

WRITTEN EXPRESSION 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 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. The County of Los Angeles / is the most populated county in / the United States.
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. A secondary inspection / found the building to be in code / compliance ware it previously was not.
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. They nevertheless have decided / to postpone the event until a / more favorable venue is found.
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. From looking at the city map, / I can see who's resident / city covers the most area.
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. In order to expedite / processing, timecards are due by / tomorrow Wednesday, April 9.
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 supervisor decided that it would be more cost-effective to train existing staff on the new technology then to hire an outside consultant.
 - B. Los Angeles County provides summer employment to 10,000 youths each year.
 - C. As requested at the meeting the final document will include a table of contents.
 - D. The interview should last for approximately a hour.

7.
 - A. She called the secretary because she had forgot what time the conference was to begin.
 - B. We would appreciate your efforts to comply with the new policies in addition to the old one's.
 - C. The supervisors memo promoting carpooling said that everyone in the division would have to ride together to all future meetings in the company van rather than in separate vehicles.
 - D. Employees can gain new experiences with the same employer by transferring among departments.

8.
 - A. Not anybody requested to have their work hours changed.
 - B. The team was so excited about the idea that it was implemented quick.
 - C. The Children and Family Services Department handles the adoptions of thousands of children each year.
 - D. They must chose whether to return the books or request to have them added to the department library.

9.
 - A. The residents were lucky; very few items were broke as a result of the earthquake.
 - B. We are very pleased that you have chosen our organization from amongst many others.
 - C. The poll-workers assembled early on Election Day to receive its instructions.
 - D. In celebration of our promotions, the division took him and I to lunch.

10.
 - A. These positions were once traditionally held by men; but are becoming increasingly popular with women.
 - B. To be considered for promotion, your supervisor must submit a performance evaluation for your previous six months in the unit.
 - C. Employees are encouraged to volunteer and are given many opportunities to do so throughout the year.
 - D. The book, *Effective Communication in Organizations* is on the desks of many department managers.

11.
 - A. The recruitment team has visited many local colleges and universities to find potential applicants for the position.
 - B. Less employees are choosing traditional work hours in favor of more flexible schedule options.
 - C. His supervisor told him that he did good on his first public speaking attempt.
 - D. The Registrar-Recorder Department issue over 50,000 marriage licenses annually.

12.
 - A. The Board of Supervisors sponsor many job fairs throughout the year.
 - B. Should the envelope be addressed to Commissioner Stevens and me.
 - C. Each of you are invited to attend the conference again next year.
 - D. In order to approve the requisition, a manager must review a written justification.

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. The Consumer Affairs Department is the largest local consumer protection agency, serving over 700,000 consumers in the United States annually.
B. Consumers, over 700,000, are annually served by the largest local consumer protection agency: the Consumer Affairs Department.
C. Annually serving over 700,000 consumers, the Consumer Affairs Department is the largest local consumer protection agency in the United States.
D. Over 700,000 consumers are served by the local Consumer Affairs Department, the largest consumer protection agency in the United States annually.
14. A. Beginners should attend the training session tomorrow, a review of the basics, and experienced professionals who want.
B. Experienced professionals who want tomorrow, and beginners, should attend the training session, a review of the basics.
C. Tomorrow, beginners should attend the training session, and experienced professionals who want a review of the basics.
D. Beginners and experienced professionals who want a review of the basics should attend the training session tomorrow.
15. A. Our office will be closed on Monday in celebration of the national holiday.
B. In celebration of the national holiday our office will on Monday be closed.
C. Closed will be our office in celebration on Monday of the national holiday.
D. On Monday, our office will, in celebration of the national holiday, be closed.

Answers and Explanations to Written Expression Items

1. There is no error in the sentence; therefore, D is the correct answer.
2. An error is found in part C of the sentence. The sentence should read, A secondary inspection found the building to be in code compliance where it previously was not. In part C, "ware" is the incorrect word choice for "where."
3. An error is found in part A of the sentence. The sentence should read, They, nevertheless, have decided to postpone the event until a more favorable venue is found. In part A, a comma is missing before and after the word "nevertheless."
4. An error is found in part B of the sentence. The sentence should read, From looking at the city map, I can see whose resident city covers the most area. In part B, the "who's" means "who is" and is not the possessive adjective required to modify "city."
5. An error is found in part C of the sentence. The sentence should read, In order to expedite processing, timecards are due by tomorrow, Wednesday, April 9. In part C, there should be a comma after "tomorrow."
6. Sentence B is most accurate. Choice "A" is improperly structured and contains a misused word (i.e., "then" should be "than"), "C" is missing necessary punctuation (i.e., "meeting" should be "meeting,"), and "D" contains an incorrect article (i.e., "a" should be "an").
7. Sentence D is most accurate. Choice "A" contains an incorrect verb form (i.e., "had forgot" should be "had forgotten"), "B" contains unnecessary possessive punctuation (i.e., "one's" should be "ones"), and "C" is missing necessary possessive punctuation (i.e., "supervisors" should be "supervisor's").
8. Sentence C is most accurate. Choice "A" contains an improper negative (i.e., "not anybody" should be "no one"), "B" contains an incorrect adverb (i.e., "quick" should be "quickly"), and "D" contains a misused word (i.e., "chose" should be "choose").
9. Sentence B is most accurate. Choice "A" contains an incorrect verb form (i.e., "were broke" should be "were broken"), "C" contains an incorrect pronoun (i.e., "its" should be "their"), and "D" contains an incorrect object form (i.e., "I" should be "me").
10. Sentence C is most accurate. Choice "A" contains improper punctuation (i.e., the semi-colon should be a comma), "B" contains an ambiguous reference (i.e., "to be considered for a promotion"), and "D" is missing necessary punctuation (i.e., a comma is missing after "organizations").
11. Sentence A is most accurate. Choice "B" contains an improper adjective form (i.e., "less" should be "fewer"), "C" contains an adjective instead of an adverb (i.e., "good" should be "well"), and "D" contains an incorrect verb tense (i.e., "issue" should be "issues").
12. Sentence D is most accurate. Choice "A" contains an incorrect verb form (i.e., "sponsor" should be "sponsors"), "B" is missing necessary punctuation (i.e., the period should be a question mark), and "C" contains an incorrect verb form (i.e., "are" should be "is").

13. Sentence C best expresses the common thought. In choices "A" and "D" the adverb (i.e., "annually") is separated from the verb that it modifies (i.e., "serving" and "served" respectively). Choice "B" does not follow the generally accepted sentence construction of the adjective (i.e., "over 700,000") preceding the noun it modifies (i.e., "consumers") and contains improper punctuation (i.e., the colon should be a comma).
14. Sentence D best expresses the common thought. Choices "A," "B," and "C" confusingly separate the subject of the sentence (i.e., "beginners and experienced professionals who want a review of the basics").
15. Sentence A best expresses the common thought. In choice "B," the verb (i.e., "will be closed") is separated by a prepositional phrase (i.e., "on Monday"). Choice "C" does not follow the generally accepted sentence construction of the subject being followed by the verb, and instead places the verb (i.e., "will be closed") after the subject (i.e., "our office"). In choice "D," the verb (i.e., "will be closed") is separated by two prepositional phrases (i.e., "in celebration" and "of the national holiday").