

EXAM FORMAT / SAMPLE QUESTIONS

NOTE: All examples provided in this guide are taken from Chapter 15, which is not on the Topic Schedule and will not be on either exam. These are merely meant to serve as examples. For these examples, assume that Key Concepts for Chapter 15 are innovation, organizational culture, and organizational myth. Stories, Rites, Rituals, and Symbols (pp. 354-355) and The Process of Innovation (pp. 361-362, Figure 15.3) would be major Key Topics while Subcultures and Countercultures (pp. 350-351) would be a minor Key Topic.

There will be three types of exam questions: 1) multiple choice; 2) scenario multiple choice; and 3) essay. These types are explained in greater detail below.

(STANDARD) MULTIPLE CHOICE. This question type is designed to test for limited knowledge on a broad range of concepts. These will typically be worth two points each and there will be two to three from each chapter on the exam. Questions will always be drawn from the Key Concepts listed on the Quiz web page. The format will be identical to that of the chapter quizzes. Questions will be grouped (and identified) by chapter, but may not be perfectly sequential within the chapter. Some of the quiz questions will be repeated on the exam.

(Examples from Chapter 15) Choose the one best answer for each of the following:

The system of shared actions, values, and beliefs that guides behavior of an organization's members is

- A. psychological contracts.
- B. professional orientation.
- C. organizational charts.
- D. organizational culture.
- E. organizational policies.

← (D) IS THE CORRECT RESPONSE

_____ is the process of creating new ideas and putting them into practice.

- A. Strategy
- B. Experimentation
- C. Governance
- D. Trial and error
- E. Innovation

← (E) IS THE CORRECT RESPONSE

SCENARIO/SUPER MULTIPLE CHOICE. This question type is designed to test for broader knowledge on a limited range of topics. These will be worth three to five points each and there will be one or two from each chapter on the exam. Questions will always be drawn from the Key Topics (mostly minor, but occasionally major) listed in the Revised Key Topics list on the Announcements web page. Scenario/super multiple choice questions consist of two components:

- Recognition (worth one or two points) – in contrast to standard multiple choice, which requires knowledge of a concept (i.e., rote memorization of a definition), this component requires you to recognize elements of a model/framework/theory; and
- Rationale (worth two or three points) – the reason for your choice based on your knowledge of the topic. Getting the recognition correct is not a guarantee you will receive full credit for the explanation. If you answer the recognition portion incorrectly, you may still be able to pick up one to three points based on a compelling explanation for your wrong choice.

(Example from Chapter 15) Note the two components.

Recognition. “Will it play in Peoria” is an old phrase that was meant to indicate whether a new product or service might have appeal to mainstream society. Companies would often test market in Peoria because its population had a broad demographic base. Let’s say McDonald’s is developing a new healthy burger alternative known as the McTurkey and wants to see how consumers will respond to the offering. They offer the sandwich for a limited time only in their Peoria locations. What step of the innovation process does this represent?

- A. idea proposal
- B. idea creation
- C. initial experimentation
- D. feasibility determination
- E. final application

← THIS (C) IS THE CORRECT RESPONSE

Rationale. Why do you consider this the best choice? Note: I will not specifically ask this question. However, space will be available on the back of the multiple-choice answer sheet for you to write your explanation.

If you answered C above, you might correctly explain that McDonald’s is developing a prototype that is shared with others as an initial test of value before a full-scale launch. [THIS RESPONSE WOULD RECEIVE 3 POINTS]

Alternately, if you answered D above, you might explain that McDonald’s appears to be testing whether the burger is practical (i.e., will consumers buy it) and if the price is acceptable (i.e., will consumers consider it a good value). [THIS RESPONSE WOULD RECEIVE 3 POINTS EVEN THOUGH YOU GET 0 POINTS FOR THE M/C ANSWER]

ESSAY. This question type is designed to test for detailed knowledge on a limited range of topics. Questions will always be drawn only from major Key Topics listed in the Revised Key Topics list on the Announcements web page. These questions will be very specific and require detailed answers (use the outlines to help you know how much detail). Essay questions consist of three components:

- Identification/Definition – you will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the model/framework/theory by identifying and/or defining various structural elements. Yes, this will require memorization, but that is part of learning (e.g., you have to learn the various parts/features of a car before you can learn how to drive);
- Recognition – you will be asked to recognize different sub-elements of the model/framework/theory from a set of brief scenarios; and
- Application – a situation/problem will be presented in which you will be expected to properly utilize the model/framework/theory.

Essay questions always draw on a model/framework/theory from the text. If you e-mail me and tell me the three parts of an essay question by the end of the day on Monday, January 27, I will add three points to your first exam score. Please do not share this information with anyone else. It is a reward for reading carefully. I generally will present these in some detail during class. When attacking essays, it is important to carefully read all parts of the question. The format of your response (i.e., outline, paragraph, diagram) is entirely up to you. Be concise yet complete with your answer. You can answer the essay in one page or less.

(Example from Chapter 15) The following is a good example of the type of essay question you might see on my exam. Note the level of detail, both in the scenario and in questions themselves.

Identification/Definition. Identify and define the four key features that help understand an organization's culture.

Recognition. Which culture feature is best represented in each of the following situations:

- Situation 1: It is common for management and workers at Honda's (a Japanese company) Marysville plant to start their day with group exercises and the singing of the company song.
- Situation 2: All United Parcel Service employees wear brown uniforms.
- Situation 3: At Ariel Corporation in Mount Vernon, Ohio, employees that complete the company's two-year leadership development program are treated to a special banquet at a local restaurant. Following the meal, which family members also enjoy, program participants receive a special plaque commemorating their accomplishment.
- Situation 4: The Monterey Pasta Company was launched from a 400-square foot store in 1989. The founders began offering fresh pasta in response to growing public interest in healthy gourmet food. Customers were excited by the exceptional quality and ease of preparation.

Application. Think back to any organization in which you were a member. Fraternities and sororities are easy choices, but Ohio University would work too. Thoroughly describe the organization's culture in terms of its features. How did you discover these features and how long did it take you to realize what was valued by the organization's members?

EVALUATION

I tend to be specific, rather than general, about what I want. I design essay questions so that my evaluation of responses can be as objective as possible. This means that I will be somewhat rigid in terms of the correct answer. Your response must be relevant. Do not write a page of “fluff” and expect to get much credit. Prepare your answer as though it will be graded by someone who has absolutely no knowledge of the framework/model/theory. Do not assume I will know what you meant to say.

That said, sometimes you may have trouble with a question (i.e., you forgot to study a particular topic). Always try to provide an answer. I can usually tell at first glance whether you have the right answer, but I read the entire question and give as much credit as possible even when you are off base.

Generally, the brief scenarios in the Recognition section will be examples of a structured answer from the Identification/Definition section (cultural features, in this case). However, I do reserve the right to introduce something new here, particularly if the Key Topic is detailed and/or consists of multiple structured elements.

Essays are set up as 25-point questions, with eight to twelve points allocated to Identification/Definition, eight to twelve points allocated to Recognition, and four to six points allocated to Application. Bracketed numbers indicate the point value associated with each item. Answers to this essay would be evaluated as follows:

Identification/Definition [12 points]

- ___ Story/saga – an embellished heroic account of accomplishments [3]
- ___ Rites – standardized and recurring activities used at special times to influence behavior [3]
- ___ Rituals – systems of rites [3]
- ___ Symbol – any object, act, or event that serves to transmit cultural meaning [3]

Recognition [8 points]

- ___ Situation 1: Ritual [2]
- ___ Situation 2: Symbol [2]
- ___ Situation 3: Rite [2]
- ___ Situation 4: Story/saga [2]

Application [5 points]

Any response that provided relevant illustrations for all four features of organizational cultures plus answered the final question would receive full credit. Missing or inaccurate illustrations would result in a slightly lowered score for this part.

Both the Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam will be worth 100 points. The Final Exam will only be over material covered in class after the Mid-Term Exam. I anticipate that questions for the exams will be distributed as follows: 1) there will 10-20 multiple choice questions worth 20-40 points; 2) there would be 5-8 scenario multiple choice questions worth 20-40 points; and 3) there will be one required essay response (usually a choice from three items) worth 25 points. The point value of the Final Exam will be shifted more toward Key Topics than the Mid-Term Exam. I reserve the right to adjust the number of scenario multiple choice and essay items based on my ability to write good questions.