

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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Personnel Administration



Law Enforcement Job Family  
Written Test  
Study Guide

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# Study Guide

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# Introduction

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I C O N   K E Y	
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*“Champions do not become champions when they win the event, but in the hours, weeks, months and years they spend preparing for it. The victorious performance itself is merely the demonstration of their championship character” - Alan T. Armstrong*

**T**his study guide was created to help applicants prepare for the written exam for positions under the Law Enforcement Job Family at the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. This job family consists of the following positions: **Security Assistant, Security Officer, Custody Assistant** and **Deputy Sheriff Trainee**. This guide will help you prepare for the written exam by giving you an overview of the test, sharing some test-taking strategies, and providing exercises and sample test questions. The test taking strategies you learn here may help improve your scores on other multiple-choice exams.

Passing the Law Enforcement Job Family written test may be your first step to becoming a member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. The test consists of 60 questions designed to measure your reading, writing, reasoning, and data interpretation skills. These basic skills are essential for success in the Sheriff’s Academy and on the job. Because these are entry-level law enforcement jobs and require no prior peace officer experience, this written test does NOT ask questions about laws or law enforcement.

## About The Test

 The Law Enforcement Job Family Test is a sixty (60) item multiple-choice test. It is made up of eight (8) sections: vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing-clarity, writing-spelling, writing grammar, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and data interpretation. You will have 90 minutes to complete all sections. We list and briefly discuss each section. This will give you a better understanding of the test which will help you develop customized preparation strategies and help reduce anxiety related to taking the test.

## SECTIONS

**Vocabulary** - tests your ability to understand words that may appear in common documents you may come across in a work environment.

**Reading Comprehension** - tests your ability to read and understand what is being communicated in short and medium sized passages.

**Writing-Clarity** – tests your ability to write with clarity and conciseness.

**Writing-Spelling** - tests your ability to spell commonly misspelled words.

**Writing-Grammar** - tests grammar usage.

**Deductive Reasoning** - tests your ability to reason deductively or to conclude a specific or particular point from a general principle.

**Inductive Reasoning** - tests your ability to reason inductively or to conclude a large principle from specific or particular points.

**Data Interpretation** - tests your ability to work with records and numbers.

-  Why is it important to know what is on the test?
-  Why does the test NOT have questions about laws or law enforcement?
-  Without looking at this guide, list the eight (8) sections that will be on the test.

## Preparing Yourself

Taking a test can be very nerve racking. Think back to the times when you were in school and taking a test, you can almost smell the number two pencil, feel your heart beating and your sweaty palms. It was even worse when you did not study or properly prepare for the test.

Being nervous during a test can affect your performance. You can reduce your anxiety in a number of ways such as:

- Take deep breaths and try to slow your heart rate or try other relaxation techniques.
- Prepare and study as much as you can so that you can build your confidence. Once you know what to expect and know that you are prepared, you will be more confident.
- Think of the test as a positive event. For example, think of the test as a way to demonstrate your abilities to your potential employer. Think about how many questions you will answer correctly versus incorrectly. Stay positive to help build your confidence.

Most of us live busy lives and have multiple responsibilities. You can tailor a study program for yourself and focus on the sections of the test that you find more difficult. For example, if you are

constantly misspelling words but you are confident about your reading comprehension abilities, then you would probably want to spend more time studying for the spelling section. You should review all of the sections, but tailor the program to fit your needs.

If you need **more help** with a section, consider taking a class. Most community colleges and adult education schools offer courses specifically designed to strengthen your reading and writing skills. You should also think about visiting a bookstore or library and review test preparation books that cover the areas listed above. Reading a newspaper, non-fiction book, or reputable news magazine can help you with many sections like reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing-grammar, writing-spelling, and writing-clarity. Make sure to write down the words that you don't know and look them up later.

Create a program and stick to it. Do a little each day and in no time you should be well prepared.

The following websites offer on-line practice tests.



Los Angeles County website:

<http://dhrdcap.co.la.ca.us/olt/index.cfm?fuseaction=general.showPrintables>

You can take the practice tests (e.g. data interpretation and written expression) offered using the online system or by printing hard copies at the Los Angeles County website.



Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) website:

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<http://lib.post.ca.gov/Publications/poWrittenPracticeTest.pdf>

-  Out of the eight (8) sections, which do you expect to do the best on?
-  Out of the eight (8) sections, which do you expect to perform the worst at?
-  What time of the day do you concentrate best? When do you have free time during the week?
-  What will your preparation program look like? What sections will you focus on? How will you get help? What days and times will you use to prepare?

## Taking the Test

### **BEFORE THE TEST ADMINISTRATION**

You can reduce your anxiety and maximize performance by following these guidelines:

- Be sure of the date, time, and location of the test.
- Plan to arrive at least thirty (30) minutes early: traffic and parking are often unpredictable. Make sure to take money for any parking charges (if needed). Arriving early will allow you to feel relaxed and comfortable before the test begins.
- Get enough sleep the night before so you will be rested and alert when you take the test.
- **TIP:** Deep breathing - When you breathe deeply, oxygen floods your system and this brings about a soothing feeling. Imagine that you are inhaling fresh air and that you are exhaling all your troubles. Deep breathing helps you focus your mind. This is an excellent method to de-stress yourself.

### **DURING THE TEST ADMINISTRATION**

Being nervous during the test can affect your performance. Following some or all of these guidelines can help you maximize your performance during the test administration.

- Concentrate on the test. Try to block out any distractions.
- All of the questions are multiple-choice. This means that there will be a question/prompt followed by four or five possible answers/responses. Sometimes more than one of the alternatives will be partly correct. Remember that you are to select the **ONE BEST** answer/response.
- Read each question *CAREFULLY* and follow the directions given in the test booklet. You need to fully understand what the question is asking and what the possible answers are before you attempt to select the best answer.
- Pace yourself so that you will be able to answer all of the questions. Take a little time in the beginning of the test to strategize. A good technique may be to break the test into chunks/sections and then allocate time to each one.
- For each item, quickly eliminate the answers that you know are wrong. Then concentrate on choosing the best answer from those you did not eliminate.
- If you do not know an answer, make a calculated guess. First eliminate the answer choices that you know are incorrect, and then guess. There is no penalty for guessing wrong answers.

- If you have trouble with any questions, skip them. You can go back to those after you have completed the rest of the test. This will help you use your time more efficiently. Just make sure you skip the corresponding space on your answer sheet too.
- If you finish the test before time is up, review your answers. Make sure you have answered all of the items and marked your answer sheet correctly. If you wish to make any changes on your answer sheet, be sure to erase your original answer **completely**.

## Retaking the Test

If you do not pass the test this time, refer to the exam bulletin for the retake period. In the meantime, build your reading and writing skills. Practice reading, and increase your vocabulary by looking up words you do not know. Review basic grammar and writing skills books available at your local library or bookstore, and do the exercises at the end of the chapters. If you diligently apply yourself to improving your reading and writing skills in this manner, you have every reason to expect to do better the next time you take the test.

-  1. It is better to:
  - a) take your time and finish the really hard questions first.
  - b) skip question that may seem hard and stump you and then come back to them.
-  2. If you feel pretty confident of your test performance, you can leave immediately following the last question.
  - a) True
  - b) False
-  3. It is probably a good idea to spend a couple minutes in the beginning of the test to develop a strategy.
  - a) True
  - b) False
-  4. You will be penalized for every wrong answer, so you should leave the question blank when unsure.
  - a) True
  - b) False

### Answers:

1. B – If you start with the really hard items, you may take too long on a few hard items and not have enough time to finish.
2. B – It is advisable that you take some time to review your test if you have extra time.
3. A – It may pay off greatly if you devise a strategy for completing the test.
4. B – You do not get penalized for guessing. If you leave the question blank, you will lose a point. If you guess, you have a chance to pick up a point.

## DO NOT BRING THIS DOCUMENT TO THE WRITTEN EXAM

### Sample Test

Read and follow the instructions for each type of question carefully. They are similar to the instructions you will see in the actual test. Try each sample item. When done, read the explanations for the correct answers at the end of the practice test even for items you answered correctly.

**Section 1** - Items 1 and 2 consist of a short statement followed by four possible titles, labeled a, b, c, and d. Select the title which most closely describes the content of the statement.

### Reading Comprehension

**Section 1** – Items 1 and 2 consist of a short statement followed by four possible titles, labeled a, b, c, and d. Select the title which most closely describes the content of the statement.

1. The United Nations, an international body of nations, was established after World War II in an effort to promote world peace.
  - a. The legacy of World War II
  - b. The Founding of the United Nations
  - c. Promoting World Peace
  - d. International Organizations
  
2. Crowd participants frequently behave in a manner that would be unacceptable to individual members under normal circumstances.
  - a. Defining a Crowd
  - b. Crowd Control
  - c. Crowd Psychology
  - d. How Riots Evolve

### Inductive Reasoning

**Section 2** - Items 3 and 4 consist of a brief passage and four paraphrases, labeled, A, B, C, and D. Read the passage and select the paraphrase that is closest in meaning to the passage.

3. The park's pony rides are restricted to children under 10 who weigh no more than 60 pounds. According to this statement
  - a. children over 10 are too heavy to ride the ponies.
  - b. any child who weighs less than 60 pounds is permitted to ride the ponies.
  - c. a child who is large for his age will not be permitted to ride the ponies.
  - d. a child who weighs less than 60 pounds may ride the ponies if s/he is not yet 10.

4. Although the customers believed that the proprietor was wrong, they realized they would gain nothing by arguing, so they left. According to this statement, the customers left because they
  - a. were tired of discussing the matter.
  - b. felt that nothing they could say would sway the proprietor.
  - c. could not prove that the proprietor was wrong.
  - d. considered the proprietor to be too stubborn to listen to reason.

### Deductive Reasoning

**Section 3** - Items 5 and 6 consist of a conclusion and five statements, labeled A, B, C, D and E. Four of the five statements, as a unit, help to support the conclusion and one does not. For each item, select the statement that LEAST supports the conclusion.

5. Conclusion: Canned peaches taste better than dehydrated peaches.
  - a. 75% of the peaches that the Associated Food Distributors buy are canned peaches and 25% are dehydrated peaches.
  - b. Canned peaches comprise 50% of the market; whereas, peaches that are frozen comprise only 20% of the market.
  - c. The International Society of Fruit and Nut Growers has rated canned peaches and dehydrated peaches third and fourth respectively on the list of best tasting forms in which peaches are sold.
  - d. Associated Food Distributors usually purchase more peaches in the forms that are better tasting.
  - e. Peaches distributed in their three best tasting forms are sweet and juicy.
6. Conclusion: Rotary-type lawn mowers are a better buy for your money than reel-type lawn mowers.
  - a. New reel-type lawn mowers generally cost \$200 to \$300; whereas, new rotary type-lawn mowers cost \$100 to \$250.
  - b. Replacement of a rotary blade costs \$5; whereas, replacement of a reel blade costs \$40.
  - c. Research into lawn mower safety has led to an improvement in safety by 30% for rotary-type mowers and by 20% for reel-type mowers.
  - d. Although engine specifications differ from model to model, both rotary-type mowers and reel-type mowers are equipped with equally durable and reliable engines.
  - e. Although there are cost differences between the two types of mowers, the rotary-type mowers cut as well as the reel-type mowers.

## Spelling

**Section 4** - Items 7 and 8 consist of a sentence with one word omitted, followed by four different spellings of the missing word, labeled A, B, C, and D. Select the alternative with the correct spelling of the word. If you think that none of the answers are correct, blacken "E" on your answer sheet.

7. We celebrate Abraham Lincoln's Birthday in \_\_\_\_\_.
- February
  - Febuary
  - Feburery
  - Febuery
  - none of the above.
8. The assault victim \_\_\_\_\_ not to press charges.
- chose
  - choosed
  - choze
  - choose
  - none of the above.

## Grammar

**Section 5** - Items 9 and 10 contain a sentence and an instruction for changing the sentence. Select the alternative that shows how the underlined portion of the sentence should be written after the change is made. Do not make changes that are unnecessary or are not requested.

9. A report is missing from the company's files. If the sentence is changed to begin with "Three reports...", how would the sentence end?
- is missing from the company's file.
  - were missing from the company's file.
  - are missing from the company's file.
  - was missing from the company's file.
10. Every Friday, Oscar drinks seven cups of coffee at work. If the sentence is changed to begin with "Last Friday ...", how would drinks be changed?
- was drunk
  - drunk
  - drunked
  - drank

## Clarity

**Section 6** - Items 11 and 12 consist of four sentences or pairs of sentences. Three of these are poorly constructed and do not clearly express the writer's thought. One is correctly written. Select the one sentence that is correctly written.

11. Select the sentence that is correctly written

- a. While watching television, the cat jumped on my lap.
- b. Having brushed her, the cat ran across the room.
- c. Not having refilled her bowl, the cat begged for food.
- d. Because she was happy, the cat purred contentedly.

12. Select the sentence that is correctly written

- a. I was very hungry, so I went to the sushi bar and I ordered some tuna and I ordered some egg and I ordered some shrimp.
- b. Since I was very hungry but did not want to gain too much weight, I decided to have sushi for lunch.
- c. I like to eat lunch with a friend, and also drink tea, and have a small dessert.
- d. We had finished our meal so we went to the clothing store to shop because I had to find some new clothes and my friend did too.

## Vocabulary

**Section 7** - Items 13 through 15 tests your ability to understand words similar to those in written documents. For each item, mark on the answer sheet the option (A, B, C, or D) that is nearest in meaning to the word that is capitalized and underlined in the sentence.

13. The judge decided that the witness was COMPETENT.

- a. compelled
- b. capable
- c. complex
- d. compromised

14. I spent all night preparing my NARRATIVE.

- a. offense
- b. substitution
- c. prank
- d. story

15. The most CRUCIAL evidence had to do with motive.

- a. important
- b. insulting
- c. explanatory
- d. powerful

## Data Interpretation

**Section 8** - Items 16 through 18 tests your ability to work with records and numbers. On the next page is a table entitled, "Educational Reimbursement Program Claims." Study the table, and then answer the questions based upon the information in the table.

16. Which employee has an educational reimbursement claim from Cal State LA?
  - a. Mullins
  - b. Cruz
  - c. Pastrana
  - d. Castillo
  
17. The difference between the total reimbursement to the employee with the highest educational expenses and the employee with the lowest is:
  - a. \$1,357.34
  - b. \$1,455.15
  - c. \$1,733.34
  - d. \$1,920.34
  
18. What is the total expense for school units for employees with a position number of 0953?
  - a. \$420
  - b. \$625
  - c. \$915
  - d. \$1,020

## EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM CLAIMS

(07/01/98 THROUGH 09/30/98)

<b>Employee</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Cost Per Unit \$</b>	<b>Cost for Books \$</b>	<b>Total Reimbursement \$</b>	<b>Position Number</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
Mullins	Cal State LB	3	105	----	315.00	2454	Criminal Law, semester
Gonzalez	UCLA	3	165	105.43	600.43	1612	Public Administration, quarter
Kent	UCLA	3	165	79.18	574.18	0953	Public Administration, quarter
Pastrana	Rio Hondo	4	43	44.79	216.79	8675	Nutrition and Stress Management, quarter
Chamberlin	Layola M.	4	173	65.55	757.55	2727	Criminology, semester
Castillo	UCLA	3	165	22.63	517.63	6589	Public Personnel Management, semester
Chamberlin	Layola M.	4	173	79.79	771.79	2727	Criminology and Penology, semester
Mullins	Cal State LB	3	105	39.99	354.99	2454	Current Issues in Law Enforcement, semester
De la Torre	Rio Hondo	4	43	----	172.00	1437	Public Personnel Management, semester
Villacis	Rio Hondo	4	43	21.19	193.19	9451	Leadership in Public Administration, semester
Cruz	Cal State LA	2	105	142.61	352.61	0953	Legal Issues in Penology, quarter
Cruz	Cal State LA	2	105	79.04	289.04	0953	Practicum in Law Enforcement, quarter

## Answers to Sample Test

1.
  - A. is incorrect because this title does not tell us that the statement provides information about the United Nations.
  - B. **is correct** because it most accurately describes the content of the statement. The United Nations is the main focus of the statement.
  - C. is incorrect because the statement mentions that the United Nations was created to help promote world peace, but the main focus is on the United Nations - not on promoting world peace.
  - D. is incorrect because, although the statement mentions that the United Nations is an international organization, it goes into more detail about other aspects of the United Nations as well.
  
2.
  - A. is incorrect because the statement points out some of the behavior of crowds rather than what a crowd is.
  - B. is incorrect because the statement mentions crowds, but not how to control them.
  - C. **is correct** because the statement deals with crowd behavior, so crowd psychology is the best choice.
  - D. is incorrect because the statement talks about crowd behavior, but not necessarily how this behavior would lead to a riot.
  
3.
  - A. is incorrect because the statement does not say that children over 10 may not ride because they are too heavy; they may still weigh less than 60 pounds
  - B. is incorrect because if the child is over 10 years old, he may not ride the pony even if he weighs less than 60 pounds.
  - C. is incorrect because a child who is large for his age may still weigh less than 60 pounds.
  - D. **is correct** because this statement includes the idea that the child cannot ride the ponies unless he both weighs less than 60 pounds and is less than 10 years old.
  
4.
  - A. is incorrect because the statement states nothing about the customers being tired of discussing the matter.
  - B. **is correct** because it includes the main idea of the statement that arguing any longer would not make any difference.
  - C. is incorrect because the statement does not indicate that the customers wanted to prove the proprietor wrong.
  - D. is incorrect because the statement does not indicate that the customers believed the proprietor to be too stubborn to listen.

5. B. is correct because alternatives A, C, D, and E work together to form an argument that canned peaches taste better than dehydrated peaches. Alternative B talks about which peaches are bought, but not necessarily which ones are the best tasting. Also alternative B does not compare canned to dehydrated peaches.
6. C. is correct because alternatives A, B, D, and E work together to form an argument that rotary-type lawn mowers are more cost effective than reel-type mowers. Alternative C describes relative improvements in safety, but it does not indicate which, if either, is the safer mower. Therefore, C does not support the conclusion that one mower is the better buy.
7. A. is the correct spelling of "February".
8. A. is the correct spelling of the word "chose." Alternatives B and D are incorrect because they are not the correct verb forms for the sentence.
9. A. is incorrect because the singular verb, "is", does not agree with the plural subject, "reports".  
B. is incorrect because "were" unnecessarily changes the sentence from present to past tense.  
C. **is correct** because the subject and verb are both in plural form and in present tense, the same tense as the original sentence.  
D. is incorrect because "was" is singular and "reports" is plural. Also, "was" unnecessarily changes the sentence to past tense.
10. A. is incorrect because it describes the inebriated state of the person, but does not provide the needed action verb for the sentence.  
B. is incorrect because the sentence would need to read: "seven cans of beer were drunk by Oscar". But even this change to the passive voice would be considered an unnecessary change and, therefore, incorrect.  
C. is incorrect because there is no such verb as "drunked".  
D. **is correct** because the verb is in the past tense and there are no unnecessary changes.

- 11.
- A. is incorrect because it is unclear whether I was watching television or the cat was.
  - B. is incorrect because it is unclear whether the cat was brushed or if the cat brushed someone.
  - C. is incorrect because it is unclear whether I forgot to refill the bowl or if the cat forgot.
  - D. **is correct** because it is clear that the cat purred because she was happy.
- 12.
- A. is incorrect because "I ordered" should not be repeated in each phrase. The sentence needs additional punctuation.
  - B. **is correct** because the sentence is clear and concise.
  - C. is incorrect because it is unclear whether I like to drink tea and have dessert with a friend, or I like to drink tea and have small desserts in addition to enjoying lunch with a friend.
  - D. is incorrect because the sentence could be much simpler.
- 13.
- A. is incorrect because compelled refers to force.
  - B. **is correct** because capable means the same as competent; able or well-suited.
  - C. is incorrect because complex refers to being complicated.
  - D. is incorrect because compromised refers to reaching an agreement.
- 14.
- A. is incorrect because offense refers to a violation.
  - B. is incorrect because substitution refers to a switch.
  - C. is incorrect because prank refers to a joke.
  - D. **is correct** because a story means the same as narrative; a tale or description.
- 15.
- A. **is correct** because important means the same as crucial; critical or urgent.
  - B. is incorrect because insulting refers to offenses or ridicule.
  - C. is incorrect because explanatory refers to clarifying a subject.
  - D. is incorrect because powerful refers to strength or authoritativeness.
- 16.
- Item B is correct because Cruz is the only employee who attended Cal State L.A.
- 17.
- Item A is correct. The employee with the highest total reimbursement claims is Chamberlin (\$757.55 plus \$771.79 equals \$1529.34). The employee with the lowest claim is De la Torre (\$172.00). The difference between the two is \$1,357.34 (\$1529.34 minus \$172.00).
- 18.
- Item C is correct because employees Cruz and Kent both have the position number 0953. The total unit costs can be calculated as 3 units multiplied by \$165 plus 2 units multiplied by \$105 plus 2 units multiplied by \$105 for a total of \$915.

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## SAMPLE ANSWER SHEET

Shown on the next page is an answer sheet which is similar to the one you will use when you take the Law Enforcement Job Family written test. At the test site, you will receive specific instructions on how to complete the answer sheet, and you will be provided with a number two (2) pencil to use.

The answer sheet has two major parts. The front of the answer sheet is where you fill-in your name, address, social security number, book form, the exam title, and exam number. The back of the answer sheet is the part where you darken the circles that correspond to the answers (A, B, C, D, or E) you have chosen for the test questions.

The machine that scores your answer sheet "reads" only the circles that you darken on the sheet. Therefore, be sure that you have filled in the circles completely and accurately. Do not make stray pencil marks on your answer sheet or mark outside circles. Carelessly darkened circles or stray pencil marks may cause your answer sheet to be incorrectly scored. You may use the sample answer sheet to mark your answers to the practice test questions in this booklet.

