Sample questions on memory and cognition

1) Suppose you can't come up with the answer to a particular short-answer question on your psychology test, but you know that you know the answer. You are having a problem with __________ .

a. recognition  
b. decay  
c. encoding  
d. storage  
e. retrieval

2) A psychologist does a memory experiment. In the first part of the experiment she shows participants a computer-generated matrix of numbers for 30 seconds. In the second part she shows the participants a number and asks them whether or not it had been in the matrix they saw earlier. The experimenter is examining ____________.

a. acquisition  
b. storage capacity  
c. recognition  
d. the size of a memory trace  
e. recall

3) Sperling demonstrated the existence of a type of memory called the ________ through his _____ ______ procedure (which involves asking subjects to recall part of a visual display of items that they briefly see).

a. trace consolidation, cued recall  
b. memory span, retention interval  
c. memory trace, free recall  
d. sensory register, partial report  
e. STM, cued recall

4) Fred has just heard a list of 12 random letters read aloud to him in a psychology experiment. He is then asked to repeat as many letters from the list as possible. Fred can only repeat the last three letters. This is an example of ____________.

a. LTM  
b. sensory memory  
c. the primacy effect  
d. the recency effect  
e. b and c
5) Jan has a 9am class each day. She notices that later each day she is usually more likely to remember what was taught at the beginning of class rather than what was in the middle. This phenomena is referred to as: ____________

a. the recency effect  
b. the primacy effect  
c. the rehearsal effect  
d. the boring class effect  
e. interference  

6) Sarah’s teacher has just read out loud a list of 40 words. As Sarah and her classmates recall words from the list, they best remember the first few and the last few. If we plot the percent they have correctly recalled as a function of the words’ position on the original list, we will have a:

a. primacy effect curve  
b. recency effect curve  
c. serial position curve  
d. working memory curve  
e. both a and b  

7) When Kramer needs to remember a phone number, he usually repeats the number aloud. This is an inefficient way to remember the number in the long run. What is this method called?

a. maintenance rehearsal  
b. repetition rehearsal  
c. stage rehearsal  
d. memory activation  
e. elaborative processing  

8) But when Kramer meets a new person, he usually associates the name with a feature of their face. This type of remembering things is usually more effective. What is this method called?

a. maintenance rehearsal  
b. repetition rehearsal  
c. stage rehearsal  
d. memory activation  
e. elaborative processing
9) In a nice restaurant, you and your parents just finish ordering and you notice that the waiter doesn't write anything down. Later when you get your salad, it has the wrong dressing on it. You tell the waiter and he realizes that the dressing is actually what the man at the table next to you ordered right before your table ordered. This memory mistake is an example of:

a. implicit memory  
b. decay   
c. maintenance rehearsal  
d. retroactive interference  
e. proactive interference

10) Ralph is going grocery shopping, but he needs only a few items, so he memorizes which items he needs instead of writing down a list. When he gets to the store, he makes the mistake of asking Diane what she is buying. After Diane leaves to do her shopping, Ralph cannot remember all the items on his list and, in addition, he keeps recalling some of the items from Diane's list. What seems to be responsible for Ralph's failure to remember his shopping list?

a. proactive interference  
b. retroactive interference  
c. decay  
d. both a and b  
e. none of the above

11) A few shopping trips later, Ralph memorizes a new list of items to buy. When he gets to the store, however, most of what he can remember are the items that he intended to buy on his last shopping trip. What seems to be responsible for Ralph's failure to remember this new list?

a. proactive interference  
b. retroactive interference  
c. decay  
d. both a and b  
e. none of the above

12) Suppose you are in a dichotic listening experiment. You are shadowing the message in your left ear. Which change in the message in the right ear are you most likely to notice?

a. a change in the topic  
b. a change in the language (e.g. English to French) of the speaker  
c. a change in the sex of the speaker  
d. a change in the direction of the message (e.g., playing the message backward after it had gone in the forward direction initially)  
e. a and d
13) George and John are at a party and are having a conversation about basketball. Other people around them are also having conversations. Which of the following conversations should be the easiest for George to ignore?

a. two people talking about basketball
b. two people talking about football
c. two people talking about tennis
d. two people talking about nuclear physics
e. all the above conversations should be equally easy to ignore

14) While beginning typists are taught to return their hands to the same "home" position after each letter they type, experts often type whole words before returning their hands to the home position. Because experts seem to think in terms of whole words, the individual keystrokes that are involved in typing these words must have become _______.

a. chained
b. chunked
c. linearly organized
d. a and c
e. retroactive

15) Mary is a guitar player in a jazz band. Initially, when she is learning a new song, she is not able to chat with other people in the band while she is playing. After playing the song a bunch of times though, she can chat while playing. What has most likely happened to allow Mary to chat while playing?

a. Mary has formed more chunks for the song
b. Mary has formed smaller-sized chunks for the song
c. the playing of the song has become automated for Mary
d. Mary has formed a mental plan for the song
e. the song was restructured for Mary
16) Suppose John is very experienced at throwing parties. One day a friend of his suggested that they have a party before the big football game. John quickly says things like "Well, we need to call a party store to make sure they will have a good selection of drinks and munchies," "We should call the party store on 10th Street since they are having a sale right now," and "I need to look up the phone number for that party store." John is demonstrating ______________ for throwing parties.

a. a propositional frame  
b. levels of processing  
c. an associational organization  
d. a hierarchical organization  
e. a and d

17) With respect to the above question, suppose John calls up the party store and orders a lot of beer like he always does when he throws a party. After hanging up he realizes that a lot of the people at this particular party are going to be non-drinkers. In this case, John suffered one of the dangers of ______ .

a. a propositional representation  
b. automaticity  
c. algorithmic reasoning  
d. levels of processing  
e. retroactive interference
Answers

1. e
2. c
3. d
4. d
5. b
6. c
7. a
8. e
9. e
10. b
11. a
12. c
13. d
14. b
15. c
16. d
17. b