

Interprovincial Exam Preparation Information Guide

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Introduction

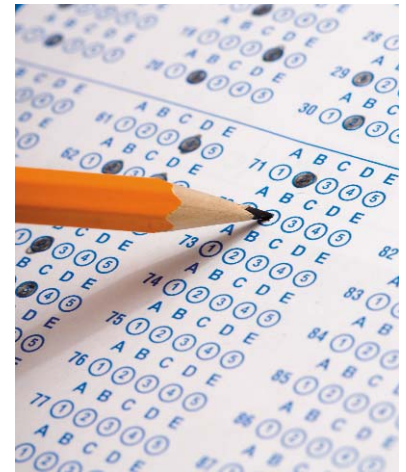
This guide has been developed by the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development, Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division to assist you in preparing to write your Interprovincial Examination (IP Exam). It provides useful information about multiple choice exams and strategies for preparing for and writing the IP Exam.

IP Exams contain between 100 and 150 multiple choice questions with an average exam containing 125 questions. Each question has four responses; only one of which is correct. A maximum of three hours is allowed to complete the exam. The passing grade is 70%.

IP Exams are available in all Red Seal trades. A listing of all designated Red Seal trades is available online at www.nsapprenticeship.ca. In Nova Scotia, IP Exams are administered by the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division.

If you are interested in writing an IP Exam, you must contact the division to confirm eligibility. Please contact the apprenticeship representative assigned to your file to discuss eligibility requirements.

If no one is currently assigned to your file, contact the Halifax Office by telephoning (902) 424-5651 or toll free 1-800-494-5651.



If you require the services of a translator, need to have the exam administered to you orally or require other special accommodations, ask about available options.

Upon successful completion of the IP Exam, you will be issued a Nova Scotia Certificate of Qualification with a distinctive “Red Seal” affixed. With the Red Seal endorsement, you are able to travel and work anywhere in Canada without the need for further training or examination.

A special thank you is extended to the British Columbia-Industry Training Authority and to Manitoba’s and New Brunswick’s Apprenticeship Branches for the use of their materials in developing this document.

IP Exam Preparation

In this section of the document, you will learn about:

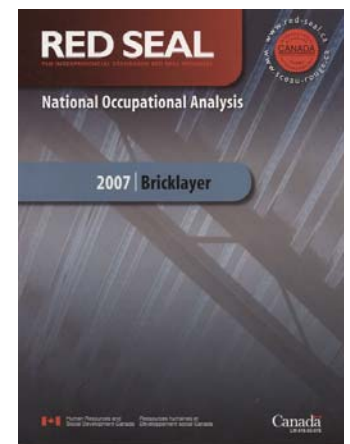
- using the National Occupational Analysis (NOA) to assess your knowledge
- accessing study materials and resources
- creating a study plan
- strategies for writing multiple choice IP exams

Using the NOA to Assess your Knowledge

The National Occupational Analysis (NOA) is a document used for a Red Seal trade that describes the knowledge and abilities required by a fully competent tradesperson in the trade. The content for IP Exams is drawn from the NOA for that trade. The NOA booklets for all Red Seal trades are available, free of charge, at the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division.

In the NOAs, material is organized into major content areas called BLOCKS. The Blocks are further broken down into TASKS and SUB-TASKS. IP Exam questions are written to test your knowledge and abilities regarding the Sub-Tasks in the NOAs.

At the back of the NOAs are appendices that identify the percentage of IP Exam questions for each Block and for each Task(s) within a Block. It is useful to know the percentage weighting of the exam, as this will help you determine where to concentrate study time. (To learn more about the percentage breakdowns, please refer to the “Creating a Study Plan” section of this guide.)



HELPFUL TIP

To obtain a copy of the NOA for your trade, please contact the apprenticeship representative assigned to your file and ask for a copy of the correct NOA for your exam.

To get started, you can use the NOA booklet as a self-assessment tool to determine your current knowledge based on the Tasks and Sub-Tasks. Review each Sub-Task in the NOA and place a checkmark (✓) next to the Sub-Tasks that you believe you have mastered. The appendices in the NOA booklet include a summary of the Sub-Tasks called a “Task Profile Chart” that can be used as a handy checklist to help compare what you know and your learning needs.

Once you have reviewed the NOA and completed a self-assessment, you are ready to obtain additional study materials and resources that will support your learning, and plan a schedule of study and review.

Accessing Study Materials and Resources

Study information can be drawn from a variety of sources. A sample list of study materials and resources is provided in Appendix A. These and other helpful resources can most likely be found in a local college bookstore, a public library, on the internet, or at your place of employment. You may be able to borrow them from an apprentice or journeyman in your trade.

Many textbooks and materials contain study questions that may be similar to those found on the IP Exam. These study questions can be useful for exam preparation. You may want to develop your own set of practice questions based on the NOA Sub-Tasks and their Supporting Knowledge and Abilities to ensure you understand the content. Although the IP Exam questions will not be the same, the information needed to answer the questions is the same. Be sure that you understand the material and have not just memorized sample questions.

Opportunities for success in writing IP Exams can also be enhanced with well-developed essential skills. As much as IP Exams test your subject area knowledge, they also test your knowledge in the areas of reading text, document use and numeracy. Assessing and enhancing your skills in these areas may also increase your chance of successfully passing the IP Exam.

HELPFUL TIP

Ask a friend or co-worker who has written the IP Exam for your trade to identify study materials and resources they found helpful.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Skills that people use in their jobs and in their lives everyday. Essential skills include reading text, working with others, problem solving, continuous learning, written communication, oral communication, document use, numeracy and computer use.



Creating a Study Plan

The strategies and helpful tips outlined here are intended to assist you in creating a study plan that meets your individual needs.

The first thing you need to do is to determine where you will study and establish a regular study routine. Find a quiet, comfortable place to study and use that same place each time you study. It may be helpful to study for shorter periods of time over a longer timeframe. This is more effective for retaining information than a single period of concentrated study. Be sure that your family and friends understand what you are doing and ask them not to disturb you during study times.

To create your study plan, think through:

- What it is you need to learn
- How you plan to learn it
- When you will learn it

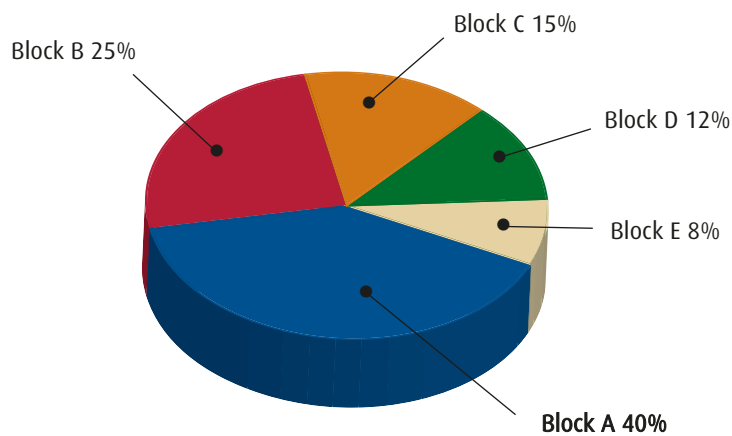
If you have used the NOA booklet to complete a self-assessment, review the Sub-Tasks that you did not place a checkmark beside. These items are the ones you need to learn. Assess these learning needs in comparison to the Block Percentages found in the appendices in the back section of the NOA booklet. The Block Percentages are presented in the form of a pie chart which will tell you the approximate number of questions assigned to each Block. For example, the pie chart below demonstrates that **Block A** represents **40%** of the exam content. If the IP Exam you are writing contains 100 questions, you will have approximately 40 questions from **Block A** on your exam. (40% of 100 questions = 40 questions).

HELPFUL TIP

You should begin studying for your exam as soon as the division confirms your eligibility to write. Do not wait until you receive a confirmation letter. Confirmation letters are only mailed to clients 10 days prior to their approved exam session verifying the date, time and location.

HELPFUL TIP

Ask the apprenticeship representative assigned to your file to tell you the total number of questions on the IP Exam you are writing. This will allow you to calculate the percentage weighting for your exam.



The NOA can further help you to narrow down your learning needs. You have already calculated from the pie chart that approximately 40 questions from “Block A” will be asked on the exam. Now you can find out how many questions will be asked based on each Task(s) within a Block. For example, the “Blocks and Tasks Weighting Chart” below tells us that based on the 40 questions that will be asked from “Block A”, **20%** will focus on **Task 1**, which would equal approximately 8 questions. (20% of 40 questions = 8 questions).

As stated previously, the exam questions are actually based on the Sub-Tasks. Therefore, concentrate your study on the **Sub-Tasks and the Supporting Knowledge and Abilities** (referred to as Required Knowledge and Key Competencies in some NOAs) **within Task 1** to get a better understanding of the potential content for the 8 questions that may be asked on this task.

Blocks and Tasks Weighting Chart

| BLOCK A | | OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS | | | | | | | | | | | National Average | | |
|----------------|---|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------------------|-----|--|
| % | NL | NS | PE | NB | QC | ON | MB | SK | AB | BC | NT | YT | NU | 40% | |
| | 31 | 40 | 41 | 29 | 40 | 45 | 42 | 40 | 39 | 45 | 4 | 41 | 45 | | |
| Task 1 | Uses and maintains tools and equipment. | | | | | | | | | | | 20% | | | |
| Task 2 | Organizes work. | | | | | | | | | | | 15% | | | |
| Task 3 | Performs routine trade tasks. | | | | | | | | | | | 24% | | | |
| Task 4 | Performs measuring and layout. | | | | | | | | | | | 16% | | | |
| And so on..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Calculating the percentage weightings of all Blocks and Tasks should give you a better understanding of the content of the IP Exam.

As a result of your self-assessment based on the NOA, are many of your gaps in areas where there are many questions on the exam? If so, you may need more than book study to prepare for the exam. If your checkmarks are in areas where there will not be many questions, don't spend too much time studying the areas. It may be a better use of your time to first concentrate on the areas with the most questions, and then review the other areas if you have the time.

For Sub-Tasks that you have not placed a checkmark beside, think of questions that could be asked in that content area. The Supporting Knowledge and Abilities identified under each Sub-Task will provide you with helpful ideas for developing practice questions. Practicing these questions should assist you on the exam.

Effective study strategies include:

- Prepare a summary of key information, including formulas, definitions and key concepts. It helps to learn the material if you write the summary in your own words, rather than copying from another source.
- Review the terminology associated with your trade. The proper names of tools, equipment, and processes are used in the IP Exam, so be sure to review the appendices (i.e., tools and equipment, glossary and acronyms) at the back of the NOA document.
- If you need help, ask a knowledgeable friend, co-worker or journeyman who has experience in the trade to assist you.
- Study alone at first and then study with others who are preparing to write the same exam. Discussion may help you to remember the material better, and explaining the material to someone else also helps in understanding it. Studying as a group may also help to ensure that you don't overlook any material.



Based on what you need to learn and the resources available to you, establish a study plan that allows you to finish studying at least several days before the exam. This will allow time for a general review of all the materials a couple of days before you write the exam.



Strategies for Writing Multiple Choice IP Exams

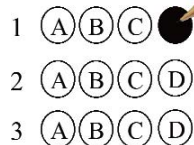
IP Exams are written exclusively in a multiple choice format. In IP Exams, each question has four responses; only one of which is correct. The three incorrect responses are called distracters because they are intended to look plausible and 'distract' you from the correct answer if you are not confident in your knowledge.

Example:

1. Which of the following is a Red Seal trade?
 - A. Florist
 - B. Locksmith
 - C. Shipwright
 - D. Boilermaker

In this example, the correct response or answer is D. The other three alternative responses are the distracters. Although plausible, as they are all trades, all three are incorrect because they are not Red Seal trades.

Using the above example, you would respond to the question by filling in the appropriate circle on the answer sheet which will be provided to you.



HELPFUL TIP

Make sure you mark each answer in the corresponding number on your answer sheet (i.e., When reading question number 1 in the exam booklet, make sure you respond to question number 1 on the answer sheet).

Effective strategies include:

- Read each question carefully so you understand exactly what is being asked. Do not make assumptions or jump to conclusions – stick to the facts. Be sure to read the whole question and not assume you know what the question is asking after you've read only part of it.
- Before answering a question, cover the response options with your hand or piece of scrap paper. When you have finished reading the question, try to determine the answer without looking at the response options. Once you think you know the answer, uncover the response options and look for the one that matches your answer. Doing this helps to avoid being distracted by incorrect response options.
- As you read through the alternative options, make note of which ones you know are wrong to narrow your options.
- Draw a diagram or jot down a formula if it helps to answer a question.
- If you are answering a question that involves calculation, it is useful to have an estimate of what the correct answer will be so that once you calculate the answer, you can check to see if it looks right.
- If you are unable to answer a question, move on and come back to the missed one(s) later. It's better to finish the easier questions first and come back to the more difficult ones later.

HELPFUL TIP

Leave your answer sheet blank for skipped questions so that you will know which one(s) you missed and so that your answers don't get out of sequence. It may also be useful to maintain a list of skipped or difficult questions on your scrap paper for review at the end.

Although IP Exams are checked carefully, it is possible that they may contain an error. If you believe that there is a mistake on the exam (e.g., a question for which there is no correct response), make note of it on the comment sheet attached to the back cover of the exam booklet, indicating the question number and the possible error. During exam scoring, your comments will be reviewed. If you are correct, the question will be deleted when the exam is marked, and your score will be based on the remaining questions.

Examples of multiple choice questions written in a format similar to that which you will experience on the IP Exam are provided in Appendix B.



Writing the Exam

In this section, you are provided with some strategies and helpful tips to help you avoid careless mistakes and to help you write the exam successfully.

Before the Exam

Once your eligibility has been confirmed, you will be asked to submit an application form indicating a “preferred” exam date and location. A listing of all exam sessions is included in the **training schedule** which is available online at: www.nsapprenticeship.ca.

Your application, along with applicable fee, must be received at the Halifax Office prior to the “apply before” date indicated online for the requested exam session. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, so you should submit your application early to secure your seat.

A confirmation letter will be sent to you 10 days prior to your approved exam session which will verify the exam date, time and location. Please do not attend an exam session without this written confirmation.

What happens if I cannot write the exam?

If you are unable to write the exam on your scheduled exam date, you will need to notify the division as soon as possible. You can contact the apprenticeship representative assigned to your file or telephone the Halifax Office at (902) 424-5651 or toll free 1-800-491-5651. Your exam may be rescheduled once only without penalty. Failure to provide at least 24 hours notice is considered a no-show and your exam fee will be forfeited.

What should I bring to the exam session?

You must bring:

- **Your exam confirmation letter**, to verify that you are approved to write the exam.
- **Government-issued photo identification**, to verify that you are the person who is supposed to be writing the exam (e.g. driver’s license, passport, apprenticeship ID card).

You also may want to bring:

- A non-programmable, pocket-sized calculator (scientific calculators are permitted).
- A watch, so that you can pace yourself when writing the exam.



Personal cellular phones, programmable or trade-specific calculators, other electronic equipment, textbooks, code books, or notes are not allowed into the exam room. If you do bring them, they will be stored away and will be returned only when you have completed the exam. The exam official will provide you with everything you need to write your exam, including pencils, scrap paper and any necessary code books.

HELPFUL TIP

Unless you are positive where the exam location is, do a test drive a day or two before the exam. Make a note of where to park and how long it takes to get there.

Try to arrive at least 15 minutes early for the exam. If you are late, you will not be permitted to write the exam and will have to reschedule for a later date.

Food is not permitted in the exam room, so it may be necessary for you to have a nutritious snack prior to entering into the exam room. Also, please allow time to go to the washroom before entering the exam room.

If you find yourself feeling anxious, just remind yourself that you have done everything you can to prepare for the exam.

Finally, get a good sleep the night before the exam, so you will wake up feeling rested and alert.

During the Exam

When you arrive at the exam location, you will be asked to show your confirmation letter and photo identification in order to confirm that you are the person authorized to write the exam. If you forget to bring these two documents, you will **not** be permitted to write and will have to reschedule your exam for a later date.

You will be assigned a place in the room and given an exam booklet, a diagram booklet (if required for your exam), a code book (if required for your exam), an HB pencil and an answer sheet.

Do not open or begin the exam until instructed to do so by the exam official. The official will start the session by asking you to ensure that you have the proper exam (for your trade) and to confirm your name on the front of your exam booklet and answer sheet. Some exams require the use of a code book. (e.g., Construction Electrician, Plumber, Carpenter). The appropriate national code will be provided as required. Writing in code books is not permitted. You may be subject to a replacement fee if you write in a code book.

IP Exams are bilingual in format. French questions are on the left pages and the same English questions are on the right hand pages. Candidates may use either official language as the questions are the same.

Before the exam begins, the exam official will read aloud the ground rules and directions on how to fill out the answer sheet. If you are not sure you understand, ask questions.

Then you will be asked to begin your exam.

Feel free to write in the exam booklet if you would like to make note of something. As well, there are extra pages at the back of the exam booklet for scrap paper.

Watch your time – it might be helpful to determine how much time you have for each question. For instance, if the exam has 120 questions (and the maximum sit time is three hours), then you would have on average 1½ minutes per question. At that pace, you should have completed about 40 questions by the end of the first hour, 80 questions by the end of the second hour, and all 120 questions by the end of the third hour. Try to allow for some review time at the end.

HELPFUL TIP

Just before starting your exam, take a few minutes to shut your eyes, take a couple of deep breaths to help clear your head, and remind yourself that you are well prepared to write the exam.

HELPFUL TIP

When the exam begins, write down any significant formulas or other memorized information on the scrap paper, to avoid panicking and being unable to recall the information when answering the questions.

Do not attempt to cheat or copy someone else's answers, or allow anyone to look at your answers. Many different trades exams are written during an exam session, so it is unlikely that someone close to you will be writing the same exam. If you are caught trying to cheat, your exam will be removed and scored as a zero, and your privilege of writing the IP Exam may be forfeited for a period of time.

HELPFUL TIP

Maintain good posture so that your muscles do not get sore and stiff. Change your seating position as necessary to help you relax and ensure you are as comfortable as possible.

If there is anything you do not understand during the exam, raise your hand and the exam official will provide assistance. While they can not help you to answer a question, it is their job to explain the instructions.

Take advantage of the entire three hours allocated for writing the exam – you get no extra points for leaving early, so don't panic when you see others handing in their exams. Leave only when you are satisfied that you have done your best.

Finally, ensure you answer all questions. If at the end of the allocated time you are still unable to determine the correct answer to some questions, guess – points are not deducted for incorrect responses,

and you have at least a 25% chance of guessing it correctly.

After the Exam

Exam scoring will begin on the Wednesday after the regularly scheduled exam sitting. Your exam result, complete with an analysis, will be mailed to you after the exam has been scored. Exam results – marks, pass/fail – will not be released over the telephone.

You should expect to receive your exam result within a couple of weeks. If you are successful, you will be issued a Nova Scotia Certificate of Qualification with the red seal endorsement.

HELPFUL TIP

If you plan to re-write, know that IP Exams are continually updated and developed. Therefore, you may not be writing the same version of the exam as before and it could be based on a new NOA. Contact your apprenticeship representative to confirm the correct NOA for your exam and your eligibility for a re-write.

Conclusion

We hope that this guide has provided you with some strategies and helpful tips to assist you in preparing for and writing the IP Exam. If you have any questions, comments, or would like more information, please feel free to contact the division at:

Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division
Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development
2021 Brunswick Street
PO Box 578
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
Telephone: (902) 424-5651 (Halifax Office)
Toll free: 1-800-494-5651
Email: apprenticeship@gov.ns.ca
Website: www.nsapprenticeship.ca

We appreciate your comments and feedback on the usefulness of the materials and resources identified. If you are aware of other helpful resources, feel free to forward your recommendations to us.



Appendix A

Sample List of Study Materials and Resources

The division neither endorses nor recommends the use of the following materials; they are provided merely as a guide to known available resources.

Trade-Specific:

- A list of textbooks and other resources used by apprentices in several trade areas are available online at <http://www.apprenticeship.nsc.ca/books/>. For additional information or pricing, please contact the Nova Scotia Community College at (902) 491-3516. Some of the textbooks may be available at a public library or at your place of employment. You may also be able to borrow them from an apprentice or journeyman in your trade.
- Alberta Advanced Education and the Apprenticeship training providers in Alberta are developing modularized learning materials. A list of the modules by trade area is available for purchase online at <http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca>
Under - Forms and Publications / Individual Learning Modules Initiative.
- Several trades-related handbooks are available for purchase through the Centennial College Press website at <http://www.centennialcollegepress.com/auto.html#autoserv>.
 - Automotive Service Technician Test Preparation (includes sample tests)
 - Truck and Transport Mechanic Test Preparation (includes sample tests)
 - Basic Welding for Motive Power Technicians
 - Dictionary of Automotive Technology
- Electrician's Self-Assessment Tool (ESAT) is available for purchase through the Canadian Standards Association. This CD-ROM offers more than 1100 sample questions to test your knowledge of the Construction Electrician National Occupational Analysis. Additional information is available online at <http://www.csa.ca>.
- Online textbooks and quizzes covering electricity and electronics are available at <http://www.thelearningpit.com> and <http://www.allaboutcircuits.com>.
- Practice exams in several trade areas are available for purchase at <http://www.exambank.com>.
- Many product manufacturers offer websites with helpful information.

Essential Skills:

- The Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College offers courses in **Math Refresher** and **Document Use** to registered apprentices. The only cost to apprentices is the purchase of textbooks or course materials. These courses are typically delivered two evenings a week over a six week period. Information on scheduled offerings is included in the **Training Schedule** which is available online at www.apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca.
- The Construction Sector Council has published two workbooks.
 - Using Trades Math www.csa-ca.org/pdf/CSC_UTM_e.pdf
 - Essential Skills Activities for Trades www.csa-ca.org/pdf/CSC_ESA_e.pdf
- Alberta Advanced Education and the Apprenticeship training providers in Alberta developed trade entrance exams that test clients' essential skills to ensure that they meet Alberta's educational requirements. **Study guides** including sample math, science and reading comprehension questions are available online at <http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca> *Under - Trades & Occupations/ Select a Trade/ Apprenticeship Training / Entrance Exam Study Guide.*
- British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) has published a **Trades Math "Tune-Up"** workbook. Work book is available online at www.bcit.ca/files/tlc/pdf/tlc_math_tuneup.pdf.

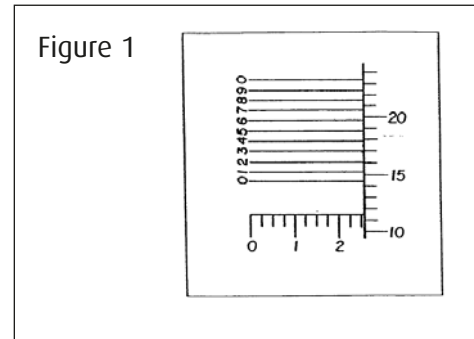
Appendix B

Sample Multiple Choice Questions

The following are examples of the style and type of multiple choice questions found on IP exams. They relate to a variety of trades, and are not intended to illustrate the total content of any one specific trade or examination.

1. Refer to Figure 1. What is the reading indicated by the vernier micrometer?

- A. 0.2253 in.
- B. 0.2613 in.
- C. 0.2615 in.
- D. 0.2645 in.

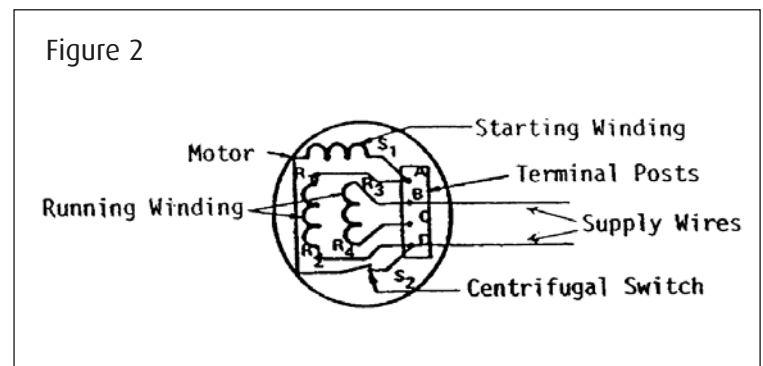


2. In a single phase 115 v circuit, a piece of equipment draws 28 A. If the power factor is 28%, what is the true power used?

- A. 3 360 W.
- B. 3 305 W.
- C. 3 135 W.
- D. 2 856 W.

3. Refer to Figure 2. The diagram shows the windings, terminal posts and supply wires for 115/230 V split-phase motor. If the supply is 230 V, what additional connections, if any, must be made at the terminal posts?

- A. None.
- B. Connect A to C.
- C. Connect C to D.
- D. Connect A to B and C to D.



4. On a water closet carrier installation, what is the purpose of the back-up nuts and washers?

- A. To provide a solid, plumb backing and help prevent fixture breakage.
- B. To be used primarily as an anchoring device.
- C. To provide for a means of expansion and contraction.
- D. To eliminate excess vibration.

5. Which ingredients can be used in a vegan meal?

- A. Milk, flour, eggs.
- B. Water, milk, eggs.
- C. Flour, water, eggs.
- D. Milk, water, flour.

6. When double cutting a seam in sheet vinyl, what should the angle be between the knife and the work surface?

- A. 45°
- B. 60°
- C. 90°
- D. 105°

7. As the speed of a magneto is increased, what is the effect on the output voltage and current?

- A. Voltage increases and current increases.
- B. Voltage increases and current decreases.
- C. Voltage decreases and current increases.
- D. Voltage decreases and current decreases.

8. An enclosed 6 ft. x 12 ft. (3 m x 4 m) room requires crown moulding at the ceiling. How much moulding is required?

- | METRIC | IMPERIAL |
|---------------|-----------------|
| A. 7 m | A. 18 ft. |
| B. 8 m | B. 24 ft. |
| C. 14 m | C. 36 ft. |
| D. 16 m | D. 48 ft. |

9. Which of the following is not a state of matter?
- A. Solid.
 - B. Gas.
 - C. Liquid.
 - D. Condensate.
10. What is the minimum clearance required between a building opening and the discharge of a regulator rated at less than 1900 SCF/H?
- A. 1 ft. (0.3 m)
 - B. 3 ft. (1.0 m)
 - C. 6 ft. (2.0 m)
 - D. 10 ft. (3.0 m)



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NOVA SCOTIA

Labour and
Workforce Development