



Association of Social Work Boards Examination Preparation

WELCOME



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Examination Experience:

2014 Human Services-Board Certified Practitioner

2013 Licensed Clinical Social Worker

2011 Substance Abuse Counselor

2009 Certified Advance Practice Social Worker

Emily Green, MSW, CAPSW, SAC-IT

Examination Experience:

2023 Licensed Clinical Social Worker

2021 Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker

INTRODUCTION



- ▶ Name
- ▶ What level of examination are you preparing for?
- ▶ Anything specifically you are hoping to get out of this training?



- ▶ **Congratulations on getting to this point in your social work career!**
- ▶ **The decision to become licensed or certified is significant, and passing the licensing examination demonstrates that you have the basic knowledge necessary to practice.**
- ▶ **Regulation through certification and licensure helps assure that social workers will interact in an ethical and safe manner.**

Test Taking Process to Success



Overview of Training

- ▶ Develop individualized Study Plan
- ▶ Increase your knowledge of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) examination
- ▶ Understanding learning styles to assist in developing study strategies
- ▶ Provide valuable test taking strategies and tips that will assist in developing a good study plan.
- ▶ Provide strategies for test anxiety
- ▶ Analyzing question wording in order to select the correct answer
- ▶ Summarize content areas that will be included on the examination as per the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's).
- ▶ Review sample questions that can be used to simulate examination questions
- ▶ Review additional resources for Study Plan

DISCLAIMER

The ideas presented in this training are not a 100% guarantee to assist you in passing the examination that you are taking. This training should not be considered a substitute for studying for the examination. The information and strategies for studying will help you develop your study plan for preparing for the examination. Participating in the training does not automatically guarantee a passing score on the examination.

Study Plan

- ↓ Information and unanswered questions about the details of the ASWB Examination
- ↓ Learning styles that best fit you as a learner (this will help identify studying strategies)
- ↓ Useful strategies for studying
- ↓ Strategies helpful with test anxiety
- ↓ Tips to Answer Questions Correctly
- ↓ Results of Self Assessment Tool of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities of Content (areas to focus on while studying)
- ↓ Identify relaxation and rewards



STUDY PLAN

STUDY PLAN

DATE:

ANTICIPATED DATE OF EXAMINATION:

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASWB EXAMINATION

(Note any information about the ASWB Examination that is important, any questions about the ASWB Examination, or note things to do)

TYPE OF LEARNER

(Identify what learning style fits you best as a learner and what study strategies you may use)

Type of Learning Styles	Study Strategies
Visual	
Auditory	
Kinesthetic	

STRATEGIES FOR STUDY SUCCESS

(Identify strategies for studying success)

STUDY PLAN

TEST ANXIETY (Identify anxiety regarding preparing and taking tests and identify strategies to manage anxiety)	
Identify Anxiety	Strategy for Anxiety

TIPS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS CORRECTLY (Identify helpful tips for answering questions correctly)		

CONTENT (Examine content areas on the examination and complete self-assessment to identify areas to focus studying)	

RELAXATION/REWARDS (Identify ways to relax and reward efforts)	

Other helpful information, resources, and supports to be successful in preparing, studying and taking the examination:

STANDARDIZED TESTS

A TEST THAT IS ADMINISTERED AND SCORED IN A CONSISTENT OR “STANDARD” MANNER. STANDARDIZED TESTS ARE DESIGNED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE QUESTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS ARE CONSISTENT AND SCORED IN A PREDETERMINED STANDARD MANNER.

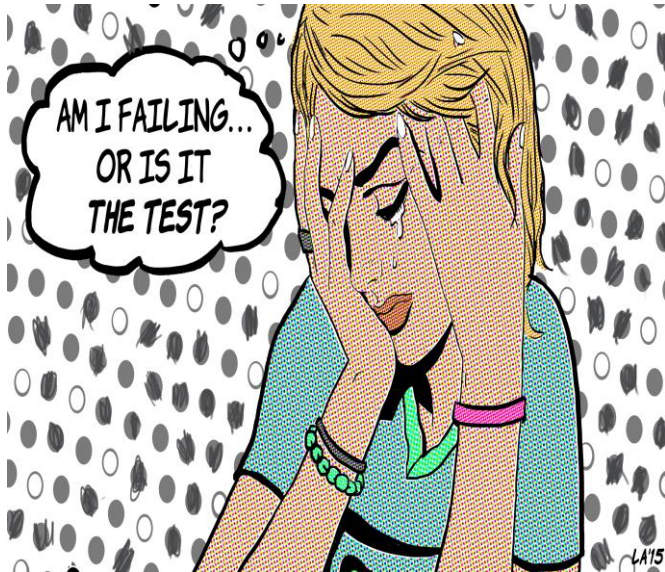
WIKIPEDIA



"Sometimes, the most brilliant and intelligent minds do not shine in standardized tests because they do not have standardized minds."

-Diane Ravitch

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARDIZED TEST YOU ARE STUDYING FOR AND TAKING



**Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
Examination
aswb.org**



ASWB Exam Candidate Handbook

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ About the Exams
- ▶ Steps for Taking the Exam
 - ▶ Apply for your license with your social work board (Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS))
 - ▶ Register and pay for the ASWB exam
 - ▶ (bachelors and masters exam \$230, advanced generalist and clinical exam \$260)
 - ▶ Schedule your ASWB exam
- ▶ Test Day
- ▶ After the Exam

About the ASWB Examination



170 multiple choice questions (20 are not scored)



4 hours to take the exam



You are allowed to take brief breaks, but the clock does not stop

About the ASWB Examination

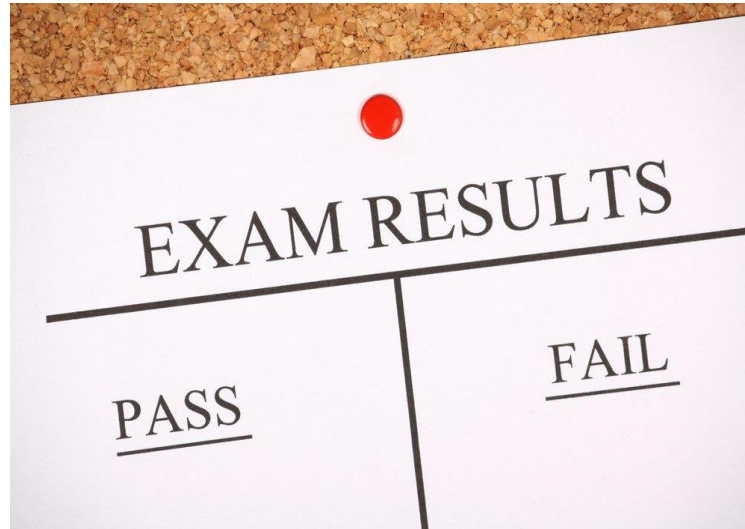
- ↓ Do not leave any questions blank
- ↓ Answer all 170 questions
- ↓ The examination is computerized, but requires no specialized computer knowledge
- ↓ If you need accommodations get those accommodations for taking your examination well in advance
- ↓ Do not be concerned if others finish before you or after you
- ↓ Testing center activities are closely monitored

About the ASWB Exam

- ↴ The number of questions you need to get correct varies
- ↴ Questions are weighted differently
- ↴ The number of correct answers can vary from 93-106
- ↴ Questions are in random order
- ↴ Questions are not grouped by content areas
- ↴ You will get different questions if you take the exam again

About the ASWB Examination

- ↴ The exam is Pass/Fail
- ↴ 70% to pass (remember questions are weighted differently)
- ↴ You will leave with an unofficial copy of the exam results



Testing Experiences Enhancements January 2023



Three-option multiple choice phased in

- ▶ Exam forms will contain a mix of three- and four-option questions beginning in January 2023. The exam will gradually include more three-option questions going forward, with the goal of completing the transition by 2025.
- ▶ Exam questions with fewer options will offer test-takers a better experience by reducing time pressure and ensuring a focus on a test-taker's social work knowledge.
- ▶ This change follows psychometric expertise that confirms the validity of three-option multiple-choice questions.

Access to food permitted

- ▶ Test-takers will be permitted to retrieve a snack from their locker and consume it in the waiting area during the examination.
- ▶ Security risks are minimal because the locker area is monitored by test center staff and is under camera surveillance.

Cell phone bags no longer required

- ▶ Test-takers will no longer be required to seal electronics in a tamper-proof bag before shutting them down and storing them in the locker.
- ▶ Because all electronics must be powered off and stored in lockers, the extra measure of a tamper-proof bag is not required.

Test Taking Strategies and Tips



**Types of Learners
(Visual, Auditory,
Kinesthetic)**



**Essential Strategies for
Study Success
Strategies for Test
Anxiety**



**Tips to Answer
Questions Correctly**

Types of Learners



- **VISUAL LEARNERS** learn best through what they see. Although lectures can be boring for visual learners, they benefit from the use of diagrams, PowerPoint slides, and charts.
- **Strategies to help visual learners study:**
 - Use colored highlighters to draw attention to key terms.
 - Develop outlines or take notes on the concepts in the guide.
 - Write talking points for each of the KSAs on separate white index cards.
 - Create a coding schema of symbols and write them in this guide next to material and terms that require further study.
 - Study in an environment that is away from visual distractions such as television, people moving around, or clutter.

- **AUDITORY LEARNERS** learn best through what they hear. They may have difficulty remembering material that they read in this guide but can easily recall it if it is read to them.
- **Strategies to help auditory learners study:**
 - Tape record yourself summarizing the material as you are studying it—listen to your notes as a way to reinforce what you read.
 - Have a study partner explain the relevant concepts and terms related to the KSAs.
 - Read the text from your study materials aloud if you are having trouble remembering it.
 - Find free podcasts or YouTube videos on the Internet on the content areas that are short and easy to understand to assist with learning.
 - Talk to yourself about the content as you study—emphasizing what is important to remember related to each KSA.

- **KINESTHETIC LEARNERS** learn through tactile approaches aimed at experiencing or doing. They need activities and physical activities as a foundation for instruction—movement and doing is important.
- **Strategies to help kinesthetic learners study:**
 - Make flashcards on material because writing it down will assist with remembering the content.
 - Use as many different senses as possible when studying—read material when you are on your treadmill, use highlighters, talk aloud about content, and/or listen to a study partner.
 - Develop mnemonic devices to aid in information retention (e.g., EAT PIE Today is a great way to remember the social work problem-solving process—Engaging, Assessing, Planning, Intervening, Evaluating, and Terminating).
 - Write notes and important terms in your guide margins.
 - Ask a study partner to quiz you on material—turn it into a game and see how many KSAs you can discuss or how long you can talk about a content area before running out of material.



Essential Strategies for Study Success

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY ONE **Knowing the Social Work Content**

This is an examination to assess knowledge of social work content, so you will need to make sure that you can describe an overview of the key concepts and terms related to each of the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities(KSAs). You will know if you are ready to take the examinations when you are able to briefly explain these areas to someone who does not have any prior knowledge of them. The difference between passing and not passing the examinations almost always is a result of gaps in knowledge, not application of test-taking strategies, so you need to make sure that the bulk of your studying is aimed at filling in knowledge gaps or refreshing information already learned.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY TWO You Will Never “Know it All”

You will never be “ready” to take the ASWB examination. Not unlike other standardized examinations, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE), you cannot judge readiness as knowing everything about the content areas. The ASWB examinations are not designed for test takers to “know it all” in order to pass.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY THREE Limit Your Study Materials

You need to limit your study materials to this guide or other key resources that summarize material. This is not the time to go back and read your textbooks! There are so many topics that you are asked to know about under each KSA that you cannot and are not expected to know everything related to the topic.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY FOUR Do not Start Studying by Doing Sample Questions

Although individuals like to study from sample questions, this is not advisable. There are many reasons why using this technique will hurt you on the examinations, but here are just a few:

1. Although it makes individuals feel better when they get an answer correct on a sample test, getting an answer correct is not a valid indicator of really knowing the content in the KSA for which the question was developed. Studying from the KSAs and the topics within them will ensure that you are able to answer any question, not just the one that is in a sample test.
2. Your answers to sample questions inappropriately influence your decisions on the actual examinations when asked about similar topics.
3. The sample questions that you study are not going to be on your examination and probably are not even written by those who developed items for your test.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY FIVE Use the Sample Questions as a Mock Test---Do Not Look at the Answer Key!

If you have access to sample questions, such as those in the last section of this guide, you should use them to create a “mock” examination. Most people have trouble resisting the urge to look at the answer key to see if they were correct immediately after selecting a response. However, a far better way to use these questions is to pretend that they are an actual examination.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY SIX Study for Four Hour Blocks at a Time

It probably has been a long time since you had to sit for a 4-hour examination—if ever! Our lives are hectic, and we rarely get a chance to really focus on a single task or have the luxury of thinking about a single topic in a way that allows us to really understand it. Thus, many people find it helpful to study in 4-hour blocks of time rather than for a few minutes here and there. This may be difficult, but it will be beneficial because it will get you prepared to not lose your concentration or focus during such a long period.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY SEVEN You Do Not Have to Know the Latest Social Work Content

There is always a time lag between the generation of new social work content and when it appears on the ASWB examinations. It takes time to write and pretest questions on new material.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY EIGHT Remembering the Core Elements of Social Work Content Areas

As you think about what is important to learn or remember when you are reviewing this guide, you should recognize that social workers who have attended social work programs at different schools, as well as courses within a program taught by various instructors, have passed the examinations. Thus, although there is always information to add to a KSA related to experience or depth of knowledge, there are “core” elements included in any overview or lecture on the topic, regardless of school or professor. These elements are the ones that have to be learned and remembered because they are the basis of the knowledge being tested.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY NINE It is Not Necessary to Memorize Content

When studying, it is not necessary to memorize the content because you will not have to recall a term or definition from memory.

Essential Strategies for Study Success

STRATEGY TEN Do Not Focus on the Jargon—Know the Content Behind the Jargon

Often, social workers are focused on using the clinical and other jargon that they learned in their MSW programs; however, they may be unable to explain what these concepts mean in plain and understandable terms.

The background features a complex, abstract design of overlapping purple and magenta geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, on the right side of the slide. The colors range from light lavender to deep, dark purple. The left side of the slide is plain white.

Strategies in Dealing with Test Anxiety

Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Acknowledge and Address the Anxiety

Ignoring the anxiety that accompanies this process will not help. It is impossible to completely eliminate it through any of the techniques mentioned.

Repeatedly studying the content over and over will not reduce your anxiety.

Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Make a Study Plan and Work the Plan

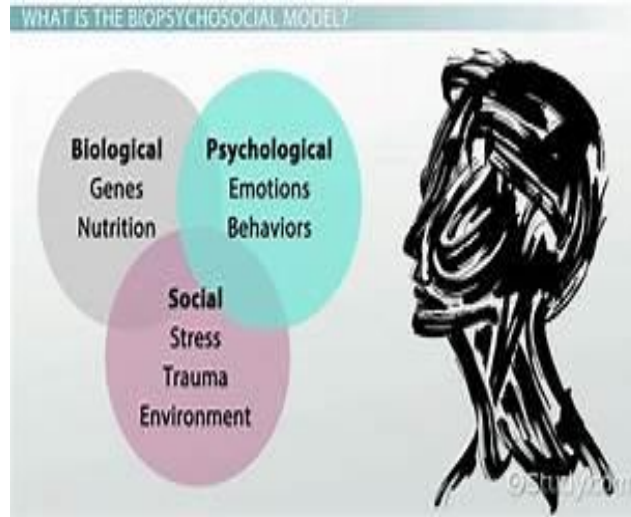
A great way to instill confidence is being able to walk into the testing center having prepared the way that you set out to do. A Study Plan will help you break the material into smaller manageable segments and avoid last-minute cramming.



Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Don't Forget the Basics

You need to make sure that you don't neglect your biological, emotional, and social needs leading up to and on the day of the examination. Get plenty of rest, build in relaxation time to your Study Plan, and eat well to give you energy during this exhausting process.



Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Familiarize Yourself With the Test Environment

Before the day of the examination, drive to the testing center so you know how to get there. Arrive early so you are not rushed. Take your time reviewing the tutorial on the computer before you start the examination.

View a test site location at aswb.org

Use Relaxation Techniques

Breathe and give yourself permission to relax during the examination. You may need to shut your eyes and stretch your neck or stand up several times during the 4-hour exam to help you to refocus.

Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Expect Setbacks

The road to licensure is not different than other journeys in life and not usually without unexpected delays or even disappointments.

It is important to see these as typical parts of the process and not ends in themselves. Try to figure out why these setbacks in studying or passing are occurring and how you can use this information as feedback for making improvements and ways to modify your Study Plan.

You did not get a social work degree without some disappointments and challenges.

Studying for and passing the examination will also not be easy, but you will be successful if you keep focused and learn from challenges encountered.

Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety

Reward Yourself

You don't have to wait until you pass in order to celebrate. Build some enjoyment into the test-taking experience by creating little incentives or rewards along the way.

Go out to dinner after having studied for 4 hours on a Saturday afternoon. Get up early and study before work so you can enjoy a movie when you get home. Improving your attitude about the test-taking experience can actually help you study more and improve your performance on the examination.



2021 ASWB Pass Rates (first time taking)

Exam	Total Number of Exams Taken	Pass Rate
Associate	307	70.7%
Bachelors	3,494	68.7%
Masters	21,650	73.0%
Advanced Generalist	173	63.6%
Clinical	20,657	75.8%

Not Passing the Examination

- ▶ No one wants to discuss this...but you may not pass the ASWB examination the first time
 - ▶ This is going to feel like you are a failure...you may be embarrassed...and you probably do not want to tell anyone that you did not pass
 - ▶ This is not a reflection of your abilities to be a great social worker
 - ▶ Put the examination into perspective
 - ▶ 90 days can retake the exam
 - ▶ Fail by 10 points or less can file a waiver to take sooner than 90 days
- ▶ It is ok!! Reflect on your experience in taking the exam, review your Study Plan, and set a plan in place to study some more and take the exam again



Examination Content Masters

Examination Content

Four Levels of Exam

- ▶ Bachelors
- ▶ Masters
- ▶ Clinical
- ▶ Advanced Generalist

Wisconsin Credential/Licensure

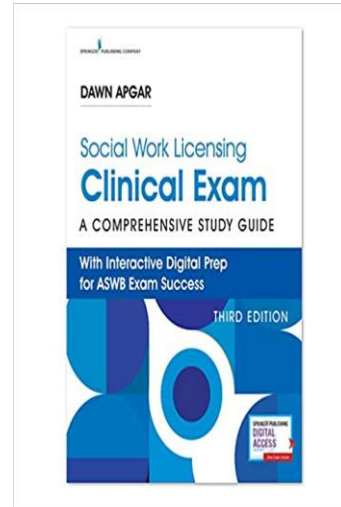
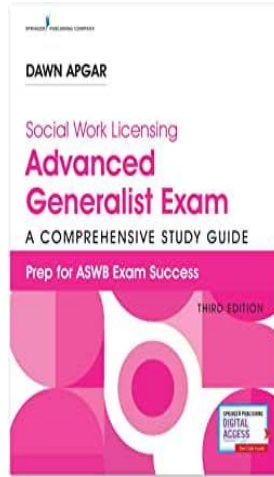
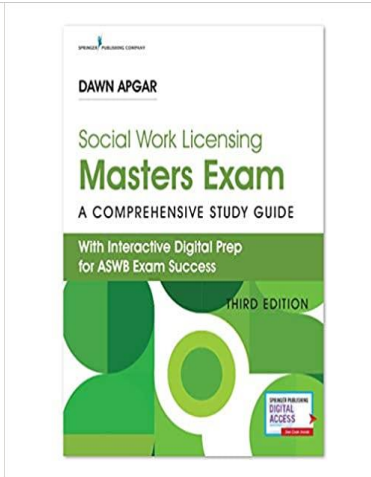
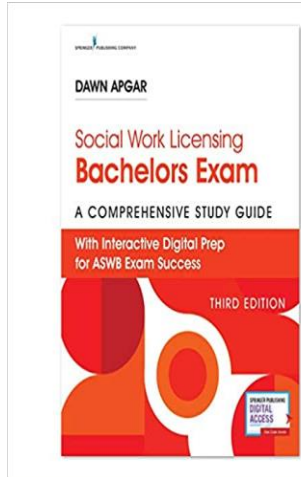
Certified Social Worker (CSW)

Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker (CAPSW)

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Independent Certified Social Worker (ICSW)

SOCIAL WORK ASWB EXAM GUIDES



Masters Exam Content

There is a separate set and percentage of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) for each level of examination, but there is some overlap.

- ▶ Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment (27%)
- ▶ Assessment and Intervention Planning (24%)
- ▶ Interventions with Clients/Client Systems (24%)
- ▶ Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (25%)

Masters Exam KSA's

**Human Development,
Diversity, and
Behavior in the
Environment
(27%)**

- ▶ Human Growth and Development
- ▶ Concepts of Abuse and Neglect
- ▶ Diversity, Social/ economic Justice and Oppression

Assessment and Intervention Planning (24%)

- ▶ Biopsychosocial History and Collateral Data
- ▶ Assessment Methods and Techniques
- ▶ Intervention Planning

Interventions with Clients/Client Systems (24%)

- ▶ Intervention Processes and Techniques for Use Across Systems
- ▶ Interventions Processes and Techniques for Use With Large Systems

Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (25%)

- ▶ Professional Relationships, Values and Ethics
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Professional Development and Use of Self

Self-Assessment

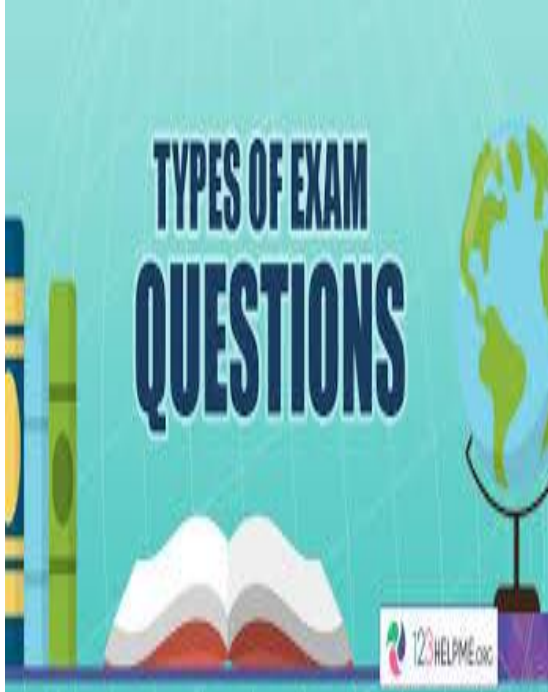
In order to help determine areas in which you need to concentrate on for preparation for the examination the ASWB

Exam Guides have Self-Assessment Tools that you can take to identify the areas to concentrate on while studying





Tips to Answering Questions Correctly



- ▶ **RECALL:** Being able to identify social work terms
- ▶ **APPLICATION:** Applying social work terms, theories, etc.
- ▶ **REASONING:** Being able to come up with a solution to an identified problem.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP ONE Know the Social Work Content

This is an examination of your knowledge of social work content. Often, what we learn in the classroom and how we might act in practice based upon practice wisdom and clinical judgments are different. **When selecting an answer, you should base it upon the content that you studied from this guide and what you learned in the classroom.**

Basing your responses on the information that is taught in the classroom and in social work textbooks, as outlined in this guide, will ensure that you get to the same correct response as others.

Tips to Use to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP TWO Having a Good Attitude Toward Taking the Test

You may have a negative opinion about the need to take a standardized 4-hour examination after having successfully graduated from your social work program and even gotten the requisite clinical experience. However, it is a requirement for licensure and seen as a way of determining whether social workers possess the knowledge needed to practice safely. The ASWB examinations are seen as indicators of proper social work preparation to successfully practice at various levels.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP THREE Recognizing Application Questions

Although there may be some questions that require you to simply “recall” content in a content area, many of them will be focused on you “applying” information to a particular situation or scenario. These questions come in the form of case vignettes and are often the ones in which social workers make mistakes. In practice, social workers often alter their actions based on many contextual variables.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP FOUR There is Only One Correct Answer

The ASWB examination that you are taking is used for licensure in virtually every state. The correct answer to a question is the same for all social workers taking the examination. However, the systems of care and laws in each state differ; thus, responses to situations may be varied in real-life, everyday work. This is not the case on the examination, as **there is only one correct answer to each question.**

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP FIVE The Best Answer is not Always the Correct Answer

Standardized examinations are often difficult and test takers often find themselves struggling to identify the correct answer from several listed. In these instances, social workers can make a common mistake such as selecting the answer that has catchy social work phrases, such as “from a client’s perspective” or “focus on a client’s strengths and skills.” Although these are important social work concepts, you need to make sure that these answers fit the scenario or question asked. **The “best” answer is not always the correct answer.** If you are judging answers solely based on the inclusion of important social work terms— independent of what the question is really asking—you will often be drawn to the “best” answers (judged to be so solely based on the inclusion of important social work terms or concepts), but they may not be correct. Remember, you always want to ask yourself, “What is the right answer to this question on the examination?”

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP SIX Only Choose Between Answers You Know

If you are asked to select between four listed terms, diagnoses, or theories, and you do not know with certainty what all the terms listed mean or the criteria for all of the named diagnoses, you should only choose between those that you know.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP SEVEN Take Your Time You Have Four Hours to Take the Exam

You will have plenty of time to answer the questions. Although the examination is timed, most people finish with a half-hour or more left in the 4 hours.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP EIGHT Look for Qualifying Words in the Examination Questions

Look for qualifying words in examination questions. These words are often capitalized, but not always. Examples of qualifying words are “**best**,” “**next**,” “**least**,” “**most**,” “**first**,” and “**not**.” Whenever you see a qualifying word, it is the key to selecting the correct answer from the others and is directly related to the answer.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP NINE Important to Have Basic Knowledge

The examinations require you to have basic knowledge about many theories, practice models, and perspectives related to social work practice.

A theory is a set of interrelated concepts that are organized in a way that explain aspects of everyday life.

A practice model is a way in which a theory is operationalized. A perspective is a point of view that is usually broader and at a higher level of abstraction (i.e., strengths perspective).

Having a basic understanding of various theories, practice models, and perspectives, as well as the terms that are rooted in them, is necessary. Sometimes there are recall questions about theories, practice models, or perspectives, but knowledge in these areas is often tested through questions related to case vignettes.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP TEN Do Not Add Material to the Examination Questions

Perhaps the biggest mistake that social workers make when taking the examinations is adding material to the questions. This is done unconsciously when social workers mistakenly think of a client or situation in their own lives that is similar to what is described in a question. Unfortunately, when this occurs, information related to this real-life client or situation is added to the information that you are considering when selecting the correct response choice or answer, even when it is not actually included in the question.

You should stay with the material in the question and not add information based upon practice experience.

Tips to Use to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP ELEVEN Look for Quotation Marks in the Examination Questions

Look for quotation marks throughout the question or clues in the last sentence before the response choices, because both are often the keys to selecting the correct answers.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP ELEVEN Answers with Verbs in Them Can Sometimes Provide Clues

Many of the response choices to questions on the examination often begin with verbs. If you are debating between multiple answers, the verb choices can often provide some clues.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP THIRTEEN Consider the Framework the Questions Refrencing

Often, questions on the examinations require social workers to identify what they would do “first” or “next” or to pick out the issue or problem that is “most” important in a case scenario. In practice, such decisions are often somewhat subjective and driven by practice wisdom that takes into account many clinical and contextual factors. However, for the examination, all social workers must select the same correct answer.

Tips to Use to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP FOURTEEN Understand the Problem Solving Process

Another critical tool available to select the correct answer is the problem solving process (i.e., engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, and termination). Understanding the goal of each phase and the tasks to be completed therein is critical because many questions on the examination focus on making sure that things are happening in the correct order.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP FIFTEEN Consider the Age of Client in Answering Examination Question

If the age of a client or others is included in a case vignette, it is usually relevant to selecting the correct response choice.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP SIXTEEN Take into Consideration Self-Determination

Often, questions on the examinations aim to assess whether a social worker is appropriately placing a client as the priority and respecting his or her right to self-determination.



Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP SEVENTEEN Read the Question Thoroughly Do Not Jump to the Answers

It is essential that the question is thoroughly understood before looking at the answers. The most difficult part of selecting the correct answer is understanding the knowledge area or concept that is being tested. In order to ensure that proper attention is given to understanding the question, a multistep process should be undertaken.

1. Read the question exactly as it is written, paying attention to qualifying words and those in quotes. Do not look at the response choices yet!
2. Ask “What is this question about?” to determine which of the KSAs is being tested.
3. Think about the important concepts related to the KSA; they will be essential in selecting the correct answers from the incorrect ones.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP SEVENTEEN Read the Question Thoroughly Do Not Jump to the Answers
(Continued)

4. Examine the question again to confirm that your assumption about which KSA is being tested is correct and to determine how the important concepts related to the KSA are relevant to the question.
5. Now look at the response choices for the first time! Read each carefully.
6. Eliminate any that do not appear to be correct. If more than one response choice appears to be viable, go back and read the question again—looking only at the remaining viable responses.

It is difficult to eliminate three of four possible answers immediately, so this process may involve multiple iterations. Each time a response choice is eliminated, read the question and the answers that are left. Going back to the question each time you are unable to dismiss all but one response choice will assist in selecting the correct answer for that particular question.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP EIGHTEEN Do Not Be Influenced by the Buzz Words

It is critical not to be influenced to select a response choice simply because it has social work “buzz words” such as “rapport,” “empathy,” “support system,” “joining with a client,” “strengths perspective,” “from a client’s perspective,” and so on.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP NINETEEN Do Not View Situation With Just Clinical Knowledge and Skills

Often, social workers view the examinations as a vehicle by which to demonstrate their clinical knowledge and skills. They view all client behaviors through a psychotherapeutic lens and are inappropriately quick to attribute actions to symptomology of disorders or dysfunction. Social workers also are more apt on the ASWB examinations to wrongly view clinical attributes as the focus of treatment or intervention.

Tips to Answer Questions Correctly

TIP TWENTY Questions Do Not All Relate to Solving the Problem Read Carefully

Most questions do not ask a social worker to “solve the problem” or even take action that will directly lead to resolving the issue or situation.

**DESIGN
IS NOT ABOUT
PROBLEM
SOLVING**

Practice Tests

- **The best way to use of practice tests:**
 - Take it **AFTER** you have completed your studying—do not memorize answers to these questions.
 - Do not apply the answers to these questions to the actual examination or you may miss subtle differences in each question that can distinguish the correct from the incorrect answer.
 - Take it in its entirety during a 4-hour block of time to show yourself that you can finish in the allotted time period for the examination.
 - Do not look up the answers until you are completely finished with the entire practice test, and do not worry if you get incorrect answers.
 - Remember, this examination is not one in which you can expect to get all of the answers correct. The number of questions that you will need to answer correctly generally varies from 93 to 106 correct of the 150 scored items.

Practice Question

- ▶ A client is referred to a social worker by her employer due to many absences. She is a single mother with three children. Financial troubles have resulted in her home being placed in foreclosure. She has had many different jobs in the last few years with few lasting more than several months. In order to best assist this client, the social worker should FIRST:
 - ▶ A. Develop strategies to address issues that led to the work absences
 - ▶ B. Help the client identify her underlying problems
 - ▶ C. Ascertain the client's earnings and expenses to find existing financial gaps
 - ▶ D. Determine if she qualifies for subsidized housing assistance

Answer: B Help the client identify her underlying problems

▶ Rationale

- ▶ Clients have multiple problems often times. Problem identification must include methods of involving clients in identifying problems targeted for intervention. Problem identification should always consider person in environment and strength based perspective. Social workers should view the clients experts in their lives. Clients should be asked about the paths that they would like to take to make desired changes.

▶ Test Taking Strategy Applied

- ▶ The question includes the qualifying work FIRST. The clients financial problems may have resulted from her employment instability. However, the cause of her absences is unknown. She may have lost her past jobs to similar behavior. The social worker must find out from the client about existing problem. According to the steps in the problem solving process the social worker must assess the situation before acting. There may be other areas of concern for the client that need to be explored.

▶ Knowledge Area

- ▶ Assessment and Intervention Planning (Content Area) Assessment Methods and Techniques (Competency) Methods of Involving Clients/Client Systems in Problem Identification (gathering of collateral information) (KSA).

Practice Question

- ▶ The primary aim of supervision for the social worker is to
 - ▶ A. Make certain that clients' issues are reviewed with more experienced practitioners
 - ▶ B. Improve social workers' skills and knowledge through professional development
 - ▶ C. Ensure that clients receive the most efficient and effective service possible
 - ▶ D. Prepare social workers to serve as mentors of new professionals in the future

Answer: C Ensure that clients receive the most efficient and effective service possible

▶ Rationale

- ▶ The purpose of supervision is to ensure clients receive treatment which is consistent with accepted standards of practice and their needs. Supervision does increase social workers' capacity to work more effectively, to provide work contexts conducive to productivity, and to help social workers take satisfaction in their work, enhanced client well-being. Social workers can use supervision as a method of professional development, but only with the goal of improved practice.

▶ Test Taking Strategy Applied

- ▶ The question includes the qualifying word PRIMARY. In this particular question the qualifying word is not capitalized. Social workers often view supervisory functions as they relate to assisting practitioners to enhance their skills or make difficult decisions. Supervisors are hands on instructors. Supervisors assist and develop social workers so they can provide better client services.

▶ Knowledge Area

- ▶ Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (Content Area), Professional Values and Ethical Issues (Competency) Professional Development and Activities to Improve Practice and Maintain Current Professional Knowledge (KSA).

Practice Question

- ▶ **When obtaining informed consent from a client who is not literate, a social worker must**
 - ▶ **A. Provide a detailed verbal explanation of service, purpose, risks, limits, and so on**
 - ▶ **B. Get written authorization from an appointed guardian**
 - ▶ **C. Complete a competency evaluation to ensure comprehension**
 - ▶ **D. Obtain assent from the client and legal consent from an appropriate third party**

Answer: A Provide a detailed verbal explanation of service, purpose, risks, limits, and so on

▶ Rationale

- ▶ The concept of informed consent has always been prominent in social work. According to the 2008 NASW Code of Ethics in instances when clients are not literate and have difficulty understanding the primary language used in practice settings, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include giving the client a verbal explanation or arranging for qualified interpreters or translators. A lack of literacy does not mean that clients are incapable of making decisions for themselves. Most people who can not read are their own guardians and capable of making informed decisions.

▶ Test Taking Strategy Applied

- ▶ This is a recall question that relies on social workers understanding informed consent procedures. It tests whether social workers are going to make assumptions about the competency of those who can not read. A lack of literacy does not mean the individual has a guardian.

▶ Knowledge Area

- ▶ Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (Content Area), Confidentiality (Competency) The Principles and Processes of Obtaining Informed Consent(KSA).

Resource for Practice Test Review of Questions (recommended by social work students)

- ▶ Phillip Luttrell (some free content and paid content)
 - ▶ <https://youtu.be/IYcqaSkviHo>
 - ▶ <https://youtu.be/rp1vi7Nif18>
- ▶ Behavioral Health Application (some free content and paid content)
- ▶ Agents of Change Podcast (some free content and paid content)
 - ▶ <https://youtu.be/PeJrCet2yjo> (Approaching Questions 5W's)

Reflections on taking the examination....

- ▶ “Relax once you get in the testing room, skip questions you are unsure about and come back to them, take the full time, and go over the answers you weren’t sure about at the end.”
- ▶ “The answers to the questions are not what you would do realistically on the job on the fly, but the answer is what you “should” do”.
- ▶ “I would definitely read the Code of Ethics---the exam preparation books keep going back to the Code of Ethics for a reason.”
- ▶ “I did a study group with people in my cohort and it helped me understand things better and always ask questions to help clarify.”
- ▶ “I did not use the practice test questions—I reviewed the ASWB book on the test and reviewed all of the content areas that were suppose to be on the exam—I did spend time reviewing how to answer the exam questions.”



- ▶ You have the foundation of the social work knowledge from completing your social work degree
- ▶ Develop a Study Plan that is tailored to you
- ▶ Put the time into studying—you have to take the time to study
- ▶ Good Luck—Believe in You!

Materials for this training from the Social Work ASWB Masters Guide and Social Work ASWB Masters Practice Test, Dawn Apgar (2018)