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Free Introductory Sociology CLEP Practice Test

10 questions from InstantCert's 194-card Introductory Sociology study guide

How to use this PDF

Each of these questions is a sentence with one blank and four choices. Pick the best fit, mark it, and keep going. The answer key with explanations starts after question 10, so do all 10 before you look. No timer. On the real exam you get 54 seconds per question, so if you want a challenge, give yourself 9 minutes for the set. One caveat before you start: half of these 10 are Social Processes questions, and none are on Social Patterns, which is 10% of the real exam.

What your score means

0 to 4 correct

The Sociology CLEP runs on terms and the sociologists attached to them, and a score in this range usually means the names are not there yet. Ten questions is a sample, not a diagnosis. Take Round 2 on the page linked at the end before you decide how much work is ahead of you.

5 to 7 correct

Right in the middle. Close enough to the line to be worth studying for, and not close enough to walk in cold. Take Round 2 and see if the number holds.

8 to 10 correct

You know the theorists and the Social Processes material. Keep in mind that a good score here says nothing about the parts this set does not sample. It has no Social Patterns question (10% of the real exam) and only one on Social Stratification (25%). Take Round 2, then put your study time into those two categories and into the three big theories.

Questions

QUESTION 1 OF 10 | THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The _____ effect is where subjects of a study change their behavior if they know they are being studied.

A. butterfly
B. Hawthorne
C. Dawes
D. motivation

QUESTION 2 OF 10 | SOCIAL PROCESSES

Children draw on their parents' experiences to learn about their possible future, this is an example of _____ socialization.

A. primary
B. environmental
C. reference
D. anticipatory

QUESTION 3 OF 10 | SOCIAL PROCESSES

Charles Horton Cooley believed that the self-concept is reevaluated every time we enter a new social situation. He called this process of self-formation the _____ self.

A. self-perception
B. social interaction
C. looking-glass
D. transient

QUESTION 4 OF 10 | SOCIAL PROCESSES

The functionalist view of _____ as defined by Emile Durkheim sees it as necessary to establish group boundaries--it marks the extremities of acceptable behavior.

A. socialization
B. religion
C. values
D. deviance

QUESTION 5 OF 10 | THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

One of the things Emile Durkheim is famous for is his definition of four types of _____, including egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic types.

A. love
B. suicide
C. responsibility
D. adaptation

QUESTION 6 OF 10 | SOCIAL PROCESSES

_____ is where members of a group think similarly and conform to each other's views, often at the expense of ignoring reality.

A. Conformity
B. Collective consciousness
C. Brainstorming
D. Groupthink

QUESTION 7 OF 10 | SOCIAL PROCESSES

Robert Michels came up with the Iron Law of _____, which said that in every organization, a small number of people actually make the decisions.

A. Plutocracy
B. Oligarchy
C. Aristocracy
D. Meritocracy

QUESTION 8 OF 10 | INSTITUTIONS

The American sociologist William J. _____ theorized that changing family patterns were NOT a simple effect of one cause, industrialization.

A. Goode
B. Mead
C. Mills
D. Spencer

QUESTION 9 OF 10 | INSTITUTIONS

_____ published a book called The Power Elite. He stated that a small group of military leaders, politicians, and business leaders cooperate and form a "ruling class" in America.

A. George Herbert Mead
B. C. Wright Mills
C. Charles Cooley
D. Karl Marx

QUESTION 10 OF 10 | SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

A _____ system of social stratification allows little social mobility--people are born or married into a certain position.

A. caste
B. class
C. estate
D. status

Answer Key

1. B Hawthorne

Subjects in a study at the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric Company who hadn't been subject to any changes improved their performance in the presence of researchers.

2. D anticipatory

Anticipatory socialization occurs in advance of playing an actual role. We rehearse for the future by learning something about role requirements and visualize ourselves in the role. For example children play at being students before they go to school. We may practice being grownup, married, having children, holding a job and retiring, before we actually assume those roles.

3. C looking-glass

This process has three stages--the end result being that our conception of ourself is based on the judgements of others--other people become our "looking glass" or mirror.

4. D deviance

Emile Durkheim was known for his functionalist view of deviance, seeing it not necessarily as harmful to society, but stated that a limited amount of crime is necessary and beneficial. His anomie theory proposed that the cause of deviance is a state of normlessness resulting from rapid social change.

5. B suicide

Egoistic suicide results from too little social integration, while altruistic suicide is from too much integration--i.e. voluntary self sacrifice in the military. Anomic suicide results from not having the means to fulfill needs, and fatalistic suicide occurs in those with overregulated, unrewarding lives--i.e. slaves.

6. D Groupthink

It usually results in decisions being made from a narrow point of view. Members with doubts and alternate ideas do not speak out because dissenting opinions are not tolerated.

7. B Oligarchy

According to this law, a small number of people in any organization end up making the decisions, even if the authority is supposed to belong to the members. The leaders end up growing more powerful than originally intended and develop values which are at odds with the members.

8. A Goode

Goode's book, World Revolution and Family Patterns, noted a trend in industrialized societies toward nuclear family households. He called these smaller family units the "western conjugal family system." He was reluctant to say that industrialization caused these changes but did indicate that industrialization or the ideologies associated with industrialization could support or help such change.

9. B C. Wright Mills

His theory forms the basis for the Power Elite model of political structure in the United States. This is in contrast to the Pluralist Model, which says that power is dispersed throughout many competing interest groups.

10. A caste

A good example of the caste system is in India, where it is nearly impossible to change your status in life. This is in contrast to the class system, where positions depend on achieved status--i.e. the United States' social stratification is of the class system.

Want 10 more? Take Round 2 online

Round 2 is 10 more questions from the same 194 cards. Six of the ten are Social Processes again, with Mead's three stages, how bureaucracies promote people, and how deviance is learned, plus two on Social Stratification and one on research methods. Take Round 1 on the page below, enter your email on the score screen, and the Round 2 link follows.

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The full Introductory Sociology study guide

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