

PolicePrep Comprehensive Guide to Canadian Police Officer Exams

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Written Communication Test

Police services in English-speaking jurisdictions across North America will require that you have a good understanding of the English language. As a police officer, it is imperative that you are able to express yourself succinctly and be able to filter, analyze and organize information into a comprehensive and legible report.

Before taking any practice written exams, review the material below.

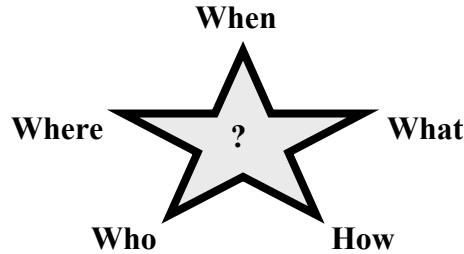
Report Intro

Many police services will ask you to write a report based on a sequence of data. They are assessing your ability to sort through the data, reach a logical conclusion and present the information in a clear coherent manner. There are several things you must keep in mind while performing this exercise.

- **There will be irrelevant information included in the question.**
 - Ensure that you discard information that doesn't add to the report.
 - Examples of this include: descriptions of districts a distance from the scope the report is to focus on. (In a traffic collision scene, is it really relevant that there is a bridge a kilometre down the road?)
- **The information will be presented in a random order.**
 - When describing the event in your report, organize it into chronological order.
 - Include the times where appropriate.
- **You will have to analyze and recreate the event concisely and clearly.**
 - Follow the KISS principle - Keep It Simple Stupid
 - Keep the language simple and the sentences clear. You are not being graded on the size of the words you use.
 - Be sure of your spelling and grammar.
 - Write the report in a legible format. If the marker can't read it, you will fail.
- **You will be under time pressure.**
 - Pay close attention to the time while writing the report.
 - Set an adequate amount of time to read the question, sort out the information and write the report.

Information Gathering

As you are going through the information, you should be pulling out relevant information and sorting it. There are six basic questions that you should be addressing while writing your report.



- If possible, "why" should be included, but be careful not to invent details in the report

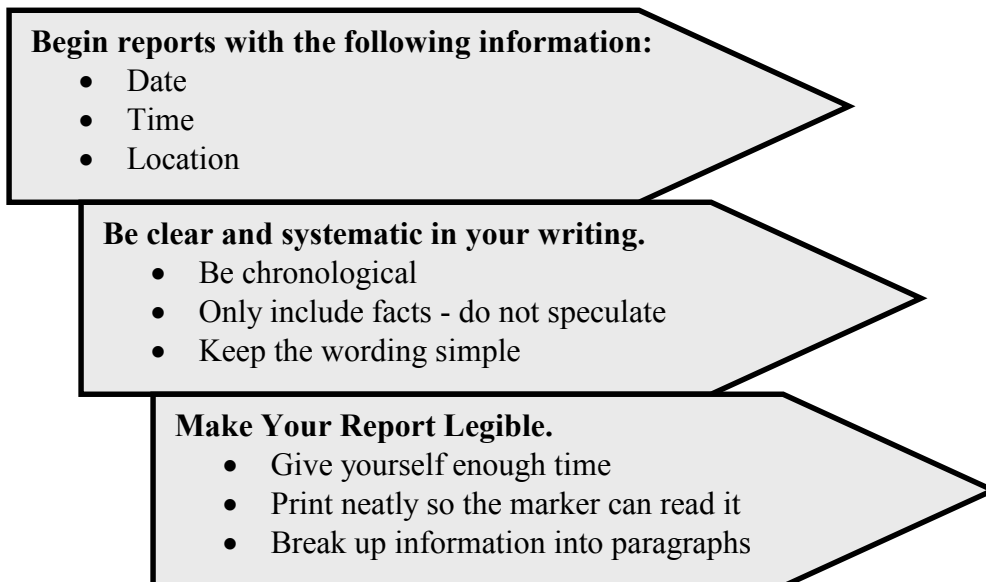
While reading through the report, pull out information that seems relevant. Sort it into categories and make rough notes. Some categories you should group the information into include:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| - time | - date |
| - location | - involved parties |
| - evidence at scene | - property description |
| - other | |

There are other categories that may be more relevant, depending on the scenario.

Report Writing

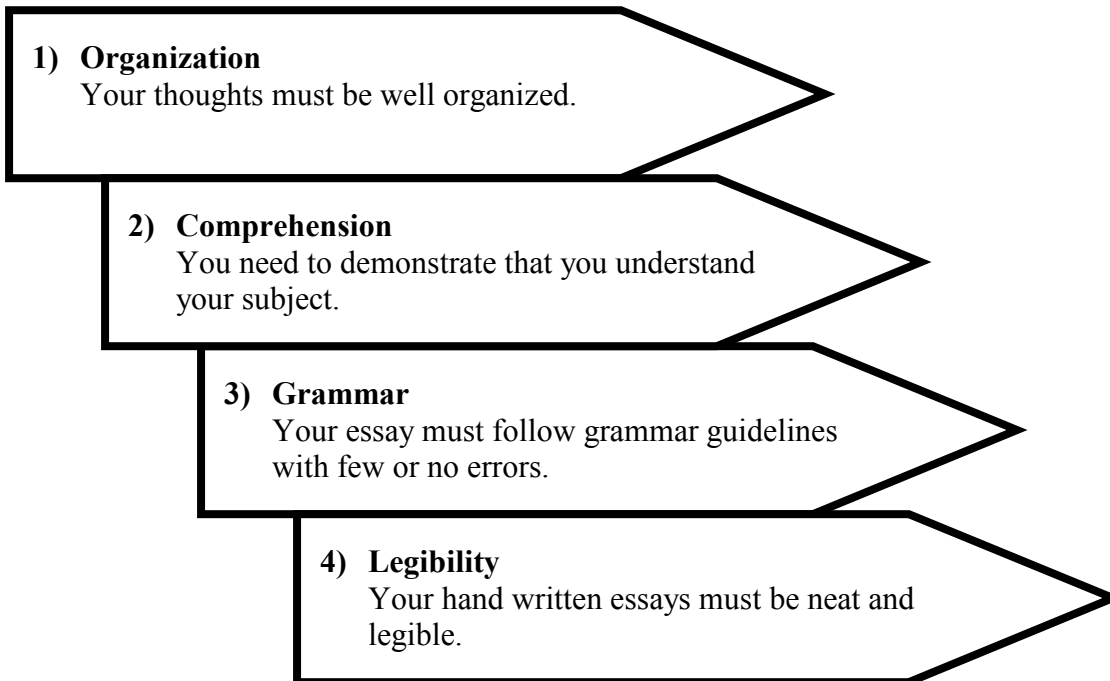
It cannot be stressed enough that, as a test applicant, you should follow the KISS rule. Police reports are factual, relevant, and clear. Below is a list of suggestions on how to write the report.



Practice writing as many reports as you can. Observe the formats used in this book and on the PolicePrep website.

Essay Writing

There are several police services across North America that will require you to submit an essay on a topic of their choice. You will be given a time limit (some are as little as 10 minutes) to organize and compose your thoughts and write an essay or paragraph. If you are asked to do this, you will be marked on:



Possible Topics

Police services may ask you to write about anything, so there is very little you can do in terms of preparing for the content of the essay. There are, however, general topics which tend to come up often.

- What challenges are police services facing in the future?
- Is diversity in the work force a good thing?
- What is the most important characteristic a police officer should have?

You could be asked to answer one of these, or any another question, in essay form.

Prior to Writing

Organize your thoughts in point form on a scrap of paper before you begin writing.

Example: What challenges are Police services facing in the future?

- Budget Cuts
- Terrorist Threats
- Racial Profiling and Race Relations
- Youth Violence
- Aging Police Personnel

No matter how long your list of points, you should focus on three at most.

Structuring Your Essay

Write an essay that is appropriate for the time limit you are given. If the limit is 10 minutes, you will only have time to write a paragraph. If you are given thirty minutes or longer, structure your essay into multiple paragraphs. Break your paragraphs down in the following manner:

Single Paragraph

- Introductory Sentence
- Supporting Point # 1
- Supporting Point # 2
- Supporting Point # 3
- Concluding Sentence

Example of Single Paragraph Essay:

There are many challenges facing police services in the new millennium that will require a great deal of personal commitment and dedication from all members of the service. The threat of terrorism in a post-9/11 world will require greater vigilance on the part of police officers and stronger ties with community members to gain information about terrorist threats. Dealing with terrorist threats is made more difficult with cutbacks to policing budgets, which will force members of the services to find creative solutions to these problems. A third problem police services across Canada face is the increase in youth violence and civil disobedience. Police services will be required to work closely with youth groups, school staff and social workers to help reduce violence. These are some of the problems that police services will have to deal with in the future, which will require hard work, personal sacrifice and partnerships within the police services and with other important organizations.

Multiple Paragraphs (Keep it to fewer than five paragraphs).

- **Introductory Paragraph**
 - State the position you are taking. This can be to agree or disagree with a statement, or to support both sides.
 - Briefly state arguments you will make (in one or two sentences).
- **Paragraphs # 2, 3 and 4**
 - State your point.
 - Provide your evidence.
 - Comment on the point.
- **Concluding Paragraph**
 - Restate the position you made in one or two sentences.

Example of Multi-Paragraph Essay:

Police services across Canada face several challenges in the coming years that will require a great deal of personal sacrifice and commitment on the part of members of the organization. These challenges range from the increasing threat of terrorism, cuts to law enforcement budgets and increases in the level and intensity of youth violence. In order to solve these problems, police officers will need to work more cooperatively with each other and with other relevant organizations in society.

Since September 11, 2001, police forces across North America have had to elevate their awareness of potential threats and create plans to handle emergency situations that may result from a terrorist attack. Preparing for possible attacks requires resources to train officers, and additional resources are needed to be ready for deployment in the event of an attack. Events that may, in the past, have been dismissed, need to be taken seriously. Recently, for example, Toronto's subway system had to be shut down when passengers detected a strange odour. This situation required officers to coordinate with transit, media and fire personnel to resolve the problem.

Paragraph #3– Budget Cuts

Paragraph #4 – Youth Violence

Terrorist threats, budget cuts and youth violence do pose challenges that police services will have to overcome. By having dedicated officers, and by working with outside agencies, police services will succeed in meeting these challenges.

Summary Tips

- Time yourself appropriately. Spend a couple of minutes writing your main ideas out in point form before beginning.
- Don't write too much. You are under a time limit. Make your points simple and give yourself enough time to print legibly.
- Keep your words simple. Don't use words if you don't know how to spell them.
- If you are writing multiple paragraphs, each paragraph should contain one idea. If you are only writing one paragraph, separate your ideas by sentence.
- Don't attempt to include too much information. Keep your points clear and simple.
- **BE ORGANIZED!** Follow the formats shown above for your essays and paragraphs.