

READING COMPREHENSION STUDY GUIDE & SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

VERSION 3



COUNTY OF
LOS ANGELES



Los Angeles
County



Human Resources
YOUR CAREER STARTS HERE.

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This booklet is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for tests containing multiple-choice reading comprehension items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of reading comprehension items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

ABOUT THE COUNTY'S EXAMINATIONS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the County of Los Angeles takes steps to ensure that our exam content is job-related. We conduct studies to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assist us in developing the content of our examinations. Testing applicants for jobs provides us with an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of our applicants.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE WRITTEN TEST?

To prepare for the written test, you should study the concepts assessed in each section. It is likely that there will be several sections to the written test in addition to reading comprehension; thus, it is to your benefit to carefully read the job bulletin to determine the knowledge, skill, and ability areas the written test will cover. In addition, it is important that you read the entire written test notice for the location and time of the written test as well as for parking instructions and other important information. Pay special attention to whether testing aids/materials such as hand-held calculators are allowed in the written test. If the test notice indicates that testing aids/materials are allowed, then you are strongly advised to bring these with you, as they will not be provided. On test day, it is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to the test's starting time, wear comfortable clothes, bring an accurate watch, and make sure you are well-rested. Also, remember to bring your test notice and a picture I.D. such as a driver license, or you may not be admitted into the test!

NOTE: Applicants who require special testing arrangements such as readers or interpreters must provide seven (7) days advance notice of their disability and requested accommodation. Check the front side of the job bulletin for telephone numbers to call to make disability accommodation requests. The County will attempt to meet reasonable accommodation requests whenever possible.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

Most County tests have a set time limit, so it is important that you work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. Always read all the possible choices before marking your answer. If you don't know the answer to a problem, it is usually best to skip it and move on to the others. Note that on most County tests, your score is based on the number of correct responses. If you are not sure of the answer to a problem, eliminate the answers you believe are wrong and mark the choice that is your best response. Above all, budget your time, pace yourself, and avoid getting bogged down on any single question.

SAMPLE READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Reading comprehension questions test your ability to read and interpret written material; however, actual questions will vary from one test to another. For instance, the test may require that you read an example of a letter similar to one you may encounter in the position for which you are testing and answer a series of questions based on the letter. The following are examples of the types of passage interpretation reading comprehension questions most common to County employment tests. Answers and explanations for the questions are provided on pages 11-12 of this study guide. NOTE: Actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

INSTRUCTIONS: For each question, read the information provided and answer the question that follows.

1. The Children's Services Ombudsman serves as an advocate and problem solver for children placed in group homes. The Ombudsman is independent from the agencies that place children in those facilities. Children are encouraged to call or email the Ombudsman who will conduct an investigation of the issues they raise if needed and provide assistance in resolution of problems. Conversations between the Ombudsman and children are confidential.

According to the information provided,

- A. anonymous letters sent to the Ombudsman through the mail will not be acted upon.
 - B. the Ombudsman is a resource to assist children who reside in group homes to solve their problems.
 - C. agencies that place the children are responsible for ensuring that all complaints made by the children are kept confidential.
 - D. issues brought to the Ombudsman that merit an investigation will be mediated solely by the Ombudsman.
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2. Through the years, the 10-story Patriotic Hall has been a familiar sight to those who have traveled the freeways near downtown Los Angeles. Patriotic Hall stands as a historical icon amidst an ever-changing skyline. Owned and operated by the County of Los Angeles, Patriotic Hall is a practical and living memorial to veterans. It was dedicated by the Board of Supervisors in 1926. Members of the Grand Army of the Republic, veterans of Indian Wars, Spanish American War veterans, and World War I veterans were among the first to use the facilities.

According to the passage, Patriotic Hall

- A. does not honor veterans of post-WWI wars.
- B. was built as a local memorial to honor the veterans of the community.
- C. will need to be renovated as the skyline of downtown Los Angeles undergoes change.
- D. is used as a residence by veterans of various wars.

3. Prior to the implementation of any exterior modifications or improvements to any Marina del Rey parcel, review and approval of plans by the Design Control Board (DCB) is required. This includes new development, renovations, repainting, signage, re-landscaping, etc. The DCB can approve a submittal as proposed, approve it with revisions, or deny it. Depending on the type of request, additional permits may be required from the Department of Public Works Division of Building & Safety, the Department of Regional Planning and the California Coastal Commission.

Based on the information provided,

- A. A business that obtains approval from the DCB will be able to proceed with its plans without further restrictions.
 - B. The DCB has the authority to suspend new developments that do not conform to the approved submittal.
 - C. The implementation of a redesign plan for an indoor restroom facility of a restaurant in Marina del Rey would be subjected to approval by the DCB.
 - D. A modification to the landscaping of a parcel in the Marina will be subject to DCB review.
4. Fluoride will be added to the drinking water used by millions of people across Southern California under a plan approved Tuesday by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). Within three years, the water agency plans to mix the cavity-fighting substance into all water it imports into the region. Health advocates praised the decision as a major step forward in protecting the public, children especially, against tooth decay. But others, including officials from some of the local water districts that purchase water from the MWD, said it needlessly puts them in the dental business.

The passage implies that

- A. water that has been mixed with fluoride may have unforeseen health risks.
- B. fluoridating water is an effective method to deliver the health-related benefits of fluoride.
- C. within three years, all Southern California residents will be drinking water enriched with fluoride.
- D. some of the water currently processed by the MWD has been fortified with fluoride.

5. Between the 1970s and the last decade of the 20th century, the Superior Court was strongly committed to court coordination with the twenty-four former Municipal Court Judicial Districts throughout Los Angeles County. Through these efforts, the participating courts were able to maximize use of their limited resources to provide necessary services in support of judicial, clerical, and administrative functions. Furthermore, duplication of functions was eliminated and centralized operations were set up to administer certain court support functions.

According to the passage,

- A. consolidation of the Municipal Court Judicial Districts led to fewer districts.
 - B. the implementation of the court coordination plan led to the offering of additional services.
 - C. a centralized operation was created by the Superior Court's court coordination efforts.
 - D. the court systems limited resources were the reason why the Superior Court decided to develop its plan.
6. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department covers a diverse and unique area of responsibility as related to fire prevention. Fire prevention practices and programs are designed to cover a varied geographic area of mountains, deserts, and basins, and population densities ranging from compact to sparse. Climatic regions vary from coastal subtropical to semi-arid. These regions are divided for planning purposes into urban, urban-rural, rural, and wildland. The fire prevention system provides assistance to multi-political jurisdictions, as well as multi-agency interfacing. It also provides coverage for a diverse socio-economic and multi-ethnic population.

Based on the information provided,

- A. populated areas are divided into different regions based on planning reasons.
- B. the fire prevention program has been developed on unique and diverse principles.
- C. mountainous regions require more complex fire prevention programs than other regions.
- D. climate conditions and population area type are the most important factors that influence the fire prevention programs.

7. The County of Los Angeles Public Library selects materials based on recommendations from the public, reviews in the media, materials donated from publishers, and the subject knowledge and expertise of library staff. Librarians purchase materials for each community based on their knowledge of the diverse needs of their customers and of the local library's existing collection. Resource centers and special collections enhance the Library's ability to provide information. No materials are excluded or removed from the library on the basis of the author's race, nationality, or political, social, or religious beliefs.

According to the passage,

- A. Donations from book publishing companies influence the library's collection of materials.
 - B. Special collections enhance the library's collection but can only be used as reference materials and cannot be borrowed.
 - C. The frequency of which books of the same topic are checked out is a strong reason why librarians select similar books for the library's collection.
 - D. Materials at each local library differ based on the residents of the community, the librarian's knowledge, and the library's current collection.
8. When a publicly recorded property transfer occurs, the Assessor generally receives a copy of the deed and determines whether a reappraisal is required under State law. If it is required, an appraisal is made to determine the new market value of the property. The property owner is then notified of the new assessment. The property owner has the right to appeal the value, if he/she does not agree with it. The transfer of property between husband and wife does not cause a reappraisal for property tax purposes. This includes transfers resulting from divorce or death. Also, the addition of joint tenants, whether related or not, does not result in reappraisal.

Based on the information provided, which of the following statements is **CORRECT**?

- A. A property owner who disagrees with an appraised value has the right to dispute it.
- B. Transfers of property that are outside the public record are still subject to reappraisal.
- C. An assessor receives notice from a variety of internal and external sources to determine if a reappraisal is necessary.
- D. A property that is reappraised at a lower value than its previous appraisal value will result in an unchanged appraised value.

9. The Registrar Recorder's "touch-screen voting" project was very well received with nearly 22,000 voters casting their ballots on this modern equipment at nine locations during the November 2000 election. Blind and visually impaired voters especially liked the system because they could vote privately and independently with the aid of an audio component. Furthermore, the system provided voters whose first language is not English the ability to display the ballot in their choice of one of seven languages. The department is seeking increased funding to expand touch-screen voting as an option for voters to cast their ballot during the next election at 35-40 locations throughout the County.

The passages suggests that

- A. touch-screen voting systems will be installed at 35-40 locations throughout the County during the next election.
 - B. non-English speaking voters were able to cast their ballots by having the touch-screen voting system display the ballot in any language of their choice.
 - C. visually impaired voters were able to privately cast their ballot without the aid of a pollworker.
 - D. touch-screen voting system was available at nine locations in Los Angeles County prior to the November 2000 election.
10. With responsibility for providing police services to one of the largest parks and recreational systems in the United States, the County Parks Services Bureau provides vehicle, bicycle, foot, and horse patrols at more than 126 regional parks, nature centers, lakes, natural areas, golf courses, neighborhood parks, and nature trails. Many of the venues and areas patrolled are recognized internationally, including the Hollywood Bowl, John Anson Ford Amphitheater, and the Los Angeles County Arboretum. The bureau also has a reserve unit and participates in the Boy Scouts of America Explorer Program for both boys and girls and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program which pairs park police officers with a specific park.

Based on the information provided,

- A. patrolling efforts are concentrated on the internationally recognized facilities.
- B. members of the reserves units are responsible for overseeing the Explorer Program.
- C. the bureau uses multiple methods of patrolling when providing police services.
- D. specific parks have been designed for Community-Oriented Policing.

11. The Toy Loan Program is a free service that allows children to borrow toys from a Toy Loan Center in the same manner in which they borrow books from the public library. The children borrow toys once a week. It is a voluntary community effort sponsored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Public Social Services. Each year, citizens donate thousands of repairable, discarded toys to Toy Loan. Crews repair and assemble items from parts of other toys. The finished product looks as good as new. After toys are repaired, assembled and painted, they are recycled into the various toy-lending centers. Many manufacturers and companies also donate toys to Toy Loan.

The passage implies that

- A. once a year, citizens of the community donate toys to the Toy Loan Program.
 - B. the Toy Loan Program has noticed an increase in the number of toys they have received.
 - C. a broken toy can have some of its workable parts recycled for use in the repair of other toys.
 - D. toy Loan Centers are staffed by volunteer citizens that lend toys to the children of the community.
12. The Brown Act governs meetings conducted by local legislative bodies such as boards of supervisors, city councils and school boards. As these legislative bodies are charged with conducting the people's business, the Brown Act ensures that the business is conducted in open meetings, allowing public access and a free exchange of opinions. The law recognizes that a balance must be struck between the public's right to open meetings and the legislative body's need for confidentiality in certain circumstances. Although the Brown Act allows for closed sessions in specific, narrowly drawn exceptions, there is a presumption in favor of public access. The District Attorney's Office has the authority to prosecute individual members of the legislative body criminally and to initiate civil actions to prevent or nullify actions taken in violation of the Brown Act.

Based on the information provided,

- A. the public's access to local legislative meetings ensures that the people's business will be conducted.
- B. the Brown Act guarantees that a variety of opinions will be presented during meetings by local legislative bodies.
- C. the need for confidentiality during the meetings of legislative bodies is considered a primary requirement under the Brown Act.
- D. members of local legislative bodies can be prosecuted under the Brown Act.

13. Between 1940 and 1947, the population of Los Angeles County increased by thirty percent, while the County Library service area population increased by a disproportionate fifty-four percent. The service area population increased another twenty-eight percent during the next two years, marking the beginning of the biggest boom in the County's history. By the 1950s, the formerly rural territory the Library was called on to serve was undergoing radical change. Due to postwar industrial expansion and a phenomenal increase in population, Southern California rapidly was becoming one large metropolitan area. One of the steps the Library took to adapt to this change was through a major reorganization. In 1957, the Regional Plan was adopted as part of a strategy to render speedier, more responsive service to the many cities and urbanized communities in the once predominately rural and agricultural County territory.

According to the passage,

- A. The growth of the County Library service area population has sometimes outpaced the growth of the County's population.
 - B. County libraries were originally located in urban areas, and then later expanded into rural territories.
 - C. An unexpected result of the Regional Plan was an equitable distribution of reading materials across the County.
 - D. Major reorganization is typically the best response to industrial expansion and large increases in population.
14. In arbitration, each side in the dispute presents its case, including evidence, to a neutral third party called an "arbitrator," rather than to a judge. The arbitrator, who is an attorney, issues an award based on the evidence just as a judge would, within a time frame set by the Court. Although evidence is presented, arbitration is a less formal process than litigation. Arbitration may be "binding" or "non-binding" depending on what the parties agree to before beginning the process. "Non-binding arbitration" means that the participants in the case are not required to accept the arbitrator's award; they may request a "trial de novo" which returns the case to the Court's calendar as if the arbitration had not occurred. It is important for parties to understand that, in agreeing to binding arbitration or by not requesting a trial de novo, they are waiving their right to a trial and are accepting the arbitrator's award as a final decision.

Based on the information provided,

- A. arbitration is not independent of the Court's influence.
- B. the arbitrator's determination of an award is not as formally tied to laws, as a court determination would be.
- C. the use of arbitration is increasing as it leads to a faster resolution than a traditional court trial.
- D. the records of the arbitration are submitted to the Courts if a case is returned for a decision under a "trial de novo."

15. Beginning in 1997, volunteers began performing civil wedding ceremonies at a wedding chapel located at the Registrar-Recorder's office in Norwalk. To date, 35 volunteers have responded to our volunteer recruitment and have been sworn-in as deputy commissioners of civil marriage and trained to conduct marriage ceremonies. The award-winning Marriage Ceremony Volunteer Program provides citizens from all walks of life the opportunity to volunteer in public service while saving taxpayer money. Department staff, who performed marriage ceremonies before the volunteer program was in place, are now able to complete more specialized tasks and help reduce backlogs which had developed as a result of staff reductions in the Birth, Death, and Marriage Section.

The passage implies that

- A. productivity of Registrar-Recorder staff performing specialized tasks has increased due to the Marriage Ceremony Volunteer Program.
- B. Deputy Commissioners of marriage are trained to conduct civil and religious wedding ceremonies.
- C. offering citizens a public service opportunity was the primary incentive for the creation of the Marriage Ceremony Volunteer Program.
- D. Deputy Commissioners are responsible for determining if couples have met the legal requirements for marriage.

Answers and Explanations to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that the "Ombudsman serves as an advocate and problem solver for children placed in group homes."
2. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that Patriotic Hall is owned and operated by the County of Los Angeles and is "a practical and living memorial to veterans."
3. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that any exterior modifications or improvements must be reviewed and approved by the DCB. It further states that modifications or improvements include "renovations, re-painting, signage, re-landscaping, etc."
4. The correct answer is **B**. The passage implies that fluoridating water is effective by stating that "health advocates praised the decision as a major step forward in protecting the public against tooth decay."
5. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that through court coordination supported by the Superior Court, resource use was maximized, duplication of functions were eliminated and "centralized operations were set up."
6. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that the regions are "divided for planning purposes into urban, urban-rural, rural, and wildland."
7. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that librarians select materials based on the recommendations of the public, subject knowledge and expertise of the library staff, and librarians' "knowledge of the diverse needs of their customers and of the local library's existing collection."
8. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that "The property owner has the right to appeal the value, if he/she does not agree with it."
9. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that visually impaired voters were able to "vote privately and independently with the aid of an audio component" suggesting that visually impaired voters were able to cast their ballot privately and without the aid of a pollworker.
10. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that the Parks Service Bureau provides "vehicle, bicycle, foot, and horse patrols" through more than 126 parks and recreation areas.
11. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that crews "repair and assemble items from parts of other toys. The finished product looks as good as new." This implies that some workable parts can be recycled for use in repair.

12. The correct answer is **D**. The passage indicates that local legislators can be prosecuted by stating that the District Attorney “has the authority to prosecute individual members of the legislative body criminally and to initiate civil actions to prevent or nullify actions taken in violation of the Brown Act.”
13. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that while the population of Los Angeles County increased by thirty percent between 1940 and 1947, the County Library service area increased by a disproportionate fifty-four percent.
14. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that the arbitration occurs within a time frame “set by the Court,” and that non-binding arbitration may return the case to the Court’s calendar as a trial de novo.
15. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that department staff “are now able to complete more specialized tasks and help reduce backlogs,” because they were relieved of spending time conducting wedding ceremonies. This implies that the Registrar-Recorder’s staff productivity performing specialized tasks has increased due to the Marriage Ceremony Volunteer Program.