

Planning and scheduling exercises: applied practice: open practice pack

20 untimed questions across 4 authored sections.

Detail	Value
Pack	applied-practice-planning-scheduling
Source	applied-practice
Pack version	v1
Worksheet items	20
Authored hints	0
Worked explanations	20

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The answer key and worked explanations in this file belong only to this public, untimed educational practice source. No active aptitude suite or Novus Reasoning Challenge answer key is ever included in any download.

Learner worksheet

Each item gives you a small network of tasks, a resource problem, or a plan that has met reality, and asks what follows. Choose the most defensible answer, then read the explanation. Nothing here is timed and no software is required.

Choose one answer for each item. On a judgement item, more than one option is often defensible. Pick the one you would rate most effective, then check the worked explanation for why the runner-up is weaker.

Sequencing and dependencies

Warm up on the shape of a plan: what must follow what, and what merely happens to share a resource.

1. planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q01

Task A takes 2 days and must finish before task B, which takes 3 days. Task C takes 4 days and depends on nothing. Enough people are available to run A and C at the same time. What is the shortest possible duration?

- A. 4 days
- B. 5 days
- C. 9 days
- D. 6 days

Your answer: _____

2. planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q02

Task A must be complete before task B can begin. What is that relationship called?

- A. A resource constraint

- B. A milestone
- C. A finish-to-start dependency
- D. A lag

Your answer: _____

3. planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q03

Two tasks are logically independent, neither needs the other's output, but both require the same single test rig.

- A. A resource conflict: they must be sequenced in the plan even though nothing logically requires an order
- B. A finish-to-start dependency between the two tasks
- C. A milestone clash
- D. Not a scheduling issue, since neither depends on the other

Your answer: _____

4. planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q04

To recover time, two tasks that were planned in sequence are overlapped so the second starts before the first is finished. What is the principal cost of doing this?

- A. Materials become more expensive
- B. It always requires additional people
- C. It removes all float from the plan
- D. Rework risk rises, because the downstream task starts on information that is not yet final

Your answer: _____

5. planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q05

What is a milestone in a schedule?

- A. A task that has no cost attached to it
- B. The longest task in the plan
- C. A point in time marking that something has been achieved; it consumes no duration itself
- D. A deadline imposed on the project from outside

Your answer: _____

Resources and constraints

People are not interchangeable units of throughput. These items are about what a resource plan can and cannot promise.

6. planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q01

A task is estimated at 10 person-days. Five people are assigned to it. How long will it take?

- A. 2 days
- B. 2 days plus a small margin
- C. 10 days, since the total effort is unchanged
- D. Fewer than 10 days but usually well over 2: some parts cannot be divided, and coordination cost rises with team size

Your answer: _____

7. planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q02

The resource sheet shows one person assigned full-time to three different tasks during the same week.

- A. The plan is infeasible as drawn: resolve the over-allocation by moving tasks or reassigning the work
- B. It is workable if they prioritise well
- C. It is workable provided the tasks are small
- D. It will resolve itself as the tasks progress

Your answer: _____

8. planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q03

The only person qualified for a critical task is on approved leave for the two weeks in which it is scheduled.

- A. Assume the leave can be moved if the project needs it
- B. Reschedule the task, bring it forward, or arrange qualified cover, and update the committed date to match
- C. Start the task with someone less qualified and have it reviewed later
- D. Shorten the task so it fits before the leave begins

Your answer: _____

9. planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q04

The sponsor pulls the delivery date forward by a month. The scope is fixed and the estimate was already tight.

- A. Ask the team to work harder for the remaining period
- B. Reduce the quality bar so the work goes faster
- C. Either cost or scope has to move; if neither does, the new date is not achievable and should be reported as such
- D. Extend working hours until the new date is met

Your answer: _____

10. planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q05

Where is a project's contingency best held?

- A. Centrally, released against identified risks, so that it stays visible and its use is a decision
- B. Inside each task estimate, where the work actually happens
- C. At the very end of the project, after the last deliverable
- D. Held privately by each team lead for their own area

Your answer: _____

Float, the critical path, and buffers

The heart of a schedule. Work out which delays matter and which do not, and where protection should sit.

11. planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q01

What is the critical path?

- A. The most expensive activities in the project
- B. The activities carrying the greatest technical risk
- C. The longest chain of dependent activities: any delay on it delays the whole project
- D. The activities the customer considers most important

Your answer: _____

12. planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q02

A task with 3 days of float slips by 2 days. What is the effect?

- A. The project end date slips by 2 days
- B. The end date is unchanged, but only 1 day of float now remains, so the task needs watching from here
- C. Nothing at all changes
- D. This chain immediately becomes the critical path

Your answer: _____

13. planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q03

A task that is not on the critical path slips by more than its available float.

- A. Nothing happens; only critical tasks affect the end date
- B. The float is simply recalculated with no other effect
- C. The critical path cannot change, by definition
- D. That chain becomes critical, and the project end date moves by the amount of the excess

Your answer: _____

14. planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q04

Where should a schedule buffer be placed to protect a delivery date?

- A. As a single buffer at the end of the chain it protects
- B. Inside each task's own estimate, so each task is protected
- C. Before the first task, so the project starts with slack
- D. Spread evenly across every task in the plan

Your answer: _____

15. planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q05

Two parallel chains both feed the same milestone. One has zero float; the other has six days.

- A. Give both chains equal management attention
- B. Concentrate on whichever chain contains more calendar days
- C. Concentrate on whichever chain contains more tasks
- D. Manage the zero-float chain as critical, while tracking the other against its six days of float

Your answer: _____

When the plan meets reality

Finish with tracking and change. A plan earns its keep only if it is updated with what actually happened.

16. planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q01

A task on the critical path finishes three days early.

- A. Pull the dependent work forward if resources allow, so the gain is not silently absorbed
- B. Hold the plan as it was; early finishes cause confusion downstream
- C. Reduce the next task's estimate by three days
- D. Note the saving and report it at the end of the project

Your answer: _____

17. planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q02

A task on the critical path is going to finish a week late.

- A. Add a week to the end date and carry on
- B. Ask the following teams to make the week back
- C. Hold the published dates and see whether it recovers
- D. Reforecast the affected chain and the end date, then communicate the new date together with what caused the slip

Your answer: _____

18. planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q03

Mid-project, a stakeholder asks for an extra deliverable, describing it as small.

- A. Decline; the scope was agreed at the outset
- B. Absorb it, since it is small and refusing looks unhelpful
- C. Estimate it, show what it would displace or what it adds to the date, and let the sponsor choose
- D. Agree to it and add it after the current end date

Your answer: _____

19. planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q04

The weekly report has shown the same task as '90% complete' for three weeks running.

- A. Accept it; the task is nearly finished
- B. Treat percent-complete as unreliable: ask what work remains, expressed in days, and what is blocking it
- C. Escalate immediately to the project sponsor
- D. Reassign the task to somebody else

Your answer: _____

20. planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q05

The project plan is three weeks out of date because nobody has been updating it and everyone now works from memory.

- A. Produce a more detailed plan so that its value is obvious to everyone
- B. Rebuild it at a level of detail the team will actually maintain, and set a short regular update rhythm

- C. Accept that this project is better run without a plan
- D. Have one person keep it updated from their own assumptions

Your answer: _____

Authored hints

This applied practice source does not publish separate authored hints: the rationale is attached to each item as a worked explanation instead. Every item is therefore listed as missing a hint, and no hint text is generated or inferred.

20 worksheet items do not have an authored hint. No hint text was generated for them.

Answer key

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Item	Choice	Answer
planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q01	B	5 days
planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q02	C	A finish-to-start dependency
planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q03	A	A resource conflict: they must be sequenced in the plan even though nothing logically requires an order
planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q04	D	Rework risk rises, because the downstream task starts on information that is not yet final
planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q05	C	A point in time marking that something has been achieved; it consumes no duration itself
planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q01	D	Fewer than 10 days but usually well over 2: some parts cannot be divided, and coordination cost rises with team size
planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q02	A	The plan is infeasible as drawn: resolve the over-allocation by moving tasks or reassigning the work
planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q03	B	Reschedule the task, bring it forward, or arrange qualified cover, and update the committed date to match
planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q04	C	Either cost or scope has to move; if neither does, the new date is not achievable and should be reported as such
planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q05	A	Centrally, released against identified risks, so that it stays visible and its use is a decision
planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q01	C	The longest chain of dependent activities: any delay on it delays the whole project
planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q02	B	The end date is unchanged, but only 1 day of float now remains, so the task needs watching from here
planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q03	D	That chain becomes critical, and the project end date moves by the amount of the excess
planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q04	A	As a single buffer at the end of the chain it protects
planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q05	D	Manage the zero-float chain as critical, while tracking the other against its six days of float

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q01	A	Pull the dependent work forward if resources allow, so the gain is not silently absorbed
planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q02	D	Reforecast the affected chain and the end date, then communicate the new date together with what caused the slip
planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q03	C	Estimate it, show what it would displace or what it adds to the date, and let the sponsor choose
planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q04	B	Treat percent-complete as unreliable: ask what work remains, expressed in days, and what is blocking it
planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q05	B	Rebuild it at a level of detail the team will actually maintain, and set a short regular update rhythm

Worked explanations

planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q01: The A-then-B chain takes 5 days and C takes 4 in parallel, so the project is 5 days long. The 9-day answer adds the chains together, which is what happens if you forget that C runs alongside rather than after.

planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q02: Finish-to-start is the ordinary dependency type and the one most schedules are built from. A lag is different: it is a mandatory wait inserted between two linked tasks, such as concrete curing, and it modifies a dependency rather than being one.

planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q03: The constraint is real and will lengthen the plan, but it comes from the rig rather than from the work, which matters because buying rig time removes it while a logical dependency cannot be bought away. Calling it a dependency is the tempting simplification and hides the cheapest available fix.

planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q04: Overlapping buys calendar time by accepting that some of the second task may be built on assumptions the first task later changes. Extra people is the plausible cost to name, but that describes adding resource to compress a task, which is a different technique with a different price.

planning-scheduling-applied-s01-q05: Milestones have zero duration and exist to make progress checkable at a specific moment. Calling it an externally imposed deadline is the everyday usage, but plenty of milestones are internal, and a milestone with no work behind it is a date rather than an achievement.

planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q01: Effort divided by headcount assumes perfect divisibility and zero communication overhead, and neither holds for real work. '2 days plus a small margin' is the sophisticated-looking version of the same error: it acknowledges friction while still treating the task as almost perfectly parallel.

planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q02: Three full-time assignments in one week is three hundred per cent allocation, and a plan that requires it will miss dates no matter how the person behaves. 'If they prioritise well' is the reasonable-sounding rescue and simply moves the decision about which task slips from the planner to the individual, without telling anyone which one it will be.

planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q03: Approved leave is a fixed constraint like any other, so the plan moves around it and the commitment moves with the plan. Shortening the task to make it fit is the tempting compromise and changes nothing real: the work still takes as long as it takes, and the shortfall now appears somewhere less visible.

planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q04: With scope and quality held, time can only be bought with resource, and if no resource is available the honest output is that the date is unachievable. Extending hours is the option that appears to create capacity from nothing, and sustained overtime reliably repays the borrowed time with defects and turnover.

planning-scheduling-applied-s02-q05: A central, visible contingency can be pointed at whichever risk actually materialises, and its balance tells you how exposed the project still is. Padding every estimate is the intuitive

alternative, protection where the work is, and it is the version that always gets spent: hidden buffer is invisible, so nobody defends it and every task expands to fill it.

planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q01: It is defined by duration and dependency, and everything on it has zero float by construction. The riskiest-activities answer is the most seductive because those tasks do deserve attention, but a risky task with a fortnight of float can slip a week without moving the end date, and a dull one on the critical path cannot slip a day.

planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q02: Float absorbs the slip, so the date holds, but the protection is now nearly gone, which is a change worth acting on. 'Nothing changes' is the tempting reading of the same fact and treats float as a permanent property rather than a consumable one.

planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q03: The critical path is a property of the current network, not a fixed list, so it moves whenever a chain runs out of slack. 'Only critical tasks affect the end date' is true at the moment it is said and stops being true the instant a non-critical chain overruns its float.

planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q04: A pooled buffer at the end is available to whichever task actually overruns, and statistically it can be smaller than the sum of the individual pads it replaces. Padding each task is the intuitive local protection and wastes most of it: a task that finishes early rarely hands its spare days on, so the buffer is consumed whether or not it was needed.

planning-scheduling-applied-s03-q05: Attention follows exposure: a day lost on the zero-float chain moves the milestone, and a day lost on the other one does not, until six have gone. Treating both equally is the even-handed-sounding policy and spends scarce management attention where it currently cannot change the outcome.

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q01: Gains on the critical path only become real if the successor starts earlier; otherwise they evaporate while everyone waits for the original date. Holding the plan is the stability-flavoured option, and it is why projects absorb every early finish and pass on every late one.

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q02: A slip changes the earliest start of everything downstream, and some of those tasks have resource or calendar constraints that a simple week-shift will not respect. Adding a week to the end date is the quick arithmetic and usually understates the impact, because it assumes every successor can simply move sideways.

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q03: Pricing the request keeps the project changeable while keeping the date honest, and the sponsor is the right person to decide the trade. Absorbing it is the accommodating option and is how a schedule accumulates a month of unattributed additions that nobody ever approved.

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q04: A self-reported percentage is an opinion; remaining days plus a named blocker is a forecast that can be checked and helped. Escalating straight away is the decisive-looking response and arrives at the sponsor with no information beyond the same unreliable number.

planning-scheduling-applied-s04-q05: The failure was maintenance, so the fix is a plan cheap enough to keep current and a rhythm that keeps it so. Adding detail is the instinctive response to a plan that is not working, and it makes the actual problem worse: the more granular the plan, the more expensive every update becomes and the sooner it is abandoned again.

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