized for misinformation unless it *directly contradicts* correct information that would otherwise have scored a point (e.g., "The sympathetic nervous system increases heart rate. The sympathetic nervous system decreases heart rate.").
3. Students can score points only if information is presented in *context*. This means that they must clearly convey which part of the question is being answered. For example, if a student correctly explains that "during the coach's speech, a student hears her name called out in the noise and turns her head," but does not identify this as the cocktail party effect, the point will not be earned. However, it may be possible to infer context from the structure or ordering of the essay.
4. Throughout the essay, definitions alone without application are not sufficient to score points, but definitions can establish and/or enhance the context for the example.
5. Because definitions alone do not score, if a student provides an incorrect definition but a correct application, score the point based on the application.
6. Every point requires students to relate their answers to the scenario. The scenario is not limited to the pep rally. The application could include experiences related to the various participants or activities that occur before, during or after the pep rally (football game, practice, etc.). Context may be established by using words such as "student/students," "participants," "the event," etc.
7. Students may address either a behavior or a perception for each point.
8. Examples provided for each of the following points are not to be considered exhaustive.

#### **Point 1: Cocktail party effect**

The example must demonstrate the ability to focus on one voice (or voices) while excluding other noises.

#### **Score**

- "Despite all the noise at the pep rally, the student could have heard his name said by another student two bleachers down."

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### Question 2 (continued)

#### **Point 2: Conformity**

Students must provide a *specific example* of an individual (or individuals) doing something because *the larger group does*.

#### Score

- “All students sit and listen to the coach’s speech because everyone else does.”

#### Do not score

- “Going to the pep rally” or “taking part in the pep rally” without a specific behavior.
- Compliance (a direct request) or obedience to an authority figure.

#### **Point 3: Deindividuation**

The example must demonstrate an individual’s (or individuals’) loss of identity, self-restraint (e.g., “do something that they might not normally do”), individuality or sense of self *because he or she is in a group*.

*Note:* The example may illustrate conformity as long as deindividuation is established as a loss of identity in a group.

#### Score

- “The individual personalities would be lost by each student and they would act as a group.”
- “Deindividuation is the loss of identity in a group with all the sophomores wearing green shirts.”

#### **Point 4: Figure ground**

Students must provide *specific examples* to distinguish between a figure (e.g., cheerleaders, coach) and [back]ground (e.g., bleachers, court), *labeling* which example is the figure **OR** the ground.

*Note:* Auditory examples will also score.

#### Score

- “The school mascot stands out as the figure in his bright yellow costume against the gym floor.”
- “A student can hear the coach’s speech against the background of crowd noise.”

#### **Point 5: Occipital lobe**

The student must establish that the occipital lobe is involved in vision.

#### Score

- “At the pep rally, the occipital lobe allows the people to see (or look).”
- “The occipital lobe allows the students to see the cheerleaders’ performance.”

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### Question 2 (continued)

#### **Point 6: Procedural memory**

Students must illustrate memory for a skill, a step-by-step process or knowledge of *how to perform* a specific task.

#### Score

- “Cheerleaders show procedural memory when they perform their routine.”

#### Do not score

- Declarative memories (“factual information,” such as “where to sit,” “what shirt to wear,” or “words to the song”).

#### **Point 7: Sympathetic nervous system**

Students must include a physiological component in the example (e.g., pupils dilate, heart rate increases, adrenaline is released).

*Note:* The words “arousal,” “pumped up,” “excited” or “energy” alone are not enough. Students must tie the application directly to the body.

#### Score

- “The exciting speech has caused the sympathetic nervous system to increase the heart rate.”
- References to “fight or flight” or “arouses the body” also score.

The cocktail party effect is the phenomenon that even if you are deep in conversation with someone else, if someone from across the room calls your name, you will switch your attention to that. In this case, if you are talking to your best friend next to you and the coach calls you to come see him, you will ~~be~~ hear it + respond.

Conformity is the idea that you will do something purely because everyone else is doing it, even if you have no reason to. In this case, if you found the coach's speech boring, but everyone else found it motivating and everyone stood up + cheered, you would, too, just because everyone else did.

Deindividuation is the idea that when placed in a big group, especially if you all look the same, you would do things you wouldn't do alone. In this case, everyone ~~wore~~ <sup>wore</sup> similar dress in that they wore school colors tee-shirts. This could lead people to be more rowdy + disrespectful, something they wouldn't be if any one of them was by himself.

Figure ground is ~~the~~ one of the Gestalt principles that allows people to make sense of the world around ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup>/their senses. This particular one has to do with the fact that when given a picture, people can determine what ~~is~~ the subject is and what the background is. In this case, when one boy watches the cheerleading routine,

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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he can recognize the shapes that are the cheerleaders and that the negative space between the bodies is the gym floor.

The occipital lobe is the part of the brain that processes the sense of sight. In this case, the occipital lobe allows the cheerleaders to <sup>perceive</sup> ~~see~~ all the students in the bleachers and <sup>perceive</sup> ~~see~~ the school flag represented by the different colored shirts.

Procedural memory is the part of memory responsible for remembering how to perform certain tasks. In this case, maybe the coach made the speech by telling everyone to stand up and do jumping jacks to get their heart rate up. Students would have to use their procedural memory to remember how to do jumping jacks.

The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the autonomic nervous system responsible for arousal. ~~This~~ ~~word~~ In this case, during the school song, everyone would get hyped up, their heartbeat quickening ~~and~~ ~~adrenal~~ glands excreting sweat, and blood pressure increasing as their body gets aroused by the excitement.

The cocktail party effect is when moving things around you distract you from what you are doing and you temporarily change your attention to something else. This could happen through sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste. At this pep rally, ~~if~~ a person may be watching the band play the song but then you see a ~~cheer~~ cheerleader be thrown up in the air, your eyes will divert from the band to the cheerleader.

Conformity is the act of changing behavior to be like the crowd or your friends or impress people to gain attention or respect. In this pep rally, when the crowd cheers, you will cheer with them to go along with the crowd to not single yourself out. Or the opposite may occur, if the crowd is cheering but your friends are not, you may not cheer to fit in with your friends.

Deindividuation is when you are with a group of people, you lose your sense of individuality and may conform to a group's actions. It may be a ~~distractive~~ <sup>destructive</sup> action such as vandalism. After the pep rally, the group you are with may be so riled up from the rally that they start vandalizing other's property and you go along ~~with them~~ with them, participating in the ~~distractive~~ destruction.

The occipital lobe is the ~~part of the~~ in the back of your brain. It is the part of the brain that processes your vision. Damage to this part of your brain may cause you to go blind. At the pep rally, the occipital lobe is the part of the brain that allows you to see the events at the pep rally. It works with the eyes and the optic nerve. The rods and cones in the eyes

detect light which then goes through transduction ~~on the optic nerve~~  
~~which leads to the thalamus which~~ (the process of changing information  
into neural electric impulses) through the optic nerve which  
leads to the thalamus, which sends the info to the occipital lobe.

Procedural memory is the memory that involves the  
order of events that you observe. Your procedural memory  
is the memory of the order that things happened at before, during,  
and after the pep rally.

The sympathetic nervous system is part of the autonomic  
nervous system, which is part of the peripheral nervous system, ~~which~~  
~~is part of~~ The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the  
nervous system that we do not control (autonomic). It controls  
how we react to and are aroused to an arousing stimuli or  
event. The sympathetic nervous system dilates your pupils,  
makes you sweat, loosens your bowels, and increases your  
heart rate, to allow you to respond quicker in stressful events that  
are potentially dangerous or just when you get excited (sexually  
or otherwise). At the pep rally, your sympathetic nervous  
system makes you aroused due to the excitement of the pep  
rally. It can make you sweat, pupils dilate, increase your  
heart rate, release adrenaline, and make your breathing speed up.

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and physically conform to the students and actions around them.

The pep rally at Williams James High School is based on conformity in that all students must participate. The students in each grade make up part of the school flag as a whole. This also provides for deindividuation because its a group activity and does not rely on one person. Deindividuation is also present in the fact that one person missing won't affect the entire group, but if many people are missing, the activity is failed. For the students to participate in the pep rally correctly, procedural memory is required. This means that every student is required to know which section they are to sit in, what color they are to wear, and the words to the school song to sing together. Most importantly, the occipital lobe of the students' brains have to be in function to pick up visual cues. The cheerleaders, for one, would not be seen without the occipital lobe, neither would the school's coach who was giving a speech. Along side the occipital lobe, the sympathetic nervous system is important in this situation in a number of ways. It provides for the students excitement without letting ~~their~~ their bodies stop functioning (examples: breathing, blinking, and brain functions). The sympathetic nervous system



counteracts the cocktail party effect. This effect provides for the students feelings of excitement, fun, and group activity. A student at a pep rally might look at ~~it~~<sup>it</sup> as a social time and a time to have fun with their classmates. All of this is attributed to the cocktail party effect. Finally, figure ground is present in the space a student makes up. It is also a so called force keeping the pep rally from going awry. Even if the students don't realize all of this, their bodies are working hard, ~~and~~ their environment is providing cues, and their minds are involved in a pep rally at all times.

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## 2010 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

This question required analysis and application. Students were asked to relate concepts from several subfields of psychology (social, visual perception, memory, attention, biological) to behavior and perception in an applied scenario.

#### Sample: 2AA

**Score: 6**

The essay establishes the requisite context of the presence of noise, and the student provides an example of attention to a voice “from across the room” and thus earned point 1. The essay merited point 2 when the student describes how pressure to stand and clap during the pep rally is conformity. When the student provides an example of how group uniformity might lead to a loss of self-restraint, point 3 was awarded. Although the student provides general information about figure ground, no credit was granted for point 4 because the student does not clearly distinguish or label the figure. The essay garnered point 5 when the student provides an example of how the occipital lobe allows a person to perceive the cheerleaders. Point 6 was gained when the student describes how procedural memory allows a person “to remember how to do jumping jacks.” Point 7 was credited when the student describes an increase in heart rate as a result of excitement (listening to the school song).

#### Sample: 2BB

**Score: 4**

The essay did not merit point 1 because the student does not provide an example describing how a person must focus on one voice amid noise. When the student provides an example of how someone might “go along with the crowd,” the essay gained point 2. The student gives an example of a loss of individuality occurring during the pep rally and thus earned point 3. The student does not attempt point 4. The essay was awarded point 5 when the student links the ability to see to the occipital lobe in the context of the pep rally. The essay did not receive credit for point 6 because the example does not clearly make a reference to how to perform a specific task. The essay earned point 7 with an accurate description of a physiological component of the sympathetic nervous system in response to the excitement of the pep rally.

#### Sample: 2CC

**Score: 1**

The essay begins with an attempt to earn point 2, which the student did not receive because the essay includes a description of obedience rather than conformity. The student specifically references a need for students to “physically conform to the students and actions around them” rather than engaging in an activity in response to group pressure. The essay did not merit point 3 because there is no mention of a loss of identity. The student references general memory for location but does not make reference to a specific task, so the essay did not receive credit for point 6. The essay was awarded point 5 when the student indicates that the occipital lobe is necessary to see the cheerleaders. The student references the sympathetic nervous system but does not include arousal of a specific physiological component, so point 7 was not gained. The essay did not earn point 1 because there is no mention of hearing a specific voice while excluding other noises. The essay was not awarded point 4 because a specific reference to a figure in relation to background is not referenced.