

CIVIL SERVICE TEST-TAKING TIPS

WORKING AND INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

This section is particularly hard to study for in advance. Much of it is common-sense. Three tips for approaching the test questions:

- Read the scenario very carefully. Look especially for clue words like “may,” “sometimes,” and “often.” This generally means that your answers should be cautious – i.e. don’t jump to the most obvious or extreme answer.
- If the lead-in to the question is “What do you do first, when....” Take the work “**first**” very seriously, because it usually means to choose the answer that is the most cautious. In these types of questions, there will usually be one choice that looks reasonable if you have tried other things. That choices in not the correct answer for this type of question.
- Imagine yourself in the scenario that is described. That is, what would you do if you were faced with the issue/problem described in the passage? Here are some general “do’s” and “don’ts” to remember when you are working and interacting with others:

DO	DON'T
Display the same standards of behavior as you expect from other people.	Take advantage of others, even if they don't know as much as you do.
Appreciate the talents and knowledge of your fellow workers. If you don't know something, be wise enough to let other people teach you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be arrogant or look down on others. • Be jealous or try to under-cut your fellow workers.
Try to understand you fellow worker's point of view.	Dismiss your fellow worker's point of view, just because it is different from your own.
Listen carefully and fully to what other people have to say, especially if you disagree.	Start figuring out your answer even before the other person finishes speaking.
Be assertive. Especially when you are having a conflict with someone, calmly and professionally explain your point of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On one hand, don't be aggressive or rude (<i>e.g.</i> personally attacking the other person, raising your voice, using inappropriate language) • On the other hand, if the conflict is important to you or the work, don't try to avoid discussing it.
Be open and honest. If you don't know something that has been asked of you, let people know and tell them you will find out the answer.	Try to hide your lack of knowledge from your supervisor, your fellow workers, or the people you serve.
In a team setting, or in a conflict, look for areas of agreement, so that you can move forward.	Hang on to your own opinion, and ignore other people's perspectives.
Accept constructive criticism.	Get defensive or take things personally.
If a member of the public gets heated and angry, stay calm and professional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions to find out what the person's issue is. • Explain the facts as you know them. • If you do not know all the facts, say that you will get back to the person (and be sure that you do!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act rudely or ignore the public's complaints as not worthy of your efforts. • On the other hand, never accept verbal abuse or violence. Indicate calmly that if the person continues abusing you, you will need to walk away, and/or you will call you supervisor or others to assist.