

# What Is Operant Conditioning?

## Worksheet

Operant conditioning is a learning method described by B.F. Skinner in which behavior is strengthened or weakened by its consequences: reinforcement increases the likelihood of a behavior, while punishment decreases it.

### Questions

1. Who developed the theory of operant conditioning?

- A) B.F. Skinner
- B) Ivan Pavlov
- C) Sigmund Freud
- D) Jean Piaget

2. Giving a dog a treat every time it sits on command is an example of:

- A) Positive reinforcement
- B) Negative reinforcement
- C) Positive punishment
- D) Negative punishment

3. Taking away a teenager's phone for missing curfew is an example of:

- A) Positive reinforcement
- B) Negative reinforcement
- C) Positive punishment
- D) Negative punishment

4. What is 'shaping' in operant conditioning?

- A) Reinforcing successive steps that get closer to a target behavior
- B) Punishing every incorrect behavior immediately
- C) Ignoring all behavior until it disappears
- D) Pairing two neutral stimuli together

5. A child receives a sticker every time they finish their homework, and starts finishing homework more often. What type of operant conditioning is this?

6. A teenager's nagging parent stops reminding them once they take out the trash without being asked. Why does the teen keep doing this chore?

7. An employee is fined for arriving late, and starts arriving on time more consistently. What type of consequence is this?

8. Define: What is positive reinforcement?

9. Define: What is negative reinforcement?

10. Define: What is positive punishment?

## Answer Key

1. A) B.F. Skinner - B.F. Skinner developed operant conditioning through experiments with the 'Skinner box'.
2. A) Positive reinforcement - Adding a pleasant stimulus (treat) to increase a behavior (sitting) is positive reinforcement.
3. D) Negative punishment - Removing a pleasant item (phone) to decrease a behavior (missing curfew) is negative punishment.
4. A) Reinforcing successive steps that get closer to a target behavior - Shaping gradually reinforces behaviors that increasingly resemble the desired final behavior.
5. A pleasant stimulus (sticker) is added after the behavior The behavior (finishing homework) increases in frequency This is positive reinforcement
6. An unpleasant stimulus (nagging) is removed after the behavior The behavior (taking out trash) increases in frequency This is negative reinforcement
7. An unpleasant stimulus (fine) is added after the behavior The behavior (arriving late) decreases in frequency This is positive punishment
8. Adding a pleasant stimulus after a behavior to increase the chance it happens again.
9. Removing an unpleasant stimulus after a behavior to increase the chance it happens again.
10. Adding an unpleasant stimulus after a behavior to decrease the chance it happens again.

### **Bounlu**

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