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Token Economy Practice Questions for RBTs (PDF)

A token economy uses tokens as conditioned reinforcers that a learner earns for target behaviors and later exchanges for backup reinforcers. The system is common in classrooms and home programs, and exam items focus on how tokens are earned, when they are delivered, and how the exchange is arranged. This set asks you to identify the parts of a token system, decide when a token should be delivered, and recognize mistakes such as delivering tokens too late or tying them to vague behaviors. A strong answer keeps the system simple, observable, and matched to the learner's age and skill level, as the plan directs.

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Practice questions

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

1. During several exchanges, Aisha chooses none of the backup items on the token menu. What is the best RBT action?

- **A** Record the refusals and ask the supervisor about a new preference check
- **B** Pause the token system for now and tell the supervisor at the next meeting
- **C** Have the learner exchange for the least disliked item to keep the routine
- **D** Raise the token price so the backup items seem more valuable to earn

2. The RBT repeatedly pairs a new token with access to the art table for Sofia. Why is this pairing used?

- **A** So the token serves as a prompt that cues the learner to begin responding
- **B** So the token gains value by predicting access to an effective reinforcer
- **C** So the learner memorizes the exchange rate before any skill is targeted
- **D** So the token can be handed out freely to build rapport with the learner

3. Maya earns tokens for raising a hand before speaking and can trade them for any of several backup items. What advantage does this variety of backups provide?

- **A** It can limit satiation and keep the conditioned reinforcer effective
- **B** It lets the RBT skip preference checks because at least one item will work
- **C** It can turn the backup items into unconditioned reinforcers over time
- **D** It allows the learner to exchange tokens whenever they choose to

4. The plan removes one earned token after Mateo's pushing the trays away, and the behavior decreases. Which procedure is this?

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

5. Priya earns tokens for following a two-step direction and exchanges them for five minutes of puzzle time. What makes this a token economy?

- **A** Tokens that are valued for themselves, apart from what they buy
- **B** Tokens that warn the learner a new demand is about to be presented
- **C** Tokens earned for target behavior that gain value by buying backups
- **D** Tokens handed out freely during the session to build rapport

6. Mateo has enough tokens to buy a bite of a preferred snack from the posted menu at the scheduled exchange time. What should occur?

- **A** Let the learner trade the tokens for the item at the posted price
- **B** Ask the learner to earn a few more tokens as a bonus before trading
- **C** Let the learner trade for a smaller portion so the item stays novel
- **D** Postpone the trade if the learner had any problem behavior earlier

7. A learner earns stars during tasks and later trades them for game time. What procedure is shown?

- **A** Token economy system
- **B** Free operant assessment
- **C** Whole interval recording
- **D** Crisis response plan

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8. Mateo earns tokens for opening a lunch container, but tokens have stopped supporting responding. Which check is most important?

- **A** Verify whether the token schedule can be thinned to build persistence
- **B** Verify that the token board stays posted where the learner can see it
- **C** Verify that praise is paired with each token at the moment it is given
- **D** Verify that tokens still reliably lead to exchange for preferred items

9. The plan says Noah earns one token immediately after reading a three-letter word. The learner responds correctly. What should the RBT do?

- **A** Save the token and deliver all earned tokens at the end of the task
- **B** Wait until the learner asks whether a token was earned, then give it
- **C** Deliver one token promptly and describe the behavior that earned it
- **D** Give two tokens this time to make the first success stand out

10. A plan reinforces homework completion with points but points are delivered before work starts. What is the main implementation issue?

- **A** Data are too objective
- **B** Tokens are too visible
- **C** Reinforcement is too varied
- **D** Tokens are not contingent

11. A written plan removes one earned token after a defined response. Which procedure should the RBT recognize?

- **A** Differential schedule
- **B** Negative punishment
- **C** Generalization test
- **D** Latency recording

12. A learner earns points for independent work and exchanges points for music time at the end. Which system is used?

- **A** Functional analysis
- **B** Whole interval scoring
- **C** Token economy system
- **D** Antecedent intervention

13. During toothbrushing practice, Ana earns a token after every third completed step. Which delivery rule is shown?

- **A** Fixed ratio delivery
- **B** Variable ratio delivery
- **C** Fixed interval delivery
- **D** Variable interval delivery

14. A technician applicant watched a token-board role-play during assessment prep. The clinic asks her to run that procedure with a learner that afternoon, but she has not performed those steps for the assessor. What should happen first?

- **A** Show the steps in practice
- **B** Review the steps before service
- **C** Have a peer stay nearby
- **D** Run one round and ask later

Answer key and explanations

1. Correct answer: A · Record the refusals and ask the supervisor about a new preference check

Backup reinforcer value can change. The RBT should report the shift and obtain supervisor-directed updates rather than altering the economy independently. Monitor backup preferences; tokens depend on what they can buy.

Task: C.11

2. Correct answer: B · So the token gains value by predicting access to an effective reinforcer

A neutral stimulus can acquire reinforcing value through repeated pairing with established reinforcers. Conditioned reinforcers gain value through pairing with already effective reinforcers.

Task: C.2

3. Correct answer: A · It can limit satiation and keep the conditioned reinforcer effective

A conditioned reinforcer paired with varied backup reinforcers may remain effective across changing preferences, although effectiveness still requires data. Variety can strengthen a conditioned reinforcement system, but effectiveness is always empirical.

Task: C.2

4. Correct answer: C · 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

5. Correct answer: C · Tokens earned for target behavior that gain value by buying backups

A token economy specifies target behavior, token delivery, and exchange for backup reinforcers. A complete token economy defines earning, exchange, and backup options.

Task: C.11

6. Correct answer: A · Let the learner trade the tokens for the item at the posted price

Reliable exchange is necessary for tokens to retain reinforcing value. Prices and rules should not change arbitrarily. A token system works only when exchange rules are predictable and honored.

Task: C.11

7. Correct answer: A · Token economy system

Tokens are earned and exchanged for backup reinforcers.

Task: C.11

8. Correct answer: D · Verify that tokens still reliably lead to exchange for preferred items

Tokens retain value when they reliably lead to meaningful backup reinforcers. Preference and exchange access must remain current. Maintain a clear, reliable connection between conditioned and backup reinforcers.

Task: C.2

9. Correct answer: C · Deliver one token promptly and describe the behavior that earned it

Consistent, prompt token delivery makes the earning contingency clear and preserves treatment fidelity. Deliver the programmed number of tokens immediately and consistently.

Task: C.11

10. Correct answer: D · Tokens are not contingent

Tokens should be delivered contingent on the target response.

Task: C.11

11. Correct answer: B · Negative punishment

Negative punishment removes a reinforcer after behavior.

Task: D.5

12. Correct answer: C · Token economy system

Points function as tokens exchanged for backup reinforcers.

Task: C.11

13. Correct answer: A · Fixed ratio delivery

C.1 includes reinforcement according to schedules, and this rule delivers reinforcement after a fixed response count.

Task: C.1

14. Correct answer: A · Show the steps in practice

RBT Ethics Code 2.0 standard 1.06 says behavior-technician services occur only after supervisor confirmation of demonstrated competence.

Task: F.2

Study tips

- Name the three parts of a token system: the token, the target behaviors, and the backup reinforcers.
- Deliver a token immediately after the target behavior so the link is clear to the learner.
- Define the exchange rules before the system begins, and keep them consistent.
- Remember that tokens must remain meaningful, so the backup reinforcers should be attractive to the learner.

FAQ

What is a token economy?

A token economy is a system in which a learner earns tokens for target behaviors and exchanges them later for backup reinforcers.

Why must tokens be delivered immediately?

Immediate delivery connects the token to the behavior, which helps the learner see what earned it and supports learning.

Is a token economy the same as a reward chart?

They are similar in concept, but a token economy has defined exchange rules and backup reinforcers. The plan should describe the details.

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