

National Police Officer Selection Test (POST)

Study Guide

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Data for Decisions in Management

Introduction

This study guide is designed to help prepare you for the written exam, The National Police Officer Selection Test (POST). Applicants are urged to review this guide thoroughly. People who take the time to familiarize themselves with the test and ways to prepare for it tend to feel more confident on the day of the test and have a better chance of achieving their highest possible score.

The guide is divided into five parts.

Preparing for the Test: Suggestions for things to do prior to testing to help you achieve your highest possible score on the written exam

About the POST: Information about the content of the test, the time limits for each section of the test, and the proper method for recording your answers

Test-Taking Strategies: Guidelines to follow on the day of the test to help you finish the test on time and increase your chances of scoring well on it

Sample Test Questions: Sample questions for each of the four sections of the test

Sample Test Answer Key: The answers to each of the sample questions, along with explanations for the answers in Sections I through III

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 using this study guide to familiarize yourself with the test ahead of time, paying proper attention to your physical well-being before the test, not becoming overly anxious about the test, and using a good test-taking strategy. This type of preparation can help you achieve your best possible test score.

Using this Study Guide

As you read through this guide, be sure to work through and answer the sample test questions, which begin on page 7. This will give you the chance to practice answering the types of questions you will be asked on the POST. Knowing ahead of time the kinds of questions that will be on the test can help you use your time more efficiently during the actual test and help you feel less anxious about the test-taking process.

For the sample questions, make sure you read all the directions carefully and each question completely before attempting to answer it. Then check your responses against the Answer Key, which also provides a brief explanation of the answers for Sections I through III.

Completing the sample questions may also show you where extra review would be beneficial. For example, if you find you have difficulty answering the math questions, you may want to brush up on your math skills prior to the actual test date. There are resources in local libraries, bookstores, and on the Internet that can help reinforce basic skills.

Getting Ready Physically for Testing Day

An important component of successful test-taking is mental and physical well-being. People who want to perform their best on a test prepare themselves beforehand, much like athletes do before a competition. They know that feeling physically well and mentally alert will increase their chances of doing well.

The following guidelines should help you optimize your test performance.

- Avoid junk food and concentrate on eating well balanced meals for at least several days before the test.
- Avoid tranquilizers and stimulants that can interfere with your mental performance, especially on the day of the test.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- Don't drink a lot of liquids or eat a big meal shortly before the test.
- Avoid alcohol several days prior to and especially on the day of the test.

About the Test

Test Format

The POST is made up of four separately timed test sections. The first three, Arithmetic, Reading Comprehension, and Grammar, use multiple-choice and True/False response formats. The fourth section, Incident Report Writing, requires you to write your answers in complete sentences in the space provided in the test booklet.

Though most of the questions on the test relate to police work, **no prior knowledge of law or law enforcement is needed to answer the questions.**

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 any one question. The number of test items and time limits for each section of the POST are listed below.

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

Marking Your Answers

Since the test can be hand scored or computer scored, you must follow the test instructions to ensure your answers are read correctly. Make no stray marks on the test booklet; scratch paper is provided in the booklet for solving math problems. Below is a summary of the scoring instructions for both types of test booklets.

Hand Scored Test Booklets

- Use a pen.
- Make heavy black marks that completely fill the circle.
- To change your answer, mark an X over the incorrect response like this . Then mark the new answer.

Correct Mark



Incorrect Marks



Be sure that you blacken only one response for each question. If you blacken more than one, the question will be incorrect, even if one of the answers is correct.

Computer Scored Test Booklets

- Use a #2 or softer lead pencil. Do not use ink.
- Make heavy black marks that completely fill the circle.
- Completely erase any marks you wish to change.

Test-Taking Strategies

This part of the study guide provides some common sense advice for the day of the test. Although some of these points may seem obvious, paying attention to details such as these will increase your chance of obtaining your maximum potential score.

Before the Test Begins

- Arrive early on the day of the test. You may be assigned a seat or you may be able to pick your own. Either way, settle in and put your things away.
- Visit the restroom before test administration begins. You may not be allowed restroom breaks during testing, or if they are allowed, you will not be able to make up the time.
- Once you are seated in the testing room, try to relax, put outside distractions out of your mind and concentrate on the test you are about to take.
- If you are feeling anxious, try taking a few, slow deep breaths. This tends to relax your muscles, calm your mind, and make you feel more alert.
- Pay close attention to the test administrator. This person will provide you with complete and detailed instructions for each section. Do not read ahead because you may miss something important.
- Ask questions if the directions are unclear. It is extremely important that you completely understand the directions before testing begins.

Test-Taking Strategies

While Taking the Test

- Just before the signal to begin each section is given, make a mental note of what time it will be when the time limit 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 help you pace yourself and avoid spending too much time on any one question.
- **Answer every question on the test.** There is no penalty for guessing since 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.
- If you are uncertain of an answer, first eliminate any alternative you know is incorrect. Use your best guess with the remaining alternatives to answer the question and then move on. Balance the amount of time you spend on each question with the total amount of time allotted for the section.
- You will be told when to start and stop each section. If you have extra time, check your answers **in that section of the test only**. Start with any questions you may have guessed on, then review all the others in that section if there is time. You will not be allowed to go back to a previous section or look ahead to the next section.
- Be sure to stop working as soon as you are told that time is up. Do not flip through the test booklet to look at any upcoming sections. Do not look at any other person's test booklet. Anything that looks like cheating will automatically disqualify you from the testing process and from further consideration for employment.

Sample Test Items

Section I: Arithmetic

In this section of the exam, there are questions that require the use of basic arithmetic. **You may not use a calculator** in this section, but scratch paper will be provided in the test booklet for figuring.

1. On Tuesday, Officer Jones worked the 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift. At 10:55 p.m., he was called to the scene of an accident where he remained until 1:30 a.m. How long past his regular shift did Officer Jones work?
 - (A) 55 minutes
 - (B) 1 hour, 50 minutes
 - (C) 2 hours
 - (D) 2 hours, 30 minutes
 - (E) 3 hours, 5 minutes

Questions 2 and 3 are based on the following information.

In preparing a report on a home burglary, a police officer listed the following stolen items and their values.

Cell phone	\$400
Watch	\$40
Notebook Computer	\$1500
Gold Chain	\$100

2. What was the total value of the stolen goods?
 - (A) \$2,000
 - (B) \$2,040
 - (C) \$2,400
 - (D) \$2,840
 - (E) \$3,000
3. What is the value of all the stolen goods **EXCEPT** the gold chain?
 - (A) \$440
 - (B) \$540
 - (C) \$1,900
 - (D) \$1,940
 - (E) \$2,640

Sample Test Items

Section I: Arithmetic

4. A police officer is called to an accident scene across town from his present location. If he has to travel two miles on Grant Road, three miles on Route 47, and 12 miles on Interstate 70, how many miles must he travel to get to the accident scene?
- (A) 17 miles
 - (B) 19 miles
 - (C) 52 miles
 - (D) 59 miles
 - (E) 82 miles
5. An appliance store is burglarized and 21 coffeemakers with a total value of \$1050 are stolen. What is the average value of the coffeemakers?
- (A) \$10.50
 - (B) \$50.00
 - (C) \$55.00
 - (D) \$105.50
 - (E) \$22,050

There are 20 questions like these in the Arithmetic section of the POST. You will have 20 minutes to answer them. Remember, your score will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing, so try to answer every question.

Sample Test Items

Section II: Reading Comprehension

This section measures your ability to understand what you read. You will read passages relating to police work and then answer questions based on these passages. **No prior knowledge of law or law enforcement will be needed to answer the 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 be either 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.

Sample Test Items

Section II: Reading Comprehension

Questions 6-10 are based on the following passage.

Many people, especially young people, probably don't think of "permanently borrowing" a library book as a crime, but it is. Thousands, possibly millions, of books and other materials are vandalized or stolen each year from libraries across the United States. These institutions must be repaid or close down.

The state criminal code contains a section that deals specifically with crimes involving library materials, defining such terms as "library facility," "library material," "premises of a library facility," and "library card." The section particularly describes two general offenses: "library theft" and "criminal mutilation or vandalism of library materials."

Sentences for the offenses vary. Examples follow. A person who borrows and fails, after notification, to return books and materials valued at \$75 may be fined up to \$500 and ordered to pay the replacement costs of the books and materials; this is considered a petty offense. Any library theft of books and materials worth more than \$300 is a Class 3 felony.

Mutilation or vandalism of library books and materials valued at less than \$300 is a Class A misdemeanor, while the same offense is a Class 3 felony if the books and materials are valued at more than \$300.

6. According to the passage, libraries in the United States experience little theft or vandalism.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False

7. According to the passage, a person who borrows and fails to return library books and materials valued at \$75 may be
 - (A) charged with a Class A misdemeanor
 - (B) charged with a Class 3 felony
 - (C) fined up to \$75
 - (D) ordered to pay replacement costs

8. According to the passage, the various crimes involving library books and materials within the U.S.
 - (A) are outlined in the state criminal code
 - (B) are categorized as petty offenses
 - (C) are committed solely by young people
 - (D) carry the same penalties

9. According to the passage, mutilating and vandalizing library books and materials worth more than \$300 is a
 - (A) petty offense
 - (B) Class A misdemeanor
 - (C) Class 3 felony

Sample Test Items

Section II: Reading Comprehension

10. The passage is mainly about
- (A) the extent of library theft among young people
 - (B) the prevalence of library theft across the United States
 - (C) the way in which the criminal code handles library theft
 - (D) the effect that theft has on libraries
 - (E) the "criminal mutilation or vandalism of library materials"

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

An individual who intentionally kills someone without lawful justification commits **murder in the first degree**.

A person who commits the offense of murder in the first degree, as described above, commits **murder in the second degree** if he was provoked into a state of uncontrollable passion.

An individual who unintentionally kills someone without lawful justification commits **involuntary manslaughter** if he was reckless in performing the act which caused the death, whether the act is lawful or unlawful.

A person who unintentionally kills someone as the result of the reckless driving of a motor vehicle commits **reckless homicide**.

11. Two men in a bar got into a shouting match and were told to settle the problem outside. According to witnesses, the first man continued yelling obscenities at the second despite the second man's loud and firm request that he stop. After 10 minutes of being taunted, the second man attacked the first with a knife and killed him before witnesses could intervene. According to the definitions, the second man should be charged with
- (A) murder in the first degree
 - (B) murder in the second degree
 - (C) involuntary manslaughter
 - (D) reckless homicide

Sample Test Items

Section II: Reading Comprehension

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

INCIDENT REPORT – SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT								
COMPLAINANT	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		
SUSPECT	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							
PROPERTY	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. SERIAL NUMBER		
35. _____ SIGNATURE OF OFFICER/BADGE NUMBER								

Susan Olson, owner of Quick Food convenience store at 20 E. Locust Avenue, Ellettsville, called police headquarters at 7:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 10, to report that her establishment had been broken into during the night. Officers Jane Wright and Alan Webber arrived at the store at 7:10 a.m. to investigate the incident. Ms. Olson was able to report immediately that a 10-inch portable TV and \$76.50 from the cash register were missing.

Sample Test Items

Section II: Reading Comprehension

12. The incident report can be fully completed based on the information in the paragraph.
- (A) True
 - (B) False
13. The information to be entered in item 24 is
- (A) \$76.50
 - (B) TV
 - (C) 10" portable
 - (D) That information is not provided.

There are 25 questions like these in the Reading Comprehension section of the POST, and you will have 25 minutes to answer them. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be the percentage of questions you answer correctly. Therefore, you should try to answer each question.

Sample Test Items

Section IV: Incident Report Writing

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

		INCIDENT REPORT				
COMPLAINANT	1. ADDRESS OF INCIDENT	2. OFFENSE	3. CODE	4. DATE		
	15 W. Grenville	Armed Robbery	AR-100	January 17		
	5. NAME OF VICTIM: INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS	6. ADDRESS		PHONE		
Jose Cartes	15 W. Grenville		781-2301			
COMPLAINANT	7. ASSIGNED OFFICERS/BADGE NUMBERS	8. AGE OF VICTIM	9. RACE OF VICTIM	10. VICTIM'S DATE OF BIRTH		
	Matt Arnold #2818 Carol O'Brien #3887	52	WHITE	March 17		
SUSPECT	11. NAME OF SUSPECT		12. ADDRESS			
	Unknown		Unknown			
	13. AGE	14. RACE	15. SEX	16. DATE OF BIRTH	17. HEIGHT	18. WEIGHT
	18	White	Male	Unknown	5'6"	150 lbs.
	19. HAIR	20. EYES	21. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION			
Brown	Brown	Wearing blue jeans, red sweatshirt				
PROPERTY	22. CHARGES					
	Armed Robbery					
	23. ITEM	24. BRAND	25. SERIAL NUMBER	26. VALUE		
	Cash			\$125.00		
27. ITEM	28. BRAND	29. SERIAL NUMBER	30. VALUE			
Jewelry			\$350.00			
31. ITEM	32. BRAND	33. SERIAL NUMBER	34. SERIAL NUMBER			
35. <u> Matt Arnold #2818 </u> SIGNATURE OF OFFICER/BADGE NUMBER						

Sample Test Items

Section IV: Incident Report Writing

Use the information from the completed incident report form on the previous page to answer questions 19-23.

19. What items were stolen from the victim?

20. Where does the victim reside?

21. What are the name and address of the suspect?

22. What was the suspect wearing?

23. Who were the officers assigned to the complaint?

There are 10 questions in the Incident Report Writing section of the POST and you will have 15 minutes to work on them. To receive maximum credit, your answers must contain the correct information, be written in complete sentences, contain no misspelled words, and be grammatically correct.

Sample Test Answer Key

A more detailed explanation of the Arithmetic, Reading Comprehension, and Grammar answers is provided on the following page.

Section I

1. D 2 hours, 30 minutes
 2. B \$2,040
 3. D \$1,940
 4. A 17 miles
 5. B \$50.00
-

Section II

6. B False
 7. D ordered to pay replacement costs
 8. A are outlined in the state criminal code
 9. C Class 3 felony
 10. C the way in which the criminal code handles library theft
 11. B murder in the second degree
 12. B False
 13. D That information is not provided.
-

Section III

14. B knives
 15. A its
 16. A was
 17. B influence
 18. C Wendsday
-

Section IV

19. Cash and jewelry were stolen from the victim.
20. The victim lives at 15 W. Grenville.
21. The name and address of the suspect are unknown.
22. The suspect was wearing blue jeans and a red sweatshirt.
23. Officers Matt Arnold and Carol O'Brien were assigned to the complaint.

Note: The correct answers in Section IV may be written in several formats. For example, the answer to #21 can also be written as, *The suspect's name and address are not known.* As long as the answer contains accurate information, is written in a complete sentence, contains no misspellings, and is grammatically correct, the response will be counted as correct.

Explanation of Answers

Section I: Arithmetic

Question 1: D Officer Jones worked until 1:30 a.m., which is 2 hours and 30 minutes past the end of his regular shift at 11:00 p.m.

Question 2: B $400 + 40 + 1500 + 100 = 2,040$

Question 3: D Subtract 100 (the value of the gold chain) from the total amount calculated in Question #2: $2,040 - 100 = 1,940$

Question 4: A $2 + 3 + 12 = 17$ miles

Question 5: B Divide the total value of the coffeemakers (\$1,050) by the number of coffeemakers stolen (21) to determine the average value of each coffeemaker. $1050 \div 21 = \$50.00$

Section II: Reading Comprehension

Question 6: B False As stated in the passage: *Thousands, possibly millions, of books and other materials are vandalized or stolen each year from libraries across the United States.*

Question 7: D ordered to pay replacement costs As stated in the passage: *A person who borrows and fails, after notification, to return books and materials valued at \$75 may be fined up to \$500 [making C incorrect] and ordered to pay the replacement costs of the books and materials; this is considered a petty offense [making A and B incorrect].*

Question 8: A are outlined in the state criminal code As stated in the passage, *The state criminal code contains a section that deals specifically with crimes involving library materials...* **B** is incorrect since the crimes can range from petty offenses to a Class 3 felony. **C** is incorrect because the passage does not state that these crimes are committed only by young people. **D** is incorrect because the passage describes different penalties based on the value of the books or the crime committed.

Question 9: C Class 3 felony As stated in the passage, the offense is a *Class 3 felony if the books and materials are valued at more than \$300.*

Question 10: C the way in which the criminal code handles library theft is the correct answer because most of the passage discusses the various types of crimes and the resulting penalties. **A** is incorrect because only the first paragraph mentions young people and their beliefs about library theft. **B** is incorrect because only the first paragraph provides information about the extent of library theft across the United States. **D** is incorrect because just one sentence in the passage mentions the effect that theft has on libraries. **E** is incorrect because just the last paragraph describes the penalties for the criminal mutilation or vandalism of library materials.

Explanation of Answers

Section II: Reading Comprehension

Question 11: B murder in the second degree According to the definition, it is considered murder in the second degree if the person is *provoked into a state of uncontrollable passion*. The paragraph states that the *first man continued yelling obscenities at the second despite the second man's loud and firm request that he stop*. This would be considered an act of provocation.

Question 12: B False The incident report cannot be filled out completely because some information, such as a suspect's name and description, is not provided in the passage.

Question 13: D That information is not provided The brand of the stolen television set is not provided in the incident description.

Section III: Grammar

Question 14: B knives The proper spelling of the plural form of the word *knife* is *knives*.

Question 15: A its The proper spelling of the possessive pronoun is *its*. *It's* is the contraction of *it is* or *it has*; *its'* is not a grammatically correct word.

Question 16: A was Since *response* is a singular noun, the singular form of the verb should be used; *were* is the plural form of the verb.

Question 17: B influence The correct spelling is *influence*.

Question 18: C Wendsday The correct spelling is *Wednesday*.