

Eyewitness Testimony – Questions by Topic

Q1.

Psychologists have carried out research into the use of cognitive interviews. One possible ethical issue which might arise during this research is protection of participants from harm. Explain how psychologists could deal with this ethical issue.

(Total 3 marks)

Q2.

Traditionally, police have questioned eyewitnesses using the standard interview procedure. This involves a period of free recall about an event, followed by specific questions. However, an increasing number of police forces are now using the cognitive interview technique.

Explain how a cognitive interview differs from a standard interview.

(Total 4 marks)

Q3.

- (a) One technique used in cognitive interviews is 'report everything'. When using this technique, the police officer in this investigation read the following instructions to the participants:

"Please tell me everything you can remember about what you saw in the film. Do not leave anything out, even the small details you think may be unimportant."

Identify **one other** technique which could have been used by the police officer in this cognitive interview. Write down the instructions that he could have read out to the participants.

(3)

- (b) The psychologist also recorded the number of correct items recalled and the number of incorrect items recalled in each type of interview. The following results were obtained:

	Cognitive Interview	Standard Interview
Mean number of correct items recalled	45	32
Mean number of incorrect items recalled	8	8

From these results, what might the psychologist conclude about the effectiveness of cognitive interviews?

(2)

(Total 5 marks)

Q4.

A psychologist was at a concert where someone threw a bottle onto the stage and seriously injured one of the band members. The psychologist decided to use this incident to investigate the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. She asked 10 people who saw the bottle being thrown if they would allow her to interview them about this. A week later she interviewed each witness separately in a quiet room and asked them the same closed questions about what they had seen. She recorded their answers. It took her two and a half hours in total to interview the 10 witnesses.

- (a) Calculate how many hours it would have taken the psychologist to interview all 1000 people who were at the event. Show your workings. (2)
- (b) Identify **one** type of data the psychologist collected in this study. Explain your answer. (2)
- (c) Investigator effects may influence this study. Explain how the investigation might be modified to reduce these effects. (2)
- (d) The psychologist submitted a report of her investigation to a journal for peer review. What would she expect the process to involve? (2)

(Total 8 marks)

Q5.

A psychologist carried out a field experiment to investigate the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. The participants were pupils and parents attending a school concert. Just before the concert began, two professional actors had an argument on the stage. During the argument, one actor pushed the other actor. Both actors then left the stage. Some of the audience were approached as they left the concert and were asked to take part in an experiment. Those who agreed were taken to a quiet room and were asked some questions about the argument. For some participants, the questions included, "Did you see the man in glasses push the other man?" In fact, neither man was wearing glasses.

The participants were then asked to describe the argument in their own words.

- (a) What is a field experiment? (2)
- (b) Other than ethical issues, outline **one** weakness of using a field experiment in this investigation. (2)
- (c) Suggest why the psychologist included the question about the man in glasses. (2)

(Total 6 marks)

Q6.

Outline techniques used in the cognitive interview **and** discuss the effectiveness of these techniques on the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.

(Total 8 marks)

Q7.

Some psychologists argue that there is always more information about an event in a person's memory than can be recalled at any one time. This means that eye-witness recall can be improved by using certain techniques and methods.

Describe and evaluate **at least one** way of improving eye-witness recall. Refer to evidence in your answer.

(Total 12 marks)

Q8.

Outline and evaluate research into the effects of anxiety on the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.

(Total 12 marks)

Q9.

Outline and evaluate research (theories and/or studies) into the effects of misleading information on eyewitness testimony.

(Total 16 marks)