

Illinois Workplace Skills Assessment

Practice Items: Set 1

These practice items are intended to give students and teachers an idea of the kinds of items and types of topics covered in the Workplace Skills Assessment. These items have not appeared on a test in the past and will not appear on any future tests.

There are three practice sets. Each set contains practice items designed to assess understanding of the six skill areas measured by the assessment: communication, adapting and coping with change, problem solving and critical thinking, work ethics, technological literacy, and teamwork. In some cases, more than one answer may seem correct, but students should select the best answer choice for that particular test item. The answer key is included at the end of the set.

Please use these practice sets in ways most useful to you and your students. You may want to have students work through one complete set or focus on one topic area across all three sets. You may also select individual items from any of the sets and create your own practice test. In addition to discussing the answer choices, students will benefit from a discussion of the basic concepts underlying the items—employer expectations, prioritizing, effective behaviors when working in teams, and interpersonal communication in the workplace.

Area D: Communication

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

While she is having lunch with Pam, Sally sees her friend Bill at the restaurant and introduces him. Pam discovers that Bill is in the market for a product she sells. Later in the week, Pam calls Bill to see if he would like to purchase her product.

- 1. How should Pam start the phone conversation?**
 - a. "Hey, Bill, this is Pam, remember me?"
 - b. "Hi, Bill, this is Pam. I met you on Monday, January 5, while having lunch with Sally at the Garden Restaurant at 12:45."
 - c. "Hello, Bill, this is Pam. We met earlier this week while I was having lunch with Sally."
 - d. "Hello, Bill, this is Pam. I have a product I think you need."

- 2. After introducing herself, what should Pam do?**
 - a. Spend time getting to know Bill better before telling Bill why she has called.
 - b. Mention that she understands he is in the market for a product she sells.
 - c. Say that Sally suggested she call him.
 - d. Compliment Bill, so he will be more inclined to buy her product when she mentions it.

- 3. Bill has been hired to replace the shingles on a house. While removing the shingles, he notices that some of the boards below are rotten. What should Bill do?**
 - a. Replace the shingles because that is what he was hired to do.
 - b. Replace the boards before redoing the shingles and add the charge to the bill.
 - c. Quit, because he was not hired to replace boards.
 - d. Tell the customer of the extra needed repairs and let the customer decide.

- 4 Which physical position suggests a person is open to the ideas being spoken?**
- a. Facing the person speaking and making frequent eye contact
 - b. Folding the arms across the chest
 - c. Crossing the legs away from the person speaking
 - d. Crossing the legs then folding the arms across chest
- 5. Shelia is giving instructions to John, an employee she supervises. John seems uncomfortable and Shelia isn't sure he is listening. Shelia and John are facing each other and standing very close. Which might improve communication?**
- a. Shelia ceasing eye contact
 - b. Shelia turning so she isn't facing John
 - c. Shelia taking a step back
 - d. Shelia moving closer to John
- 6. In which situation is a person using body language to show she or he has more power?**
- a. The person talking is standing in front of the seated listener.
 - b. Both people are seated and the listener is making eye contact with the person talking.
 - c. The person listening keeps looking around the room.
 - d. The person talking occasionally uses his/her hands to emphasize a point.
- 7. Which is intended to be the most reliable tool of internal communication for a company?**
- a. The company bulletin board
 - b. The community daily newspaper
 - c. The local gossip network
 - d. The company newsletter

8. Jesse has been disciplined by his supervisor, but he thinks his supervisor is wrong. What should Jesse do?

- a. Tell the supervisor he/she is wrong.
- b. Research the situation to come up with the correct solution.
- c. Ask for a meeting with the supervisor to explain his point of view.
- d. Do the task the way the supervisor asked for it to be done.

9. Speakers can ensure that information is understood by encouraging listeners to

- a. repeat the information.
- b. look them directly in the eyes.
- c. write the information word-for-word.
- d. ask questions about the information.

Area G: Adapting and Coping with Change

Use the following information to answer the next seven questions.

Bob works in the graphic arts department. He has spent a lot of time learning one computer program, but his supervisor assigns him to projects that require him to use a new program. Because of the time it will take to learn the new software, Bob will have to work very hard in order to finish the projects on time.

- 1. What would be the best approach for Bob to take?**
 - a. Tell his supervisor there is no way he can complete the requested jobs on time.
 - b. Realize that it is necessary to make a transition to new and better software.
 - c. Quit to avoid the stress of trying to do a job without the time he needs.
 - d. Do the best he can with the program he knows in order to finish the job on time.

- 2. How should Bob carry out the decision he has made?**
 - a. Work as fast as he can.
 - b. Formulate a step by step plan.
 - c. Write a letter of resignation.
 - d. Work as he normally does.

- 3. Martin, Bob's supervisor, has decided that all graphic artists will change to the new software. He develops a transition plan to move from the old software to the new. What should be the first step in Martin's plan?**
 - a. Stop work on all current jobs during the transition period.
 - b. Ask which artists want to try the new software.
 - c. Train the artists on the new software.
 - d. Arrange workloads to accommodate the change.

- 4. Sam, Bob's co-worker, decides that there isn't enough time to learn the new software and complete his jobs on time. He figures that the stress will be more than he can handle and decides to quit. What step should Sam have taken before he made this decision?**
 - a. Asked his supervisor for more time in the transition plan
 - b. Tried to finish as much of the project as he could
 - c. Continued to use the existing software
 - d. Tried to talk Martin out of his decision to change software

- 5. For Sam, what would be the best result of his resignation?**
 - a. He will have a lot of free time to do what he wants.

- b. He will be the only one making decisions that affect him.
- c. He can look for a job that pays more money.
- d. He is no longer under the stress that his job created.

6. Considering Sam's feelings, why is it important that he quit?

- a. Sam's stress would hinder his job performance.
- b. He has no other choice but to quit.
- c. His supervisor doesn't understand him.
- d. The company is impossible to work for.

7. If Sam had decided to adjust to change instead of quitting, how would he have benefited the most?

- a. He would have kept his job.
- b. He might not have to change software again for a while.
- c. He would get a raise.
- d. He would become a more valuable employee.

Use this information to answer the next question.

Dave has worked at ABC Company for the last two years. He just completed his degree and has accepted employment with XYZ Company beginning in one month. Dave would like to have a one-week break so he wants to end his employment with ABC in three weeks.

8. When should Dave send his letter of resignation?

- a. This week
- b. Next week
- c. Two weeks before he begins at XYZ
- d. The last day he works at ABC

9. Which is an effective way for most people to reduce stress?

- a. Look for more challenging work.
- b. Exercise on a regular basis.
- c. Take vitamin supplements.
- d. Plan a vacation for next summer.

10. Which most likely would be a financial consideration when applying for a new job?
- a. Cost of uniforms
 - b. Working environment
 - c. Work schedule
 - d. Reputation of the company

Area H: Solving Problems and Critical Thinking

1. **On Monday, Latisha's supervisor asks her to work on three projects that need to be finished by Friday. On Wednesday, Latisha realizes that she won't be able to finish them on time. What should she do?**
 - a. Ask a coworker for help.
 - b. Stay late to get the jobs done.
 - c. Discuss the problem with her supervisor.
 - d. Finish what she can; deadlines can usually be changed.

Use the following information to answer the next four questions.

George is a very dependable auto mechanic. Although George is paid the same as the other mechanics, his boss often assigns George more difficult, time-consuming tasks. George often finds he is busy working while the other mechanics are standing around talking. Lately, George has been leaving work angry.

2. **What is the most important problem in this situation?**
 - a. George is angry.
 - b. George isn't paid enough.
 - c. George wants time to talk.
 - d. George's boss is picking on him.
3. **What is the source of the problem?**
 - a. George is too good at his job.
 - b. George doesn't complain enough.
 - c. George isn't being rewarded for his work.
 - d. George has too much work to do.
4. **What is the best solution to the problem?**
 - a. Give the other employees more work.
 - b. Give George less work.
 - c. Reprimand the other employees for talking so much.
 - d. Reward George for his hard work.
5. **What result does the boss most likely expect from the chosen solution?**
 - a. Some employees will quit.
 - b. All the employees will work harder.
 - c. George will no longer leave work mad.
 - d. The employees will talk less at work.

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

Cliff, a mechanic, is eager to learn and try new things, but he isn't always careful and accurate. When a regular customer comes in with a difficult problem, the boss wants Ron, a more experienced mechanic, to take care of it, but Cliff has offered to do it.

6. What should the boss do?

- a. Give the job to Cliff.
- b. Give the job to George.
- c. Have Ron supervise Cliff as he does the work.
- d. Have Cliff watch Ron as he does the work.

7. Cliff makes several mistakes and doesn't take directions well from Ron. Which should Ron do?

- a. Discuss Cliff's behavior with their boss.
- b. Fix the car himself.
- c. Reprimand Cliff.
- d. Refuse to work with Cliff.

8. Juan's supervisor gives him a list of work to do today and asks him to set priorities. What does she want Juan to do?

- a. List tasks in their order of importance.
- b. Tell how difficult it will be to do each task.
- c. Estimate how long each task will take.
- d. Estimate the cost of each task.

9. Which accurately describes the process of decision-making?

- a. Define the problem, identify alternatives, make a decision.
- b. Define the problem, gather information, make a decision.
- c. Identify alternatives, weigh the alternatives, make a decision.
- d. Define the problem, identify alternatives, gather information, weigh the alternatives, make a decision.

10. Maria's job is to organize the workloads of three employees so they share work equally and the work gets done. Which is likely to be Maria's greatest problem?

- a. A worker willing to work overtime
- b. A worker who misses work often
- c. A worker willing to work overtime with advance notice
- d. A new worker

- 11. If the most important goal is completing work when it is due, which is the best guideline for organizing a workload?**
- a. Whether the task has been done before
 - b. How much a task will cost to complete
 - c. How long it will take to complete a task
 - d. Whether people need to work together to complete the task

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

Kim has been a very dependable clerk at Sue's Pawn Shop for six weeks. He fills out customer/item information on the pawn tickets customers use to reclaim their items. Three times in the past week Sue has been unable to locate items quickly because Kim failed to write information clearly on the claim ticket.

- 12. What should Sue do?**

- a. Relieve Kim and hire someone new.
- b. Buy Kim a typewriter.
- c. Ask Kim to print information clearly.
- d. Ignore the situation.

- 13. Kim notices that Sue is unhappy with him. What should he do?**

- a. Quit.
- b. Ignore Sue.
- c. Ask Sue for a conference.
- d. Wait and see if things change.

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

José, a cashier in a grocery store, learned how to install cash register tape last week. He hears Shandra say that her cash register isn't working properly and she can't fix it. José walks over to Shandra's cash register and rethreads the tape.

- 14. What should José do next?**

- a. Return to what he was doing and say nothing.
- b. Tell the other cashiers how incompetent Shandra is.
- c. Tell the boss what he has done.
- d. Discuss the situation with the other clerks.

- 15. What is the first thing Shandra should do?**

- a. Thank José for helping her.
- b. Complain to her coworkers about José's attitude.
- c. Refuse José's help the next time and wait for her boss.
- d. Learn how to fix the tape herself.

16. The boss on a construction job asks Ted, a new worker, to do something Ted doesn't know how to do. What should Ted do?
- a. Assure the boss he knows how and then ask a co-worker to teach him.
 - b. Watch other workers doing similar jobs and copy what they do.
 - c. Try doing the task anyway to show he's confident.
 - d. Tell the boss he doesn't know how and ask for assistance.
17. A supervisor who distributes work according to each person's strengths and potential is
- a. managing time.
 - b. showing initiative.
 - c. delegating responsibility.
 - d. displaying authority.

Area J: Work Ethics

1. **Brenda works for a small company. Two or three times each week, she walks two blocks to the post office to buy correct postage for special mailings. Is this a good use of Brenda's time?**
 - a. Yes. It is not wise for small companies to tie up a lot of money in stamps.
 - b. Yes. Brenda can use this time to plan so she is more productive when she returns.
 - c. No. The company could save time and money by buying stamps in large quantities.
 - d. No. The money required for just a month's supply of stamps would pay for Brenda's time.

2. **Steve works at a store that plans to buy a new type of cash register. He volunteers to test the new register. What does this show?**
 - a. His attempt to impress the boss
 - b. His attempt to show up the other employees
 - c. His willingness to learn
 - d. His boredom with his present job

3. **What is the best reason for regularly attending work?**
 - a. Workers don't get paid when they're off.
 - b. Workers get too far behind when they're absent.
 - c. It shows the job is important to the worker.
 - d. It makes a favorable impression on the boss.

Use the following information to answer the next question.

It is 4:30 Friday afternoon and Jim has plans to meet friends at 5:00 for dinner. He has spent all day typing a report that must be in the mail by the end of the day. Jim's work is always neat and accurate, but proofreading the report will take at least two more hours.

4. What should Jim do?

- a. Send the report out without proofreading it because it probably has few errors.
- b. Come in on Saturday to finish the report when he has more time.
- c. Ask a secretary to proofread the report and mail it.
- d. Proofread the report and mail it before he leaves.

5. Which is highly recommended for managing time at work?

- a. Prioritize a list of things to do.
- b. Complete work in the order that it comes in.
- c. Tackle the hardest jobs first.
- d. Finish easy jobs before starting hard ones.

6. Dale has worked in the same division in the company for 14 years. The company just announced that employees with at least 12 years of experience may choose to retrain for work in a new division. If Dale pursues the offer, which principle will his decision prove?

- a. Learning is an activity that can occur throughout a lifetime.
- b. Company policies usually discriminate against younger workers.
- c. Company downsizing decreases employment opportunities.
- d. Younger workers are less capable than older workers.

7. Which is the best way to deal with the temptation to put off work?

- a. Do the task all at one time.
- b. Wait to set a deadline.
- c. Break the task into smaller parts.
- d. Talk to co-workers about completing the task.

8. Which is most important in time management?

- a. Do the easiest task first.
- b. Do the most important task first.
- c. Do the simplest task first.
- d. Do the hardest task first.

9 Which occurs when an employee regularly misses work?

- a. All the work somehow gets done.
- b. Peers recognize the person as always on the go.
- c. The employee is promoted according to schedule.
- d. Co-workers complain about having to do the employee's work.

10. When employees do *not* complete assigned jobs, what is the usual reason?

- a. They don't know how.
- b. They don't have enough time.
- c. The work isn't in their job description.
- d. They feel they aren't paid enough.

11. When people take pride in their work, what is it often related to?

- a. Their salary
- b. Their education
- c. Their age
- d. Their self-concept

Area K: Technological Literacy

1. What would be the best type of software to use in order to produce the following?

Insert graphic of a pie chart

- a. Graphing program
- b. Page lay-out program
- c. Data base program
- d. Graphic design program

2. What is the best type of software to use in designing a newsletter?

- a. Graphing program
- b. Page lay-out program
- c. Data base program
- d. Graphic design program

3. What would be the best type of software to use in order to produce the following?

Insert graphic of a table

- a. Spread sheet program
- b. Page lay-out program
- c. Data entry program
- d. Word processing program

4. Which of the following is being found less and less in the office of today's executive?

- a. Pen and paper
- b. Tape recorder
- c. Computer
- d. Dictaphone

5. Cheryl works in a discount store in Anytown. She receives a message from the store in Bigcity asking if she has the items on their list in stock. What should Cheryl do to put a copy of the file on her computer?

- a. Print out a copy of the file and type it in.
- b. Make a back-up copy of the file.
- c. Download the file.
- d. Upload the file.

6. Which is multimedia-capable and set up for viewing colorful "pages" containing photos and sounds?
- a. World Wide Web
 - b. Gopher
 - c. Internet
 - d. Chat rooms
7. On World Wide Web pages, what are the hidden codes called that let users click on a highlighted word or phrase to automatically access a related site?
- a. Gopher
 - b. File transfer protocol
 - c. Hypertext
 - d. Surfers
- 8 Jan's boss hands her a document to prepare. She wants the final copy to be in three columns. Which would be the most efficient approach for Jan to take?
- a. Put the document in columns only after her supervisor has proofed and approved it.
 - b. Put the document in columns as she begins typing.
 - c. Key in the text, put it in columns, and ask her supervisor to proof it.
 - d. Create two versions of the document, one in columns and one not.
9. Who owns the Internet?
- a. An international group of computer manufacturers
 - b. A consortium of U.S. universities
 - c. The U.S. government
 - d. No one

Answer Key: Set 1

Area D: Communication

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. D
8. C
9. D

Area G: Adapting and Coping with Change

1. B
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. D
6. A
7. D
8. A
9. B
10. A

Area H: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. D
5. B
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. D
10. B
11. C
12. C
13. C
14. A
15. A
16. D
17. C

Area J: Work Ethics

1. D
2. C
3. C
4. D
5. A
6. A
7. C
8. B
9. D
10. A
11. D

Area K: Technological Literacy

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. D
5. C
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. D