

SOCIAL WORK ASWB[®] BACHELORS PRACTICE TEST

170 QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY
KNOWLEDGE GAPS

DAWN APGAR

The following study guides by Dawn Apgar are also available to assist social workers with studying for and passing the ASWB examinations.

Bachelors

The Social Work ASWB® Bachelors Exam Guide: A Comprehensive Guide for Success

Test focuses on knowledge acquired while obtaining a Baccalaureate degree in Social Work (BSW). A small number of jurisdictions license social workers at an Associate level and require the ASWB Associate examination. The Associate examination is identical to the ASWB Bachelors examination, but the Associate examination requires a lower score in order to pass.

Masters

The Social Work ASWB® Masters Exam Guide: A Comprehensive Guide for Success

Test focuses on knowledge acquired while obtaining a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW). There is no postgraduate supervision needed.

Clinical

The Social Work ASWB® Clinical Exam Guide: A Comprehensive Guide for Success

Test focuses on knowledge acquired while obtaining a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW). It is usually taken by those with postgraduate supervised direct practice experience.

Advanced Generalist

The Social Work ASWB® Advanced Generalist Guide: A Comprehensive Guide for Success

Test focuses on knowledge acquired while obtaining a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW). It is usually taken by those with postgraduate supervised nonclinical experience.

Dawn Apgar, PhD, LSW, ACSW, has helped thousands of social workers across the country pass the examinations associated with all levels of licensure. In recent years, she has consulted in numerous states to assist with establishing licensure test preparation programs, including training the instructors.

Dr. Apgar has done research on licensure funded by the American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation and is currently chairperson of her state's social work licensing board. She is a past President of the New Jersey Chapter of NASW and has been on its National Board of Directors. In 2014, the Chapter presented her with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Apgar has taught in both undergraduate and graduate social work programs and has extensive direct practice, policy, and management experience in the field.

Social Work ASWB® Bachelors Practice Test

170 Questions to Identify Knowledge Gaps

Dawn Apgar, PhD, LSW, ACSW



Copyright © 2017 Springer Publishing Company, LLC

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Springer Publishing Company, LLC, or authorization through payment of the appropriate fees to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600, info@copyright.com or on the Web at www.copyright.com.

Springer Publishing Company, LLC
11 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
www.springerpub.com

Acquisitions Editor: Stephanie Drew
Compositor: diacriTech

ISBN: 978-0-8261-3432-5
e-book ISBN: 978-0-8261-3433-2

16 17 18 19 20 / 5 4 3 2 1

The author and the publisher of this Work have made every effort to use sources believed to be reliable to provide information that is accurate and compatible with the standards generally accepted at the time of publication. The author and publisher shall not be liable for any special, consequential, or exemplary damages resulting, in whole or in part, from the readers' use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this book. The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Apgar, Dawn, author. | Association of Social Work Boards.

Title: Social work ASWB bachelors practice test : 170 questions to identify knowledge gaps / Dawn Apgar, PhD, LSW, ACSW.

Description: New York, NY : Springer Publishing Company, [2017] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016024066 | ISBN 9780826134325

Subjects: LCSH: Social workers—Certification—United States. | Social service—United States—Examinations—Study guides. | Social service—United States—Examinations, questions, etc.

Classification: LCC HV40.52 .A7354 2016 | DDC 361.3076—dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016024066>

Special discounts on bulk quantities of our books are available to corporations, professional associations, pharmaceutical companies, health care organizations, and other qualifying groups. If you are interested in a custom book, including chapters from more than one of our titles, we can provide that service as well.

For details, please contact:

Special Sales Department, Springer Publishing Company, LLC
11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036-8002
Phone: 877-687-7476 or 212-431-4370; Fax: 212-941-7842
E-mail: sales@springerpub.com

Printed in the United States of America by Bradford & Bigelow.

*I did then what I knew how to do.
Now that I know better, I do better.*

—Maya Angelou

To Bill, Ryan, and Alex, who are my teachers and
make me want to do better

Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Recommendations for Using This Practice Test</i>	<i>xv</i>
170-Question Diagnostic Practice Test	1
Answer Key	45
Answers With Analytic Rationales	47
Evaluation of Results	177
<i>Appendix A: Content Areas, Competencies, and KSAs for the ASWB® Bachelors Examination</i>	183
<i>Appendix B: Learning Styles</i>	191

Introduction

Despite social workers' best efforts to study for and pass the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB®) examinations for licensure, they can encounter difficulties answering questions correctly that can ultimately lead to challenges in passing. Social workers who struggle with standardized test taking or have failed the ASWB examinations find themselves at a loss in finding resources to assist them in identifying the mistakes they made and strategies for correcting those errors. The focus of test preparation courses and guides is usually the review of the relevant content and supplying some study and test taking tips. However, when these resources do not result in passing the ASWB examinations, social workers do not know where to turn for help.

Often, social workers will turn to taking practice tests in an effort to gauge their readiness for the ASWB examinations. In addition, they will try to use them to identify gaps in knowledge and errors in problem-solving that prevent desired outcomes. Such an approach is understandable because there has been a void in available diagnostic resources. However, for several reasons, use of existing practice examinations is not usually helpful.

First, it is difficult to identify specific content that is used by test developers to formulate actual questions. For example, many practice tests do not provide the rationales for the correct and incorrect answers. In addition, they usually do not let social workers know which specific ASWB® content areas were being tested (e.g., Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment; Assessment; Direct and Indirect Practice; or Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics).

x INTRODUCTION

In addition, the ASWB competencies and corresponding Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities statements (KSAs) that form the basis for question development are also not included. Thus, when questions are answered incorrectly, social workers do not know which knowledge in the ASWB content areas, competencies, and KSAs is lacking so they can go back and review relevant source materials.

Based on a practice analysis conducted by ASWB, which outlines the content to be included on the exam, content areas, competencies, and KSAs are created. Content areas are the broad knowledge areas that are measured by each exam. The content areas structure the content for exam construction and score reporting purposes. When receiving exam scores, failing candidates are given feedback on their performance on each content area of the exam. Competencies describe meaningful *sets* of abilities that are important to the job of a social worker within each content area. Finally, KSAs structure the content of the exam for item development purposes. The KSAs provide further details about the nature and range of exam content that is included in the competencies. Each KSA describes a discrete knowledge component that is the basis for individual exam questions that may be used to measure the competency.

Having ASWB content areas, competencies, and KSAs identified is critical in order to make practice tests useful for diagnosing knowledge weaknesses. The following example illustrates the usefulness of having this material explicitly stated.

SAMPLE QUESTION

A social worker at a community mental health agency is doing a home visit to a client who has not gotten his medication refilled as prescribed. The social worker learns that the client has not been taking it for several weeks due to a belief that the drug is not helping to alleviate his thought to “just end things.” In order to assist the client, the social worker should FIRST:

- A. Accompany the client to his next appointment with the psychiatrist to see if another medication can be prescribed
- B. Explain to the client the importance of taking the medication as prescribed
- C. Conduct a suicide risk assessment
- D. Ask the client if he has suggestions for other strategies that may assist him

ANSWER

1. C

Rationale

Social workers have an ethical duty to respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination. However, there are times when **social workers' responsibility to the larger society** or specific legal obligations supersedes their commitment to respecting clients' decisions or wishes. These instances are when, *in the social workers' professional judgment*, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves (including the risk of suicide) or others (in general or aimed at identifiable third parties—duty to warn).

The client's thoughts to "just end things" may be an indicator of suicide risk. The social worker should FIRST assess the degree of risk which is present to determine whether the client is safe without use of the medication and can wait to discuss his concerns with his psychiatrist at a future appointment or needs to be treated immediately, voluntarily, or involuntarily.

Knowledge Area

Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (content area); Client's Right to Self-Determination (competency); Balancing Self-Determination and Client Risk (e.g., Suicidal, Homicidal, Grave Danger [KSA]).

If this answer was missed, social workers need the rationale for the correct response choice in order to identify the need to review materials related to professional relationships, values, and ethics which is the content area being assessed. Specifically, this question focused on determining competency with regard to a client's right to self-determination and balancing it against risk (KSA). Reviewing the standards in the *National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics* (2008) would be a useful place to start. In addition, refined literature searches on self-determination and dignity of risk would produce more targeted information to fill this information gap.

Most practice tests will not help direct social workers toward these resources as they do not provide the ASWB content areas, competencies,

xii INTRODUCTION

and KSAs being tested. They also do not give valuable information on the topics as a way for social workers to understand the rationales for the correct answers and why the others are incorrect.

Second, practice tests rarely explicitly identify the test-taking strategies that must be used in order to select the correct answers from the others provided. Even when rationales are provided on practice tests, the test-taking strategies which should be generalized to other questions are often not explicitly stated. This void makes it difficult for social workers to see problems that they may be having in problem-solving, outside of content gaps.

For example, in the question above, social workers must be keenly aware of the client's thoughts to "just end things" as delineated by quotation marks. These thoughts may be an indication of suicide risk.

There is also a qualifying word—FIRST—used which is capitalized in the question. The use of this qualifying word indicates that more than one of the provided response choices may be correct, but selecting the one which precedes the others is what is being asked. When clients are potentially suicidal, social workers must FIRST assess for risk.

This tool was developed to assist social workers in identifying their knowledge gaps and difficulties in problem-solving by providing critical information including the knowledge area being assessed and the test-taking strategies required in order to answer questions correctly.

Social workers should use this diagnostic practice test to identify:

- Question wording which is important to selecting correct answers
- Key social work concepts which are being assessed
- Useful problem-solving strategies and themes
- Mistakes in logic and/or
- Content areas, competencies, and/or KSAs that require additional study

This test is not intended to be a study guide, but it does contain important social work content related to the KSAs. This diagnostic practice test is provided to help social workers who are struggling to find answers about what mistakes they are making and what they need to study more. It can be used in conjunction with existing study guides, which provide an overview of needed social work material, such as the *Social Work ASWB® Bachelors Exam Guide: A Comprehensive Guide for Success* by this author.

Social workers must understand their learning styles and use available resources to fill in existing content gaps through the use of visual, auditory, and/or hands-on materials. Most social work content is available for little or no cost. There is no need to purchase expensive products as there are many educational materials available for free. However, it is important that social workers make sure that these resources are rooted in the values and knowledge base of the profession, as well as produced by those providing legitimate instruction. There are no tricks or fast facts for the examination that can replace learning and understanding a topic. The application of material requires being able to relate it to various case scenarios or vignettes.

Recommendations for Using This Practice Test

Actual ASWB test results are based on 150 scored items and an additional 20 questions that are not scored because they are being piloted. These pilot items are intermixed with the scored ones and not distinguished in any way. Social workers never find out which questions are scored and which questions are being piloted.

In an effort to make this diagnosis as similar to the examination as possible, it contains 170 questions, the same number as the actual exam, proportionately distributed within the four domains—Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment (46 questions); Assessment (48 questions); Direct and Indirect Practice (44 questions); and Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics (32 questions). These proportions mirror the distribution of questions across these domains on the actual ASWB® examination.

The best way for social workers to use this diagnostic tool is to:

- Complete it after you have studied yet are still feeling uncertain about problem areas
- Finish it completely during a 4-hour block of time as a way of gauging fatigue and the length of time it will take to complete the actual examination
- Avoid looking up the answers until you have finished completely

xvi RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USING THIS PRACTICE TEST

- Generate a list of content areas in which you experienced problems and use it as the basis of a study plan employing other source materials to further review the concepts
- Generalize the test-taking strategies for future use on the actual examination

This practice test is to be used as a diagnostic tool, so social workers should not worry about getting incorrect answers, but should view them as learning opportunities to avoid common pitfalls and pinpoint learning needs. On the actual examination, the number of questions that social workers need to answer correctly generally varies from 93 to 106 of the 150 scored items. Since this diagnostic practice test contains 170 items, 20 questions would need to be randomly removed (6 from Unit I, 6 from Unit II, 5 from Unit III, and 3 from Unit IV) to determine if the overall number correct falls into this range.¹ Since many social workers who do not pass find themselves “just missing” these pass points, the value of identifying content gaps and difficulties in problem-solving is tremendous because it can result in additional correct answers on the actual test.

1 Because different test-takers receive different questions, raw scores on the actual exam—the actual number of correctly answered questions—go through an “equating process” to make sure that those receiving more difficult questions are not placed at a disadvantage. Equating adjusts the number of items needed to be answered correctly up or down depending on the difficulty levels. This diagnostic practice test has not gone through the equating process, which is why the number of correct answers needed to “pass” using ASWB standards cannot be determined.

170-Question Diagnostic Practice Test

1. A client who has recently retired tells a social worker that his life has always been consumed by his job. He was focused on rising to the top of his industry and increasing his earnings. The client feels that he would now like to “make a difference by giving back” and would like to donate his time and money to helping others. This client is MOST likely:
 - A. Progressing through a typical psychosocial stage of development
 - B. Worried about having something productive to do now that he is retired
 - C. Wanting to teach others how to be successful in their chosen fields
 - D. Experiencing a loss in role functioning that often accompanies retirement
2. A social worker is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of a behavioral program aimed at increasing social skills of children. While collecting baseline data, she asks a colleague to independently record the number of social interactions observed prior to the start of the program. The colleague’s information is then compared to that obtained by the social worker. This approach is MOST likely used by the social worker due to concerns about:
 - A. Validity of the research being conducted
 - B. Response bias due to social desirability
 - C. Reliability of the observations made
 - D. Homogeneity of the sample

2 SOCIAL WORK ASWB® BACHELORS PRACTICE TEST

3. Which of the following is NOT an assumption of age-stage developmental theorists?
 - A. Development is discontinuous, with qualitatively different capacities emerging in each stage
 - B. Stages are related to age
 - C. Stages occur in a specific order, with each stage building on capacities developed in the previous stage
 - D. Development in early childhood has an impact on development later in life

4. A process during which a conditioned response gradually stops occurring due to the withholding of a reinforcer is known as:
 - A. Aversion therapy
 - B. Negative reinforcement
 - C. Extinction
 - D. Classical conditioning

5. Which of the following service provisions is based on a residual approach to social welfare?
 - A. Public education
 - B. Supplemental nutrition assistance
 - C. Law enforcement
 - D. Social security

6. A client reports getting fired from her job. When asked about the reason for her termination, she states that it was due to her boss being jealous of her. However, performance appraisals reveal that the client was late for work and did not complete tasks accurately or in a timely fashion. The client is MOST likely using which of the following defense mechanisms with regard to her firing?
 - A. Rationalization
 - B. Displacement
 - C. Projection
 - D. Conversion

7. Which of the following statements is true about BOTH consultants and supervisors in social work?
- A. Consultants have specialized expertise while supervisors are generalists
 - B. Consultants and supervisors provide time-limited assistance in solving identified problems
 - C. Consultants charge high fees for their services while supervisors do not
 - D. Consultants have no formal authority within organizations while supervisors do
8. Which of the following is NOT a purpose of licensing social work practice?
- A. To establish regulations to serve as standards for professional practice
 - B. To provide mechanism for gatekeeping of those who do not have requisite knowledge and/or education from practicing
 - C. To raise social work salaries so that they are more closely aligned with other licensed professionals
 - D. To monitor those in practice to ensure compliance with established rules, taking remedial action as needed
9. The primary focus of crisis intervention in social work is to:
- A. Help clients learn coping skills so that they can avoid the onset of crises in the future
 - B. Provide immediate assistance to address presenting problems
 - C. Identify factors that have caused the crises for the development of preventative measures
 - D. Deal with the emotional and psychological consequences of trauma to avoid long-term effects
10. Comorbidity can be used to describe a client who:
- A. Is diagnosed with a terminal illness
 - B. Has a medical problem that shortens the life span
 - C. Experiences suicidal ideations that result in a preoccupation with death
 - D. Possesses both mental health and substance use disorders

4 SOCIAL WORK ASWB® BACHELORS PRACTICE TEST

11. A client states that she feels that she has been discriminated against at her workplace due to her sexual orientation. She is upset by this treatment and would like to find another job as she does not think that she will be successful in fighting the agency bias. The client has worked for her employer for many years without advancement and believes it is due to her marriage to another woman. In this situation it is BEST for the social worker to help the client:
- A. Address the emotional consequences of discrimination
 - B. Find another job that will offer advancement opportunities
 - C. Determine if other employees have suffered discrimination
 - D. Fight the agency's discriminatory practices
12. A social worker learns that his client is a close personal friend of his supervisor. Neither the client nor the supervisor is aware of this situation. In order to address it ethically, the social worker should:
- A. Keep the circumstances confidential, not disclosing it to either the client or the supervisor
 - B. Refer the client to another agency in the community
 - C. Inform the client of the situation and arrange for alternate supervision within the agency
 - D. Ask the client if this situation poses a problem
13. A social worker refers a client to another agency for assistance. After several months, the client returns to the social worker as she believes that the agency to which she was referred is engaging in fraudulent billing practices. The client has received notices from her insurance company that claims have been submitted and paid for services not received. In this situation, the social worker should FIRST:
- A. Ask the client for the bills and receipts to determine if the allegations are supported
 - B. Provide the client with a referral to another agency
 - C. Inform the client of the methods for making an official report of her stated concerns
 - D. Contact the agency to determine their reasons for submitting the claims
14. A former client comes to see a social worker to get a copy of his record. As he appears to be in crisis, the social worker is concerned

Answers With Analytic Rationales

1. A

Rationale

This client is likely in middle adulthood and is faced with the challenge of understanding himself as part of the larger society. During this time, adults strive to create or nurture things that will outlast them—often by having children or contributing to positive changes that benefit other people. According to Erik Erikson, contributing to society and doing things to benefit future generations are important needs at the **generativity versus stagnation stage** of development. Generativity refers to “making your mark” on the world through caring for others, creating things, and accomplishing things that make the world a better place. Stagnation refers to the failure to find a way to contribute, leaving individuals feeling disconnected or uninvolved with their community and with society as a whole.

Test-Taking Strategies Applied

The question begins with several sentences about the client’s past and current life experiences, including his current desire to “make a difference by giving back.” Material in quotation marks deserves particular attention and usually relates to the answer. One other answer relates to helping others by teaching, but it does not account for the qualifying word—MOST. Erikson described generativity versus stagnation as part of psychosocial development for all in middle adulthood.

48 SOCIAL WORK ASWB® BACHELORS PRACTICE TEST

Knowledge Area

Unit I–Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment (Content Area); Models of Human Growth in the Social Environment (Competency); The Psychosocial Model (KSA)

2. C

Rationale

Reliability is related to the consistency of data collected. When using observers to collect information, there is always a concern about whether results are reliable or consistent. Observers can be distracted or simply miss critical interactions. In order to determine whether all data were gathered consistently, **interobserver reliability** (the use of independent observers to see whether they record the same events) is needed. The social worker in this case scenario is using this approach by having a colleague independently observe interactions so that she can compare results.

There are other types of reliability testing—such as test–retest reliability (assessing the consistency of a measure from one time to another), parallel-forms reliability (comparing results of two tests assessing the same domain), and internal consistency reliability (examining the consistency of results across items within a test).

Test-Taking Strategies Applied

The question contains a qualifying word—MOST. While all of the response choices contain research terms, the use of independent observers relates to concerns with consistency or reliability of the data being gathered.

Knowledge Area

Unit III–Direct and Indirect Practice (Content Area); Evidence-Based Practice (Competency); Critiquing Relevant Research and Statistical Data (e.g., Understanding Basic Research Designs and Methods) (KSA)

3. D

Rationale

Development is the series of **age-related changes** that happen over the course of a life span. Several famous psychologists, including Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg, describe development as a series of stages. A stage is a period in development in which people exhibit typical behavior patterns and establish particular capacities. Age-stage developmental theorists view these age-related stages as discrete and occurring in sequential order.

While the last response choice may be true, it is NOT a hallmark of age-stage development theories.

Test-Taking Strategies Applied

The question contains a qualifying word—NOT—which requires social workers to select the response choice which is not a tenet of age-stage developmental theories. When NOT is used as a qualifying word, it is often helpful to remove it from the question and eliminate the three response choices that *are* essential components of age-stage development. This approach will leave the one response choice which is NOT an assumption.

Knowledge Area

Unit I—Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment (Content Area); Models of Human Growth and Development (Competency); Child Behavior and Development (KSA)

4. C

Rationale

In operant conditioning, behavior is reinforced by either gaining something positive or having something negative taken away when the behavior occurs. **Extinction** is the disappearance of a previously learned behavior when the behavior is not reinforced. For example, if a child always gets what he or she wants from a parent after having a tantrum, it is likely that these tantrums will persist because they are being reinforced. However, if the parent does not provide the desired response after a tantrum, they will likely subsist over time. This process is known as extinction.

Test-Taking Strategies Applied

This is a recall question that relies on social workers understanding behavioral interventions and key terms associated with these interventions. The question is seeking the name of a behavioral technique used to stop an action. However, even without in-depth knowledge of behavioral management principles, it is possible to identify extinction as a disappearance. For example, species that are extinct no longer exist. Thus, critically thinking about the meaning of the words provided as answers could assist in picking out the correct response.

Knowledge Area

Unit III—Direct and Indirect Practice (Content Area); Intervention Processes and Techniques (Competency); Cognitive and/or Behavioral Interventions (KSA)