

STUDY GUIDE



NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICER SELECTION INVENTORY

I/O SOLUTIONS
THE PUBLIC SAFETY
SELECTION SPECIALISTS™

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Introduction

This study guide has been developed to introduce you to the *National Correctional Officer Selection Inventory (NCOSI)*. The exam consists of a series of multiple-choice questions and rating scales designed to test important cognitive abilities and personality attributes that are necessary for effective job performance as a correctional officer.

In developing the NCOSI, a group of corrections and law enforcement experts from criminal justice agencies throughout the United States identified many of the tasks essential to the performance of the job of a correctional officer. From these tasks, five essential areas for entry-level testing were determined. These five areas are as follows:

- problem solving ability
- reading comprehension
- mathematics
- writing ability
- personality characteristics

These five test areas have been clustered or grouped into two sections on the NCOSI. The cognitive section, which includes problem solving, reading comprehension, mathematics and writing ability is the first part of the exam and consists of a total of 45 questions. Various attitudes and personality characteristics are clustered together to form the second section of the NCOSI, which consists of a total of 42 questions.

The total time allowed for taking the NCOSI is one-and-a-half (1½) hours.

The selection process for correctional officers is very competitive, and higher scores on the entrance exam will increase your chances of being hired by a corrections agency. Although you are not required to read or use this study guide, we encourage you to do so. The more you prepare for the test, the more likely you are to improve your score.

We hope this booklet will help you to become better prepared, and we wish you the best of luck on the examination.



General Exam Information



◆ Objectives of the Study Guide

There are several objectives that we would like to accomplish with the use of this study guide. They are outlined for you below.

1) To help you become acquainted with the types of questions included in the exam.

This study guide will provide you with a better understanding of the nature and format of questions that will appear on the NCOSI. The exam is designed to be a measure of your job-relevant cognitive abilities and personality attributes. You will be tested on four separate cognitive abilities: problem solving, reading comprehension, mathematics, writing ability and several personality attributes. A definition of each of these areas and an explanation of how they apply to the job of an entry-level correctional officer will be given in this guide. In addition, sample test questions are also provided in each measurement area to give you a good idea of the types of questions to expect.

We encourage you to become acquainted with the different measurement areas and question formats that will appear on the exam.

2) To inform you of the rules governing the testing process.

This guide will provide you with information about what you will be allowed to bring with you when you take the exam. Also included in this section is information

about what is expected of you and what you can expect from the test proctors. It is a good idea to be aware of the rules before the day of the test so that you will not be distracted during the actual administration and can focus all of your efforts on doing well on the exam.

3) To provide you with some general test-taking strategies.

It is very important to pay close attention to this section of the study guide. The general test-taking strategies presented in this section can help to ensure that you work as efficiently and effectively as possible on the exam. Following these general test taking strategies may help to improve your overall score on the NCOSI.

4) To provide specific instructions for completing the exam answer sheet.

Because the NCOSI is computer scored, you will mark your answers on a computer scan sheet. If your answers are not marked correctly on this answer sheet, you will not receive credit for correct answers.

5) To provide you with information about common test-taking errors and strategies for avoiding them.

This study guide explains errors typically made by test takers in multiple choice exams and includes steps for analyzing your own errors and suggestions for avoiding the same errors in the future.

◆ Exam Specifications

The exam is divided into the following two sections:

Section I: The following four job-related cognitive abilities will be tested in this section:



- 1) Problem solving
- 2) Reading comprehension
- 3) Mathematics
- 4) Writing ability

Section II: This section of the NCOSI measures various job-related personality attributes that indicate how successful you will be as a correctional officer.



◆ Tips for the day of the exam

- ✓ **Preparation for the exam.**
You will increase your chances of obtaining your best score if you spend some time preparing for the exam. This includes reading this study guide and finding out as much as possible about the exam ahead of time, trying to avoid becoming overly anxious about the exam and using good test-taking strategies.
- ✓ **Your physical well-being.**
Get a good night's sleep before the exam. Try to ensure that you are in the best possible condition both physically and mentally on the day of the exam.
- ✓ **Arrive early.**
Make all necessary arrangements to ensure that you arrive early at the test site. You may need to make advance



arrangements for such things as child-care and a ride to the test site. It would also be wise to anticipate traffic delays in traveling to the test site and to allocate extra travel time to ensure an early arrival even with delays. Give yourself ample time to settle in at the test site.

- ✓ **Confidence.**
The more confident you are in your abilities, the more likely you are to do well on the exam. Try to stay focused so that you don't end up reading sentences and answer choices over and over again. You want to take control of the exam by feeling confident in your skills. Try to relax but concentrate on the exam you are about to take.
- ✓ **Attitude.**
This exam is an opportunity for you to show your skills and abilities, and a positive attitude can have an impact on increasing your test score. There are a few ways to fine-tune your attitude about taking this exam:
 - ✓ Look at this exam as a challenge but try not to get "stressed out" by thinking about it too much.
 - ✓ Remember that passing this exam is the first step in the selection process for entrance to the police academy, but it is not the only piece of information used to make that decision.
 - ✓ Remember that by using this study guide and practicing your strategies, you can be more prepared for the exam.

◆ Nine Basic Test Rules

- 1) Promptness is mandatory for admittance to the test on the date and time scheduled.
- 2) Photo identification is mandatory for admittance to the test.
- 3) You must bring the following supplies to the test: two sharpened #2 pencils, an eraser and a watch. A small pencil sharpener is also recommended but not mandatory. No other supplies will be permitted at the test site. Calculators will NOT be allowed at the test site.
- 4) Beepers, portable phones and other communication devices will not be permitted during testing. **If you choose to use an unauthorized communication device, in violation of testing guidelines, your test will be collected and considered invalid.**
- 5) Handbags, backpacks or other personal items will be placed on the floor under your work area (table/desk). You may not open your handbag, backpack or any other personal belongings during the testing process.
- 6) You will undergo the same standardized process as all other candidates, with respect to the testing process (e.g., notification, instructions, etc.).
- 7) Due to the security measures that will be in place, only authorized candidates will be admitted to the test site.
- 8) All questions or concerns that arise during the testing process should be directed to the appropriate designated test administration staff person(s).
- 9) It is strictly prohibited for you to leave the test site with any test materials. All test materials supplied must be returned before you exit the test site.



◆ General Strategies for Taking the NCOSI

✓ Listen Carefully.

The exam administrator will provide you with complete instructions for taking the exam. Be sure that you pay close attention to all test instructions. It is extremely important that you completely understand the directions before the exam begins.



✓ Ask questions.

If there are instructions that you do not understand or if something is not clear, please feel free to ask the exam administrator any questions that you may have before the exam begins.

✓ Note start and end times.

Just before the test administrator begins the test, make a note of the time the test will actually begin and the time that the test will end.

✓ Keep track of time.

It is important that you keep track of your time so that you are able to pace yourself throughout the exam. You do not want to run out of time and have unanswered questions. Since the score on the cognitive portion of your exam will be based on the total number of correct answers, you will want to work both quickly and efficiently. It is also important that you keep track of time so that you are able to allot a few minutes to guess on unanswered questions at the end of the exam.

✓ Remain calm.

It is important that you remain calm throughout this exam so that you are able to work most effectively. You can't allow yourself to become nervous or

confused by a few difficult or challenging questions. There are going to be times when you are not going to know the answer and neither will other individuals taking the exam. If you believe that you have not done well on any particular type of questions, try to remain calm and focus on doing your best for the rest of the exam.

✓ Read each question carefully.

Be sure that you understand what the question requires of you.

✓ Read for meaning.

Don't get stuck on words or sentences you do not understand. You may be able to get the main idea from a sentence or paragraph without understanding the individual words or the individual sentences.

✓ Try to answer the question correctly before you look at the answers given.

If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and pick the choice closest in meaning to the answer you have in mind.

✓ Answer easy questions first.

It is important that you answer the easy questions first on this exam. By doing so, you will afford yourself more time to spend on the difficult questions if necessary. Seek out questions you can answer. If there are particular kinds of questions that you feel most comfortable with, answer those questions first. For example, if you are particularly good at reading comprehension, then find those items first and complete them.

✓ **Don't waste time on questions you can't answer.**

If you believe that you are not able to answer a question then skip it. It is better to skip a difficult question, than to spend a lot of time on it and not be able to complete other exam questions.

✓ **Mark your exam booklet.**

Mark in your exam booklet those questions that you have skipped so that you are able to come back to them later in the exam. Marking questions that you have skipped in your test booklet will help to ensure that you have answered all of the questions by the time the examination period has ended.

✓ **Use a process of elimination.**

If a situation presents itself where you are unable to answer a question, use a process of elimination to narrow your options. First, eliminate any answers that are clearly wrong. Then determine how you feel about the remaining choices. If you believe that some answers are more correct than others, indicate that on your exam booklet. Later in the exam, you may have an opportunity to come back to these questions and answer them without having to read the entire question again.

✓ **Guessing.**

It is important that you try to get as many points as possible on the examination. Points are given for correct answers only. Because there is no penalty (i.e., points deducted) for guessing or incorrect answers on this exam, you should try to answer every question. By leaving yourself enough time at the end of the test to fill in unanswered questions using your "best guess," you will increase the possibility of getting a few of them correct.

✓ **Extra time.**

If you finish the exam before the time period is over, review your answers and make any changes that are necessary. Also make sure that you have marked your answers on the answer sheet correctly.

◆ **Strategies for Analyzing and Avoiding Errors**

Four common causes for choosing incorrect responses are presented to you below, along with suggestions for avoiding these errors. Reading through this section carefully can help you identify and correct any major weaknesses in your test-taking behavior.

1) Answer sheet marking errors and guessing errors.

- **Reason:** You may have missed a question because you skipped it and failed to come back to it later.

Suggestion: *Be sure you mark skipped questions in your exam booklet and remember to go back to them before the end of the exam period.*

- **Reason:** You may have lost track of the time and were unaware that the exam period was about to end before you could mark any remaining unanswered questions.

Suggestion: *Be sure to check your watch often (time goes by quickly during an exam) so that you can keep track of how much time you have left. Leave five minutes at the end of the exam so that you are able to go back to any unanswered questions and complete them.*

- **Reason:** You may have been forced to make guesses for questions at the end of the exam because you spent too much time working on difficult questions, rather than skipping them and saving them for later.

Suggestion: *If you did skip difficult questions, it may be because you failed to narrow down the number of alternatives in the question.*

2) Misreading a question or answer.

- **Reason:** This may occur because you overlooked a key word or phrase.

Suggestion: *When choosing an answer, underline key words and phrases that stand out. Once you have underlined the key words and phrases, check the details of the possible answers with the details you underlined, one by one. Always keep in mind you are looking for the best possible answer with the most accurate details.*

3) Not knowing the meaning of key words.

- **Reason:** This is a problem with vocabulary.

Suggestion: *When you come to an unfamiliar word, reread the sentence to determine the general, overall meaning of the sentence. This is known as reading for meaning. The meaning of the unfamiliar word should become clearer as you begin to understand the phrases and ideas that surround it.*

4) Answers that "look" good.

- **Reason:** An incorrect answer may contain an exact phrase from the original question.

Suggestion: *Beware of answers containing exact words or phrases from the question.*

- **Reason:** An incorrect answer may overstate information that was presented in the question. For example, if the question says, "Some incidents..." the incorrect answers may say, "All incidents..."

Suggestion: *Stick strictly to the facts described in the exam question itself. Don't be drawn to answers that stretch or exaggerate these facts or rules. This is the time to watch out for words such as "only," "never," "always," "whenever," "all," etc.*

Other suggestions:

- *Have an answer in mind before you look over the alternatives. This will make you less likely to choose an answer that just looks good.*
- *Beware of choosing answers based on common sense or previous knowledge and experience. Answer ONLY on the basis of the material presented in the exam question itself.*

◆ Instructions for using the answer sheet

This section describes the procedures used to fill in the answer sheet during the actual exam. All of the questions on the examination will be multiple-choice. *You will mark your answers on the scannable answer sheet included with the NCOSI, and detailed instructions on how to use it will be outlined for you at that time.* A sample of the answer sheet has been provided below for your review.

Things to consider when marking the answer sheet:

- ✓ Make heavy black marks that fill the circles completely.
- ✓ Erase any answers you wish to change completely.
- ✓ Do not make any other marks on the answer sheet.
- ✓ Use a #2 pencil ONLY. Pencil is required to complete the answer sheet because a computer will be reading these marks. Do not use ink or ballpoint pens.
- ✓ Mark all of your answers on the answer sheet. Only answers on the answer sheet will be scored. You may use your exam booklet as scratch paper, but be certain to record your answers on the answer sheet.

1.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- ✓ Use your *exam booklet* for scratch paper.
- ✓ Be sure that the number of the question you are working on corresponds with the number that you fill in on the answer sheet. For example, if you are working on question 37, make sure that you fill in your answer on 37 on the answer sheet. Periodically, check yourself to make sure that your answers are in the correct spaces.
- ✓ There are five alternatives (a, b, c, d and e) listed on the answer sheet for each question. Please be sure that you mark your answer in the appropriate column. You may want to go back and check your answers periodically to be sure that you have placed your answer in the correct column.

You will notice that on question 10 on the sample answer grid to the left, the circle marked "A" has been filled in. This indicates that alternative "A" has been selected as the correct answer for question 10. This is the correct way to mark your answer sheet. The reason that we ask you to take such care in marking your answer sheet is because the computer is not able to recognize other marks such as checks (✓), X's, partially filled in circles, etc. If the computer encounters poorly erased responses, incomplete or stray marks on your answer sheet, you may not receive credit for a correct answer.

Areas of Measurement

◆ Cognitive Ability Areas

The information presented in this section of the Study Guide will assist you in becoming familiar with the structure of the cognitive abilities section of the exam. The four cognitive abilities measured are problem solving, reading comprehension, mathematics and writing ability. A brief definition of each cognitive ability is presented along with sample questions to orient you to the different question formats.



It is important to note that all the job-related questions presented in this area are designed to measure your basic problem solving, reading comprehension, mathematics and writing abilities. **While these questions are presented in a criminal justice context and may include laws and corrections procedures, no prior knowledge of corrections is required to answer any question on this test. You should answer all questions in this section solely on the basis of the information presented in the question.** Further, it should be noted that procedures and definitions contained in test questions are not necessarily those of any correctional agency.

Following is the format that will be used to familiarize you with the areas of measurement on the examination:

Definition

In this section, each ability is defined and you are provided with examples of how the ability applies to the job of an entry-level correctional officer.

General Information

This section describes the various types of questions that will be used to assess your ability with respect to the four cognitive ability areas.

Sample Questions

In each of the ability areas, two sample questions are given to illustrate the types of questions that may appear on the NCOSI. By answering the sample exam questions, you can assess your understanding of the information. For each type of question, you will see the correct answer to the sample question as well as some strategies to assist you in responding to such questions where appropriate.

Problem-Solving Ability

Definition

Problem-solving is defined as the ability to effectively deal with routine or unusual situations that can present themselves on the job. It can also be thought of as the ability to anticipate situations and to generate alternative plans of action. This is applicable to the job of a correctional officer because officers engage in a variety of activities that require them to perceive critical elements of a situation and then formulate plans and take action to effectively deal with these situations. Correctional officers must always be prepared for any situation where their assistance may be needed.

General Information

There are several types of problem-solving questions in the NCOSI. A few of them are outlined for you.

Sample Questions

The following are grooming standards for inmates in correctional facilities:

- For security and identification purposes, no inmate shall be permitted to have his or her hair, including eyebrows and facial hair, dyed, cut, shaved or styled according to fads or extremes that would call attention to the inmate or separate inmates into groups based upon style. This would include, for example, tails, woven braids, cutting, sculpting, clipping or etching numbers, letters, words, symbols or other designs into the hair. Male inmates shall have their hair cut short to medium uniform length at all times with no part of the ear or collar covered. Sideburns shall not extend beyond the bottom of the earlobes and will have straight lines with no flare at the base.
- All male inmates shall be clean shaven, provided, however, that an exemption from this requirement shall be granted on the basis of a medical diagnosis when it is determined by the staff physician that shaving would be detrimental to the inmate's health. Inmates granted a medical exemption from the shaving requirement might be required to keep their facial hair closely trimmed with scissors or clippers. An inmate who has been granted a shaving exemption shall

maintain the written exemption on his person at all times when outside the assigned housing unit.

- If an inmate refuses to adhere to the grooming standards after having been given an opportunity and after having been found to be in violation through the formal disciplinary process (33-601.301-601.314), the officer in charge or a more senior official shall direct staff to shave the inmate or cut the inmate's hair or take other necessary action to bring the inmate into compliance with the grooming standards. When it is necessary to use force to carry out this task, the use of force shall be documented pursuant to rule 33-602.210.

1. Because Inmate Brown has a skin condition, the staff physician has determined that he may keep a short beard. Although staff members have ordered him to trim his beard closely, he has repeatedly refused to do so. What, if anything, can staff do to bring him into compliance with grooming standards?
 - a. Because Inmate Brown has a medical exemption from the shaving requirement, staff members may not order him to trim his beard.
 - b. The senior official may order staff members to trim Inmate Brown's beard forcibly.
 - c. Inmate Brown will have to go through the formal disciplinary process, and staff may be allowed to trim his beard if he is found to be guilty of violating the policy.

- d. Because Inmate Brown is being uncooperative and is violating the grooming standards, his medical exemption will be revoked, and he will be forced to shave off the beard entirely.

The correct answer to sample question 1 is (c) "Inmate Brown will have to go through the formal disciplinary process, and staff may be allowed to trim his beard if he is found to be guilty of violating the policy," because the last paragraph of the selection states that inmates who refuse to comply with grooming requirements have to go through the formal disciplinary process and afterwards may be brought into compliance by staff members. Answers (a), (b) and (d) are all incorrect. Although Inmate Brown does have a medical exemption and is allowed to have a beard, he is required to keep his beard trimmed closely. The medical exemption does not mean that Inmate Brown may keep a long beard. Before staff members may trim Inmate Brown's beard (forcibly or otherwise), Inmate Brown must first go through the formal disciplinary process. Finally, the above policies do not state that medical exemptions are granted or revoked on the basis of inmate behavior, so it would not follow that he would be forced to completely shave his beard because he is being uncooperative.

- a. You should ask the supervisor to repeat the unclear instructions.
- b. You should ask another coworker for assistance.
- c. Follow only the parts of the instructions that you understand perfectly.
- d. Try to complete the task as best as you can and ask the supervisor if you did the task correctly at the end of your shift.

The best answer to sample question 2 is (a) "You should ask the supervisor to repeat the unclear instructions." It is vital that you know what is required of you at all times during your shift. If you ask the supervisor to repeat the instructions, you will be able to follow those instructions accurately and efficiently. Answers (b), (c) and (d) are all incorrect. A coworker may not know what the supervisor wants you to do, so it would be best to ask the supervisor directly. If you only follow the parts of the instructions that you understand perfectly, you may neglect an important aspect of the task. Finally, it would simply be inefficient (and perhaps even dangerous!) to try to complete the task without understanding the instructions and waiting until the end of the shift to have a supervisor check on your progress. It is essential that you communicate clearly with your supervisor; therefore, (a) is the only correct answer.

- 2. You are a correctional officer at the Broward Correctional Institution. At the beginning of your shift, your supervisor gives you instructions that you do not understand. What would be the first step you should take to solve this problem?

If you had trouble determining the correct answers to these sample questions, look at the information provided in the questions and accompanying passages and compare it to the correct answers.

Reading Comprehension

Definition

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to understand written materials presented on the job and the ideas associated with them. This ability is related to the job of a correctional officer because officers must read, understand and interpret the laws, procedures and a variety of departmental correspondence containing information critical to the effective performance of job tasks, duties and responsibilities.

General Information

Questions in this section are presented in a variety of different formats. You are asked to read over a short descriptive paragraph and answer the questions that follow. The subject matter will vary from one paragraph to the next. Some paragraphs may discuss corrections related topics, such as policies and procedures, etc.

These types of questions can be more time-consuming than other questions because there is a great deal of material to read. You should read through the material carefully so that you may correctly answer the questions that follow.

Sample Question

Correctional Officers Craig Spencer and Sean Pryor work in the Lake Correctional Institution. At 4:45 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, Officers Spencer and Pryor were monitoring inmates in the recreational yard when they noticed Inmate Louis Dodgson arguing with Inmate Charles Boulton. As they approached the fighting inmates, the argument escalated and Inmate Dodgson

produced a homemade weapon, made from a disposable razor and a ballpoint pen, which he used to cut Inmate Boulton's arms and face. Correctional Officers Spencer and Pryor attempted to subdue Inmate Dodgson and confiscate the weapon. Inmate Dodgson became disorderly and struggled with Officers Spencer and Pryor. Inmate Dodgson dropped the weapon, which was quickly confiscated by Officer Pryor. Dodgson then punched Officer Spencer in the right eye and on the left side of his jaw. Officer Spencer was assisted by Correctional Officers Pryor, Davis, Leonard and Aktins. Inmate Dodgson was subdued and was transferred to another institution pending evaluation of his status. Inmate Boulton and Correctional Officer Spencer were both treated by prison medical staff.

3. Who sustained cuts on his arms and face during the attack?
 - a. Inmate Dodgson
 - b. Inmate Boulton
 - c. Correctional Officer Spencer
 - d. Correctional Officer Pryor

The correct answer to question 3 would be (b), "Inmate Boulton" because Inmate Boulton was the one who was cut on his arms and face during his argument with Inmate Dodgson. Answers (a), (c) and (d) are all incorrect answers. Inmate Dodgson was the person who was attacking the inmate and officer; he received no injuries that were reported in the above paragraph. Correctional Officer Spencer was injured by Inmate Dodgson, but he was hit in the right eye and on the left side of his jaw. Correctional Officer Pryor was not injured while he helped to subdue Inmate Dodgson.

Mathematics

Definition

Mathematics is defined as the ability to conduct simple on-the-job arithmetic computations including, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This ability is related to the job of a correctional officer because officers often calculate the value of items, determine bond percentages and other important tasks necessary to perform their jobs.

General Information

Questions in this section will present you with all of the information that is necessary to compute the correct answer. You must determine the proper arithmetic operation (e.g., addition, division) that should be used to solve the problem and correctly apply the operation to the information provided. Sometimes it will be necessary to apply more than one operation to solve the problem.

Sample Questions

- 4) A correctional officer apprehends an inmate participating in a work-release program trying to steal a watch from a member of the community. Upon investigation, the officer finds that the thief has pilfered three watches, two wallets, five cell phones and three beepers. According to the chart below, what is the total value of the recovered items?

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>
1 watch	\$100
1 Wallet	\$75
1 cell phone	\$100
1 beeper	\$90

- a. \$1120.00
- b. \$1145.00
- c. \$1220.00
- d. \$1295.00
- e. \$1320.00

- 5) If a gas tank in a corrections department vehicle holds 17.5 gallons, and premium grade gasoline costs \$1.48 per gallon, how much will it cost to fill the tank (assuming the tank is half-empty)?
- a. \$11.95
 - b. \$12.90
 - c. \$12.95
 - d. \$25.90

The answer to both sample questions 4 and 5 is C. These answers are determined directly from the information provided in the questions. If you have trouble determining the correct answer, reread the problems for clues.

Writing Ability

Definition

Writing ability is defined as the ability to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary when relaying information in a written format. This includes the ability to reduce points of information to a written format in a logical manner as well as the ability to communicate accurate information (e.g., names, times, dates, facts, etc.) in written format. Correctional officers are frequently required to write reports on incidents to which they respond and cases on which they are working. To do this, they must be able to convey their knowledge of the situation in a logical,

accurate and coherent manner.
Correctional officers must be able to communicate well in writing.

General Information

Test questions in this section are designed to assess your ability to use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. You will also be tested on your ability to organize and present information in an accurate, logical and coherent manner.

Sample Questions

- 6) An officer _____ a weapon at all times to protect himself or herself from potential harm.
- carrys
 - caries
 - cares
 - carries
 - carres
- 7) The warden went to the inmate's cell to _____ how the attack was committed.
- sea for herself
 - sea four herself
 - see for herself
 - see for herselfe
 - see fore herselfe

Sample questions 6 and 7 test your ability to use correct grammar and spelling. Based on the information provided for you in the sentence, you must answer with the choice that makes the most sense and gives the correct meaning to the sentence. Option "D" is the correct answer for question 6, and option "C" is the correct choice for question 7.

- 8) State Trooper Victor Smith is dispatched to the scene of a burglary at the home of Heather Cesario, an elderly female. At the scene, Mrs. Cesario's account of the incident includes the following five sentences:

- I saw that the lock on my front door had been broken, and the house was open.
- My house was a mess; my personal belongings were everywhere, and my television set was missing.
- As I walked down the hallway toward the dining room, I heard what sounded like the backdoor slam shut.
- I left my daughter's apartment at 2:00 p.m. and took a bus home.
- At that time, I quickly reached for the phone and called the police.

The most logical order for the above sentences to appear in the report is _____.

- 1, 5, 4, 2, 3
 - 4, 3, 2, 5, 1
 - 1, 5, 2, 3, 4
 - 4, 1, 2, 3, 5
- 9) While on patrol, Officer O'Hara is dispatched to the *Harley Davidson's Tap* to respond to a complaint call. At the scene he obtains the following information during a brief investigation:

Place of occurrence:

In front of the Harley Davidson's Tap.

Time of occurrence:

Between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m.

Victim: *Harry White, 1556 W. Elmdale*

Complaint: *Paint poured onto his vehicle.*

Officer O'Hara is preparing a report about the incident. Which one of the

following expresses the above information **most clearly and accurately?**

- a. While parked in front of the *Harley Davidson's Tap*, Harry White stated between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., that paint was poured onto his vehicle at 1556 W. Elmdale.
- b. Harry White between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., while parked at 1556 W. Elmdale, his residence, stated that paint was poured onto his vehicle.
- c. Between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., Harry White of 1556 W. Elmdale stated, while parked in front of *Harley Davidson's*, that paint was poured on his vehicle.
- d. Harry White, of 1556 W. Elmdale, stated that between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., paint was poured onto his vehicle while it was parked in front of the *Harley Davidson's Tap*.

Sample questions 8 and 9 test your ability to organize and present events in a clear, accurate, logical manner. Based on the information provided for you in the question, you must select the option that is most accurate and represents a clear presentation of the events in the most logical sequence. The correct answer to both sample questions 8 and 9 is option "D."

◆ Personality Attributes

The information presented in this section of the study guide will assist you in becoming familiar with the structure of the personality attributes section of the exam.

The questions appearing in this section are significantly different from the questions appearing in the cognitive abilities section in



terms of design and requirements for your response. **It is important to note that the statements in this section are scored in terms of how similar the response patterns you provide are to the response patterns of successful correctional officers.** These questions are presented as a series of statements for you to respond to by marking the answer that best fits your opinion using the following five-point scale:

- 1 - *Strongly Agree*
- 2 - *Agree*
- 3 - *Neither Agree nor Disagree*
- 4 - *Disagree*
- 5 - *Strongly Disagree*

The goal of the personality component of the NCOSI is to compare your attitudes and personality characteristics to those of successful correctional officers. The closer your responses match those of successful officers, the higher your score on the exam will be and the more likely it is that you will be successful on the job.

Your response should be an indication of how you feel about the statement that is presented. You should respond honestly to each statement. A good guideline for answering these types of items is to put down the first response that feels right. Overanalyzing the question or looking for hidden meaning can often cause you to misunderstand the question and respond in a manner that does not reflect your true personality.

Good luck on the NCOSI and in your criminal justice career!