

WRITTEN EXPRESSION 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 written expression items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of written expression 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. Pre-employment testing 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 test in addition to written expression; 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 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 WRITTEN EXPRESSION QUESTIONS

Written expression questions test your knowledge of, and ability to recognize errors in, structural and grammatical elements of standard written English; however, questions will vary from one test to another. For example, the test may require you to "edit" a document similar to one you may encounter in the position for which you are testing by asking you to respond to a series of questions based on the document. The following are examples of the types of written expression questions most common to County employment tests. Answers and explanations for the questions are provided on pages 6-7 of this study guide.

Identifying Common Written Errors

INSTRUCTIONS: Each of the items below consists of a sentence that has been divided into three sections, labeled A, B, and C. Each sentence may contain an error in capitalization, grammar, punctuation, or word usage. Determine whether the sentence has an error and select the appropriate answer below. No sentence contains more than one error. NOTE: actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

1. Though the procedure applies / to all departments, / the Fire department has modified it.
A B C
 - A. There is an error in part A of the sentence.
 - B. There is an error in part B of the sentence.
 - C. There is an error in part C of the sentence.
 - D. There is no error in the sentence.

2. Detailed information regarding / open positions are / available on our website.
A B C
 - A. There is an error in part A of the sentence.
 - B. There is an error in part B of the sentence.
 - C. There is an error in part C of the sentence.
 - D. There is no error in the sentence.

3. Because of changes, the / responsibility for maintaining child support / records is now theirs.
A B C
 - A. There is an error in part A of the sentence.
 - B. There is an error in part B of the sentence.
 - C. There is an error in part C of the sentence.
 - D. There is no error in the sentence.

4. After a year of retirement, / you're former supervisor is / returning to work as a consultant.
A B C
 - A. There is an error in part A of the sentence.
 - B. There is an error in part B of the sentence.
 - C. There is an error in part C of the sentence.
 - D. There is no error in the sentence.

5. He, to, is considering / transferring divisions in order to / have a shorter commute to work.
A B C
 - A. There is an error in part A of the sentence.
 - B. There is an error in part B of the sentence.
 - C. There is an error in part C of the sentence.
 - D. There is no error in the sentence.

Select the Correct Sentence

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item below, read the sentences and select the one that is **MOST** accurate with respect to grammar, mechanics, punctuation, sentence structure, and word usage. NOTE: actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

6.
 - A. The work wellness instructor has informed us that swimming burns more calories overall than to walk.
 - B. We in the procurement section thank you for the valuable assistance that you provided.
 - C. Los Angeles County welcomes more than 15 million persons' each year to county parks and facilities.
 - D. After training for more than one year, the event was cancelled.
7.
 - A. The woman who issue the request extended the deadline.
 - B. The secretary ordered several plants because she knew it would enliven the workplace environment.
 - C. The employees of Los Angeles County annually inspect gas pumps and scales to ensure their accuracy.
 - D. While typing, the fire alarm went off and the building was evacuated.
8.
 - A. Thousands of immunizations are given hear to protect residents against many diseases.
 - B. Please submit your registration forms to Tracy, Joyce, or myself before the end of the week.
 - C. She preferred the first option least, despite its being less expensive than the other options.
 - D. Brochures describing the new facility was distributed to all who attended the ceremony.
9.
 - A. All managers should realize that it's their responsibility to inform employees of new policies.
 - B. The department wants a more bigger space to conduct business.
 - C. Los Angeles County own and administer five general aviation airports.
 - D. About 20% of the divisions budget was spent on upgrading old computers and installing new software.
10.
 - A. They are not never going to implement the proposed policy because of its expense.
 - B. A passport is an acceptable form of identification to: present for entrance to the testing facility.
 - C. The police officer reminded the student to be more careful when crossing the street.
 - D. Aged, blind, and disabled, Los Angeles County provides in-home supportive services to residents.
11.
 - A. The summaries of my, Josephines', and Marias' comments are attached to this memo.
 - B. The employees of Los Angeles County circulate 15 million books and materials through 84 libraries and four bookmobiles.
 - C. The Animal Control representative described the lost puppy as a golden retriever wearing a silver collar weighing 150 pounds.
 - D. All employees should recognize that it is they're responsibility to know and follow all policies.
12.
 - A. His supervisor reminded him to do the yearly report frequently.
 - B. A operation as large as Los Angeles County has some of the largest systems in place, including one of the largest flood control systems in the world.
 - C. If you complete the certificate program then you should have a basic understanding of contracting.
 - D. For more information about the new tax regulation, please contact the Assessor's office.

Select the Best Expression

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item below, read the sentences and select the one that **BEST** expresses the common thought. NOTE: actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

13. A. All are fully considered for benefits: men, women, and, children.
B. All men, women, and children are fully considered for benefits.
C. For benefits, men, women, and children are all fully considered.
D. Fully considered are all men, women, and children for benefits.
14. A. The department offers many programs to the elderly to daily assist them with their activities.
B. Daily are offered many programs to assist the elderly activities by the department.
C. The department offers many programs that assist the elderly with their daily activities.
D. Offered by the department to assist the elderly activities are many daily programs.
15. A. For your signature, I have placed in your in-box the memo.
B. I have placed the memo for your signature in your in-box.
C. The memo for your signature I have placed in your in-box.
D. I have in your in-box placed the memo for your signature.

Answers and Explanations to Written Expression Items

1. An error is found in part C of the sentence. The sentence should read, Though the procedure applies to all departments, the Fire Department has modified it. In part C, "department" should be capitalized to reflect that a specific department is referenced.
2. An error is found in part B of the sentence. The sentence should read, Detailed information regarding open positions is available on our website. In part B, "are" is the incorrect verb form for the singular subject of "information."
3. There is no error in the sentence; therefore, D is the correct answer.
4. An error is found in part B of the sentence. The sentence should read, After a year of retirement, your former supervisor is returning to work as a consultant. In part B, "you're" means "you are" and is not the possessive adjective required to modify "supervisor."
5. An error is found in part A of the sentence. The sentence should read, He, too, is considering transferring divisions in order to have a shorter commute to work. In part A, "to" is a preposition denoting direction and should be "too" as in also.
6. Sentence B is most accurate. Choice "A" is improperly structured (i.e., "to walk" should be "walking"), "C" contains an unnecessary possessive (i.e., "persons'" should be "persons"), and "D" contains an ambiguous reference (i.e., "After training for more than one year").
7. Sentence C is most accurate. Choice "A" contains an incorrect verb tense (i.e., "issue" should be "issued"), "B" contains an incorrect pronoun (i.e., "it" should be "they"), and "D" contains an ambiguous reference (i.e., "While typing").
8. Sentence C is most accurate. Choice "A" contains a misused word (i.e., "hear" should be "here"), "B" contains a misused word (i.e., "myself" should be "me"), and "D" contains an incorrect verb form (i.e., "was" should be "were").
9. Sentence A is most accurate. Choice "B" contains an unnecessary adjective (i.e., "more"), "C" contains improper verb forms (i.e., "own" and "administer" should be "owns" and "administers"), and "D" is missing necessary possessive punctuation (i.e., "divisions" should be "division's").
10. Sentence C is most accurate. Choice "A" contains a double negative (i.e., "not never"), "B" contains unnecessary punctuation (i.e., ":"), and "D" contains a misplaced modifier (i.e., "Aged, blind, and disabled").
11. Sentence B is most accurate. Choice "A" contains incorrect possessives (i.e., "Josephines' and Marias'" should be "Josephine's and Maria's"), "C" contains a misplaced modifier (i.e., "weighing 150 pounds"), and "D" contains a misused word (i.e., "they're" should be "their").
12. Sentence D is most accurate. Choice "A" contains a misplaced modifier (i.e., "frequently"), "B" contains an incorrect article (i.e., "a" should be "an"), and "C" is missing necessary punctuation (i.e., "program" should be "program,").
13. Sentence B best expresses the common thought. In choices "A" and "C," the adjective "all" is too far way from the noun that it modifies (i.e., "men, women, and children"), thus splitting up the subject of the sentence, "all men, women, and children," and compromising clarity. Choice "D" is awkward in that it does not follow the generally accepted sentence construction of the subject being followed by the verb, and instead places the verb (i.e., "are fully considered") before the subject (i.e., "all men, women, and children").

14. Sentence C best expresses the common thought. In choice "A," the adjective "daily" is too far from the noun that it modifies (i.e., activities), thus creating confusion. Choices "B" and "D" do not follow the generally accepted sentence construction of the subject being followed by the verb, and instead place the verb (i.e., "are offered") before the subject.
15. Sentence B best expresses the common thought. In choice "A," the prepositional phrase "for your signature" is too far from the noun that it modifies (i.e., "memo"). Choice "C" is awkward in that it does not follow the generally accepted sentence construction of the subject and verb being followed by the object, and instead places the object (i.e., "the memo for your signature") before the subject and verb (i.e., "I have placed"). Choice "D" splits up the verb "have placed" with a prepositional phrase (i.e., "in your in-box").