



# Examination Preparation Booklet

Secretarial and Typing Series  
For Counties, Municipalities,  
And Non-Teaching School  
District Personnel

Booklet No. 1



CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.  
LOCAL 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
Danny Donohue, President

**Booklet #1**

# **Secretarial and Typing Series For Counties, Municipalities, And Non-Teaching School District Personnel**

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

Copyright, Reprinted January 1998  
Not To Be Reproduced Without Permission

## SECRETARIAL AND TYPING PRACTICES

This booklet is designed for those CSEA members working in counties and municipalities who are taking promotional exams in the secretarial and typing series. This exam series includes: Senior Typist, Senior Steno, Principal Steno, Principal Typist, Clerk II with Typing, Clerk III with Typing, and Senior School Secretary. Because the exam series is decentralized, you should check your exam announcement carefully to determine which areas are going to be covered. Some exams may include a section on Supervision but not on Usage; others may have Spelling but not Understanding and Interpreting Written Material. There's no reason to review things that won't be on your exam.

This booklet contains review work in the following areas:

- Supervision
- Secretarial and Typing Practices
- Spelling
- Punctuation and Capitalization
- Usage

If your exam includes a section on Understanding and Interpreting Written Material, you may find Booklet Four of the CSEANYs Exam Review Series helpful. It contains thirty practice questions and full explanations of the answers. The booklet may be ordered from the CSEA Training Office, 33 Elk Street, Albany, New York 12207 or from an order blank in the CSEA Public Sector.

It's best to spread out your studying over a long period of time if that's possible. Try to answer the questions in this booklet twice, leaving a few weeks in between each attempt. Reviewing the questions and answers carefully will help you understand why you've missed certain questions. On the following page is a checklist to help you analyze any patterns you may have that could lower your score.

DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHEET FOR  
THE SECRETARIAL AND TYPING PRACTICES SERIES

For each question you answered incorrectly, go through the checklist below and place the number of the question missed next to each trait exhibited. This is designed to give you more insight in-to why you answered a problem incorrectly. By working to improve your abilities in these areas, you should notice an improvement in your scores.

<u>Question Number(s)</u>	<u>Trait Exhibited</u>
_____	1. I jumped to an incorrect conclusion.
_____	2. I misinterpreted what the question was asking.
_____	3. I had little confidence I could solve the problem.
_____	4. I didn't break the problem down into more easily understood parts.
_____	5. I knew I couldn't solve the problem, so I gave up and guessed.
_____	6. I made a careless error.
_____	7. I "followed a hunch" without checking it through.
_____	8. I didn't step back and evaluate the reasonableness of my solution.
_____	9. I worked mechanically because I knew it was hopeless.
_____	10. I didn't check my work.
_____	11. I became bored and frustrated, and I took a guess.
_____	12. I was inconsistent in my interpretation of parts of the question.
_____	13. I didn't try to visualize the problem.
_____	14. I misinterpreted part of the question.
_____	15. I tried to answer the question without realizing that my understanding of a section of the question was vague.

## SUPERVISION

Supervision is an area tested frequently on many of the promotional exams in this examination series. There are usually fifteen supervisory questions in this section. We've included thirty questions, including former exam questions, for you to practice with. An answer key and explanations are provided immediately after the questions. Before you begin, we suggest you read the following section on "Points To Keep In Mind When Answering Supervisory Exam Questions".

### POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN ANSWERING SUPERVISORY EXAM 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
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 work details and procedures, but avoid becoming bogged down in detail
15. Avoid supervising too closely or too loosely. Employees should also view you as an approachable supervisor
16. Remember that employees' personal problems may affect job performance, but become involved only when appropriate

17. Work to develop workers, and to instill a feeling of cooperation while working toward mutual goals
18. Do not overpraise or underpraise, be properly appreciative
19. Never ask an employee to discipline someone for you
20. A complaint, even if unjustified, should be taken seriously

Good luck!

SUPERVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE  
SECRETARIAL AND TYPING SERIES

1. You are a senior school secretary and supervise eight employees. In the last two weeks, one of the student aides you supervise has been coming in late most mornings. One of the other aides has just commented to you that she doesn't feel the situation is fair to the other employees. Of the following, the best reply to her would be:
  - a. "I will check into the matter."
  - b. "This is something that needs to be discussed between the aide and myself."
  - c. "I appreciate your concern, but it's really none of your business."
  - d. "We're all under a lot of pressure these days, and I'm sure she has a good reason, but thank you for expressing your opinion."
  
2. You supervise four stenographers. One of them comes to you and says she feels she is being treated unfairly because she is having to type more tabular material than the other stenographers. Of the following, it would be best to first:
  - a. let her know that you'll try to redistribute the work
  - b. try and determine if she is correct
  - c. calmly explain that there is currently no other way to reallocate the work
  - d. ask her if she believes in teamwork
  
3. You are the supervisor of a small unit in a county agency. You have assigned one of your employees a task that must be completed by the end of the day. Because the employee is unfamiliar with the assignment, she will be unable to complete it on time. The other employees are too busy working on other important assignments to be able to help, but you do have the time. You decide to help the employee. This action is:
  - a. desirable because the employee is likely to appreciate your help and give you cooperation when you need it
  - b. undesirable because you are setting a bad example
  - c. desirable because you can show the people you supervise that you are familiar with the kind of work they do
  - d. undesirable because a supervisor should not perform the same type of work as the employees he or she supervises
  
4. As a supervisor, you find that a probationary employee under your supervision is consistently below a reasonable standard of performance for the job she is assigned to do. Of the following, the most appropriate action for you to take first is to:
  - a. give her an easier job to do
  - b. advise her to transfer to another department
  - c. recommend to your superior that she be discharged at the end of her probationary period
  - d. determine whether the cause for her below standard performance can be readily remedied

5. You are in charge of a small office. In order to cover the office during the lunch hour, you assign Employee A to remain in the office between the hours of 12 and 1 P.M. On your return to the office at 12:25 P.M., you note that no one is in the office and that the phone is ringing. You are forced to postpone your 12:30 P.M. luncheon appointment, and to remain in the office until 12:50 P.M. when Employee A returns to the office. The best of the following actions is:
- ask Employee A why he left the office
  - bring charges against Employee A for insubordination and neglect of duty
  - ignore the matter in your conversation with Employee A so as not to embarrass him
  - make a note to rate Employee A low on his next performance evaluation
6. The one of the following causes of clerical error which is usually considered to be LEAST attributable to faulty supervision or inefficient management is:
- inability to carry out instructions
  - too much work to do
  - an inappropriate record-keeping system
  - continual interruptions
7. Suppose that it is necessary to order one of the typists under your supervision to stay overtime a few hours one evening. The work to be done is not especially difficult. It is the custom in your office to make such assignments by rotation. The particular typist whose turn it is to work overtime requests to be excused that evening, but offers to work the next time that over-time is necessary. Hitherto, this typist has always been very cooperative. Of the following, the best action for you to take is:
- grant the typist's request, but require her to work overtime two additional nights to compensate for this concession
  - inform the typist that you are compelled to refuse any request for special consideration
  - grant the typist's request if another typist is willing to substitute for her
  - refuse the typist's request outright because granting her request may encourage her to evade other responsibilities
8. A supervisor can best encourage employees to make suggestions by:
- keeping a record of the number of suggestions an employee makes
  - providing a suggestion box
  - giving credit to an employee whose suggestion has been accepted and used
  - putting up a bulletin board



9. On Monday a typist made many errors in completing a new daily form. The supervisor explained the errors and had the typist correct the form. On Tuesday, the typist made fewer errors. Because she was very busy, the supervisor did not point out the errors to the typist, but corrected the errors herself. On Wednesday, the typist made the same number of errors as on Tuesday. The supervisor reprimanded the typist for making so many errors. The supervisor's handling of the situation on Wednesday may be considered poor mainly because:
- the typist was not given enough time to complete each form properly
  - the supervisor should not have expected improvement without further training
  - the typist was obviously incapable of completing the form
  - the supervisor should have continued to correct the errors herself
10. One of the typists you supervise has been assigned to work for Mr. Jones in another office for several days. At the end of the first day Mr. Jones, stating the typist was not satisfactory, asks that she not be assigned to him again. This typist is one of your most dependable workers and no previous complaints about her work have come to you from any other outside assignments. To get to the root of this situation, your first action should be to:
- ask Mr. Jones to explain in what way her work was unsatisfactory
  - ask the typist what she did that Mr. Jones considered unsatisfactory
  - check with supervisors for whom she previously worked to see if your own rating of her is in error
  - tell Mr. Jones to pick the typist he would prefer to have work for him the next time
11. The supervisor should set a good example. Of the following, the chief implication of this statement is that:
- supervisors should behave the way they expect employees to behave
  - supervisors should know about their work
  - supervisors should keep workers informed of their plans
  - supervisors should keep ahead of their employees
12. Suppose that you are requested to transmit to the stenographers in your bureau an order curtailing certain privileges that they have been enjoying. You anticipate that your staff may resent curtailment of such privileges. Of the following, the best action for you to take is to:
- impress upon your staff that an order is an order and must be obeyed or else
  - attempt to explain to your staff the probable reasons for curtailing their privileges
  - excuse the curtailment of privileges by saying that the welfare of the staff was evidently not considered
  - warn your staff that violation of an order may be considered sufficient cause for immediate dismissal

13. Suppose a new typist, still on probation, is placed under your supervision and refuses to do a job you ask her to do. What is the first thing you should do?
- explain that you are the supervisor and she must follow your instructions
  - tell her she may be suspended if she refuses
  - ask someone else to do the job, and rate her accordingly
  - ask for her reason for objecting to the request
14. Good administration allows for different treatment of different workers. Of the following, the chief implication of this statement is that:
- it would be unfair for the supervisor not to treat all staff members alike
  - fear of favoritism tends to undermine staff morale
  - best results are obtained by individualization within the limits of fair treatment in handling employees
  - difficult problems call for a different kind of approach
15. A new stenographer in your unit has a habit of whistling under her breath. Two of the four stenographers in your unit have complained that her whistling disturbs their work. Of the following, the best action you should take is:
- call a meeting and discuss how distracting nervous habits, such as whistling under one's breath, can be
  - wait a few weeks to see if the other employees complain, since the whistling has never bothered you
  - ignore the complaints, as everyone has their own quirks
  - speak with the new employee privately and discuss the situation
16. One of the eleven typists you supervise has begun occasionally smoking legal herbal cigarettes at her desk. One employee, who smokes regular cigarettes, complains to you about it. You personally don't mind the smell, which is mild, and there is no policy in your office about smoking, as long as the substance is legal. Of the following, it would be best to:
- assure the employee who complained that you will stop the herbal cigarette smoking at once
  - call in the employee who is smoking the herbal cigarettes and ask her to stop smoking herbal cigarettes immediately
  - explain to the employee who complained that you have received complaints from others about her own smoking habits
  - wait a few days to see if anyone else complains to you about the smoking before making a decision about what to do

17. The most constructive and effective method of correcting an employee who has made a mistake, in general, is to:
- show the employee how to readjust his or her work methods in order to avoid similar errors in the future
  - try to discover indirectly why the error was made
  - point out immediately where the employee erred and tell the employee how it should have been done
  - explain that performance evaluation ratings are related to the number of errors made
18. When routine procedures covering the ordinary work of an office are established, the supervisor of the office tends to be relieved of the need to:
- make repeated decisions on the handling of recurring similar situations
  - check the accuracy of the work completed by the employees of the office
  - train employees in new work procedures
  - plan and schedule the work of the office
19. The most successful supervisor takes preventive rather than curative action. Of the following, which is the most accurate statement on the basis of this statement:
- success in supervision may be measured more accurately in terms of errors corrected than in terms of errors prevented
  - anticipating problems makes for better supervision than waiting until these problems arise
  - difficulties that cannot be prevented by the supervisor cannot be overcome
  - the solution of problems in supervision is best achieved by scientific methods.
20. As a supervisor, you are conducting a group conference. Of the following, the best procedure for you to follow in order to stimulate group discussion is to:
- permit the active participation of all members
  - direct the discussion to an acceptable conclusion
  - resolve conflicts of opinion among members of the group
  - present a question for discussion on which the group members have some knowledge or experience
21. Lax supervision has been blamed lately on the unwillingness of supervisors to be critical of their employees when it is warranted. The main reason for this unwillingness is:
- ignorance of new management and supervisory techniques
  - the desire to avoid unpleasant situations and the wish to be liked by employees
  - incompetence on the job
  - inability to catch mistakes that are made

22. One of the employees under your supervision, previously a very satisfactory worker, has begun arriving late one or two mornings each week. No explanation has been offered for this change. You call her to your office for a conference. As you are explaining the purpose of the conference and your need to understand this sudden lateness problem, she becomes angry and states that you have no right to question her. Of the following, the best course of action for you to take at this point is to:
- inform her in your most authoritarian tone that you are the supervisor and that you have every right to question her
  - end the conference and advise this employee that you will have no further discussion with her until she controls her temper
  - remain calm, try to calm her down, and when she has quieted, explain the reasons for your questions and the need for answers
  - hold your temper; when she has calmed down, tell her that you will not have a tardy worker in your unit and will have her transferred at once
23. You have just been appointed supervisor of a group of eight typists. On your second day, you notice that one of the typists asks the typist next to her how the letter she has just typed looks before she takes it out of the typewriter. Of the following, it would be best to:
- stop this practice immediately, as it wastes the valuable time of two typists
  - look up the performance records of the two typists to see how their performance has been rated in the past and to see if action is warranted
  - do nothing for the time being
  - talk to the second typist immediately to find out if the behavior of the first typist annoys her
24. The one of the following over which a unit supervisor has the least control is:
- the quality of the work done in the unit
  - the nature of the work handled in the unit
  - the morale of workers in the unit
  - increasing efficiency of the unit
25. You work in a small, narrow office. Two factions are developing in your office over the issue of smoking versus non-smoking. There is no official policy in your department. There are disagreements over seating arrangements and how often windows should be opened. The bad feelings are beginning to affect the work of the office. Of the following, it would be best to:
- study the situation, and then make a decision on your own
  - speak to each employee privately first, and then make a decision
  - call a meeting, allow each person to present their point of view, and then put each issue to a vote
  - call a meeting to attempt to first work out a compromise that everyone can live with

26. One of the employees you supervise was using the copying machine when it broke. There are several very important items that need to be copied before the day is over. The employee is very upset. Of the following, it would be best to:
- a. have the employee go to a commercial copier to make the necessary copies
  - b. let him know how disappointed you are in him
  - c. reassure him that it could have happened to anyone
  - d. help him feel better by asking him if he has any knowledge about repairing copying machines

27. One of the typists you supervise is a little behind schedule in typing some reports. You have just gotten a phone call from a manager of the unit inquiring about the status of the report. The need for the report is not urgent. You intend to discuss it with the typist, but as you approach her desk you find that she is leaving to go to the hospital emergency room, as her husband has just gotten injured on the job. She says she will be in the next morning.

Of the following it would be best to:

- a. wait for the next opportunity, under better circumstances, to ask her about the report
  - b. secretly ask a co-worker if she knows if the typist has been working on the report
  - c. state that you hate to ask about a report at a time like this, but it's important
  - d. inform the typist that you'll need a look through her files while she's gone because you've received some disturbing news from one of the managers
28. You have supervised nine typists for five months. You've noticed that your unit frequently runs out of office supplies and short delays are encountered while waiting for the supplies to be restocked. Under the current system, whoever takes the last item is supposed to restock that item.

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

- a. tell the person you think is most lax that you are assigning them to restock supplies daily, as a way of developing a more responsible attitude in the employee
- b. call a meeting and ask for suggestions on how the system could be improved or made to work
- c. hire someone to be in charge of supplies full-time
- d. try to determine who is most lax under the present system, and privately discuss the matter with them

29. The postage meter in your office is running low, and more postage will not be available until the next day. Your office has a total of \$12.50 left on the machine. One of the office administrators doesn't check the amount that the machine was last left on, and accidentally uses \$6.60 worth of postage to send a first class letter. One of the typists you supervise, a long-time employee whose work has always been excellent, sees the mistake and excitedly reprimands the administrator. The typist apologizes immediately. Later in the day the administrator tells you that she knows the typist is under a lot of pressure, and that the incident was not important.

Of the following, it would be best for you to:

- a. let the administrator know that you feel you should still say something to the typist
  - b. ignore the incident
  - c. privately call the typist in and explain that while you understand the pressures she is under, you hope she never does anything like that again
  - d. privately call in the typist and ask if she understands that her actions have placed you in a difficult position
30. The administrator of your unit unnecessarily procrastinates on many items that need to be completed. The result is that the eight typists that you supervise are constantly flooded with a great deal of last minute work and very tight deadlines. The typists are under a lot of stress. Without consulting you, one of them goes to the administrator and tactfully explains that the typists are under a great deal of pressure because of these management methods.

The action of the typist was:

- a. correct because someone had to do something about the situation
- b. incorrect because it would make the administrator angry
- c. correct because you weren't aware of the situation
- d. incorrect because the typist should have first discussed the situation with you, instead of ignoring the chain of command

ANSWER KEY FOR SUPERVISION QUESTIONS

- |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. a  | 11. a | 21. b |
| 2. b  | 12. b | 22. c |
| 3. a  | 13. d | 23. c |
| 4. d  | 14. c | 24. b |
| 5. a  | 15. d | 25. d |
| 6. a  | 16. d | 26. c |
| 7. c  | 17. a | 27. a |
| 8. c  | 18. a | 28. b |
| 9. b  | 19. b | 29. b |
| 10. a | 20. d | 30. d |

## EXPLANATIONS FOR SUPERVISION QUESTIONS

1. The answer is a. This is a difficult question for many people. One of the most frustrating things about exams is that often the answer you'd most like to pick isn't even one of the choices. In that case, it's very important to keep in mind that you have to become comfortable and adept at picking the "least rotten" of the four choices. In this case, choice a may seem a little cold as a response. But compared to the other responses, it's the best choice. Choices b and c are a little too nasty. The aide is letting you know her opinion of the situation, which is something she has a right to do. Perhaps if choice b or c had stated something like, "Thank you for expressing your concern. This is something I will seriously consider discussing with the aide", it would have been a more desirable choice. Choice d is incorrect because it seems as if you're defending the actions of the employee. It also appears from the way the question is worded that you haven't even discussed the situation with the employee, but "you're sure she has a good reason." A very trusting approach to supervision, but one that is not acceptable on Civil Service exams. Choice a, then, while not a great answer, is still better than the other choices, so it is the correct choice.

One of the problems, of course, with supervisory exam questions is that by their very nature they create an artificial environment. One or two paragraphs cannot possibly truly represent any real life situation because of all the variables and personalities involved in any office. Every situation is unique.

Over the years we've noticed that many people get frustrated when answering exam questions. While this is certainly understandable, the frustration just makes it harder to do well on the exams. While we would love to see exams become more relevant and better written, this is currently the way they are. It's important, in the interim, to learn to play the game the way it's currently designed. By the time you've finished with this booklet, you should have a better idea of what they're looking for, and of how to approach exam questions.

2. The answer is b. This is one of the most important principles to remember. It's best to first try and determine if any employee has a legitimate reason to be concerned about something. Choice b is the correct answer for this reason. Choice c is incorrect because you are willing to redistribute the work without checking to see if she is correct. Choice c may be a common "real life" answer, but this is an exam, not real life. Even if it is true that there is no other way to assign the work, you should first try to determine if she is correct. Choice d is incorrect because it is a rather insensitive reply that implies that she is being selfish.



3. The answer is a. Choice b is incorrect because you would not be setting a bad example. It would be worse to not help the employee, not get the work done, and be perceived as an incompetent supervisor who feels above doing the work of people in his or her unit in a crisis. Choice c is incorrect because it would be a minor reason for helping the employee. Choice d is incorrect because of the extenuating circumstances.
4. The answer is d. The question is asking what action you should take first. Before you take any of the actions suggested in choices a, b and c it's best to determine if the cause for the poor performance can be remedied. Of course the question doesn't state how you can go about determining this, but it's the best of the possible choices given.
5. The answer is a. It's always best to first ask an employee what the reason was for unacceptable behavior, before taking action. Choice b is incorrect because it is premature; asking what the reason was for the behavior must come first. Unless the employee has a poor work record and has done things like this in the past, which we don't know, it's also too harsh. Choice c is cowardly and too nice, and choice d is incorrect for the same reasons as choice b.
6. The answer is a. Continual interruptions, an inappropriate record-keeping system, and too much work are conditions that a supervisor or management is likely to have more responsibility for than an employee's inability to carry out instructions.
7. The answer is c. The other choices are too harsh, and could easily lead to resentment by the employee. Choice c is reasonable and the best of the four choices given.
8. The answer is c. The trick to answering this question is noticing how it is worded. They are asking what would "best encourage" employees. Choice a is incorrect because keeping a record of the number of suggestions an employee makes does little to encourage suggestions, especially if the suggestions are not adopted. Choice b is incorrect because providing a suggestion box may encourage suggestions (although in real life this may not happen), but it is not as good a choice as choice c. Choice c, giving credit to an employee whose suggestion has been adopted, is a better choice than merely providing a suggestion box because it demonstrates the sincerity of the supervisor in taking action on the suggestions of employees. It also shows that the supervisor did not take credit for an employee's suggestion. Choice d is incorrect because it is unlikely that a bulletin board would best encourage suggestions.
9. The answer is b. Choice a is incorrect because the paragraph does not state that this is the reason for the typist's errors. Choice c is incorrect because it is jumping to conclusions about the ability of the typist to improve. Choice d is incorrect because it is not the supervisor's job to repeatedly correct the typist's mistakes. The supervisor has her own duties to perform. Choice b is not a great choice, but since the other choices all have something seriously wrong with them, it's the best of the four choices.

10. The answer is a. Again, before taking action it's always best to get as much information as possible. You can't do this without asking what was unsatisfactory about her work.
11. The answer is a. Sometimes on this section of the exam you'll be given a statement and then asked which of the four choices relates best to the statement. It's really more like a reading comprehension question. In this case, choice a comes the closest to reflecting the thought that a supervisor should set a good example. The main reason people miss this question is because they misread it and think they are to pick which of the four choices is most important.
12. The answer is b. Choices a and d are incorrect because they are too harsh. Choice c, while perhaps a real life answer, is not acceptable on Civil Service exams. That leaves choice b, which is the most acceptable of the four choices.
13. The answer is d. Again, it's important to first give an employee the opportunity to explain the reasons for his or her actions.
14. The answer is c. This is another supervisory question of the "reading comprehension" variety. You need to select the choice that comes closest to representing the ideas contained in the quote you're given. Choice a is incorrect because it directly contradicts the quote. Choices b and d are incorrect because they are too broad and don't nearly represent the ideas in the quote as well as choice c does.
15. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because it is too indirect and is likely to produce embarrassment for both the new employee and yourself. Choices b and c are incorrect because half of your unit has already come to you complaining, so some sort of action should be taken. Choice d, speaking privately with the employee, is the best of the four choices.
16. The answer is d. This is a variation on the last question, and a little trickier. Choice a is incorrect because it's unfair to the other employee and could lead to resentment. Choice b is incorrect for the same reason. Choice c is incorrect because it is likely to lead to resentment on the part of the employee who complained. In addition, it may lead to her becoming angry with the non-smokers in the office. Choice d seems the best of the choices you've been given.
17. The answer is a. Choices c and d are incorrect because they are either too curt or too harsh. Choice b is incorrect because it could lead to defensiveness on the part of the employee. The question is asking for the most constructive and effective method for correcting mistakes. It would be best to focus on showing successful work methods rather than finding out why an error was made. It is true that sometimes discovering why a mistake was made can be very helpful in teaching someone how to perform an operation correctly. In this case, however, the question is asking for the most constructive and effective method. Because of this, a is the best choice.

18. The answer is a. Establishing routine work procedures would not eliminate the need to check the accuracy of the work of employees, train employees in new work procedures or plan and schedule the work of the office. It would relieve the need to make repeated decisions on the handling of recurring similar situations, choice a.
19. The answer is b. This is another supervisory reading comprehension question. Choice a is incorrect because it directly contradicts the statement you're given. Choice c is incorrect because it is illogical and not what the statement says at all. Choice d sounds nice, but nowhere does the statement mention that problems in supervision are best solved by scientific methods. Choice b is the only choice that accurately reflects the information given in the statement.
20. The answer is d. You have to read this question carefully. You are asked to select the best procedure for stimulating group discussion. Choice a is incorrect because permitting the active participation of members is not the same as stimulating discussion. Choice b is incorrect because directing the discussion to an acceptable conclusion could mean a variety of things, but it is not likely to stimulate group discussion. Choice c may be a desirable goal, but your attempt to resolve conflicts is not likely to stimulate discussion. Choice d, presenting a question for discussion on which the group members have some knowledge or experience, makes sense and is the best choice.
21. The answer is b. According to studies that have been done, supervisors are often unwilling to be critical because they wish to avoid unpleasant situations and want to be liked by employees.
22. The answer is c. The other choices would all be considered too harsh. Choice b is the least harsh of the three, but it would still be considered a poorer choice than choice c. It would be best to first try to calm her down and then continue the discussion.
23. The answer is c. This is another very tricky question. Sometimes you will get a question that appears to have two possible acceptable answers. This happens sometimes because the question is well written and difficult, and other times because it's a poorly written question that should be appealed. This one, which we wrote ourselves to make a point, is one of the latter. You simply didn't have enough information to make a definite choice. You can rule out choices a and d because they contain the word immediately. Since this is your second day as supervisor, both actions could easily be premature and lead to hard feelings. Another problem with the question is that you don't know how often the typist asks the other to look at her work. Since you don't know this, it's difficult to decide between choice b or choice c. If it happened very often, looking up their performance ratings might possibly be helpful in determining what action should be taken. If it happens only occasionally or only once, doing nothing for the time being would be the better choice.

If and when you come across an exam question you feel is unfair, you should make a strong effort to appeal the question if the results of the exam are important to you. You can find out the appeals process for your exam from the exam proctor. But you should

still try to answer the question as best you can. In this case, we think a safer choice would be to do nothing for the time being. Another possible way to justify choosing c is that sometimes performance ratings don't always give an adequate picture of an employee's performance. Still, it's a poorly written question.

24. The answer is b. A supervisor has more control over the quality of work, the morale of the unit and increasing the efficiency of the unit than he or she does over the nature of the work handled in the unit. A supervisor of a typing unit cannot decide that from now on his or her unit will handle the accounting needs of the department, or do all of the computer work.
25. The answer is d. Choice a would probably not be the wisest decision. Again, in real life there would be many factors to consider. Because this is an exam question, you need to work with what you've been given. Whoever didn't like your solution would resent you. Choice b would give you more information, but would lead to the same problem as in choice a. Choice c might initially sound good, but it would tend to make the factions even more polarized, and whoever was in the majority would get their way. It seems this would not end the hard feelings, but make them worse. Choice d, calling a meeting to attempt to first work out a compromise, is the best choice of the four. If that didn't work, you would then need to consider other courses of action.
26. The answer is c. We don't have enough information to know if choice a is a possibility. Is there a copier somewhere else in the building they can use? Is there another department they can send it to? Is there someone else who performs this task? Since we don't know, it's best to put choice a aside and examine the other choices to see if we can find a better choice. Choice b is poor supervisory practice. The employee is already upset, and it was an honest mistake. Choice d is also a poor choice because it's unlikely he will know how to fix the machine, and it will only make him feel worse. Choice c, reassuring him that it could have happened to anyone is an appropriate response that should help him feel better. Since you aren't sure about all of the circumstances surrounding choice a, but you do know that choice c is reasonable, it would be best to pick choice c.
27. The answer is a. Choice b is incorrect because it may lead to hard feelings later, and may put the co-worker in an uncomfortable position. It's also not wise generally in these questions to "secretly" do anything. Choice c is incorrect because it's tactless and poor timing. The employee and others who overhear you may think you are so concerned with work output that you don't consider the needs of your employees. You've also been told that the need for the report is not urgent, and that she'll be in the next morning. Under these circumstances, it's best to wait. Choice d is incorrect because it is tactless and will unnecessarily give her even more to worry about. Choice a is the most appropriate answer of the choices you were given. Note that the question didn't give you any idea of whether the office had a central location where all completed and all pending work could be found. Because of this, you had to work within the confines of the question.

28. The answer is b. Choice a is incorrect because we don't know if you really know who is being lax. Since the unit frequently runs out of supplies, and since under the current system the last person who takes an item is supposed to refill that item, it's much more likely that the problem is a group problem, not just the problem of one individual. Even if it were one person's problem, the way choice a is worded would more likely bring about resentment and little cooperation in that person. Choice c is incorrect because it doesn't sound like the problem merits a full-time position. When answering these questions, it's important to be conscious of not wasting money. Choice d is incorrect for many of the same reasons as choice a and is not as good a choice as choice b. Since it is a group problem, it would be best to have the group try to solve it.
29. The answer is b. This is a difficult question. Just how compassionate and understanding is an administrator supposed to be? These days, pretty understanding. Overall, as long as a solution doesn't cost a lot of money, as long as people still go through proper administrative channels, and as long as the solution is still logical, exam answers have gotten more liberal. In this case, it would mean it would be best to ignore the incident. If the typist hadn't apologized, or if the typist had a long history of rudeness and wasn't under a lot of work pressure, your response may have had to be different. In general, it is recognized on these exams that employees have feelings, and there may be times, like in this case, where it would be counter-productive to reprimand an excellent employee for something she is aware of and has apologized for.
30. The answer is d. The typist has broken a cardinal rule. She should have gone to you first. This is known in exam language as following the chain of command. If you had ignored her, then she would have had more of a reason for going directly to the administrator. In exam questions one doesn't initially "go over a supervisor's head" without a really compelling reason.

We hope this section has been helpful. If you've done poorly on this section, or would like more practice, we suggest you practice with Booklet Six, Supervision, in the CSEA/NYS Series. If you've done well on this section, you should be in good shape for the exam. We suggest you review this section one more time before the exam.

## SECRETARIAL AND TYPING PRACTICES

This section of the exam requires knowledge of common office practices and procedures. You'll be able to answer many of the questions just by using common sense. Other questions may be more difficult. In answering the "tricky" questions, it's important to relate the situation as much to real-life as you can. It's also important to remember that answering exam questions is sometimes like voting in an election. The answer (or candidate) you'd really like to see just isn't there, and you don't like any of the choices. Don't be frustrated; keep cool and "vote" for the least undesirable choice. Most exam questions are looking for the best answer of the four choices they have given you – not the best possible answer in the world. Later, if you feel a test question was unfair or illogical, you can usually appeal it. (Many exams offer an opportunity to review the questions and appeal any you thought were unfair the following week. Ask your exam proctor for more information.) While you're taking the exam, however, give it your best, and try not to let that type of question unnerve you.

Below are thirty questions, many of which are former exam questions. There are usually seven to fifteen questions of this type in this section of the exam. If you find you have missed more than five questions, you might want to review a secretarial handbook before the exam. If you find that you know the information but are misreading the questions, we suggest you review Booklet 4, Understanding and Interpreting Written Material, in the CSEA/NYS Exam Review Series.

### Secretarial and Typing Practices

1. I. It is considered good practice to skip three spaces after each group of numbers one types.
- II. A dictionary is a good source to consult when concerned about whether to capitalize a word.
- III. It's appropriate to divide a word wherever it feels comfortable for the person dictating the letter.
- IV. It is considered good practice to put a period inside of a parentheses at the end of a sentence if the whole sentence is inside of the parentheses.

Which of the four statements printed above are correct?

- a. only choice IV is correct
- b. only choices I, II and IV are correct
- c. only choices II and IV are correct
- d. only choice II is correct

2. Of the following, which would generally be considered the least desirable?
  - a. misplacing an important memorandum that needs to be typed
  - b. accidentally disconnecting your supervisor from an important phone call
  - c. misplacing several thousand dollars worth of personal checks made out to your department
  - d. ordering the wrong type of toner for the copying machine
  
3. According to standard rules for typing, two spaces are left after:
  - a. an opening parentheses
  - b. a comma
  - c. a number
  - d. a colon
  
4. Decisions regarding when to capitalize words:
  - a. are always difficult
  - b. should be left to the person who wrote the letter
  - c. should follow generally acceptable and consistent rules
  - d. depend on the number of words already capitalized in the sentence
  
5. The most common practice when typing a "date line" is to type it as:
  - a. Aug. 15, 1984
  - b. 8/15/84
  - c. 8-15-84
  - d. August 15, 1984
  
6. A letter was dictated on May 4, 1984 and was ready to be typed on May 7. The letter was typed on May 7, signed on May 8 and mailed on May 9. The date that ordinarily should have appeared on the letter is:
  - a. May 4, 1984
  - b. May 7, 1984
  - c. May 8, 1984
  - d. May 9, 1984
  
7. While opening incoming mail, you notice that one letter indicates that an enclosure was to be included. Even after careful inspection, however, you are not able to find the information to which this refers. Of the following, you should first:
  - a. replace the letter in its envelope and return it to the sender
  - b. file the letter until the sender's office mails the missing information
  - c. type a letter to the sender informing them of their error
  - d. make a notation in the margin of the letter that the enclosure was omitted

8. In order to center a heading when typing a report, you should:
- multiply the number of characters in the heading by two and begin the heading that number of spaces in from the left margin
  - measure your typing paper with a ruler and begin the heading one-third of the way in from the left margin
  - begin the heading at the point on the typewriter scale which is equal to the center point of your paper minus one-half the number of characters and spaces in the heading
  - begin the heading at the point on the typewriter scale which is 42 minus the number of letters in the heading
9. Assume that Ms. Ella Sherwood is an acting government official. In a letter written to her, the word "acting" would:
- be used with the title in the address and in the salutation
  - not be used with the title in the address
  - be used with the title in the address but not in the salutation
  - not be used with the title in the address or in the salutation
10. A Senior Stenographer is instructing a typist to type a table that contains three column headings. Under each column heading are three items. Of the following, which sequence should the Senior Stenographer tell the typist to use when typing this table?
- using tabular stops, first type the headings, and then type the items under them, one column at a time
  - using tabular stops, type each heading with its column of items under it, one column at a time
  - using tabular stops, first type the column of items, then center the headings above them
  - using tabular stops, type the headings and items across the page line by line
11. A typed rough draft should be double-spaced and should have wide margins primarily in order to:
- save time in making typing corrections
  - provide room for making insertions and corrections
  - insure that the report is well organized
  - permit faster typing of the draft



12. According to standard rules for typing, one space is left after:
- a comma
  - every sentence
  - a colon
  - an opening parentheses
13. Assume that the letters and reports which are dictated to you fall into a few distinct subject-matter areas. The practice of trying to familiarize yourself with the terminology in these areas is:
- good, because you will have a basis for commenting on the dictated material
  - good, because it will be easier to take the dictation at the rate at which it is given
  - poor, because the functions and policies of an office are not of your concern
  - poor, because it will take too much time away from your assigned work
14. In typing long letters, which of the following is generally considered the least desirable practice?
- numbering the second and succeeding pages of the letter
  - typing a single line of a new paragraph as the last line of a page
  - dividing a word at the end of a line of typing
  - typing the name of the recipient of the letter on the second and succeeding pages
15. Your supervisor must leave to attend an important meeting. She requests that you sign her name to a letter she has dictated and mail it. In carrying out her request, you should:
- sign your full name and title below the signature
  - imitate your supervisor's handwriting as closely as possible
  - type "Dictated but not read" in the lower left hand corner
  - add your initials next to or under the signature
16. When a lengthy quotation is included in a letter or a report, it must be indicated that it is quoted material. This may be done by:
- enclosing the quotation in parentheses
  - placing an exclamation point at the end of the quotation
  - using the apostrophe marks
  - indenting from the regular margins on the left and right

17. A Senior Stenographer still on probation is instructed to transcribe and type, as quickly as possible, one section of a draft of a long, complex report. Her part must be completed before another part of the report can be written. When asked when she can have the report ready, she gives her supervisor an estimate of a day longer than she knows it will actually take. She then finishes the job a day sooner than the date given her supervisor. The judgement shown by the Senior Stenographer in giving an overestimate of time in a situation like this is, in general:
- good, because it keeps unrealistic supervisors from expecting too much
  - good, because it prevents the supervisor from thinking she works slowly
  - bad, because she should have used the time left to further check and proofread her work
  - bad, because schedules and plans for other parts of the project may have been based on her false estimate
18. If a legal document is being prepared and requires necessary information to be typed into blank areas on pre-printed legal forms, the margins for a line of typewritten material should be determined primarily by:
- counting the total number of words to be typed
  - the margins set for the pre-printed matter
  - spacing backwards from the right margin rule
  - the estimated width and height of the material to be entered
19. While you are on the telephone answering a question about your agency, a visitor comes to your desk and starts to ask you a question. There is no emergency or urgency in either situation, that of the phone call or that of answering the visitor's question. In this case, you should:
- continue to answer the person on the telephone until you are finished and then tell the visitor you are sorry to have kept her waiting
  - excuse yourself to the person on the telephone and tell the visitor that you will be with her as soon as you have finished on the phone
  - explain to the person on the phone that you have a visitor and must shorten the conversation
  - continue to answer the person on the phone while looking up occasionally at the visitor to let her know that you know she is waiting
20. A member of the public approaches a county employee who is at work at her desk. The employee cannot interrupt her work in order to take care of this person. Of the following, the best and most courteous way of handling this situation is for the employee to:
- avoid looking up from her work until she is finished with what she is doing
  - tell this person that she will not be able to take care of him for quite a while
  - refer the individual to another employee who can take care of him right away
  - chat with the individual while she continues with her work

21. Which of the following is not generally accepted when dividing words at the end of a line?
- dividing a hyphenated word at the hyphen
  - dividing a word immediately before the suffix
  - dividing a word immediately after the prefix
  - dividing proper names between syllables
22. The supervisor you assist is under much pressure to meet certain deadlines. She has scheduled an important meeting to take place early next week, and she asks you to send out notices immediately. As you type the notice, you realize your supervisor has scheduled the meeting for Veterans Day, a vacation day. You know that your supervisor is under a lot of stress and not in a good mood. Which of the following is the most effective method of handling this situation?
- change the meeting to a working day on which her calendar is clear and send out the notices
  - change the meeting to the next working day after Veterans Day, and send out the notices
  - send out the notices as they are, since you have received specific instructions
  - point out to your supervisor that the date is Veterans Day
23. When typing a table which lists several amounts of money and the total in a column, the dollar sign should be placed IN FRONT of the
- first dollar amount only
  - total dollar amount only
  - first and total dollar amounts only
  - all of the amounts of money in the column
24. In order to type addresses on a large number of envelopes most efficiently, you should:
- insert another envelope into the typewriter before removing each typed envelope
  - insert several envelopes into the machine at one time, keeping the top edge of each envelope one inch below the top edge of the one beneath it
  - take each typed envelope out of the machine before starting the next envelope
  - insert several envelopes into the machine at one time, keeping all top and bottom edges even

25. As you are taking shorthand notes, the dictator tells you that the sentence she has just dictated is to be deleted. Of the following, the best thing for you to do is to:
- place the correction in the left hand margin next to the deleted sentence
  - write the word "delete" over the sentence and place the correction on a separate page for corrections
  - erase the sentence and use that available space for the correction
  - draw a line through the sentence and begin the correction on the next available line
26. As a Senior Stenographer, you have been asked to attend committee meetings and take the minutes. The body of such minutes generally consists of:
- the date and place of the meeting and the list of persons present
  - an exact verbatim report of everything that was said by each person who spoke
  - a clear description of each matter discussed and the action decided on
  - the agenda of the meeting
27. I. It would be acceptable to divide the word affirmative after the second "i" in the word.
- II. It would be acceptable to divide the word recommend after the first "m".
- III. It would be acceptable to divide the word interface between the r and the f.
- IV. It would be acceptable to divide the word budgeting between the e and the t.
- Which of the four statements printed above are correct?
- only choice I is incorrect
  - only choices II and III are correct
  - only choice II is correct
  - only choices I, II and III are correct
28. Your supervisor has told you not to let anyone disturb him for the rest of the morning unless absolutely necessary since he has some urgent work to complete. His supervisor, who is the department head, telephones and asks to speak to him. The best course of action for you to take is to:
- ask the department head if she can leave a message
  - ask your supervisor if he can take the call
  - tell the department head that your supervisor is out
  - tell your supervisor that his instructions put you in a difficult position

29. Which one of the following would be the most advisable procedure for you to follow when a dictator asks you to make extra copies of dictated material?
- a. note the number of copies required at the end of the notes
  - b. note the number of copies required at the beginning of the notes
  - c. make a mental note of the number of copies required to be made
  - d. make a check mark beside the notes to serve as a reminder that extra copies are required
30. When typing a rough draft from a transcribing machine, a stenographer under your supervision reaches a spot on the tape that is virtually inaudible. Of the following, the most advisable action that you should recommend to her is to:
- a. guess what the dictator intended to say based on parts that were audible
  - b. ask the dictator to listen to the unsatisfactory dictation
  - c. leave an appropriate amount of space for that portion that is inaudible
  - d. stop typing the draft and send a note to the dictator identifying the item that could not be completed

SECRETARIAL AND TYPING PRACTICES  
ANSWER KEY

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 1. c  | 16. d |
| 2. c  | 17. d |
| 3. d  | 18. b |
| 4. c  | 19. b |
| 5. d  | 20. c |
| 6. a  | 21. d |
| 7. d  | 22. d |
| 8. c  | 23. c |
| 9. c  | 24. a |
| 10. d | 25. d |
| 11. b | 26. c |
| 12. a | 27. b |
| 13. b | 28. b |
| 14. b | 29. b |
| 15. d | 30. c |

## EXAM REVIEW SPELLING LIST

This is a list of words commonly found on promotional exams.

abundance	circumstantial	embarrass
accessible	citation	eminently
accommodate	classification	emphasis
accumulation	column	emphatically
achievement	commemorate	enhancing
acquaint	commensurate	entirely
acquired	commitment	equilibrium
actually	committee	equipped
addressee	committal	essential
adjunct	community	exaggerate
adoption	compel	exceed
advise	complacency	exercise
affirmative	complication	exhibition
aggravate	conceive	existence
allege	condemn	experience
amendment	conscious	extraordinary
amplify	consensus	
ancient	controlling	
angle	conversant	facilitation
anticipate	correlation	financier
apologetic	correspondence	foreign
apparatus	credentials	forfeit
appellate	criticism	function
appropriate	crucial	
arraignment	council	
arrangement	counsel	government
ascertain	courtesy	guarantee
assessment	crystallized	
attendance	currency	
auxiliary		harass
aversion	deceive	heightened
	decentralize	heritage
balancing	deferred	hindrance
bankruptcy	definitely	hygienic
beleaguered	deliberate	
believable	description	illegible
beneficial	detail	imminent
biased	deterrent	impartiality
bookkeeping	disappearance	impeccable
briefly	dismissal	impromptu
brochure	displayed	incongruity
bureau	dissatisfied	indictment
bureaucracy	distinguished	indispensable
		individual
capitol	effects	innocuous
category	elaborate	innumerable
character	eliminate	integrity
		intelligence

intercede  
interruption  
irreparably

jeopardy  
journal  
judgment, judgement  
judiciary

laboratory  
labyrinth  
liaison  
liquidate  
loose  
lucrative  
maintenance  
management  
maneuver  
mechanical  
mediocrity  
misspell  
mischievous  
monetary  
myriad

necessary  
negligible  
nevertheless  
nickel  
ninth  
noticeable

occasion  
occurring  
official  
ordinance

pamphlet  
parallel  
parliament  
patient  
patronize  
peculiar  
percentage  
permanent  
permissible  
personnel  
plagiarism

policy  
possession  
preceding  
precious  
predatory  
predilection  
preferably  
preparation  
presumptuous  
previous  
primarily  
principal  
probably  
proceed  
promissory  
psychology  
publicity  
realize  
reasonable  
receipt  
recognizable  
recommendation  
referring  
regrettable  
relevant  
repetitious  
resonance  
responsibility  
rhetorical  
rhythm  
routine

salable  
salient  
scissors  
secretary  
senior  
similar  
sincerely  
sophomore  
source  
sovereign  
specialized  
specifically  
staunch  
stretch  
subordinate  
subversive  
succeed  
summarize  
surfeit  
surgeon  
symmetrical

temperament  
thorough  
transaction  
transient  
tremendous  
truly

vacillate  
vacuum

warrant  
weight  
whether  
wholly  
wield





In each of the following groups of sentences, there is only one sentence which does not contain a misspelled word. Choose the completely correct sentence in the group.

11.
  - a. The commitee meeting has been rescheduled for next week, at the request of the commissioner.
  - b. It is important that the location be accessible for all of our clients, particularly the disabled.
  - c. There is no guaranttee that the promotion will be approved.
  - d. The legislators should procced with caution.
  
12.
  - a. There is no need to exagerrate or overstate the case.
  - b. The salary was commensurate with her abilities.
  - c. The agency has made a fair assesment of the situation.
  - d. The ordinance was repealed last Tuesday.
  
13.
  - a. The agency has made a firm commitment to continue funding the project.
  - b. The attendence was unusually high that evening.
  - c. By refering the project to the other bureau, much time was lost.
  - d. A thorough review of the transactions would be necessary before judicial action was taken.

## PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION

Examine the following groups of sentences and choose the one that contains no errors in punctuation.

14.
  - a. We wanted to see you but she said that you weren't home.
  - b. During the past two weeks, its rained almost every day.
  - c. After breathing deeply for five minutes, most of the class felt relaxed.
  - d. Lets' go down to Maria's Pizza House, she has the best pizza in town.
  
15.
  - a. "It's only three blocks away" said Harry, "but each block is a mile long."
  - b. It's been a long time since we've seen Mary.
  - c. "It's not his, it's mine" shouted Jill!
  - d. Although the day was hot, and dusty we enjoyed our walk.
  
16.
  - a. She wanted to know where it was and why I hadn't finished with it yet?
  - b. My supervisor has recommended that I read three magazines: Computer Age, Business Monthly, and National News Up-Date.
  - c. Slithering around in dirty old caves is not Laura's idea of fun.
  - d. "You have to show the oral board that you can see the "big picture," said Ms. Black to her aide.
  
17.
  - a. Lady Jane Grey Seminary, located in Chestnut Hill, is a girls school.
  - b. Brown Electronics hires intelligent, aggressive, creative, women.
  - c. The man said, they were too small and helpless to take care of themselves.
  - d. The day started out fine, took a turn for the worse, and ended up wretched.

In each of the following groups of sentences, there is only one that contains no errors in capitalization and punctuation. Select the one that is correct.

18.
  - a. In spite of rough weather, James Palmer, the captain, brought us safely into Booth Bay Harbor.
  - b. I know her store is located on a Main Street, but I don<sup>1</sup>t know if it's Washington or Western.
  - c. There will be a luncheon for all agency members at the Womens' Club.
  - d. After delivering her speech in Wiggins Library, Ms. Marjorie Jones, leading Economist for the State Department, toured Littleton Commons.

19.
  - a. At the request of the Commissioner, the meeting was rescheduled.
  - b. Each person should be sure to bring the following: a sleeping bag, a knapsack, a flashlight, and a change of clothes.
  - c. On her desk were these books: Ten Who Dared, All The President's Men, and The Naked and The Dead.
  - d. Last year I took psychology, math., physics, and english.
  
20.
  - a. This machine ancient as it is is still running.
  - b. They used Teflon and cast-iron frying pans to cook the chicken.
  - c. Ms. Marion Lowe, PHD., and Mr. Walter Lyle, MA., arrived at the conference at 10:05 AM.
  - d. A woman from Unesco and a man from Nato spoke at their High School graduation.



29. a. She sat the plant on my desk and tells me to take care of it.  
b. She sits the plant on my desk and tells me to take care of it.  
c. She set the plant on my desk and told me to take care of it.  
d. She sat the plant on my desk and told me to take care of it.

Examine each sentence, and then choose the statement that correctly describes it.

30. A set of plans for the new conference rooms were put on the director's desk.
- a. there is no error  
b. were should be changed to was  
c. put should be changed to placed  
d. rooms should be changed to room
31. According to Charlie, Mr. Avalon intends on doing more than he is capable of doing.
- a. there is no error  
b. according to should be changed to according with  
c. capable of doing should be changed to capable to do  
d. intends on doing should be changed to intends to do
32. Michael and she have given me a table that is most unique.
- a. there is no error  
b. she should be changed to her  
c. most should be deleted  
d. have given should be changed to has given
33. If she had received the notice in time, she would of gone to the bureau's luncheon.
- a. there is no error  
b. of should be changed to have  
c. bureau's should be changed to bureaux  
d. gone should be changed to went

For the following groups of sentences, select the sentence in each group that is incorrect.

34. a. Neither Mary or she are coming to see me.  
b. Melissa is the kind of person on which you can depend.  
c. If the engineers had admitted their mistake, this tragedy would never have occurred.  
d. The pool, the tennis court, and the sauna at the new plant keep the people happy.

35. a. According to the author, it is important to use one's intuition when you try to solve math problems.  
b. First, fill out the form, and then the employee brings it to the office.  
c. She left her work on her desk and tried not to think of it again.  
d. Some forms, such as 101A and 114C, have been in use since the year 1910.
36. a. He had a great deal of trouble managing the office while we were away.  
b. The reason why she hasn't finished is that she is over-worked.  
c. She says her prayers when she sees the mail being put on her desk.  
d. That group of advisors is more knowledgeable than them.

For the following groups of sentences, choose the one in each group that is correct.

37. a. We have only two dollars between the three of us.  
b. I was brought to me knees by the force of her words.  
c. We can't live our lives in a vacuum; we must learn as much as possible about the world around us.  
d. She was wearing a new skirt and jacket, and they fit her perfect.
38. a. She didn't like me probing for an answer.  
b. Everyone agreed with him but I.  
c. Between you and I, there are no secrets.  
d. I appreciated Mary's thanking me for my assistance.

Select the sentence that is preferable with respect to grammar and usage.

39. a. According to recent surveys, our society is more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women.  
b. Our society according to recent surveys are more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women.  
c. According to recent surveys of our society, it's more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women.  
d. Recent surveys of our society is more excepting of alcoholism in men than in women.
40. a. The program was a failure due to everyone's lack of motivation, preparation and that they didn't know what they wanted to do.  
b. The program was, due to lack of preparation, motivation, and a coherent plan, a failure.  
c. The program's failure was a result of the fact that no one seemed to know what to do or care.  
d. The program failed because the organizers were ill-prepared, unenthusiastic, and unmotivated.

### SPELLING ANSWER KEY

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

### PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION ANSWER KEY

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 14. c | 18. a |
| 15. b | 19. b |
| 16. c | 20. b |
| 17. d |       |

### USAGE ANSWER KEY

- |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 21. d | 28. d | 35. b |
| 22. b | 29. c | 36. d |
| 23. a | 30. b | 37. c |
| 24. b | 31. d | 38. d |
| 25. c | 32. c | 39. a |
| 26. a | 33. b | 40. d |
| 27. c | 34. a |       |



We have tried to design this section of the booklet to serve a number of purposes. First, we wanted to help you become familiar with the different forms that the actual test questions could take. Second, we wanted to hold your interest as much as possible. We know grammar is boring, but we wanted you to stick with it. Finally, we wanted to expose you to as many different rules of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and usage as possible. Some questions were designed to illustrate as many as four different rules. Therefore, we suggest that you read the explanations for all of the questions, even the ones you answered correctly. Often an answer just "sounds" right. Reading the explanations will help you understand why your answer was right and the others were wrong.

If you did well on these questions, you know enough grammar, punctuation, and spelling to do well on the test. If you didn't, we suggest that you study a basic English handbook. Two books that we think are clear and easy to use are: Harbrace College Handbook, published by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. and Practical English Handbook, published by Houghton Mifflin Co.

#### EXPLANATIONS FOR PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION QUESTIONS

14. The answer is c. The 'other sentences should be written as follows:

- a. We wanted to see you, but she said that you weren't home.
- b. During the past two weeks, it's rained almost every day.
- d. Let's go down to Maria's Pizza House; she has the best pizza in town.

OR

Let's go down to Maria's Pizza House. She has the best pizza in town.

Choice a: When you have two main clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction, you need a comma between the first clause and the conjunction. A main clause is one that could stand alone as a sentence. Both We wanted to see you and she said that you weren't home are perfectly good sentences. If you have trouble deciding, if a sentence can stand alone, try saying it under your breath or out loud. The coordinating conjunctions are: and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet.

Choice b: The word it's is a contraction for it is, it has, or it was. The word its is a possessive pronoun. (For example, its name is Robotron.) If you have trouble with this, test the word out by trying to replace it with it is. If you can, you know that you need an apostrophe.

Choice c: This sentence is correct because there is a comma separating the subordinate clause from the main clause. A subordinate clause is one that can't stand alone as a sentence. If the main clause had come first, however, you wouldn't have needed a comma. (Example: Most of the class felt relaxed after breathing deeply for five minutes.) Words like although, which, after, that, since, because, if, as, and before can

make a clause subordinate. (This is not a complete list, however, nor do these words always mark subordinate clauses.)

Choice d: There are two errors in this sentence. Let's is a contraction for let us; the apostrophe shows that the letter u is missing. The sentence is made up of two main clauses. (See explanation for choice a.) You need to create two sentences or place a semi-colon between the two clauses.

15. The answer is b. The other sentences should be written as follows:

- a. "It's only three blocks away," said Harry, "but each block is a mile long."
- c. "It's not his; it's mine!" shouted Jill.
- d. Although the day was hot and dusty, we enjoyed our walk.

Choice a: Two commas are needed to separate said Harry from the quoted dialogue. The first comma belongs within quotation marks, the second is placed before the quotation marks.

Choice b: There is no comma between time and since because the subordinate clause comes after the main clause. (See explanation for question 14.)

Choice c: If the remark you are quoting takes a question mark or an exclamation point, that mark replaces the comma that usually comes after the quote. Make sure that you place it inside the quotation marks.

Choice d: The comma is in the wrong place. It should be between dusty and we to separate the subordinate clause from the main clause. (See explanation for question 14.)

16. The answer is c. The other sentences should be punctuated in the following manner:

- a. She wanted to know where it was and why I hadn't finished with it yet.
- b. My supervisor has recommended that I read three magazines: Computer Age, Business Monthly, and National News Up-Date.
- d. "You have to show the oral board that you can see the 'big picture,'" said Ms. Black to her aide.

Choice a: This doesn't take a question mark because it's not really a question. It's a statement about what the question was.

Choice b: A colon or a dash can be used to introduce a series of items. A colon is just more formal. Titles of magazines need to be underlined or italicized.

Choice c: Since it is her idea, Laura owns it. The apostrophe and s are used to show possession.

Choice d: This explains itself. It would look better, perhaps, to leave off that single quotation mark after picture, but that's not how it's done.

17. The answer is d. The other sentences should be punctuated as follows:

- a. Lady Jane Grey Seminary, located in Chestnut Hill, is a girls' school.
- b. Brown Electronics hires intelligent, aggressive, creative women.
- c. The man said they were too small and helpless to take care of themselves.

Choice a: You wouldn't write girl's school because this is a school for more than one girl. The commas setting off the phrase , located in Chestnut Hill, are correct because that phrase is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. If the sentence were dependent on that phrase for its meaning you wouldn't use commas. (Example: A seminary located in Chestnut Hill has little hope of making it.)

Choice b: There shouldn't be a comma between a noun and the last adjective that modifies it.

Choice c: Because this is not a direct quote, the comma is unnecessary. A direct quote is one that is surrounded by quotation marks. (The man said, "They were too small and helpless to take care of themselves.")

Choice d: This is correct because the commas are used to separate a series of phrases. It would also have been correct if there had been no comma between worse and and.

18. The answer is a. The other sentences should be written as follows:

- b. I know her store is located on a main street, but I don't know if it's Washington or Western.
- c. There will be a luncheon for all agency members at the Women's Club.
- d. After delivering her speech in Wiggins Library, Ms. Marjorie Jones, leading economist for the State Department, toured Littleton Commons.

Choice a: Harbor is capitalized because it is an essential part of the proper name Booth Bay Harbor. Captain is not capitalized because it follows the person's name. If the title had preceded the person's name (Captain James Palmer) it would have been correct to capitalize it.

Choice b: This particular main street is not a proper name. The word main just describes the kind of street it is.

Choice c: The apostrophe comes between the n and the s in Women's because women is a plural noun that doesn't end in s. The following examples should make this clear.

(one) girl - girl's pens  
(two or more) girls - girls' pens  
(one) woman - woman's pens  
(two or more) women - women's pens

Choice d: Wiggins Library, Marjorie Jones, Littleton Commons, and State Department are all proper names. The word economist just gives information concerning her occupation.

19. The answer is b. The other sentences should be written as follows:

- a. At the request of the commissioner, the meeting was rescheduled.
- c. On her desk were these books: Ten Who Dared, All the President's Men, and The Naked and the Dead.
- d. Last year I studied psychology, math, physics, and English.

Choice a: A title is not usually capitalized unless it precedes a proper name. (See explanation for question 18, choice a.)

Choice b: (See explanation for question 16, choice b.)

Choice c: In titles of books, the first and last words are capitalized as well as all other words except articles (a, an, the), short conjunctions (and, or, nor), and short prepositions (on, to, in, etc.).

Choice d: Math is not an abbreviation; it's the short form for the word mathematics. English is capitalized because it is the name of a language.

20. The answer is b. The incorrect sentences should be written as follows:

- a. This machine, ancient as it is, is still running.
- c. Ms. Marion Lane, Ph.D., and Mr. Walter Lyle, M.A., arrived at the conference at 10:05 AM. (or a.m., or am, or A.M.)
- d. A woman from UNESCO and a man from NATO spoke at their high school graduation.

Choice a: The phrase ancient as it is is known as a parenthetical insertion. It's as if an aside were thrown into the middle of the sentence. Try to read it out loud. You'll probably notice that you need to pause before and after the phrase in order to make sense out of the sentence. Reading aloud (or under your breath) will often help you determine where a comma is needed.

Choice b: Teflon is capitalized because it is a brand name. Some brand names have become synonymous with the product they represent. Who do you know that says facial tissue instead of kleenex (Kleenex)? When in doubt, it's probably best to capitalize.

Choice c: These are the standard abbreviations for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Master of Arts (M.A.). As you can see there is no standard for AM or PM.

Choice d: It is customary to capitalize the abbreviations of (and the acronyms formed from) capitalized words. (Example: United States of America - USA)

## EXPLANATIONS FOR USAGE QUESTIONS

21. The answer is d. We may tend to think that everyone is plural because it sounds like a lot of people, but it is a singular pronoun which stands for every person. All pronouns referring to it must be singular. Other pronouns which should also be treated as singular include: anybody, anyone, nobody, someone, somebody, and everybody.

Their (choice a) is a possessive pronoun, but it is plural. There (choice b) plays on the fact that people often confuse their, there, and they're because they sound alike. Their meanings are quite different. They're is a contraction of they are, and there is an adverb meaning "in that place" or an expletive. (An expletive is an exclamatory word or filler that doesn't add to the meaning of the sentence.) Its (choice c) is a possessive pronoun that is used to refer to things, not people. (Example: This plant is losing its leaves.)

Here is a short review of pronouns for those who are sometimes confused by them. Pronouns, like the nouns they replace, serve different functions within a sentence.



24. The answer is b. Singular subjects joined by and usually take plural verbs. (Example: The book and the clock are on my desk.) When these nouns are preceded by each or every, however, they take the singular form of the verb. (Example: Every shelf and drawer is already full.)
25. The answer is c. Who's and whose are often confused. Who's is the contraction for who is; whose is the possessive case of the pronoun who. (See section on pronoun cases in the explanation for question 21.) If you have trouble deciding whether to put an apostrophe between a pronoun and an s, try to say the sentence using who is (or it is). If it makes sense, you need the apostrophe.
26. The answer is a. The subject of this sentence, one, is singular. Each pronoun referring to this subject must also be singular. Why is "their environment" (choices b and c) incorrect? To whose environment does the sentence refer? To one's environment. The possessive pronoun which agrees with one is his.
27. The answer is c. In order to answer this question correctly, you have to know how to form the perfect tenses. You don't need to know how to identify them by name, but you need to be able to write them correctly. In Modern English, there are three perfect tenses: the present perfect, the past perfect, and the future perfect. The perfect tenses are used to show a relationship between two or more things in time, to show that something has happened or been done before something else. The present perfect talks about something that has happened in the past, but makes an impact on or has consequences for the present. The past perfect is the "past of the past". The future perfect is used to speak of something that will happen in the future before something else that also will happen in the future.

The tenses are formed by adding the appropriate form of the verb to have to the past participle of the verb describing the action. In other words, use the present tense of to have to form the present perfect, use the past tense of to have to form the past perfect, and use the future tense of to have to form the future perfect. The following examples should make this clear.

#### PRESENT PERFECT

She has finished and is waiting for you. (She finished before this and is now waiting.)

#### PAST PERFECT

She had finished and was waiting for you. (First she finished, and then she waited. All of this happened in the past.)

#### FUTURE PERFECT

She will have finished and will be waiting for you.  
(Both actions are expected to take place in the future, but one is happening first.)  
She will have finished by the time you arrive. (Note that arrive is in the present tense in form but is future in meaning.)

28. The answer is d. To answer this question correctly, you must know how to form the past perfect tense. (See explanation for question 27.) You must also know how to form the past and the past participle for the verbs to see and to come. To form the past and the past participle for most verbs, you simply add -d or -ed.

they wade, they waded, they have waded  
 you color, they colored, you have colored

There are many irregular verbs, however, that do not follow this simple rule. The following is a list of the principle parts of some of these verbs

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drive	drove	driven
fall	fell	fallen
get	got	got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
know	knew	known
lay (place)	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lend	lent	lent
lie (tell an untruth)	lied	lied
lie (down)	lay	lain
ride	rode	ridden
rise	rose	risen
shake	shook	shaken
speak	spoke	spoken
steal	stole	stolen
swear	swore	sworn

29. The answer is c. This question plays with the difference between sit and set. Set takes an object; sit does not. In general, something sits down by itself, but an outside force is needed to set something down. There are some irregularities, however.



The sun sets.  
 Her mind is set.  
 Our plans are set.  
 Jello and pudding set.

The principal verb forms of these verbs are:

	PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
to sit	sit	sat	sat
to set	set	set	set

30. The answer is b. The subject of this sentence is a set of plans. People tend to want to make the verb plural to agree with plans. It is the set that was put on the desk, however, and set is singular. Choice c is incorrect because placed and put are interchangeable in this sentence. One is not preferable to the other. Changing put to placed would not make the sentence correct.

31. The answer is d. According to, intends to do, and capable of are idioms. An idiom is a group of words that has a certain meaning when said together. Often this combined meaning is something quite different from the literal meaning of the words the idiom contains. (Example: to be put out by, to run for office, or a put down.) Each idiom is eccentric, a law unto itself. You just have to know it. It is often the preposition at the end of the idiom that causes difficulty. Here are some common idioms. If you don't know them, perhaps you should get a grammar book and brush up.

conform to (or with)	not	conform in
die of	not	die from
kind of	not	kind of a
identical with	not	identical to
plan to	not	plan on
similar to	not	similar with
try to	not	try and

32. The answer is c. Unique means "one of a kind, unequalled." It's an absolute adjective. Words like more or most shouldn't be used with it because something is either unique or is not. Choice b is incorrect because a subjective pronoun is needed. (See explanation for question 21.) Drop the first three words (Michael and she), and try to use her as a substitute. If you say the sentence aloud, you can easily hear that her is incorrect. Choice d is incorrect because singular subjects joined by and take plural verbs.

33. The answer is b. It's not correct to use the word of in place of have. Using of s~ems right because we're used to saying would've and should've when we speak. The 've, which is a contraction of have, sounds like "uhv". Choice d is incorrect because gone is the past participle of the word go. Went is the proper form for the past tense.

34. The answer is a. The sentence should be written: Neither Mary nor she is coming to see me. Both Mary and she are singular. singular subjects joined by or or nor usually take a singular verb. If one subject is singular and one is plural, the verb usually agrees with the one that is nearer. (Examples: Neither the books nor the paper is on the shelf. Either the paper or the books are on the shelf.) Or is used with either, and nor is used with neither. It is not correct to mix them.

35. The answer is b. There are two ways to write this statement correctly.

First fill out the form, and then bring it to the office.

First the employee fills out the form, and then he or she brings it to the office.

The first sentence is written in the imperative mood. It is a pair of commands. The second sentence is in the indicative mood. It is a pair of statements. It is not proper to shift moods within the same sentence. A third mood, the subjunctive, is used for wishes and for conditions contrary to fact.

I wish I were going with my niece. (wish)

If I were going, I would take my niece. (conclusion contrary to fact)

36. The answer is d. The sentence should be written: That group of advisors is more knowledgeable than they. When a pronoun follows than or as, it may be either subjective or objective. (See explanation for question 21.) The proper choice depends on the meaning implied but not actually stated in the sentence. In sentence d, the unstated meaning is very clear. It could be stated as follows: That group of advisors is more knowledgeable than they are knowledgeable. You wouldn't say "they are knowledgeable." In another sentence, the choice might not be so clear.

Joan likes Chris more than I.

(Meaning she likes Chris more than I like Chris.)

Joan likes Chris more than me.

(Meaning she likes Chris more than she likes me.)

37. The answer is c. The other sentences should be written as follows:

Choice a: We have only two dollars among the three of us.

Choice b: I was brought to my senses by the force of her words.

Choice c: She was wearing a new skirt and jacket, and they fit her perfect.

Choice a is incorrect because between is only appropriate when speaking of two items or people. Among must be used for three or more. Choice b is incorrect because me is the objective case of the pronoun, not the possessive. (See explanation for question 21.) Choice d is incorrect because an adverb is needed instead of an adjective. Perfect is an adjective, perfectly is an adverb. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns; adjectives usually modify verbs, verbals, adjectives and other adverbs. Predicate adjectives are used to modify linking verbs like: be, become, look, seem, appear, feel, sound, smell, taste. A modifier gives more information about the word it modifies. "How did the skirt fit?" "It fit perfectly." In this case, perfectly describes the fit, not the skirt and jacket. An adjective would have been called for if the sentence had been written: Her new skirt and jacket were perfect. Most adverbs are formed by adding -ly to the adjective. (Examples: quaint, quaintly; angry, angrily.) A few adjectives (like manly, womanly, friendly, and lovely) end in -ly, however.

38. The answer is d. The other sentences should be written:

Choice a: She didn't like my probing for an answer.

Choice b: Everyone agreed with him but me.

Choice c: Between you and me, there are no secrets.

Choice a is incorrect because probing is a gerund, and nouns and pronouns that modify gerunds must be possessive. A gerund is a noun formed by adding ing to a verb stem. (Examples: go, going; type, typing) Choice b is incorrect because but is used as a preposition instead of as a conjunction. It is used as a substitute for except. The pronoun which is its object must be in the objective case. (See explanation for question 21.) Choice c is incorrect because the pronoun is the object of the preposition between and must be in the objective case.

39. The answer is a. It expresses the idea clearly and smoothly with no errors in grammar or usage. Choice b is incorrect because the phrase according to recent surveys should be set off with commas and the verb should be changed to a singular form to agree with society. It would be written: Our society, according to recent surveys, is more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women. It would still be more awkward than choice a, however. Choice c could pass, but it is not preferable. You can tell from the sentence that it refers to our society, not recent surveys, but the reference is weak. Choice d is

very unclear. It sounds as if recent surveys are more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women. In order to make the sentence more acceptable, it could be changed to: Recent surveys state that our society is more accepting of alcoholism in men than in women.

40. The answer is d. In sentence a, the clause "that they didn't know what to do" is incorrect. "Motivation, preparation, and..." is a series. All elements of a series must be similar. Words may follow words, clauses may follow clauses, and phrases may follow phrases. Mixing words with clauses or phrases with words is considered "lack of parallel structure". In order to make this sentence correct, it could be changed to: The program was a failure due to the fact that they were unmotivated, that they were ill-prepared, and that they didn't know what they wanted to do. Choice b is technically correct but not preferable because its structure is so awkward. It would read better as: The program was a failure due to.... Choice c is incorrect for a reason similar to choice a. "To know what to do or care" should be changed to "to know what to do or to care". To know and to care are related elements in the sentence, and they both should be in the infinitive form.