

# System Analyst Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## **Questions**

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- 1. In a typical organizational model, what do top managers develop to define a company's overall mission and goals?**
  - A. Short-term plans**
  - B. Operational plans**
  - C. Strategic plans**
  - D. Tactical plans**
- 2. Which element is NOT typically included in a project team review?**
  - A. Performance metrics**
  - B. Team member feedback**
  - C. Personal opinions**
  - D. Collaborative discussion**
- 3. Which external factor is NOT typically considered in business decisions?**
  - A. Technology**
  - B. Competitors**
  - C. Government**
  - D. Personal opinions**
- 4. What is the term for a task that represents several activities in project management?**
  - A. Task group**
  - B. Milestone**
  - C. Phase**
  - D. Module**
- 5. Structured walk-throughs occur at different phases of the SDLC and are referred to as what type of reviews?**
  - A. Progress**
  - B. Design**
  - C. Evaluation**
  - D. Quality**

- 6. What is the primary function of documentation in the systems development process?**
- A. To serve as a reference**
  - B. To limit communication**
  - C. To maintain confidentiality**
  - D. To reduce project costs**
- 7. What is the term for the process of identifying long-term organizational goals and strategies?**
- A. Operational management**
  - B. Strategic planning**
  - C. Tactical planning**
  - D. Project management**
- 8. What is defined as any work that has a beginning and an end and requires the use of company resources?**
- A. Task**
  - B. Milestone**
  - C. Project**
  - D. Activity**
- 9. True or False: An agile approach emphasizes continuous feedback, where each step is influenced by prior learning.**
- A. True**
  - B. False**
  - C. Maybe**
  - D. Not applicable**
- 10. What is the term used for employees who perform roles such as system analysts and programmers within an organization?**
- A. Technical staff**
  - B. Operational workers**
  - C. Knowledge workers**
  - D. Support personnel**

## **Answers**

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1. C
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C

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## **Explanations**

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**1. In a typical organizational model, what do top managers develop to define a company's overall mission and goals?**

- A. Short-term plans**
- B. Operational plans**
- C. Strategic plans**
- D. Tactical plans**

Top managers are responsible for establishing the long-term direction and overall purpose of the organization, which is articulated through strategic plans. These plans outline the company's mission, vision, and the key objectives it aims to achieve over an extended timeframe, typically spanning several years. By focusing on strategic planning, top managers can ensure that the organization aligns its resources and efforts toward fulfilling its overarching goals, responding effectively to external market conditions and internal capabilities. While short-term plans, operational plans, and tactical plans play important roles within the organizational structure, they focus on different aspects. Short-term plans tend to address immediate needs and actions, typically over a year or less. Operational plans are more concerned with the day-to-day functioning and the processes necessary to implement broader strategies. Tactical plans bridge the gap between strategic and operational plans by detailing specific actions, generally covering a shorter timeframe and often emphasizing departmental objectives. Strategic plans encompass a more holistic view and thus serve as the foundation from which these other types of plans are derived, ensuring that all levels of management are aligned with the company's mission and long-term goals.

**2. Which element is NOT typically included in a project team review?**

- A. Performance metrics**
- B. Team member feedback**
- C. Personal opinions**
- D. Collaborative discussion**

In a project team review, the aim is to evaluate project progress, performance, and team dynamics in a structured manner. Personal opinions, while they can influence discussions, are not a formal component of the review process. Instead, the focus is usually on quantitative and qualitative data that contribute to an objective assessment of the project's status. Performance metrics provide concrete data on how well the project is meeting its goals, team member feedback facilitates productive communication about team dynamics and individual contributions, and collaborative discussion encourages engagement and collective problem-solving. Therefore, including subjective personal opinions in this context can detract from the analysis and decision-making process, making it the least fitting element in a structured project review.

**3. Which external factor is NOT typically considered in business decisions?**

- A. Technology**
- B. Competitors**
- C. Government**
- D. Personal opinions**

In the context of business decisions, external factors typically include elements that influence an organization from outside its operational framework. These factors help shape strategic planning and operational adjustments. Technology is critical as it affects how businesses operate, the efficiency of processes, and the development of new products or services. Competitors play a vital role due to their actions and strategies impacting market dynamics, pricing, and innovation. Government regulations and policies can significantly affect business decisions, including compliance requirements, taxation, and economic conditions. Personal opinions, while potentially influential within an organization, are not considered an external factor since they stem from individual perspectives rather than external influences on the business environment. Decisions in a business context are typically driven by external market conditions, trends, and regulatory factors rather than personal beliefs or preferences, making this option distinct from the others listed.

**4. What is the term for a task that represents several activities in project management?**

- A. Task group**
- B. Milestone**
- C. Phase**
- D. Module**

The correct term that represents a task made up of several activities in project management is "Phase." In project management, a phase is a distinct stage in the project lifecycle that encompasses a collection of related tasks and activities. Each phase typically has specific deliverables and outcomes, and it is essential for managing the progression of the project toward its final goal. In contrast, a task group refers more to a collection of tasks rather than a structured phase, which encompasses a broader set of interconnected activities. A milestone signifies a significant point in time within a project but does not represent a collection of activities or tasks; rather, it is a marker indicating the completion of key deliverables. A module usually refers to a self-contained unit within a system, often in software development, and does not align with the context of phases in project management. Understanding these distinctions helps in effectively organizing and managing projects, ensuring that all activities are aligned with the overall timeline and objectives.

**5. Structured walk-throughs occur at different phases of the SDLC and are referred to as what type of reviews?**

- A. Progress**
- B. Design**
- C. Evaluation**
- D. Quality**

Structured walk-throughs are commonly associated with the design phase of the Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC), where they serve as formal reviews focused on assessing the design documentation. This type of review is crucial because it allows stakeholders, including developers, analysts, and clients, to collaboratively evaluate the proposed design against requirements and specifications. By conducting a structured walk-through during this phase, teams can identify issues, ensure that the design aligns with user needs, and make necessary adjustments before moving into the implementation phase. During design reviews, participants engage in discussions to clarify design choices, confirm adherence to standards, and ensure completeness and correctness of the design artifacts. This process helps mitigate risks and contributes to a higher quality final product. Other phases of the SDLC may involve reviews of different kinds (such as quality reviews later in the process), but it is specifically within the design phase that structured walk-throughs play a pivotal role in validating the architecture and design decisions made.

**6. What is the primary function of documentation in the systems development process?**

- A. To serve as a reference**
- B. To limit communication**
- C. To maintain confidentiality**
- D. To reduce project costs**

The primary function of documentation in the systems development process is to serve as a reference. Documentation provides a detailed record of the system requirements, architecture, design, coding standards, and testing procedures, among other elements. This comprehensive reference is crucial for various stakeholders, including developers, project managers, and end users, as it helps ensure that everyone involved has a shared understanding of the project. Moreover, effective documentation aids in maintaining clarity throughout the development cycle by providing guidance and context, which can be invaluable during onboarding new team members or when revisiting projects after time has passed. This serves to promote consistency, enhance communication among team members, and facilitate the maintenance and upgrading of the system in the future. While documentation may indirectly contribute to aspects like reducing costs or aiding confidentiality, its primary and most critical function is to be a reliable and accessible reference source throughout the system's lifecycle.

**7. What is the term for the process of identifying long-term organizational goals and strategies?**

**A. Operational management**

**B. Strategic planning**

**C. Tactical planning**

**D. Project management**

The correct answer is strategic planning, which refers to the process of defining an organization's direction and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this direction. It involves identifying long-term goals, setting clear objectives, and developing strategies to achieve those objectives. Strategic planning is essential because it helps organizations assess their position, the competitive landscape, and the resources needed to achieve desired outcomes over time. In contrast, operational management focuses on the day-to-day operations of a business and is more concerned with short-term processes and activities. Tactical planning is related to the specific actions and resources that will be utilized to implement strategies, usually in a shorter time frame compared to strategic planning. Project management involves planning, executing, and closing specific projects, which may have defined scopes and timelines but does not encompass the broader, long-term focus of setting organizational goals and strategies.

**8. What is defined as any work that has a beginning and an end and requires the use of company resources?**

**A. Task**

**B. Milestone**

**C. Project**

**D. Activity**

The concept that describes any work with a defined beginning and end that requires the use of company resources is best captured by the term "project." A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result, differentiating it from ongoing operations or repetitive tasks. Projects have specific objectives that need to be completed within a certain timeframe and typically involve various resources, including people, materials, and financial assets. This definition encompasses the essential characteristics of a project, including its temporary nature and resource requirements. In contrast, a task involves a smaller piece of work that contributes to the project's overall goal but does not define the larger scope or resource allocation. Milestones are significant points within a project that mark the completion of major phases or deliverables, while activities are specific actions taken to accomplish tasks or parts of a project. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for effective project management and analysis.

**9. True or False: An agile approach emphasizes continuous feedback, where each step is influenced by prior learning.**

**A. True**

**B. False**

**C. Maybe**

**D. Not applicable**

The correct answer is true. An agile approach fundamentally revolves around the principles of iterative development and continuous improvement. This methodology ensures that every phase of the project integrates feedback from previous stages, leading to more informed decisions and adaptations of the product being developed. In agile, regular feedback is solicited from stakeholders and team members throughout the development process, which allows for adjustments to be made that reflect not just current requirements but also lessons learned from past iterations. This continuous cycle of feedback helps teams to respond more quickly to changes and ensures that the product evolves in alignment with user needs and expectations. Thus, the emphasis on continuous feedback distinctly characterizes the agile approach, highlighting its flexibility and commitment to enhancing the end product at every stage of development.

**10. What is the term used for employees who perform roles such as system analysts and programmers within an organization?**

**A. Technical staff**

**B. Operational workers**

**C. Knowledge workers**

**D. Support personnel**

The term that best fits employees who perform roles such as system analysts and programmers is "knowledge workers." Knowledge workers are individuals whose primary job involves handling and utilizing information and knowledge. They create, analyze, and disseminate information that is crucial for decision-making and problem-solving within an organization. System analysts and programmers are fundamentally engaged in tasks that require a high level of expertise and cognitive skills. They not only work with data and technology but also apply their knowledge to develop solutions that enhance business processes and information systems. This aligns well with the characteristics of knowledge workers, who leverage their expertise to contribute to the organization's intellectual capital. In contrast, the other terms provided do not adequately capture the essence of the roles described. "Technical staff" generally encompasses a broader group that may include support roles or non-knowledge work, while "operational workers" typically focus on roles that manage routine tasks. "Support personnel" usually refer to those who assist other employees in their functional tasks but may not be directly involved in high-level decision-making or technical strategy. Therefore, "knowledge workers" precisely describes the specialized roles of system analysts and programmers.