



Police Officer Selection Test (POST)

Study Guide

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Introduction

This study guide is designed to help you obtain your maximum potential score on the National Police Officer Selection Test (POST). It is divided into four parts, which provides useful information on preparing to take the test.

Preparing for the Test

Taking the Test

Sample Test Items

Sample Test Answer Key

Preparing for the Test

You will increase your chances of obtaining your best possible score if you spend a fair amount of time preparing for the test. This includes finding out as much as possible about the test ahead of time, paying proper attention to your physical well-being before the test, taking care to avoid becoming overly anxious about the test and using a good test-taking strategy. Preparation in these areas can help you achieve your best possible score on the test.

For optimal test results, read this study guide thoroughly and answer the sample test items beginning on page 7. Make sure you read all the directions carefully and each test question completely before answering.

Test Format

The POST is made up of four separately-timed test sections. The first three sections (Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Grammar) utilize multiple-choice and true/false formats. The fourth section, Incident Report Writing, requires you to write out your answers in complete sentences in the spaces provided in the test booklet.

Though most of the questions in this test battery relate to police duty, no prior knowledge of law or law enforcement will be needed to answer the questions.

Examination Hints

Attempt to answer every question on the test. There is no penalty for guessing because your score is based on the total number of correct answers. This means you should respond to every question, even when you are not certain of the correct answer. When you are uncertain, your answer should be your best guess, and you should then move on to the next question. You will need to balance the amount of time you spend on each question with the total amount of time allotted to take the test. You will be told when to start and stop each section. If you have extra time, you are allowed to check your work in that section of the test only.

Time Limits

It is important to know the amount of time allowed for each section so you can pace yourself and not spend too much time on questions causing you problems. Remember there is no penalty for guessing. If you find you are spending too much time on a question, you should make your best guess and move on. If you finish before time is called, you can go back and check your answers in the section you are working on. The number of test items and time limits for each of the sections of the test are listed below.

Section	Test	Number of Items	Test Time
I	Mathematics	20	20 minutes
II	Reading Comprehension	25	25 minutes
III	Grammar	20	15 minutes
IV	Incident Report Writing	10	15 minutes

Marking Your Answers

The test will be computer scored. Therefore, it is important to follow the instructions below to insure your answers are read correctly.

- Use a #2 or softer lead pencil. Do not use ink.
- Make heavy black marks that completely fill the oval.
- Erase completely any marks you wish to change
- Make no stray marks on the test booklet. Scratch paper will be provided in the math section to do your figuring.
- Be sure that you blacken only one oval for each question. If you blacken more than one oval it will be counted as incorrect, even if one of the answers is correct.
- The first three sections of the test are in a multiple-choice format. The ovals appear next to the test questions as shown in the example below:

1. A
 B
 C
 D
 E

Notice that for each number there are five ovals labeled *A*, *B*, *C*, *D* and *E*. You will blacken the oval that corresponds to the answer you think is correct. For example, assume that for test question number 1, you feel that *B* is the correct answer. You would blacken the oval labeled *B* on your answer sheet as shown in the example below.

1. A
 B
 C
 D
 E

The fourth section of the test requires the test taker to answer questions in complete sentences. The sentences must contain the correct information, be grammatically correct and all words should be spelled correctly. Pages 7-19 of this study guide give various sample test items and answers.

Taking the Test

This part of the POST study guide provides some common sense advice for the day you take the test. Although these points may seem obvious, it is attention to details such as these that will increase your probability of obtaining your maximum potential score.

Before The Test Begins

Arrive early. You may be assigned a seat or you may be able to pick your own. Either way, settle in and put your things away. Try to relax, but concentrate on the test you are about to take. Put outside distractions out of your mind. Give the test you are about to take your complete attention.

Listen Carefully

The test administrator will provide you with complete and detailed instructions for taking each section. Be sure that you pay close attention to what this person has to say. Do not read ahead because you may miss something very important. If you do not hear or do not understand the directions, ask the test administrator to repeat them. It is extremely important that you completely understand the directions **before** the test begins.

Test Timing

Just before the signal to begin each section is given, make a mental note of what time it will be when the time limit for the section is up. For example, if the time limit is 15 minutes and it is currently 4:15, make a mental note that time will be up at 4:30. This will allow you to pace yourself while working through the test. Remember, your score on the test will be the total number correct. Therefore, you will want to work both quickly and accurately.

You should balance the amount of time you spend on each question. You should devote enough time to work through the question, but you should not spend too much time on any one question that is giving you difficulty. When this occurs, make your best guess and move on to the next question. If you finish before time is up, you can always go back and check the questions on which you guessed.

Preparing Yourself Physically for the Test

- Avoid junk food and concentrate on a well balanced diet for at least several days before the test.
- Avoid tranquilizers and stimulants, such as coffee, especially on the day of the test.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Do not drink a lot of liquids or eat a big meal before the test.
- Avoid alcohol several days prior to and especially on the day of the test.

Sample Test Items

Section I In this section of the exam you will be provided with situations that require the use of basic arithmetic. You will read each situation and solve the problem. You are not allowed to use a calculator in this section; scratch paper will be provided in the test booklet to do all of your figuring.

1. Officer Milton visits local area businesses as part of a theft prevention program. If Officer Milton visits three area businesses every week, except for his three-week vacation, how many groups does he visit in one year?
- A. 49
 - B. 98
 - C. 147
 - D. 150
 - E. 166

Questions 2 and 3 are based on the following information.

In preparing a report on a burglary in a dentist's office, Sgt. Kramer listed the following stolen items and their values.

Digital camera	\$810
Laptop computer	\$650
Printer	\$325
Paper shredder	\$125

2. What was the total value of all the stolen goods?
- A. \$1800
 - B. \$1810
 - C. \$1860
 - D. \$1910
 - E. \$2010
3. What was the value of all the stolen goods EXCEPT the paper shredder?
- A. \$1100
 - B. \$1260
 - C. \$1585
 - D. \$1685
 - E. \$1785

4. During one 5-day period, Officer Fernandez drove his patrol motorcycle 225 miles. If he drove 85 miles on one day, how many miles did he average on each of the other days?
- A. 28 miles
 - B. 35 miles
 - C. 40 miles
 - D. 70 miles
 - E. 140 miles
5. Burglars broke into an electronics store and left with 30 global navigation systems with a total retail value of \$6,750. What is the average retail value of each navigation system?
- A. \$225
 - B. \$250
 - C. \$275
 - D. \$325
 - E. \$350

There are 20 questions like these in Section I of the test, and you will have 20 minutes to answer them. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be the percentage of problems you answer correctly. Therefore, you should try to answer each problem.

Section II

This section measures reading comprehension. You will read passages relating to police duty and then answer questions based on these passages. **NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF LAW OR LAW ENFORCEMENT WILL BE NEEDED TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.** All the information needed to answer the questions will be provided in the passage.

THE PASSAGES IN THIS SECTION ARE NOT INTENDED TO REPRESENT ACTUAL LAW OF ANY PARTICULAR STATE. THE PASSAGES PRESENT POTENTIAL RULES AND LAWS RELATING TO POLICE WORK.

Three different types of questions will be asked in this section.

- (1) True/False questions in which a statement will be given concerning a passage or sample report form. The statement will either be accurate and true based on the passage or form, or the statement will be inaccurate and false according to the passage or form.
- (2) Questions in which you will be asked to choose the correct answer according to the information presented in the passage or on a sample report form.
- (3) Questions in which you will be asked to choose the alternative that best completes the sentence. Again, answers should be based on the information in the passage or on the report form.

Questions 6-10 are based on the following passage.

In an effort to conserve fuel, reduce traffic congestion and encourage greater use of public transportation, police in Central City are enforcing new driving restrictions through the use of specially marked license plates. These restrictions apply to all vehicular traffic within a two-mile radius of the city center and are effective Monday through Friday.

Vehicles with an “**A**” license plate are considered essential to city services and may travel and park freely in the city center. Police, fire and emergency vehicles are examples of vehicles that would be issued an “**A**” license plate. Public transportation vehicles such as buses and taxis will be issued a “**K**” license plate, and they too may travel freely through the city center, though they may not park anywhere within the city center.

Delivery vehicles will be issued a “**B**” license plate which allows them access to the city center for loading and unloading between 8 and 10 am and 4 to 6 pm only. There is no restriction on deliveries over the weekend. Shop and business owners within the city center will be issued a “**Q**” license plate which allows them access to their place of business; however, parking within the city center must be off-street.

Privately-owned vehicles with an “**X**” license plate may be driven and parked within the city center on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only. Vehicles issued a “**Z**” license plate may be driven and parked within the city center on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday only.

Central City police are authorized to ticket and arrange for the immediate towing of vehicles violating these new license ordinances. The objective of these changes is to make the city center less congested and more shopper-friendly.

6. According to the passage, a package delivery service may deliver a shipment of medications to a pharmacy in the city center
- A. at any time of day
 - B. on weekends only
 - C. between 8 am and 10 am
 - D. on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only
 - E. between 8 am and 6 pm only

7. According to the passage, what type of license plate will be assigned to Lucy, who owns a clothing store in the city center?
- A. **Q** license plate
 - B. **X** license plate
 - C. **A** license plate
 - D. **B** license plate
 - E. **Z** license plate
8. According to the passage, Mrs. Jackson drives a Volvo with a **Z** license plate and may drive and park within the city center
- A. on any Monday
 - B. on any Friday
 - C. before 9 am or after 7 pm on any day
 - D. for loading and unloading purposes only
 - E. at any time
9. According to the passage, drivers with an **X** or **Z** license plate may drive and park in the city center on any Wednesday.
- A. True
 - B. False
10. According to the passage, which of the following statements would be accurate?
- A. The newly enacted driving restrictions apply to all vehicular traffic driving within the boundaries of Central City.
 - B. Central City police may choose to either ticket or tow vehicles violating these new license ordinances.
 - C. Vehicles with an **A** license plate may travel freely in the city center but may not park on the street there.
 - D. The goal of these new driving restrictions is to create a pedestrian-only shopping area.
 - E. The purpose of these newly issued plates is to reduce traffic volume in the city center during the time when shoppers frequent the businesses.

Question 11 is based on the statements below. Do not assume anything to be true that is not stated in the passage or in the question.

The **First Amendment** guarantees freedom of religion, speech and press, as well as the right to assemble peacefully.

The **Fifth Amendment** protects citizens against violations of due process in criminal proceedings. No person may be compelled to testify against him/herself, a grand jury process is required for criminal indictments and double jeopardy is prohibited.

The **Sixth Amendment** guarantees a speedy, fair trial by an impartial jury and the right to counsel in all criminal cases.

The **Eighth Amendment** prohibits excessive bail or fines, as well as cruel or unusual punishment.

11. Which of the following best describes the *Fifth* Amendment?
- A. George, who has little money, has a court-appointed lawyer to defend him in his manslaughter trial.
 - B. Because Juan is a flight risk, Judge Bailey has set bail at one million dollars.
 - C. During interrogation, Drew incriminates himself because a lawyer was not present to advise him.
 - D. Manuel, who was found not guilty in the murder of his wife, cannot be tried again after new evidence is found.
 - E. Spencer has waited three years for his burglary charge to go to trial.

Questions 12 and 13 are based on the incident report form and the incident description below.

INCIDENT REPORT--POLICE DEPARTMENT							
1. ADDRESS OF INCIDENT		2. OFFENSE		3. CODE		4. DATE	
5. NAME OF VICTIM: INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS				6. ADDRESS		PHONE	
7. ASSIGNED OFFICERS/BADGE NUMBERS			8. AGE OF VICTIM	9. RACE OF VICTIM	10. VICTIM'S DATE OF BIRTH		
11. NAME OF SUSPECT				12. ADDRESS			
13. AGE	14. RACE	15. SEX	16. DATE OF BIRTH		17. HEIGHT	18. WEIGHT	
19. HAIR	20. EYES	21. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION					
22. CHARGES							
23. ITEM	24. BRAND		25. SERIAL NUMBER		26. VALUE		
27. ITEM	28. BRAND		29. SERIAL NUMBER		30. VALUE		
31. ITEM	32. BRAND		33. SERIAL NUMBER		34. VALUE		
35. _____ SIGNATURE OF OFFICER/BADGE NUMBER							

Michelle Wilson, owner of the Coffee Bean at 1535 Madison Avenue, Park Center called police headquarters at 6:30 am, Friday, April 13, to report that her coffee shop had been broken into during the night. Officers Keith Michaels and Toby Manelli arrived at the store at 6:40 am to investigate the incident. Ms. Wilson was able to report immediately that an espresso machine and \$78 from the cash register were missing.

12. The incident report can be fully completed based on the information in the paragraph.

- A. True
- B. False

13. The incident was reported on April 13.

- A. True
- B. False

There are 25 questions like these in Section II of the test, and you will have 25 minutes to answer them. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be the percentage of problems you answer correctly. Therefore, you should try to answer each problem.

Section III This section of the exam requires you to identify errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. There are two types of questions presented in this section. The first type presents incomplete sentences and you are to choose the alternative that best completes the sentence. For these items, be sure to read carefully any material appearing before or after the item. The right answer may be dependent on this material. The second type of question presents sentences that contain a spelling error and you are to choose the alternative that contains the misspelled word.

14. There were three _____ at the accident scene.
- A. witness
 - B. witnesses
 - C. witness's
15. The Lieutenant decided _____ was enough evidence to issue an arrest warrant.
- A. there
 - B. their
 - C. they're
16. Officer Perez and _____ arrested the suspect.
- A. me
 - B. I
17. A recent study found that alcahol was a common factor in traffic accidents. Which word in the above sentence is misspelled?
- A. recent
 - B. found
 - C. alcahol
 - D. common
 - E. accidents
18. On Tuesday, September 18, Officer Daniels investigated a complaint filed by the secretery of an insurance company. Which word in the above sentence is misspelled?
- A. Tuesday
 - B. September
 - C. investigated
 - D. secretery
 - E. insurance

There are 20 questions like these in Section III of the test. You will have 15 minutes to answer them. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be the percentage of problems you answer correctly. Therefore, you should try to answer each problem.

Section IV Section IV tests your writing skills. On the following page is a completed sample incident report form. Use the information contained on the form to answer the questions that follow. You should write your answers in the spaces provided. All your answers must contain the correct information and be written in complete sentences. The sentences must be grammatically correct and all words should be correctly spelled.

EXAMPLE QUESTION

Read the sample question and answer below.

What is the victim's date of birth?

EXAMPLE OF CORRECT ANSWER

The victim's date of birth is August 5.

Note that the answer above contains the correct information and is a complete sentence and the grammar and spelling are correct.

EXAMPLES OF INCORRECT ANSWERS

August 5

The answer above is not a complete sentence and does not contain the correct information.

Victim's date of birth is August 5.

The answer above is not grammatically correct. The word "the" is missing.

The victim's date of berth is August 5.

In the above answer, "birth" is spelled incorrectly.

Questions 19-23 are based on the incident report form below.

INCIDENT REPORT--POLICE DEPARTMENT					
1. ADDRESS OF INCIDENT	2. OFFENSE	3. CODE	4. DATE		
711 W Magnolia	Burglary	A6-250	Nov 11		
5. NAME OF VICTIM: INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS		6. ADDRESS	PHONE		
Thomas Stanton		711 W. Magnolia	753-9267		
7. ASSIGNED OFFICERS/BADGE NUMBERS		8. AGE OF VICTIM	9. RACE OF VICTIM	10. VICTIM'S DATE OF BIRTH	
David Crosby #201 Chris Taylor #176		43	White	08/05/80	
11. NAME OF SUSPECT			12. ADDRESS		
Eric Harvey			246 Ivy Lane		
13. AGE	14. RACE	15. SEX	16. DATE OF BIRTH	17. HEIGHT	18. WEIGHT
19	White	Male	04/22	5'10"	180
19. HAIR	20. EYES	21. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION			
Brown	Blue	Wearing black sweatpants, gray sweatshirt			
22. CHARGES					
Burglary					
23. ITEM	24. BRAND	25. SERIAL NUMBER		26. VALUE	
Cash				\$150.00	
27. ITEM	28. BRAND	29. SERIAL NUMBER		30. VALUE	
Jewelry				\$600.00	
31. ITEM	32. BRAND	33. SERIAL NUMBER		34. VALUE	
MP3 Player	Apple	AE98RL567B901		\$200.00	
35. <u>David Crosby #201</u> SIGNATURE OF OFFICER/BADGE NUMBER					

19. When did the incident take place?

20. What is the name of the suspect?

21. What is the victim's phone number?

22. How much does the suspect weigh?

23. What is the value of the stolen jewelry?

There are 10 questions like these in Section IV of the test and you will have 15 minutes to answer them. To receive maximum credit, answers must contain the correct information, be in complete sentences, contain no misspelled words and be grammatically correct.

Sample Test Answer Key

- Section I**
1. C. 147
 2. D. \$1910
 3. E. \$1785
 4. B. 35 miles
 5. A. \$225
-

- Section II**
6. C. between 8 am and 10 am
 7. A. Q license plate
 8. B. on any Friday
 9. A. True
 10. E. The purpose of these newly issued plates is to reduce traffic volume in the city center during the time when shoppers frequent the businesses.
 11. D. Manuel, who was found not guilty in the murder of his wife, cannot be retried after new evidence is found.
 12. B. False
 13. A. True
-

- Section III**
14. B. witnesses
 15. A. there
 16. B. I
 17. C. alcahol – the correct spelling is alcohol
 18. D. secretery – the correct spelling is secretary
-

- Section IV**
19. The incident took place on November 11.
 20. The suspect's name is Eric Harvey.
 21. The victim's phone number is 753-9267.
 22. The suspect weighs 180 pounds.
 23. The stolen jewelry is valued at \$600.

Note: The correct answers in Section IV may be written in several formats.