



The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) is empowered by Public Act 203 of 1965, as amended, to set employment standards for persons entering law enforcement in Michigan. Under that Authority, the MCOLES has developed two examinations to test critical skills required of law enforcement officers. The preemployment examination, or the Reading and Writing Test, is the sole focus of this overview.

The Reading and Writing Test is designed to measure writing skills and reading comprehension – skills important and necessary for success in training and on-the-job. The test is job-related and validated for persons entering the law enforcement profession in Michigan. It consists of 120 multiple-choice items, and is administered online, via the web, in a proctored test environment at a set time and location.

Additional descriptive information, as well as sample items, follow.

Who is required to take the test?

All persons initially entering law enforcement must demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing. Under authority of Public Act 203 of 1965, the MCOLES has mandated the testing as part of its Selection and Employment Standards published in the Michigan Administrative Code.

If you have any questions about whether you are required to take the Reading and Writing Test, please contact MCOLES at (517) 322 1417.

If I am an individual with a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and interested in requesting an accommodation for the testing, how do I go about making such a request?

To initiate a request for a reasonable accommodation for testing, please contact MCOLES at (517) 322 3967, before registering for the test.

How is the test administered?

The test is administered online, via the web, in a proctored environment. Group test administration sessions are scheduled at various training academies throughout the State. You may elect to take the test during any of the scheduled dates and times and at any of the listed academies. (The test administration schedule is published online and available in hard copy upon request.) Once you have selected a testing session, you are to report to that academy on the date given, at least 15 minutes prior to the time listed. You will complete the test onsite, using the academy's computer and web access. Before beginning the exam, practice items are provided to allow you time to acclimate yourself to the computer-based testing environment.

What do I have to bring to the test center on test day?

You will need to bring a valid driver's license and/or government picture ID to be admitted to the test center and to take the test. (Note that you must be at least 18 years of age to be admitted to the test center.) If your license does not have a picture, you will also need pictured identification.

How long are the test scores valid, and how are they reported?

Test scores for the Reading and Writing Test do not expire. For those who pass the Reading and Writing Test, a letter grade is reported (i.e., A, B, or C). This letter grade indicates to the employer whether you are in the top (A), middle (B), or lower (C) group or "band" of those applicants who have passed the test.

You may access your test results 24 hours after completing the test. Test results will also be mailed to you within three business days of test administration. If you would like to try to improve your results, you may elect to retake the test at any time.

How do I report my passing score to the agency to which I am applying?

You should present your MCOLES Notification of Test Results form (either printed from the web or the mailed copy) to the agency; they will copy it and return the original to you. If there is any question about your test score(s), the agency will contact MCOLES directly. Note that your printed or mailed results do not serve as official results; all results are verified upon application.

What are some tips or strategies for doing my best on the test?

Pace yourself. There are 120 items to be completed in 120 minutes. The test is not intended to be speeded; it is designed so that most people will readily finish in the time given. The item number and amount of time remaining are, however, displayed on your screen throughout the administration session. You can check your progress periodically by glancing at the top right corner of your screen.

Read the directions and each item carefully. Even if you think you know the answer to the item, read through all alternatives before selecting your answer.

Bookmark items. If you find yourself in a situation where you do not understand the question or do not know the answer, consider "bookmarking" the item and return to it later. The testing platform will track the items you "skip" (and/or bookmark) and will present the list to you once you have completed all other items. This allows you to move on to other items before investing too much time on a single item you find challenging. Then, once you have completed the remainder of the test, you can return to those items which you find require more thought and review. (Note that how to "bookmark" an item will be explained in greater detail at the beginning of the administration session.)

Answer as many items as you can. Every item is worth the same in scoring. There are no penalties for incorrect answers, so it is to your advantage to answer as many items as you can.

When you do not know the answer, narrow down the choices. If you do not know the answer to an item, see if you can narrow the choices by eliminating alternatives that you know are incorrect, and then select an answer from those remaining.

Make no assumptions about the answer key. If you have answered several items in a row “A” for example, do not assume that your answers are incorrect. Answer the items as best you can based on the information presented, not based on assumptions or superstitions about how tests are constructed.

Consider whether you want to review your answers before you finalize your test. Once you have completed all items, a question will appear on the screen asking whether you want to “finalize” your responses. If there is time remaining, consider whether you would like to review any of the test items and/or your responses. You can go back, reread items, and change answers at any point prior to finalizing the test. Once you chose (i.e., click) “finalize” however, you can no longer review or modify your responses. Make sure you are satisfied with your responses and have answered all the items that you intend before finalizing the test.

Answer each item based on the information as presented. The test is not designed to trick you or to be unnecessarily difficult. It measures basic skills necessary for and related to success in law enforcement.

THE READING AND WRITING TEST: AN OVERVIEW

The Reading and Writing Test is designed to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your reading and writing skills, and has been shown to predict subsequent success in training and on-the-job for law enforcement professionals in the State of Michigan.

The Reading and Writing Test includes 120 multiple-choice test items. Half of the items measure writing skills and half measure reading comprehension. The test is derived from job-related documents and resources, yet no technical knowledge is required to successfully complete the test.

The writing skills portion of the test includes five different sections or item types: (1) Detail, (2) Spelling, (3) Word Usage, (4) Clarity, and (5) Grammar. The reading comprehension portion of the test consists of a series of passages, each followed by a series of items on the passage.

Sample items are given below so that you can practice before taking the test, and familiarize yourself with the types of items in the test. An answer key is given immediately following the sample items. For maximum effectiveness, practice items should be reviewed and completed before checking the answer key.

Sample Items: Writing

Sample items for each of the five different sections or item types follow.

For **Detail** items, two statements are presented. You are to select the statement that provides the more useful, detailed information.

1.
 - A. Inspector Lewis of the Flint Police Department entered 807 Cottage Way at 9:42 a.m. and discovered the remains of a Caucasian male, subsequently identified as Allan Jones. The victim's spouse, who was present and living in the apartment, was taken into police custody without incident. She was identified as Patricia Ann Robert.
 - B. Patricia Ann Roberts of 807 Cottage Way, Flint, Michigan was taken into custody by Inspector Lewis for the investigation of the death of her husband, Allan Jones, with whom she was living. Lewis found the remains of Jones when he entered the couple's apartment at 9:42 a.m., June 3, 2012, to investigate Jones' disappearance.
2.
 - A. Irving Frederickson of 211 South Washington Street, Seattle, was arrested for the November 3rd murder of Juan Gonzales. Gonzales, a Seattle native, lived at 1201 Marconi Avenue, Seattle, at the time of his death.
 - B. Irving Frederickson, 18, residing at 211 South Washington Street, Seattle, was arrested in Tacoma, Washington on November 11th. He was arrested for the November 3rd murder of Juan Gonzales of 1201 Marconi Avenue.

Each **Spelling** item presents a sentence with one word missing. You are to select the correct spelling of the missing word from the three alternatives given.

3. On _____, police officers will enlist the aid of an informer.
 - A. ocasion
 - B. occasion
 - C. occaseon
4. The prosecutor challenged the defendant's _____.
 - A. innocence
 - B. innocense
 - C. inocence
5. The crowd was _____ to become unruly at the concert.
 - A. beginning
 - B. begining
 - C. begenning

The **Word Usage** items also present a sentence with one word missing. You are to select the best and proper word to complete the sentence from the two alternatives that follow.

6. The riot control squad _____ the crowd.
- A. dispersed
 - B. disbursed
7. This was the _____ such attack in the last 30 days.
- A. forth
 - B. fourth
8. The _____ were transported from the hospital by van.
- A. patience
 - B. patients

For the **Clarity** items, a complete sentence is presented with a phrase or section italicized. The italicized phrase may or may not be well-written, and is the focus of the item. Three alternatives follow, the first of which is exactly the same as the italicized phrase. You are to review the three alternatives, in the context of the sentence, and select the one that is most clearly stated.

9. The suspect's pants had bloodstains *in the area beneath his right pocket*.
- A. in the area beneath his right pocket.
 - B. below the right pocket area.
 - C. beneath his right pocket.
10. The prisoner has refused *to say who he is*.
- A. to say who he is.
 - B. to identify himself.
 - C. to have his name be known.

In each **Grammar** item, a sentence is presented which may or may not be grammatically correct. You are to read the sentence, decide whether it is grammatically correct or incorrect, then indicate your decision by selecting the corresponding alternative from the two given (A. Correct or B. Incorrect).

11. If Albertson were to submit to a polygraph test, it would lessen our concerns.
- A. Correct
 - B. Incorrect

12. The inspector's remarks about the crime spree was chosen extremely well.

- A. Correct
- B. Incorrect

13. I find it hard to believe Alexander's story.

- A. Correct
- B. Incorrect

Sample Items: Reading

For the Reading items, several passages are presented. For each passage, a series of items follow. You are to read the passage and then answer the items based solely on the information given in the passage. A sample reading passage and series of items are given below.

Passage

Most people think about policing in a very narrow way. They may think of traffic stops or criminal arrests. While it is true that law enforcement officers do both of these things, there is so much more to the job. In fact, policing is a diverse role. Officers must have a wide range of job skills if they are to be successful.

In addition to making arrests and traffic stops, officers often mediate disputes, domestic and otherwise. Mediation requires skill in listening, persuasion, conflict management, and the ability to subdue a belligerent person if needed. When responding to an incident, there is often far more involved than an arrest. Officers must first investigate and decide which, if any, crime was committed, and by whom. This requires problem solving, analytical ability, and knowledge of investigative techniques, as well as a good memory and observational skills.

Another core job duty is documenting investigations and incidents. The documentation is required to create a record and may be used in criminal or court proceedings. As a result, officers must attend to detail, have strong writing skills, and be able to use word processing software. There are other skills that may not come to mind as quickly. Yet, these skills are helpful, or may even be essential. For example, law enforcement officers are often the first to arrive at the scene of an accident. Thus, knowledge of CPR and first-aid are essential. Or, consider the ability to speak a second language, which can be very helpful in interviewing victims and witnesses.

14. What is the term belligerent used to mean in the passage?

- a. Large or strong
- b. Criminal
- c. Physically violent

15. Which of the following statements best summarizes the passage?
- a. The public's opinion of law enforcement is unfavorable.
 - b. Police officers take on many roles, and use many different skills and abilities.
 - c. The police officers who are the most successful are the ones with the most skills.
16. For police officers, first-aid skills can best be described as
- a. a job requirement.
 - b. a definitive characteristic.
 - c. helpful, but not necessary.
17. Writing ability is
- a. far less important than most other job-related skills and abilities.
 - b. necessary to successfully complete an important and common job duty.
 - c. outdated as a job requirement due to the use of word processing software.
18. According to the passage, which of the following statements about disputes is true?
- a. Domestic disputes are by far the most common.
 - b. The parties involved in a dispute are generally hostile and aggressive.
 - c. The dispute may be resolved through communication and reason.

Scoring Key

1. B, 2. B, 3. B, 4. A, 5. A, 6. A, 7. B, 8. B, 9. C,
10. B, 11. A, 12. B, 13. A, 14. C, 15. B, 16. A, 17. B, 18. C

Questions and Additional Information

If you have any questions concerning the preemployment test program, please contact the MCOLES Standards and Training Section at (517) 322 1417.