

Illinois Workplace Skills Assessment

Practice Items: Set 2

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

1. **As Petra gives directions to Karl, she notices that he yawns and rolls his eyes after she finishes. What does this most likely tell Petra about Karl?**
 - a. That Karl is excited about doing the job
 - b. That Karl doesn't care about what she is saying
 - c. That Karl already knows about the job
 - d. That Karl wants to start a new project

2. **When Heather goes to work, she notices a car that isn't labeled as handicapped parked in a handicapped spot. She knows that this makes it harder on her friend who is handicapped. What is the best way for Heather to handle the situation?**
 - a. Have the car towed.
 - b. Tell coworkers about the incident.
 - c. Call the police who will ticket the car.
 - d. Ask the person to move the car.

3. **Why is listening important in a telephone conversation?**
 - a. Because the other senses cannot be used
 - b. Because interference or noise makes hearing difficult
 - c. Because asking the speaker to repeat something is improper
 - d. Because writing down messages becomes less necessary

4. **Why should the telephone be answered courteously and correctly?**
 - a. It demonstrates skill in using electronic gadgetry.
 - b. It creates a good first impression.
 - c. It aids in cost-effectiveness.
 - d. It saves the company time.

5. **Barriers to communication may be physical, such as speech or hearing handicaps, but most are social or psychological. What is the best example of a social or psychological barrier?**
 - a. Appearance
 - b. Lack of humor
 - c. Lack of knowledge
 - d. Cultural difference

6. **A task-oriented manager is watching a group of her employees laughing. How would she most likely interpret the laughter?**

- a. Time is being wasted.
 - b. The team is enjoying doing the work.
 - c. The group is laughing at the manager.
 - d. The assigned task is not worth doing.
- 7. What is the most efficient and secure method to communicate a confidential message to someone in a remote location?**
- a. E-mail
 - b. Voice mail
 - c. Fax
 - d. Postal service
- 8. Which is an advantage of written communication?**
- a. Speed
 - b. Variety
 - c. Clarity
 - d. Permanency
- 9. When answering the telephone at work, begin with**
- a. your name.
 - b. a courteous greeting.
 - c. the reason for calling.
 - d. the name of the company you work for.
- 10. Sheila works for a computer firm and has recently learned that a new computer program is being installed. She is unfamiliar with the program. What would be the best way for Sheila to learn and practice the new program?**
- a. Ask other employees to show her how it works.
 - b. Work with the program by trial and error until she learns it.
 - c. Attend a training session on the program and then work with it.
 - d. Wait until she actually has to use the program and then ask for help.
- 11. Kathy is meeting for the first time with a group of employees who work for her company's major supplier. Which is the best way for Kathy to begin the meeting?**
- a. Introduce herself and explain the purpose of the meeting.
 - b. Ask everyone to state their names and titles.
 - c. Start right in on the topic for the meeting.
 - d. Let everyone talk together for awhile to get to know each other.
- 12. Lee is giving a financial report to the other department heads. She gives everyone an outline of the major topics she will be covering. What would be the major benefit to the audience?**
- a. The presentation will be much shorter.

- b. Everyone will have the same key information.
 - c. The information will be much easier to understand.
 - d. The audience will be able to listen without asking questions.
13. **As Jerry's friend Chris told him all his problems at work, Jerry thought about a similar situation that had happened to him. As soon as Chris stopped talking, he looked to Jerry for a reaction. Which of the following would best indicate Jerry's support for Chris as a friend?**
- a. "That's nothing. Wait till you hear what happened to me."
 - b. "You seem very upset about all that is going on."
 - c. "Here's what you should do."
 - d. "There's no need to feel bad."
14. **Paul is listening to Monica describe a complicated project. Paul has been assigned to help her complete the project. Which response would show Monica that Paul understood what she said and is ready to help?**
- a. "If I follow you, we have several things to do right away."
 - b. "So, why are we doing this again?"
 - c. "Okay, this will be easy. I'm ready."
 - d. "What a mess! No wonder you need help!"
15. **Sharon is sitting across from Mike behind her desk. She is looking straight at him with a frown on her face. Her arms are crossed and she is leaning back in her chair. What would be the best way for Mike to respond to Sharon's body language?**
- a. Leave quickly since Sharon is mad at him.
 - b. Ignore how Sharon looks and focus on her words.
 - c. Ask Sharon questions to learn what her body posture means.
 - d. Explain in more detail since Sharon is concentrating on what he is saying.

16. **Juanita consistently does prompt, efficient work on all daily required tasks, and the quality of her work is excellent. What is the best way for Lara, her supervisor, to recognize Juanita for these daily work habits?**
- a. Compliment her and thank her for routine work well done.
 - b. Save her compliments for out-of-the ordinary work only.
 - c. Comment on Juanita's daily work habits during her annual performance review.
 - d. Notice Juanita's work but say nothing since compliments might spoil her.
17. **The Apex company has this sign posted on the fence next to the employee entrance:**

15 Days Without a Customer Complaint!

What is the likely purpose of the sign?

- a. To remind employees of the importance of customer service
 - b. To show employees that management is watching them
 - c. To keep score for a contest with another company
 - d. To give employees something to read
18. **Enrique is holding a performance review with Jason. Enrique needs to let Jason know that his below-average quality ratings on the car repair work he is doing is a significant problem. What is the best way for Enrique to encourage Jason to improve his work?**
- a. Compliment Jason first on something, criticize the quality of his work, and then compliment him on something else.
 - b. Say nothing about the problem directly, but let Jason know that he is angry.
 - c. Tell Jason in strong terms that he must stop making mistakes.
 - d. Tell Jason his concern and discuss ways to improve.

Area G: Adapting and Coping with Change

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

A manufacturing plant decides to increase its hours of operation and change workers' schedules. Instead of working 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, they will now work 10 hours a day, 4 days a week, with opportunities for more overtime.

- 1. How would most employees likely respond?**
 - a. They will feel increased stress.
 - b. They will work fewer hours.
 - c. They will be more productive.
 - d. They will be less productive.

- 2. What reason might the company have for increasing its hours of operation?**
 - a. It allows employees to work more overtime hours.
 - b. It will increase company profits.
 - c. It will result in more local sales.
 - d. It improves the work environment.

- 3. When would it be most beneficial for an employee to leave a job?**
 - a. After changing work areas
 - b. After being assigned a new supervisor
 - c. After experiencing health problems caused by job-related stress
 - d. After being required to learn a new computer program

- 4. A supervisor compares two coworkers' job performance in a meeting. The supervisor compliments one employee and criticizes the other. How might this affect the two working together?**
 - a. Help the first employee supervise the second employee.
 - b. Maintain the friendship between the two employees.
 - c. Improve morale within the company.
 - d. Create a competitive work environment.

- 5. Herman works in Illinois for a European-based company. The company decides they can make better use of Herman's skills in the company's main office in Europe. What should the company do to help Herman adjust to the new position as quickly as possible?**
- a. Assign Herman a secretary.
 - b. Tell Herman the best places to eat.
 - c. Show Herman the newest tourist attraction.
 - d. Enroll Herman in a language course.
- 6. The most common error in managing change is**
- a. making the change too quickly.
 - b. lacking goals or purpose for the change.
 - c. budgeting too little to make the change.
 - d. misunderstanding the effect change has on people.
- 7. The best way to communicate change within an organization is**
- a. by meeting with workers and management.
 - b. by sending written notice only to those involved.
 - c. by creating mass media announcements.
 - d. by using word-of-mouth.

Area H: Solving Problems and Critical Thinking

- 1. When faced with a problem, what would be the most logical first step?**
 - a. Seek help from a competitor.
 - b. Look at several possible solutions.
 - c. Implement changes immediately.
 - d. Remove people who find problems.

- 2. Effective delegation takes time, patience and follow-up. Why would a person decide to delegate?**
 - a. To give away all the nasty jobs
 - b. To restructure a heavy workload so all the work will get done
 - c. To show who is boss
 - d. To show that a person is unable to do a job

- 3. The best way to generate good ideas for solving a problem is**
 - a. to work alone on possible solutions.
 - b. to ask others to submit their ideas to you.
 - c. to involve a group in generating solutions.
 - d. to ask your supervisor what to do.

- 4. Brainstorming is a creative problem-solving technique used in many work situations. To use it effectively**
 - a. ideas should be evaluated as the process evolves.
 - b. limits should be placed on the number of ideas generated.
 - c. participants should not be allowed to build on other participants ideas.
 - d. group members should share any and all ideas that come to mind.

- 5. Sam has an office job that requires making many decisions. Who is most likely to give Sam good ideas when he has a problem at work?**
 - a. A coworker with more experience in the same tasks
 - b. His relative whose employment has been in a factory
 - c. His best friend who runs his own business
 - d. A job counselor who advises students

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

Jan reviews her work for the day. Her list of things to do includes write and type two letters that must be dated today, schedule a meeting of six people for next week, prepare the conference room for a meeting at 8 a.m. tomorrow, and call three hotels to make reservations for her boss's business trip next month. In addition, each day Jan must answer the phone, check the fax machine, and keep paper in the copy machine which many others also use.

- 6. If Jan finishes everything she must do today, what else should she try to do?**
 - a. Schedule meeting and make hotel reservations.
 - b. Prepare conference room and check fax machine.
 - c. Answer phone and type letters.
 - d. Make hotel reservations and check copy machine.

- 7. Which of these would allow Jan to work more efficiently and still do the work that is expected of her?**
 - a. Take the phone off the hook for the day.
 - b. Use e-mail to check schedules for next week's meeting.
 - c. Ask every fifth person who uses the copy machine to check the paper supply.
 - d. Instead of typing and mailing the letters, call and give a verbal message.

- 8. In which occupation is showing initiative likely to be most important?**
 - a. Entrepreneur
 - b. Clerical worker
 - c. Sales associate
 - d. Educator

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

Betty and Toby were supervisors in a department store. Several employees told them that merchandise was missing from the store. Betty and Toby compared their inventory list against the actual merchandise and found differences. They discussed the problem and decided to increase security by setting up videotape cameras. While watching the videotapes, they saw someone stealing merchandise.

- 9. Which was the first step in their problem-solving process?**
- Having the thief arrested by the police
 - Discussing the problem of stealing in a meeting
 - Setting up cameras to increase security
 - Learning from employees that there is a problem
- 10. Which step would be part of evaluating the results of their efforts to solve the problem?**
- Seeing someone stealing while watching the videotapes
 - Deciding to increase security to watch the customers
 - Discussing the problem of missing merchandise
 - Having the thief arrested by the police after watching the videotapes
- 11. Kathryn, manager at a fast food restaurant, has noticed that there is a high turnover rate. In order to stop employees from quitting, she decides to purchase new uniforms for everyone. Six months later, she still has a high turnover rate. Which step in the problem-solving process did Kathryn skip?**
- Asking her employees what color of uniform to buy
 - Finding out why her employees were quitting
 - Noticing that she has a high employee turnover rate
 - Deciding to stop her employees from quitting
- 12. Mary works in a busy dental office. She and her boss make a list of job duties that need to be finished by the end of the week. On Thursday, Mary has to leave early to pick up some needed office supplies. When she comes in to work on Friday, she knows she will be expected to have the weekly list completed. What is the best way for Mary to complete her list?**
- Tell her coworkers she won't be able to get the list completed.
 - Finish as many jobs as she can and leave at the end of the day.
 - Ask everyone in her office to leave her alone because she has things to do.
 - Ask other coworkers to help her finish the job duties for the week.

13. The McNeery Corporation received a contract that requires them to hire more employees. They need enough employees to finish the project, but they don't want to hire so many employees that there won't be enough work for everyone. How should they decide how many employees to hire?
- a. Look on the Internet for information on hiring.
 - b. Ask a temporary agency to supply whatever they need.
 - c. Analyze their upcoming projects.
 - d. Hire half as many employees and schedule double shifts.

Area J: Work Ethics

Use the following information to answer the next two questions.

Mary's boss has just placed a new software package on her desk.

- 1. What should Mary do?**
 - a. Try to learn it as soon as she can.
 - b. Wait for someone to teach it to her.
 - c. Wait until she needs it, then begin to learn it.
 - d. Put it on the shelf and hope her boss does not mention it.

- 2. Mary decides to learn the software on her own. Which best describes Mary?**
 - a. Mary is trying to impress the boss.
 - b. Mary is a good employee.
 - c. Mary is overly ambitious.
 - d. Mary is trying to avoid doing her regular work.

- 3. When you give part of your positive attitude to others, you create a good working environment. A good way to share a positive attitude is to**
 - a. put up posters about having a positive attitude.
 - b. laugh more so that your attitude will be infectious.
 - c. criticize co-workers who you feel are not showing a positive attitude.
 - d. arrange for an inspirational speaker to meet with fellow coworkers.

- 4. Sue has felt disappointed and upset for over a month since she was passed over for a promotion. She had worked hard and felt she deserved it more than the person selected. One of the first things she should consider doing is**
 - a. talking to her supervisor about what she needs to do to get promoted.
 - b. threatening to quit the job.
 - c. taking a vacation.
 - d. asking her doctor for advice.

- 5. When people try to do too much on the job, they often**
 - a. tell themselves that they work best under pressure.
 - b. resist the urge to complete work uncompleted by others.
 - c. are well organized.
 - d. have well-kept records.

- 6. Nancy is a highly skilled technician. She always completes her assignments rapidly and the quality of her work is among the best in the department. Nancy's job requires her to be considerate of others; however, she has little patience with people who do poor quality work and expresses her opinion about them. As a result, no one wants to work with Nancy. What should Nancy do?**
- Look for another job.
 - Enroll in a human relations course.
 - Ask to be assigned to projects where she can work alone.
 - Ask her supervisor for a superior performance raise.
- 7. Beth's business always gave its customers calendars at the end of the year. The office manager has decided the business will no longer hand out calendars because it isn't cost effective. Which is the most correct explanation of the manager's decision?**
- The calendars cost too much.
 - Beth and the other employees gave out too many calendars.
 - Calendars aren't a product Beth's company normally sells.
 - Giving out calendars didn't generate enough new or continuing business to pay for the calendars.
- 8. Judy's supervisor's behavior continually annoys her. What is the best thing Judy can do about it?**
- Confront the supervisor.
 - Learn to ignore the irritating behavior.
 - Tell her problems to a coworker.
 - Report the supervisor for harassment.
- 9. At Paula's place of work, Friday is "dress down" day. Which should Paula assume about the dress expected at work?**
- Shorts and a tank top would be acceptable attire on Fridays.
 - A casual tee-shirt and jeans would be appropriate dress on Tuesdays.
 - A tailored blouse and slacks would be appropriate to wear on Fridays.
 - It would be all right to wear tennis shoes at work any day.

10. Jared was assigned to a company task force with a challenging mission and opportunity to be highly visible to top management. The assignment meant moving to a new office shared with another task force member. After moving in, Jared discovered that his office mate was a smoker. Jared strongly objects to smoke in his working space. The best way for Jared to handle the situation is to

- a. speak with his new office mate and try to reach an understanding.
- b. lobby the boss for a new company no smoking policy.
- c. not take the assignment and move back to his old office.
- d. ask for a private office.

Area K: Technological Literacy

1. **When a message is sent by electronic mail, which of the following is true?**
 - a. It is acceptable to use a less formal style than when you write a letter.
 - b. The person you are sending it to can read it instantly.
 - c. No one other than the person you sent it to can read it.
 - d. You need to make a paper copy if you want a record of what you said.

2. **When aligning dollars and cents in columns, use the**
 - a. centered tab.
 - b. decimal tab.
 - c. left-aligned tab.
 - d. right-aligned tab.

3. **A spell-check program will**
 - a. find all misspelled words.
 - b. suggest which version of "to," "too," or "two" is correct.
 - c. find only the words listed in its dictionary.
 - d. suggest other words that are easier to spell.

4. **Information or data is typically stored in a computer as a**
 - a. cell.
 - b. document.
 - c. field.
 - d. file.

5. **What does using a data base management program to sort data alphanumerically mean?**
 - a. Sorting the data alphabetically from Z to A
 - b. Sorting the data by numbers first, then by letters
 - c. Sorting the data from the largest number to the smallest number
 - d. Sorting the data from the smallest number to the largest number

6. **If someone wants words in a paragraph to line up horizontally on the left side of the screen or paper, which of these options should be used to format the text?**
 - a. Centered
 - b. Right-aligned
 - c. Left-aligned
 - d. Justified

- 7. Hyphenating words in a word processing program improves the appearance of a document by**
- a. making every line of text the same length.
 - b. reducing the raggedness of text on the right.
 - c. making words easier to read.
 - d. stretching the text to make it look longer.
- 8. Font or typeface refers to the style and shape of both letters and numbers in a word processing program. To improve readability, choose a font that**
- a. uses lots of flourishes and curvy lines.
 - b. uses bold lines.
 - c. uses serif letters.
 - d. uses distorted shapes.
- 9. What does adjusting the leading in a document do?**
- a. Increases or decreases the size of type.
 - b. Changes the style or shape of the text.
 - c. Changes the amount of space between lines of type.
 - d. Changes the amount of space between letters in a word.
- 10. The best way to emphasize a word in a text paragraph is to use**
- a. all caps.
 - b. underlining.
 - c. larger type size.
 - d. boldface or italicized characters.
- 11. What improves the readability of a document?**
- a. Increasing the number of words
 - b. Decreasing the average sentence length
 - c. Increasing the length of paragraphs
 - d. Choosing more complex words
- 12. A surge protector is a piece of equipment that**
- a. speeds up the operations of a computer.
 - b. regulates high and low electrical voltages passing to the computer.
 - c. secures a computer from theft.
 - d. protects the user from eyestrain.

13. A byte, the basic unit of information storage in a computer, usually contains 8 bits. How many bits and how many bytes are there in a megabyte?
- Roughly 800 bits and 100 bytes
 - Roughly 8,000,000 bits and 1,000,000 bytes
 - Roughly eight billion bits and one billion bytes
 - Roughly 8 bits and 1 byte
14. Why would a business executive who travels frequently most likely choose a laptop computer over a desktop?
- Laptops are easy to transport.
 - Laptops have more memory.
 - Laptops have faster processors.
 - Laptops have better operating systems.
15. What is the most important feature to consider when buying a modem?
- Memory
 - Accuracy
 - Speed
 - Size
16. Arthur needs to find information about recent developments in the healthcare industry. Which online resource should he check first to locate differing views and opinions about current developments?
- Web pages of health care companies
 - Internet site with free information
 - Computer bulletin board service or newsgroup
 - Web pages of different newspapers
17. While Myra is using a word processor, the keyboard stops responding. Which is least likely to be the cause?
- Myra misspelled a word.
 - The keyboard is unplugged.
 - The computer has shut down or "locked up."
 - The word processor isn't the active program.

Area M: Teamwork

Use the following information to answer the next four questions.

Kris leads a department that is responsible for record keeping, budgeting, customer relations, and corporate communications. The following employees work in the department:

Alex: 5 years experience in data entry

Barry: 12 years experience in sales

Charlie: 5 years fiscal management experience

Dan: 6 years experience as a technical writer

- 1. To which team member would it be most appropriate to assign the responsibility of record keeping?**
 - a. Alex
 - b. Barry
 - c. Charlie
 - d. Dan

- 2. To which team member would it be most appropriate to assign the responsibility of budgeting?**
 - a. Alex
 - b. Barry
 - c. Charlie
 - d. Dan

- 3. To which team member would be most appropriate to assign the responsibility of customer relations?**
 - a. Alex
 - b. Barry
 - c. Charlie
 - d. Dan

- 4. To which team member would be most appropriate to assign the responsibility of corporate communications?**
 - a. Alex
 - b. Barry
 - c. Charlie
 - d. Dan

Use the following information to answer the next four questions.

Jan is great at scheduling and chairing meetings, keeping accurate records of a group's progress, and reminding group members of deadlines. Tom's strength is in helping group members reach consensus and look at problems more broadly. Sally is generally fairly quiet but attends all meetings, is highly cooperative and supportive of other members, finishes assignments promptly, and inspires others to follow her good example. Jim is highly creative, may or may not attend meetings, but does good work although not always on time.

- 5. Which group member would most likely be the best manager?**
 - a. Jan
 - b. Tom
 - c. Sally
 - d. Jim

- 6. Which group member would most likely be the best leader?**
 - a. Jan
 - b. Tom
 - c. Sally
 - d. Jim

- 7. Which group member can best be described as leading by following?**
 - a. Jan
 - b. Tom
 - c. Sally
 - d. Jim

- 8. Which group member would most likely be the least effective manager?**
 - a. Jan
 - b. Tom
 - c. Sally
 - d. Jim

- 9. Which symptom would most likely signal the need for team- building in a work situation?**
 - a. Increased production or output
 - b. Decreased complaints within staff
 - c. Hostility among staff
 - d. Low dependency on the advice of the manager

- 10. A questionnaire is often used to collect data when trying to get at the cause of a problem. The major advantage of a questionnaire is it**

- a. avoids response bias.
- b. provides a opportunity to probe deeper into the situation.
- c. standardizes responses.
- d. eliminates face-to face interaction.

11. Which statement does not describe a team?

- a. The group has a common purpose or goal.
- b. Members of the group depend on one another.
- c. All agree they must work together.
- d. Everyone does the same job.

Use the following information to answer the next question.

Tom, Sue, and Jane were given a project to work on as a team. The project must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m. All three will have to invest a lot of time to meet the deadline. Tom is good at motivating and organizing people. Sue is shy but works hard and always completes her work early. Jane is friendly and outgoing but procrastinates.

12. Jane is good at y, z, and b. Sue is good at a, b, c, and y. And Tom is good at b and y. How should they divide the tasks so that everything gets done by a qualified person?

- a. Sue, a and c; Jane, z and y; Tom, b
- b. Sue, y and z; Jane, a and b; Tom, b and y
- c. Sue, a and z; Jane, z and b; Tom, y
- d. Sue, a and c; Jane, z and c; Tom, b and y

13. Which of the following tasks is the most important thing that a team leader can do to insure the success of a project?

- a. Assign tasks.
- b. Get to know each member better.
- c. Discover each member's strengths.
- d. Make a schedule.

14. Which of the following abilities would likely be most beneficial to a potential employer?

- a. Creating detailed directions
- b. Working well with others
- c. Writing grammatically correct letters
- d. Asking challenging questions

15. Jack has a tendency to complain about Leslie's work in front of others. What is the best way for Leslie to keep Jack from doing this?

- a. Tell Jack that he has a problem.

- b. Criticize Jack when he isn't around.
- c. Ignore Jack and continue to work.
- d. Discuss the problem with a supervisor.

Answer Key: Set 2

Area D: Communication

1. b
2. d
3. a
4. b
5. d
6. a
7. d
8. d
9. b
10. c
11. a
12. b
13. b
14. a
15. c
16. a
17. a
18. d

Area G: Adapting and Coping with Change

1. a
2. b
3. c
4. d
5. d
6. d
7. a

Area H: Solving Problems and Critical Thinking

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. d
5. a
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. d
10. a
11. b

12. d

13. c

Area J: Work Ethics

1. a

2. b

3. b

4. a

5. a

6. b

7. d

8. b

9. c

10. a

Area K: Technological Literacy

1. a

2. b

3. c

4. d

5. b

6. c

7. b

8. c

9. c

10. d

11. b

12. b

13. b

14. a

15. c

16. c

17. a

Area M: Teamwork:

1. a
2. c
3. b
4. d
5. a
6. b
7. c
8. d
9. c
10. c
11. d
12. a
13. c
14. b
15. d