

Preparing Workers for 21st Century Employment Situational Judgment Reading Practice Exercises Instructor Key Form 2

Introduction:

Life is filled with choices. People make choices every day while at work. The choices made directly impact success on the job. Sometimes it is hard to make the best choice while under pressure especially if the response has to be immediate. Your clients/students can benefit from the opportunity to practice making good choices and avoiding making catastrophic mistakes in a non-threatening situation.

Situational Judgment is a complex psychological concept that has been studied and reported on in many professional publications. The fifteen scenarios presented here were written to provide practice for students. The answers in this key are the author's ideas of how the situation can best be resolved along with a short explanation as a rationale. Each scenario key also contains the author's thoughts on the worst choice followed by a short explanation.

Judgment is by its nature subjective. Each of us must answer for the choices we make. There are times when we believe we have made a good choice only to find out that a supervisor does not agree with that choice. So it will be with some of the author's answers in this key. It is important for participants to consider the long-term impact of choices. In this light most will come to see the author's point of view.

The following are the directions to participants:

Read each of the situations that follow. There are four choices presented for each scenario. You will choose two answers for each. Pick the best choice first. Then decide on the worst choice. The worst choice is one that will possibly cause the person to lose the job. Your instructor will tell you how to mark your answers.

You may instruct students to answer directly on the practice exercises or have them use the answer sheets provided.

**Situational Judgment Scenarios
Instructor Key
Form 2**

Scenario # 1

Use Technology

Learn how to use appropriate computer-based technology to get the job done most efficiently.

Sandy works in the title department at the county court house. She records the titles for all of the property sales in the area. Each time she records a title, it takes about four hours. The county has just purchased a new computer system. The computer system will record titles in a few minutes. Sandy has never worked on a computer. She is afraid that she will lose her job. What should she do?

- a. Talk to her boss about how she can do the job just as well as a computer.
- b. Quit her job as the computer will take over her responsibilities.
- c. Talk with her supervisor about taking training courses so that she can use the computer system to better do her job.
- d. Complain to her fellow employees that computers are taking all of their jobs.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is C. Technology is an important part of the workplace. Workers need to know how to best use the technology available for their job.

The worst answer is B. Sandy is a good worker. She needs to learn how to use technology as other jobs will also require these skills.

Scenario # 2

Integrity

Maintain confidentiality, as appropriate, about matters encountered in the work setting.

Lisette and Edwidge are both nail technicians. Edwidge has decided to buy a new car because she has so much business from two of the hairdressers in the salon. What Edwidge does not know is the two hairdressers are leaving at the end of the month and taking their clients with them. Lisette knows they are leaving because they told her in confidence. Lisette knows Edwidge will not be able to pay for the car if she loses her clients. What should Lisette do?

- A. Immediately tell Edwidge that she knows the hairdressers are leaving and taking their clients with them because they told her in confidence.
- B. Do not say anything to Edwidge because it is not any of her business what Edwidge buys.
- C. Speak with the two hairdressers and let them know the effect this will have on Edwidge and ask if it is okay to tell Edwidge about their plans.
- D. Insist that Edwidge not buy the car because she knows a “secret” that will affect Edwidge but she can’t tell.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is C. If something is told in confidence it should be kept in confidence. By speaking to the two hairdressers, they can decide if they want to share their plans.

The worst answer is A. It is not acceptable to say you will keep something in confidence and then not do so. There are reasons why something is said in confidence. By sharing something that is said in confidence, it may create a difficult situation.

Scenario # 3

Work With Others

Diversity: Work as part of a team to develop and achieve mutual goals and objectives.

David notices that Peter’s deliveries use much less gas than Shamir’s even though each route has the same number of miles. David knows that Shamir is new and it is difficult to communicate with him due to his limited English. When David tries to speak to Shamir about taking a shorter route, Shamir shrugs his shoulders and says he does not understand. What should David do?

- A. Repeat what he just said, but slower and louder.
- B. Find a coworker to translate how to take a shorter route.
- C. Get angry and call Shamir a name because he does not understand.
- D. Draw a map and explain to Shamir how to take a shorter route.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is B. It is important to seek additional help when trying to maintain good working relationships with non English speaking coworkers. It should be kept in mind that the goal is to find a solution for a shorter route in order to save money on gas.

The worst answer is C. Just because someone does not understand is not a reason to call them a name. This does not develop good working relations.

Scenario # 4

Work With Others

Negotiate: Work through conflict constructively

Maria, a Spanish interpreter in an elementary school, saw one of the third grade teachers grab a child quite roughly. The child was unruly and undisciplined at the time. The teacher was trying to stop this child from causing harm to others. The child's parent accused the teacher of hurting her child on purpose. Maria was asked what she saw. Maria does not like this teacher. What should Maria do?

- A. Say that the teacher hurt the child on purpose, because she does not like this teacher and wants her to get in trouble.
- B. Say she did not see anything, because she does not want to get involved.
- C. Explain that the child was unruly but the teacher stopped the child too roughly.
- D. Explain that the child was unruly. The teacher grabbed the child roughly, but Maria did not see any indication that it was on purpose to hurt the child, but to prevent the child from hurting others.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is D. Resolving conflict requires the identification of the problem with only the facts that have been observed.

The worst answer is A. Allowing your feelings and point of view to cloud of how and why something happened does not help to resolve an issue.

Scenario # 5

Use Systems

Follow established procedures for handling urgent situations or emergencies.

Ed is a building superintendent. Early this morning the smoke alarm goes off in the apartment building. Ed does not smell any smoke. What should he do?

- a. Follow the set emergency procedure for evacuating the building and calling the fire department.
- b. Call the owner of the building to ask what he should do.
- c. Check the smoke alarm and each floor of the building.
- d. Nothing as smoke alarms always go off for no reason.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is A. It is important to follow the established procedures for handling emergencies. The procedure is to evacuate the building and call the fire department. This is what Ed needs to do.

The worst answer is D. When one is faced with a possible emergency, doing nothing is the least appropriate option.

Scenario # 6

Use Systems

Pay attention to company guidelines regarding appropriate dress.

Boris believes that it doesn't matter how one looks, but rather how one does his or her job. Boris works at an accounting firm where everyone wears a suit. The company has a very conservative policy on dress code.

On weekends, Boris plays in a band. The other band members have their hair spiked and colored green and red. Boris is thinking about getting his hair colored and spiked too. However, Boris isn't sure what his accounting firm would think of this new look. What should Boris do?

- a. Ask his co-workers at the accounting firm what they think.
- b. Get his hair spiked and colored, since it's his business how he looks.
- c. Get his hair colored, but not spiked.
- d. Forget about both as they are against the company's dress code.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is D. Employees need to understand company policy regarding dress code and follow it.

The worst answer is B: Boris works in an accounting firm which has a conservative dress code. He knew that when he took the position and he needs to pay attention to and follow those company dress guidelines. During a vacation from his job he can experiment with some wash out color to see if that might work with his hair. If that won't work he has a choice to make.

Scenario # 7

Solve Problems

Cope with work situations or tasks that change frequently: Adjust to unexpected problems and situations by seeking advice from a supervisor or appropriate others.

William oversees a self-storage warehouse. Flammable materials are not allowed. A renter saw another renter put some highly flammable materials into one of the self-storage bays. He went to William and told him right away. William went to the renter with the flammable materials and said he would have to remove them from the property. The customer became quite angry and started shouting at William. What should William do?

- A. Calmly tell the customer that flammable materials are not allowed and they must be removed for the safety of everyone while calling the owner on the phone for additional help.

- B. Shout back at the renter in even a louder voice.
- C. Walk away and do nothing.
- D. Tell the renter he is going to charge him more money for the illegal material.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is A. Calmly talking can help quiet down the upset person. Calling for additional help from someone else may also help with the situation.

The worst answer is C. Rules must be followed. No one should be allowed to break the rule by intimidating someone else. Safety for life and property is the number one concern in a self storage facility.

Scenario # 8

Work with Others

You are called by the factory to come in on your day off. They ask if you can cover another shift as Damian has called in sick. You already have plans to go to the amusement park. You tell your workplace that you are sorry but cannot come in. While waiting in line at the park, you see Damien ahead of you. What should you do?

- a. Do nothing because it is not your problem.
- b. Inform your boss the next day that Damien skipped work and that he is an awful worker who should be fired immediately.
- c. Talk to Damian about his irresponsible behavior and tell him that if this happens again, you will need to tell your supervisor.
- d. Tell Damian's friends that he skipped work.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is C. Making a co-worker aware that his actions are wrong and letting him explain his actions is the best answer to the question.

The worst answer is B. Telling on a fellow worker can result in others not wanting you as part of the team. It is always best to first talk with a person, before reporting to the boss.

Scenario # 9

Solve Problems

Accept new or changed work responsibilities with a positive attitude.

Jenny works for a childcare center. She has been there for two years. She loves the job and the children. One of the directors has quit. They have asked Jenny to take the job. It means a lot more money. Jenny takes the job and realizes that supervising the other childcare workers is much harder than just supervising children. What should Jenny do?

- A. See if she can get her old job back.
- B. Tell her boss she can't handle this new job.
- C. Complain to everyone that this is a lousy job because all the childcare workers have too many problems.
- D. Talk with her boss about how to handle the new job responsibilities and ask to attend training to help her be more effective.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is D. Accepting a promotion may take a lot of effort and time to adjust to the added responsibilities. Recognizing a need for training is a good first step. Talking with a boss may help with the changes.

The worst answer is C. One should not complain about other personnel.

Scenario # 10

Solve Problems

Identify actual or potential problems related to one's own work: Report them in a timely manner, according to company policy.

Rasheed works for a small hardware company. He notices that the bookkeeper leaves the customer's credit card invoices all over the desk in the back room even when he is not at the desk. Customers go right by the desk on the way to the rest room facilities. The bookkeeper told him to mind his own business. What should Rasheed do?

- A. Explain the situation to the manager. Mention how angry customers may get seeing credit card invoices open on the desk.
- B. Tell the other employees what the bookkeeper is doing.
- C. Demand that the bookkeeper put the credit card invoices in a secure place so that other customers do not see the invoices.
- D. Tell the customers to demand that their credit card invoices be kept in a secure place.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is A. If you have identified a possible problem and brought it to the attention of your coworker without it being resolved, you need to take it to the next level in the organization. This would be the manager. The manager would then make the decision.

The worst answer is D. It is best to work out problems within an organization instead of involving customers.

Scenario # 11

Work with Others

Chloe is new at her job at the bank. Beatrice had been working the same job for years. Beatrice sees that Chloe is making a mistake when she closes her register. What should Beatrice do?

- a. Let Chloe make mistakes even if she will likely get fired.
- b. Tell another worker to help Chloe.
- c. Tell the supervisor that Chloe has problems.
- d. Show Chloe how to avoid making the mistake when she closes a register and support her efforts as a new employee.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is D. Working as a team is an important skill. Helping a new employee to do his/her job correctly is important to both the person and the company.

The worst answer is A. Not working as a team creates a poor workplace environment. Employee turnover is costly. Helping others be successful is important to the profitability of a business.

Scenario # 12

Responsibility

Take responsibility for completing one's own work assignments (accurately, on time, to a high standard)

It's been a busy month at the automobile factory. There have been new projects and a new computer system has just been installed. Roberto is responsible for completing the monthly report. This report is due the first of every month. However, it has been so busy around the plant that Roberto has not been able to complete the report. His boss has sent him a memo demanding the report. Roberto is worried that his boss will demote him or fire him for not getting the report in on time. What should Roberto do?

- a. Tell the supervisor that the report was already sent and complete the report as soon as possible.
- b. Apologize to the supervisor for not getting the report completed and provide a date by which the report will be sent.
- c. Tell the supervisor the reasons the report was not completed.
- d. Ignore the request from the supervisor for the report. It will get done eventually.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is B. When a task is not completed, take responsibility and let the supervisor know when to expect the completed product.

The worst answer is D. Ignoring one's responsibilities at work, regardless of the reason, leads to poor evaluations and possible firing.

Scenario # 13

Responsibility

Show initiative in carrying out work assignments.

Inez is a waitress at a local diner. She works the breakfast and lunch crowds. As she was leaving for a break before the lunch rush, she noticed a lot of tables hadn't been cleaned. What should Inez do?

- a. Nothing because cleaning tables is someone else's job.
- b. Report that someone has not been doing his/her job.
- c. Tell the supervisor that she is going to clean the tables before her break in order to be ready for the lunch crowd.
- d. Tell a fellow waitress to clean the tables.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is: C. A willingness to complete tasks that need to be done is necessary for success in the workplace. Sometimes one needs to help others in order for good customer service to be provided.

The worst answer is A. If the tables are not cleaned by lunch time, customers will not be served. Good teamwork requires that workers communicate and help each other.

Scenario # 14

Responsibility

Take responsibility for completing one's own work assignments even when the work is physically or mentally challenging.

Victor and Karl own a moving company. Today, they have a large moving job. The job requires that they move very heavy furniture into a third story apartment. They must move the furniture up the stairs since there is not an elevator. They have promised the owners that everything would be finished by the end of the day. At six o'clock, they still have to move a heavy safe, piano, and bedroom furniture. The owners are angry. They said they were promised that the move would be done. Victor and Karl are very tired. They can't get the furniture moved up the steps. It is way too heavy. What should they do?

- a. Tell the owners that they shouldn't have such heavy furniture and that it can't be moved. The owners will just have to get rid of it.
- b. Contact additional workers to help them get the job done and take responsibility for the extra cost.
- c. Stop for the day and tell the owners that they will finish tomorrow when they are less tired.
- d. Move the furniture themselves and hope that they can get it done without any damage.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is B. Victor and Karl contracted a job for a certain fee. Taking responsibility for completing a service is necessary for the success of a business.

The worst answer is A. Victor and Karl should have looked more closely at the furniture and the location to which it was being moved. It is their responsibility, not that of the owners.

Scenario # 15

Allocate Resources

Manage time effectively to get work done on schedule; make sure that urgent tasks are completed on time; make sure that materials, tools, and equipment are available to do the job effectively.

Lee works in the printing department of an office supply store. He did not work over the weekend. He sees that the weekend clerk has simply piled all of the orders on his desk. There are more than he will be able to get done today. What should he do?

- a. Start with the top printing job and work his way down the stack.
- b. Take the morning off since the printing isn't going anywhere.
- c. Take the time to look at each order and prioritize those that are most urgent and then print them in that order.
- d. Plan to complete half of the printing jobs today and half tomorrow.

The best answer is:

The worst answer is:

The best answer is C. Lee needs to first review the different orders and then place them in order of most urgent and date arrived to ensure the best customer service.

The worst answer is B. Taking the morning off only creates a bigger problem when one returns to work.