

APPLICANT PREPARATION GUIDE FOR THE POST ENTRY-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT TEST BATTERY

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

The POST Entry-Level Law Enforcement Test Battery (PELLETB) measures skills that are associated with successful performance as a California peace officer. Because the PELLETB is an aptitude test, the skills measured are acquired gradually over a long period of time (usually years). There is no quick or easy way to improve these skills in preparation for the exam. The only way to predictably improve scores on an aptitude test is through extensive learning and practice (e.g., coursework, training).

Because the PELLETB is primarily a language aptitude test, one must already possess solid language skills to perform well on the test. There are a few exercises that can be helpful in maximizing performance if solid language skills are already in place. This test preparation guide has been developed to provide helpful information about test format and content. This guide explains exactly what is tested in the exam and provides sample questions that can be used for practice. This guide also provides research-based information on the best strategies for answering test questions.

WHAT THE EXAM MEASURES

The two components of the PELLETB focus on language ability: one evaluates writing ability and the other tests reading ability. The writing component of the test measures clarity, vocabulary, and spelling. The reading component measures reading comprehension.

1. Writing Ability

Each of the three writing sub-tests contains between 15 and 18 items. In the **clarity sub-test**, sentences are presented, and the test-taker is asked to identify which sentence is most clearly and correctly written. Only common writing errors (e.g., unclear references, misplaced modifiers, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences) are included in the clarity portion of the exam.

The **spelling sub-test** uses a standard multiple-choice format. A sentence is given with one word omitted. A blank indicates the location of the omitted word. Four alternative spellings of the same word are given. The test-taker is asked to identify the word that is correctly spelled for the given context.

The **vocabulary sub-test** also uses a standard multiple-choice format. One word in a sentence is underlined and the test-taker is instructed to select the alternative that is the most accurate synonym or definition. The words included in the spelling and vocabulary tests are common words that may be encountered in law enforcement work.

2. Reading Ability

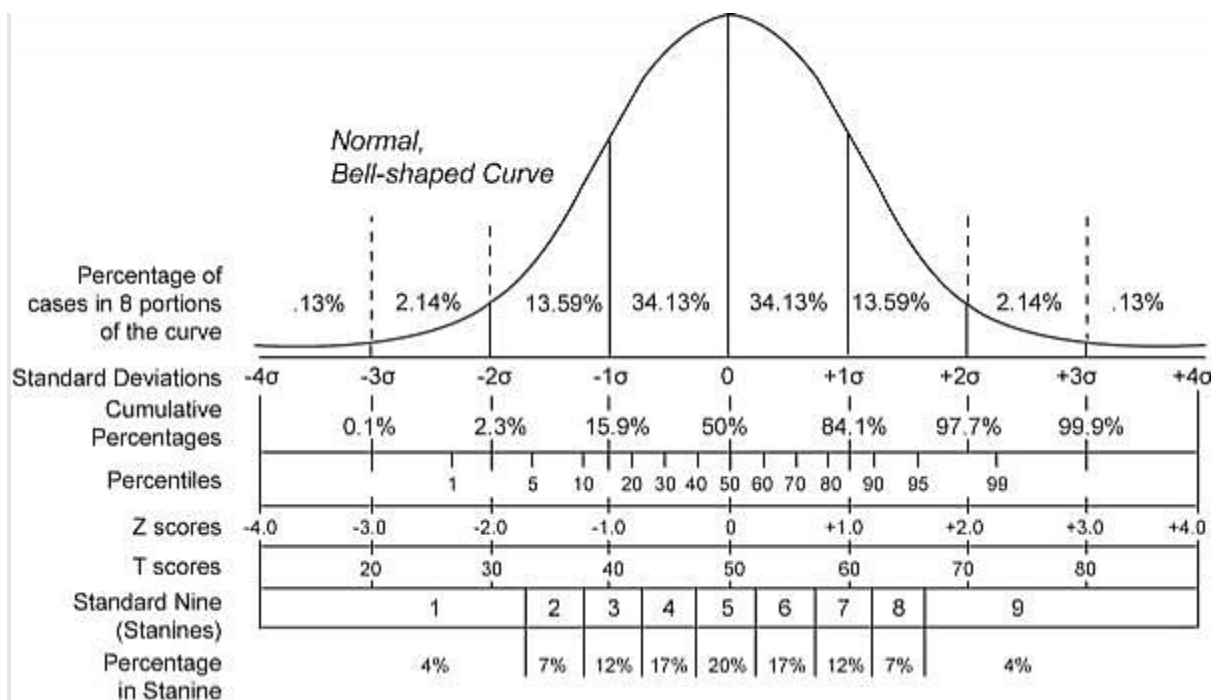
Reading ability is measured through a ***reading comprehension sub-test*** that contains between 20 and 24 items. This sub-test presents passages which vary in length from a single paragraph to one page. After reading the passage, test-takers answer multiple-choice questions about the information contained in the passage. All passages cover common concepts and contain the information necessary to answer the questions.

Please note, the CLOZE reading comprehension sub-test is no longer part of the PELLETB, effective January 1, 2025. The Applicant Preparation Guide reflects this change.

HOW THE EXAM IS SCORED AND INTERPRETED

When POST electronically scans test answers, statistical calculations are performed to convert raw scores (the number of items answered correctly) into a "T-score." A T-score is a standardized score that places an individual's performance on the test into a distribution (bell-shaped curve) with a midpoint (average) of 50 and a standard deviation of ten. If the individual's score falls around 50, their performance is considered "average" when compared to other applicants who have taken the test. Scores of 40 or below are considered "below average." Scores of 60 or above are considered "above average." Research shows that the likelihood of successful academy completion increases for every point scored above 42.

All responses provided by the test taker are a part of the ongoing analyses of the test battery.



The graph above provides a visual representation of T-scores. The bell is comprised of many individual test scores. The bell is widest in the middle because most scores fall in and around the middle. This is why scores near the midpoint of 50 are considered "average."

PRACTICE TEST

The following shortened version of the test is provided to prepare potential test-takers for the types of items they will encounter on the actual test. Familiarity with the structure and content of the test should reduce anxiety associated with taking the exam. The covers of the test, as well as all instructions and directions, have been presented exactly as they appear on actual tests. Following each practice sub-test, the correct responses are provided along with an explanation of why the other choices are incorrect. For item formats where test-taking strategies can improve one's final score, the strategies are presented.

NAME: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ____ -- ____ -- ____

TEST LOCATION:

DATE:

(Month) (Day) (Year)

ENTRY-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT TEST BATTERY

Form Version: 2025

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON
PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING
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CONTROL NUMBER _____

WRITING ABILITY TEST

The Writing Test is comprised of a multiple-choice examination containing between 45 and 54 items. This test measures three aspects of good writing: clarity, vocabulary, and spelling. Remember to mark all responses to test questions on the answer sheet. **Make no marks in the test booklet.**

Suggestions for Taking the Test:

- Be sure you mark the space on your answer sheet that has the same number as the question in the test booklet.
- Keep your answer sheet on a hard surface while you are marking an answer.
- Firmly press down the pencil point until you completely darken the circle on the answer sheet. Do not use any other means of marking your answer sheet.
- If you wish to change your answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely to ensure proper scoring.
- It is to your advantage to answer **all** questions. If it takes an unreasonable amount of time to answer a question, it is better to skip it and go back to it after the other questions have been answered.
- Read and consider all choices to each question before deciding which one is correct.

CLARITY

Instructions:

In the following pairs of options, identify the option which is most clearly written. If option "a" is more clear than option "b," mark "a" on your answer sheet. If option "b" is more clear than option "a," mark "b" on your answer sheet.

- The officer was hoping to get a new partner, one that had a great deal of experience.
 - The officer was hoping to get a new partner. One that had a great deal of experience.
- Bullet fragments were gathered by officers in envelopes.
 - Bullet fragments were gathered in envelopes by officers.
- The suspect disliked the officer as did the judge.
 - The suspect disliked the officer as much as the judge.
- The officer had probable cause to arrest the suspect when he arrived at the scene.
 - When the officer arrived at the scene, he had probable cause to arrest the suspect.
- Jail is not a pleasant place to be, but they do get their basic necessities met.
 - Jail is not a pleasant place to be, but inmates do get their basic necessities met.

Correct Answers:

1, a; 2, b; 3, a; 4, b; 5, b

Explanation of Incorrect Alternatives:

In item #1, alternative "b" is incorrect because "One that had a great deal of experience" is a sentence fragment.

In item #2, alternative "a" is incorrect because it contains a misplaced modifier. The way this sentence is written, it sounds like the officers collecting the bullet fragments were themselves in the envelope.

In item #3, alternative "b" is incorrect because it is confusing and ambiguous. Statement "b" could either mean that the suspect disliked both the officer and judge, or that the judge and suspect both disliked the officer.

In item #4, alternative "a" is incorrect because it has an unreferenced pronoun. The way the pronoun "he" is used in this sentence makes it unclear if "he" is referring to the officer or the suspect.

In item #5, alternative "a" is incorrect because it is unclear who is referred to by the pronoun "they." In sentence "b", the noun "inmates" makes the sentence clear.

Things to Study:

This is the only sub-test where studying can markedly improve your test score. The clarity test measures your ability to identify clear, as opposed to unclear, writing. The writing faults that are included in this test relate to modification, reference and sentence boundaries. No obscure writing faults are included. To maximize your test score, you should review the rules regarding:

1. Modification

Example 1:

- a. "In rural areas, more deer are killed by automobiles than by hunters."
- b. "In rural areas, automobiles kill more deer than hunters."

Explanation:

- 2. Option "a" is clearly written. The reader knows that more deer are killed by automobiles than are killed by hunters. Alternative "b" is an example of improper modification. The way the sentence is written, automobiles are killing both deer and hunters.

Example 2:

- a. Beginning to run before stretching is frequently the cause of shin splints.
- b. Beginning to run before stretching frequently is the cause of shin splints.

Explanation:

Option "a" is correctly written. The reader knows that beginning to run before stretching can frequently cause shin splints. Alternative "b" is written incorrectly. The way this sentence is worded, "frequently" incorrectly modifies stretching thus causing confusion or error.

3. Vague or Indefinite Reference

Example 1:

- a. The next time Mary was in town, she agreed to have lunch with Sue.
- b. Mary agreed to have lunch with Sue the next time she was in town.

Explanation:

Option "a" is clearly written. The reader knows who is having lunch, with whom, and when. Alternative "b" suffers from an ambiguous reference. The sentence is ambiguous because the way it is worded does not make clear whether Mary will have lunch with Sue the next time Mary is in town or the next time Sue is in town.

Example 2:

- a. The child wanted everything he saw advertised in commercials, even though he didn't know exactly what the toys were.
- b. The child wanted everything he saw advertised in the commercials, even though he didn't know exactly what they were.

Explanation:

Option "a" is clearly written. The reader knows that the items advertised in the commercials were toys. Alternative "b" is incorrect because the "they" at the end of the sentence is unreferenced. The reader does not know what items were in the commercials.

4. Run-on Sentences

Example:

- a. The necessary revisions have been made by the author and the manuscript is now ready to be printed. The publicist can begin developing the advertising campaign.
- b. The necessary revisions have been made by the author and the manuscript is now ready to be printed the publicist can begin developing the advertising campaign.

Explanation:

Option "a" is correctly written. Alternative "b" is a run-on because it consists of two complete sentences that are not separated by a semi-colon, a period, or a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

5. Sentence Fragments

Example:

- a. The position requires that the incumbent type, file and prepare travel expense claims in addition to acting as the receptionist for the organization.
- b. The position requires that the incumbent type, file and prepare travel expense claims. In addition to acting as the receptionist for the organization.

Explanation:

Option "a" is correctly written. Alternative "b" is incorrect because the phrase "in addition to acting as the receptionist for the organization" is not a complete sentence.

VOCABULARY

Instructions:

In each of the following sentences, choose the word or phrase that most nearly has the same meaning as the underlined word. Mark on your answer sheet the letter that identifies the correct choice.

1. The witness corroborated the suspect's story.
 - a. verified
 - b. contradicted
 - c. added to
 - d. questioned

2. It was not a very pragmatic plan.
 - a. plausible
 - b. serious
 - c. practical
 - d. sensible

3. The police sequestered the suspect.
 - a. caught
 - b. isolated
 - c. arrested
 - d. released

4. In order to conceal her guilt, Linda told a blatant lie.
 - a. harmless
 - b. subtle
 - c. careless
 - d. obvious

5. He was ignorant of the proper procedures.
 - a. unaware
 - b. conscious
 - c. uncertain
 - d. cognizant

Correct Answers:

1, a; 2, c; 3, b; 4, d; 5, a

Explanation of Incorrect Alternatives:

In item #1: corroborated means to confirm or give support to

- a. *verify* means to corroborate, confirm, or attest to
- b. *contradict* means to express the opposite
- c. *added to* means augmented
- d. *question* means to cast doubt on

In item #2: pragmatic means dealing with things sensible and realistically

- a. *plausible* means apparently valid or likely
- b. *serious* means earnest or sincere
- c. *practical* means pragmatic
- d. *sensible* means reasonable or wise

In item #3: sequestered means isolated and hidden away

- a. *caught* means to seize or trap
- b. *isolate* means to sequester
- c. *arrest* means to seize or bring into custody
- d. *release* means to let go

In item #4: blatant means done openly and unashamedly

- a. *harmless* means not harmful, inoffensive
- b. *subtle* means not obvious
- c. *careless* means done without care or concern
- d. *obvious* means blatant

In item #5: ignorant means lacking knowledge, information, or awareness

- a. *unaware* means ignorant
- b. *conscious* means aware
- c. *uncertain* means having questions regarding
- d. *cognizant* means aware

Things to Study:

Vocabulary is not a skill that can be improved quickly. The best way to improve vocabulary is to immerse oneself in language for prolonged periods of time through activities such as reading and writing. Using and interacting with language is the only real way to achieve mastery. Just learning the spelling and definition of words without context for their use in communication will be insufficient. Those with strong vocabulary skills may benefit from understanding the Latin and Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes on which many English words are based. Below are some examples of words that derive their meaning from their roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Roots Meaning Examples:

- bas = low (basement, debase)
- bio = life (biology, biopsy)
- cent = hundred (century, centipede)
- dec = ten (decade, decimal)
- ego = self (egotistical, egomaniac)
- equ = equal (equity, equality)
- fort = strong (fortitude, fortify)
- graph = write (autograph, graphic)
- loc = place (location, dislocate)
- mort = death (mortal, mortician)
- ped = child (pediatrician, pedagogy)
- phob = fear (claustrophobia, homophobia)
- poten = powerful (impotent, potentate)
- soph = wisdom (philosophy, sophisticated)
- term = end (terminate, terminal)
- urb = city (suburban, urban)

Prefixes Meaning Examples:

- anti = against (antidote, antislavery)
- in, il, im, ir = not (indiscrete, illegal, impossible, irresponsible)
- inter = among, between (intercede, interject)
- non = not (nonconformist, nonentity)
- re = back (recur, rebound)
- pre = before (precede, preempt)
- sub = under (subvert, submarine)
- trans = across (transmit, transcend)
- un = not (un-American, unaware)

Suffixes Meaning Examples:

- ance, ence = state of (indulgence, abundance)
- ate = one who (candidate, advocate)
- il, ile = capable of being (evil, servile)
- ness = quality of (willingness, shrewdness)
- ory = a place for (factory, depository)
- some = characteristic of (loathsome, fearsome)

Test Strategies:

1. Put the word in context.

If you do not know the word itself, attempt to figure out the meaning based on the meaning of the sentence in which it is used.

2. Be aware of subtle differences in meaning.

There may be occasions when two words seem to be correct. Before making a choice, try to identify the differences between the words. This will help in selecting the word that is most correct for the context.

SPELLING

Instructions:

In the following sentences, choose the correct spelling of the missing word. Mark on your answer sheet the letter that identifies the correct choice.

1. His _____ of the situation was incorrect.
 - a. analisys
 - b. annalysis
 - c. analysis
 - d. anallysys

2. It was not _____ who committed the crime.
 - a. apparent
 - b. apperant
 - c. aparent
 - d. aperant

3. She was a _____ worker.
 - a. conscienteous
 - b. consceintious
 - c. consceinteous
 - d. conscientious

4. She did not actually _____ the stolen goods.
 - a. receive
 - b. recieve
 - c. receve
 - d. recive

5. There was only one witness to the boy's _____.
 - a. abducton
 - b. abducSION
 - c. abduction
 - d. abduckion

Correct Answers:

1, c; 2, a; 3, d; 4, a; 5, c

Things to study:

It is difficult to prepare for the spelling portion of the test. No specific word list was used to identify the words that comprise the spelling test and, therefore, no specific words to study. The words that comprise the test are words that could likely find themselves in police reports or in the other writing done by officers.

Spelling is governed by complex rules and numerous exceptions. The following includes just a few of the more important rules that govern spelling.

1. Prefixes

A prefix is a syllable or syllables added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. A prefix does not change the spelling of the original word—it is simply added to the beginning of that word.

Examples: *dis* approve, *dis* continue, *mis* understand, *over* extend, *un* happy.

2. Suffixes

A suffix is a syllable, or syllables, added to the end of a word to change its meaning. A suffix can be a letter, a syllable, or a group of syllables added at the end of a word or word base to change meaning.

There are a number of rules that govern spelling when adding a suffix.

- A. When adding the suffix *ness* or *ly*, don't change the spelling of the base word. However, when the root word ends in *y*, the *y* is usually changed to *i* before the *ly* or *ness*.

Examples: sure, *surely*; cool, *coolness*; happy, *happily*; friendly, *friendliness*.

- B. When a one syllable word ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, double the consonant before adding *ing*, *ed*, *er*, *est*.

Examples: wrap, *wrapping*; tap, *tapped*; big, *biggest*.

- C. When a word with more than one syllable ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, and when the accent is on the last syllable, double the consonant before adding *ing*, *ed*.

Examples: occur, *occurring*; submit, *submitted*.

- D. When a word ends in a consonant followed by a silent *e*, drop the *e* before adding *ing*.

Examples: hide, *hiding*; save, *saving*.

- E. When a word ends in *y* preceded by a consonant, keep the *y* before adding *ing*. When adding either *es* or *ed*, change the *y* to *i*.

Examples: cry, *crying*; cry *cries*; cry, *cried*.

3. Plural forms of nouns

- A. To form the plural form of most nouns, add *s*.

Examples: truck, trucks; cat, cats.

- B. To form the plural form of nouns ending in *s*, *x*, *z*, *ch*, or *sh*, add *es*

Examples: box, boxes; patch, patches; fox, foxes.

- C. To form the plural form of nouns ending in a consonant plus *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *es*.

Examples: county, counties; cherry, cherries.

- D. To form the plural form of nouns ending in a vowel plus *y*, add *s*.

Examples: turkey, turkeys; boy, boys.

- E. To form the plural form of nouns ending in a consonant plus *o*, add *es*.

Examples: tomato, tomatoes; veto, vetoes.

- F. To form the plural form of nouns ending in a vowel plus *o*, add *s*.

Examples: rodeo, rodeos; stereo, stereos.

4. "I" and "E" Rule

The general rule is that *i* precedes *e*, except after *c* when *e* precedes *i* (e.g., believe, receive, etc.).

THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Instructions:

Officers must read and understand a wide range of materials. This test is designed to measure your ability to read and understand various types of written material. Read each paragraph or passage and choose the statement which best answers the question. All questions pertain only to the material in the passage which precedes them. Choose your answer solely on the basis of the material contained in the passage. Mark the letter which identifies your choice in the space on your answer sheet. Do not spend too much time on any one item.

1. The case of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, decided by the Supreme Court in 1962, granted court-appointed counsel to people charged with felonies who could not afford to pay for their own attorneys. In a more recent case, the Supreme Court declared that the right extends to persons who are charged with any crime for which prison is a potential penalty. According to these court decisions, a defendant may waive their right to be represented by counsel at trial, but the state must at least provide the defendant with the opportunity to have free counsel.

Question: Based on the above passage, which of the following statements is most correct regarding defendants who cannot afford an attorney?

- a. Anyone who must appear in court has the right to a free attorney.
 - b. Anyone whose charges may result in prison must have an attorney representing their at trial.
 - c. Anyone charged with a felony must have an attorney present for their trial.
 - d. Anyone charged with an offense that could lead to prison must have the option of a free attorney.
2. During the 1970s rural America registered a population gain of almost 14 percent, while metropolitan growth was just under ten percent. The surprising spurt in rural growth had nothing to do, however, with prolific reproduction. On the contrary, rural areas were mired in aging townfolk. This fact, combined with the trend toward smaller families, actually resulted in a ten percent decline in the existing rural population between 1965 and 1970. Newcomers more than made up for that loss. The latest census tells us that one sixth of the U.S. population now lives in rural areas and 40 percent of all new housing in the 1970s was built on rural land. The rural areas are now growing faster than the metropolitan areas for the first time since the early 1800s.

Question: Based on the preceding passage, which of the following statements is most accurate?

- a. Rural areas were mired in aging townfolk because the young and farmers were immigrating to the cities.
- b. There has been more than a ten percent increase of newcomers to rural areas.
- c. The overall gain in the American population was almost 14 percent.
- d. The trend toward small families contributed to the decrease in the urban population growth rate.

3. Entrapment is defined as officers or agents of the government provoking a person to commit a crime that he did not originally contemplate in order to prosecute him. The goal of law enforcement is not to encourage nor to create an offense, but to prevent people from committing crimes and/or arrest people when they do commit offenses.

Question: Based on the preceding passage, which of the following statements describes an instance of entrapment?

- a. Property that has been marked by police so that they can trace it at a later time.
 - b. A victim, learning that a person intends to rob him, does nothing to stop the crime, but instead allows the robber to carry through with the crime so that police will catch him in the act.
 - c. A door to a warehouse containing valuable merchandise is purposely left open by police.
 - d. An undercover officer approaches a known drug dealer and tries, unsuccessfully, to purchase drugs.
4. Community policing has gained increased acceptance during the past ten years. The community policing model places service to the public and prevention of crime as the primary role of police in society and emphasizes problem solving, with active citizen involvement in defining those matters that are important to the community, rather than crime fighting and arrest statistics. Officers at the patrol level are required to spend less time in their cars communicating with other officers and more time on the street communicating with citizens. Proponents of this style of policing insist that addressing the causes of crime makes police officers more effective and at the same time enhances the quality of life in the neighborhood. Community policing concepts, if successfully implemented, offer the prospect of effective crime prevention and substantially improved community relations. Although community-based policing is not a panacea for the problems of crime in society, it does offer valuable opportunity to both reduce crime and enhance the police image.

Question: According to the preceding passage, which of the following statements is most accurate?

- a. Community policing is expected to increase the number of arrests made by patrol officers.
 - b. Implementing community policing is expected to decrease the amount of crime.
 - c. Community policing is not designed to lessen crime.
 - d. The community policing model defers decision-making to citizens and community members.
5. GENERAL ORDER 62 (Radio Codes)

The purpose of this general order is to describe the coding system that identifies the various departmental and non-departmental units. Below you will find three components of police radio codes (A, B, and C). When a dispatcher sends officers out on a call, these 3 code components are used.

Each call number shall be comprised of three components:

1. The first digit identifies shift
2. The alpha digit describes the operational assignment
3. The last two digits identifies unit or area

Call numbers shall be assigned as follows:

- Shift designation
 - 1 – Day
 - 2 – Swing
 - 3 – Graveyard
- Operational assignments
 - A – Patrol Division, Platoon 1
 - B – Patrol Division, Platoon 2
 - C – Patrol Division, Special Activities
 - D – Patrol Division, Gang Unit
 - E – Traffic Division, Motorcycle Unit 1
 - F – Traffic Division, Motorcycle Unit 2
 - G – Traffic Division, Administration
 - H – Investigation Division, Fraud
 - I – Investigation Division, Drugs
 - J – Administration Division
- Unit or Area
 - 1-12 – Metropolitan area
 - 13-20 – Airport
 - 21-40 – Industrial parks
 - 41-45 – Residential areas

Question: Using the above coding system, the call number 2-B-12 would identify

- a. Swing shift, Platoon 2, Metropolitan area
- b. Graveyard, Platoon 1, Airport
- c. Swing shift, Administration, Residential area
- d. Day, Traffic unit 1, Airport

Correct Answers:

1, d; 2, b; 3, c; 4, b; 5, a

Explanation of Incorrect Alternatives:

Item #1:

Alternative "a" is incorrect because it states that "anyone who must appear in court has the right to a free attorney" while the text states that "persons who are charged with any crime for which prison is a potential penalty" have a right to a free attorney.

Alternative "b" is incorrect because it states that "anyone...must have an attorney representing them at trial." The passage, however, states that "a defendant may waive their right to be represented."

Alternative "c" is incorrect because it states that "anyone charged with a felony must be represented for their trial" while the passage only addresses individuals charged with a crime "for which prison is a potential penalty."

Item #2:

Alternative "a" is incorrect because the passage says nothing about "the young and farmers...immigrating to the cities."

Alternative "c" is incorrect because it states that an "overall gain in the American population" but the passage speaks about rural and metropolitan growth, not overall growth.

Alternative "d" is incorrect because the passage states that the trend toward smaller families resulted in a "decline in the existing rural population" not a trend toward smaller families affecting urban growth.

Item #3:

Alternative "a" does not constitute entrapment because there is no government provocation to steal the marked items.

Alternative "b" is not entrapment because the activity described is undertaken by a "victim" not by the government.

Alternative "d" is not entrapment because the officer is not provoking an individual to commit a crime that they were not already contemplating committing.

Item #4:

Alternative "a" is incorrect because community policing is not focused primarily on enhancing arrest statistics but rather "places service to the public and prevention of crime as the primary role of police in society."

Alternative "c" is incorrect because community policing is intended to lessen crime. Unlike traditional policing, however, this goal is to be achieved through crime prevention, not crime fighting.

Alternative "d" is incorrect because decision-making is not deferred to the citizens and the community. Community policing does, however, stress "active citizen involvement in defining those matters that are important to the community."

Item #5:

Alternatives "b", "c", and "d" are immediately recognized as incorrect because the last element of the code (12) refers to the metropolitan area, and only one of the choices, "a," meets this condition.

Test strategies:

Strategy 1: Read the question and the alternative responses before reading the passage. When reading the passage, focus attention on information indicated in the question and alternatives.

Strategy 2: Avoid using opinions or personal knowledge to answer the question. Remember that responses are scored based solely on information that is in the passage.

Strategy 3: Read the question very carefully. Correct responses are difficult for those who misread the question.