B

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A B C D E F G H I

BCBA

6TH EDITION

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01

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THE TERRITORY

01

Where the **points** live

The 6th Edition exam has **185 questions** across nine domains. The bar shows each domain's exam weight - highlighted rows together account for more than half your score.

A	Behaviorism & Philosophical Foundations	5%
B	Concepts & Principles	14%
C	Measurement, Data Display & Interpretation	12%
D	Experimental Design	7%
E	Ethical & Professional Issues	13%
F	Behavior Assessment	13%
G	Behavior-Change Procedures	14%
H	Selecting & Implementing Interventions	11%
I	Personnel Supervision & Management	11%

54%

Domains **B, G, E and F** alone account for more than half of every scored question on the exam. If your study time is tight, this is where it belongs first - depth here moves your score more than anywhere else.

THE ROUTE

02

A **12-week** order

A 12-week path through this guide's chapters. Build the vocabulary first, then the tools, then the procedures - and save full mocks for last. Go faster or slower to fit your timeline, but **keep the order**.

Wk 1-2 — LEARN

Learn the language — Ch. A · B

Start with the vocabulary everything else is built on - reinforcement, punishment, motivating operations, and the verbal operants. Don't move on until these feel automatic.

Wk 3-4 — MEASURE

Measure and prove it — Ch. C · D

Learn how behavior is counted and graphed, and how single-case designs show that the intervention - and nothing else - caused the change.

Wk 5-6 — ASSESS

Find the function — Ch. F

Master behavior assessment: how to find *why* a behavior happens and write clear, observable definitions that point to the right intervention.

Wk 7-8 — CHANGE

Change behavior — Ch. G · H

The procedures that build and reduce behavior - shaping, chaining, prompting, differential reinforcement - and how to choose the right one for the function.

Wk 9-10 — APPLY

Ethics and people — Ch. E · I

Work through ethics scenarios and supervision - BST, feedback, cultural humility. Both are heavily tested and easy to underestimate.

Wk 11-12 — EXAM

Practice until you're ready — All chapters

Take full, timed mock exams. After each one, review every miss and drill your weakest areas - and don't book the real exam until you're consistently clearing the line on the next page.

CHAPTER A · 5% OF THE EXAM

Behaviorism & **Foundations**

The high-frequency terms behind ~5% of the exam - the worldview and language the rest of the exam assumes you already own. Watch for answers that explain behavior with labels instead of observable relations.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
ATTITUDES OF SCIENCE		
Determinism	The world is lawful: behavior has causes	*We assume a tantrum has a findable cause, not that it's "random."*
Empiricism	Rely on objective observation, not opinion	*You tally tantrums instead of guessing "it felt like a lot."*
Parsimony	Prefer the simplest explanation that fits	*Try "he wants attention" before inventing a complex inner cause.*
Philosophic doubt	Keep questioning even accepted facts	*New evidence appears, so you re-examine a method you always used.*
Pragmatism	Truth is judged by what works and predicts	*A method is "true" if it reliably changes behavior.*
KEY VIEWS		
Radical behaviorism	Private events are behavior subject to the same principles as observable behavior	*Skinner studies "thinking" as covert behavior, not an inner cause.*
Methodological behaviorism	Focuses on publicly observable behavior and rejects private events as explanations	*A researcher records only what can be seen and measured.*
Mentalism	Explaining behavior with inner labels instead of observable relations	*"She hit because she's aggressive" explains nothing testable.*
Explanatory fiction	A label repeated as if it were the cause	*"He's unmotivated" names the pattern, but does not explain it.*
Selectionism	Behavior is selected by consequences across phylogeny, ontogeny, and culture	*Reinforced behavior occurs more often in that context.*
7 dimensions (BAT CAGE)	Behavioral, Applied, Technological, Conceptual, Analytic, Generality, Effective	*Applied = socially important. Generality = the skill lasts over time.*
CORE UNITS		
Behavior	Activity of a living organism that is observable and measurable	*A learner hits the table, reads aloud, or raises a hand in class.*
Response	A single instance of behavior	*One hand raise during circle time is one response.*
Response class	Different response topographies that produce the same function or effect	*The learner says "help" or presses a button, and both get adult help.*
Stimulus	An energy change or event that affects an organism through receptor cells	*A bell rings, a teacher gives an instruction, or a strong smell enters the room.*
Stimulus class	Stimuli that share physical features or a common functional relation with behavior	*Different stop signs all occasion stopping, even when their size or location changes.*

CHAPTER B · 14% OF THE EXAM

Concepts & **Principles**

The biggest domain (14%). Part 1: the contingencies, motivation, reinforcers, and function. For exam items: positive = add, negative = remove; reinforcement increases, punishment decreases.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
THE FOUR CONTINGENCIES		
Positive reinforcement (+R)	A stimulus is presented after behavior: future behavior increases	*After a child cleans up, the teacher gives praise, and cleanup happens more often.*
Negative reinforcement (-R)	A stimulus is removed or avoided after behavior: future behavior increases	*When completing work removes a difficult task, work completion increases in the future.*
Positive punishment (+P)	A stimulus is presented after behavior: future behavior decreases	*A driver receives a speeding ticket, and future speeding decreases.*
Negative punishment (-P)	A stimulus is removed after behavior: future behavior decreases	*A teen loses phone time after cursing, and future cursing decreases.*
MOTIVATION		
Motivating operation (MO)	Alters a consequence's effectiveness and the current frequency of related behavior	*No water makes water more reinforcing and increases water-seeking.*
Establishing operation (EO)	Increases a consequence's effectiveness and evokes behavior that has produced it	*Skipping breakfast makes food more effective as a reinforcer by lunch.*
Abolishing operation (AO)	Decreases a consequence's effectiveness and abates behavior that has produced it	*Right after a big meal, food-seeking is less likely.*
Discriminative stimulus (S^D)	Sets the occasion for a response because reinforcement has been available in its presence	*A green light occasions driving because going is reinforced in that context.*
TYPES OF REINFORCER		
Unconditioned reinforcer	Reinforcing without any learning	*Food, water, and warmth can reinforce behavior without a learning history.*
Conditioned reinforcer	Became reinforcing through learning	*Praise becomes reinforcing after being paired with attention, success, or other reinforcers.*
Generalized reinforcer	Conditioned reinforcer paired with many backup reinforcers	*Tokens are useful because the learner can exchange them for many different items.*
Automatic reinforcement	Reinforcement produced directly by the behavior, without social mediation	*Rocking that feels good regardless of whether anyone is in the room.*
Socially-mediated	Reinforcement delivered by another person	*A parent hands over a toy when the child asks.*
EXTINCTION & FUNCTION		
Extinction	Discontinuation of reinforcement for a previously reinforced behavior, decreasing responding over time	*Ignoring attention-seeking whining reduces it over time.*
4 functions of behavior	Attention, Escape, Tangible, Sensory. Function is the maintaining consequence, not how behavior looks	*If screaming reliably removes a hard task, the behavior is maintained by escape.*

CHAPTER B · 14% OF THE EXAM · CONTINUED

Concepts & Principles

Part 2: how reinforcement is scheduled, all six building blocks of language, and how behavior comes under stimulus control.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
Extinction burst	Temporary increase in rate, magnitude, and/or variability when extinction begins, sometimes with aggression or emotional responses	*Whining gets louder, or the child tries hitting, before both behaviors fade.*
SCHEDULES OF REINFORCEMENT		
Continuous (CRF)	Reinforce every response: best for new skills	*While first teaching labels, the teacher praises every correct answer.*
Fixed ratio (FR)	Reinforce after a fixed number of responses	*A worker earns $1 after every 10 items packed, which is an FR-10 schedule.*
Variable ratio (VR)	Reinforce after a varying number of responses, often producing high, steady responding	*A slot machine pays after an unpredictable number of pulls.*
Fixed interval (FI)	Reinforce the first response after a set time has elapsed	*Checking the mailbox more as delivery time nears.*
Variable interval (VI)	Reinforce the first response after varying amounts of time have elapsed	*Refreshing email for a reply that could arrive anytime.*
THE SIX VERBAL OPERANTS		
Mand	Verbal behavior controlled by an MO and maintained by a specific reinforcer	*A thirsty child says "water" because water is valuable in that moment.*
Tact	Verbal behavior controlled by a nonverbal stimulus and maintained by generalized reinforcement	*When the child sees a dog and says "dog," an adult responds with praise.*
Echoic	Vocal response with point-to-point correspondence to a vocal verbal stimulus	*The adult says "ball," and the child immediately repeats "ball."*
Intraverbal	Verbal response controlled by verbal stimuli without point-to-point correspondence	*"How are you?" evokes "I'm good."*
Textual	Vocal response controlled by written verbal stimuli, with point-to-point correspondence	*The learner sees the printed word "cat" and reads it aloud as "cat."*
Transcription	Written response controlled by spoken verbal stimuli, with point-to-point correspondence	*The teacher says "dog," and the learner writes the word "dog."*
STIMULUS CONTROL		
Stimulus generalization	A response occurs in the presence of novel stimuli similar to the training stimulus	*Taught to greet the teacher, the child also greets the principal.*
Response generalization	Untrained responses with the same function occur in the same stimulus conditions	*Taught to say "hi," the child also starts waving.*
Discrimination	Responding differently in the presence of different stimuli	*Stops at a red light, goes at green.*
S-delta (S^{Δ})	Stimulus correlated with extinction or no reinforcement for a response	*A "closed" sign means knocking is not reinforced.*

CHAPTER C · 12% OF THE EXAM

Measurement & **Data**

12% of the exam, and pure points once the patterns stick - measure it, record it, check agreement, and read the graph.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
DIMENSIONS OF MEASUREMENT		
Count	A tally of how many times it happens	*During a 30-minute session, staff record that hitting occurred 7 times.*
Rate	The count divided by time	*If 7 hits occur in 30 minutes, the rate is 0.23 hits per minute.*
Duration	How long the behavior lasts	*Staff start timing when the tantrum begins and stop after 4 minutes.*
Latency	Time from the cue until the response begins	*After the teacher says "sit," 8 seconds pass before the child sits.*
IRT	Time between one response and the next	*Two minutes pass between one bite of food and the next bite.*
RECORDING METHODS		
Whole interval	Counts only if it lasts the whole interval, so it tends to undercount	*Staff mark "on-task" only when the learner stays on-task for the entire 10 seconds.*
Partial interval	Counts any occurrence, so it tends to overcount	*Staff mark "hitting" if it happens even once during the interval.*
Momentary time sampling	Counts only at the instant the interval ends	*At the timer's beep, staff score whether the learner is on-task at that instant.*
Continuous vs discontinuous	Measure every instance vs sample it	*Staff either tally every hit or sample behavior during selected intervals.*
INTERPRETING DATA		
IOA	Agreement between two observers	*If two staff record 9 and 10 hits, agreement is 90% using total count IOA.*
Accuracy	How close data are to the true value	*The live count is accurate when it matches the count from video review.*
Level	The average value, or where the data sit	*If data stay near 8 responses per day, the level is about 8.*
Trend	The direction and steepness of the path	*When data points climb across sessions, the graph shows an increasing trend.*
Variability	How much the points bounce around	*When scores jump from 2 to 18 across days, the data show high variability.*

CHAPTER D · 7% OF THE EXAM

Experimental **Design**

D

7% of the exam. Be able to name the single-case design that proves the intervention - and nothing else - caused the change.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
THE BUILDING BLOCKS		
Independent variable	What you change: the intervention	*The analyst adds a token system to see whether reading improves.*
Dependent variable	The behavior you measure	*Staff measure the number of words the learner reads correctly each session.*
Baseline	Pre-intervention measurement of the target behavior, used as the comparison	*Before starting the token plan, staff record one week of reading data for comparison.*
Functional relation	Changes in the IV reliably produce changes in the DV	*Hitting drops when the plan is used and rises again when the plan is removed.*
SINGLE-CASE DESIGNS		
Reversal (A-B-A-B)	Withdraw, then reintroduce, to show control	*The plan is turned on, removed, and reintroduced, and behavior changes with each phase.*
Multiple baseline	Stagger the start across behaviors, people, or settings	*The plan starts for reading first, then math, then writing, while other baselines continue.*
Alternating treatments / multielement	Rapidly alternate conditions to compare their effects	*The teacher alternates two teaching methods across sessions to see which works better.*
Changing criterion	Change the performance criterion in planned steps to show control	*The goal changes from 5 completed problems to 10, then to 15, and behavior follows.*
VALIDITY & THREATS		
Internal validity	Confidence that the IV, not another variable, caused the change	*A reversal strengthens internal validity by showing behavior changes with the plan.*
External validity	How well results generalize beyond the study	*External validity is stronger when the same method works in other classrooms.*
Confound	Another variable that could explain the result	*If a new teacher starts the same week as the plan, the teacher change may confound results.*
Baseline logic	Predict, verify, and replicate the effect	*A stable baseline helps predict what behavior would look like without the plan.*

CHAPTER E · 13% OF THE EXAM

Ethics & **Conduct**

E

13% of the exam and heavily scenario-based. Know the duties, then default to the answer that protects the client, stays in competence, gets consent, consults, and documents.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
CORE OBLIGATIONS		
Scope of competence	Activities the analyst can perform with proficiency. Outside scope requires training, supervision, consultation, or referral	*If you are not trained in feeding treatment, consult or refer instead of taking the case alone.*
Informed consent	Legally valid permission after explaining procedures, risks, benefits, alternatives, and withdrawal rights	*Before treatment starts, explain the plan, risks, alternatives, and right to withdraw.*
Right to refuse	Client can refuse or withdraw, and refusal should not be punished	*If a client asks to stop a session, the team honors the refusal unless safety is at risk.*
Confidentiality	Protect client information	*Staff avoid discussing a client's case in a public hallway where others can hear.*
Multiple relationship	More than one role with a person, requiring risk identification and mitigation when unavoidable	*A BCBA avoids treating a close friend's child because the personal role may bias service.*
Conflict of interest	A personal or professional interest that could bias decisions	*The analyst declines a costly gift that could influence professional judgment.*
Mandated reporting	Must report suspected abuse or harm	*When staff observe signs of suspected abuse, they report to the proper authority.*
6TH-EDITION EMPHASIS & STRATEGY		
Cultural humility	Seek input, reflect on bias, and adapt services to client and stakeholder context	*The analyst adapts goals to the family's language, customs, and priorities.*
Dignity	The client's welfare and rights come first	*The team protects dignity by choosing the least intrusive effective option.*
Right to effective treatment	Clients deserve evidence-based services	*The analyst selects a procedure with research support instead of a preferred fad.*
Least restrictive	Use the least intrusive effective option and minimize risk	*The team tries reinforcement-based procedures before restrictive procedures.*
How to answer	Choose the most client-protective, least risky ethical action	*When unsure, protect the client, consult, document, and stay within scope.*

CHAPTER F · 13% OF THE EXAM

Behavior **Assessment**

F

13% of the exam, all aimed at one question: what maintains the behavior? Do not choose intervention from topography alone - find the function first.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
FINDING THE FUNCTION		
FBA	The process of identifying the variables that maintain a behavior	*The team gathers interview, ABC, and FA data to identify the behavior's function.*
Indirect assessment	Interviews and rating scales, without direct observation	*A parent completes a questionnaire about when aggression usually occurs.*
Descriptive assessment	Direct ABC observation in the natural setting	*Staff observe class and record what happens before and after aggression.*
Functional analysis	Experimentally manipulate antecedents and consequences to identify maintaining variables	*The analyst compares attention, escape, alone, and play conditions to identify the maintaining reinforcer.*
WHAT SETS BEHAVIOR OFF		
Antecedent	What happens right before the behavior	*A hard worksheet is placed on the desk right before the learner throws materials.*
Setting event	A background condition that makes behavior likelier	*After poor sleep, the learner is more likely to have a meltdown during demands.*
ABC data	Antecedent, then Behavior, then Consequence	*Staff record: task given, learner threw materials, and the task was removed.*
Operational definition	Observable, measurable, and clear enough that two people score it the same way	*"Hitting" is defined as open-hand contact with another person's body.*
IDENTIFYING REINFORCERS		
Preference assessment	Identifies stimuli likely to function as reinforcers	*The assessor offers pairs of items and records which item the learner chooses.*
Reinforcer assessment	Evaluates whether a stimulus increases responding when delivered contingently	*The item functions as a reinforcer if work output increases when it is earned.*
Social validity	Social significance of goals, acceptability of procedures, and importance of outcomes	*Parents value the goal, accept the method, and see meaningful change at home.*

CHAPTER G · 14% OF THE EXAM

Behavior-Change **Procedures**

Tied for the biggest domain (14%). Part 1: how you teach new behaviors and fade the help that gets the learner there.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
TEACHING NEW BEHAVIOR		
Shaping	Reinforce successive approximations toward the goal	*The therapist reinforces closer and closer attempts until "mama" is clear.*
Task analysis	Break a skill into small teachable steps	*Hand-washing is broken into 7 teachable steps from turning on water to drying hands.*
Forward chaining	Teach the first step first	*The learner completes step 1 independently while the adult prompts the remaining steps.*
Backward chaining	Teach the last step first (reinforcer comes right away)	*The adult completes steps 1-6, then the child finishes step 7 and earns the reward.*
Total-task chaining	Teach every step on each attempt	*The learner practices all 7 hand-washing steps during every teaching trial.*
Discrete trial training	Teaching in short, structured trials	*The teacher presents a cue, waits for a response, delivers a consequence, and repeats.*
PROMPTING & FADING		
Response prompt	Help via a model, words, or physical guidance	*The therapist gently guides the child's hand to complete the response.*
Stimulus prompt	Change the materials to cue the answer	*The teacher makes the correct card larger so it is easier to select.*
Most-to-least	Start with strong help, then fade it	*Teaching starts with full guidance, then fades to light touch, then no prompt.*
Least-to-most	Start with little help, add only as needed	*The teacher waits, then gives a hint, then provides guidance only if needed.*
Errorless learning	Prompt immediately so very few errors happen	*The teacher prompts the right answer before the learner has a chance to make an error.*
Time delay	Gradually wait longer before prompting	*The teacher waits 3 seconds before helping, then later waits 5 seconds.*

CHAPTER G · 14% OF THE EXAM · CONTINUED

Behavior-Change Procedures

Part 2: how you reduce problem behavior, replace it, and the systems that hold new behavior in place.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT		
DRA	Reinforce an alternative behavior, often while withholding reinforcement for the target behavior	*The teacher reinforces asking for a break instead of screaming to escape work.*
DRO	Reinforce the absence of target behavior during a set interval, with no specific alternative required	*The learner earns a token after 5 minutes without hitting, regardless of other behavior.*
DRI	Reinforce an incompatible behavior	*Hands-in-lap is reinforced because the learner cannot hit while hands are in lap.*
DRL	Reinforce a lower rate of the behavior	*The learner earns reinforcement for calling out 3 times or fewer during class.*
DRH	Reinforce a higher rate of a desirable behavior	*The learner earns reinforcement for completing more problems than in the last session.*
REDUCING & REPLACING		
FCT	Teach a communication response that gets the same reinforcer as the problem behavior	*If screaming produces escape, teach the learner to request "break please" instead.*
Response cost	Negative punishment: removal of a specified amount of a reinforcer after behavior	*After calling out, the learner loses one token from the token board.*
Time-out	Negative punishment: removal from access to reinforcement for a brief period	*After aggression, the learner briefly loses access to the game area.*
Overcorrection	Two types: restitutional (restore to better-than-before) and positive practice (repeatedly rehearse correct behavior)	*Restitutional repair restores the area; positive practice rehearses the correct response.*
MOTIVATION & ANTECEDENTS		
Token economy	Conditioned reinforcers are earned and exchanged for backup reinforcers	*The learner earns stars for completed work and trades them for extra recess.*
Contingency contract	A written if-then agreement	*The contract says, "If chores are done all week, then movie night is earned."*
NCR / time-based reinforcement	Deliver reinforcement on a time schedule independent of the target behavior	*Staff give attention every 5 minutes so attention is not earned by acting out.*
Behavioral momentum	Use high-probability requests before a low-probability request to increase compliance	*The teacher gives three easy requests before presenting the difficult task.*
Modeling	Demonstrate a response so the learner can imitate it	*The therapist shows how to greet someone, then has the learner try it.*

CHAPTER H · 11% OF THE EXAM

Selecting **Interventions**

11% of the exam. First match the function, then check restrictiveness, contextual fit, treatment integrity, generalization, and social validity.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
CHOOSING THE INTERVENTION		
Function-based intervention	Use assessment results to match the plan to the maintaining variables, not the behavior's appearance	*If behavior is escape-maintained, the plan teaches break requests and adjusts demands.*
Antecedent intervention	Change the environment to prevent the problem	*The teacher pre-teaches, offers choices, and adjusts task difficulty before behavior occurs.*
Replacement behavior	An appropriate behavior that serves the same function as the target behavior	*The learner is taught to say "help, please" instead of throwing materials.*
Least intrusive	Choose the least restrictive option that is still likely to work	*The team tries reinforcement procedures before considering a restrictive procedure.*
Contextual fit	The plan fits the people, skills, resources, culture, and setting	*The intervention fits when a busy teacher can realistically run it every day.*
MAKING IT STICK		
Treatment integrity	The extent to which the intervention is implemented as written	*Integrity is high when every staff member follows the written plan steps.*
Generalization	Behavior change occurs across new people, settings, materials, or response forms	*The learner uses the skill at home, at school, and with different adults.*
Maintenance	Behavior change continues after time passes or supports are thinned	*The learner still uses the skill months later after prompts are reduced.*
Behavioral cusp	Once learned, exposes learner to new environments, reinforcers, and opportunities not previously available	*After learning to read, the learner can access new information and activities.*
Pivotal behavior	A central skill area, such as motivation or self-management, where improvement produces collateral gains across many untrained behaviors	*Improved motivation to socialize may also improve communication, play, and academics.*
Social validity	Social significance of goals, acceptability of procedures, and importance of outcomes	*Parents accept the procedures and report that the outcome improves daily life.*

CHAPTER I · 11% OF THE EXAM

Supervision & **Management**

11% of the exam. Apply behavior analysis to staff: use full BST, measure performance, give specific feedback, and delegate only within competence.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	EXAMPLE
BEHAVIORAL SKILLS TRAINING (BST)		
Instruction	Tell the trainee exactly what to do and when	*The supervisor explains when to prompt and exactly what prompt to deliver.*
Modeling	Show the correct performance before expecting it	*The supervisor demonstrates a complete teaching trial before the trainee tries it.*
Rehearsal	Have the trainee practice the skill, not just describe it	*The trainee practices the teaching trial while the supervisor observes.*
Feedback	Give specific praise plus corrective feedback tied to the performance	*"Great pacing. Wait a beat longer before prompting."*
MANAGING PERFORMANCE		
Performance feedback	Specific, timely information about performance, often with praise and correction	*The supervisor gives weekly fidelity notes with praise and one correction.*
Competency-based training	Train until a clear standard is met	*The trainee is signed off only after reaching 90%+ fidelity during observation.*
Fidelity monitoring	Check that procedures are run correctly	*The supervisor observes a session and scores whether each plan step occurs.*
OBM	Apply behavior analysis to workplace and staff performance systems	*The manager uses task clarification, feedback, and reinforcement to improve data entry.*
Self-monitoring	Staff track their own performance	*A therapist logs their own prompt timing.*
STRUCTURING SUPERVISION		
Supervision contract	Roles, expectations, and schedule in writing	*The supervisor and trainee sign an agreement covering duties and meeting frequency.*
Pyramidal training	Train staff who then train other staff	*A BCBA trains a lead RBT, and the lead RBT trains new RBTs.*
Delegation	Assign only tasks the person is competent and supervised to perform	*The supervisor gives a trainee only tasks the trainee is trained to perform.*

MOST-TESTED CONFUSIONS

15

Know the **difference**

Part 1 focuses on concepts and assessment. On the exam, two answers can both sound technical. The right one usually matches the controlling variable in the scenario.

1 MO vs S^D

MO	Changes how valuable a reinforcer is and evokes behavior that has produced it.
S^D	Signals that reinforcement is available for a response right now.
Cue	If **value** changes, think MO. If **availability** changes, think S^D.

2 Preference vs Reinforcer

Preference	The person chooses or seems to like the item.
Reinforcer	The item actually increases future behavior when delivered contingently.
Cue	Preference is **selection**. Reinforcement is a demonstrated **effect**.

3 FA vs Descriptive Assessment

Descriptive	Observe naturally occurring antecedents and consequences.
FA	Manipulate conditions to identify which consequence maintains behavior.
Cue	Only FA can show a **causal** functional relation.

4 Topography vs Function

Topography	What the behavior looks like: hitting, screaming, dropping.
Function	Why it persists: attention, escape, tangible, or sensory reinforcement.
Cue	Do not choose treatment from appearance alone. Find the **maintainer**.

5 Cusp vs Pivotal Behavior

Cusp	Opens access to new environments, reinforcers, or contingencies.
Pivotal	Improves a central skill area and produces broad collateral gains.
Cue	New access = **cusp**. Broad ripple effects = **pivotal**.

6 Generalization vs Maintenance

Generalization	The behavior occurs with new people, places, materials, or responses.
Maintenance	The behavior continues after time passes or supports fade.
Cue	Across **settings** = generalization. Across **time** = maintenance.

MOST-TESTED CONFUSIONS · CONTINUED

Know the **difference**

Part 2 focuses on procedures, data, and ethics. These are high-yield because wrong answers often describe a related concept, but not the one the exam stem is asking about.

7 DRA, DRI, DRO, DRL

DRA / DRI	DRA reinforces an alternative, and DRI must be physically incompatible.
DRO / DRL	DRO reinforces no target behavior, and DRL reinforces a lower rate.
Cue	Ask what earns reinforcement: **new**, **none**, or **less**.

8 Prompting vs Fading

Prompting	Adds help before or during the response to increase correct responding.
Fading	Systematically removes that help so stimulus control transfers.
Cue	Help added = **prompt**. Help removed = **fade**.

9 Shaping vs Chaining

Shaping	Reinforce closer approximations of one behavior.
Chaining	Teach a sequence of already-defined steps in a task analysis.
Cue	New form = **shaping**. Step sequence = **chaining**.

10 Whole, Partial, Momentary

Whole	Counts only if behavior lasts the entire interval, so it tends to undercount.
Partial	Counts if behavior happens at all, so it tends to overcount.
MTS	Counts only at the instant the interval ends.

11 Integrity vs Social Validity

Integrity	Was the plan implemented as written?
Validity	Do goals have social significance, are procedures acceptable, and are outcomes important?
Cue	Weak results plus poor implementation point first to **integrity**.

12 Consent vs Assent vs Refusal

Consent	Legally authorized approval after risks, benefits, and options are explained.
Assent	Ongoing willingness from the learner when they cannot legally consent.
Refusal	Respect withdrawal or resistance unless immediate safety requires action.

SCENARIO DECISION RULES

17

What to do **first**

When the item gives you a messy real-world situation, slow down and choose the first behavior-analytic step. These rules prevent many attractive wrong answers.

E Ethics first moves

Safety	If risk is present, protect the client before optimizing treatment.
Scope	If outside competence, consult, supervise, train, or refer.
Consent	If services or procedures change, explain and obtain consent.
Record	Document the concern, decision, consultation, and next step.

F Assessment before treatment

Define	Write an observable, measurable definition before collecting data.
Measure	Choose count, rate, duration, latency, or IRT to match the behavior.
Function	Use indirect, descriptive, and FA data to identify maintaining variables.
Avoid	Do not pick treatment from topography alone.

G Choose the procedure

Build	Use shaping, chaining, prompting, and fading for new skills.
Replace	Use FCT/DRA when problem behavior has a clear function.
Reduce	Use extinction or punishment carefully, paired with reinforcement.
Sustain	Thin schedules gradually and plan generalization from the start.

H Intervention selection filter

1	Does it match the function?
2	Is it least intrusive while still likely to work?
3	Can real implementers run it with integrity?
4	Will stakeholders accept it and value the outcome?

I Supervision sequence

Train	Use BST: instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback.
Measure	Observe performance and score fidelity, not impressions.
Feedback	Give timely, specific praise and correction tied to behavior.
Delegate	Assign only tasks the person is trained and supervised to perform.

! When two answers look right

First	Pick data collection before treatment change if the function is unclear.
Then	Pick the function-matched, least restrictive feasible plan.
Always	Prefer client protection, consent, competence, consultation, and documentation.

THE READINESS EXAM

Are you **actually** ready?

80%

THE LINE TO CLEAR

Aim for **80%+ on full-length mocks** before you book. The buffer absorbs exam-day nerves - and real exam forms tend to run harder than most practice sets.

Book the exam when you can say yes to all five:

- [ ] Two full-length mocks scored **80%+**, untimed crutches removed.
- [ ] No single domain sitting **below 70%** on your last mock.
- [ ] You can **explain** wrong answers, not just recognize the right one.
- [ ] Ethics & concepts (B, E) feel **automatic**, not effortful.
- [ ] You've completed a mock **under timed, real conditions**.

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