

Exam Preparation Booklet

Supervision



Booklet No. 6



Booklet #6

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The CSEA Examination Preparation Booklet Series is designed to help members prepare for New York State and local government civil service examinations. This booklet is designed for practice purposes only and its content may not conform to that of any particular civil service examination.

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Introduction

Purpose

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for specific New York State civil service exams. The 55 practice questions that follow are examples of the kinds of questions you're likely to encounter in several actual exams. These questions are intended to test your ability to apply the principles of effective supervision and training.

In some ways, this is the least objective section of the test. Most of the questions in this section ask you to apply commonly accepted principles of supervision and training to hypothetical situations in the workplace. That isn't always easy. Sometimes two of the four possible answers might seem correct, and you will have to use your judgment to choose between the two. Most of the time, however, it should be clear to you which answers are consistent with accepted practices and which aren't.

There are two potential pitfalls in this section that you need to be careful about. The first is that you may have encountered a situation at work that is similar to one described in a question. In cases such as this, your own feelings about what happened at work may color your thoughts about the appropriate answer. Stay focused on the situation described in the question and base your answer on what you know about the principles of effective supervision and training, not on your feelings or personal experiences. The second potential pitfall is that you may know which answer the test writers consider correct but you may disagree with them. In these cases, it is not worth losing credit for a question just to make a point.

The generally accepted ideas about supervision and training listed on the following page will guide you in answering questions in this section.

Study Guide Contents

The first part of this study guide is composed of 55 multiple choice questions. Questions 1–40 concern supervision, and questions 41–55 concern training. An answer key is located on page 15, followed by explanations of the correct answers, beginning on page 16.

Good luck!

Points to keep in mind when answering questions about supervision and training

1. Avoid inconsistency.
2. Always give employees a chance to explain their actions before taking disciplinary action. Don't allow too much time for a "cooling off" period before disciplining an employee.
3. Be specific in your criticisms.
4. Delegate responsibility wisely.
5. Do not argue or lose your temper.
6. Promote mutual respect and be fair, impartial, and open-minded.
7. Keep in mind that asking for employees' advice and input can be helpful in decision making.
8. If you make promises, keep them.
9. Always keep the feelings, abilities, dignity, and motives of your staff in mind.
10. Remain loyal to your employees' interests.
11. Never criticize employees in front of others, or treat employees like children.
12. Admit mistakes. Don't place blame on your employees, or make excuses.
13. Be reasonable in your expectations, give complete instructions, and establish well-planned goals.
14. Be knowledgeable about office details and procedures, but avoid becoming bogged down in detail.
15. Avoid supervising too closely or too loosely. Employees should view you as an approachable supervisor.
16. Remember that employees' personal problems may affect job performance, but become involved only when appropriate.
17. Work to develop workers, and to instill a feeling of cooperation while working toward mutual goals.
18. Do not overpraise or underpraise. Be properly appreciative.
19. Never ask an employee to discipline someone for you.
20. A complaint, even if unjustified, should be taken seriously.
21. Training programs should produce measurable improvements in staff performance.
22. Training programs should address the gap between current and desired performance.
23. Training programs should be designed to meet the needs of adult learners.
24. Training programs should have clearly defined objectives.
25. The effectiveness of training programs should be evaluated on a regular basis.

Supervision

For each of the following questions, select the letter that represents the best choice.

1. One of your employees frequently does not follow correct procedures for recording time and attendance. What should you do?
 - a. Hold a staff meeting to stress the importance of following correct procedures to record time and attendance
 - b. Ask another employee to speak to the person who has not been following procedures
 - c. Send a memo to all staff members stressing the importance of following correct procedures to record time and attendance
 - d. Speak to the employee individually about the importance of following correct procedures to record time and attendance
2. Which of the following is the best reason to conduct performance evaluations?
 - a. To establish your authority as supervisor
 - b. To provide employees an objective assessment of their development needs
 - c. To rank employees according to their abilities
 - d. To establish a basis for future disciplinary actions
3. You have successfully delegated most of your responsibilities to your staff. What do you do now?
 - a. Take back some work that you feel you could do better yourself
 - b. Ask for daily reports on the work you have delegated
 - c. Monitor the progress of work you have delegated and look for new projects for yourself and your staff
 - d. Reassign delegated tasks to different staff members
4. One of your employees has done an outstanding job on a difficult project. What should you do?
 - a. Recognize the employee's accomplishment at a staff meeting
 - b. Avoid praising the employee in public because you do not want to stir up resentment among other employees
 - c. Send a memo to all staff members thanking them for their hard work
 - d. Hold up the employee as an example to other staff members who have not performed as well

5. As a supervisor, you find that a probationary employee under your supervision is consistently below a reasonable standard of performance for the job he is assigned to do. The most appropriate action for you to take first is to:
 - a. Give him an easier job to do
 - b. Advise him to transfer to another department
 - c. Determine whether the cause for his below standard performance can be readily remedied
 - d. Recommend to your supervisor that the employee be discharged at the end of his probationary period
6. Your supervisor tells you that she is concerned about employees using the Internet at work for personal business. What should you do?
 - a. Ask your most trusted employees to keep an eye on their coworkers and report any improper use of the Internet
 - b. Speak privately about improper Internet use with employees who have business interests outside of work
 - c. Discuss proper use of the Internet at a staff meeting
 - d. Do nothing until an actual case of improper Internet use comes to your attention
7. An employee comes to you with a complaint that you consider frivolous. What should you do?
 - a. Listen to the complaint. If you decide not to act on it, explain your decision to the employee
 - b. Tell the employee that you have many more pressing issues to deal with and you do not have time to consider the complaint
 - c. Explain to the employee why you think the complaint is trivial
 - d. Treat the complaint humorously in the hope that the employee will see that is not worth bothering about
8. One of your employees frequently plays practical jokes on other employees. Several employees have complained to you about these jokes. What should you do?
 - a. Ignore the complaints because you do not consider the problem serious enough to bother with
 - b. Tell the employees who have complained to develop a sense of humor
 - c. Tell the employees who have complained to speak to the practical joker themselves
 - d. Speak to the practical joker in private and explain that his actions are annoying to other employees

9. An experienced, capable employee has recently been making a number of errors in routine work. What should you do?
 - a. Discuss the problem with the employee and try to determine the cause of the errors
 - b. Reassign the work to a different employee
 - c. Begin disciplinary action against the employee
 - d. Ask another employee to check all the work of the employee who has been making errors
10. Your supervisor has established new work procedures that your staff considers burdensome and inefficient. What should you do?
 - a. Tell your staff to ignore the new procedures
 - b. Tell your staff that you also object to the new procedures but that there is nothing that can be done about them
 - c. Tell your staff that you will discuss their objections with your supervisor
 - d. Ask several of your staff members to bring their objections to your supervisor
11. Of the following, which is the most important reason for disciplining an employee?
 - a. To correct unsatisfactory performance
 - b. To establish a reputation as an effective supervisor
 - c. To establish a basis for possible future layoffs
 - d. To foster a clear understanding of your authority
12. You discover that you have unjustly reprimanded one of your staff members. What should you do?
 - a. Admit your mistake to the employee
 - b. Do not admit your mistake, but grant the employee some special privilege to make up for your error
 - c. Admit that a mistake was made, but give the employee the impression that it was not your fault
 - d. Ignore the matter, but be more careful in the future

13. You have overheard two of your staff members make insulting remarks about your supervisor. What should you do?
 - a. Begin disciplinary action against the employees
 - b. Bring the matter to the attention of your supervisor
 - c. Discuss the staff's complaints at a staff meeting
 - d. Do not take any action until a staff member raises the issue with you
14. Which of the following is the most accurate statement about the performance appraisal process?
 - a. Appraisals should always include at least one negative statement about an employee's performance
 - b. Appraisals should be based primarily on the supervisor's personal opinion about the abilities of the employee
 - c. Appraisals should be based on pre-established standards that are known to the employee
 - d. Appraisals should be worded in vague terms to avoid confrontations with employees
15. In preparing written instructions for employees, it is best to:
 - a. Keep instructions general to encourage employees to ask questions about specific actions they may need to take
 - b. Give careful thought to what employees already know and what you may need to explain
 - c. Omit routine steps in order to keep the instructions brief
 - d. Use long sentences to make the instructions easier to follow
16. Which of the following is the least appropriate thing for a supervisor to do when delegating work?
 - a. Monitor employees' performance on a regular basis
 - b. Let employees know that you are available to answer questions about the work
 - c. Reassign the work as soon as it appears that an employee is having trouble
 - d. Provide employees with an objective evaluation of their performance when they have finished the work

17. Which of the following is a likely reason for supervision that is too lax?
 - a. The supervisor's wish to avoid unpleasant confrontations
 - b. The difficulty of dealing with modern office technology
 - c. Perfectionism on the part of the supervisor
 - d. A more highly educated work force
18. Which of the following is likely to have the most positive effect on employee morale?
 - a. Special privileges for employees who contribute to the supervisor's success
 - b. Frequent reminders about the consequences of poor performance
 - c. Frequent praise for all employees regardless of their performance
 - d. A clear understanding of each employee's responsibilities
19. One of your employees has become an expert user of a software program that is becoming increasingly important for the work of your unit. How should you, as a supervisor, handle this situation?
 - a. Praise the employee for her accomplishment and encourage her to share her knowledge with other employees
 - b. Require all other staff members to become expert users by a certain date
 - c. Say nothing to the employee because you do not want to appear to be showing favoritism
 - d. Assign all the work that needs to be done with this software program to the expert user
20. One of your employees frequently comes to work in worn and dirty clothes. What should you do?
 - a. Encourage other employees to speak to this person about his appearance
 - b. Warn the employee that you will begin disciplinary action if he does not improve his appearance
 - c. Ask other employees if they know why this person dresses so unprofessionally
 - d. Speak to the person one-on-one about improving his appearance
21. The financial records of your unit are being reviewed by outside auditors. What should you tell your staff to do?
 - a. Use their own judgment in deciding what records the auditors should see
 - b. Challenge any requests for information that they consider irrelevant
 - c. Cooperate fully with all requests from the auditors
 - d. Press the auditors to finish their work as quickly as possible

22. Which of the following is the best indicator of effective supervision?
- a. Employees work independently without constant monitoring by the supervisor
 - b. Employees never have to work overtime
 - c. Employees never come to the supervisor with complaints
 - d. Employees never question the supervisor's instructions
23. One of your employees comes to you with a complaint. Another employee frequently tells off-color jokes (jokes of a sexual nature) in her presence, and she finds this offensive. What should you do?
- a. Tell the employee who has complained not to be so sensitive
 - b. Ask other employees what they think about the appropriateness of such jokes
 - c. Explain to the employee who has been telling such jokes that they are not appropriate and tell him to stop
 - d. Do nothing and wait for the problem to resolve itself
24. Which of the following is the most important element of effective supervision?
- a. Knowledge of the latest office technology
 - b. Skill in human relations
 - c. Knowledge of policies and procedures
 - d. Skill in written communications
25. Your staff members range in age from the early twenties to the late sixties. How should you handle this situation?
- a. Assign the more tiring work to younger staff members
 - b. Provide younger staff members with more opportunities for training
 - c. Assign more difficult tasks to older, more experienced staff members
 - d. Assign work based on the abilities and interests of staff members, without regard to age
26. One of your employees tells you that she suspects your supervisor has been receiving expensive gifts from a vendor who does business with your agency. You have a great deal of faith in the honesty of your supervisor. What should you do?
- a. Tell the employee that you will take her accusation seriously
 - b. Warn the employee that making such accusations can be dangerous
 - c. Warn your supervisor that he may become the subject of an investigation
 - d. Advise the employee to say nothing and wait for the proper authorities to discover any improprieties

27. You have been monitoring the phone calls of customer service staff, and you find that one employee often treats callers rudely. What should you do?
- a. Reassign the employee to different work that does not involve contact with the public
 - b. Hold a staff meeting to stress the importance of treating callers courteously
 - c. Speak to the employee individually about treating callers more courteously
 - d. Begin disciplinary action against the employee
28. One of your employees reports that several personal items have been stolen from her desk. Which of the following would be your best course of action?
- a. Inspect the work areas of all employees to look for the missing items
 - b. Ask all employees to remove all personal items from their work areas
 - c. Ask the employee whose things were stolen to begin a confidential search of your unit to look for the missing items
 - d. Send a memo to all employees reminding them to be careful about securing personal possessions
29. You want to introduce a more efficient method to handle a routine task that several members of your staff perform on a regular basis. What should you do?
- a. Explain the new method to your staff and ask for their opinions about it
 - b. Remind the staff that they will be evaluated on their ability to learn new skills
 - c. Explain the new method only to those staff members who seem willing to learn new things
 - d. Give the staff one week to learn the new method and then reassign anyone who cannot master it in that amount of time
30. Which of the following would be appropriate to ask about when interviewing a job candidate?
- a. The candidate's general health
 - b. The candidate's knowledge of a particular software program
 - c. How many children the candidate has at home
 - d. The year the candidate graduated from high school

31. One of your employees tells you that there is some incorrect information on your agency's Website. What should you do?
- Tell the employee that your group is not responsible for the agency's Website
 - Bring the situation to the attention of the person responsible for the Website
 - Bring the situation to the attention of someone in upper management
 - Send a memo to all of your staff members informing them about the error
32. One of your staff members has a sideline business selling custom-made candles. You notice that he is spending more and more time during normal business hours selling candles to his co-workers. What should you do?
- Ask one of the employee's friends to caution him about conducting personal business during normal work hours
 - Send a memo to all staff reminding them not to use work hours for personal business
 - Inform the person one-on-one that it is not appropriate to use work hours to pursue his personal business
 - Ignore the situation because the employee's business will probably slow down when most people in your work unit have bought candles
33. You learn that one of your staff members is looking for a job outside your agency. What should you do?
- Cancel any training plans you had made for the employee
 - Ask the employee to explain why she is dissatisfied with her present job
 - Continue to treat the employee in the same way as you have been treating her
 - Reassign any confidential work that the employee has been doing
34. An employee tells you about a new laser printer that offers better quality than the printer you are using now. How should you respond?
- "I'll ask the people in Information Technology if they're familiar with the printer"
 - "We don't make decisions about computer equipment. The decision is out of our hands"
 - "I think the printer we have now meets our needs. I don't see the need for something new"
 - "If this printer is really better than what we have now, someone would have told us about it already"

35. You have promised an employee that he will be able to take a vacation day on his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. A few days before his scheduled vacation day, your supervisor assigns your group a large project with a tight deadline. Which of the following would be your least appropriate course of action?
- a. Ask all the staff members if they can work overtime to help complete the project
 - b. Ask the employee to change his vacation plans
 - c. Ask your supervisor if it is possible to extend the deadline
 - d. Help out with the project yourself
36. Several employees frequently arrive late at staff meetings. What should you do?
- a. Wait for everyone to arrive before starting the meeting
 - b. Schedule staff meetings at a different time
 - c. Hold fewer staff meetings
 - d. Explain to those employees who arrive late that they are being disrespectful to employees who arrive on time
37. One of your employees frequently uses obscene language in the workplace. What should you do?
- a. Ignore the situation as long as no one complains
 - b. Ask another employee to discuss the issue with the employee who is using obscene language
 - c. Explain to the employee, one-on-one, that his language is not appropriate in an office
 - d. Give the employee a new assignment in which he will have little contact with other employees
38. You see an employee playing solitaire on her computer during lunch hour. What should you do?
- a. Counsel the employee that computers should not be used for games
 - b. Do nothing unless you see the employee using the computer to play games during work hours
 - c. Send a memo to all staff members informing them that they should never use computers to play games
 - d. Ask the Information Technology staff to remove the games from all computers in your work area

39. A supervisor can best encourage employees to make suggestions by:
- a. Keeping a record of the number of suggestions each employee makes
 - b. Giving credit to an employee whose suggestion has been accepted and used
 - c. Providing a suggestion box
 - d. Putting up a bulletin board
40. An employee has made an error that may have serious consequences for your work unit. What should you do?
- a. Act quickly to minimize the consequences of the error
 - b. Make sure that everyone in the unit knows who is responsible for the error
 - c. Begin disciplinary action against the employee
 - d. Tell the employee who has made the error that he alone is responsible for correcting it

Training

41. Which of the following is the first step in developing a training program?
 - a. Prepare handouts and job aids
 - b. Conduct a needs analysis
 - c. Develop specific learning objectives
 - d. Develop a method of evaluating what participants have learned
42. Five staff members who report to you attend a workshop on a new software program. After the workshop, four of the five can use the new program effectively but one cannot. What should you do about this employee?
 - a. Assign the employee tasks that do not require using the new software
 - b. Have the employee take the workshop again
 - c. Consider a different approach to providing training for the employee
 - d. Assume that the employee will eventually become proficient in the program without additional instruction
43. One of your employees is having trouble learning how to use a new tool that he will need to do his job. What should you do?
 - a. Change his job responsibilities
 - b. Offer him an opportunity for additional training
 - c. Raise the issue at a staff meeting and ask for advice from other staff members
 - d. Ask him to begin looking for another position
44. Which of the following statements is least accurate?
 - a. Adult learners find it difficult to master new skills
 - b. Adult learners have different learning styles
 - c. Adult learners have different motivational levels
 - d. Adult learners are goal-oriented
45. Which of the following best describes the objectives of a training program?
 - a. Open-ended
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Flexible
 - d. Fluid

46. A staff member tells you that she has not been accepted in a training program, but other employees who applied after she did have been accepted. What should you do?
- a. Suggest that the employee apply for the program again sometime in the future
 - b. Begin an investigation of the training program to determine if it is discriminatory
 - c. Tell the employee that the next time she applies she should ask you to intervene on her behalf
 - d. Suggest that the employee call the training coordinator to see if there has been a mistake
47. Which of the following is the best way to determine whether the participants in a training program are mastering the subject matter?
- a. Give pop quizzes
 - b. Ask questions frequently
 - c. Study the body language of participants
 - d. Use small-group activities
48. Training programs often include pre-course and post-course assessments. What is the primary purpose of these assessments?
- a. To determine the effectiveness of the training program
 - b. To rank participants in terms of their understanding of the subject matter
 - c. To establish objectives for the training program
 - d. To determine which participants may be able to take on additional job responsibilities
49. You are attempting to teach an employee how to use a new software program. The employee is having a great deal of difficulty, even though you consider the program to be very simple and easy to use. Before you spend more time instructing the employee, what should you do?
- a. Reassign the work to be done with this program to another employee
 - b. Tell the employee that this is an easy program and you don't understand why he is having so much trouble with it
 - c. Review the steps you have already explained, and determine whether the employee understands them
 - d. Tell the employee that you will continue your explanation another day because you are becoming too frustrated

50. Which of the following best describes the purpose of a training program?
- a. To rank employees in terms of their ability to perform specific tasks
 - b. To provide employees opportunities for advancement
 - c. To increase opportunities for supervisors to delegate work to employees
 - d. To address the gap between current and desired performance
51. Which of the following is the least appropriate thing to consider when making training plans for employees?
- a. The interests and experience of employees
 - b. The family responsibilities of employees
 - c. Changes in employee roles and responsibilities
 - d. New office technology that will soon become available to employees
52. A new employee is assigned to your unit. Which of the following is most important to consider when establishing training objectives for the employee?
- a. The performance standards established for the workplace
 - b. The employee's education background
 - c. The educational background of other employees
 - d. The employee's career goals
53. The standards used to develop training objectives should be
- a. Subjective
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Different for each employee
 - d. Open to interpretation
54. The results of a post-course assessment for a training program show no improvement over scores on the pre-course assessment. Which of the following is the best way to address this situation?
- a. Re-evaluate the training objectives
 - b. Revise the pre-course and post-course assessments
 - c. Re-evaluate the training methods
 - d. Have participants complete the same course again

55. The objectives of a training program should be
- a. Explained to participants at the beginning of the program
 - b. Customized for each instructor
 - c. Established by participants in the program
 - d. Not be shared with participants

Answer Key

1. d	12. a	23. c	34. a	45. b
2. b	13. d	24. b	35. b	46. d
3. c	14. c	25. d	36. d	47. b
4. a	15. b	26. a	37. c	48. a
5. c	16. c	27. c	38. b	49. c
6. c	17. a	28. d	39. b	50. d
7. a	18. d	29. a	40. a	51. b
8. d	19. a	30. b	41. b	52. a
9. a	20. d	31. b	42. c	53. b
10. c	21. c	32. c	43. b	54. c
11. a	22. a	33. c	44. a	55. a

Answers and Explanations

1. The answer is choice d. Choice a is incorrect because it would be inappropriate to raise this issue at a staff meeting if only one employee is having a problem. Raising the issue at a staff meeting would imply that several members of the staff are not recording time and attendance properly. Choice c is incorrect for the same reason. Choice b is incorrect because a supervisor should never ask one employee to speak to another about unsatisfactory performance. Choice d is the appropriate course of action for a supervisor to take in this situation.
2. The answer is choice b. There are other valid reasons to conduct performance evaluations, but choice b is the only choice given that reflects their true value and purpose. Choices a and c are not appropriate uses of performance evaluations. Choice d represents one possible use of performance evaluations, but it is certainly not “the best reason” to conduct them.
3. The answer is choice c. A supervisor should always continue to monitor delegated work, even if it is being performed successfully. If you feel that you and your staff can do more, it is appropriate to look for new projects. It is not appropriate for a supervisor to take back some work (choice a) because this sends employees the message that you are dissatisfied with their performance. Choice b sends a similar message – that you are so concerned about how your employees are doing that you feel you need to check up on them constantly. There is no real reason for the course of action in choice d. Change for the sake of change is inefficient and unnecessary. It also sends the message that you are unhappy with the way employees are performing their delegated work.
4. The answer is choice a. It is appropriate to praise an employee in a public setting for a job well done. Therefore, choice b is incorrect. Choice c is incorrect because it fails to recognize the accomplishments of the individual. Choice d is incorrect because this action is likely to stir up resentment among other staff members toward the employee who is being held up as an example.
5. The answer is choice c. The question asks you what action it is appropriate to take *first*. Choice c would be an appropriate *first* step. If the employee's poor performance cannot be readily improved, then you would probably recommend that he be discharged at the end of his probationary period (choice d). Giving the employee an easier job to do (choice a) is inappropriate because it ignores the problem. The same is true for advising the employee to transfer to another department (choice b).
6. The answer is choice c. Since this issue affects your entire staff, it is appropriate to raise it at a staff meeting. Choice a is incorrect because asking some employees to keep an eye on others would create an atmosphere of distrust. Choice b is incorrect because it is not appropriate to single out certain employees if you have no reason to suspect that they have been using the Internet improperly. Choice d is incorrect because you need to do something to respond to your supervisor's concerns about improper use of the Internet.
7. The answer is choice a. All complaints should be taken seriously, even if a supervisor considers them unimportant. Choice b is incorrect because it sends a discouraging message to employees. Employees will be reluctant to bring legitimate issues to your attention if

they feel that you are not interested in their concerns. Choices c and d are incorrect for the same reason. These approaches may also be considered insulting.

8. The answer is choice d. This situation calls for one-on-one counseling. Choices a and b are incorrect because they send a discouraging message to employees. All complaints should be taken seriously, even if a supervisor considers them unimportant. Choice c is incorrect because as a supervisor you would be shirking your responsibility if you failed to address conflicts among employees.
9. The answer is choice a. This is another situation that calls for one-on-one counseling. Choices b and c are incorrect because they represent an extreme response to a routine problem. Choice d is incorrect because it is unfair to both employees involved. It would create resentment in the employee who has been making errors, and it would place the other employee in an uncomfortable situation.
10. The answer is choice c. A supervisor should take all complaints seriously. In this case the best course of action is to discuss the staff's concerns with your supervisor. Choice a is incorrect because it is your responsibility to see that your supervisor's instructions are carried out, even if your staff disagrees with them. Choice b is incorrect because it is too negative an approach. Choice d is incorrect because this course of action unfairly shifts responsibility from you to your staff. In this situation, it is clearly your responsibility to bring your staff's concerns to the attention of your supervisor.
11. The answer is choice a. This is a legitimate and important reason for disciplining an employee. The other choices are not.
12. The answer is choice a. The best thing to do in this situation is to admit your mistake to the employee. We all make mistakes. By admitting your mistake, you establish yourself as a fair person who has enough self confidence to admit that you are not always right. Choice b is incorrect because it does not address the real problem – you have been unjust in reprimanding an employee. Choice c is incorrect because it is dishonest. Choice d is incorrect because, like choice b, it does not address the problem.
13. The answer is choice d. Sometimes you may not like any of the choices given as possible answers. In the situation described in this question, perhaps the best course of action would be to speak to the employees individually. That might allow you to gain a better understanding of why they object to your supervisor. But that is not one of the choices.

Sometimes you may think that two answers are both valid. In this case you may think that choices b and d are both legitimate ways of dealing with the situation. But you have to choose one.

What should you do when no one answer stands out as being clearly the best? Your best approach is to begin by eliminating wrong answers. Choice a is clearly wrong because it is an extreme over-reaction to the situation. Choice c is also an over-reaction. By raising the subject at a staff meeting, you are assuming that the casual remarks of two staff members represent general dissatisfaction with your supervisor. Choice b is a possibility, but it might be seen as unfair to the employees you have overheard. If employees come to you with complaints about your supervisor, then it would be appropriate to inform your supervisor about their feelings. But if you have only overheard your employees' remarks, you have no way of knowing how serious their feelings are. You might also be accused of

eavesdropping on their conversations. Choice d is the fairest and safest course of action. With questions such as this, you may have to choose the “least bad” answer rather than the best answer.

14. The answer is choice c. Personal opinions are bound to enter into the appraisal process to a certain extent, but supervisors should attempt to make appraisals as objective as possible. Basing appraisals on pre-established standards is the best way to do that. Choice a is incorrect because there is no reason to include negative comments in an appraisals unless they reflect unsatisfactory performance. Choice b is incorrect because, as we have seen, appraisals should be as objective as possible. Choice d is incorrect because vaguely worded appraisals are unfair and unhelpful to employees.
15. The answer is choice b. Whenever you write instructions, you make assumptions about what the reader knows already and what you may need to explain. You should give careful thought to these assumptions and not assume that employees know more than they really do. Choice a is incorrect because instructions should be specific enough to stand on their own. They should not require additional explanations. Choice c is incorrect because employees might not be familiar with what you consider routine steps in a process. Choice d is incorrect because long sentences are difficult to read and understand.
16. The answer is choice c. This question asks, what is the *least* appropriate thing for a supervisor to do when delegating work. If an employee is having trouble completing a delegated task, the first thing a supervisor should do is provide additional instruction and guidance. It is not appropriate to reassign the task as soon as an employee appears to be having trouble. The other choices all represent sound practices to follow when delegating work.
17. The answer is choice a. Of the choices given, this is the most common reason for supervision that is too lax. Choices b and d have nothing to do with this issue. Choice c, perfectionism on the part of the supervisor, would probably lead to supervision that was too strict, not too lax.
18. The answer is choice d. Employees feel more positive about their jobs if they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Choice a is incorrect because granting special privileges to some employees in this situation is likely to stir up resentment and envy. Choice b is incorrect because emphasizing the consequences of poor performance will probably weaken morale, not strengthen it. Choice c is incorrect because indiscriminate praise, with no regard to actual performance, will not give employees the feeling that their accomplishments are valued and appreciated.
19. The answer is choice a. Praise is appropriate in this situation. It is also appropriate to ask the employee to share her knowledge with others. Choice b is incorrect because it is not reasonable to expect that all employees will become experts in a particular program. Supervisors should encourage all employees to improve their skills, but they should also recognize that people have different strengths. It is unrealistic – and demoralizing – to insist that everyone become an expert in a particular program. Choice c is incorrect because praise is not a sign of favoritism if the praise is justified. Choice d is incorrect because it is not fair – or wise – to make one employee solely responsible for a certain type of work, even if she is particularly good at it. What happens if she becomes seriously ill or takes another job?

20. The answer is choice d. In this situation, it is best to speak to the employee one-on-one. Choice a is incorrect because it would create an awkward situation for everyone involved. It also seems to be an evasion of the supervisor's responsibility. Choice b is incorrect because discipline is not called for in this situation unless the employee refuses to change his appearance. Choice c is incorrect because it involves other employees in something that is clearly not their business.
21. The answer is choice c. Anything less than full cooperation with auditors is likely to be seen as an attempt to cover something up. Choices a and b are incorrect because it is not up to the employees to decide what records an auditor should be allowed to see. Choice d is incorrect because it is up to the auditors, not the group being audited, to set the schedule for this work.
22. The answer is choice a. The ability of staff to work independently without close supervision says several positive things about the supervisor. Basically, it says that the supervisor has done a good job of assigning work and delegating responsibility. Choice b is incorrect because the decision for the staff to work overtime is often out of the supervisor's control. Choices c and d are incorrect because they both reflect an unwillingness on the part of the staff to come to the supervisor with questions or problems. This unwillingness suggests that the supervisor has not been open to input from employees in the past.
23. The answer is choice c. Courts have ruled many times that telling off-color jokes in the workplace can create a hostile atmosphere. As a supervisor, it is your responsibility to make this clear to anyone who persists in telling such jokes. You might also explain to the employee that such jokes make some people uncomfortable. Choice a is incorrect because the employee who has come to you is justified in her complaint. Choice b is incorrect because the appropriateness of such jokes is not a matter for discussion. Choice d is incorrect because it is your responsibility to take some action in this situation.
24. The answer is choice b. Of the four choices given, skill in human relations is the most important element of effective supervision. The other choices are all important elements of effective supervision, but with questions like this you need to think about the *most* important element.
25. The answer is choice d. The abilities and interests of your staff should be the main things you consider when assigning work. Age, in itself, should not be a factor. Choice a is incorrect because it is based on the assumption that young people are necessarily better able to handle tiring work. Choice b is incorrect because there is no justification for providing younger workers with more training opportunities than older workers. Choice c is incorrect because it would deprive younger workers of the chance to gain experience handling difficult tasks. Older workers may have more experience, but experience is only one thing of many to consider when assigning work. Choice d is a more comprehensive statement of what a supervisor should consider in this situation.
26. The answer is choice a. All allegations of unethical behavior should be taken seriously. Choice b is incorrect because it unfairly "blames the messenger" for bringing bad news. Such a statement is likely to discourage the employee from bringing similar situations to your attention in the future. Choice c is incorrect because it would give your supervisor a chance to conceal any evidence of wrong-doing and to coach any potential witnesses.

Choice d is incorrect because you have an ethical obligation to inform the proper authorities about this accusation.

27. The answer is choice c. The best thing to do in this situation is to advise the employee about being more courteous on the telephone. You might also point out examples of statements that you consider rude. This will help the employee understand the kinds of statements that should be avoided. Choice a is incorrect because it is too drastic a response to the situation. If the employee continues to treat callers rudely, even after you have discussed the problem, then it is probably time to consider another assignment. But reassigning the employee is not an appropriate first step in dealing with this situation. Choice b is incorrect because raising this issue at a staff meeting would imply that rude behavior is a common staff problem in dealing with callers. This approach would also not be the most effective way to change the behavior of the employee who is being rude. Choice d is incorrect because it is an over-reaction to the situation. A more appropriate response to this problem is to advise the employee about being more courteous on the telephone.
28. The answer is choice d. Your best course of action in this situation is to remind the staff to be careful about securing personal possessions. Choice c is incorrect because searching the work areas of all employees would be an unwarranted invasion of their privacy. It would also be unfair because you have no way of knowing whether the items were stolen by someone in your unit. Choice c is incorrect for the same reasons and because you should not shift the responsibility for dealing with this situation to a staff member. Choice b is an over-reaction to the situation. Employees should decide for themselves whether they feel safe having personal items at work.
29. The answer is choice a. Whenever you want to change the way something is done at work, you should solicit opinions from the staff members who are familiar with the task. This lets the staff know that you value their knowledge and experience. Their opinions may also lead you to change your plans about the new approach you have in mind. Choice b is incorrect because it is too negative. Threatening employees is not likely to have positive results. Choice c is incorrect because this course of action might be seen as favoritism. This approach might stir up envy among those employees who were not chosen to learn the new method. Choice d, like choice b, is very negative.
30. The answer is choice b. The candidate's health, number of children, and age are not appropriate topics to raise in an interview.
31. The answer is choice b. Bringing the mistake to the attention of the person responsible is the most efficient way to get it corrected. Choice a is incorrect because it would be irresponsible just to ignore this mistake, even though it does not directly involve your unit. Ignoring the mistake would also send a negative message to the employee who brought it to your attention. Choice c is incorrect because it seems to be motivated by a desire to get the person responsible in trouble, not by a desire to correct the mistake. Choice d is incorrect because it does nothing to correct the mistake.
32. The answer is choice c. The best thing to do in this situation is to inform the person individually that it is not appropriate to use work time this way. Choice a is incorrect because you should not ask one staff member to speak to another about unsatisfactory performance. Choice b is incorrect because sending out such a memo would imply that

using business hours this way is a common problem in your unit. Choice d is incorrect because ignoring this problem makes it appear that you condone using work time to pursue personal business.

33. The answer is choice c. Until an employee actually resigns, there is no reason to treat her any differently. Choice a is incorrect because it is unfair to the employee. Until an employee resigns, she should not be shut out of training opportunities. Choice b is incorrect because it is a defensive, misguided response to the situation. When an employee chooses to move on to another job, the supervisor should not automatically assume that she is dissatisfied with her present job. The desire to advance to a new job reflects a positive approach to career planning. Choice d is incorrect because, once again, it is not appropriate to change an employee's privileges or responsibilities just because she is looking for a new job.
34. The answer is choice a. This approach lets the employee know that you take her suggestion seriously enough to pass it on to someone who can act on it. Choice b is incorrect because it is too negative. Such a defeatist attitude would discourage employees from ever trying or suggesting anything new. Choice c is incorrect because it belittles the employee's suggestion. All suggestions should be taken seriously. Choice d is incorrect because it reflects an unwillingness to listen to different ideas or opinions unless they come from "official" sources.
35. The answer is choice b. This question asks you to choose the *least* appropriate response to this situation. Supervisors should always keep their promises. In this situation, you should do whatever you can to avoid breaking your promise that the employee could take a vacation day on his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Choices a, c, and d are all appropriate ways of dealing with the situation.
36. The answer is choice d. The employees who arrive late at staff meetings may not realize that they are being disrespectful to the employees who arrive on time, but in fact they are. As a supervisor, you should point this out to them. It may be the most effective way to remedy their tardiness. Choice a is incorrect because starting meetings late will encourage more employees to arrive late. Choices b and c are incorrect because they do not really address the problem. There is no reason to believe that having fewer staff meetings or holding them at a different time will encourage employees to arrive on time.
37. The answer is choice c. Obscene language often makes people uncomfortable. Your best course of action in this situation is to speak to the employee individually about his inappropriate language. Choice a is incorrect because it is too passive. You owe it to your employees to do something about this situation. Choice b is incorrect because you should not shirk your responsibility as a supervisor by asking another employee to handle personnel issues for you. Choice d is incorrect because it is too drastic a response to the situation and it does not really address the problem of the employee's inappropriate language. Rather than reassigning the employee, it would be better to advise him how to change his behavior so that he can stay in his present assignment.
38. The answer is choice b. Playing solitaire on a computer during lunch hour is not a serious problem (if it is a problem at all). A supervisor who blows such minor issues out of proportion will be seen as a harsh, bureaucratic taskmaster. Therefore, choices a and d are incorrect. Choice c is incorrect because by sending such a memo to all employees you are

suggesting that using computers to play games is a common problem. Choice b is correct because this response is appropriate to the situation. Playing games on a computer during work hours is a misuse of the employee's time. Playing games on a computer during lunch hour is not.

39. The answer is choice b. This question asks how a supervisor can *best encourage* employees to make suggestions. Choice a is incorrect because keeping a record of the number of suggestions that employees make would do little to encourage suggestions, especially if the suggestions are not adopted. Choice c is incorrect because providing a suggestion box may encourage suggestions, but it would not be as effective as choice b. Choice b, giving credit to an employee whose suggestion has been adopted, is better than merely providing a suggestion box because it demonstrates the sincerity of the supervisor in taking action on the suggestions of employees. It also shows that the supervisor did not take credit for the employee's suggestion. Choice d is incorrect because it is unlikely that a bulletin board would *best encourage* suggestions.
40. The answer is choice a. As a supervisor, you should do all you can to support your employees. Sometimes this includes helping them deal with the consequences of their mistakes. Choice b is incorrect because it serves no useful purpose to shine a spotlight on an employee who has made an error. Choice c is incorrect because it is an overreaction to the situation. We all make mistakes. If your first response to an employee's mistake is to begin disciplinary action, you will create a threatening atmosphere in which no one feels comfortable. Choice d is incorrect because there is probably no reason to insist that the employee correct the error without assistance from anyone else.

Training

41. The answer is choice b. The first step in developing a training program is to conduct a needs analysis. A needs analysis defines the specific skills and knowledge employees need to gain to perform their jobs. The training objectives, course materials, and evaluation tools will be based on this analysis.
42. The answer is choice c. Adults have different learning styles. The employee who did not learn how to use the software in the workshop might need a different type of instruction. Assigning the employee tasks that do not require the new software (choice a) would be inappropriate because this approach wrongly assumes that the employee is not capable of learning how to use the program. Having the employee take the workshop again (choice b) would probably be frustrating to the employee and a waste of time. Doing nothing (choice d) is a passive, ineffective approach to the problem.
43. The answer is choice b. If an employee is struggling to learn a new skill, the wisest course of action is to offer him an opportunity for additional training. Choices a and d are incorrect because they represent an unfair over-reaction to a fairly common problem. Choice c is incorrect because it places an unfair burden on other employees and is likely to embarrass the employee who is having trouble learning how to use the new tool.

44. The answer is choice a. Choices b, c, and d are all accurate descriptions of adult learners. Choice a is not. "Adult learners find it difficult to master new skills" is a sweeping generalization that does not do justice to adult learners.
45. The answer is choice b. Measurable objectives make it possible to evaluate a training program objectively. The other choices are incorrect because they describe objectives as changeable or undefined.
46. The answer is choice d. It seems most likely in this situation that there has been an administrative error. Perhaps the error can be corrected and the employee can still be accepted in the training program. If the employee cannot be accepted, at least she should be given top priority the next time the program is offered. In any case, the logical first step is to bring the situation to the attention of the training coordinator. Choice a is incorrect because it is a passive, negative approach to the situation. Supervisors should actively support their employees' career development. Choice b is an inappropriate response to the situation. Based on what you have been told, you would be leaping to an unwarranted conclusion if you assumed that this was a case of discrimination. Choice c is somewhat insulting because it implies that the employee is not important enough to be accepted in the program on her own without your assistance.
47. The answer is choice b. Asking questions is a good way to determine if participants understand the subject matter. Pop quizzes (choice a) are not an appropriate instructional tool with adult learners. They make participants feel anxious and uncomfortable. Studying body language (choice c) is an uncertain and subjective way to determine how well participants are doing. Small-group activities (choice d) are often worthwhile, but they do not provide an indication of how well participants are mastering the subject matter.
48. The answer is choice a. The primary purpose of pre-course and post-course assessments is to determine the effectiveness of a training program. Choices b and d are incorrect because they focus on individual performance. Pre-course and post-course assessments are often done anonymously because they are more concerned with the effectiveness of the course itself than with the performance of specific individuals. Choice c is incorrect because the objectives of a training program are established before the program begins.
49. The answer is choice c. Sometimes training an employee to perform a particular task requires patience and repetition. Choice a is incorrect because it is an impatient response to the situation. It also reflects a careless attitude toward the human resources available to the supervisor. Reassigning work so abruptly is not an intelligent use of human resources. Choice b is incorrect because it is insulting and discouraging to the employee. Choice d is incorrect because it also reflects a lack of patience on the part of the supervisor, and because it would probably be discouraging to the employee.
50. The answer is choice d. The primary purpose of a training program is to address the gap between current and desired performance. Training programs are not intended to rank employees in terms of their ability to perform specific tasks. Training programs may provide employees opportunities for advancement (choice b) and they may increase opportunities for supervisors to delegate work to employees (choice c), but they do not necessarily serve these purposes.

51. The answer is choice b. An employee's family responsibilities would be the *least* appropriate thing to take into account when planning training opportunities. All the other choices are legitimate things to consider when planning training opportunities.
52. The answer is choice a. Training objectives are based on the performance standards established for a workplace. The purpose of training is to enable employees to meet those standards. The educational background of employees (choices b and c) is not directly related to performance standards. The employee's career goals (choice d) are worth considering when establishing training objectives, but they are not the "most important consideration."
53. The correct answer is b. Standards should be specific, measurable, and objective. They should not be different for each employee (choice c) or open to interpretation (choice d) because they should provide a clearly defined basis for evaluating the performance of all employees.
54. The answer is choice c. The post-course assessment shows no improvement over the pre-course assessment. The obvious conclusion is that the training program was not effective, and the obvious response to this problem is to re-evaluate the training methods. Re-evaluating the training objectives (choice a) would not be appropriate because the objectives are based on desired performance standards. Revising the assessments (choice b) might be worthwhile, but it would not address the fundamental issue. Having participants complete the course again (choice d) would be a waste of time. If the course was not effective the first time, there is no reason to repeat it.
55. The answer is choice a. Adult learners want to know what they are expected to learn in a course. Objectives should not be customized for each instructor (choice b) or established by participants (choice c) because they should be based on established performance standards.

