

Study Guide
For
Lateral Police Officer
Examination



Springfield Police Department

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INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide has been prepared for candidates who are preparing to take the written examination for the position of Police Officer. The creation of this Study Guide is to assist persons preparing for the written examination by providing them helpful information concerning study habits and test taking. In preparing this Study Guide, it is our hope to help each person taking the examination to do his or her best.



Use of this Study Guide does not ensure a person of receiving a passing score on the examination. Rather, it is intended as a guide to correct study habits.

This Study Guide contains useful information about the nature of the written examination, study techniques, and test taking. These instructions are general in nature and apply to most written examinations you may take in the future.

SECTION ONE: PREPARING FOR THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION

I. Purpose of the Written Examination. The written examination is designed to test the ability of someone to read, comprehend and analyze technical material contained in books, standard operating procedures, and other similar sources. A written examination is not always the best test of someone's ability, but it is an important measure of whether a person understands the technical information that he or she needs in order to do a job properly.

II. Study Tips. Careful study is an active process. It doesn't help much too just run your eyes over the words of a page or to briefly scan through a chapter outline. Good studying is hard work that will pay off in achieving a higher score on the written examination. Here are some study tips to help you learn more efficiently.

A. When you distribute your study over a few days or even weeks your memory will be better. If you make mistakes, don't restart from the beginning. Simply continue on with the exercise until you have completed it.

B. **Learning is an active process.** As you study keep written notes. Make a simple outline.

C. **Remember you are preparing for an exam.** The exam is a multiple-choice test. Remember that the people who are writing the test are not trying to trick you. They are simply trying to find out if you studied the material and understand the basic concepts presented in it.

D. **Remember Key Points.** Don't bother trying to anticipate



irrelevant questions, such as what picture is on what page, who wrote what book, or when radios were first used in the police service. Our item writers try to focus on questions that measure practical applications.

E. Types of Questions. This is a multiple-choice examination. You may encounter several different types of questions in the examination. Some of these are the following:

1. Definition

- a. What means the same as ...?
- b. What conclusion can be drawn from ...?
- c. Which of the following statements expresses this concept in different form?

2. Purpose

- a. What purpose is served by ...?
- b. What principle is exemplified by ...?
- c. Why is this done?
- d. What is the most important reason for ...?

3. Cause

- a. What is the cause of ...?
- b. Under which of the following conditions is this true?

4. Effect

- a. What is the effect of ...?
- b. If this is done, what will happen?
- c. Which of the following should be done in order to achieve a given purpose?

5. Association

What tends to occur in connection (temporal-same time), causal (one causes the other), or concomitant association (varying together) with ...?

6. Difference

What is the important difference between ...?

7. Similarity

What is the important similarity between ...?

8. Arrangement

In the proper order (to achieve a given purpose or to follow a given rule), which of the following comes first (or last, or follows a given item)?

9. Incomplete Arrangement

In the proper order, which of the following should be inserted here to complete the series?

10. Common Principle

- a. What is the principle?
- b. Which item does not belong?
- c. Which of the following items should be substituted?

As you study, keep these item types in mind. Ask yourself: what kind of questions would an item-writer write for this material?

F. Understand What You Are Reading. When you are studying, be sure that you understand all of the words in the text. If you find a word you do not know, use the glossary in the book or a dictionary. If you read something you don't understand, ask your training officer or another officer for help.

G. Don't Look for Trick Questions. Most professional examination publishers avoid the use of trick questions or those that are simply designed to find out if you read the material. What they are really interested in is knowing whether you understand what you read. If you set out thinking that the examination writer is trying to trick you, you will probably convince yourself to select the wrong answer.

H. Small Study Groups. Some people find that they learn well in small study groups with their friends. Sometimes small study groups will pool their money to buy themselves their own private set of study books. Making up questions for each other is a good way to test your knowledge.

I. Learning is an active process. Learning comes easily to some people, but for others, it is work. It requires a constant mental activity on your part. Constantly ask yourself "What is important here?", "What goes with what?", "What is the key concept in this section?" Don't forget to read footnotes, too. Many times, footnotes contain important exceptions that are difficult to weave into the general text.



Again, remember that it is best to spread your study time out over all of the time you have to prepare. Don't wait until the last minute to cram - it doesn't work.

III. Test Taking Tips. Now that you have studied well, you want to use your knowledge effectively on the exam. The first tip is to be sure you are physically ready for the exam. Get a good night's sleep before the test. Avoid over-indulgence in alcohol, tobacco, coffee or other stimulants or depressants before the exam. Some people make a cram sheet of some of the more important facts that they think will be on the exam for last minute study but this practice can be confusing and lead to a rigid response to questions.

A. **Beginning the Examination.** When you are told to open your test booklet, take a minute or two to scan the questions. Don't panic if you see a question that looks too hard. Then start answering with the first question. If you find a question that looks too hard or that you don't understand, make your best guess on the answer sheet and then draw a circle around the item number in your test booklet and check it again after you have finished the other questions.

B. **Look for Answers, not just Questions.** Test items not only provide questions, they sometimes provide information that can be useful in answering another item, or maybe they can just jog your memory. Don't give up because you can't answer a question immediately.

C. **Eliminate Obviously Wrong Answers.** If you don't know the answer to a question you may be able to eliminate some obviously wrong answers. Cross the wrong answers out in your test booklet and then pick the best option of the remaining answers. Picking one of two possible answers improves your odds from 1 in 4 to 1 in 2.

D. **Look for Key Words.** There are usually key words in the item stem and the options. Be sure to look for negatives such as "not" or "except". Draw a line around these words. Pay special attention to words such as "never," "usually," "always," and "commonly."

E. **Don't Answer Too Soon.** Don't just select the first correct answer. Your job is to make the best answer. Sometimes the first three answers are all correct, but the best answer will be d. "all of the above." However, don't believe that "all of the above" or that "none of the above" is always the best answer.



F. **Use Your Test Booklet.** Use your pencil to mark in the test booklet to "flag" key words, underline exceptions, etc. Add your own notes if you want to. Make a drawing. Reconstruct a graph. Cross-out obviously wrong answers. Just remember that your score is determined by the answer sheet and not by what you write in the test booklet.

G. If You Have to Guess. Some people think that their first guess is their best guess. This is not necessarily true. Many times, a little additional thought, a different way of looking at a question, or a more careful reading of the question can turn a guess into an informed choice.

H. Take Your Time. You will almost always be given more than enough time to take the test. If you are a slow test-taker, however, be sure that you are keeping pace with the time. You will be allowed two hours to answer 100 questions. At the end of the first hour you should have answered about 50 questions. If you haven't answered that many questions you are going too slow, probably because you are hung up on a few questions that you don't understand. Just make a guess at these questions, mark the number in your test booklet, and go on. Come back later if you have time to make a better answer to the question.

I. When You are Finished. When you finish the test, sit back and relax for a minute. Then look at your answer sheet and be sure you made an answer for each question. In almost every test administration, somebody loses points because they failed to answer some questions.



SECTION TWO: EXAMINATION CONTENT

The below list of subject material will be broad and non specific to the State of Illinois, City of Springfield and Springfield Police Department. The written examination will consist of 100 multiple-choice questions which will cover some of the following areas:

Description of job knowledge areas
Police patrol operations and strategies
Methods of establishing interpersonal relationships
Defensive tactics
Criminal investigation methods and procedures
Criminal laws and procedures
Methods of interviewing and interrogation
Crime scene processing procedure
Traffic accident investigation procedures
Laws of evidence
Laws and procedures governing arrest, detention and questioning of juveniles
Laws and procedures governing use of force
Laws and rules governing police pursuits
Laws and procedures governing arrest and detention of adults
Principles of community policing