The following study guide will familiarize and assist you with preparing for a written examination containing multiple-choice customer service items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the types of customer service items you may encounter on the County examinations. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in content and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested. For example the Office Assistant (an entry-level classification) examination will ask questions of a lower difficulty level than the Office Specialist (an advanced journey-level classification) examination.

To determine if the examination you are scheduled to take contains the content in this study guide refer to the Invitation to Examination letter you have received. This letter will clearly state which subject areas are included on the examination. The Personnel Department recommends you also review the “Preparing for a Written Examination” guide available on our website for general tips and advice for preparing for and taking written examinations with Yuba County. If you have any questions or concerns regarding written examinations or the recruitment process please contact the Personnel Department.

**About this Examination Guide:**

This guide contains a sample of the different types of questions that may be asked within this content area. None of the sample questions will be on the actual examination. The questions in this guide will be very similar to the actual questions you will encounter. After each practice exam you will be given the correct answers to the questions and an explanation (if necessary) for why it is the best choice. You should carefully study each sample question to become familiar with questions of the same type on the examination.

**How to Use this Examination Guide:**

Read each question carefully. Then read all of the answer choices to each question before deciding which answer is correct. If you are having difficulty in determining the correct answer to a question, skip the question, and come back to it later. It is to your advantage to answer each question even if you must guess. With a few exceptions (the exam proctor will be very clear if this is the case) there are no penalties for wrong answers. Your score is determined by the number of correct answers.

After you complete each practice examination you should review the solutions page to determine areas for improvement. You may take the practice exams multiple times until you are familiar and comfortable with the format and content of the exam.

Do not be discouraged if you are not able to answer some of the sample questions correctly. If you feel you need more practice than this study guide offers, the local library may have reference materials to help you or the Personnel department may be able to help you locate additional study guides on the Internet.
1. A customer walks into the office and asks for the deadline to file an employment application. You do not know the answer. The best way to respond to this request is?

A. Tell the person what you think the answer might be.
B. Refer the person to your supervisor.
C. Say that you are not allowed to give out that information to the public.
D. Inform the person that you don’t know but will find out.

2. If a customer service representative is unable to do what a customer asks, the representative should avoid:

A. Quoting organizational policy regarding the customer’s request.
B. Explaining why it cannot be done.
C. Making specific statements.
D. Offering alternatives.

3. Of the following, which would be the least frustrating for a customer to hear from a service representative?

A. You will have to…
B. I will do my best.
C. Let me see what I can do.
D. He/She should be back any minute.

4. When dealing with customers, a service representative’s apologies, if necessary, should not be:

A. immediate
B. official
C. sincere
D. personal

5. The ability to provide the promised service or product dependably and accurately may be defined as:

A. assurance
B. responsiveness
C. courtesy
D. reliability

6. To be most useful to an organization, feedback received from customers should be each of the following except:

A. centered on internal customers
B. ongoing
C. focused on a limited number of indicators
D. available to every employee in the organization
7. Once a customer problem is identified, each of the following should become a part of the resolution process except:

A. following up on the problem resolution  
B. making whatever promises are necessary  
C. providing the customer with what was originally requested  
D. listening and responding to every complaint given by the customer

8. To arrive at a fair solution to a service problem, one should first:

A. defend the organization  
B. ask questions to understand and confirm the nature of the problem  
C. listen to the customer’s description of the problem  
D. determine and implement a solution to the problem

9. A customer service representative strives to be prompt when addressing customer complaints. Which service factor is the representative demonstrating?

A. Assurance  
B. Responsiveness  
C. Empathy  
D. Reliability

10. Customer service representatives will achieve the best results if they strive to represent

A. the entire organization  
B. the customer  
C. the department  
D. their supervisor
Practice Exam 1 – Solutions

1. D. It is always best to be honest and admit that you do not know the answer but will attempt to find out. It is never a good idea to guess an answer as it may result in inaccurate information. Referring the customer to someone else is not ideal. If someone else in the office knows the answer than you should ask them directly and increase your own knowledge to better serve the next customer.

2. A. It is always better to explain the reasoning behind policies and offer alternatives than to merely quote an established policy. For many customers this can be a source of frustration as it still leaves their needs unmet and many questions on how to resolve their issue.

3. C. This response tells a customer that the customer service representative will make every effort to satisfy a request or to offer alternatives.

4. B. Official apologies should come from a supervisor or higher-level of authority within the organization. Not only does this reduce the pressure on the customer service representative to bear the full responsibility of a situation, but it provides a level of authority to the apology (if necessary).

5. D. Reliability is defined as consistency and accuracy in judgment or results.

6. A. Feedback centered on internal customers overlooks what usually represents the largest customer base of an organization (external customers) and also presents often biased and skewed feedback.

7. B. Promises that cannot be delivered on can cause additional complaints and issues with a customer and should be avoided at all costs.

8. C. Listening to a customer’s description of the problem in its entirety is the first step in the process. Once you have heard the description you should ask clarifying questions to better understand the nature of the problem.

9. B. Responsiveness is defined as readily reacting.

10. A. By representing the entire organization the customer service representative will achieve results that are consistent with the entire organization’s goals, will minimize changes that unduly negatively impact divisions or departments of the organization, while satisfying the needs of the customer.
1. A person approaches you and tells you of many complaints he has about your department. You should first:
   A. Assume that he is just blowing off steam and ignore the criticisms.
   B. Check into the legitimacy of the complaints.
   C. Ask for advice from your supervisor on the best way to handle the person.
   D. Regard the complaints as accurate and take immediate steps to correct them.

2. When a customer presents a service representative with a request, the representative’s **first** reaction should **usually** be a(n):
   A. Apology
   B. Friendly greeting
   C. Statement of organizational policy regarding the request.
   D. Request for clarifying information.

3. A customer appears to be mildly irritated when lodging a complaint. It is most appropriate for a service representative to demonstrate ___________ in reaction to the complaint.
   A. urgency
   B. empathy
   C. nonchalance
   D. surprise

4. If a customer service representative is aware that the organization is not capable of meeting a customer’s expectations, the representative’s first responsibility would be to:
   A. tell the customer of the organization’s inability to comply.
   B. shape the customer’s expectations to match what the organization is capable of doing for him/her.
   C. encourage the customer to believe that the organization can do as he/she asks.
   D. refer the customer to a higher level for further communication.

5. According to most customers, ______ prevents good listening on the part of a service representative when a customer is speaking.
   A. technological devices (telephones, pagers, e-mail)
   B. frequent interruptions by other staff or customers
   C. asking unnecessary questions
   D. background noise

6. Instead of directly saying no to a customer, service representatives will usually get the best results with a reply that begins with the words:
   A. I’ll try
   B. I don’t believe
   C. You can
   D. It’s not our policy
7. A customer appears to be mildly irritated when lodging a complaint. The most appropriate action for a service representative to take while attempting resolution is to:

A. allow venting of frustrations  
B. enlist the customer in generating solutions  
C. show emotional neutrality  
D. create calm  

8. When listening to a customer during a face-to-face meeting, the most appropriate physical presentation is:

A. crossed arms  
B. frowning  
C. leaning towards the customer  
D. staring at a spot over the customer’s shoulder  

9. The majority of what is communicated during face-to-face meetings is conveyed by:

A. word choices  
B. body language  
C. verbal tone  
D. clothing  

10. When a customer submits a written complaint, the representative should select a response that avoids:

A. addressing every allegation in the written complaint  
B. a personal tone  
C. a pre-formulated response  
D. a proposed solution or remedy
Practice Exam 2 - Solutions

1. B. The first step to take is to determine how valid the individual’s complaints are. Then, you can decide whether further action is needed or the complaints were unfounded and require no further action.

2. D. In order to best satisfy a customer’s request it is vital to know as many details of the request as possible and remove any uncertainties that could result in duplicating work or increasing customer distress.

3. A. A quick and motivated effort to resolve a complaint is the most effective way to prevent a mild irritation to escalating to a more serious problem. While empathy is valuable it does not resolve a complaint and nonchalance or surprise can further escalate a situation by appearing indifferent or even antagonistic.

4. B. Customer service representatives are in the unique position in that their interaction with a customer can influence a customer’s expectations. By laying the framework for what the organization can accomplish and setting reasonable expectations the customer’s level of satisfaction with the end result can be increased.

5. B. When a customer service representative does not focus on the customer and instead interrupts their interaction to address other individuals it is perceived that the representative has not heard what the customer is saying, is not paying attention to the issue, and does not care about the issue.

6. C. Of all of the choices only C provides an action for the customer, a source of potential relief. The other choices imply directly and indirectly that relief is either not possible or not likely, which can be highly discouraging and frustrating.

7. B. By enlisting the customer in providing solutions the representative can get a feel for the end result that the customer is looking for and ultimately what will resolve their complaint. While not all of the alternatives presented by a customer may be feasible it can provide a starting point for realistic resolutions that can meet the same goal.

8. C. Leaning towards a person during a conversation is a nonverbal cue that expresses interest and attention.

9. B. Over 50% of what we perceive in a face-to-face discussion is expressed through our body language, how we stand, our facial expressions, our arm gestures etc.

10. C. Pre-formulated responses can be impersonal or overly generic and give the impression that issues are commonplace and have not been successfully responded to. A more personalized approach that is slightly less formal and addresses the specific nature of the complaint, including remedies to the issue is preferred and more effective.