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TUTORIALS: ANSWERING EXAMINATION QUESTIONS”

**Any examination will want to establish whether a student has the following:**

1. *Ability to follow instructions*
2. *Understanding of content and ability to recall*
3. *Ability to apply concepts*

**Ability to following instructions:**

A question will always contain **instructions** e.g.

***Question****: Discuss any five factors that influence phenomenon “A” and in each case, cite relevant examples.*

***Note****: this is a compound question that requires you to adhere to several instruction components*

The above question requires the candidate to be able to pick out the following key issues:

* ***Discuss*** *– that the answer or response to the question should be in a form of a continuous narrative, which can be broken into paragraph (each paragraph focusing on one factor) i.e. it means that you should not number or bullet your points!!!*
* ***Five factors*** *– it means that your discussion should cover five different factors*
* *Phenomenon A – means that the factors you include in your response to the question should only relate to phenomenon in question*
* ***Cite Example*** *– means that for each factor, you must include in the discussion a relevant example and relate the example to the factors/example should be applicable*

**Outline/State:**

*E.g.* ***Question****: Outline/State the factors that influence rainfall in a given region*

*The question may also be framed a s: What factors influence………….*

*When these terms are used, your response to the question should bring out the points without belaboring to give details. You can also number or bullet your answers e.g. for the above question the answers/responses may be presented as:*

* *Size of forest cover*
* *Geographical location*
* *Time of the year*

**Describe**:

*e.g.* ***Question****: Describe the structure of human heart.*

* *Describe means that your answer should paint a mental picture of the phenomenon in question. This question is best answered with the aid of relevant diagram or sketches where applicable. Of importance here is the ability of the respondent to draw the imagination of the examiner make them to picture the phenomenon.*
* *In the above question, it would help to first mention the function of the heart – pump blood ……. So that when you talk about the right and left ventricles, the muscles etc, the examiner can actually relate to the stated function.*

**Describe with the aid of a suitable diagram**

*e.g.* ***Question****: Describe the how a magnetic hard disk works with the aid of a suitable diagram*

*Simply means that you need to include a relevant diagram and map your description of the phenomenon or entity in question to the diagram*

**Recommend/Suggest:**

*Here, the respondent has some degree of freedom to craft their answer but the trick lies in the fact that the answer must be scientifically sound/workable.*

*E.g.* ***Question****: Recommend a strategy for managing malaria crisis in Kenya.*

*In such a question, it is important to think through*

* *the series of activities that need to be done (Justify why each is important)*
* *Order: When and how each should be done and anticipated outcome and how this outcome works towards realizing the desired goal*

**Explain**

* *Such questions simply mean, make (an idea or situation) clear to someone by revealing relevant facts or details.*
* *Such questions assume that the respondents can recall facts about the phenomenon and can make them clearer by revealing more relevant details.*

*E.g.Question: Explain the concept of photosynthesis.*

**Write Short Notes**

*Questions that require you to write short notes simply means that first, your answer can take any form of presentation e.g. bulleted or paragraph but the preferred approach is the bulleted format and secondly, the notes should cover an attribute of the entity or phenomenon in question*

*E.g. Question: Write Short notes on the Wireless networks.*

*The response to this question should cover issues that include:*

* *Components of a wireless network*
* *Function of each component*
* *Why it is a preferred option*
* *Challenges associated with it etc.*

**Differentiate**

*Means bring out the attributes of the phenomenon in question that make them different: Your answer can be presented in the form of a table or in sentences such that each sentence covers one difference.*

*E.g. Question: Differentiate between Copper cables and optical fiber cable*

*Sample response could be:*

*Optical fiber cables carry signals in the form of light pulses whereas copper cables carry signals in the form of electrical pulses.*

**Compare**

*In questions that ask the candidate to compare, all issues; similarities and differences must be brought out. There is a tendency for people to focus on the differences. Note that the response can also be presented in the form of a table that attempts to show the comparison of attributes or behavior in the phenomenon or entity in question.*

*E.g. Question: Compare the performance of unshielded twisted pair to coaxial cables.*

*Response to this question should cover all possible similarities e.g. the fact that both cables carry electrical pulses or differences such as the fact that UTP can achieve full duplex while co-axial can only achieve half duplex*

**Contrast**

*In such a question, the difference should be brought out.*