

**New York State
Department of Civil Service**

Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence

A Guide to the Written Test

for the

Police Supervisors/Investigators Series

Opportunities at work.



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with some of the written test materials which will be included in the Police Supervisors/Investigators Series. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas which will be tested and an explanation of the different types of questions you may see on the test.

Not all subject areas mentioned in this test guide are included in all examinations in this Series. The Examination Announcement will list the subject areas that will be included on the particular test you will be taking. Titles typically included in this series are Police Sergeant, Deputy Sheriff Sergeant, Detective, Criminal Investigator, and Detective Sergeant. The series is designed to test, regardless of title, first-line police supervisors, police detectives or investigators, and first-line supervisors of police detectives or investigators.

The Police Supervisors/Investigators Series written test has an overall time allowance of 6 hours and 30 minutes. The tests in the series include a selection from the following subject areas:

- 1. Law enforcement methods and practices** – These questions test for knowledge of accepted police methods and practices and/or their application to situations in the police field. The questions are a sampling of the various knowledge that police personnel may be required to possess in the course of their day-to-day work-related activities.
- 2. New York State Laws** – These questions test for knowledge of the laws in effect during the current year that law enforcement personnel may encounter in the course of their day-to-day work-related activities. The questions are a sampling of job-related sections of the Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Vehicle and Traffic Law, and the Family Court Act.
- 3. Preparing written material in a police setting** – These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police personnel write. Some questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately. They consist of restatements of information given in note form. You must choose the best version from each set of four choices. Other questions test for the ability to organize paragraphs. They consist of paragraphs with their sentences out of order. For each of the paragraphs you must choose, from four suggestions, the best order of the sentences.
- 4. Understanding and interpreting written material** – These questions test how well you comprehend written material. You will be provided with brief reading selections and will be asked questions about the selections. All the information required to answer the questions will be presented in the selections; you will not be required to have any special knowledge relating to the subject areas of the selections.
- 5. Supervision** – These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline.

INTRODUCTION (Continued)

6. Evaluating information and evidence – These questions test for the ability to evaluate and draw conclusions from information and evidence. Each question consists of a set of facts and a conclusion based on the facts. The candidate must decide if the conclusion is warranted by the facts.

7. Investigative techniques and criminalistics – These questions test for knowledge of criminal investigation techniques and criminalistics. The questions will deal with, but will not necessarily be restricted to, such concepts as: interviewing; interrogation; evidence gathering and preservation; and surveillance.

The remainder of this test guide explains how you will be tested in each subject area listed above. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject area. This is an explanation of how a question is presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide also provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. The sample question is similar to the type of questions that will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer to each sample question. You should study each sample question and solution in order to understand how the correct answer was determined.

SUBJECT AREA 1

LAW ENFORCEMENT METHODS AND PRACTICES: These questions test for knowledge of accepted police methods and practices and/or their application to situations in the police field. The questions are a sampling of the various knowledge that police personnel may be required to possess in the course of their day-to-day work-related activities.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of accepted police methods and practice in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A police officer should have a detailed knowledge of all legitimate business and activity in his patrol area. Which one of the following is the most important reason why the officer should have this knowledge?

- A. The officer will become acquainted with and know the businessmen through a set patrol routine.
- B. The officer will know the unusual or out of the ordinary and it can be investigated.
- C. The officer will know who to notify in case of an emergency.
- D. The officer will know who to call on if he needs assistance.

The correct answer to this sample question is B.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is not correct. Patrol should generally be performed in a random manner. A set patrol routine is predictable and unacceptable.

Choice B is the correct answer to this question. Most events which are of interest to police are those that are unusual. The ability to recognize these allows officers to focus their attention where it is most likely to be needed.

Choice C is not correct. Notifications of emergencies should be made through the department's dispatching personnel.

Choice D is not correct. Assistance should be obtained through department dispatching personnel, not extra-departmental channels.

SUBJECT AREA 2

KNOWLEDGE OF NEW YORK STATE LAWS: These questions test the candidates' knowledge of the laws in effect during the current year. This portion of the test is a sampling of the various sections of the law that police personnel may encounter in the course of their day-to-day work-related activities. Laws covered may include the Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Vehicle and Traffic Law, and the Family Court Act.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of New York State Laws in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

According to the Penal Law, "Robbery" is defined as the forcible stealing of property

- A. of any value
- B. valued at more than \$500.00
- C. valued at more than \$1000.00
- D. valued at more than \$3000.00

The correct answer to this sample question is A.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is the correct answer. New York State Penal Law Section 160.0 defines robbery simply as the forcible stealing of property. No value or other modifiers are included in this definition.

Choice B is not correct. This definition would incorrectly exclude the forcible stealing of property valued \$0 to \$500 from the crime of robbery.

Choice C is not correct. This definition would incorrectly exclude the forcible stealing of property valued \$0 to \$1000 from the crime of robbery.

Choice D is not correct. This definition would incorrectly exclude the forcible stealing of property valued \$0 to \$3000 from the crime of robbery.

SUBJECT AREA 3

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL IN A POLICE SETTING: These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police personnel write. Some questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately. They consist of restatements of information given in note form. You must choose the best version from each set of four choices. Other questions test for the ability to organize paragraphs. They consist of paragraphs with their sentences out of order. For each of the paragraphs you must choose, from four suggestions, the best order of the sentences.

TYPE 1:

TEST TASK: You will be presented with some notes about an incident. You must determine which one of four choices expresses the facts presented in the notes in phrasing and punctuation that results in a clear and accurate presentation of those facts.

SAMPLE QUESTION 1:

The following are taken from notes you have kept while following a suspect and observing his activities. In a "real" situation, part of your assignment would be to prepare a narrative report based on the notes.

NOTES:

- Brown left work at about 1:00 a.m.
- Brown met Johnson in Sam's Bar
- Johnson threatened Brown
- Brown left the bar quickly
- Brown went to Charlie's Place

In the following, select the one choice which is the most CLEAR and ACCURATE presentation of the information from the notes. Considerations of grammar and style are important only when they affect clarity and Accuracy.

- A. Brown met Johnson in Sam's Bar, and he left the bar quickly after Johnson threatened him.
- B. Brown met Johnson in Sam's Bar, and he left the bar quickly after he threatened him.
- C. Brown met Johnson in Sam's Bar; he threatened him, and then he left the bar quickly.
- D. Johnson threatened Brown when he met him in Sam's Bar; then he left the bar quickly.

The answer is A.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question, evaluate all the choices.*

Choice B *makes it unclear who did the threatening, and who left the bar, but it leaves the impression it was Brown who did the threatening.*

Choice C *is also unclear, and it implies even more strongly that Brown threatened Johnson.*

Choice D *is clear about Johnson doing the threatening, but it makes it seem it was also Johnson who left the bar quickly.*

*Only **choice A** is a clear and accurate presentation of material from the notes. Choice A is therefore the best choice.*

Note that the information from the first and last lines of the "notes" did not appear in any of the four choices. It therefore was not relevant to this particular question.

SUBJECT AREA 3 (Continued)

TYPE 2:

TEST TASK: You will be presented with a set of numbered sentences which form a paragraph. For each of the paragraphs you must choose, from four suggestions, the best order of the sentences.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

DIRECTIONS: The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when they are correctly arranged they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences; then answer the question about the best arrangement of the sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together, make a choice, and act upon their decision.
2. Before actually deciding upon a job, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing an occupation is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 2-3-1-4
- B. 2-3-4-1
- C. 4-2-1-3
- D. 4-2-3-1

SOLUTION:

The best arrangement of the sentences is 4-2-3-1. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation." Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. Choice D is the BEST ANSWER to the question.

SUBJECT AREA 4

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test how well you comprehend written material. You will be provided with brief reading selections and will be asked questions about the selections. All the information required to answer the questions will be presented in the selections; you will not be required to have any special knowledge relating to the subject areas of the selections.

TEST TASK: You will be provided with brief reading passages and then will be asked questions relating to the passages. All the information required to answer the questions will be provided in the passages.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

The increasing demands upon our highways from a growing population and the development of forms of transportation not anticipated when the highways were first built have brought about congestion, confusion, and conflict, until the yearly toll of traffic accidents is now at an appalling level. If the death and disaster that traffic accidents bring throughout the year were concentrated into one calamity, we would shudder at the tremendous catastrophe. The loss is no less catastrophic because it is spread out over time and space.

Which one of the following statements concerning the yearly toll of traffic accidents is best supported by the passage above?

- A. It is increasing the demands for safer means of transportation.
- B. It has resulted in increased congestion, confusion, and conflict on our highways.
- C. It does not shock us as much as it should because the accidents do not all occur together.
- D. It has resulted mainly from the new forms of transportation.

The correct answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question correctly, you must evaluate each choice against the written selection and determine the one that is best supported by the written selection.*

Choice A: *Nowhere in the passage does it say that there has been any demand for safer means of transportation. Someone who picks this choice may believe that there could be or should be a demand for safer transportation, but there is nothing in the passage to base it on. This choice is incorrect.*

Choice B: *The passage states that it is the congestion, confusion, and conflict which results in the high toll of traffic accidents and not the other way around. A person who picks this choice could either be confused as to which is the cause and which is the effect or not have read the choice carefully. This choice is incorrect.*

Choice C: *This choice is supported by the last two sentences in the passage. The writer says, "If ..., we would shudder." (A shudder is a response to shock.) The implication is that we don't shudder because traffic accidents do not all occur at the same time and place. The writer then points out that we should think of the yearly toll as being catastrophic (shocking) even though the accidents are spread out over time and space. This choice is supported by the information in the passage.*

Choice D: *There are two reasons given in the passage for the high accident rate. One is the development of new forms of transportation; the other is the increased highway use from a growing population. Neither one is described as the main reason. It is clearly incorrect to say that the new forms of transportation are the main reason. This choice is incorrect.*

SUBJECT AREA 5

SUPERVISION: These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of the principles and practices of supervision in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Assume that the unit you supervise is given a new work assignment and that you are unsure about the proper procedure to use in performing this assignment. Which one of the following actions should you take FIRST in this situation?

- A. Obtain input from your staff.
- B. Consult other unit supervisors who have had similar assignments.
- C. Use an appropriate procedure from a similar assignment that you are familiar with.
- D. Discuss the matter with your supervisor.

The correct answer to this sample question is D.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is not correct. Since this assignment is new for your unit, your staff would not be expected to be more knowledgeable than you about the proper procedure.

Choice B is not correct. Although discussing this matter with other supervisors may increase your knowledge of the new assignment, similar assignments performed in other units may differ in some important way from your new assignment. Other units may also function differently from your unit, so the procedures used to perform similar assignments may differ accordingly.

Choice C is not correct. Since this assignment is new for your unit, you would have no way of knowing whether the procedure from a similar assignment is appropriate to use. You would need someone with the appropriate knowledge, usually your supervisor, to determine if the procedure from a similar assignment could be used before you actually employed this procedure in the performance of your new assignment.

Choice D is the correct answer to this question. Your supervisor is more likely to be informed about what procedure may be appropriate for work that he or she assigns to you than would other unit supervisors or your staff. Even if your supervisor does not know what procedure is appropriate, a decision regarding which procedure to use should be made with his or her participation, since he or she has the ultimate responsibility for your unit's work.

SUBJECT AREA 6

EVALUATING INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE: These questions test for the ability to evaluate and draw conclusions from information and evidence. Each question consists of a set of facts and a conclusion based on the facts. You must decide if the conclusion is warranted by the facts.

TEST TASK: You will be given a set of **FACTS** and a **CONCLUSION** based on the facts. The conclusion is derived from these facts only – NOT on what you may happen to know about the subject discussed. Each question has three possible answers. You must then select the correct answer in the following manner:

Select **A** if the statements prove that the conclusion is TRUE.

Select **B** if the statements prove that the conclusion is FALSE.

Select **C** if the statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion EITHER TRUE OR FALSE.

SAMPLE QUESTION #1

FACTS: All uniforms are cleaned by the Conroy Company. Blue uniforms are cleaned on Mondays or Fridays; green or brown uniforms are cleaned on Wednesdays. Alan and Jean have blue uniforms, Gary has green uniforms and Ryan has brown uniforms.

CONCLUSION: Jean's uniforms are cleaned on Wednesdays.

The correct answer to this sample question is B.

SOLUTION:

The last sentence of the FACTS says that Jean has blue uniforms. The second sentence of the FACTS says that blue uniforms are cleaned on Monday or Friday. The CONCLUSION says Jean's uniforms are cleaned on Wednesday. Wednesday is neither Monday or Friday. Therefore, the conclusion must be FALSE (choice B).

SAMPLE QUESTION #2

FACTS: If Beth works overtime, the assignment will be completed. If the assignment is completed, then all unit employees will receive a bonus. Beth works overtime.

CONCLUSION: A bonus will be given to all employees in the unit.

The correct answer to this sample question is A.

SOLUTION:

The CONCLUSION follows necessarily from the FACTS. Beth works overtime. The assignment is completed. Therefore, all unit employees will receive a bonus.

SUBJECT AREA 6 (Continued)

SAMPLE QUESTION #3

FACTS: Bill is older than Wanda. Edna is older than Bill. Sarah is twice as old as Wanda.

CONCLUSION: Sarah is older than Edna.

The correct answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION:

We know from the facts that both Sarah and Edna are older than Wanda. We do not have any other information about Sarah and Edna. Therefore, no conclusion about whether or not Sarah is older than Edna can be made.

SUBJECT AREA 7

INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES AND CRIMINALISTICS: These questions test for knowledge of criminal investigation techniques and criminalistics. The questions will deal with, but will not necessarily be restricted to, such concepts as: interviewing; interrogation; evidence gathering and preservation; and surveillance.

TEST TASK: You will be asked to answer questions about basic investigative techniques and physical evidence gathering and handling. Many of the questions will be situational in nature.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

The best reason for you to consider the possible motives of each person that is interviewed during an investigation is to

- A. prevent persons from making false statements
- B. appear sympathetic
- C. avoid sensitive issues
- D. recognized biased information

The correct answer to this sample question is D.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is incorrect because understanding the motives of a person being interviewed will not prevent the person from making false statements.

Choice B is incorrect because it is not generally necessary for investigators to appear sympathetic as they conduct a professional interview.

Choice C is incorrect because it is often necessary to raise sensitive issues during an interview.

Choice D is the correct answer because it is critical that investigators understand the accuracy and value of the information they gather in an interview.

TEST SECURITY

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others. Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine. Additionally, candidates may be disqualified from appointment to the positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any civil service examination for five years. After you take the test, other individuals may want to talk with you about the test. You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms. You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

CONCLUSION

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test ...

- Study and review this guide to familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.

On the day of the test ...

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, a quiet lunch or snack, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **NOT** bring this test guide to the test site.

At the test site ...

- Do **NOT** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site (this includes the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots) could result in your disqualification.

During the test ...

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, test booklets, answer sheets, and Candidate Directions.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of the time.

After the test ...

- Do **NOT** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **NOT** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **NOT** discuss the test material with others.

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New York State
Department of Civil Service
Albany, NY 12239

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