

American Board of Forensic Psychology Written Examination – Sample Questions

The following questions are similar in form and substance to those on the ABFP written examination. Questions on the written examination load on one or more of seven categories. Following each sample question are the categories on which that question would likely load if it were on the written examination. On the actual exam, the categories are not shown.

1. The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology are best described as:
 - a. a binding code of ethics
 - b. a code which forensic psychologists are legally obligated to follow
 - c. an advisory document established to guide state legislatures in formulating limitations on the practice of forensic psychologists
 - d. an aspirational model of practice

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

2. Expert witnesses are classified as such in court through a process called:
 - a. voir dire
 - b. expert identification questioning (EIQ)
 - c. forensic identification
 - d. in re plane

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

3. All are instruments that can be used to assess trial competence *except*:
 - a. MacCAT-CA
 - b. ECST-R
 - c. SIRS
 - d. Interdisciplinary Fitness Interview-Revised

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

4. According to the Specialty Guidelines, a forensic psychologist is expected to:
 - a. possess an understanding of legal issues equal to that of a second year law student
 - b. possess an understanding of legal issues equal to that of an attorney
 - c. possess a reasonable level of knowledge applicable to the case at hand
 - d. possess professional clinical skills, but no legal knowledge is expected

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

5. In *Estelle v. Smith*, the psychiatrist used the defendant's statements obtained in a:
- Miranda Rights waiver evaluation in a trial competence hearing
 - trial competence evaluation in the death penalty phase of a trial
 - trial competence evaluation in an insanity trial
 - insanity evaluation in a trial competence hearing

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

6. APA Recordkeeping Guidelines require that the full/complete record be maintained for _____ years:
- 2
 - 5
 - 7
 - 15

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

7. The final *Tarasoff* case speaks of a duty to:
- warn
 - document
 - protect
 - record

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

8. The name given to specialized instruments used in the field of forensic psychology that provide information of direct relevance to a legal question is:
- forensically relevant instruments
 - objective psychological testing
 - forensic assessment instruments
 - traditional psychological tests

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

9. The highest level/standard of proof in legal proceedings is:
- beyond a reasonable doubt
 - clear and convincing evidence
 - preponderance of the evidence
 - statistical significance

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

10. Guidance offered by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals* (1993) indicates that, when considering the admissibility of challenged expert testimony, the court should consider:
- whether the technique(s) on which the testimony is based is generally accepted by the relevant scientific community.
 - the error rates of the technique(s) on which the testimony is based.
 - whether the technique(s) on which the testimony is based has been subjected to peer review.
 - All of the above.

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

11. Regarding competency to make treatment decisions, determining whether a consent is valid requires consideration of which of the following three elements:
- Disclosure, competency, and voluntariness
 - Privilege, understanding, and legal representation
 - Intact memory, mental health stability, and absence of intellectual disability
 - All the above

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

12. Testimony regarding trial competence and whether a defendant could make a legal waiver of *Miranda* rights is most likely to be heard at what stage in the legal process?
- preliminary hearing
 - trial
 - sentencing hearing
 - post-sentencing hearing

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

13. In a personal injury proceeding, the plaintiff must prove her claims
- by a preponderance of the evidence
 - by establishing probable cause
 - by clear and convincing evidence
 - beyond a reasonable doubt

Category 2: Civil damages, personal injury, disability, and workers compensation.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

Categories represented:

14. In *Addington v. Texas* the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the minimal standard of proof required in civil commitment proceedings is:
- a preponderance of the evidence
 - probable cause
 - clear and convincing evidence
 - beyond a reasonable doubt

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

15. According to the law, an expert is identified by all of the following *except*:
- background
 - experience
 - skills
 - training
 - graduate school degree

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

16. If the court orders that an evaluation occur, the psychologist should
- obtain agreement from both lawyers that the defendant can be examined
 - not move forward with the evaluation if he is unable to obtain the examinee's consent
 - seek a release from his or her malpractice insurance carrier before conducting the evaluation
 - notify the examinee about the nature and purpose of the evaluation before moving forward with the evaluation

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

17. In a case of disputed child custody, if a psychologist only evaluates one parent and does not see the other parent:
- a custody recommendation can still be made, but with caution
 - no report or opinions can be offered
 - the strengths and weaknesses of the parent who was evaluated can be described in a testimony or report
 - a report can be provided to retaining counsel, but no testimony can be offered

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

18. The connection that must be established between the legal wrong and the damage or injury caused to the person who brings suit is referred to as:
- post-hoc action
 - proximate cause
 - zone of danger
 - legal duty

Categories represented:

Category 2: Civil damages, personal injury, disability, and workers compensation.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

19. The requirement that testators be competent and “of sound mind” has been interpreted by courts to encompass _____.
- A testator’s knowledge at the time of making the will that they are making their will.
 - A testator’s knowledge of the nature and extent of their property.
 - A testator’s knowledge of the “natural objects of [their] bounty” and the manner in which the will they are making distributes their property.
 - All the above.

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

20. A structured instrument used to assess capacity to consent to treatment is the:
- MacCAT-T
 - MMPI-2
 - Community Assessment Scale
 - CMR-T

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

21. In *Painter v. Banister*, the Court decided that:

- a. a blood relative is not automatically entitled to the custody of his child
- b. the death penalty must be based upon an unlimited number of mitigating factors
- c. insanity can be defined in any way a state deems appropriate
- d. amnesia does not, by itself, automatically make a defendant incompetent to stand trial

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

22. The Validity Indicator Profile (VIP) is used to identify persons feigning:

- a. depression
- b. memory loss
- c. cognitive impairment
- d. psychotic spectrum symptoms

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

23. A tort refers to:

- a. the relationship between the harm and the claimed improper act
- b. a legal wrong
- c. evidence a judge may decide to exclude from testimony
- d. an aggravating factor in death penalty cases

Categories represented:

Category 2: Civil damages, personal injury, disability, and workers compensation.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

24. Testamentary capacity refers to:

- a. the decision by a judge that an expert can offer testimony
- b. the likelihood that a sworn witness knows the difference between the truth and a lie
- c. limits set by the courts on the subject matter of expert testimony
- d. the ability of someone to execute a will

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

25. In considering whether a juvenile's waiver of his or her *Miranda* rights was valid, the judge should consider:
- the seriousness of the alleged offense
 - the likelihood that the confession was false
 - the totality of circumstances
 - all of the above

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

26. Which of the below factors is NOT referenced by the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act as a factor the court is to consider when making decisions in cases of contested custody?
- The child's preferences
 - the sexual orientation of each parent
 - the parents' emotional stability
 - the relationship between the child and each parent

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

27. The tender years doctrine emphasizes that:
- in child custody cases, mothers rather than fathers are better qualified to take care of children when the child is younger and should be awarded custody as a result
 - juveniles should not be considered for the death penalty because their age would make capital punishment cruel and unusual
 - juvenile offenders should be processed in a separate system from adults (i.e., the juvenile justice system) because they show greater potential for rehabilitation
 - children who are sexually abused when younger are at risk of becoming abusers themselves when adults

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

28. Which of the following is commonly used as a less restrictive alternative to guardianship?
- an advance directive
 - plenary guardianship
 - civil commitment
 - substituted judgment of the court

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

29. A valid informed consent for medical treatment requires:
- appropriate disclosure
 - a competent patient
 - a voluntary decision
 - all of the above

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

30. If, as a component of your evaluation, you are considering whether the examinee knows “the natural objects of her bounty” what kind of evaluation are you completing?
- competence to waive *Miranda* rights
 - competence to consent to medical treatment
 - flight risk regarding bail or bond
 - testamentary capacity

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

31. In most jurisdictions, who can petition to have someone declared incompetent and subject to guardianship?
- police officer
 - first-degree relative
 - attorney
 - any interested person

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

32. If, prior to completing your evaluation, you research “job demands” for a special education teacher, for what type of evaluation are you most likely preparing?
- testamentary capacity
 - disability
 - individual education plan
 - none of the above

Categories represented:

Category 2: Civil damages, personal injury, disability, and workers compensation.

33. The tort system is most anchored to the concept of
- earnings
 - compensation
 - fault
 - mental illness

Categories represented:

Category 2: Civil damages, personal injury, disability, and workers compensation.

34. Pleading guilty involves waiving all of the rights below *except*:
- right to confront one's accusers
 - right to allocution
 - right to remain silent
 - right to trial by jury

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

35. When conducting testamentary capacity evaluations involving an individual who is deceased, which of the following guideline from the *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* (2013) is most relevant?
- Guideline 4.02.01: Therapeutic-Forensic Role Conflicts
 - Guideline 6.03.02: Persons Lacking Capacity to Provide Informed Consent
 - Guideline 9.03: Opinions Regarding Persons Not Examined
 - Guideline 7.01: Conflicts With Legal Authority

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

36. The Insanity Defense Reform Act was, in large part, a response to the crimes committed by which person?
- John Hinckley
 - Andrea Yates
 - Ted Bundy
 - Jeffrey Dahmer

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

37. The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology are applicable based on:
- the practitioner's typical areas of practice or expertise
 - the service(s) provided in the case at hand
 - the psychologist's membership status in APA and AP-LS
 - all of the above

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

38. The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology suggest that out-of-court statements about an examinee who a psychologist has examined:
- should ordinarily be avoided
 - should occur only after the case has been decided
 - should be accompanied by detailed information about evaluation techniques
 - never serve appropriate educational purposes

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

39. While testifying, the judge sustains an objection. You believe the question was a fair one, and that the jurors would benefit from hearing your answer. You should:
- answer the question anyway
 - explain to the judge that the jurors need to hear your answer
 - work your answer into a response to another question
 - act as though the question were never asked and answer the next question

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

40. *Voir dire* refers to:
- the process of jury selection
 - the process of determining whether a proffered witness qualifies as an expert
 - the process by which a judge, outside the presence of the jury, questions a criminal defendant as to whether he wishes to exercise his right to testify
 - Both A and B above

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

41. Which of the following is *not* an advantage of a psychological test?
- questions are asked in a standardized manner
 - idiosyncratic contributions of the examiner are eliminated.
 - results are comparable to every other administration of the test.
 - clinical prediction, diagnosis, and/or classifications are governed by the same decision rules

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

42. In the U.S. Supreme Court case *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc. (1998)*, it was decided that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act
- only protects women who are being harassed by men.
 - protects men who are being harassed by other men.
 - was inapplicable.
 - None of the above.

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

43. In two-alternative, forced-choice tests (often called symptom validity tests), “below chance” responding refers to:
- any response below the test mean
 - any systematic error committed by the test-taker
 - any score lower than that expected for 95% of random responding
 - any score less than or equal to one standard deviation below the mean.

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

44. The “best interests of the child” standard provides some direction to judges who are deciding, and psychologists who are conducting evaluations in:
- child custody proceeding
 - juvenile delinquency proceedings
 - child abuse or neglect proceedings
 - termination of parental rights proceedings

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

45. What percentage of defendants in the United States enter a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity?
- 1%
 - 11%
 - 21%
 - 31%

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

46. In *Dusky v. U.S.*, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that, in order to be considered competent to stand trial the defendant must have:
- a rational understanding of the proceedings
 - a factual understanding of the proceedings
 - the capacity to consult with counsel with a reasonable degree of rational understanding
 - all of the above are required of defendants

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

47. In *Estelle v. Smith*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that incriminating statements a defendant offers during a compelled competence to stand trial evaluation:
- cannot be used at trial to prove that the defendant committed the charged offense
 - can be used at trial to prove that the defendant committed the charged offense
 - cannot be used at trial to prove that the defendant committed the charged offense, unless the defendant uses findings from the competence evaluation at trial to challenge the state's claims that he committed the charged offense
 - can be used to prove that the defendant committed the charged offense providing that he waived his 6th amendment right against self-incrimination at the time he was arrested and interrogated

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

48. All of the following are characteristic of persons high in psychopathy with the exception of:
- high intelligence
 - glibness/superficial charm
 - criminal versatility
 - pathological lying

Categories represented:

Category 7: Testing and assessment, examination issues, and application of scientific knowledge to legal procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession).

49. Which of the following legal standards or tests of insanity is best considered to be a cognitive test or standard?
- M’Naghten standard/test
 - “policeman at the elbow” standard/test
 - Durham standard/test
 - product standard/test

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

50. Which of the following is the best predictor of whether children with some history of delinquent offending will continue to offend into adulthood?
- the presence of a substance use disorder diagnosis during adolescence
 - the age at the time of the first offense
 - the presence of a mood disorder diagnosis during adolescence
 - whether juvenile offending is primarily limited to property offenses

Categories represented:

Category 5: Juveniles, parenting, and family/domestic/matrimonial matters.

51. Testamentary capacity refers to:
- the decision by a judge that an expert can offer testimony
 - a proposed witness’s capacity to testify
 - limits set by the courts on the subject matter of expert testimony
 - the ability of someone to execute a will

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

52. A criminal defendant who feigns significant psychopathology as well as significant limitations in his understanding of and ability to participate in the legal process
- is competent to stand trial
 - is incompetent to stand trial
 - may or may not be competent to stand trial
 - is competent to stand trial, enter a plea, and/or be sentenced

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

53. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Constitution prohibits execution of what types of persons who are convicted of first degree murder?
- persons who were intellectually disabled at the time they committed the murder
 - persons who were below the age of 18 at the time they committed the murder
 - persons who were experiencing symptoms of severe and persistent mental illness at the time they committed the murder
 - Both A and B

Categories represented:

Category 3: Criminal competency and criminal responsibility.

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

54. The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology
- direct that forensic psychological evaluations are subject to HIPAA requirements
 - direct that forensic psychological evaluations are not subject to HIPAA requirements
 - direct that criminal forensic evaluations are subject to HIPAA requirements whereas civil forensic evaluations are not subject to HIPAA requirements
 - offer no commentary as to whether forensic evaluations are subject to HIPAA requirements

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

55. Respondents in immigration proceedings have the right to
- a jury trial
 - government paid counsel
 - remain silent (with no negative inferences being made)
 - notice of the allegations

Categories represented:

Category 1: Civil competence, individual rights and liberties, workplace discrimination, and employment rights.

56. In *People v. Goldstein*, the Court of Appeals of New York ruled that the defendant's Constitutional right to confront witnesses against him
- a. is violated when a prosecution-retained mental health professional recounts statements made to her by collateral sources if those persons are not available for cross-examination
 - b. is not violated when a prosecution-retained mental health professional recounts statements made to her by collateral sources if those persons are not available for cross-examination
 - c. is violated when prosecution-retained or defense-retained mental health professional recounts statements made to her by collateral sources if those persons are not available for cross-examination
 - d. none of the above

Categories represented:

Category 6: Law, precedents, court rules, civil and criminal procedures, and judicial practices.

57. The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology
- a. prohibit video-recording of forensic evaluations
 - b. require video-recording of forensic evaluations
 - c. recommend video-recording of forensic evaluations
 - d. offer no commentary as to whether forensic evaluations should or should not be recorded

Categories represented:

Category 4: Ethics, guidelines, and professional issues.

Answers

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 11. A | 21. A | 31. D | 41. B | 51. D |
| 2. A | 12. A | 22. C | 32. B | 42. B | 52. C |
| 3. C | 13. A | 23. B | 33. C | 43. C | 53. D |
| 4. C | 14. C | 24. D | 34. B | 44. A | 54. D |
| 5. B | 15. E | 25. C | 35. C | 45. A | 55. D |
| 6. C | 16. D | 26. B | 36. A | 46. D | 56. A |
| 7. C | 17. C | 27. A | 37. B | 47. A | 57. D |
| 8. C | 18. B | 28. A | 38. A | 48. A | |
| 9. A | 19. D | 29. D | 39. D | 49. A | |
| 10. D | 20. A | 30. D | 40. D | 50. B | |