

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

LABOR EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAM

# EXAMINATION PREPARATION BOOKLET

Administrative Supervision/  
Supervision II

Booklet No. 18



# CSEA

Booklet #18

# Administrative Supervision/ Supervision II

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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## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION/SUPERVISION II

There are usually fifteen questions in this section. Of the fifteen, a few will be very difficult, a few very easy, and most will be in between. In answering the questions, it's good to keep in mind the points on supervision outlined on the next page. Please read these first, and then answer the questions. We suggest you do no more than five questions at a time, looking up the answers and explanations in the back of the booklet after completing each set of five. Before your exam, we recommend you reread the section entitled, "Points to Keep In Mind When Answering Supervisory Questions."

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 details.
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.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION/SUPERVISION II QUESTIONS

For each of the following questions, select the letter that represents the best of the four possible answers.

1. Ms. Wilkinson is a manager in Agency Z who has the reputation of being tough, but fair-minded. She has just been promoted into a different part of the agency, and now heads a unit of thirty employees. She has observed that there are several employees who stick together. They seem to really enjoy working together, and she has observed them discussing how to solve work problems even on their lunch breaks. While she realizes they are effective and good at what they do, she does not like the idea of this informal work group staying together, and possibly becoming more powerful and a threat to her authority. She decides to take steps to weaken its effectiveness.

The proposed action of Ms. Wilkinson is:

- a. a good idea, since supervisors need complete control of their units
  - b. a bad idea, since the employees are having a good time and not causing trouble
  - c. a good idea, since the informal work group is most likely seen as a clique and resented by other employees
  - d. a bad idea, since the informal work group is functioning effectively, and she is most likely reacting in a defensive manner
- 
2. The middle manager is both "player" and "coach," and needs to combine different skills and actions. A middle manager must see the "big picture," be detached and have a more long-range perspective. But he or she also needs to have detailed knowledge of the job, abundant job experience and the ability to become deeply involved in the work. It is sometimes difficult for a middle manager to know if he or she is employing the correct blend of these roles. Is he or she too involved in being a player -- doing too many things that should be done by others? Or is he or she being too much of a coach -- delegating too much, and not being involved enough? How much one needs to be player or coach is unique to every situation, and very much influenced, not only by the actual job to be done, but also by the needs and demands of bosses, co-workers and employees.

With which of the following choices would the author most likely agree?

- a. when in doubt, a middle manager is likely to be better off delegating an assignment
- b. if a middle manager has very competent employees, he or she is likely to be better off being a "player" than a "coach"
- c. if a middle manager has a very demanding boss, he or she is likely to be better off being a "player"
- d. if a situation calls for technical information that only the middle manager has, he or she is likely to be better off being a "player"

3. Bob Pearson supervises fifteen employees in Unit 2, a position he has held for nine months. Before being promoted, he had worked in the same unit for four years, and was well liked by all of his co-workers. He was an excellent employee, and worked very hard. Bob has had a number of problems since receiving his promotion, however. A new employee in his unit seems to have an aversion to work. He frequently comes in late and makes many personal phone calls during the day. Bob has noticed this behavior, but is reluctant to do anything about it. Because he is not sure if the work he assigns the employee will get done, he gives much less work to him than to the others. Since the unit has a higher workload than ever, the work is piling up, and everyone in the unit is concerned.

One day, one of the personnel managers approaches Bob, tells him that the employees in the unit are upset about the situation, and urges him to take action. The next day Bob calls a meeting of the staff and announces that "some people in the unit are coming in late, spending too much time on the phone, and not getting any work done." He also says that this has to stop. That afternoon, Bob sends everyone in his unit a memo which emphasizes these points and bans any future personal calls in the office.

Bob's way of handling this situation was:

- a. wise, since this should have the effect of "shaping up" the other workers in the unit as well
- b. unwise, since it will lower productivity
- c. unwise, since it is too indirect and punitive a response
- d. wise, since he would have hurt the new employee's feelings if he had confronted him alone

4. You supervise a large unit of thirty employees. Diane, an employee in the unit, comes to you and says she can't work for Alan, her supervisor, anymore because he checks on her work all the time and is very critical of her. She says she has tried to talk to him about the situation, but he won't listen to her.

Of the following, it would be best if you responded by saying:

- a. "I'm sure Alan is treating you no differently than he treats everyone else."
  - b. "Do you feel Alan is too critical of you?"
  - c. "I don't think you should have gone over Alan's head by coming to me with this minor problem."
  - d. "You wouldn't want Alan to accept poor quality work, would you?"
5. Which of the following statements is most accurate?
- a. it is much better for supervisors to focus on an employee's behavior rather than on his or her personality
  - b. it is not common for supervisors to procrastinate, hoping a problem will go away
  - c. problems in working habits are always more difficult for supervisors to deal with than performance problems
  - d. when discussing an employee's behavior, it is wise for a supervisor to attribute motives to the behavior
6. All of the following are likely to be true of a new supervisory situation, EXCEPT:
- a. new supervisors are often on the spot during their first few weeks on the job
  - b. some new supervisors swell with responsibility instead of growing with it
  - c. it's best if a new supervisor begins by making a lot of changes
  - d. former cronies of the new supervisor may expect special treatment and become resentful if it's not given
7. You have been the supervisor of a small unit for four months. One of the employees you supervise has consistently performed very poorly. You have talked with her on many occasions, and

evaluated her performance and set goals regularly. None of this has helped, although she does have the necessary skills to do the job. It seems that she just doesn't like to work very hard. She has been employed by the organization for thirty years, and other long-time employees have told you she has always performed poorly, but her other supervisors always overlooked her poor performance because they knew she would make a lot of trouble if she were formally disciplined. Your unit's workload has increased significantly in the past three months, and now the other employees must do a great deal of the work she is unwilling to do.

Of the following, which would be the best action for you to take?

- a. discuss the situation with the employee, and tell her you will have to begin formal discipline procedures if her performance does not improve
  - b. ask the employee to resign
  - c. ask one of the long-time employees to discuss the situation with her, encouraging her to resign
  - d. ask your supervisor to fire her
8. An employee you supervise is extremely competitive and very abrasive. The other employees in your unit are very resentful of this employee, who often "shows them up" with the very high quality of his work.

Of the following, it would be best if you:

- a. let him know that, while you appreciate his concern and attempts to produce high quality work, the ability to get along with others and work as a team is just as important as technical ability
- b. ignore the situation, since his work is of such high quality
- c. let him know that, although you appreciate the high quality of his work, you can't help but get irritated by some of his behavior
- d. try to understand why he is acting the way he is



9. You have the responsibility of making a big decision, and you would like to get some group input.

Of the following, it is most important that you:

- a. make sure everyone in the group has a chance to speak
- b. make it clear whether you will abide by their suggestions, or whether you just want to hear these suggestions to help you arrive at a possible solution
- c. wait until everyone has spoken before silently deciding whether to consider their ideas
- d. use good problem-solving techniques during the meeting

10. Which of the following statements is least accurate?

- a. most workers want to satisfy physical, social and personal needs
- b. a supervisor can have a significant impact upon an employee's personal life
- c. supervisors who emphasize getting to know the needs of their employees are not using their time wisely
- d. most workers want responsibilities they can handle, results they can demonstrate, and recognition for what they accomplish

11. You are the supervisor of a unit of twenty employees. Janet Graham, one of the employees, comes to you and says that Mark Bell, her supervisor, is not supervising. She says he does not take the time to give her direction or feedback on her work. Janet also says that she often has had to do assignments that should have been handled by Mark. Janet understands that Mark has a large workload, but says that she does too. She has tried to talk to Mark several times about the situation, but says he won't acknowledge that there is a problem. Both Janet and Mark have performed well in the past.

How would you handle this situation?

- a. inform Janet that she should not have ignored the chain of command by going over Mark's head
- b. ask Janet to be more understanding of the pressures faced by Mark
- c. thank Janet for coming to you, but explain that there's nothing you can do
- d. discuss the situation with Mark

12. It is now widely recognized that salaries, benefits and working conditions have more of an impact on job satisfaction than on motivation. If they aren't satisfactory, work performance and morale will suffer. But even when they are very good, employees will not necessarily be motivated to work well. For example, The Wall Street Journal recently reported that as many as 40% or 50% of newly hired Wall Street lawyers (whose salaries start at upwards of \$50,000) quit within the first three years, citing long hours, pressures and monotony as the prime offenders. It seems there's just not enough of an intellectual challenge in their jobs. An up-and-coming money-market executive concluded: "Whether it was \$1 million or \$100 million, the procedure was the same. Except for the tension, a baboon could have done my job." When money and benefits are adequate, the most important additional determinants of job satisfaction are more responsibility, a sense of achievement, recognition and a chance to advance. And all of these have a more significant influence on employee motivation and performance.

If you were a supervisor who agreed with the above passage, which of the following would you most likely do?

- a. press hard for large monetary bonuses for well-paid executives that you supervise
  - b. encourage employee involvement in establishing employee assistance programs
  - c. encourage employee participation in job design and decision-making
  - d. encourage "Employee of the Year" awards
13. A supervisor feels very comfortable with two of the employees she supervises because they have work styles very similar to her own.

Of the following, the supervisor should:

- a. feel confident that the employees are doing a very good job
  - b. try to view their work as subjectively as possible
  - c. try to view their work as objectively as possible
  - d. carefully reevaluate their past work performance
14. Ozzie Nelson is a perfectionist who often becomes overwhelmed because he's trying to do too much too well. He has

extremely high expectations and seems to be showing signs of "burnout." Ozzie just can't say no -- he will take on anything, even if someone else could or should do it. And nothing leaves his desk unless it is done perfectly. You know he is taking a lot of work home with him in order to keep up.

Assume that you are Ozzie's supervisor. Which of the following do you feel would be the best way to handle the above situation?

- a. enroll Ozzie in a course on assertiveness
  - b. discuss with Ozzie the issues of working too hard and trying to be perfect, and the consequences of these
  - c. sit down with Ozzie and let him know it's all right to make mistakes
  - d. enroll Ozzie in a course on establishing priorities
15. Which of the following statements is least accurate?
- a. in order to be highly productive it usually doesn't matter whether a work group feels the general organizational climate is a fair and friendly one
  - b. work groups are likely to contain an informal alignment based on status and authority
  - c. supervisors should accept the subgroups that often form within work units
  - d. it's not desirable for a supervisor to be seen as an outsider imposing controls on members of the work group
16. When conducting a corrective interview, a supervisor should do all of the following, EXCEPT:
- a. state the purpose of the interview
  - b. change the employee's point of view
  - c. state the problem, review expectations, and review the employee's current performance
  - d. give time-frames
17. An employee writes: Derogatory criticism of a person's work can be very harmful. A supervisor should be able to correct an employee without destroying his or her self-worth. A very minor example is a typist's mistake or typographical error that is sent back along with a 3 x 5 sheet of paper

on which the typist's name is written, underlined, and deliberately misspelled. To me and the other typists in my department, it is a little degrading and implies a certain amount of ignorance and a lack of respect. Little things add up to a lot.

Which of the following statements is best supported by the above passage?

- a. respect and dignity on the job are important to employees
- b. supervisors should only criticize an employee's work when they absolutely have to
- c. a supervisor's ability to take criticism well is important in order to set an example for the supervisor's employees
- d. give employees an inch and they'll take a mile

18. You have just received a promotion to a different unit. Until he failed the oral exam for the title, Murray Foster, a long-time and well-liked employee, had briefly held this position provisionally. You have been in the job for two weeks, and have noticed that Murray is very bitter about the situation and is subtly undermining your authority.

Of the following, it would be best if you:

- a. had Murray transferred as soon as possible
- b. spoke with Murray about the situation
- c. spoke with your supervisor about the situation, and asked him or her to talk with the employee
- d. ignored the situation for two more weeks to give Murray more time to adjust to it

19. I believe that many of the problems I encountered were problems of fit with the informal organization. My peers and supervisors were unable to perceive me as being able to perform the job that the company hired me for. Their reaction to me was disbelief. I was out of the "place" normally filled by black people in the company; and since no black person had preceded me successfully, it was easy for my antagonists to believe I was inadequate, and to act as if I were.

-- A black manager on his experience in the early 1960's

Which of the following statements is best supported by the above passage?

- a. the informal organization is often beyond a supervisor's best efforts to control it
- b. expectations can significantly affect behavior and perceptions
- c. informal organizations wield little power
- d. informal organizations are very powerful

20. You supervise a unit of twenty employees. Sometimes you must ask your employees to work overtime. You are careful to allocate the overtime fairly. Most of the employees are cooperative, but Andy always resists. Tonight he said that you deliberately pick him to work on Monday nights because you're afraid to ask anyone else to miss the football game on TV.

Of the following, it would be best if you responded by saying:

- a. "It's your own fault for always resisting overtime."
- b. "If you think you aren't getting a fair deal on overtime, we can discuss it, but I do need you to work overtime tonight."
- c. "It's only a game. Besides, I've been fairly allocating overtime on Monday nights to every employee on a regular schedule."
- d. "I really don't think I've been singling you out."

21. When supervising, it's best for supervisors to:

- a. focus primarily on appearances
- b. refine their hidden expectations
- c. focus on an employee's attitude toward the job as a basis for performance evaluation
- d. know the job standards, and be sure employees know them too

22. You are the manager of a large unit of fifty employees. Jane, a typist in the unit, comes to you with a complaint about her supervisor, Marie. Marie is a program analyst who transferred to your unit last year. Jane, a very good and reliable worker, tells you that Marie has been taking up

a lot of the secretaries' and other workers' time by talking with them a great deal about projects she is working on. Jane says she realizes that Marie is insecure about her work and needs a lot of support, but her behavior is causing some disruption. Because you are Marie's supervisor, she asks you to intervene.

Of the following choices, it would be best if you:

- a. went over Marie's personnel records for clues of poor performance and then discussed the situation with her
- b. told Jane she should have gone directly to Marie to discuss the problem, instead of coming to you
- c. asked Jane for more proof
- d. called Marie in to ask her how she is doing, and asked if you could do anything to make her feel more comfortable on the job

23. Of the following statements, which would most likely be appropriate for a supervisor to say to someone he or she supervises?

- a. "I'm concerned about the impact your long coffee breaks are having on the other employees. I'd like you to shorten them."
- b. "Time off next week? You must be kidding!"
- c. "You must be pretty thirsty to take all those long coffee breaks."
- d. "I get annoyed every time I see you coming in late."

24. When Napoleon was asked why he reinstated the symbolic and practically worthless Legion of Honor Medal, he replied, "You lead men by baubles, not words."

Which of the following would most accurately reflect this statement?

- a. a supervisor gives all of the employees she supervises "outstanding" evaluations
- b. a supervisor never overly praises those he supervises
- c. a supervisor passes out trophies annually to outstanding employees
- d. a supervisor praises those she supervises only when they deserve it

25. All of the following are common problems faced by new supervisors, EXCEPT:
- difficulty in making decisions because of the fear of making a mistake
  - spending too much time procrastinating or collecting data before making a decision
  - success in delegating work
  - succumbing to waves of inertia because of fear
26. Which of the following is not true about planning and organizing work?
- good planning skills are not as important as good people skills
  - well-written operating manuals and other guides can allow a supervisor to primarily manage by exception
  - every operation needs planning, even when it looks routine
  - a good supervisor should have alternatives readily available for potential problems that are predictable
27. Two weeks ago you asked one of your employees to be sure to keep a copy of all mail-in requests that come in to your office requesting information about an important project. You have just found out he has not been doing it. He explains that he thought you said it would be "nice" if he kept copies. You are quite upset about this.
- Of the following, it would be best if you:
- tried to find out how the possible misunderstanding occurred, and ask him to follow your instructions
  - tried to find out how the possible misunderstanding occurred, and then ask him if he is willing to keep the copies
  - assigned the task to someone else
  - told him that when you say "it would be nice if," you mean he should do something
28. You have just been appointed supervisor of a large unit of thirty employees. You immediately notice there is a sort of "caste system" in the office, which runs along salary-grade lines. Although it is in their job descriptions, certain

employees are not allowed to answer the phone when it rings. They must wait for a higher-grade employee to answer it. The slightly higher-grade employees have a number of privileges, and also get to decide things like when the blinds should be open. There is a great deal of divisiveness in the unit.

Of the following, it would be best if you:

- a. waited at least a month before taking any sort of action in order to acquire more information
- b. held a staff meeting as soon as possible to discuss the situation
- c. asked the former supervisor why things had gotten to this stage
- d. slowly, but firmly, began changing policies

29. Wilbur Post seems allergic to detail. He thinks of himself as a man of action who gets right to the heart of the issue -- and very often he does. He hands in his work early, but occasionally it needs to be redone because a key detail has been overlooked. Wilbur is a very valuable, intelligent employee, who has a lot of enthusiasm. You've noticed, however, that this enthusiasm for undertaking new projects sometimes gets in the way of his follow-through.

If you were Wilbur's supervisor, which of the following do you feel would be the best way to handle the above situation?

- a. whenever possible assign a co-worker who is good at handling details to work on projects with Wilbur
- b. discuss the matter honestly with Wilbur, and order him to change his work habits
- c. anonymously send Wilbur an article on the importance of attention to detail and of follow-through
- d. discuss the matter honestly with Wilbur, and ask him to establish work goals

30. You supervise a small unit of five employees. The day before you are about to leave for a much needed and well deserved two-week vacation abroad, the most competent worker asks to speak privately with you. The employee tells you that she has just been offered a better paying job with another organization. She is the employee who has been in the unit the longest and knows a great deal of valuable



information about procedures and tasks that the other employees don't know. There has been talk for a while of upgrading her position.

Of the following, it would be best if you:

- a. sincerely stated that you don't want to stand in her way, congratulate her, and let her know that you'll miss her very much
- b. changed procedures so that never again would so much expertise be left to just one employee
- c. discussed the matter fully with the employee, and if she wished to stay with your unit, assured her that you would instruct your replacement supervisor to immediately begin the process of upgrading her
- d. discussed the matter with the employee, letting her know how valuable she is, and then asked her to stay long enough to train someone fully before she leaves

31. You've assigned a new project to one of the employees you supervise. Soon after the assignment, she comes into your office and asks that you give the project to another worker. She feels she's not qualified to complete it correctly, and that she will do a poor job.

Of the following, it would be best if you:

- a. urged her to complete the project because this is a golden opportunity for her to shine
- b. allowed her to express her doubts, and then provided support in helping her organize and master the project
- c. reassigned the project to someone who would like to do it
- d. asked her why she is so insecure about doing the project

32. All of the following are true, EXCEPT:

- a. support on the job can reduce stress
- b. an employee's self-esteem is rarely a critical determinant of performance
- c. employees who are allowed to participate in making decisions about how a task is to be performed are more enthusiastic about the task, and are more likely to do the task well
- d. a supervisor's behavior has a greater effect on his or her employees than most supervisors recognize

33. Our control systems are designed under the apparent assumption that ninety percent of the people are lazy ne'er-do-wells, just waiting to lie, cheat, steal . . . . We demoralize the ninety-five percent of the workforce who do act like adults by designing systems to cover our tails against the five percent who really are bad actors.

-- General Motors Manager

A supervisor who believed the above statement would most likely:

- a. give employees more discretion in performing tasks
  - b. supervise employees very closely
  - c. supervise problem employees more loosely than other supervisors would
  - d. give employees less discretion in performing tasks
34. All of the following are common problems found in new supervisors, EXCEPT:
- a. an over- or underestimation of what they can accomplish
  - b. an unwillingness to accept positive feedback from those they supervise
  - c. overly flattering behavior towards their supervisors
  - d. a tendency to become overly concerned with appearance rather than substance
35. Phyllis Grogan is a typist who works in a small typing pool in Agency Z. She has worked there for a year and a half, and has received excellent evaluations. Phyllis is a 24-year-old white female. Her supervisor is Patricia Richards, a 45-year-old white female. They have always gotten along well, and morale in the unit is good. There are five white females and one Hispanic female in the unit.

One night Phyllis and her husband, who is black, ran into Patricia and her husband as they were leaving the movie theater. Phyllis noticed that Patricia seemed uncomfortable, but didn't think much more about it. The following Monday, Patricia asked Phyllis how she enjoyed the movie. She also asked if that was Phyllis's husband with her. When Phyllis replied that it was, Patricia gave her a weak smile, talked a little more, and left. Since that time Patricia has been quite cold to Phyllis. For the last month, Phyllis has noticed that she has been getting all of the assignments for typing tabular material and other

difficult typing that no one else wants. Previously, this work had been evenly distributed among all of the typists.

The above passage is an example of:

- a. comparable worth
- b. subtle discrimination
- c. sexual harassment
- d. equal pay for equal work

36. At a staff meeting, another supervisor made a comment that you felt was very critical of your department. You are about to meet with him in his office.

Of the following, it would be best if you said:

- a. "I really didn't appreciate that comment you made about my department during the staff meeting."
- b. "That sure was an interesting staff meeting. I learned a lot. How about you?"
- c. "I was concerned about your comments on my department this morning. Do you have any suggestions on how I might improve things?"
- d. "I was interested in what you had to say today in the staff meeting. I feel some of your remarks were critical of my department, and I'd like to talk with you about them."

37. Donna Reed's style has no doubt increased her supervisor's risk of heart attack significantly. She is a procrastinator and a last minute operator. She seems to thrive on the challenge of these self-imposed tight deadlines. Her supervisor has even tried lying and pushing the deadline of a project up a week before it was really due, but somehow she always finds out the truth. The quality of her work is excellent, but her supervisor never can be sure a project will be finished on time. Her supervisor feels he couldn't constantly work under that sort of stress, and can't imagine that Donna is not going to succumb to the pressure one of these days and miss a deadline. Besides, he feels all that stress isn't good for her health.

Please select the choice below that you feel would be the best way to handle the above situation:

- a. Donna's supervisor does nothing
  - b. Donna's supervisor calls her in to his office and lectures her about the importance of not procrastinating
  - c. Donna's supervisor anonymously sends her a book on planning and time management
  - d. Donna's supervisor threatens her with severe formal disciplinary action unless she stops procrastinating
38. Barbara Rogers is an employee who has a reputation for being a troublemaker. She comes to her supervisor, Jack Burns, and says she is being sexually harassed. Barbara accuses Jack's supervisor, David London, who has been a close friend of Jack's for many years.

Jack should:

- a. take Barbara's complaint seriously
  - b. refer Barbara to counseling or to an Employee Assistance Program
  - c. listen to Barbara sympathetically, advise her to go to the Affirmative Action Office to file a complaint, but also warn David that a complaint is going to be filed against him
  - d. ask Barbara if she has any documentation to support her allegations
39. Which of the following statements about supervision is least accurate?
- a. once an employee performs well, he or she will continue to perform at that level
  - b. it's important for supervisors to encourage the employees they supervise to employ good delegation skills
  - c. hidden expectations a supervisor may have, like assuming an employee doesn't mind taking work home, can be harmful
  - d. supervisors should always be trying to improve their supervisory skills

40. Which of the following would not be considered an example of subtle discrimination against an employee who is a protected-class member?
- a. a supervisor protects a protected-class member by never giving negative feedback, and by giving easy assignments
  - b. a supervisor asks a highly respected protected-class member in the unit to talk with a Hispanic employee about a performance problem
  - c. a supervisor treats black male employees with more respect than she treats white male employees
  - d. a supervisor shares important information much more with male employees than with female employees
41. You supervise eight employees. In order to protect all of them from eyestrain, one particular assignment that requires close eyework is rotated and shared by everyone. One of the employees has just complained to you that he receives more of this work than the others, and he wants to be excused from doing the work today. You're not completely sure that he's incorrect.

Of the following, it would be best if you responded by saying:

- a. "Let me review my records to see if I've assigned the work fairly, and I'll get right back to you."
  - b. "I've given a lot of thought to how assignments are allocated, and it's fair for everyone. Please go back to work."
  - c. "Last week you complained about needing a new electric stapler. The week before you said you lost money in the vending machine. Isn't there anything you like around here?"
  - d. "I'm really sorry things have worked out this way, but I have to ask you to do the work anyway."
42. Dennis Morgan works very, very hard but isn't as productive as he could be, considering how hard he works. He seems to have a hard time setting priorities and determining what is really important. There have been a number of occasions when you've found him hard at work on projects that were of much lower priority than others that were sitting on his desk. He also loves to collect information, and thinks tons of information (some relevant, some not) will help him make the "perfect decision."

If you were Dennis' supervisor, which of the following do you feel would be the best way to handle the above situation?

- a. sit down with him and assist him in improving his decision-making skills
  - b. meet with him to discuss your observations and then review his projects, establish priorities and set realistic goals together
  - c. have him attend a training course on improving self-esteem
  - d. have him attend a training program on improving decision-making skills
43. An employee writes: A few years back I had the occasion to work at an agency where a new manager came in. We soon found out that the happy atmosphere we had all enjoyed for the past few years was slowly eroding. We started receiving memos for everything and anything; such as no more placing sweaters on chairs, absolutely clear desk tops, personal chattering is forbidden at all times, compulsory signing in and out at lunch time, and so on. This soon brought a big change in our health. We got nervous stomachs, headaches, high blood pressure, and so on. He also stated that women were taking men's jobs away and should be at home. Many of us spoke to the higher-ups, but nothing was done. So now I had to make a big decision. I loved my job but not the atmosphere I was working in. I was fortunate in having a friend who helped me to get into another agency where I still work. This atmosphere caused quite a few more people to leave, and it was a big shame because we all were good, productive workers. In fact, in many cases the agency had hire two workers to do the job one of us had been able to do so well.

What could the administrators have done to avoid the above situation?

- a. conducted exit interviews of the employees who left to determine their reasons for leaving
- b. instituted the above changes more slowly
- c. realized the changes were hurting employee morale and withdrawn them
- d. used the carrot-and-stick approach to management

44. John Brock is a 25-year-old black Training Specialist trainee in Agency X. He has been with the agency for eight months. John works with Ed Gordon, a 28-year-old white Training Specialist who has been in his position for four years. Their supervisor is Daniel Hannah, a 30-year-old white male who has been supervisor for six years. Daniel and Ed are good friends. John has become upset because he and Ed are treated so differently. Ed is allowed to come in late and leave early. On days when Ed drives his car to the office, he is allowed to leave every 90 minutes to change his parking place so that he won't get a parking ticket. Ed never has to let Daniel know where he is going, or what meetings he is attending. John is not allowed any leave violations, however minor. The second time he was a few minutes late to work, Daniel called him in to his office and reprimanded him. There is a training conference in Washington, D.C., that Ed and Daniel are going to. John has asked permission to go, but has been told he can't go because he wouldn't benefit as much as Ed and Daniel would.

Of the following statements, which best applies to the above paragraph?

- a. bad supervision can look a lot like discrimination
  - b. friends should never work together
  - c. agencies should provide parking for their employees in order to improve productivity and reduce friction
  - d. supervisors should be careful in choosing when to reprimand employees
45. All of the following are common problems faced by new supervisors, EXCEPT:
- a. one's former peers are now people one has to supervise, and this can lead to confusion, conflict or resentment
  - b. the supervisor may have been "top dog" in the previous title, and now has to start at the "bottom" in the new position; this can lead to arrogant or defensive behavior
  - c. new supervisors usually experience low levels of stress
  - d. the new supervisor is often selected because he or she was a very competent employee, not because he or she demonstrated leadership or supervisory skills, and the lack of these skills can lead to serious problems with those he or she supervises

## ANSWER KEY

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



## ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

Before we begin, it's very important to keep in mind that supervisory test questions just can't reflect reality very well. By their very nature, they are artificial, presenting situations that are contrived. Real life is much more complex. In real life, you would make decisions by examining a variety of factors, most of which can't be presented in a brief exam question. So, to do well on this exam, you need to be able to let go of all your ideas about what the answer should be and all your frustrations about the limited nature of the questions. You have to become comfortable selecting the best of the four choices you are given, especially when you don't like any of the choices. Whether you like them or not, you have to do your best with what you are given.

1. The answer is choice d. Choices a and c are incorrect because Ms. Wilkenson's idea is not a good one. It is natural for employees to "stick together," and it can help to make the workplace more enjoyable and productive. In fact, the passage says that they are effective, good at what they do, and seem to really enjoy working together. There is nothing to indicate that their friendliness is having any kind of negative impact at the workplace -- except for Ms. Wilkinson's fears that the group may become too powerful and threaten her authority. And the passage never says anything that would support these fears. Choice a is also incorrect because it goes too far. There is a vast difference between having control and having complete control. A supervisor should have control over appropriate things in the workplace, but complete control is much too authoritarian. Petty tyrants usually do not make good supervisors. The case for eliminating choice c is bolstered by the fact that the passage doesn't mention any resentment on the part of other employees in the unit. Choice b is incorrect because the reasons given in it -- employees having a good time and not causing trouble -- are not as good as the reasons given in choice d. Choice d talks about the effectiveness of the work group and the probable defensiveness of the supervisor, both of which are supported by the passage.

2. The answer is choice d. This requires very careful reading of the passage. Choice a is incorrect because it is not stated or implied anywhere in the passage. Choice b is incorrect because a middle manager who has very competent employees would most likely be better off delegating more. The employees perform well, so they can probably do more of the work themselves. This would mean being a coach, not a player. Choice c is incorrect because it is not stated or implied by the passage. There is not enough information given to determine what would be the best

course of action if one had a very demanding boss. Choice d is correct because a middle manager who is the only one with needed technical information can't delegate the task and so can't be a coach -- he or she has to be a player.

3. The answer is choice c. Choice a is incorrect because it is most likely that Bob's use of this indirect approach would alienate the other employees. They are very aware of how the problem employee is negatively affecting their lives and would most likely resent Bob for not handling the problem directly. Choice b is incorrect because it is too much to assume that productivity will be lowered. It's possible that the other employees would become so resentful of Bob's mismanagement of the situation that productivity would go down, but it's also possible that this would not occur. Of course, choice b could be the right answer if there were no better choice, but it's best to read all the choices in hopes of finding one. Choice d is not a better choice because the supervisor is taking the "cowardly" approach to disciplining the employee. Choice c is correct because Bob's action is not directed at the problem employee, and so it punishes innocent employees.

4. The answer is choice b. Choice a is incorrect because you can't be sure from the information given that Alan is treating her no differently than he treats everyone else. Also, if everyone is being treated in this way, Alan's behavior is quite harsh. It's not good supervision, and could be seriously affecting the work environment and productivity. Choice c is incorrect because she said that she's already tried to talk with him, but he wouldn't listen. It's also incorrect because it's an abrupt response, and it's not good practice to call her problem "minor." Choice d is incorrect because it is abrupt and assumes that her work is of poor quality. Choice b may seem like a cowardly response -- not very effective and a little too much like something a therapist would say -- but it's the only safe choice. It shows that you are listening and that you are taking her problem seriously.

5. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because it is common for supervisors to procrastinate when faced with a problem. Choice c is incorrect because it is an overgeneralization. Although it is probably true that work-habit problems (lateness, absenteeism, and so on) are usually more difficult to deal with than performance problems since skills that cause performance problems can often be upgraded, it is too much to assume that work-habit problems are always more difficult for supervisors to deal with. Choice d is incorrect because it is not wise for a supervisor to attribute motives to another's behavior. It's very possible that the supervisor doesn't know why the employee is doing something, even though he or she thinks she knows. Also, people tend to react negatively when someone

tells them why they did something; it tends to make them defensive. Choice a is correct because focussing on personality also tends to put people on the defensive. It's much wiser to focus on behavior.

6. The answer is choice c. Choice c is the only incorrect choice. People usually have a difficult time with change, so it's not considered good practice for a new supervisor to begin by making a lot of changes. (Of course, there could be a time when it would be best to make a lot of changes, but this is the exception, not the rule.) One of the reasons that the other choices are so much more "true" than choice c is that they are all qualified. Choice c says that "it's best"; this makes it an absolute. The other choices all contain words to indicate that they are not true 100% of the time. Choice a uses often, choice b uses some, and choice d uses may. By allowing room for exceptions, these choices are more accurate.

7. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because it is more appropriate to begin disciplinary procedures, and also because the passage makes it pretty clear that the employee would not resign. It says that she would make a lot of trouble. Choice c is incorrect because, not only is it unlikely that the employee would resign, it's also not considered good practice to have another employee do something the supervisor should do. Choice d is incorrect because it is not appropriate to have your supervisor handle something you should handle. And even your supervisor would most likely have to follow a set of formal procedures before the employee could be let go. Choice a is the best choice because it is the most appropriate choice, and is likely to be the most effective.

8. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because his behavior is having a negative effect on the other employees. Choice c is incorrect because expressing your irritation is not the most constructive approach to take. It doesn't offer a positive reason for different behavior, like the importance of working together as a team. Choice d is incorrect because, while it is important to try to understand why an employee acts the way he or she does, it's not much good if a supervisor doesn't act on the information. Of the four choices given, choice a gives the most appropriate action.

9. The answer is choice b. You need to pick the choice that states what is most important. While all of the choices listed are important, if you don't make it clear that you want their input in making what will ultimately be your decision, you will be making a very serious mistake. The employees are very likely to feel manipulated and to be resentful.

10. The answer is choice c. Choice a is true. Choice b is correct because supervisors can indeed have a significant impact upon an employee's personal life. This might have sounded strange, but think about how many times employees with difficult or incompetent supervisors have "brought the supervisors home in their heads." Studies have also found that problems with an employee's supervisor can lead to a great deal of stress for the employee. Choice d is true. Choice c is not true because it is wise for supervisors to get to know the needs of their employees.

11. The answer is choice d. Choice a is incorrect because Janet has already tried to talk with Mark. It's also not a very empathetic response. Choice b is incorrect because both employees are under pressure, and it looks like you are favoring one employee over the other. Choice c is incorrect because there is something you can do. You can discuss the situation with Mark, choice d, to get more information. You need to find out if this problem really exists, and if it is one that Mark "won't acknowledge." You may not have liked choice d because you may have preferred to begin with a more subtle, fact-finding approach, but it's the best of the four choices given.

12. The answer is choice c. Choice a is incorrect because the passage gives the example of well-paid executives who are bored with their jobs. Choice b might be a possibility, because it addresses the issue of employee involvement, but it's too specific. Not all dissatisfied employees are going to want to get involved in this particular program. Choice c is a better choice because it directly addresses the problem. Participation in job design should give individuals a way of changing their jobs to help eliminate the boredom. And involvement in job design and decision-making would allow them to have more responsibility, more recognition, and a greater sense of achievement. According to the passage, these have a significant influence on employee motivation and performance. Choice d is incorrect because, while it is an attempt to recognize and encourage good performance, it doesn't do anything to make the job any more interesting and would directly affect only a small number of employees.

13. The answer is choice c. Choice a is incorrect because the fact that an employee has a work style similar to your own does not necessarily mean that he or she is doing a very good job. Supervisors can be fooled by appearances sometimes. Choice b is incorrect because to view someone's work subjectively means to have a biased view, and this is not recommended. Choice d, to carefully reevaluate their past work performance, does not seem necessary. It's too formal, and probably involves more work than is necessary. Still, it could have been the correct choice if choice c didn't exist. Choice c, to try to view their work as objectively as possible, is the best of the four choices given.

It simply means that the supervisor should be aware of this tendency in him or herself and try not to let it color his or her assessment of the employees' work.

14. The answer is choice b. Choice a is incorrect because we're not sure that Ozzie has a problem with assertiveness. He might have trouble saying "no" because he wants to be very helpful. And even if Ozzie did have a problem with assertiveness, he has other problems that need to be addressed. Choice c is incorrect primarily because it doesn't address the problem of Ozzie's working too hard and job burnout. Choice d is incorrect because it's too specific. A course in establishing priorities may help with some of Ozzie's problems, but it will not help him deal with his perfectionism or his tendency to take on too many things. Choice b is correct because it best deals with the variety of problems Ozzie faces. If done correctly, a discussion with his supervisor about the situation could help a great deal because most employees are affected by the opinions of their supervisors.

15. The answer is choice a. Choice b is true. Informal alignments are likely to exist; they are a natural part of the workplace. Choice c is also true. Unless they are destructive, subgroups are a natural part of the workplace, and supervisors should accept them. Choice d is not the right answer because, as much as possible, a supervisor shouldn't be seen as an outsider who imposes controls. Choice a is correct because studies have shown (and common sense would tell you) that an unfair or unfriendly work climate can significantly affect worker morale and productivity. Of course, there are situations where productivity would not be affected, but the passage says it usually doesn't affect productivity, and this is simply not true.

16. The answer is choice b. When conducting a corrective interview, a supervisor should state the purpose (choice a); state the problem, review expectations, and review the employee's current performance (choice c); and give time-frames (choice d). It's important to give time-frames for follow-up and improvement, but you might have thought choice d was inadequate because it didn't give enough information. It's an acceptable statement, and can be eliminated as the answer because choice b is not true. If a supervisor goes into the interview thinking he or she is going to "change the employee's point of view," the supervisor could get into a lot of trouble. A supervisor can hope to change an employee's behavior by taking corrective action, but it's too much to expect to change the employee's point of view.

17. The answer is choice a. This is a tricky question if you don't read it carefully. Choice b is incorrect because the employee does not state that supervisors should only criticize work when they absolutely have to. The employee is upset because

criticism is given in an offensive manner. We can't be sure how the author feels about supervisory criticism in general. Choice c, while it is true, is not supported by the passage. Choice d is incorrect because the author does not feel this way. After reading this passage some supervisors might think, "boy, give them an inch and they'll take a mile," but that was not the feeling of the author. The statement is also not warranted because the employee has a legitimate complaint. Since the issue is that supervisors should treat their employees with respect and dignity, choice a is correct.

18. The answer is choice b. It would be best if you first discussed the situation with Murray. Later, if the discussion doesn't help, you may have to discuss the situation with your supervisor and ask him or her to talk with Murray. At this point, however, it would be best to try to resolve the situation yourself. There are two reasons for this. One, you don't want to bother your supervisor, whose first question to you is likely to be, "Well, have you talked with him about it?" Secondly, you are new and you probably don't know how well your supervisor and Murray like each other. Choice a is incorrect because it's best to try to talk with the employee first, rather than just getting rid of him as soon as possible. Aside from the fact that it is unfair and shows a lack of empathy, it's liable to seriously affect morale and productivity. It could do more to undermine you than Murray ever did. Choice d is incorrect because the situation is serious, and ignoring it is unlikely to make things any better. Of course, in some real life situations, it might be better to allow more time to let things settle down. When faced with a situation like this in an exam question, however, it's best to stick with the choice that is more likely to work and shows the more positive and active course. Choice d is too passive, and could have serious, negative consequences. Allowing Murray to undermine your authority for two more weeks might make you appear weak to him and to the other employees you supervise.

19. The answer is choice b. Again, you need to read this passage very carefully. You aren't being asked which choice makes the most sense. You're being asked which statement is best supported by the passage. Choices a and c are incorrect because they are not mentioned or inferred by the passage. Choice d is incorrect because it is too strong; the wording implies that all informal organizations are very powerful. While the passage does show one instance in which an informal organization had a lot of influence on the worklife of an individual, it's too much to use this to generalize about informal organizations. Choice b is a much better choice. The author's main point is that, because he was placed in a role that others did not expect him to be in, they were unable to perceive him as competent and treated him as if he weren't. People's expectations can significantly affect their perceptions and behavior.

20. The answer is choice b. Choice a is incorrect because it's rude, and you are admitting that you are treating the employee unfairly. Choice c is incorrect because stating "it's only a game" could offend the employee. Choice d is incorrect because it is too abrupt, especially compared with choice b. It doesn't allow any room for the employee's point of view. Choice b is a better choice because it's firm but allows for discussion. You may not have been crazy about it, but it's a better choice than any of the others.

21. The answer is choice d. Choice a is incorrect because it is a mistake for supervisors to focus on appearances; they need to know what is really going on. Choice b is incorrect because supervisors should try to eliminate their hidden expectations, not refine them. Choice c is incorrect because an employee's "attitude" can be a highly subjective factor, difficult for supervisors to objectively and accurately measure. Also, an employee may have a great attitude and still be performing poorly.

22. The answer is choice a. Another tricky question. As we have said so many times, sometimes you have to pick a choice that you are not really crazy about. Again, these situations are artificial and contrived, and you don't always have all the information you need to make a decision you're really sure of. On an exam, if you find a question that is too ambiguous to make a clear choice, we recommend you appeal it. This question is borderline, which is why we included it. Choice b is incorrect because it's understandable why Jane would come to you rather than Marie about this sensitive problem. Choice c is incorrect because it could be insulting. You might want to try to observe the situation yourself, but that is not included in any of the choices. Choice a is a slightly better choice than choice d because it is a more direct approach, and the supervisor does do some background research on the problem. In most cases, but not all, the direct approach would probably be best -- again, the problem of artificial exam question environments.

23. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because, while amusing and very "real life," it is inappropriate. Choice c is incorrect because it is indirect and probably meant to be sarcastic. Again, it's real life, but supervisors are supposed to be more polite. Choice d is not as good as choice a because it is probably too harsh. Of course, you can't be absolutely sure that it is inappropriate, but it is not the best of the four choices you're given, so you can eliminate it. Choice a is a much better choice because, while it's direct, it's not "charged." It's the least likely to offend the employee or to put him or her on the defensive. You might not have liked this statement either, but it's the best of the four choices you've been given.

24. The answer is choice c. According to Webster's dictionary, a bauble is a "small, showy, cheap ornament." This fits with choice c, which talks about handing out trophies. Choice a is incorrect because, while it might have seemed correct, "outstanding evaluations" are words, not baubles. Choices b and d are incorrect because they also involve words, not objects.

25. The answer is choice c. Choices a, b and d are all problems commonly faced by new supervisors. Choice c, "success in delegating work," is incorrect because it is not a problem. If the choice had read "trouble in delegating work," or even "delegating work," it too could have been eliminated. But success in delegating work is not a problem; it's an asset. It's a rotten question, but it points up the importance of reading very carefully.

26. The answer is choice a. All of the other choices are more true about planning and organizing than choice a. For a supervisor, it is critical to have both good planning and good people skills. In some instances, it might be better to have more of one than the other, but to state that "good planning skills are not as important as good people skills" implies that this is always true.

27. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because it doesn't correct the situation. Asking him if he's willing to keep the copies implies that it's OK if he doesn't keep them. That isn't how you feel; you really want them kept and you're upset that they weren't kept. (Choice b could also be interpreted as a sarcastic comment.) Choice c is incorrect because it shifts the problem, rather than dealing with it. You probably wouldn't have asked this employee if he weren't the obvious one to keep the copies. The employee that you transfer the work to might get annoyed. And, if it was just a misunderstanding, the employee originally assigned to the task might be insulted or hurt by your action. Choice d is incorrect because it sounds as if you're telling him that you are polite on the surface, but you don't expect him to take these empty gestures seriously. It doesn't get at solving the misunderstanding as well as choice a does, and there might be times in the future when you'll say "it might be nice," and mean just that. Choice a is much better because it enables you to say what you want as well as to clear up the misunderstanding.

28. The answer is choice d. Choice a is incorrect because a month is too long a time to wait, and you already have observed quite a bit. Choice b is incorrect because it may be an awfully explosive staff meeting. It may be too soon to try to discuss the situation with the whole group before other actions are taken. Choice c is incorrect because it may not be helpful, the former supervisor may not think there's a problem, or he or she



may "leak" your concern to one of your employees. Choice d is the best of the four choices you've been given, even if you don't like the wording very much. Because change is so difficult for most employees to accept, slowly and firmly changing policies is a good way of attempting to resolve this problem.

29. The answer is choice a. Another fun question. Again, you may not have liked any of the choices, but you need to pick the best. Choice b is incorrect because "ordering him to change" is too harsh. Choice c is incorrect because it is too indirect a method; it's sneaky and is not likely to be very effective. Choice d is incorrect, although it sounds good, because asking Wilbur to establish goals won't solve his problem. His primary problem is not with setting goals; it's with details. Goal-setting will help only if he decides that paying attention to detail is a reasonable goal. Choice a may not always be possible, and you may not have liked it because it does nothing to change the root of the problem -- Wilbur. But it is correct because it presents a better solution to the problem than any of the other choices do.

30. The answer is choice c. Choice a is incorrect because you would have made no effort to try to keep a valuable employee, and you don't even know if the employee really wants to accept the job. She could have just been telling you to see what you would say, or to see if you'd offer to try to get the upgrading that's been talked about for a while. Choice b, while it may be a very good idea, is not the right answer because it does not solve the problem at hand. Choice d is incorrect because it leaves little room for the employee to stay. Choice c is the best of the choices because it allows for the possibility of the employee's staying. It gives her a chance to fully discuss the situation, and you the opportunity to find out what might be done to keep her. Because it also allows for the possibility of a deserved promotion, it would give her the opportunity to decide if she would like to stay under different conditions. (Note that the paragraph never says that she has decided to leave; it just says that she tells you of the offer.)

31. The answer is choice b. Choice a is not the best choice because it doesn't provide the employee with help in organizing and mastering the project, as choice b does. Choice b is a good choice because it provides guidance, but not coddling. It's appropriate for a supervisor to help an employee grow, as long as an inappropriate amount of time (a lot of time) is not involved. You can't tell from the wording of choice b if this would take a lot of your time, but you have to assume that it would not. Again, you're faced with contrived situations and limited information. You have to do the best with what you are given, and this is by far the best choice. Choice c is incorrect because it's best to at least try to have the employee do it. In real

life, you might be too busy to take the time to encourage her, but exam questions are often looking for the ideal. A good supervisor does what he or she can to foster the growth of employees. With support and encouragement this employee could discover that she can do the work, and this could increase her self-confidence as well as her abilities. Choice d is incorrect because it's so blunt. It's likely to cause her to be even more insecure, and it offers no solution or additional support.

32. The answer is choice b. An employee's self-esteem is often a very important factor in determining performance. Choices a, c, and d are all true and are supported by research. Even if you weren't completely sure about all of these, you could still have answered correctly by using common sense and the process of elimination.

33. The answer is choice a. Choice a is correct because the passage favors giving employees more leeway when performing tasks. Choices b and d are incorrect because they indicate the opposite, strict supervision. Choice c is incorrect because it assumes too much. Nothing in the passage indicates that a supervisor who holds this position would supervise problem employees more loosely.

34. The answer is choice b. Choices a, c, and d are all true. Choice b is incorrect because an unwillingness to accept positive feedback from those one supervises is not a common problem supervisors face.

35. The answer is choice b. Choice a is incorrect because comparable worth refers to the concept that workers should be paid equally for work requiring comparable skills. Choice c is incorrect because there is nothing to indicate that the woman was a victim of sexual harassment. Choice d is incorrect because pay is not the issue here. The issue is subtle discrimination. This woman is being treated unfairly because of her marriage, and her supervisor is not being open about her actions.

36. The answer is choice d. Choice a is incorrect because it is a little too abrasive. Choice b is incorrect because it doesn't address the problem at all. Choice c is incorrect because it's asking for improvements, and the passage doesn't mention that you're interested in any suggestions from him. You may think that the remarks were totally uncalled for. Also, choice c places you at a disadvantage. You are admitting that this person is right and that you are in a situation that you can't handle. That may be true, but it's not usually the best way to begin a discussion. If there were no better choice, however, you might have had to pick choice c. Luckily, choice d is a much better

selection. It is polite, direct, and keeps you on equal ground.

37. The answer is choice a. The passage states the employee is performing very well, but her procrastinating style is difficult for her supervisor. This is a tricky situation because the supervisor has to be careful not to alienate an excellent worker. You would probably like a different alternative, but choice a is the best of the choices you're given because it doesn't do any damage. Choice b is incorrect because it is too harsh a response. The key words are "lectures her." Choice c is incorrect because it is so indirect and rather sneaky. Donna probably wouldn't feel very good about receiving something like that anonymously in the mail. Choice d is incorrect because it is too harsh a solution.

38. The answer is choice a. It's important for supervisors to remember that complaints of sexual harassment should always be taken seriously. In this case, you are being "set up" because the passage states that Barbara is a troublemaker and that David is a close friend of Jack. This shouldn't matter at all -- the complaint should still be treated as objectively as possible. Choice b is incorrect because it is insulting to Barbara. It indicates that you don't believe her and feel she is at fault. Choice c is incorrect because it is unethical. Choice d is incorrect because, as the only response given for that choice, it sounds like Jack doesn't believe her. It could be a reasonable question, but not if it's the only or the first comment given by Jack. Since this is all you're given, you have to eliminate choice d.

39. The answer is choice a. Choices b, c, and d are all true. It is not true that once an employee performs well he or she will always perform well.

40. The answer is choice c. All of the other choices are examples of subtle discrimination against protected-class members. Choice c is the answer because, although the discrimination may be subtle, the group affected is white males, a group that is not considered a protected-class. (It would be considered as such if the men were disabled or Viet Nam era veterans, but the passage doesn't say this, and it's too much to assume.)

41. The answer is choice a. It is the most polite and the most open-minded of the responses given. Choice b might have been correct if there weren't a better choice. It is flawed because it has you telling the employee to go back to work and saying that you've allocated the work fairly before you've determined that this is correct. What if there are no records? This is a good point, but you can only go with the information you've been

given. In this case, there's no way of knowing, so it's best to take each choice at face value. Choice c is incorrect because it is a rude, inappropriate response. Choice d is incorrect because it too does not allow the supervisor to check to see if he or she is mistaken.

42. The answer is choice b. None of the other choices has as good a chance of helping Dennis improve his skills as choice b, because choice b covers all of the major areas he needs help with. Choices a and d focus on just one problem, while choice c may or may not be helpful.

43. The answer is choice c. Choice a is incorrect because it might help them in finding out why people left, but it wouldn't help them avoid the problem unless additional action were taken. Choice b is incorrect because slowly instituting the changes might come as less of a shock to the employees, but it is most likely that they would still be unhappy with these changes. Choice d is incorrect because the carrot-and-stick approach would not make the employees any happier with a situation which involves such a radical change in their working conditions. Choice c is the best choice of the four, even if it's not a great answer.

44. The answer is choice a. Choice b is incorrect because it is too sweeping a statement, and is not the main point of the passage. Choice c is incorrect because it is a debatable and minor point. Choice d is incorrect because it is not a major point of the passage. The passage is primarily concerned about an unfair supervisory situation that could look a lot like racial discrimination, even if it isn't. We don't know for sure whether this discrimination stems from racism as well as friendship, but choice a is still the best of the four choices.

45. The answer is choice c. All of the other choices are true. Studies have found that new supervisors often experience a good deal of stress.