

## Examrace

### Competitive Exams: Conditioning

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Classical conditioning is only concerned with involuntary, reflex behaviour. However, operant conditioning looks at voluntary behaviour. It is a type of learning in which future behaviour is determined by the consequences of past behaviour. In classical conditioning, the stimulus comes before the behaviour; in operant conditioning the behaviour comes before the consequence.

The central component of operant conditioning is reinforcement. Behaviours are learned by reinforcement:

1. a positive reinforcement involves being given a reward for showing a certain desired behaviour (e. g. a child tidies his room as his mother asks him to, and so receives additional pocket money that week)
2. a negative reinforcement involves having something negative taken away for showing a certain behaviour (e. g. a mother not shouting at her child for behaving well whilst on a car journey)

Also to consider are punishments. A punishment is not the same as reinforcement. A reinforcement encourages desired behaviour (as it has pleasant effects) ; and a punishment discourages undesired behaviour (as it has unpleasant consequences) . An example of a punishment therefore might be a naughty child not being allowed to play with his toys.

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