



# HOW TO DO YOUR BEST on a McCann Written Test



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## INTRODUCTION

McCann Associates has prepared this guide to give each candidate the opportunity to prepare for the test. This guide is intended to familiarize you with our question formats and the instructions for taking the test. If you study this guide, you should be able to concentrate your efforts during the test itself on reading and answering the questions.

This guide consists of four parts: questions about test taking, information about typical question formats, sample questions, and the test instructions. The key answer for each sample question is given and, with some of these questions, an explanation about the key answer is also given.

Don't try to memorize the answers to the sample questions; none of these questions will be on the test. However, by carefully studying these questions, you can become familiar with the style and format of our questions. The test instructions appear exactly the way they are on the front and back covers of the examination question booklets.

## THE BEST ANSWER

Your task in each question is to choose the *best* or most acceptable answer from among the five choices. The basis for the official key answer is not absolute rightness or wrongness, but comparative rightness. The key answer must be the *best* answer; that is, it must be *better* than any of the other four choices. There may be another answer, which is not among the five choices, which is a better answer than any of the five choices. Even if this is true, it is still your task to choose the *one* choice that is the best answer of the five choices given. To help you remember that your task is to choose the best or most acceptable answer, many questions include a superlative, such as "the most important reason," "the best course of action," "best describes," or "most likely to be."

## TO GUESS OR NOT TO GUESS

The instructions you will find on the front cover of the test booklet include the following statement:

**All questions have equal weight. Do not open this booklet until the monitor tells you to "Begin the test."**

There is no penalty for guessing. If you answer 70 questions correctly and 30 questions incorrectly, you will be given full credit for 70 correct answers. If you answer 70 questions correctly, 20 questions incorrectly, and fail to answer 10 questions, you will also be given full credit for 70 correct answers.

If you fail to answer one or more questions, you will not get credit. If you guess at the answer to one or more questions, you will get credit for any correct answers. Consequently, you should record an answer to every question - the answer that seems best to you - even though you may not be *sure* that it is the best answer.

## **TAKE TIME TO BE CAREFUL**

Most of the tests we develop contain 100 questions and have a time limit of 3½ hours (210 minutes). If the test for your department has a different number of questions or a different time allowance, you will be notified of that fact. The time limit is sufficient so that most candidates, even those who read slowly, should be able to complete the test. However, it is extremely important to plan your time and to pace yourself.

During the actual test, the monitor will periodically announce the amount of remaining time that you have to complete the test, in order to assist you in pacing yourself. It is a good test-taking technique to check your time regularly to see whether you are on schedule. You should answer five questions in 10 minutes. Take the time to read and answer the questions carefully, because rushing may cause mistakes. It's better to answer only 95 questions, because you took time enough to be careful, than to rush through all 100 questions and make mistakes.

## **TOUGH QUESTIONS**

There probably will be some difficult questions. Don't spend too much time trying to figure out the answer to a tough question. It is usually wiser to skip a tough question (don't forget to skip the space on the answer sheet!), and answer the rest of the questions. Mark each question you skip in the booklet so that you can find it later. When you have finished all the questions, go back and answer the tough questions that you skipped. If you spend too much time on tough questions, you may have to hurry or you may not have sufficient time to answer all the questions (possibly including some easier ones that might appear later in the test).

## **"TRICKINESS"**

The test does not contain trick questions. However, a question that is not tricky for a candidate who knows the answer may seem tricky to someone who doesn't. The test creators try to make wrong answers attractive to persons who are poorly qualified. The wrong answers are intended to be incorrect, but nevertheless, wrong answers can't be so silly that no one would ever answer any questions incorrectly.

A candidate may believe an answer is correct, but feels that the answer is too easy or too obvious and that there must be a hidden meaning. Such a candidate may search for a hidden meaning and may be convinced that a right answer is wrong, simply by looking for a trick where there is none.

## **REVIEWING AND CHANGING YOUR ANSWERS**

If you have time after you have answered all of the questions, go back and make sure that you have answered every question and that you have put all your answers in the right places. Also check that you have chosen and marked the best answer. However, don't change your original answer unless you are absolutely sure that your original answer is wrong, or that you marked the wrong answer on the answer sheet.

Many studies have been made of the erasures on answer sheets. The likelihood is about two to one that a candidate will erase a correct answer and change it to a wrong answer. This is why we suggest that you don't change your answer unless you are positive that the answer you originally recorded is wrong.

## "NEGATIVE" QUESTIONS

Most of the questions are "positive" questions, that is, they ask for "the best" answer or "the most important reason" or "the best course of action," etc. A much smaller number of questions are "negative," in that they ask for "the LEAST desirable course of action," "the LEAST important principle," etc.

Many times it is just as important to know what is wrong as it is to know what definitely should *not* be done because it would make an already bad situation even worse. This is why "negative" questions are included in the test. Some candidates tend to overlook the "negative" and try to answer a question which asks for the "LEAST desirable" as though it asks for the "most desirable." The best indication that you have made this mistake is when you find what appear to be two or more good answers to a question. When this occurs, immediately check the question to see if it asks for a positive or negative answer.

## WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS?

The questions will be in one of three formats: 1) the regular format and 2) the permutation format and 3) the understanding and interpreting text, table, and graph format. In the following sections, we discuss each of the three formats.

## THE REGULAR FORMAT

The stem of each question describes the task that you must do to answer the question. The stem of Sample Question 1, as follows, is marked to help you understand the term "stem." The task may be to identify the "best reason" or the "most advisable course of action" or a different kind of task. First read the stem of the question and try to understand its task.

After you understand the task, read each choice. If you are reasonably sure that a choice is wrong, put an "X" beside the choice letter in the question booklet. (See Choices C, D, and E in Sample Question 1.) On the other hand, if you are fairly sure that a choice is the best answer, put a ✓ in front of that choice to indicate that fact. (Choice A in Sample Question 1 is marked as the best answer.) If you aren't sure if a choice is right or wrong, don't make any marks. (See Choice B in Sample Question 1.)

After you have read all the choices and marked the ones you are sure are either right or wrong, you may find that there is only one choice which you are sure is the best. If so, mark it on the answer sheet. There may be no answer which you are sure is the best, but you may have marked off one, two, or even three choices that are wrong. This will leave you with four, three, or possibly only two choices which aren't crossed off. At this point, exercise your judgment and experience to choose one of those choices that you have not crossed off, and record it on the answer sheet. If you have no idea which of the choices not crossed off is best, then perhaps this is a "tough question." You might want to postpone answering it until you have gone through the rest of the test.

## SAMPLE QUESTION 1

STEM



Which one of the following statements most accurately describes a general characteristic of gas station robberies?

- ✓ (A) Gas station robberies usually occur either at closing time or when there are no customers.
- (B) Station attendants are usually confronted by robbers outside, most often at the gasoline pumps.
- X (C) Gas station robbers will usually stake out several gas stations before robbing one or more of them.
- X (D) Gas station robbers rarely commit a series of robberies, one immediately following the other, along the same highway.
- X (E) All-night service stations, in outlying areas, are seldom robbed because they do not have a high volume of business.

The key answer is (A).

## THE PERMUTATION FORMAT

A permutation question is a multiple "true-false" question. The best way to understand the permutation format is to look at Sample Question 2, as follows. A permutation question is made up of four parts. Three of the four parts make up the stem of the question. The first part is called the "lead." The "propositions" are the second part. There are usually three or four propositions, and each is numbered. The third part is the question, and the choices are the fourth part.

First read the lead to see what task is to be performed in relation to the propositions. Next, read the propositions and decide whether each proposition "is" or "is not" what the task states. If you feel that a proposition is what the task states, mark "is" next to the number of the proposition. (See Proposition 2 in Sample Question 2.) If you feel that it is NOT what the task states, mark "not" next to the proposition number. (See Proposition 3.) If you aren't sure, don't mark anything next to the proposition. (See Proposition 1.) After you have read and marked the propositions, read the question itself.

Each choice will list the propositions, by number only, and will indicate whether each proposition "is" or "is not" what the task states. You can now apply the process of elimination.

## SAMPLE QUESTION 2

S T E M	LEAD	Following are three statements about field interviews that may or may not be accurate statements:
	PROP- OSITIONS	<b>IS</b> 1- You should pat down every subject before conducting the field interview.
		<b>IS</b> 2- You should write down the information as you receive it during the field interview.
	<b>NOT</b> 3- You should conduct a field interview only when you are suspicious that the person has committed a crime.	
QUESTION	Which one of the following choices most accurately classifies the above statements about conducting field interviews into those that are accurate statements, and those that are not?	

- X (A) 1 and 3 are accurate statements, but 2 is not.
- X (B) All of 1, 2, and 3 are accurate statements.
- ✓ (C) 2 is an accurate statement, but 1 and 3 are not.
- X (D) 2 and 3 are accurate statements, but 1 is not.
- X (E) None of 1, 2, or 3 is an accurate statement.

The key answer is (C).

In Sample Question 2, Proposition 2 is an accurate statement. Choices A and E say Proposition 2 is NOT an accurate statement. Therefore, neither Choice A nor E is a correct statement, as shown by the "X." Proposition 3 is NOT an accurate statement. This eliminates Choices B and D, which are marked by an "X." Proposition 1 may or may not be an accurate statement; it is unmarked. Choice C says that Proposition 2 is an accurate statement, and Propositions 1 and 3 are not accurate statements. Therefore, Choice C must be the correct answer.

## INTERPRETING TEXT, TABLE, AND GRAPH MATERIAL FORMAT

There are some questions which involve interpreting a quoted text (reading material) which deals with a specific subject. There are also questions involving material that is presented in the form of a table or graph. Your task is to study the information in the reading selection, table, or graph, and then to answer each question based *only* on the information contained in the text, table, or graph.

The stem starts with text, which is contained within quotation marks. The quotation is followed by a question which asks you to interpret the quotation or to draw a conclusion from it. No training or job experience is needed to answer these questions, because the answer is contained in the quotation. Base your answer on what it says in the quotation, rather than on your outside knowledge. The quotation controls the choice of an answer even though you may think that the text isn't right.

First read the quotation carefully and thoroughly to understand what it is saying. Then read the question and identify the task which is required. Look back at the quotation to be clear on what the quotation says in regard to the question. Then read each of the choices and mark each with an X or a ✓ just as you did for regular questions. Remember that the X indicates a choice which clearly is not based on the quotation, and the ✓ indicates a choice which is clearly based on the quotation. Then choose the answer you believe is the best answer.

The technique to answer a table or graph question is essentially identical to the technique outlined above.

## **THE DAY OF THE TEST**

We realize that taking a written examination can make a person tense and fearful. We hope this study guide has eliminated most of your fear. The most important advice we can give you is to try to enter the testing room in a positive, cheerful frame of mind, with as much self-confidence as possible. Tell yourself, "I'm going to read each question and all the choices carefully, and then I'm going to select the best answer. If I'm not sure of the answer, I'm not going to worry about it. Instead, I'm going to skip it and go on to the next question." With this frame of mind, you should do well. It is also a good idea to get a good night's sleep before the examination and to allow yourself plenty of time to get to the examination room, so you don't feel rushed because you're late.

## **CONCLUSION**

Studying this guide will not increase your level of knowledge, ability, or skill. However, if you read and study this guide and the questions that accompany it, you should be better able to do your best on the written test.

**COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM**

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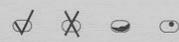
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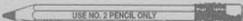
**DIRECTIONS**

CORRECT MARK

EXAMPLE    A    B    C    D    E  
           

INCORRECT MARKS



ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE 



**39295**

*Do NOT write your name on this portion of the answer sheet*

**Special Codes**

Group 1     Group 6  
 Group 2     Group 7  
 Group 3     Group 8  
 Group 4     Group 9  
 Group 5     Group 10

EXAMINATION FOR		EXAMINATION NUMBER	
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McCANN  
ASSOCIATES

QUESTION BOOKLET  
FOR  
(Rank to be tested)

**Question Booklet**

**WRITE YOUR IDENTIFICATION  
NUMBER IN THE BOX**

**Directions**

Write your identification number in the box above. Read all of the instructions on this front cover, and also the instructions on the outside of the back cover. You are NOT to open the booklet for any reason until the Monitor instructs all of the candidates at once to “Open the booklet and begin the test.”

Instructions for recording your answers on the separate answer sheet are found on the outside of the back cover of this booklet and should be read carefully before you begin to answer the questions. Also, remember to read carefully any instructions that are part of the test. Interpreting and following directions are part of the examination. You may make marks in the booklet. If you need to make calculations, use the margins of the booklet.

Candidates are positively forbidden to take this booklet or any part thereof from the examining room. This booklet is the property of McCann Associates, and is loaned to you only for use in this examination. All examination material must be returned to the Monitor before candidates leave. All materials in this booklet are covered by copyright.

The questions in this test are not intended to be tricky or misleading. Read each question carefully before answering.

Your task is to select the choice for each question which you believe to be the most acceptable of the choices offered. You are to select one choice and only one to each question. The choice you select for each question will be scored “right” or “wrong” on the basis of the standard answer which has been determined to be the most acceptable. Any unanswered question is counted as “wrong.” Any single question to which you record two or more answers will be counted as “wrong.”

**ALL QUESTIONS HAVE EQUAL WEIGHT**

**DO NOT OPEN THIS TEST BOOKLET UNTIL THE MONITOR  
TELLS YOU TO “BEGIN THE TEST.”**

No part of this booklet may be reproduced by any means without specific written permission of McCann Associates.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

You should have already printed the information required in the box on the tear-off portion of the answer sheet, as well as in the area above where you record your answers. Check to make sure you have recorded the position for which you are being examined, the examination number (if there is one), the date, the place, and, if appropriate, the room number. **BE SURE THAT THE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER printed on the remaining portion of the answer sheet is also recorded on the front cover of this booklet.** For your protection, your answer sheet is identified only by this number until after it has been scored. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE ANSWER SHEET OR ANY OTHER TEST MATERIAL PROVIDED TO YOU.**

You are not allowed to use books or other reference materials. Before the test begins, turn over any such aids to the Monitor, who will return them to you after the test. Failure to do so may disqualify you. You are forbidden to communicate with any other candidate, or to give or to receive help from any person or source during the course of this test. **KEEP YOUR OWN WORK COVERED.** Copying from another candidate or permitting another candidate to copy from your answer sheet is cause for disqualification.

The Monitor is forbidden to explain the meaning of any question, or to give any information which may help to answer a test question. Any necessary explanations will be made to the entire room. Do not leave the room without the permission of the Monitor. If you leave the room without permission, your papers will be taken and will not be reissued to you.

If you wish to withdraw from this test without completing it, write across your answer sheet “I withdraw” and sign your name. If you withdraw, you will not be permitted to leave the room until ½ hour after the “Time Started.” When you finish the test, review your question booklet carefully to make certain that you have answered as many of the questions as you can. Signal the Monitor, and stay in your seat until the Monitor collects and checks all material.

### How to Record Your Answers on the Answer Sheet

The answer sheets are scanned into a computer and scored. The process is done twice to verify accuracy. However, accurate scoring also depends upon candidates following these instructions:

1. Use a No. 2 pencil.
2. Be sure to mark your answers **DARKLY** on the answer sheet. Fill in the **ENTIRE** oval.
3. Every question is identified by its own number. After you have read a question and decided which answer is best, you should note the letter, (A) or (B) or (C) or (D) or (E), for that choice on the answer sheet.
4. Be certain to record your answer on the right line for that question. Misplaced answers are counted as wrong answers.
5. Do not mark more than one answer per question. Double answers are counted as wrong answers.
6. If you change your mind about the best answer to a question, **COMPLETELY** erase the black mark for the answer you want to change and make a new black mark for the new answer. Thorough erasing is important, but **DO NOT** erase so thoroughly as to tear the paper.