

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

LEAP

LABOR EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAM

Examination Preparation Booklet

Supervision

Booklet No. 6



CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.
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Booklet #6

Supervision

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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SUPERVISION

There are usually fifteen Supervision questions on promotional examinations. We have found that generally people do better on this section than they think they do. The nature of these questions does produce some anxiety, and there are often two or three of the fifteen questions that people just aren't sure about. Supervisory exam questions, by necessity, create an artificial environment, and sometimes experiences people may have on the job may not apply in the exam question situation. We have attempted in the following fifty questions, which include many former exam questions, to give you an idea of what you can expect, and of approaches to consider when answering questions. We suggest that after every ten questions you consult the answer key, and then the Self Study Guide, for the explanations for any questions you may have missed. We've also included some "Points To Keep In Mind When Answering Supervisory Questions". We suggest that you read this material before answering the questions, it should help.

Good Luck!

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN ANSWERING SUPERVISORY QUESTIONS

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, and avoid being impatient
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 also 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

Good Luck!

SUPERVISION

For each question, select the letter that represents the best choice.

1. When assigning work, which of the following criteria would be best for a supervisor to use?
 - a. allow each employee to select the tasks he or she does best
 - b. assign all unimportant work to the slower employees
 - c. assign the more tiring tasks to the newer employees
 - d. assign tasks based on the abilities of employees

2. You have been supervising ten people for 16 months. During that time, your employees have never reported any problems to you. It is likely that:
 - a. you are doing such a good job there is no room for improvement
 - b. since your staff is small, the chances of problems arising are smaller than in a larger unit
 - c. for some reason your staff is reluctant to discuss problems with you
 - d. your employees are very competent, and are handling all of the problems well by themselves

3. Your supervisor informs you that three of your fifteen employees have complained to her about your inconsistent methods of supervision. You should:
 - a. offer to attend a supervisory training program
 - b. first ask her if it is proper for her to allow these employees to go over your head
 - c. ask her what specific acts have been considered inconsistent
 - d. explain that you've purposely been inconsistent because of the needs of these three employees

4. On short notice, a supervisor must ask her staff to work overtime. Of the following, it would be best to:
 - a. explain they would be doing her a personal favor which she would appreciate a great deal

- b. explain why it is necessary
 - c. reassure them that they can take the time off in the near future
 - d. remind them that working overtime occasionally is part of the job requirement
5. One of your employees has begun reporting to work late on the average of twice a week. You should:
- a. send a memo to everyone in your unit, stressing that lateness can not be tolerated
 - b. privately discuss the matter with the employee to determine if there are any unusual circumstances causing the behavior
 - c. bring the issue up at the next staff meeting, without singling out any employee
 - d. ask one of your employees to discuss the matter with the individual
6. One of your employees submitted an application for acceptance into a career development workshop two months ago, and has heard nothing. The individual tells you that when one of her co-workers submitted an application he received a reply a week later. Which is the best response for you to make?
- a. "This is obviously a case of discrimination, I'll bring it to the Affirmative Action officer immediately."
 - b. "Next time you submit a request for something of this nature, let me know and I will write a cover letter that will carry more weight."
 - c. "Perhaps it was an oversight. Why don't you call the organization and ask why you've heard nothing?"
 - d. "It looks like you won't be accepted this year. Be sure to try again next year."
7. In order to meet deadlines, a supervisor should:
- a. schedule the work and keep informed of its progress
 - b. delegate work
 - c. hire temporary personnel
 - d. know the capabilities of his or her most reliable employees

8. Your supervisor has given instructions to your employees, in your absence, that differ from those you had given them. You should:
 - a. have your employees follow your instructions
 - b. have your employees follow your supervisor's instructions
 - c. discuss the matter with your supervisor
 - d. discuss the matter with your employees and find out which method they think is best

9. You have found it necessary to return an assignment completed by one of your employees so that several changes can be made. The employee objects to making these changes. The most appropriate action for you to take first is to:
 - a. inform the employee that he or she is free to object to your supervisor
 - b. ask if the employee has carefully read your proposed changes
 - c. calmly state that your decision is final, and further discussion will most likely be useless
 - d. allow the employee to present his or her objections against making the changes

10. You are preparing a vacation schedule for your employees. The factor which is least important for you to consider in setting up the schedule is:
 - a. the competence of each employee
 - b. the vacation preference of each employee
 - c. the anticipated workload in the unit
 - d. how essential each employee's services will be during the vacation period

11. Among the problems that confront a new supervisor in relation to her or his employees, the one which requires the most unusual degree of skill and diplomacy is:
 - a. changing established ideas
 - b. calling attention to mistakes
 - c. gaining the respect of employees
 - d. training new employees

12. Of the following, the best indication of high morale in a supervisor's unit would be:
- the unit never has to work overtime
 - the supervisor often enjoys staying late to plan work for the following day
 - the unit gives expensive birthday presents to each other
 - the employees are willing to give first priority to attaining group objectives, subordinating personal desires they may have
13. In the satisfactory handling of an employee's complaint which is fancied rather than real, the complaint should be considered:
- not very important since it has no basis in fact
 - as important as a grievance grounded in fact
 - an attempt by the employee to create trouble
 - an indication of a psychological problem on the part of the employee
14. You are attempting to teach a new employee in your unit how to change a typewriter ribbon. The employee is having a great deal of difficulty changing the ribbon, even though you have always found it simple to do. Before you spend more time instructing the individual, you should:
- ask if the employee working nearest would take responsibility for changing the ribbon in the future
 - tell the employee that you never found this difficult, and ask what he or she finds difficult about it
 - review each of the steps you have already explained, and determine whether the individual understands them
 - tell the employee that you will continue after lunch, because you are getting irritable
15. An employee you supervise frequently protests when receiving any assignment that requires the typing of tabular material, although she then performs the task competently. Her protests are causing resentments among the other employees, and interfering with their work. You should:
- arrange to give such assignments to her when no other employees are present

- b. threaten to formally discipline her if she continues to protest
 - c. explain the effect her actions are having on the other employees' performance, and ask for her cooperation
 - d. ask one of the employees who is upset by her behavior to speak with her
16. Lax supervision has been blamed largely on the unwillingness of supervisors to supervise their employees. The chief reason for this unwillingness to supervise is based mainly on the supervisors':
- a. failure to accept modern concepts of proper supervision
 - b. doubt of their ability to keep pace with modern techniques and developments in supervision
 - c. fear of complaints from employees, and the supervisors' wish to avoid unpleasantness
 - d. inability to adhere to the same high standards of performance which are required of employees
17. The appraisal of employees and their performance is an integral part of the supervisor's job. There is wide agreement that several basic principles must be taken into account by supervisors involved in the appraisal process in order to perform this function correctly. The one of the statements below that least represents a basic principle of the appraisal process is:
- a. appraisals should be based more on performance of definite tasks than on personality considerations
 - b. appraisal of long-range potential should rely heavily on subjective judgement of that potential
 - c. appraisal involves the use of value judgements by the supervisor and does, therefore, require reference to pre-established standards
 - d. appraisal should aim at emphasizing employees' strengths rather than weaknesses
18. Of the following, it is least essential for a supervisor to issue written instructions in assigning work to an employee when:
- a. the instructions will be passed on to others
 - b. the supervisor will be present to check the quality of the work

- c. the assignment involves much detail
 - d. the employee has often misinterpreted instructions
19. Although accuracy and speed are both important in the performance of work, accuracy should be considered more important mainly because:
- a. most supervisors insist on accurate work
 - b. much time is lost in correcting errors
 - c. a rapid rate of work cannot be maintained for any length of time
 - d. speedy workers are often inaccurate
20. If an employee has done a complicated task well, his or her supervisor should:
- a. tell the employee that he or she has done a good job
 - b. call a staff meeting to see if anyone has suggestions for improving future performance of the task
 - c. avoid commending the employee, as performing competently is what they are paid to do
 - d. confide in the employee that he or she is the best worker in your unit
21. You are a newly appointed supervisor in a large office. It had been the practice in that office for the employees to take an unauthorized coffee break at 10:00 a.m. You have been successful in stopping this practice, and for one week no one had gone out for coffee at 10:00 a.m. One day a stenographer comes over to you at 10:15 a.m., appearing to be ill. She states that she doesn't feel well and that she would like to go out for a cup of tea. She asks your permission to leave the office for a few minutes. You should:
- a. telephone and have a cup of tea delivered to her
 - b. permit her to go out
 - c. refuse her permission, explaining that you don't wish to set a bad example
 - d. tell her she can leave for an early lunch

22. A clerk in your unit performs work quickly but carelessly. The head of another unit this employee wishes to transfer to asks you for your opinion of the employee's work. It would be best for you to:
- emphasize the employee's good points and downplay the bad
 - allow the employee to begin with a clean record by avoiding any criticism
 - state that the employee works quickly but carelessly
 - warn the unit head that he or she would be making a big mistake by hiring the employee
23. You wish to reprimand a worker for neglect of duty. It would not be good practice to:
- allow yourself a cooling off period of several days before you administer the reprimand
 - give the employee a chance to reply to your criticism
 - be very specific about the particular act for which you are reprimanding the employee
 - reprimand the employee when you are alone with him or her
24. One of the employees you supervise has just put up a small poster in her work area that two of your eight employees find obscene and distasteful. While you don't like the poster either it doesn't upset you. The two employees already have complained to you about the poster. Of the following, you should:
- have the two employees talk to the individual and explain why they are offended
 - privately explain to the individual that her poster is causing some problems, and seek her cooperation in removing it
 - do nothing, as the employee has the right to express her feelings
 - compromise and allow her to display the poster half of the time
25. "One of the most effective ways to build a sense of employee pride, teamwork, and motivation is for the supervisor to seek advice, suggestions, and information from employees concerning ways in which work should be solved. Many experiments in group decision making have indicated that work groups can help the supervisor in improving decision making. Where employees feel that they are really part of a team and that they have a significant influence on the decisions that are made, they are more likely to accept

the decisions and to seek new solutions to future difficult problems."

According to the above passage, a supervisor should:

- a. almost always follow the advice of his or her employees in handling difficult problems
 - b. always seek advice from employees when handling difficult problems
 - c. choices a and d, but not b
 - d. look to employees for assistance in decision making
26. You have just had a private discussion with the employee with the poster in Question twenty-four. You have explained that her poster is causing some problems, and have asked for her cooperation in removing it. She has politely refused to do so, saying looking at it cheers her up, and she's been depressed lately. You should:
- a. wait a day or two to see if the incident "blows over" before deciding whether to take any further action
 - b. call in the two disgruntled employees in question twenty-four within the hour and let them know they'll have to live with the poster, as you're not going to "act as a censor in the office."
 - c. check agency policies to see if it's legal to have posters in work areas
 - d. firmly but politely instruct the employee to take the poster down, as its interfering with the work of the unit
27. Of the following, if a supervisor has an employee who is lacking in self-confidence but is otherwise capable, the supervisor should:
- a. give the employee a forceful pep talk
 - b. overly praise the employee to increase his or her confidence
 - c. find out if the condition is caused by home problems
 - d. compliment the employee's work whenever possible
28. An employee reprimanded for poor performance tells her supervisor that her recent behavior has been due to a serious family problem. The supervisor suggests several programs which may be able to help her. The action of the supervisor was:
- a. inappropriate; the supervisor should not involve herself in the personal affairs of her subordinates

- b. appropriate; personal problems frequently affect job performance
 - c. inappropriate; the employee may consider the supervisor responsible for the subsequent action of the social agencies
 - d. appropriate; the discussion with the supervisor will in itself tend to solve the problem
29. Your supervisor informs you that the employee turnover rate in your office is well above the norm and must be reduced. Which one of the following initial steps would be least appropriate in attempting to overcome this problem?
- a. decide to be more lenient about performance standards and about employee requests for time off, so that your office will gain a reputation as a good place to work
 - b. discuss the problem with a few of your employees whose judgement you trust to see if they can provide insight into the underlying causes of the problem
 - c. review the records of employees who have left during the past year to see if they can shed some light on the underlying causes of the problem
 - d. carefully review your training procedures to see if they can be improved
30. The management principle that each employee should be under the direct control of one immediate supervisor at any one time is known as the principle of:
- a. chain of command
 - b. span of control
 - c. unity of command
 - d. homogeneous assignment
31. The employees of a unit have been wasteful in the use of office supplies. Of the following, the most desirable action for the supervisor to take to reduce this waste is to:
- a. determine the average quantity of supplies used daily by each employee
 - b. find out which employees have been most wasteful, and reprimand those employees
 - c. discuss this matter at a conference with the staff, pointing

- out the necessity for, and methods of, eliminating waste
- d. issue supplies for an assignment at the time the assignment is made, and limit the quantity to the amount needed for that assignment only
32. You supervise nineteen employees in a unit which is located directly across from the Commissioner's office. One of your new employees has a habit of "showing off" whenever the Commissioner is nearby. You have just heard other employees laughing about this behavior among themselves. You like the new employee, and would like the employee to be accepted by the others.
Of the following, you should:
- a. discuss the situation with two of the older employees, and seek their cooperation in being a little more tolerant
- b. talk with the new employee, and gently explain the situation
- c. discuss the situation with your most trusted employees, and ask them to talk to the others
- d. do nothing
33. One of your employees comes to you and complains of sexual harassment by your supervisor. The employee has frequently complained about minor issues in the six months she's been there. You've known your supervisor for thirteen years, and respect him a great deal. Of the following, you should:
- a. firmly let the employee know what a serious allegation she is bringing against your supervisor
- b. let the employee know you will take her concerns seriously
- c. call your supervisor and give him a chance to prepare a defense
- d. inform the employee that she'd better have concrete proof for a charge of this nature
34. The one of the following which is usually the poorest reason for transferring an employee is to:
- a. grant a doctor's request that the employee work nearer to his or her home
- b. take care of changes in workload
- c. relieve the monotony of work assignments
- d. discipline the employee

35. A good way for a supervisor to retain the confidence of his or her employees is to:
- say as little as possible
 - check work frequently
 - make no promises unless they will be fulfilled
 - never hesitate in giving an answer to any question
36. Your supervisor has discovered a serious error in work done by your unit, under your supervision. Of the following, it would be best to:
- assure your supervisor it won't happen again
 - state that mistakes are unavoidable because your unit is understaffed
 - assure your supervisor you will find out how the mistake occurred so that you can prevent it happening again
 - assure your supervisor that you will investigate and then reprimand the employee responsible
37. Good supervision is essentially a matter of:
- patience in supervising workers
 - care in selecting workers
 - skill in human relations
 - fairness in disciplining workers
38. It is most important for an employee who has been assigned a monotonous task to:
- perform this task before doing other work
 - ask another employee to help
 - perform this task only after all other work has been completed
 - take measures to prevent mistakes in performing the task
39. One of your employees has violated a minor agency regulation. The first thing you should do is:
- warn the employee that you will have to take disciplinary action if it should happen again

- b. ask the employee to explain his or her actions
 - c. inform your supervisor and wait for advice
 - d. write a memo describing the incident and place it in the employee's personnel file
40. Your unit head has issued orders changing working procedures that your staff disagrees with. It would be best for you to tell your employees that:
- a. you do not like the changes either, but the unit head wouldn't listen to you
 - b. they should write a memo detailing their complaints to the unit head
 - c. nothing can be done, even though you feel they are correct
 - d. you will discuss their objections with the unit head
41. One of your employees tells you that he feels you give him much more work than the other employees, and he is having trouble meeting your deadlines. You should:
- a. ask if he has been under a lot of non-work related stress lately
 - b. review his recent assignments to determine if he is correct
 - c. explain that this is a busy time, but you are dividing the work equally
 - d. tell him that he is the most competent employee and that is why he receives more work
42. It is generally considered proper that the number of employees immediately supervised by a higher, upper echelon supervisor:
- a. should be equal to the number of employees supervised by a lower level supervisor
 - b. should be larger than the number supervised by a lower level supervisor
 - c. should be smaller than the number supervised by a lower level supervisor
 - d. none of the above

43. Some managers propose that work assignments be made by assigning a varied set of tasks to a group of employees and then allowing the group to decide for itself how to organize the work to be done. The one of the following which is considered to be the chief advantage of this system is that it:
- encourages employees to specialize in the work they are assigned to do
 - reduces the amount of control employees have over their work
 - increases the employees' job satisfaction
 - reduces the number of skills the employee is required to learn
44. You find that you have unjustly reprimanded one of your subordinates. You should:
- ignore the matter, but be more careful in the future
 - readily admit your mistake to the employee
 - admit your mistake at your next staff meeting, so that your employees will know how fair you are
 - admit your mistake, but blame the misunderstanding on your supervisor
45. An experienced, self confident employee carelessly omitted an essential operation on a job assigned to her. As a result the completion of an important urgent report was delayed for several hours. A few days later, a relatively inexperienced, sensitive co-worker made a similar careless mistake with similar negative results. The supervisor of the two employees was more gentle in reprimanding the latter than the former employee. The supervisor's action in administering reprimands of unequal severity to these two subordinates was:
- not appropriate because fairness requires that subordinates responsible for like mistakes receive reprimands of like severity
 - appropriate because supervisors should consider the temperament of subordinates when reprimanding them
 - appropriate because subordinates who accept greater responsibilities must likewise accept the consequent greater penalties for their mistakes
 - not appropriate because more experienced employees benefit less, in general, from reprimands than less experienced employees

46. You've just overheard a tense discussion in the cafeteria between two of your best employees. One of them has owed the other \$40 for several months, and has not paid it back or even mentioned the debt. The employees don't realize that you've overheard them. During that week, you should:
- not discuss the matter with either of them
 - discuss the matter with both of them, as the conflict may adversely affect their job performance
 - discuss the matter with the one who hasn't paid back the money
 - put a clever but meaningful cartoon up on your wall about the importance of paying back debts to friends
47. You have been supervising twenty employees for three months. You suspect that one of your employees, who has worked in the unit longer than anyone else, has perfected the "art of looking busy." You wish to find out how much work she is really accomplishing. Of the following, it would be least appropriate to:
- have a frank discussion with the employee about her performance
 - set specific time limits on when you would like to get work back from her
 - try to observe her more carefully while she is working
 - be more careful when monitoring her work output
48. The supervisor of a central files bureau which has fifty employees customarily spends a considerable portion of time in spot-checking the files, reviewing material being transferred from active to inactive files, and similar activities. From the viewpoint of the department management, the most pertinent evaluation which can be made on the basis of this information is that the:
- supervisor is conscientious and hardworking
 - bureau may need additional staff
 - supervisor has not made a sufficient delegation of authority and responsibility
 - bureau needs an in-service training course as the work of its employees requires an abnormal amount of review
49. You have just been appointed as supervisor of ten employees. The supervisor you are replacing demanded that her subordinates accept their assignments without question. She refused to allow them to

exercise initiative in carrying out assignments, and maintained a constant check on their work performance. The most appropriate policy for you to adopt would be to:

- a. gradually remove the controls you consider too strict and provide opportunities for your staff to participate in formulating work plans and procedures
- b. continue her rigid policies, as the employees are used to this
- c. discontinue all strict controls immediately and give the employees complete freedom in carrying out their assignments
- d. ask your employees what method of supervision they would prefer

50. "In any public agency, the top administrative officials are concerned largely with the work of overall creative planning with respect to the anticipated progress of the agency. The first-line supervisors, on the other hand, are concerned largely with the control of current action for the execution of current jobs." On the basis of this quotation, a first-line supervisor would be chiefly responsible for:

- a. increasing or decreasing the responsibilities of his or her unit to reflect changes in the policies of the agency
- b. modifying the work assignments of his or her present staff to handle a seasonal variation in the activities of the unit
- c. revising the procedure that is used for transmitting instructions from the head of the agency to the unit heads
- d. raising and lowering the production goals of his or her unit as often as necessary to adjust them to the abilities of employees

ANSWER KEY

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

SELF STUDY GUIDE

SUPERVISION

1. The answer is (d). Choice a is incorrect because, while there is a growing recognition of the importance of worker participation, this is too drastic a measure to be the answer to this question. If each employee selected only the tasks they preferred, there's a good chance not all of the tasks would be done. Choice b is incorrect because we are looking for the best possible choice, and its premise is suspect. It's good to be suspicious of questions that contain expressions like "assign all unimportant work", they're often a little too broad to be correct. There may be situations where assigning all of the unimportant work (whatever that is) to slower employees may not be appropriate. In addition, we need to look at the other choices, as we need to select the best choice. Choice c is incorrect because it is not considered good supervisory practice to assign more tiring tasks to newer employees as a rule. Choice d, assigning tasks based on the abilities of employees, is the safest, and best, of the four choices. Supervisors need to be able to make maximum use of the resources available to them, and assigning tasks based on employees' abilities is a good way to do this. When answering these questions, it's good to remember that you may often not be fond of any of the choices, and will need to choose the one you dislike least of the four.
2. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because it's highly unlikely there would be no room for improvement under the circumstances. Choice b is not a good explanation for the lack of problems reported. Choice d is unlikely, since the time span, 16 months, and the fairly large number of people would indicate some problems would occur in the unit. Choice c is the best of the four possible answers.
3. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because, while a possible partial solution, it is not an appropriate response to the immediate problem. You also need to consider all of the other choices. Choice b is a defensive response to the problem, and is inappropriate. Choice d sounds like a rationalization, and, from this question, you would have no way of knowing whether this was really true. In addition, inconsistency is not considered good supervisory practice. Choice c is the best choice, as it is what the supervisor should do in this situation. As a supervisor, it's very important to be as specific as possible when evaluating employees. Conversely, it would be wisest to first receive as much specific information as possible to determine what action should be taken next.

4. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect because a supervisor should not resort to asking employees to work overtime as a personal favor. Choice c is incorrect because it may not be true that they can take time off soon, and is also not good supervisory practice. Choice d is heavy handed and may cause resentment. Choice b, explaining why it is necessary, is the best supervisory practice of the four.
5. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect, because it is too indirect a method, and may not obtain the desired results. Choice c is incorrect for the same reason. Choice d is incorrect because it is not good supervisory practice to have one of your employees speak to another about lateness. Choice b is the most appropriate action, and has the best chance of obtaining the desired results.
6. The answer is (c). Choice a is jumping to an unwarranted conclusion, and would probably cause additional problems. Choice b may sound like the supervisor is trying to be helpful, but it is actually a rather tactless statement that implies the supervisor has more status, and that the employee would need the supervisor's assistance in order to get accepted. Choice d is incorrect because it is too pessimistic an assumption. Choice c is correct because it is the most logical reply, and the best of the four choices.
7. The answer is (a). Choice b is incorrect because it is too broad a statement, and doesn't directly address how a supervisor should meet deadlines. Choice c is incorrect because it is an impractical and expensive solution. Choice d sounds good, but it does not address the problem of meeting deadlines as directly as Choice a does. Choice a directly answers the question, and is the best of the four possible choices.
8. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because it could get you in trouble with your supervisor. Choice b is incorrect because your instructions may be best, and you shouldn't discard your ideas automatically. Choice d is incorrect because it appears to be "too democratic" to be a possible test answer. It also may not endear you to your supervisor. Choice c is correct because it seems the wisest of the four possible choices.
9. The answer is (d). Choice a is incorrect because it is too heavy handed an approach. Choice b is a possibility, although it seems a little insulting. It shouldn't be ruled out completely, however, until you've read the others. Choice c is also very heavy handed. Choice d is correct because it illustrates an important supervisory principle - that employees should always first be given a chance to explain their actions.

10. The answer is (a). It's important to watch out for the use of the phrase "least important" with these types of questions. Here, the vacation preference of each employee, the anticipated workload, and how essential each employee's services will be are all more important considerations than the competence of each employee, Choice a.
11. The answer is (a). For this question, you are looking for the problem which requires the most unusual degree of skill and diplomacy. Choices b, c and d may sometimes all be difficult for a new supervisor, but changing established ideas, Choice a, would require the most skill. Changing established ideas is considered one of the most difficult things to successfully accomplish as a supervisor, and this would be even more difficult for a new supervisor.
12. The answer is (d). Choices a & c may be true in some offices in "real life," but they wouldn't be the answer on an exam question like this. Choice b tells you little about the morale of the other employees. Choice d sounds like a "textbook answer", and is the best choice of the four given.
13. The answer is (b). This is an important point to remember. Even if there seem to be no grounds for a complaint, the fact that the complaint has been voiced is a clue that all is not well. The supervisor should treat the problem seriously, and not minimize the employee's situation. Choice b is the only answer that does this.
14. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because not only will the new employee not learn how to do it, the action may lead to resentment by the employee who has been asked to change the ribbon for the new employee. Choice b is incorrect because it is a negative, impatient sounding response. Choice d, which may sound like a real life answer, is not a good choice for the same reason. Choice c is correct because it makes the most sense, and is also an appropriate response.
15. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because not only is it impractical, it is a cowardly approach that doesn't solve the problem. Choice b is a heavy handed solution. Choice d is not good supervisory practice, and could lead to additional problems. Choice c is the most logical choice.
16. The answer is (c). Some people have a difficult time with questions like this, because the question is so broad. If that's the case, the best strategy is to choose a response that

seems the most logical of the four. In this case, the issue is lax supervision. Choices a & b imply that supervisors who are lax are not accepting or keeping pace with modern concepts and developments. There probably isn't any way you could get a definite answer about either opinion, but both don't seem to address the issue of lax supervision as directly as choices c and d. It's also difficult to tell a great deal of difference between the two choices, which may also be a clue that they can be eliminated. Choice d can be eliminated because it seems too critical of the behavior of supervisors. Choice c seems the most logical choice, and also addresses a probable cause of lax supervision very directly.

17. The answer is (b). Again, this is a question which asks you to consider which statement least represents something. Choice a can be ruled out because appraisals should be based more on performance than personality. Choice c can also be ruled out because it is very important to have standards to refer to. Choice d fools some people, as they aren't sure whether they should agree that appraisals should emphasize employees' strengths rather than weaknesses, as that may sound "too liberal." Even if you're not sure about choice d, however, choice b is so inappropriate that it would best fit the bill as the worst statement. Appraising long-range potential subjectively, rather than objectively, is definitely not good supervisory practice.
18. The answer is (b). Again, you are looking for the least essential condition. Choice a is incorrect because it would seem to be important to have written instructions when they will be passed on to prevent distortions or misunderstandings. Choices c & d, where there is much detail or the employee has often misinterpreted instructions, would also be cases when written instructions would appear to be very helpful. Of the four, choice b seems to be the safest, as the supervisor would be present to check the quality of the work.
19. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect because all it is saying is that accuracy is more important because supervisors insist on accurate work. While this may be the case in "real life", this is an exam question, and there should be a better answer in here somewhere. Choice c is incorrect because it is a statement that is very unlikely to be true. Choice d could possibly be the answer, as it does directly address the question of accuracy and speed, but choice b sounds like the "textbook answer," and is also more logical. If someone works quickly but carelessly, their work will take more time and trouble to correct than the work of others.

20. The answer is (a). Choice b is an insulting, demoralizing thing to do. Choice c, while it may sound familiar, is not a good supervisory practice, and may discourage future efforts. Choice d is an indiscreet, unwise action. If the employee tells others what the supervisor has said, problems could easily be created. Choice a is the logical and most straight forward approach.
21. The answer is (b). This is a very tough question for many people, with good reason. People aren't sure how liberal or conservative one should be in this situation. Indeed, a few years ago the answer to this question may have been different. It's safe to say that, while supervisors in these questions need to still be firm and obey the rules, they are allowed to be more trusting and are encouraged to think of the impact their actions are likely to have on their employees' behavior. In this case, choice a, telephoning to have a cup of tea brought in, seems a little strict and untrusting, and could make you look really cold hearted if the employee ends up getting sick at her desk. Choice c is incorrect for the same reasons, and is treating the employee even more like a child. Respecting the dignity of employees is important. Choice d seems like it could be a choice, but is a little hypocritical, since it is 10:15 a.m., and is also rather harsh. It also may make you appear overly concerned with timecards, and may result in some of your staff becoming annoyed and rebellious in reaction to what they may perceive as a petty action on your part. Choice b is the best answer of the four choices given.
22. The answer is (c). One of the reasons people have trouble with some supervisory questions is because they answer a question based on experiences they have seen or participated in. In the land of exam questions, that is not always a good idea. Many people miss this question for that reason. Choice a is a very common answer, and incorrect. Of course people do this all the time in real life - to be nice, or because they want to unload someone. But it is not considered good supervisory practice. While it may help your unit, it won't help the other unit, the organization, or the individual involved. Choice b is incorrect for the same reason. Choice d is incorrect because it is going to the other extreme, and that would also not be fair to the employee. Choice c, stating the truth, is the best answer to this question.
23. The answer is (a). We're looking for what is not good supervisory practice. Choice b, giving the employee a chance to reply, is a very important thing to do. Choice c, being very specific in your criticism, is also very important. Reprimanding the employee when you are alone, choice d, is also essential. That leaves choice a. It is not a good idea to allow yourself several days for a cooling off period, as that is too long. You may need several hours in some cases, but several days is too long to wait.

24. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect because it will most likely make the situation more tense. Choice c is incorrect because two employees have already come to you about the problem, so it has in a sense become a problem on which you will need to at least consider taking action. Choice d seems reasonable, except that instead of making each happy, it would probably make both angry half the time. Choice b sounds like the "textbook answer", and is the correct choice.
25. The answer is (d). Choice a is incorrect because it is assuming too much. Nowhere in the paragraph does it state that supervisors should almost always follow the advice of employees in handling difficult problems. Choice b is incorrect because nowhere does it state that supervisors should always seek advice from employees. Choice c is incorrect because it includes choice a, which is incorrect. Choice d is a correct interpretation of the passage, as it does not jump to unwarranted conclusions.
26. The answer is (a). This is a tough question, and it's unlikely you'd get a question this miserable. But, since you can never be sure, we included it anyway. Choice b is incorrect because you are telling them you won't act as a censor. What happens if the next day someone brings in a very obscene poster, or a poster that offends a particular ethnic group or religion? As the supervisor, you may have to take action then. Also, to call them in within the hour may not be wise, as the timing may "fuel the flames." Choice c is incorrect because it may cause more problems than it solves. The employee with the poster would most likely be very annoyed with your indirect handling of the situation. More importantly, if other employees had posters up you would be punishing those people as well, and resentments could easily build. Choice d is incorrect because, while you know it's not helping, you're not sure yet if the poster is interfering with the work of the unit. In addition, your action will most likely seem harsh to the employee with the poster. Choice a, while it too may not seem like a great choice, is the safest of the four. It's possible that the whole incident may become less important if there's a waiting period. It will also give you more time to assess the true impact of the poster on the rest of the staff, as well as on the parties most directly involved.
27. The answer is (d). This is one of those questions where you may not have liked any of the choices, but were forced to select the one you disliked the least. Choice a is incorrect because giving a "forceful pep talk" may work if you're Knute Rockne and it's half time at the big game, but this in an office situation, and your forceful pep talk could easily intimidate, embarrass or antagonize the employee. The problem is one of self-confidence,

and in all likelihood a forceful pep talk" won't be very effective. The use of the word "forceful" is also a clue here, as it's too strong for the situation. Choice b is incorrect because of the phrase "overly praise." It is not good supervisory practice to overpraise, as it can hurt your credibility, and your words will mean less when you do want to convey sincere feelings. Choice c is incorrect because it is too personal an approach. The question states that the employee is capable, so the supervisor would be inquiring about matters of a personal nature in a situation that does not warrant it. Also, the employee could become intimidated, angry or embarrassed. Choice d, "complimenting the employee's work whenever possible," may sound too obvious, or too broad an answer, but it's the best of the four choices, even though the phrase "whenever possible" is vague. One has to assume that "whenever possible" would mean whenever it seemed appropriate and not too obvious or embarrassing. Again, it may seem to be too vague to be the answer, but it's the best of the four choices.

28. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect because not only is the employee performing poorly on the job, she has confided a serious family problem to the supervisor, so the supervisor is already involved. If her advice can help the employee, her performance may improve as well. Choice c is incorrect because, while there is always a risk of this sort of thing happening, the employee's problem is a serious one, and the supervisor's suggestions may help. In addition, the supervisor is giving suggestions that may work, she is not giving the employee orders to go. Choice d is incorrect because it is highly unlikely that the discussion alone will be able to solve a serious family problem. Choice b is correct. Personal problems can have a large effect upon job performance.
29. The answer is (a). In this question you are looking for the least appropriate action to take. Choice b, discussing the problem with a few employees whose judgement you trust, would be a good initial step to take, as they may have some good insights. Choice c, reviewing former employees' records, could also be helpful. Choice d, reviewing your training procedures, could also be useful. Choice a, becoming more lenient about performance standards and employee requests for time off, would not be considered good supervisory practice.
30. The answer is (c). This question appears on exams occasionally, and is just one of those definitions that is helpful to remember. Unity of command means that each employee should be under the direct control of one immediate supervisor.
31. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because, not only would it be time consuming, it wouldn't be very helpful in directly solving the problem. If the intent is to indirectly let the employees know that you are aware of how many supplies they are each using, so that they will be more careful, this method may cause problems. Employees may resent your indirect methods,

and feel that you don't trust them. Choice b is incorrect because it is harsh and impractical. How you will correctly determine which employees are most wasteful is not mentioned, and it's very possible employees may feel that you are not trusting them and treating them like children. Choice d may sound good at first, but it would mean that a great deal of time would be spent issuing supplies every time an assignment was made. In addition, employees may resent this procedure. Choice c is the best choice, as it can be expected to obtain the best results of the four choices.

32. The answer is (d). This is another tricky question. Again, the issue is one of when, or if, one should get involved in an office situation. In this case, it's best not to get involved. There is no indication that work in the unit is being disrupted, or that any employees are very upset about the problem. If it got to the point where either of these was happening, you would then need to consider taking action. Choice a is incorrect because not only is it taking action in a situation that doesn't warrant it, it also may alienate the older employees. Choice b is incorrect not only because it is inappropriate, but also because it may embarrass or anger the new employee, or make her uncomfortable with her co-workers. Choice c is incorrect because it would not be good supervisory practice normally, but in this case it could cause even more problems and resentments from other employees. Of the four choices, choice d is the most appropriate.
33. The answer is (b). Again, this illustrates the importance of taking employees' grievances seriously, and of maintaining objectivity. The question sets up a situation where it would be easy to not be objective and wait until the facts are brought out. The issue of sexual harassment itself (which some people still don't take seriously), the long time you've known and respected your supervisor, and the chronic complaining employee are all factors which need to be recognized as potentially contributing to possible subjectivity. However, your concern here is to take your employee's claims seriously, while maintaining objectivity. Choice a, which may be appropriate, at some point, is not the best choice of the four, because it may appear to the employee that you don't believe her, or are automatically defending your supervisor. Choice c is incorrect because it is inappropriate and unethical behavior. There should be agency policy on how to handle these cases. Even if there isn't, this behavior wouldn't be appropriate. Choice d is incorrect for the same reasons as choice a. In addition, it sounds even more like you don't trust her, as "she'd better have concrete proof." Choice b is correct because the most important point you should make is that you will take her seriously. Of course, depending on the situation, you may also have to mention the importance of having proof or the seriousness of the charge, but this is an exam question, not real life. And in exam questions, you need to select which response "of the following" you would make. Of the four, it's most important to state you will take her concerns seriously, choice b.

34. The answer is (d). We need to select the poorest reason for transferring an employee. Granting a doctor's request, changes in workload and relieving monotony are all better choices than disciplining an employee. It's not considered good supervisory practice to transfer employees as a disciplinary measure. Also, one should be able to effectively deal with problem employees without resorting to transferring them. That's not to say it would never be necessary, but the question asks "which of the following is usually the poorest reason ...". Choice d is the poorest reason of the four.
35. The answer is (c). Choice a, while humorous, and perhaps true in a few cases, is not the answer. Choice b is incorrect because, while it may show that the supervisor is attentive to detail, it is not the best choice of the four for retaining the confidence of employees. Choice d may sound like the actions of a "good leader," but in fact it would be unwise to never hesitate in answering questions. There may be times when you aren't sure, or don't know, the answer to a question. It's far better to state the truth, but many people think a supervisor should never admit he or she doesn't know something, or isn't sure. Supervisors are human, and not expected to know everything. Choice c, making no promises unless they will be fulfilled, is a very important supervisory practice and the best of the possible choices.
36. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because you can't be sure it won't happen again. Choice b, which may be a "real life" response, is not an appropriate answer to an exam question. Choice d, another possible "real life" answer, sounds harsh and like you are trying to "pass the buck." Choice c is the best of the four choices. In this response you are concerned with finding the cause of the mistake so you can prevent its occurrence, without making excuses or blaming anyone.
37. The answer is (c). What you are looking for here is the best definition of supervision. Patience in supervising workers, care in selecting workers and fairness in disciplining workers are all necessary components of good supervisory practices, but we're looking for the best definition. Choice c, "skill in human relations" is broad, and encompasses more supervisory activity than the others. The other choices are narrower, and don't define supervision as well as choice c.
38. The answer is (d). You need to find which of the four choices is most important. Choice a is incorrect because when monotonous work is best done is usually dependent upon individual preferences. Choice b is incorrect because it may cause problems in the office, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to assign work. Choice c is incorrect again because it is usually a matter of individual preference. Choice d is the correct answer because it is definitely most important that measures are taken to prevent mistakes.

39. The answer is (b). This once again illustrates the importance of always giving employees the opportunity to first explain their actions. Choice b is the only choice that recommends this. It's good to note here that choice c, asking your supervisor for advice, would be relying too heavily on your supervisor. It's important in supervision to be sure not to overly involve your supervisor in matters that are your concern, not hers or his.
40. The answer is (d). Choice a, while it may sound like a "real life" answer, is not the best choice of the four. It's negative, and implies both powerlessness on your part, and criticism of the unit head. It also does not allow for the possibility of your discussing your staff's objections with the unit head. Choice b is incorrect because it may antagonize the unit head, may appear as if the employees are going "over your head", and is a more indirect way of solving the problem. Choice c, while it may sound familiar to some, is too negative a response. Choice d is a reasonable approach, demonstrates your commitment to speaking up on behalf of your staff, and may contribute to solving the problem.
41. The answer is (b). This illustrates the importance of having all of the necessary facts before taking action, and of being objective. Choice a is incorrect because it is insulting and implies that you feel he couldn't be correct. Choice c is incorrect because you are automatically assuming that you are right. Choice d is incorrect because you shouldn't tell him he is the most competent, or that you are "rewarding" him by giving him more work. That type of statement could easily make him feel that you are rewarding the less competent employee, and punishing him. In addition, the question does not state that this is what you have been doing. So it is an assumption to select choice d. Choice b is correct because it shows you are willing to be objective and find out if he is correct.
42. The answer is (c). Generally, the number of people one immediately supervises decreases the higher one goes in the organization. A "higher, upper echelon" supervisor would immediately supervise a smaller number of people than a "lower level" supervisor.
43. The answer is (c). Choice a is incorrect because it wouldn't encourage employees to specialize, it would do the opposite, as it's likely employees would learn more about all of the required tasks. Choice b is incorrect because this method would increase, not decrease, the amount of control employees would have over their work. Choice d is incorrect because the number of skills required should increase, not decrease. Choice c is the best choice. Even if you weren't aware that this is one of the primary reasons this method is being considered, you could still have answered the question correctly because the other three choices were the opposite of what they should have been, and had to be eliminated.
44. The answer is (b). Choice a is incorrect, because this would be

a poor supervisory practice. Choice c is incorrect, because it goes to the other extreme, a public confession. Choice d is incorrect because it is blaming someone else, and unethical. Choice b is the correct, and fair, response.

45. The answer is (b). We really hated to include this question, but we felt we should. Sometimes you may get a question that drives you crazy because there seem to be two possible choices, and you can't decide which is the correct one. Sometimes it's because the question is difficult and well-designed, but occasionally it's because it's a bad question. We feel a question like this one is a poor question, but included it so we could make this point. If you think you've had a poor test question, it's even more important that you attend the review session the following week, if one is offered (if one isn't offered, it's because all of the questions have already been through the review process, and been upheld). By attending, you will find out what the correct answers were, and be given a chance to appeal any that you thought were unfair or poor questions. It's important to do this if you've had a problem, and you'll also gain insight into what the correct answers were. (There's no other way to find out). It's important to note that when you review a test, they won't give you your answer sheet, just the test booklet and the correct answers, so try and remember what answers you finally decided to select, for the questions you had a lot of difficulty with. Back to this problem. Most people select choice a or choice b, and there are good reasons for selecting either one. In this case, both choice a and choice b were rather broad statements that could be applied to the situation described in the paragraph. Test questions by necessity create artificial environments, and in this case it's difficult to determine in exactly what context choices a and b should be interpreted. In addition, there are sometimes extenuating circumstances that make the application of some broad "rules" impossible in supervision. So, we feel, this would be a question that could possibly be appealed. Choice c is incorrect because, not only does its premise make no sense, nowhere does it state that one of the employees accepted more responsibility than the other. Choice d is incorrect because this is not necessarily true. It is not considered good supervisory practice to reprimand experienced employees less because they benefit from it less.
46. The answer is (a). Again, this is another of those "how much do you get involved?" questions. In this case the problem does not seem to be a major one, and neither employee has come to you about it. Nor is there any indication that job performance is being affected, so it's best not to get involved. Choice b is incorrect because the problem is not major, and your actions may lead to resentment from both employees, as neither one of them chose to discuss the issue with you. Choice c is incorrect for the same reason. Choice d is incorrect because it is an indirect way of handling the problem, and the employees may become uncomfortable

or resentful of your interference. It's best to not discuss the matter with either employee.

47. The answer is (a). You need to determine which action would be least appropriate. Choice a is least appropriate because it assumes that you must definitely already know the employee is just looking busy. From the paragraph, you suspect this, but you're not sure. It would be poor supervisory practice to have a "frank" discussion until you have all of the facts. Choice b, setting specific time limits, choice c, observing her more carefully, and choice d, monitoring her work output more carefully, are all better choices than choice a.
48. The answer is (c). It's important that supervisors delegate work in the proper amounts, neither delegating too little or too much. In this case, the supervisor is delegating too little of his or her responsibility and authority. The supervisor has fifty employees, so one should assume the supervisor would have more important things to do than "spend a considerable portion of time spot-checking files, reviewing material being transferred from active to inactive files, and similar activities." Choice a is incorrect because the supervisor may be conscientious and hard-working, but from the paragraph it is apparent that the supervisor is not delegating authority properly, choice c. Choice b may be true, but even if it were, the supervisor's actions would still be inappropriate. Choice d is incorrect because, not only is it an unlikely assumption, even if it were true the supervisor would not be delegating responsibility wisely. Surely there would be other people he or she could delegate those tasks to.
49. The answer is (a). Choice b is incorrect, as the previous supervisor had been too harsh and undemocratic. Her behavior is not considered good supervisory behavior, and even if there weren't problems as a result, it is likely problems would occur eventually from this method of supervision. Employees need to be able to take the initiative and participate in formulating work plans and procedures when appropriate. Employees should also not be treated like children. Continuing her policies would in all likelihood create problems for you. Choice c is incorrect because it goes to the other extreme, "giving employees complete freedom in carrying out their assignments." This is also not good supervisory practice. Choice d is incorrect because it is a little too participatory, especially to be the answer to a test question, and your employees may think you're indecisive. Choice a is the best choice of the four.
50. The answer is (b). For this question, you need to select which activity would be most appropriate for a first-line supervisor. Choice a is incorrect because a first-line supervisor would not have the authority, based on the quotation, to increase or decrease the responsibilities of his or her unit. According to the quote, supervisors "are concerned largely with the control

of current action for the execution of current jobs." Choice a would give the supervisor more authority than he or she would actually have. Choice c is incorrect because a first-line supervisor would not have the authority to revise the procedure to be used for transmitting instructions from the head of the agency to the unit heads. Choice d is incorrect because a first-line supervisor would not have the authority to raise or lower production goals in order to adjust them to the abilities of his or her employees. Choice b is correct because a first-line supervisor would have the authority to modify staff work assignments to handle seasonal variations in the unit's activities.