Sample Questions

Questions on the exam are situational, meaning to answer them you must apply your knowledge and experience to the given scenario rather than just giving a textbook response. Many questions are ambiguous. Questions often seem like they have two or more right answers. Prepare for the following types of questions so you will not be caught off guard when you are taking the exam.

1. **Situational questions** These demonstrate why project management experience and knowledge of good practices are critical to passing this exam. Such questions require you to align your real-world experience with knowledge of the exam concepts. For example:

   Question   The project manager receives notification that a major item they purchased for a project will be delayed. What is the best thing for the project manager to do?

   A.   Replan the project to accommodate this delay.
   B.   Notify the project sponsor.
   C.   Let the customer know about it and talk over options.
   D.   Meet with the team and identify alternatives.

   Answer   D

2. **Questions with two or more right answers**   Multiple choice questions that appear to have two or more right answers are a major complaint from test takers. These questions, which list several choices that could reasonably be done, require analysis and the process of elimination to find the best answer for the given scenario and question details.

   As you go through questions and review the answers in the RMC Interactive Chapter Quizzes, look for questions you think have more than one right answer and try to figure out why you think multiple choices are correct. We have intentionally included such questions in the RMC Interactive Chapter Quizzes to give you exposure to these types of questions. We provide explanations to help you understand why your right answer may not be the best choice.

   Let's look again at the previous situational question. Couldn't we really do all the choices? The right answer is D, but isn't it also correct to tell the customer? Yes, but that is not the *first* thing to do. This question is really saying, "What is the best thing to do *next*?" or "What should the project manager do *next*?" As you answer practice questions, keep in mind the concept of the "*best* thing to do *next*" to help you decide which answer identifies the project manager's responsibilities in the given situation.

   Note: By "proper project management" we generally mean project management according to systematic and agreed-upon good practices. More specifically for the exam, if we are talking about the order of activities within a process, it should relate to how processes are described in the ECO domains, the Process Groups model, or the *Agile Practice Guide*. We know that processes can vary in their order of activities but as PMI has sometimes been specific on this, we will be specific as well. In other words, for the exam we mean "proper project management" according to PMI. Be careful—this will sometimes not align with your everyday project management experience.

3. **Questions with extraneous information** Not all information in a question will be relevant.

   Question   Your next project involves managing an agile initiative to distribute new driver management software to your firm's taxi fleet. At this point the project steering committee is debating whether to contract with a usability testing service for the project. They ask for your input on whether this would be cost-effective. You reply that while you don't have the specific data yet, as a general rule:

A. The most economical time to test would be near the end of the project when the screens are done and less likely to change.

B. Finding issues earlier is always preferable since it is likely to save a lot of money in the long run.

C. Defects found by the developers are less costly to fix than those found in review or testing.

D. Testing the screens near the end of the project will leave little time to incorporate changes.

Answer   B

In this example, the type of system being developed (driver management) doesn't affect the answer. It is extraneous information meant to distract you.

4. **Questions using made-up terms** Many people taking the exam expect that all the terms used as choices should mean something. That is not the case. Answer choices sometimes include made-up terms. If you consider yourself well prepared and see a term on the exam you do not know, chances are it is not the right answer. For example:

Question   The WBS, estimates for each work package, and the network diagram are completed. The next thing for the project manager to do is:

A. Sequence Activities

B. Develop Schedule

C. Validate Scope

D. Resource Simulation

Answer   B

In this question "resource simulation" (choice D) is not a real project management term.

5. **Questions where understanding is important.** Let's look at the following question:

Question   The senior web designer on a project just came down with the flu in the middle of an iteration. What should the project manager do?

A. Meet with the team to find out how much of the planned work will be done.

B. Ask the two other designers to work overtime this week.

C. Ask the product owner to postpone the product demo until the iteration goal is done.

D. Call the web designer's functional manager and ask for a new designer for the rest of the iteration.

Answer   A

In order to answer this question, you must understand iteration timeboxes and how agile teams work.

6. **Questions with a new approach to a known topic** There will be many instances where you understand the topic but have never thought about it as described. For example:

Question   A product is being built iteratively on a new technology platform. When the project manager asks the team members about the quality of the early product increments, they say "They're fine." How can the project manager verify that the new technology is supporting the quality objectives of the project?

A. Ask the team to present performance testing results showing the actual vs. expected measures.

B. Ask the product owner how well the technology is delivering business value.

C. Present the quality management plan to the team's coach and ask if the technology is supporting the plan.

D. Bring in an auditor to assess the quality.

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Answer   C

Seeing the words "iterative" and "increments" should make you think this is an adaptive life cycle project but that might steer you away from an answer referring to a management plan. Management plans can be used on adaptive and hybrid project life cycles if the project manager sees value in the plan.

7. **Questions with more than one item in each choice**   Let's look at the following example:

Question   The seller has presented the project manager with a formal notification that the seller has been damaged by the buyer's activities. The seller claims that the buyer's slow response to the requested approvals has delayed the project and has caused the seller unexpected expense. The first things the project manager should do are:

A. Collect all relevant data, send the data to the company attorney, and consult with the attorney about legal responses.

B. Review the contract for specific agreed-upon terms that relate to the issue, see if there is a clear response, and consult an attorney if needed.

C. Review the procurement statement of work for requirements, send a receipt of claim response, and meet to resolve the issue without resorting to legal action if possible.

D. Hold a meeting with the team to review why the acceptances have been late, make a list of the specific reasons, and correct those reasons.

Answer   B

These questions can seem hard until you apply this little trick. Use the process of elimination, one item at a time. Consider the first item listed in each choice and eliminate the choices that contain an implausible first item, if applicable. Then look at the second item in each remaining choice and eliminate any implausible choices. Keep going until you have one choice remaining.

Watch out! Sometimes the items in each choice show a flow or process. See the following example to think about how sometimes the items in each answer choice show a flow or a process:

Question   A resource issue has come up on a construction project. Which of the following is the best way to deal with the problem?

A. Go to the team, go to management, go to resources managers

B. Go to resource managers, go to management, go to the customer

C. Handle it yourself, go to the customer, go to management

D. Resolve problems with resources you control, go to resource managers, got to the customer.

Answer   D

In this case you need to look at each choice independently to see if the process listed is correct.

8. **Excessively wordy questions** Instead of saying "The project is behind schedule," the exam might use wordier phrasing such as "The project float was zero and has recently gone to negative 2." Instead of saying "The team is not reporting properly," the exam could say "The team has lost sight of the communications management plan." The first step in answering many questions is to determine what the question is really asking, and then to translate the wordy phrasing.

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Questions in Different Format Types

Our examples so far have used a typical multiple-choice format to point out specific characteristics of the way questions are worded on the exam. Now take time to look at the other, newer question formats that are used on the PMP exam.

9. Multiple responses answer Questions using this format ask you to choose two or three correct answers, as in this example:

Question Several stakeholders have different opinions about the product requirements. Which two of the following techniques could the project manager use to bring the group to consensus?

A. Facilitated workshop
B. Interview
C. Backlog refinement session
D. Observation
E. Survey
F. Mind mapping

Answer A, C

10. Hot spot questions These types of questions show you a graphic on which you will have to click a "hot spot" containing the correct answer:

Question Review the Burnup Chart. The team's velocity has averaged 4.6 story points per iteration with 27 points completed. The project scope was increased during iterations 3 and 4 to a total of 48 story points. Management would like the project scope to be completed by iteration 9. What should be the team goal for iteration 7? Click on the diagram showing the next data point in the Work Accepted line.
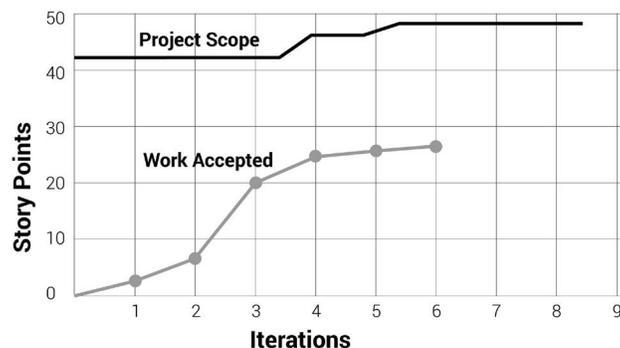
To answer the question, click on a "hot spot" on the diagram as shown below.

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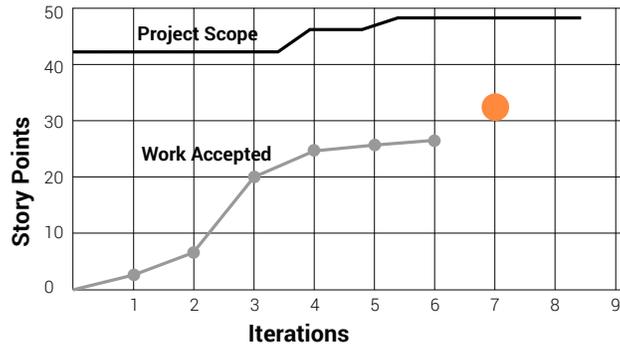
11. Matching question Questions in this format will give you two columns of concepts to match. In the following example, the test taker would drag the cards in the "Action" column to the center box that aligns with the "Order in which to perform" column.

Question During a team retrospective, the project manager senses a conflict. In what order should the project manager use the following actions to address the conflict?
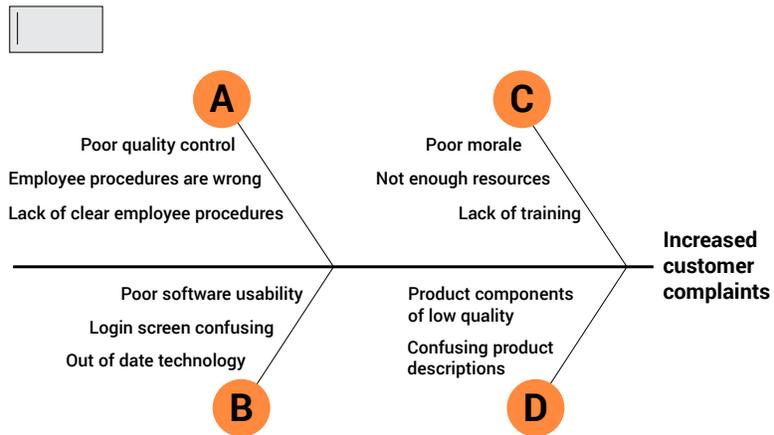
Action		Order in which to perform
Decide what, if any, intervention is needed		First
Determine the level of conflict		Second
Observe the situation and listen to both sides		Third
Assess the group's energy, words and body language		Fourth

Answer

Action		Order in which to perform
Decide what, if any, intervention is needed	Observe the situation and listen to both sides	First
Determine the level of conflict	Assess the group's energy, words and body language	Second
Observe the situation and listen to both sides	Determine the level of conflict	Third
Assess the group's energy, words and body language	Decide what, if any, intervention is needed	Fourth

12. Limited fill-in-the blank These types of questions will ask that you type the answer (represented by a blank space in the question) in a box given:

Question Review the fishbone diagram for the problem: Increased customer complaints. Enter the letter indicating the area that includes the possible causes of the problem related to people.

A

Poor quality control
Employee procedures are wrong
Lack of clear employee procedures

C

Poor morale
Not enough resources
Lack of training

**Increased
customer
complaints**

Poor software usability
Login screen confusing
Out of date technology

B

Product components
of low quality
Confusing product
descriptions

D

Answer C