

READING COMPREHENSION STUDY GUIDE & SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

VERSION 2



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 Fire Department protects the lives of Los Angeles County residents, the environment, and property within its 2,280-square-mile jurisdiction. The department provides prompt, skillful, and cost-effective fire protection and life-saving services to nearly 4 million residents in 57 cities and all unincorporated County areas. Within its current budget is a major departmental reorganization to enhance community service, including the addition of seven community services representatives.

According to the passage, the Fire Department is

- A. having budgetary problems due to a reorganization.
 - B. charged with protecting only the property of County residents.
 - C. responsible for the unincorporated areas of the County.
 - D. increasing its jurisdiction over additional cities within the County.
2. The term "certified" used in the phrase "Certified Farmers' Markets" means that the produce is brought to the market straight from the farm, either by the farmer personally or by an employee. Only California grown produce may be certified. Los Angeles County agricultural inspectors visit and certify participating farms growing crops locally. They inspect the markets and review all farmers' papers for accuracy, thereby certifying that the farmers are selling only what they, themselves, have grown.

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

- A. The inspection process is determined by the type of produce being grown.
- B. Agricultural inspectors are responsible for determining if local farmers meet requirements for certification.
- C. Farmers who bring produce that they purchased from another farmer who grew the produce locally are eligible to be certified.
- D. Produce sold at a "Certified Farmers' Market" is always of better quality than other produce.

3. California law requires that all dogs over the age of four months be licensed as a rabies control measure. Making sure your dog has its current license attached to its collar is also your best insurance of having your dog returned to you in case the dog becomes lost or gets out of your yard. The dog license also lets the Animal Care and Control Department staff know if your pet is currently vaccinated against rabies. The money received from dog license fees helps the department continue to provide quality animal care and control services 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The passage implies that

- A. dogs that do not wear a collar are more likely not to be licensed.
 - B. fees collected for dog licenses are used to pay for rabies vaccinations that are available 24 hours a day.
 - C. dogs that are not vaccinated and are lost will not be returned to their owners.
 - D. a dog that has a license attached to its collar is less likely to remain lost.
4. Library customers may ask the librarians at the reference desk for information on borrowing books from other public library agencies. Cooperative agreements between the County of Los Angeles Public Library and local and national libraries allow County residents to obtain books and other materials that are not listed in the County Library catalog. Library customers will need to have a valid County Library card to request materials through the InterLibrary Loan (ILL) program. There is a \$3.00 non-refundable handling fee per item to place an ILL request.

Based on the information provided,

- A. a library customer must be a resident to obtain a valid County of Los Angeles Library card.
- B. the small fee for using the ILL program is applicable if more than one item is requested.
- C. the County of Los Angeles Library catalog has an extensive listing of books to be borrowed by its customers.
- D. a customer at a County of Los Angeles library can use the ILL program to request a book from an international library.

5. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' Pet Adoption Program was started in December of 1995. Each Tuesday at the Board of Supervisors' Meeting, a Supervisor highlights an animal in need of a home from one of Los Angeles County's six Animal Care Centers. Information is provided about the animal, including the sex, breed, and age. A telephone number is provided so that anyone interested in adopting the animal can call to obtain more information. To date, more than 389 dogs, cats, puppies, kittens, rabbits, and guinea pigs have been placed into new homes thanks to this special program.

Based on the information provided,

- A. the animal's breed, age, and vaccination history is provided for those interested in adopting the featured pet.
 - B. the Pet Adoption Program has placed a majority of the animals featured during the Board of Supervisors meetings.
 - C. once per month during the Board meeting, a shelter animal in need of adoption is featured by a Supervisor.
 - D. the Board of Supervisors uses the Pet Adoption Program to publicize animals available for placement.
6. In accordance with federal law and local ordinance, Los Angeles County provides voter registration information, election materials and oral assistance in six languages other than English (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese). Voters who request election materials in one of these languages will be mailed a translated sample ballot for all Los Angeles County-conducted elections. Additionally, poll locations that have been identified as requiring oral language assistance are supplied with translated voting materials and staffed with bilingual-speaking pollworkers whenever possible. Signs are posted in those poll locations identifying the language(s) spoken.

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

- A. Pollworkers are hired based on their ability to speak several languages.
- B. A request must be made by the voter to receive election materials in a language other than English.
- C. Poll locations throughout Los Angeles County always have signs posted that indicate the minority languages spoken.
- D. Voters who speak a language other than English and the six identified minority languages may request registration materials in that language.

7. Computers may not make mistakes, but people programming them sometimes do. During a recent survey, Weights and Measures inspectors were overcharged by store scanners on more than one out of two items they purchased at retail and grocery stores. To protect consumers, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance that increases the number of inspectors monitoring scanner accuracy, sets up a toll-free number for consumers to report overcharges, and requires stores to post the toll-free number near the checkout stand. Under this new law, stores that are repeat offenders for overcharging consumers must also post conviction notices on the front of the store.

According to the passage,

- A. the new ordinance requires all stores to post conviction notices where consumers can see them.
 - B. scanner accuracy has decreased which has led to an increase in the overcharging of consumers.
 - C. inspectors conducting a recent survey were overcharged more often than correctly charged.
 - D. additional inspectors have been hired to handle the increased number of retail and grocery stores that overcharge customers.
8. The Sheriff Department's Evidence Control Section (ECS) provides evidence pickup and delivery service, whether directly to law enforcement agencies, sheriff's stations, police departments and highway patrol agencies, or indirectly via the Scientific Services Bureau regional laboratories. Last year, the ECS handled more than 110,000 receipted evidence submissions and traveled more than 208,000 miles in the process. The section is responsible for maintaining a strict chain of custody, security, and records, and for providing assistance and information involving the gathering, storing, and processing of all evidence submitted to the Bureau.

Based on the information provided,

- A. the ECS has experienced a significant increase in the volume of evidence submissions.
- B. civilian staff members maintain an electronic log of all evidence submitted to the ECS.
- C. the Sheriff's Department provides evidence-handling services to a variety of other agencies.
- D. when an external law enforcement agency submits evidence to the ECS, the agency is responsible for delivering it.

9. It is the intent of the Legislature that all persons qualified for jury service shall have an equal opportunity to be considered for service as criminal grand jurors in the county in which they reside, and that they have an obligation to serve when summoned for that purpose. All persons selected for the Criminal Grand Jury shall be selected at random and shall be reasonably representative of a cross section of the population that is eligible for jury service in the county. For this reason, there is no mileage limitation for the Criminal Grand Jury and no excuse will be granted because of the distance from the courthouse or inconvenience to the juror.

Based on the information provided,

- A. eligible jurors have a responsibility to serve on juries in their county of residence.
 - B. civil grand jurors follow the same jury selection procedures as criminal grand jurors.
 - C. random selection of jurors has been the proven method of increasing juror participation.
 - D. jurors who are unable to travel to the main courthouse may be given the option of serving at an alternate courthouse.
10. The Fire Investigation Unit conducts investigations of major alarm fires and other fires when mandated by Department policy. In addition, they investigate those fires that appear to be of significance in Fire Prevention practices. They interview witnesses, collect and preserve evidence, write reports and maintain comprehensive files on fires investigated. The Unit also conducts training programs for Departmental personnel. As part of their duties, and as a consequence of their investigations, they are required to testify in both criminal and civil court cases. Because some fires investigated are of suspicious origin, this unit must work very closely with the Sheriff Department's Arson/Explosive Detail as well as other law enforcement agencies.

According to the passage, the Fire Investigation Unit

- A. provides court testimony at the conclusion of every investigation.
- B. identifies fire prevention practices when conducting routine investigations.
- C. uses actual investigations as part of the training they provide departmental personnel.
- D. investigates fires independently and in conjunction with other agencies as necessary.

11. The County of Los Angeles Air Quality-Rideshare Program complies with County Ordinance 90-0033U, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 2202 Employee Commute Program, and the Federal Clean Air Act. Our mission is to promote ridesharing and telework as a workplace strategy that reduces traffic congestion, air pollution, and commuter costs. The Chief Administrative Office sets program policy and coordinates implementation of uniform procedures through a Countywide Coordinator Network. The County Labor-Management Advisory Committee has oversight responsibility for Civic Center rideshare strategies and achievement of regional air quality/rideshare goals.

According to the passage,

- A. a central goal of Rule 2202 is to save money for the commuter.
 - B. the Clean Air Act defines the rideshare goals that are mandated on local governments.
 - C. programs within the workplace can assist in reducing air pollution in Southern California.
 - D. each rule, ordinance, and act that governs commuting programs has a different focus and requirement that make developing a ridesharing program challenging.
12. The County of Los Angeles historically has played a leadership role in pursuing aggressive outreach efforts to promote and include minority, women, disadvantaged and disabled veteran-owned businesses in County contracting. To further these efforts, the County established the Community Business Enterprise (CBE) Program, which is designed to ensure that minority, women, disadvantaged and disabled veteran-owned firms have access to all County contracting opportunities. The Board of Supervisors established a Countywide goal of 25% CBE participation for dollars awarded in all construction, commodities, and service contracts. The Board has assigned management of the County's CBE Program to the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance (OAAC).

Based on the information provided,

- A. the Board of Supervisors determines the vendors that are eligible to participate in the CBE Program.
- B. the primary purpose of the CBE Program is to encourage diversity among vendors bidding for County contracts.
- C. the OAAC is responsible for ensuring that 25% of County contracts are awarded to CBE participants.
- D. since the initiation of the CBE Program the County has experienced a significant increase in the volume of minority-owned vendor bids.

13. No one is above the law, especially those who are sworn to uphold it. Those who are charged with enforcing the laws of the State of California must themselves scrupulously obey the law. They must lead by example, and that example must be based on principles of honesty, integrity, credibility, and accountability. When judges, attorneys, police officers, and others working in the justice system break the law, they must be held accountable for their actions. The District Attorney created the Justice System Integrity Division (JSID), a team of highly experienced prosecutors and investigators, to ensure just that. JSID – with enhanced cooperation from local and federal agencies – provides the resources to detect, investigate, and prosecute criminal misconduct among those sworn to uphold the law. By doing so, JSID deters criminal wrongdoing and helps raise confidence in law enforcement, the courts, and the justice system in general.

According to the passage,

- A. the JSID works with other law enforcement agencies to accomplish its objectives.
 - B. people working in the law enforcement field face stricter sentences when found guilty of crimes.
 - C. internal investigative branches of law enforcement agencies are responsible for shaping the public's confidence in the agency.
 - D. when members of the JSID are suspected of breaking the law, the investigation is conducted by a neighboring jurisdiction.
14. The Dispute Settlement Service (DSS) offers a fast, convenient, and free alternative to the time consuming process of using the crowded courts to resolve disputes. The parties can still go to court if a resolution cannot be reached. Mediation is scheduled at a time and place convenient for both parties, or is conducted through telephone conciliation. When one party decides to mediate, DSS will contact the other party in the dispute, explain the mediation process, and invite them to participate. The DSS will work to resolve most conflicts between consumer and vendors, landlords and tenants, neighbors, businesses, real estate and homeowner/condominium associations. It does not accept cases involving criminal acts, malpractice, and family law.

The passage suggests that Dispute Settlement Services

- A. has helped to lessen the number of court cases.
- B. are used by members of the entire community.
- C. works to resolve most of the mediation requests it receives.
- D. will require the second party to participate in the mediation process when the first party requests mediation.

15. Hundreds of thousands of bad checks are passed in Los Angeles County every year. Merchants lose millions of dollars to bad check activity while consumers share in these losses through higher prices. Everyone bears the additional cost of law enforcement efforts and prosecution of bad check cases in Los Angeles County. To combat this problem, the District Attorney's Office has created a dynamic program to track down bad check writers and recover losses for their victims. A check writer who qualifies for the new Bad Check Restitution Program is temporarily "diverted" from criminal prosecution and given an opportunity to make good on the check. Successful completion of the program requires attendance at an eight-hour intervention class designed to address underlying behavioral issues that cause bad check activity. Cases on check writers who fail to fully repay their victims are reviewed for possible criminal filing. This diversion opportunity, coupled with the possibility of criminal prosecution, deters bad check writers from future offenses.

Based on the information provided,

- A. bad check activity costs law enforcement agencies more than it costs businesses.
- B. an eight-hour intervention class is mandatory for those found guilty of forging bad checks.
- C. heavy losses that business experience due to bad checks is the reason for higher priced merchandise.
- D. a new program allows people who have written bad checks to potentially avoid criminal prosecution.

Answers and Explanations to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that the Fire Department provides services to residents in "all unincorporated County areas."
2. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that the agricultural inspectors determine certification for farms by inspecting markets and reviewing all paperwork for accuracy.
3. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that making sure your dog has its current license "is your best insurance of having your dog returned to you."
4. The correct answer is **A**. The passage provides two clues that a customer must be a County resident to obtain a valid library card. First, it states that cooperative agreements allow County residents to obtain books not in the County catalog. Second, it states that library customers will need to have a valid County Library card to request materials through ILL.
5. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states the Board of Supervisor uses the Pet Adoption Program to feature animals in County shelters that are eligible for adoption.
6. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that "voters who request election materials in one of these languages will be mailed a translated sample ballot."
7. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that inspectors were overcharged on "more than one out of two items they purchased."
8. The correct answer is **C**. The passage provides two clues to indicate that the department provides services to a variety of agencies. The first clue states that the department provides direct services to "law enforcement agencies, sheriff's stations, police departments and highway patrol agencies." The second clue states that the department provides indirect services "via the Scientific Services Bureau and regional laboratories."
9. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that all persons qualified for jury service have an equal opportunity to be considered for service in the County in which they reside, and that they "have an obligation to serve when summoned for that purpose."
10. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the Fire Investigation Unit investigates major alarm fires and fires of significance in Fire Prevention Practices. It also states that "this unit must work very closely with the Sheriff Department's Arson/Explosive Detail as well as other law enforcement agencies."
11. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that ridesharing and telework are two examples of programs that reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and commuter costs.

12. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that the Community Business Enterprise (CBE) Program was created “to ensure that minority, women, disadvantaged and disabled veteran-owned firms have access to all County contracting opportunities,” indicating that the primary purpose of the CBE Program is to encourage diversity among vendors bidding for County contracts.
13. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that the JSID works with cooperation from both local and federal agencies to detect, investigate, and prosecute misconduct.
14. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that Dispute Settlement Services is an alternative to the “time consuming process of using the crowded courts to resolve disputes,” suggesting that the service has helped to lessen the number of cases.
15. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the Bad Check Restitution program is an opportunity to avoid criminal prosecution, by making good on the bad check and attending an eight-hour intervention class.