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# AP Psychology

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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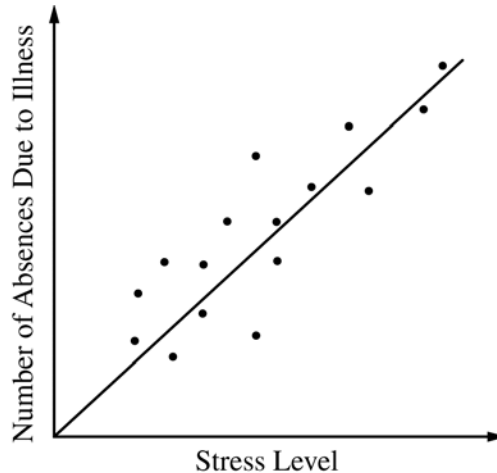
## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 2

A survey was conducted to determine the state of the physical and psychological health of high school students.

#### Part A

Some of the survey questions related to student stress levels and student absences due to illness. The data on these variables are displayed below.



- What is the most appropriate conclusion that can be drawn based on the figure above?
- Explain how the data depicted in the graph are consistent with the exhaustion stage of the general adaptation syndrome.
- A researcher wants to conduct another study using the same variables, but wants to set it up as an experiment. Explain one reason that an institutional review board (IRB) might not approve this new study.

#### Part B

Some of the survey questions related to risky behaviors. The results indicated that 90 percent of high school students' risky behaviors were influenced by social factors.

Explain how each of the following may contribute to an increase in risky behaviors.

- Deindividuation
- Normative social influence

#### Part C

Explain how each of the following may contribute to good physical or psychological health of high school students.

- Cognitive restructuring
- Incentive motivation

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### Question 2 (continued)

#### General Considerations

1. Answers should be presented in sentences and be cogent enough for the meaning of the response to come through. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce the score of a response, but spelling must be close enough that the reader is convinced of the word.
2. Do not score any notes made on the question section of the booklet. Score only what has been written in the blanks provided in the booklet.
3. Definitions alone will not score, but they may be used to enhance the application.
4. Within a point, a student will not be penalized for misinformation unless it directly contradicts correct information that would otherwise have scored a point. A correct application with an incorrect definition is not considered a direct contradiction and should score the point.
5. Rubric examples provided for each point are not to be considered exhaustive.
6. Responses that simply parrot or repeat the terms from the question will not score.
7. A response can score a point only if it clearly conveys what part of the question is being answered. It is possible to infer what part of the question is being answered if it is consistent with the order of the question.

#### Part A

##### Point 1

The response must indicate that (1) stress level positively predicts the number of absences due to illness OR (2) there is a positive (direct) correlation between stress level and number of absences OR (3) as stress levels increase, the number of absences tends to increase OR (4) as stress levels decrease, the number of absences tends to decrease.

- Score: “We can positively predict number of student absences due to illness from students’ stress levels.”
- Score: “There is a positive correlation between stress level and number of absences.”
- Score: “As stress levels increase, the number of absences tends to increase.”
- Do NOT score anything to do with stress causing absences. Phrases such as “leads to, due to, results from” without clear description of correlation will not score, as they imply causation.
- Do NOT score reference to negative (inverse, indirect) correlation.

Note: Because these are correlational data, it would also be correct to use the number of absences as the predictor of stress level.

Note: Responses may substitute synonyms for correlation, such as association or relationship.

##### Point 2

The response must reference the study and indicate vulnerability to illness or depletion of the immune system.

- Score: “The research findings are consistent with the exhaustion stage of general adaptation syndrome (GAS), in which our body’s immune system is depleted and we get sick.”
- Do NOT score alarm or resistance stages of GAS.

Note: Response does not need to mention that exhaustion is the third/final stage of GAS.

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### Question 2 (continued)

#### Point 3

The response must indicate that the manipulation of stress, absences, or illness would be unethical or harmful.

- Score: “It is unethical to randomly assign people to stress levels because it might cause undue harm to participants.”
- Score: “It is harmful to induce stress in the participants.”
- Do NOT score references to harm without specific mention of stress, absences, or illness.

Note: Manipulation of stress, absences, or illness can be described with synonyms such as influence, cause, induce.

#### Part B

The response to Points 4–5 must indicate that the concept facilitates/increases risky behaviors.

The response does not have to relate to the original survey, as the directions in Part B do not say anything about risky “health” behaviors, only risky behavior in general.

Risky behavior can be indicated as any behavior with a potentially negative consequence.

#### Point 4

The response must include that the presence of other people diminishes one’s sense of self-awareness OR increases feelings of anonymity OR diminishes one’s sense of individual responsibility or inhibition. This increases one’s engagement in risky behavior.

- Score: “A person feels anonymous in large groups, so they do irresponsible things.”
- Score: “Drew is at a concert with 100,000 other people, so he loses his sense of self-awareness and tosses his empty soda can on the field instead of throwing it in the recycle bin like he normally would do.”
- Do NOT score other group-related phenomena such as groupthink, group polarization, social facilitation, social loafing, bystander effect.

#### Point 5

The response must indicate that a person engages in risky behavior in order to fit in/gain social approval or avoid social disapproval.

- Score: “People might do risky things because they think it will make them look cool in the eyes of others.”
- Score: “Susie has never stolen anything, but when she is shopping with friends, she sees them shoplifting, so she steals to fit in with her classmates.”
- Do NOT score references to informational social influence or simply learning by observation or conformity.

Note: A response can use descriptions of fitting in, such as belonging.

Note: Using “normal” alone is not enough to indicate social approval. If a response uses the word “normal,” it must also clearly describe social approval in the eyes of others.

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### Question 2 (continued)

#### Part C

##### Point 6

The response must indicate that reinterpreting one’s negative thoughts in a positive way leads to better physical or psychological health.

- Score: “When Rik gets a bad grade on his physics test, he is sad. But he tells himself that at least now he has lots of room to improve before the next test and starts to feel better about himself.”
- Score: “Liz is overwhelmed by her pile of homework, but when she decides that it is a challenge that she can conquer, her headache goes away.”
- Score: “Elliot changes his negative thoughts to more positive thoughts, which leads to better psychological health.”
- Do NOT Score “Andi has been dwelling on negative thoughts about school, so she decides instead to start thinking about more positive things like summer vacation, which reduces her stress level.”

##### Point 7

The response must include an external stimulus that pulls someone towards a behavior that contributes to good physical or psychological health.

- Score: “When Barney saw an ad for a free t-shirt for joining the gym, he signed up for a membership.”
- Score: “Kristin meditates for 15 minutes a day so that she will receive extra credit in her health class.”
- Do NOT score references to wants and desires without an external stimulus that pulls someone toward a behavior.
- Do NOT score “extrinsic motivation” without description or explicit mention of an external stimulus.

Note: The response may earn a point by using an example of either positive or negative reinforcement as the external incentive.

Note: If the response discusses a behavior that does not obviously contribute to good physical or psychological health, then it must specify **how** the behavior contributes to good physical or psychological health.

## ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

2. Part A:

Based on the figure above, it can be concluded that stress level and number of absences due to illness have a positive correlation. This essentially means that as one gets more and more stressed, they are more likely to miss school due to illnesses. This is consistent with the exhaustion stage of the general adaptation syndrome because in the exhaustion stage one gets tired and worn out from what they are doing, and then begin to get ill or drop in performance. As student stress levels increase, ~~they~~ from being worn out from all of the tests and schoolwork they must do, ~~they~~ their body begins to give out on them and they become ill, which is why they miss school. ~~An IRB~~ An IRB might not approve of an experiment using the same variables of stress level and number of absences because it is not ethical. If it were an experiment, the researcher would essentially make ~~to~~ ~~pro~~ students sick by putting various amounts of stress on them, which is not morally right.

Part B:

Deindividuation is the phenomenon in which, people ~~are more~~ lose their sense of identity when in a big group. ~~When the students~~ If the students were with a big group of people, they might lose their sense of individualism and begin to behave more recklessly and do things that they typically wouldn't do if they were on their own. As a result, risky ~~and~~ behaviors would increase because people experiencing deindividuation might forget about punishment, standards, and morals.

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Normative social influence is basically peer pressure. It is when people do things to try and fit in and to act "normally." This may lead to an increase in risky behaviors because at most students want to fit in, and may go to great extremes to do so. For example, if one is at a party where everyone is drinking alcohol, normative social influence may cause them to begin drinking as well, even if they normally wouldn't do it.

### Part C:

Cognitive restructuring is when one changes/rebuilds their bad thoughts/behaviors into better ones. Cognitive restructuring in high schoolers ~~may~~ might cause them to think more positively, helping with their psychological health. In addition it might allow them to make better choices, such as the choice to not do drugs, which would contribute to good physical health.

Incentive motivation is when one does something in order to gain ~~an~~ a reward. By offering incentives, ~~to the high schoolers~~ ~~to who exercise daily,~~ or high schoolers will be more likely to do what they are supposed to. For example, if the school high school principals offer extra credit as an incentive to those who exercise daily, more students will be more likely to exercise, which would contribute to their overall physical health. In addition, schools could offer other incentives, such as food, to those who read <sup>a certain</sup> daily number of books a week, which would again go to help ~~increase~~ maintain good mental health.

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## ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

The most appropriate conclusion that can be drawn from the figure is that stress and the number of Absences due to illness are correlated. The number of days a student is absent is positively correlated to the amount of stress they have. The data in the graph shows that students who are ill more also have higher amounts of stress. This data is consistent with the exhaustion stage of General adaptation syndrome by showing that the body is physically affected by a person's mental state and vice versa. If a researcher wanted to study this as an experiment, the IRB might not approve because it would potentially cause harm to people by either causing them stress or causing them to be ill intentionally.

Deindividuation may result in risky behavior by causing an individual to conform and act like a certain group of people. This group of people can have a heavy influence over an individual and their actions and cause them to behave & act differently than they normally would. Normative social influence is also a big factor in students risky behavior. Students are aware of the risky behaviors that others partake in and might want to conform and fit in with the "norms" of the high school society.

Cognitive restructuring may contribute to good psychological health of high school students. If a student had a negative outlook on life or a certain subject or even themselves, their mental perspectives could be altered in a positive way.

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## ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

Over time with cognitive restructuring, teachers or administrators or even students could influence individuals or groups with cognitive restructuring and help them think positively, which would greatly increase their mental health. And since mental health and physical health can be correlated, the positive state of mind would also increase their physical health.

Incentive motivation is also a factor that may contribute to good physical and psychological health. If a student has incentive motivation to do things, they might think more positively and would therefore increase their mental state by feeling accomplished for doing something. This feeling of accomplishment would act as a positive regard and continue to help their mental state.

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## ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

The most appropriate conclusion that could be drawn is that with a greater amount of absences the greater amount of stress it causes for a student.

High stress levels can cause lack of sleep which if the lack of sleep happens continuously will cause exhaustion because of the circadian rhythm and sleep debt, that is not paid off.

The IRB might not approve the experiment because the results could disproportionate and skewed because different people handle stress and exhaustion differently.

Deindividuation may increase risky behavior because it causes the student to not be themselves and conform to peer pressure from other students.

Normative social influence may contribute to riskier behavior by ~~the~~ individuals conforming to others influence in order to fit in and feel a sense of

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ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 2

belonging therefore fulfilling one of  
Maslow's needs.

Cognitive restructuring may contribute to good psychological health of a student by changing the way they view the world around them therefore altering their state of conscious thoughts and feelings.

Incentive motivation may contribute to good psychological health because ~~if~~ they are gaining something to motivate them to do good by them reaching an incentive and giving them something to look forward to which improves their psychological ~~health~~ health.

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## 2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

This free-response question focuses on three different aspects of psychology: the ability to understand research methodology, knowledge of social processes, and how cognition and behavior are related.

#### Sample: 2A

**Score: 7**

The response earned point 1 because it draws the appropriate conclusion that there is a positive correlation between stress and absences due to illness. The response earned point 2 because it references the study by mentioning students, and it indicates illness following the body breaking down due to stress. The response earned point 3 because it describes the manipulation of stress as being unethical. The response earned point 4 because it indicates an increase of risky behavior after losing a sense of identity in a group. The response earned point 5 because it indicates an increase of risky behavior with a desire to fit in. The response earned point 6 because it discusses changing negative/bad thoughts into better or more positive thoughts, contributing to good psychological health. The response earned point 7 because it indicates an external incentive of extra credit for exercising, which contributes to good physical health.

#### Sample: 2B

**Score: 4**

The response earned point 1 because it draws the appropriate conclusion that there is a positive correlation between stress and absences due to illness. The response did not earn point 2 because it does not indicate vulnerability to illness or depletion of the immune system. The response earned point 3 because it discusses the manipulation of stress or illness as being harmful. The response did not earn point 4 because it does not describe the loss of a sense of self awareness, responsibility, or inhibition but instead discussed conformity. The response earned point 5 because it indicates partaking in risky behavior in order to fit in. The response earned point 6 because it discusses going from a negative outlook to a more positive one, thus benefitting psychological health. The response did not earn point 7 because it does not describe any external stimulus that would contribute to good physical or psychological health.

#### Sample: 2C

**Score: 1**

The response did not earn point 1 because it describes a causal relationship between variables instead of a positive correlation. The response did not earn point 2 because it does not indicate a vulnerability to illness or depletion of the immune system. The response did not earn point 3 because it does not discuss the manipulation of stress, illness, or absences as being unethical or harmful. The response did not earn point 4 because it does not describe a diminished sense of self-awareness, responsibility, or inhibition. The response earned point 5 because it discusses kids' risky behavior resulting from trying to fit in. The response did not earn point 6 because it does not describe a reinterpretation of negative thinking to more positive thinking. The response did not earn point 7 because it does not indicate a specific external stimulus that would pull someone toward a behavior that would contribute to good health.