



# BCBA Task List (5th ed.)

## Introduction

The *BCBA Task List* includes the knowledge and skills that serve as the foundation for the BCBA examination.

## Structure

The *BCBA Task List* is organized in two major sections, *Foundations*, which includes basic skills and underlying principles and knowledge, and *Applications*, which includes more practice-oriented skills.

### Section 1: Foundations

- A Philosophical Underpinnings
- B Concepts and Principles
- C Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation
- D Experimental Design

### Section 2: Applications

- E Ethics (*Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*)
- F Behavior Assessment
- G Behavior-Change Procedures
- H Selecting and Implementing Interventions
- I Personnel Supervision and Management

This document should be referenced as follows:  
Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2017). *BCBA task list* (5th ed.). Littleton, CO: Author.

# Section 1: Foundations

## A. Philosophical Underpinnings

- A-1 Identify the goals of behavior analysis as a science (i.e., description, prediction, control).
- A-2 Explain the philosophical assumptions underlying the science of behavior analysis (e.g., selectionism, determinism, empiricism, parsimony, pragmatism).
- A-3 Describe and explain behavior from the perspective of radical behaviorism.
- A-4 Distinguish among behaviorism, the experimental analysis of behavior, applied behavior analysis, and professional practice guided by the science of behavior analysis.
- A-5 Describe and define the dimensions of applied behavior analysis (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968).

## B. Concepts and Principles

- B-1 Define and provide examples of behavior, response, and response class.
- B-2 Define and provide examples of stimulus and stimulus class.
- B-3 Define and provide examples of respondent and operant conditioning.
- B-4 Define and provide examples of positive and negative reinforcement contingencies.
- B-5 Define and provide examples of schedules of reinforcement.
- B-6 Define and provide examples of positive and negative punishment contingencies.
- B-7 Define and provide examples of automatic and socially mediated contingencies.
- B-8 Define and provide examples of unconditioned, conditioned, and generalized reinforcers and punishers.
- B-9 Define and provide examples of operant extinction.
- B-10 Define and provide examples of stimulus control.
- B-11 Define and provide examples of discrimination, generalization, and maintenance.
- B-12 Define and provide examples of motivating operations.
- B-13 Define and provide examples of rule-governed and contingency-shaped behavior.
- B-14 Define and provide examples of the verbal operants.
- B-15 Define and provide examples of derived stimulus relations.

## C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation

- C-1 Establish operational definitions of behavior.
- C-2 Distinguish among direct, indirect, and product measures of behavior.
- C-3 Measure occurrence (e.g., count, frequency, rate, percentage).
- C-4 Measure temporal dimensions of behavior (e.g., duration, latency, interresponse time).
- C-5 Measure form and strength of behavior (e.g., topography, magnitude).

- C-6 Measure trials to criterion.
- C-7 Design and implement sampling procedures (i.e., interval recording, time sampling).
- C-8 Evaluate the validity and reliability of measurement procedures.
- C-9 Select a measurement system to obtain representative data given the dimensions of behavior and the logistics of observing and recording.
- C-10 Graph data to communicate relevant quantitative relations (e.g., equal-interval graphs, bar graphs, cumulative records).
- C-11 Interpret graphed data.

## D. Experimental Design

- D-1 Distinguish between dependent and independent variables.
- D-2 Distinguish between internal and external validity.
- D-3 Identify the defining features of single-subject experimental designs (e.g., individuals serve as their own controls, repeated measures, prediction, verification, replication).
- D-4 Describe the advantages of single-subject experimental designs compared to group designs.
- D-5 Use single-subject experimental designs (e.g., reversal, multiple baseline, multielement, changing criterion).
- D-6 Describe rationales for conducting comparative, component, and parametric analyses.

# Section 2: Applications

## E. Ethics

Behave in accordance with the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*

- E-1 Introduction
- E-2 Responsibility as a Professional
- E-3 Responsibility in Practice
- E-4 Responsibility to Clients and Stakeholders
- E-5 Responsibility to Supervisees and Trainees
- E-6 Responsibility in Public Statements
- E-7 Responsibility in Research

## F. Behavior Assessment

- F-1 Review records and available data (e.g., educational, medical, historical) at the outset of the case.
- F-2 Determine the need for behavior-analytic services.
- F-3 Identify and prioritize socially significant behavior-change goals.
- F-4 Conduct assessments of relevant skill strengths and deficits.
- F-5 Conduct preference assessments.
- F-6 Describe the common functions of problem behavior.
- F-7 Conduct a descriptive assessment of problem behavior.
- F-8 Conduct a functional analysis of problem behavior.
- F-9 Interpret functional assessment data.

## G. Behavior-Change Procedures

- G-1 Use positive and negative reinforcement procedures to strengthen behavior.
- G-2 Use interventions based on motivating operations and discriminative stimuli.
- G-3 Establish and use conditioned reinforcers.
- G-4 Use stimulus and response prompts and fading (e.g., errorless, most-to-least, least-to-most, prompt delay, stimulus fading).
- G-5 Use modeling and imitation training.
- G-6 Use instructions and rules.
- G-7 Use shaping.
- G-8 Use chaining.
- G-9 Use discrete-trial, free-operant, and naturalistic teaching arrangements.
- G-10 Teach simple and conditional discriminations.
- G-11 Use Skinner's analysis to teach verbal behavior.
- G-12 Use equivalence-based instruction.
- G-13 Use the high-probability instructional sequence.
- G-14 Use reinforcement procedures to weaken behavior (e.g., DRA, FCT, DRO, DRL, NCR).
- G-15 Use extinction.
- G-16 Use positive and negative punishment (e.g., time-out, response cost, overcorrection).
- G-17 Use token economies.
- G-18 Use group contingencies.
- G-19 Use contingency contracting.
- G-20 Use self-management strategies.

G-21 Use procedures to promote stimulus and response generalization.

G-22 Use procedures to promote maintenance.

## H. Selecting and Implementing Interventions

H-1 State intervention goals in observable and measurable terms.

H-2 Identify potential interventions based on assessment results and the best available scientific evidence.

H-3 Recommend intervention goals and strategies based on such factors as client preferences, supporting environments, risks, constraints, and social validity.

H-4 When a target behavior is to be decreased, select an acceptable alternative behavior to be established or increased.

H-5 Plan for possible unwanted effects when using reinforcement, extinction, and punishment procedures.

H-6 Monitor client progress and treatment integrity.

H-7 Make data-based decisions about the effectiveness of the intervention and the need for treatment revision.

H-8 Make data-based decisions about the need for ongoing services.

H-9 Collaborate with others who support and/or provide services to clients.

## I. Personnel Supervision and Management

I-1 State the reasons for using behavior-analytic supervision and the potential risks of ineffective supervision (e.g., poor client outcomes, poor supervisee performance).

I-2 Establish clear performance expectations for the supervisor and supervisee.

I-3 Select supervision goals based on an assessment of the supervisee's skills.

I-4 Train personnel to competently perform assessment and intervention procedures.

I-5 Use performance monitoring, feedback, and reinforcement systems.

I-6 Use a functional assessment approach (e.g., performance diagnostics) to identify variables affecting personnel performance.

I-7 Use function-based strategies to improve personnel performance.

I-8 Evaluate the effects of supervision (e.g., on client outcomes, on supervisee repertoires).