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Preference Assessment Practice Questions for RBTs (PDF)

Preference assessments help a team identify items and activities that may function as reinforcers for a learner. This practice set covers the procedures most often described in assessment items, including paired stimulus and multiple stimulus formats, and the reasons a team might choose one over another. Many questions ask how the RBT should record selections, how often items should be rotated, and what a result does and does not show. Read each question for the purpose of the assessment, since the right answer depends on what the team needs to learn.

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Practice questions

Answer every question before you look at the key, then check yourself on the next pages.

1. On each trial, the learner may select a card game or a board game but not both, and later trials offer other combinations of two items. What preference-assessment format is being implemented?

- **A** Single-stimulus (SS) preference assessment
- **B** Tangible-condition functional analysis
- **C** Multiple-stimulus without replacement (MSWO)
- **D** Paired-stimulus (PS) preference assessment

2. The learner may go to any of different sensory materials at any time while the RBT records engagement time. Which preference assessment is this?

- **A** Progressive-ratio (PR) reinforcer assessment
- **B** Free-operant (open-access) assessment
- **C** MSWO (without-replacement) assessment
- **D** Staff-interview preference ranking

3. A technician places five items on a table, lets Imani choose one, removes the chosen item, and repeats with remaining items. Which format is being run?

- **A** Paired-stimulus format
- **B** Multiple-stimulus format
- **C** Curriculum-based probe
- **D** Functional-analysis test

4. A tablet ranks first in a preference assessment. What can the RBT conclude?

- **A** It is a candidate reinforcer until contingent delivery is shown to strengthen later responding
- **B** It is now an established reinforcer for target responses, since it came out on top of the assessment
- **C** It shows what maintains problem behavior, as long as it was chosen across repeated trials
- **D** It can be added to other programs by the RBT until a supervisor reviews the ranking

5. A technician presents two leisure items at a time and records which one Jordan selects across several trials. Which term fits the procedure?

- **A** Paired preference
- **B** Free-operant preference
- **C** Functional analysis test
- **D** Skills assessment check

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6. During a preference assessment, staff give extra praise only after one selection. What is the best interpretation?

- **A** The ranking likely still holds, since each selection was recorded exactly as it happened
- **B** The RBT should adjust the affected scores to offset the error and then inform the supervisor
- **C** The error may bias selections, so it should be documented and reported to the supervisor
- **D** The top-ranked item is now a confirmed reinforcer, so it should be used first in teaching

7. A learner chooses between two snacks at a time across several trials. Which assessment is the RBT conducting?

- **A** Free-operant assessment format
- **B** Paired-stimulus assessment
- **C** Functional analysis test
- **D** Curriculum assessment task

8. During a preference assessment, an RBT presents a ball and a puzzle together, then records which item the learner chooses. What format is shown?

- **A** Free-operant check
- **B** Paired-stimulus check
- **C** Functional analysis
- **D** Skills checklist review

9. The plan removes one earned token after Sofia's tearing activity sheets, and the behavior decreases. Which procedure is this?

- **A** Time-out, since access to reinforcement is removed
- **B** Response cost, which is a form of negative punishment
- **C** DRO, since tokens depend on the behavior not occurring
- **D** Positive punishment, since losing a token is unpleasant

10. After the session, the RBT counts signed request forms using a defined quality rule. Which recording procedure is this?

- **A** Writing a narrative of the events before and after each response
- **B** Scoring the lasting results of the behavior after it has occurred
- **C** Timing each episode from its onset to its offset while watching live
- **D** Marking each interval in which the behavior occurred at any point

Answer key and explanations

1. Correct answer: D · Paired-stimulus (PS) preference assessment

A paired-stimulus assessment presents two stimuli on each trial and compares selections across planned pairs. Two choices per trial signals a paired-stimulus assessment.

Task: B.1

2. Correct answer: B · Free-operant (open-access) assessment

A free-operant assessment permits unrestricted access to several options and measures allocation or duration of engagement. Concurrent free access and measured engagement signal free-operant assessment.

Task: B.1

3. Correct answer: B · Multiple-stimulus format

Multiple-stimulus formats present several items across selection trials.

Task: B.1

4. Correct answer: A · It is a candidate reinforcer until contingent delivery is shown to strengthen later responding

Preference is demonstrated by selection or engagement; reinforcement is defined by an effect on future behavior after contingent delivery. Preferred does not automatically mean reinforcing.

Task: B.1

5. Correct answer: A · Paired preference

A paired-stimulus preference assessment presents choices in pairs and records selections.

Task: B.1

6. Correct answer: C · The error may bias selections, so it should be documented and reported to the supervisor

Unequal presentation, inconsistent consequences, or timing errors can bias preference-assessment results. Present options consistently and record choices exactly as the assessment protocol specifies.

Task: B.1

7. Correct answer: B · Paired-stimulus assessment

Paired-stimulus assessment presents items in pairs.

Task: B.1

8. Correct answer: B · Paired-stimulus check

Paired-stimulus assessment presents two options and records the choice.

Task: B.1

9. Correct answer: B · Response cost, which is a form of negative punishment

Response cost removes a conditioned reinforcer contingent on behavior to reduce that behavior, making it negative punishment. Response cost is negative punishment because a reinforcer is removed after behavior.

Task: D.5

10. Correct answer: B · Scoring the lasting results of the behavior after it has occurred

Permanent-product recording measures a durable result left by behavior. A permanent product must be a measurable result that remains after the behavior.

Task: A.3

Study tips

- Note the difference between a preference result and proof that an item is a reinforcer.
- Learn how paired and multiple stimulus formats differ in the number of items shown at once.
- Review how selections are recorded and which data are compared across trials.
- Revisit items where preferences change over time, since they may need to be repeated.

FAQ

Does a high preference result prove an item is a reinforcer?

Not by itself. A high preference suggests the item may function as a reinforcer, and the team should confirm this by checking whether it increases the target behavior.

What does a preference assessment measure?

It measures which items or activities a learner approaches or selects under a defined procedure. It is a starting point for identifying potential reinforcers.

Who decides which preference assessment to use?

The supervisor or clinical team selects the procedure. The RBT follows the plan and records results accurately.

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