New York State
Department of Civil Service

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A Guide to the Written Test

for the

Entry-Level Police Officer Series

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Governor

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the Entry-Level Police Officer Series written test. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas to be tested and an explanation of the different types of questions that will be presented. The Examination Announcement will list the subject areas that will be included on the test you will be taking.

Local titles typically included in this series are Police Officer, Patrol Officer, and Deputy Sheriff. State titles typically included in this series are Environmental Conservation Officer Trainee, Forest Ranger 1, Park Police Officer Trainee, and University Police Officer 1.

The written test generally has an overall time allowance of 5 hours (the time allowance is increased to 6 hours when certain state titles that are given additional test material are included). The tests in the series include a selection from the following subject areas (please refer to your Examination Announcement for the list of subject areas that will be included on the particular test you will be taking):

1. **MEMORY FOR FACTS AND INFORMATION:** These questions test for the ability to remember facts and information presented in written form. You will be given 5 minutes to read and study the information in the Memory Booklet. After the 5-minute period, the Memory Booklet will be taken away. You will then be required to answer questions about the material that was presented in the Memory Booklet.

2. **PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL IN A POLICE SETTING:** These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police officers write. You will be presented with a page of notes followed by several questions. Each question will consist of four restatements of the information given in the notes. From each set of four, you must choose the version that presents the information most clearly and accurately.

3. **READING, UNDERSTANDING, AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN INFORMATION:** These questions test for the ability to read, understand, and interpret the kinds of written information that police officers are required to read during their formal training period and on the job.

4. **APPLYING WRITTEN INFORMATION (RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, ETC.) IN POLICE SITUATIONS:** These questions test for the ability to apply written rules in given situations similar to those typically experienced by police officers.

5. **NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT (for Environmental Conservation Officer Trainee and Forest Ranger 1 only – different sets of questions are given to each title):** These questions test for basic practical knowledge of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; outdoor recreation; forestry and environmental awareness.

6. **WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, TREE AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, MAP INTERPRETATION AND SURVEYING (for Forest Ranger 1 only):** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices of outdoor recreation on forest lands and management for public recreational use and other purposes; identification and characteristics of trees and other plants found in New York State forests; and understanding and interpreting maps and surveying fundamentals.

For each subject area listed above, this test guide provides an explanation of the **TEST TASK**, a **SAMPLE QUESTION**, and a discussion of the **SOLUTION** for the sample question. You should study each sample question and solution to understand which choice is the correct answer.

SUBJECT AREA 1

MEMORY FOR FACTS AND INFORMATION: These questions test for the ability to remember facts and information presented in written form after you have been given a period to read and study the information.

TEST TASK: You will be given a Memory Booklet containing a story. The story will be considerably longer than the one presented here. You will have 5 minutes to read and study the information in the Memory Booklet. You will NOT be allowed to take notes. At the end of the study period, the monitor will collect the Memory Booklets containing the story and then will hand out the test booklets containing the test questions. The first group of questions in this test booklet will ask you to recall the facts and information presented in the Memory Booklet.

SAMPLE MEMORY STORY: Officer Gary Hanson of the Burke Police Department was questioning Mathew Meyers, the owner of Meyers Sporting Goods located at 321 Payne Avenue, about a burglary that occurred the previous evening. Meyers said that when he arrived at the store at 8:50 A.M., he noticed that the rear door had been broken into. Meyers said that, after he had checked his inventory, he was missing 20 rifles, 16 pellet guns, 12 shotguns, and 8 pistols.

SAMPLE QUESTION: How many shotguns did Meyers tell the Officer were missing from his store?

A. 8
B. 12
C. 16
D. 20

The correct answer to this sample question is choice B.

SOLUTION: *This question asks how many shotguns did Meyers tell the Officer were missing from his store. The last sentence in the Memory Story states, "...Meyers said that ... he was missing 20 rifles, 16 pellet guns, 12 shotguns, and 8 pistols."*

Choice A: This is the number of missing pistols. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B: This is the number of missing shotguns. Choice B is correct.

Choice C: This is the number of missing pellet guns. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D: This is the number of missing rifles. Choice D is incorrect.

SUBJECT AREA 2

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL IN A POLICE SETTING: These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police officers write. You will be presented with a page of notes followed by several questions. Each question will consist of four restatements of the information given in the notes. From each set of four, you must choose the version that presents the information most clearly and accurately.

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: Following is a portion of notes about an incident.

NOTES: Responded to a call from 26 Arbor Ave. Residence of Tessa and John Wynter. Pulled in driveway. Saw woman on Wynters' porch. Identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

QUESTION: Which one of the following choices most clearly and accurately expresses the facts presented in the notes?

A. I responded to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter. When I pulled into the driveway, I saw a woman on their porch. She identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

B. Responding to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter, and pulling into the driveway, I saw a neighbor on their porch, who identified herself as Mrs. Orvis.

C. When I responded to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter, I saw pulling into their driveway a woman on their porch who identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

D. Responding to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, I saw a woman on the porch of Tessa and John Wynter's residence. She identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

The correct answer to this sample question is choice A.

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

Choice A: This choice presents all the information in the notes in the correct sequence. This choice says that the officer responded to a call from the Wynter residence, pulled into the driveway, and saw a woman on their porch who identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

Choice B: "I saw a neighbor on their porch" suggests that the officer knew that it was a neighbor on the porch before Mrs. Orvis told the officer who she was. This choice is incorrect.

Choice C: "I saw pulling into the driveway a woman on their porch" is not phrased and punctuated correctly. For C to be correctly written, there should be a period after "Wynter," and the next sentence should begin: "Pulling into the driveway, I saw…" This choice is incorrect.

Choice D: This choice does not identify 26 Arbor Avenue as the residence of Tessa and John Wynter. Also, another piece of information is missing: the officer does not say that he/she pulled into the driveway. In police writing, every detail is important. This choice is incorrect.

SUBJECT AREA 3

READING, UNDERSTANDING, AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN INFORMATION: These questions test for the ability to read, understand, and interpret the kinds of written information that police officers are required to read during their formal training period and on the job.

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 choice C.

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

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 4

APPLYING WRITTEN INFORMATION (RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, ETC.) IN POLICE SITUATIONS: These questions test for the ability to apply written rules to given situations similar to those typically experienced by police officers.

TEST TASK: You will be given a set of rules, regulations, or other written information to read. You will then be asked a question, which requires you to apply the rule to a given situation.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

RULE: Patrol vehicles should be checked at the start of each shift. Do not assume that the vehicle is in satisfactory condition. Check all of the lighting equipment, all emergency equipment, siren, engine, oil, transmission fluid, battery, radiator and gasoline levels, tire pressure and condition (including spare), lug wrench, jack, windshield wipers and windshield washer fluid level. Check the body of the vehicle for damaged or missing parts and report any problems, damage, or discrepancies to your supervisor. At the end of your shift, leave the vehicle in optimum condition for emergency use by the next officer.

SITUATION: Officer Burton is about to begin her patrol shift when she discovers that her police vehicle has a large dent in the left rear bumper. She knows that the vehicle did not have this dent yesterday, when she last drove it.

QUESTION: According to the above Rule, Officer Burton should most properly

A. request that she be assigned a different vehicle
B. begin her shift and be alert to any operating problems
C. find out what other officers have used the vehicle since her last shift
D. inform her supervisor about the dented bumper

The correct answer to this sample question is choice D.

SOLUTION: *The Situation states that Officer Burton has discovered a dent in the bumper of her patrol vehicle that did not exist when she last used it. The question asks what she should do about it. To answer the question, evaluate all of the choices.*

Choice A states that the officer should request a different vehicle. There is nothing in the rule that states that the officer should do this. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B states that the officer should begin her shift and be alert to any operating problems. The rule states that the officer should report any problems with the vehicle to her supervisor. Choice B is incorrect.

Choice C states that the officer should find out what other officers have used the vehicle since her last shift. There is nothing in the rule that states that the officer should do this. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D states that the officer should inform her supervisor about the damaged bumper. This conforms to the given rule that states that the officer should report any problems, damage, or discrepancies to her supervisor. Choice D is the correct answer.

SUBJECT AREA 5

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS (for Environmental Conservation Officer Trainee only): These questions test for basic practical knowledge of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; outdoor recreation; forestry; and environmental awareness.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with questions about natural resources and the environment. Each question will be followed by four choices, from which you must choose the correct answer to the question.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following is the term for a male turkey?

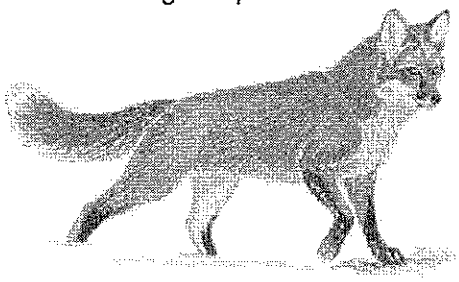
A. cob
B. tom
C. drake
D. gander

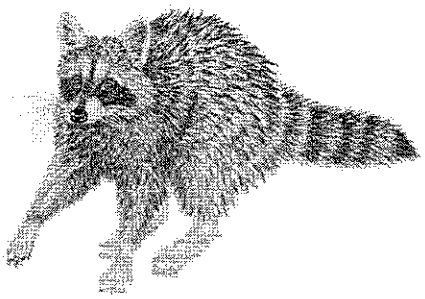
The correct answer to this sample question is choice B.

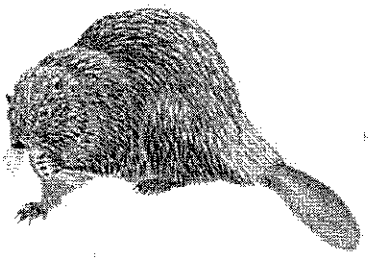
SOLUTION: *Choice A is the term for a male swan. Choice B is the term for a male turkey. Choice C is the term for a male duck. Choice D is the term for a male goose.*

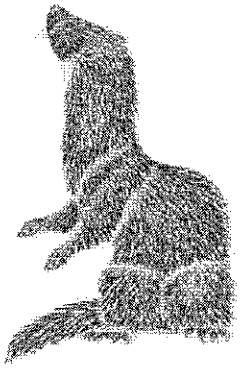
QUESTION 2:

Which one of the following is a picture of a mink?

A. 

C. 

B. 

D. 

The correct answer to this sample question is choice D.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is a picture of a red fox. Choice B is a picture of a beaver. Choice C is a picture of a raccoon. Choice D is a picture of a mink.

SUBJECT AREA 5 (cont.)

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT – FOREST RANGERS (for Forest Ranger 1 only): These questions test for basic practical knowledge of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; outdoor recreation; forestry; and environmental awareness.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with questions that require knowledge of the basic principles of ecology and natural resource conservation.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

QUESTION 1:

Which one of the following diseases is transmitted to humans by the deer tick *Ixodes dammini*?

A. giardiasis
B. rabies
C. salmonellosis
D. Lyme disease

The correct answer to this sample question is choice D.

SOLUTION:

Choice A: Giardiasis is transmitted by contaminated water. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B: Rabies is transmitted by mammals such as raccoons or bats. Choice B is incorrect.

Choice C: Salmonellosis is transmitted by contaminated food. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D: Lyme disease is transmitted by deer ticks. Choice D is the correct answer.

QUESTION 2:

Which one of the following devices can be used to measure the surface area of a pond or lake?

A. thermograph
B. planimeter
C. fathometer
D. polygraph

The correct answer to this sample question is choice B.

SOLUTION:

Choice A: A thermograph is a recording thermometer and measures temperature. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B: A planimeter is an instrument used to measure the area of any shape on a plan, map, or photograph. Choice B is correct.

Choice C: A fathometer is a nautical instrument used to measure water depth. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D: A polygraph is commonly called a lie detector, and measures factors such as pulse and respiration. Choice D is incorrect.

SUBJECT AREA 6

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, TREE AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, MAP INTERPRETATION AND SURVEYING (for Forest Ranger 1 only): These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices of outdoor recreation on forest lands and management for public recreational use and other purposes; identification and characteristics of trees and other plants found in New York State forests; and understanding and interpreting maps and surveying fundamentals.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with questions that require knowledge needed to manage forest lands for public recreational use and other purposes.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

QUESTION 1:

Which one of the following is a tree which is native to New York State?

A. blue spruce (*Picea pungens*)
B. bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*)
C. bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)
D. balsam fir (*Abies balsamea)*

The correct answer to this sample question is choice D.

SOLUTION:

Choice A: Blue Spruce is related to the Rocky Mountains, although it is widely cultivated elsewhere. Giardiasis is transmitted by contaminated water. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B: Bristlecone is native to California, Nevada, and Utah. Choice B is incorrect.

Choice C: Bald Cypress is native to the southeastern United States. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D: Balsim Fir native range includes New York State and is the correct answer.

QUESTION 2:

Which one of the following would be used to represent a hiking trail on a topographic map?

A. a black, broken line of dots and dashes
B. a thin, black, single dashed line
C. thin, black, double dashed lines
D. thin, black, double, solid lines

The correct answer to this sample question is choice B.

SOLUTION:

Choice A: A black, broken line of dots and dashes represents a boundary. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B: A thin, black, single dashed line represents a hiking trail . Choice B is the correct answer.

Choices C & D: Thin, black, double dashed lines and thin, black, double, solid lines represent roads. Choices C & D are incorrect.

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.
- Study and review the subject areas to be covered on the test.
- Visit our website at http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker for further information and there you will find 'A General Guide to Written Tests' and 'How To Take A Written Test for NYS Civil Service Examinations'

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.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make the information in this test guide available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.

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