



**New York State
Department of Civil Service**

Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence

A Guide to the Written Test

for the

State and Local Investigator Series



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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 State and Local Investigator Series. This test guide provides a general description of the most common 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 tested in the State and Local Investigator Series are covered in this test guide. The Examination Announcement will list the subject areas that will be included on the particular test you will be taking. Some of these subject areas may not be covered in this test guide.

The State and Local Investigator Series written test has an overall time allowance of 7 hours. The tests in the series commonly cover the following subject areas:

- 1. 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.
- 2. INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES:** These questions test for knowledge of the fundamental concepts in the area of field investigation. These questions will cover such areas as: obtaining the cooperation of individuals involved in an investigation, preparing for the investigation and/or interview, investigative principles, interviewing principles and practices, behavior and attitudes of the investigator and others, gathering of data and evidence, and presenting the results of an investigation. Many of the questions are situational in nature and attempt to measure the candidate's ability to apply basic investigative techniques. The questions are generic rather than dealing with investigations in a particular field.
- 3. PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from among four choices, the best order for 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.

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

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 1 (cont.)

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 2

INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES: These questions test for the knowledge of the fundamental concepts in the area of field investigation. These questions will cover such areas as: obtaining the cooperation of individuals involved in an investigation, preparing for the investigation and/or interview, investigative principles, interviewing principles and practices, behavior and attitudes of the investigator and others, gathering of data and evidence, and presenting the results of an investigation. Many of the questions are situational in nature and attempt to measure the candidate's ability to apply basic investigative techniques. The questions are generic rather than dealing with investigations in a particular field.

TEST TASK: You will be asked to answer questions about basic investigative techniques that are generic rather than related to a particular investigative field. 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 investigation.

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.

SUBJECT AREA 3

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately and for the ability to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly.

TEST TASK: There are two separate test tasks in this subject area.

- For the first, **Information Presentation**, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version.
- For the second, **Paragraph Organization**, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order, and then be asked to choose, from among four choices, the best order for the sentences.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Which one of the following best presents the information above?

- A. Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions that caused a personal injury accident.
- B. Proper precautions, which Martin Wilson failed to take, caused a personal injury accident.
- C. Martin Wilson's failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.
- D. Martin Wilson, who failed to take proper precautions, was in a personal injury accident.

The best answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION:

Choice A conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Choice B conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Choice C best presents the original information: Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions and this failure caused a personal injury accident.

Choice D states that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident. The original information states that Martin Wilson caused a personal injury accident, but it does not state that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident.

SUBJECT AREA 3 (cont.)

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

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

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a human services 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 among occupations in the field of human services is an important decision to make.

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

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

The best answer to this sample question is D.

SOLUTION:

Choices A and C present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both **A** and **C**, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1.

Choice B also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice **B** places the main idea of the paragraph (Sentence 4) in between two detail sentences (Sentences 1 and 3). The logical sequence of the information presented in the paragraph is therefore interrupted.

Choice D presents the information in the paragraph in the best logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation in the field of human services." 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 this sample 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.*

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 some of the material which the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas to be covered on the test.

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 materials as instructed on the admission notice or the announcement.
- 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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