

UPDATED: January 25, 2025

Sociology of Aging

Possible Test Questions for Test 1:

Unless otherwise notified, roughly 4 or 5 of these questions (or some version/combination of them) will make up test 1.

Be sure to draw from the chapters and PowerPoint slides when answering the questions.

Introduction to Sociology of Aging (Power Point slides):

1. Are older people respected? How has respect for the elderly changed over time, let's say from the 1800s to today? What is agism? How is it related to social change?
2. What kinds of effects has the baby boom generation had on society as it has aged? Use the concept of: "A pig in a python" to provide your answer?
3. What is meant by life expectancy? How did the life expectancy in the U.S. compare to other technologically advanced countries in 1950? How has this changed since the 1950's and what has contributed to the change? Please explain.

Chapter 4 and PowerPoints :

1. Discuss a variety of human behaviors that contribute to a person's "aging" as they grow old. What happens to one's physical health as one becomes old? Describe the various visible and less visible changes that are likely to occur over time.
2. What are chronic and acute conditions of aging? Describe various factors that contribute to/cause each (be sure to draw from the text)? Describe several of the chronic conditions most often found among the elderly.
3. List five top causes of death among older people. Now, for each, describe what it is, note some of the causes for it, what symptoms are evident, and what can help reduce or slow down the chances of experiencing it?
4. Describe the damage theory of aging and the program theory of aging. What does each state happens as one grows old. Provide factors that support each theory—that is, what evidence suggests the theory is true. Which do you believe does the best job of explaining aging or has the most influence on aging. Explain your choice.

5. What are free radicals (without getting too technical)? Where do they come from? What harm or help do they provide? What are antioxidants, where are they found, and what harm or help do they provide? How might these be related to Alzheimer's disease?
6. Explain how each--diet, exercise, and mental stimulation—can have positive effects on aging. Explain how each can have negative effects on aging. Describe intrinsic and extrinsic changes that occur with aging. Be sure to discuss vitamins, minerals, and the senses.
7. As described in your text, what is the role of diet, nutrition, exercise, and mental health in one's longevity? Give an example for each. What is considered a good diet when considering aging? How is nutrition over one's lifetime related to aging? What are reasons given by older people for exercising or not? What mental states have a positive effect on aging and which have a negative effect (be sure to draw from text)?

Chapter 5 and PowerPoints

1. What roles do people lose as they grow old? How might role loss affect the older person's self-concept or self-image? What is role discontinuity? How might role ambiguity be related to older persons? How might it be different between women and men? What is re-socialization?
2. There are at least three major theories that attempt to explain an older person's behavior (e.g., disengagement theory) as they grow old. What does each theory propose? Which do you believe is most accurate and why?
3. List and describe four different factors that may contribute to depression among the elderly? Describe at least four different feelings the older depressed person may have. List and describe four factors that can help an older person overcome depression (be sure to draw from text).
4. What is Alzheimer's disease? How did the name originate? How does it affect the body as it progresses? How does it affect the person's behavior? How is it related to dementia? How is it related to depression? What is the cure? What treatments are available?
5. Our text describes five factors that affect cognitive processes/functioning. List four of these. Describe how each influences cognitive functioning. Provide an example for each.
6. Two primary variables thought to be related to slowing of information processing in old age are (1) genetic-biological factors and (2) cultural-social factors. Describe what each is referring. Provide at least three examples of each.

7. Define (1) primary memory, (2) working memory, (3) secondary memory, and (4) tertiary/long-term memory. Describe how each changes as one becomes elderly.

8. What is dementia? What are the symptoms of early and later dementia? What causes it? What is depression disorder? What are the symptoms of depression disorder? What causes it? What are some differences between dementia and depression?