

RBT Exam Study Guide

2nd Edition Task List Coverage

Measurement - Skill Acquisition - Behavior Reduction
Documentation - Professional Conduct

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Free Study Resource - 2026 Edition

About the RBT Exam

The Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) exam is a 75-question multiple-choice exam administered by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). You have 90 minutes to complete it. A passing score requires approximately 68% correct (scaled scoring).

Exam Blueprint - 2nd Edition Task List

Content Area	Questions	Weight
A. Measurement	12 items	16%
B. Skill Acquisition	24 items	32%
C. Behavior Reduction	12 items	16%
D. Documentation & Reporting	10 items	13%
E. Professional Conduct & Scope of Practice	15 items	20%
Unscored field items	10 items	Not counted

Prerequisites: (1) high school diploma or equivalent, (2) 40-hour training based on the RBT Task List, (3) initial competency assessment, and (4) BACB application. After passing: maintain 5% monthly supervision hours and renew annually.

Section A: Measurement (16%)

A-1: Prepare for Data Collection

Review the BIP or SAP, ensure data sheets are ready, and understand the operational definition of each target behavior. Operational definitions are observable and measurable.

A-2: Continuous Measurement Procedures

Frequency/Event Recording:

Count every occurrence. Best for behaviors with clear start and end.

Rate:

Frequency divided by time (e.g., 5 per minute). Use when observation lengths vary.

Duration Recording:

Total time a behavior occurs. Use when length matters (e.g., tantrums).

Latency:

Time from stimulus onset to behavior onset (e.g., time from instruction to compliance).

Inter-Response Time (IRT):

Time between the end of one response and the start of the next.

A-3: Discontinuous Measurement Procedures

Whole-Interval Recording:

Mark "+" only if the behavior occurs for the ENTIRE interval. Underestimates.

Partial-Interval Recording:

Mark "+" if behavior occurs at ANY point in the interval. Overestimates.

Momentary Time Sampling (MTS):

Mark "+" only if behavior is occurring AT THE END of the interval.

A-4: Permanent Product Recording

Measure outcomes (e.g., worksheets completed, items sorted) rather than the behavior itself. Useful when direct observation is not possible.

A-5: Enter Data and Update Graphs

Plot data after each session. Use line graphs (most common). Label all axes, add phase-change lines, and verify accuracy. Never alter data retroactively.

Section B: Skill Acquisition (32%)

B-1: Prepare for Sessions

Review the skill acquisition plan, prepare materials, identify reinforcers via preference assessment, and set up the environment to promote learning.

B-2: Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)

DTT has 5 components:

- SD: The instruction or cue.
- Prompt (if needed): Additional cue to help the learner respond correctly.
- Response: The learner's behavior.
- Consequence: Reinforcement for correct; error correction for incorrect.
- ITI (Inter-trial Interval): Brief pause between trials.

B-3: Naturalistic Teaching

Instruction embedded in natural routines and the learner's preferred activities. Examples: incidental teaching, NET, pivotal response training (PRT). Follows learner motivation; less structured than DTT.

B-4: Task Analysis and Chaining

Break complex skills into steps. Chaining types:

Forward Chaining:

Teach step 1 first, then step 2, etc.

Backward Chaining:

Teach the last step first; learner always completes the task.

Total Task Presentation:

Prompt and reinforce all steps every trial.

B-5: Discrimination Training

Teach the learner to respond to the SD but not the S-delta. Simple: 1 SD vs 1 S-delta. Conditional: matching based on a sample stimulus.

B-6: Stimulus Control Transfer (Prompting and Fading)

Prompt hierarchy (most to least intrusive):

- Physical: hand-over-hand guidance.
- Model: demonstrating the behavior.
- Gestural: pointing or gesture.
- Verbal: a verbal cue.
- Visual: picture or written cue.

Prompt Fading:

Systematically reduce prompts. Methods: MTL (most-to-least), LTM (least-to-most), time delay (constant or

B-7: Generalization and Maintenance

Generalization: skill occurs in new settings, with new people, or with new materials. Maintenance: skill persists after training ends. Promote by varying instructors, settings, and materials during training.

B-8: Shaping

Reinforce successive approximations toward the target behavior. Start with what the learner currently does; gradually raise the criterion.

B-9: Token Economy

Tokens are conditioned reinforcers exchanged for backup reinforcers. Establish the ratio before starting. Deliver tokens immediately and contingently. Gradually increase the ratio to promote delay tolerance.

B-10: Preference Assessments

Free Operant:

Observe what the learner naturally engages with when unrestricted.

Single Stimulus:

Present one item at a time; record approach or avoidance.

Paired Stimulus (Forced Choice):

Present two items; record which is chosen across pairings.

MSWO:

Present an array; remove chosen item; re-randomize. Best for ranking multiple items.

Section C: Behavior Reduction (16%)

C-1: ABC Data Collection

Antecedent (event before), Behavior (observable), Consequence (what immediately follows). RBTs collect data; BCBA's use it to identify function. Never conclude function independently.

Four functions of behavior (SEAT):

- Social Attention: maintained by attention from others.
- Escape/Avoidance: removes or postpones something aversive.
- Access to Tangibles: obtains preferred items or activities.
- Automatic (Sensory): produces its own sensory reinforcement.

C-2: Implement Procedures as Written

Never design, modify, or stop behavior reduction procedures independently. If a procedure seems unsafe or ineffective, notify the BCBA immediately.

C-3: Differential Reinforcement

DRA:

Reinforce a specific ALTERNATIVE behavior; withhold reinforcement for target behavior.

DRI:

Reinforce a behavior INCOMPATIBLE with the problem behavior (both cannot occur at once).

DRO:

Reinforce the ABSENCE of the target behavior for a specified interval.

DRL:

Reinforce behavior only when it occurs at or BELOW a specified rate.

C-4: Extinction

Withhold the reinforcer that maintained behavior. Side effects to expect:

- Extinction burst: temporary increase in frequency/intensity/duration.
- Spontaneous recovery: behavior reappears after a period of absence.
- Emotional responding: frustration, aggression, crying.

C-5: Crisis and Emergency Procedures

Follow the written crisis plan and agency policy. Prioritize safety. Document incidents accurately. Report to supervisor immediately. Physical intervention requires authorization and training.

Section D: Documentation and Reporting (13%)

D-1: Report Concerning Issues

RBTs are mandated reporters in most states. If you suspect abuse or neglect, follow your organization's protocols AND state law. Document and report immediately. Do not investigate independently.

D-2: Objective Session Notes

Notes must be:

- Objective: observable, measurable behavior - not interpretations.
- Accurate: reflect what actually occurred.
- Timely: completed same day as service.
- Complete: goals addressed, data summary, and incidents.

Avoid vague language like "had a good session." Instead write: "Completed 15/20 manding trials at 80% accuracy. Two floor drops, each approx 30 seconds."

D-3: HIPAA and Confidentiality

PHI (Protected Health Information) = name, DOB, address, diagnosis, session notes. Never share without written authorization. Avoid discussing cases in public. Secure all materials and devices.

Section E: Professional Conduct & Scope of Practice (20%)

E-1: Supervision Requirements

At least 5% of monthly service hours must be supervised by a BCBA or BCaBA. Supervision must include direct observation. Track and log all supervision hours. Note: supervision does NOT count toward PDUs (2026 requirement).

E-2: Respond to Supervisor Feedback

Implement changes immediately and accurately. Ask questions before the session, not during. Never modify procedures without BCBA approval. Document all changes.

E-3: Proactive Communication

Contact your supervisor when:

- A client shows new or concerning behavior.
- You are unsure how to implement a procedure.
- An injury, incident, or safety concern occurs.
- A caregiver requests program changes.
- You observe skill regression.

E-4: Professional Boundaries

Avoid multiple relationships that could impair objectivity. This includes: accepting gifts above nominal value, personal social media contact with clients or families, and social invitations outside of professional context. When in doubt, consult your supervisor.

E-5: Client Dignity

Use the least restrictive intervention. Conduct preference assessments regularly. Celebrate achievements. Never use demeaning language or sarcasm.

E-6/E-7: Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Violations

Disclose conflicts to your BCBA. If you witness unethical behavior, consult your BCBA first. If the BCBA is involved, follow your organization's reporting procedures and the BACB Ethics Code.

Key Vocabulary Quick Reference

ABA:

Applied Behavior Analysis - applying behavior principles to improve socially significant behavior.

BACB:

Behavior Analyst Certification Board - certifies RBTs, BCaBAs, and BCBAs.

BIP:

Behavior Intervention Plan - written procedures for reducing problem behavior.

SAP:

Skill Acquisition Plan - written teaching procedures for target skills.

SD:

Discriminative Stimulus - signals reinforcement is available for a given behavior.

EO/MO:

Establishing/Motivating Operation - temporarily alters reinforcer effectiveness and response frequency.

Reinforcement:

Consequence that INCREASES future frequency. Positive: add something. Negative: remove something.

Punishment:

Consequence that DECREASES future frequency. Positive: add aversive. Negative: remove preferred.

Extinction:

Withholding a previously provided reinforcer, resulting in decreased responding.

Generalization:

Skill occurs in new settings, with new people, or with new stimuli beyond training.

Maintenance:

Skill continues over time after systematic training has ended.

Baseline:

Measurement of behavior before intervention is introduced.

IOA:

Interobserver Agreement - consistency between two independent observers. Must be above 80%.

Mand:

Verbal operant controlled by a motivating operation - a request.

Tact:

Verbal operant controlled by a non-verbal stimulus - a label or comment on the environment.

Intraverbal:

Verbal operant controlled by another verbal stimulus (e.g., answering fill-in questions).

Echoic:

Verbal imitation - repeating what another person says.

VB-MAPP:

Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program - a skills assessment tool.

Study Tips for the RBT Exam

The RBT exam tests your ability to APPLY concepts in scenarios, not just define them. Here is how to prepare effectively:

- **Flashcards for vocabulary**
Know every term cold. The exam uses them without providing definitions.
- **Mock exams at rbtstudy.behaviorschool.com**
Timed practice tests - 75 questions in 90 minutes. Track weak areas.
- **Measurement first**
The 12 measurement questions are highly learnable with precise definitions.
- **DTT components**
Many questions describe scenarios - identify SD, prompt type, and consequence.
- **Four functions of behavior**
Attention, Escape, Access, Automatic. Every behavior reduction question links back to function.
- **Read the Ethics Code**
Section E scenarios test scope of practice knowledge. Know what an RBT can and cannot do independently.
- **Study 20 minutes daily**
Spaced repetition beats cramming. Review what you got wrong the previous day.
- **Teach it to someone else**
Explaining concepts reveals gaps in your own understanding.

Ready to practice?

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85 questions per exam - Instant feedback - 2nd Edition aligned

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