

IST605: Human Information Processing — Practice Questions

Distribution: 25% Easy (5) | 40% Normal (8) | 35% Hard (7) — 20 questions total

Types: MCQ, short/structural, and complete (paragraph) questions. All answers include explanations.

EASY (25% — 5 questions)

E1. MCQ

Cognitive psychology is best defined as the study of:

- A) Brain anatomy only
- B) How people perceive, learn, remember, and think about information
- C) Social behaviour only
- D) Clinical disorders only

► **Answer**

E2. Structural (fill-in)

Complete: The human information processing model views people as being like _____ in the sense that we store, retrieve, and use information.

► **Answer**

E3. MCQ

Naive realism refers to the intuition that:

- A) Reality is unknowable
- B) Perception is simply seeing the world as it is
- C) Only experiments yield truth
- D) Memory is always accurate

► **Answer**

E4. Structural (one word/phrase)

Which philosophical approach did John Locke emphasize for studying the mind?

► **Answer**

E5. MCQ

Behaviourism proposed that the basic unit of behaviour is the:

- A) Thought
- B) Reflex
- C) Memory
- D) Perception

► **Answer**

NORMAL (40% — 8 questions)

N1. MCQ

A key limitation of the human information processing (computer) metaphor is that it:

- A) Ignores the role of memory
- B) Does not acknowledge that humans are biological beings whose cognition serves adaptive behaviour
- C) Overstates the role of intuition
- D) Rejects the use of algorithms

► Answer

N2. Complete (short paragraph)

In 2–3 sentences, explain the “under-representation” problem in learning, using the example of a child learning the word “rabbit.”

► Answer

N3. MCQ

According to the document, when people attribute causes to others’ behaviour without definitive information, they tend to:

- A) Attribute causes at random
- B) Bias their causal attributions toward what is unusual or abnormal in the situation
- C) Rely only on genetic explanations
- D) Avoid making any attribution

► Answer

N4. Structural (short list)

Name three topics that cognitive psychology includes (as listed in the document).

► Answer

N5. MCQ

Why does the document say that “tasks that seem most natural and easy for people” can be “some of the most difficult to encode as intelligence in a computer system”?

- A) Computers lack memory
- B) Human perception and cognition rely on assumptions and processes that are often unconscious and context-dependent
- C) Computers cannot run experiments
- D) Only intuition works for such tasks

► Answer

N6. Complete (short paragraph)

What is empiricism, and how does the document say cognitive psychology uses it?

► Answer

N7. MCQ

Immanuel Kant's position on rationalism and empiricism, as presented in the document, was that:

- A) Only rationalism should be used
- B) Only empiricism should be used
- C) Both approaches must be used to decipher truth about the mind and reality
- D) Neither approach is useful

► **Answer**

N8. Structural (short answer)

What was the main goal of introspectionism (e.g., Wundt), and what was one problem with it?

► **Answer**

HARD (35% — 7 questions)

H1. MCQ

In the “information overload” example (chess), the document implies that:

- A) Humans can consider all possible moves
- B) Machines can consider all possible moves
- C) Neither humans nor machines can consider all possibilities, but machines can explore many more good moves than humans
- D) Only intuition is needed for chess

► **Answer**

H2. Complete (paragraph)

Explain how the “shaded objects” illusion is used in the document to illustrate a limitation of perception.

What assumption does the visual system make, and what is the consequence?

► **Answer**

H3. MCQ

The document suggests that a central theme in memory research is:

- A) To prove that memory is unlimited
- B) To discover how memory is organized to provide useful information when needed
- C) To show that only recent events are remembered
- D) To replace memory with computers

► **Answer**

H4. Complete (paragraph)

Compare the cognitive approach with behaviourism as presented in the document. What did behaviourism focus on and what did it ignore? How does the cognitive approach differ?

► **Answer**

H5. MCQ

Why might “experience” fail to provide relevant information or even provide misinformation in reasoning about others’ behaviour?

- A) Experience is always wrong
- B) Without definitive information, attributions cannot be logically justified in almost all cases
- C) People never use experience
- D) Only experiments are valid

► **Answer**

H6. Structural (short essay)

State one assumption of cognitive psychology about mental processes (as in the document), and briefly explain how the human information processing model reflects it.

► **Answer**

H7. MCQ

In the rat-and-illness example, the document uses it to illustrate that:

- A) Rats have no memory
- B) Humans and organisms have biases and expectations that help them cope with ambiguous possibilities; these biases are often correct but can be wrong
- C) Only taste causes illness
- D) Laboratory research is always wrong

► **Answer**

Answer key (quick reference)

ID	Answer
E1	B
E2	Computers
E3	B
E4	Empiricism (observation)
E5	B
N1	B
N2	(See explanation: under-representation + rabbit example)
N3	B
N4	Sensation, perception, attention, memory, language, reasoning, problem solving, decision making (any 3)
N5	B
N6	(See explanation: empiricism + observation/experimentation)
N7	C
N8	Goal: structure of consciousness; Problem: unconscious processes / failed to reveal structure

H1	C
H2	(See explanation: light-from-above assumption, concave/convex illusion)
H3	B
H4	(See explanation: behaviourism vs cognitive approach)
H5	B
H6	(See explanation: rules/algorithms + HIP model)
H7	B