

BOARD OF STATE AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS



**SELECTION EXAMINATION FOR THE  
ADULT CORRECTIONS OFFICER,  
JUVENILE CORRECTIONS OFFICER, AND  
PROBATION OFFICER CLASSIFICATIONS  
FOR LOCAL CORRECTIONS  
CANDIDATE ORIENTATION BOOKLET**

**SUMMER 2020**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
**BOARD OF STATE AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**  
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In preparing and updating the Selection Examination for the Adult Corrections Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, and Probation Officer Classifications, the Board of State and Community Corrections has considered the following documents concerning selection testing:

- The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, Joint Committee, 2014).
- The Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Inc., 2003).
- The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, et al, 1978).

**Candidate Orientation Booklet**  
**Selection Examination for the Adult Corrections Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, and Probation Officer Classifications**

**Overview**

The Candidate Orientation Booklet is designed to serve several functions, including:

- To provide background information about the development and validation of the Selection Examination for the Adult Corrections Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, and Probation Officer Classifications (referred to from here as the Selection Exam).
- To familiarize candidates with the exam format.
- To preview the contents of the Selection Exam.
- To provide sample questions (with answers) to help candidates prepare for the exam.

## **Development of the Selection Exam**

The Selection Exam was developed as a result of a multi-year statewide analysis of the following jobs: Adult Corrections Officer (ACO), Juvenile Corrections Officer (JCO), and Probation Officer (PO).

Exam development began with a review of job descriptions, previous job analyses (and related documentation), site visits, as well as interviews with ACO, JCO, and PO incumbents and supervisors. After a thorough research process, the project team developed a job analysis questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to ACO, JCO, and PO incumbents and supervisors from agencies throughout California. Questionnaire results were used to determine the nature and overlap of the ACO, JCO, and PO job classifications and to develop a clear and complete description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for successful job performance.

A large pool of exam items was developed to measure the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) at the point of hire, which were identified in the job analysis as important and critical to job success. These exam items were administered to a large sample of ACOs, JCOs, and POs undergoing the previous selection examination process around the state. The current Selection Exam is composed of items found to accurately measure the necessary KSAs identified in the job analysis.

## Exam Format

The Selection Exam consists of several sections of multiple-choice items. There are two ways to take the examination: paper-and-pencil or electronic. Each agency determines which method they prefer to use.

For the paper-and-pencil format, the exam is contained in a single exam booklet and an accompanying answer sheet. You will be instructed to answer all exam items on the answer sheet, not in the exam booklet. For the electronic version, you will be prompted through the exam steps on a computer and to select your answers as prompted. Typically, the exam will be administered in a group setting.

The total examination time given for both the paper-and-pencil and computer-based format will be approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes. Most candidates should have adequate time to complete all exam items.

## Preparing for the Selection Exam

A brief description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities measured in each section of the exam is given in the following pages, followed by examples of the types of items you will find in each section.

1. **Written Communication – Spelling:** Identify an incorrectly spelled word from a list of four words either presented with a paragraph example of how the words are used or without a paragraph.
2. **Written Communication – Grammar:** Read a passage and identify which sentence contains a grammatical error.
3. **Reading Comprehension – Identify a Difference:** Read two statements describing an image or an event and identify conflicting information between the two statements.
4. **Reading Comprehension – Understanding Passages:** Read a passage and answer a question that may require identifying facts and details, interpreting information, or drawing conclusions based on the passage.
5. **Apply Rules – Logical Sequences:** Identify the correct logical order of several sentences.
6. **Apply Rules – Appropriate Placement:** Identify the proper placement of a sentence within a given paragraph.
7. **Apply Rules – Level of Priority:** Identify the correct logical order of several events based on a given set of priorities.
8. **Apply Rules – Forms:** Identify the number of errors that were made when filling out a form based on a provided set of rules or procedures.
9. **Apply Rules – Scenarios:** Determine whether the provided set of rules or procedures were followed in a written scenario.
10. **Basic Math – Addition/Subtraction:** Correctly add or subtract a set of whole numbers.

The instructions and sample questions that appear in the examination for each section are presented on the following pages.

**1. Written Communication - Spelling**

**Directions:**

In this section, you will be presented with sets of four words. For each set of words, you will be asked to identify the word that contains a spelling error. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

**Sample Item:**

S1. Which of the following words contains a spelling error?

- A. assault
- B. separate
- C. remained
- D. arest

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
S1.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the first example (S1), option D (arest) is marked as the correct answer because the word should be spelled **arrest**.

**Directions:**

In this part of the section, you will be presented with a short paragraph in which four words are underlined. You will be asked to identify the underlined word that contains a spelling error. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

**Sample Item:**

When Officer D returned to work after vacation, there was an email waiting for her from her supervisor. The message informed Officer D that she was supposed to report imediately to the staff break room to restock the inventory. As Officer D entered the staff break room, she found her supervisor and fellow officers there waiting for her. To her surprise, they began singing the Happy Birthday song and presented her with a chocolate cake.

S2. Based ONLY on the paragraph above, which one of the underlined words contains a spelling error?

- A. supposed
- B. imediately
- C. restock
- D. surprise

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
S2.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the second example (S2), option B (imediately) is marked as the correct answer because the word should be spelled **immediately**.

## 2. Written Communication - Grammar

### *Directions:*

In this section, you will be presented with short paragraphs in which four sentences are numbered. You will be asked to identify the sentence that contains a grammatical error. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

### *Sample Item:*

(1) A package arrived for Inmate Q, who was called in to be present during the inspection of the package to make sure there were no unauthorized materials. (2) Officer R opened the package designated for Inmate Q and finds a knife. (3) The knife was confiscated from the incoming package. (4) The package was returned to the sender.

S1. Based ONLY on the paragraph above, which one of the sentences contains a grammatical error?

- A. Sentence 1
- B. Sentence 2
- C. Sentence 3
- D. Sentence 4

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
S2.	A	B	C	D	E
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For this example, the correct answer is option B (Sentence 2) because, sentence (2) should be written as "Officer R opened the package designated for Inmate Q and **found** a knife."

### 3. Reading Comprehension – Identify a Difference

**Directions:**

In this section, two descriptions are presented. The information in the two descriptions may or may not contain conflicting information. You will need to identify the piece of conflicting information, if any, between the two descriptions. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

**Sample Item:**

Two officers respond to a call about a two-car accident. Each officer collects a brief statement about the accident from each of the drivers. The drivers' statements are provided below.

Driver R's statement:

"I was driving to work and came to a stop at a red light so I could turn left at the intersection over there. The man behind me started to slow down, but he never came to a complete stop and hit me. He couldn't have been paying much attention to what he was doing. Afterward, I suggested we move out of the street so we wouldn't block the road for other drivers, so he followed me over to a nearby parking lot while we contacted the police."

Driver K's statement:

"I was just driving and saw that the car ahead of me was slowing down in the turn lane. I stopped safely about three or four feet behind her car, but my foot slipped off the brake pedal. Before I could do anything, the car had already rolled into her bumper. We got out of our cars and talked for a minute where we were, but neither of us wanted to block the road so we pulled off into this parking lot to wait for the police to arrive."

S1. What conflicting information, if any, is there between the two statements? Base your answer ONLY on the information provided above.

- A. The exact location of the accident.
- B. Where both drivers moved their vehicles after the accident.
- C. Whether or not Driver K came to a full stop before the accident.
- D. There is no conflicting information in the information provided in the two statements.

**Sample Answer Sheet**

	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer is option C because, according to the passage, Driver R stated Driver K's car never came to a complete stop while Driver K stated that he did safely stop, but his foot slipped off the brake pedal.



**4. Reading Comprehension – Understanding Passages**

**Directions:**

In this section, several passages are presented. Each passage is followed by one question about the passage. Select the best answer to each question based on the information in the passage, mark the letter (A, B, C, or D) on your answer sheet. An example is provided below.

**Sample Item:**

Depending on the type of offense, an offender may participate in a home-based electronic monitoring program instead of serving jail time. While in the program, an offender may be able to spend time outside of the home, but the activity must be approved. Activity limits will depend on the level of risk that an offender is assigned. Low-risk offenders are only required to be at home at certain hours during the day. Medium-risk offenders are required to be at home at all times except for pre-approved activities, such as work, school, or court appearances. High-risk offenders are only allowed to leave the home for court appearances.

S1. If a person is expected to be home all day but has been approved to attend classes in the morning, what level of risk would the individual fall under?

- A. No-risk offender.
- B. Low-risk offender.
- C. Medium-risk offender.
- D. High-risk offender.

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer is option C because, according to the passage, only medium-risk offenders are required to be home at all times unless there is a pre-approved activity.

## 5. Apply Rules – Logical Sequences

### *Directions:*

In this section, you will be presented with lists of numbered sentences that, when combined, form a paragraph. You will be asked to arrange each list of numbered sentences to form the MOST logical paragraph. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

Consider the following sentences. Order the sentences below to form the MOST logical paragraph. Choose the correct order from the options below.

1. Since the inmates did not need any further medical attention, they were cleared by medical staff and escorted to their living areas.
2. Inmate B's neck was bruised and there was a shallow cut located on his right knee.
3. Furthermore, medical staff discovered bruises on Inmate A's chest and scratches on his elbow.
4. Two inmates who were fighting in the exercise yard were restrained and escorted to the facility medical center to be evaluated.

S1. Which of the following options represents the correct order of the above sentences?

- A. 1, 2, 3, 4
- B. 4, 3, 2, 1
- C. 4, 2, 3, 1
- D. 1, 4, 2, 3

***Sample Answer Sheet***

	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer is option C because reading the sentences in this order makes the most logical sense:

4. Two inmates who were fighting in the exercise yard were restrained and escorted to the facility medical center to be evaluated.
2. Inmate B's neck was bruised and there was a shallow cut located on his right knee.
3. Furthermore, medical staff discovered bruises on Inmate A's chest and scratches on his elbow.
1. Since the inmates did not need any further medical attention, they were cleared by medical staff and escorted to their living areas.

**6. Apply Rules – Appropriate Placement**

**Directions:**

In this section, you will be presented with paragraphs followed by a sentence. Based on the content of the paragraph, select the most appropriate placement of the sentence. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

[1] Officer K arrived on the scene to find two individuals, one of whom was sitting on the ground holding his ankle. [2] Officer K questioned the individuals and found that when the robber attempted to threaten the victim with a knife, the victim defended himself, breaking the robber’s ankle in the process. [3] Officer K collected statements and took the man with the broken ankle into custody. [4]

S1. Read the following sentence and choose the most appropriate placement of the sentence in the above paragraph.

Officer K responded to a report of an attempted robbery during the middle of her late-night shift.

- A. Placement [1].
- B. Placement [2].
- C. Placement [3].
- D. Placement [4].

<b>Sample Answer Sheet</b>					
	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	●	○	○	○	○

The correct answer for this item is option A. This will create the following paragraph:

**Officer K responded to a report of an attempted robbery during the middle of her late-night shift.** Officer K arrived on the scene to find two individuals, one of whom was sitting on the ground holding his ankle. Officer K questioned the individuals and found that when the robber attempted to threaten the victim with a knife, the victim defended himself, breaking the robber’s ankle in the process. Officer K collected statements and took the man with the broken ankle into custody.

This option is correct because adding the new sentence to the beginning of the paragraph tells the reader about the “scene” discussed in the first sentence of the provided paragraph.

## 7. Apply Rules – Level of Priorities

### Directions:

In this section, you will be presented with tables containing sets of priorities defining types of events ordered from highest to lowest priority. Below each table will be a list of events. Based on the Order of Priorities table, put the events in order from highest to lowest priority.

The following priority list was given to a janitor at a high school.

<b>Order of Priorities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Priority: Potential biohazard situations (e.g., bodily fluids, chemical spills).</li> <li>• Second Priority: Serious property damage (e.g., flooding, broken glass).</li> <li>• Third Priority: Minor mess (e.g., toilet clog, small spills).</li> <li>• Fourth Priority: Graffiti.</li> <li>• Fifth Priority: Stocking the supply room</li> </ul>

Consider the following events. Order the events below based on highest priority to lowest priority. Choose the correct order from the options below.

1. One of the sinks in the girls' bathroom was damaged, getting water all over the bathroom floor.
2. Between classes, a student dropped their metal water bottle, spilling the contents in the hall.
3. Explicit paintings were reported on the school's exterior wall.
4. During a class, a chemical was spilled all over a table and the floor.
5. Janitorial supply is low on cleanser, paper towels, and sponges.

S1. Which of the following options represents the correct order for the events listed above from highest to lowest priority?

- A. 4, 1, 2, 3, 5
- B. 3, 2, 4, 1, 5
- C. 3, 4, 2, 1, 5
- D. 4, 2, 3, 1, 5

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer for this item is option A. This will create the following order of events:

- Event 4: A chemical spill is considered a First Priority (**potential biohazard**).
- Event 1: Damage to a bathroom sink causing flooding is considered a Second Priority (**property damage**).
- Event 2: Spilled water is considered a Third Priority (**small spill/minor mess**).
- Event 3: Paintings on the school walls are considered a Fourth Priority (**graffiti**).
- Event 5: Low stock of janitorial supplies is considered a Fifth Priority (**stocking supply room**).

**8. Apply Rules – Forms**

**Directions:**

In this section, you will be presented with a list of requirements that are needed to complete a form. You will then be presented with a form that has been completed by an individual. You will need to determine how many of the form requirements were **not** met. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

**Sample Item:**

Below is a list of requirements for filling out the Recreational Softball League Application form:

<b>Recreational Softball League Application</b>	
To join the community Recreational Softball League, please fill out this application in its entirety. The required information is requested as follows:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant name</li> <li>• Street address (number and street only)</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Indication of previous baseball/softball experience</li> <li>• Shirt size</li> <li>• Signature of applicant</li> </ul>	

Person X filled out the form below:

Softball League Application Form		
<b>Applicant Name:</b>	<b>Street Address:</b> Carmichael Way	<b>Gender:</b> Man
<b>Previous Baseball/Softball Experience?</b> Yes _____ No _____	<b>Shirt Size:</b> Men’s Large	<b>Signature of Applicant:</b> <i>Person X</i>

S1. Based **ONLY** on the information above, how many of the requirements for the Softball League Application were **NOT** met?

- A. 4
- B. 3
- C. 2
- D. 1

<b>Sample Answer Sheet</b>					
	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer is option B because the person filling out the form did not include their name in the Applicant Name box, a street number in the Street Address box, and they did not indicate whether they had experience in the Previous Baseball/Softball Experience box.

## 9. Apply Rules – Scenarios

### Directions:

In this section, you will be presented with sets of rules, procedures, or requirements followed by a description of a situation. You will be asked a question about the situation that requires you to apply the rules, procedures, or requirements. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. An example is provided below.

### Sample Item:

**PIZZA RECIPE**

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Prepare the crust:
  - Remove unbaked crust from package and smooth it out on a round baking sheet.
  - Use a pastry brush to spread a thin layer of olive oil over the top of the crust.
- Spread pizza sauce smoothly over the crust.
- Sprinkle an even layer of cheese over the top of the sauce and add toppings.
- Bake the pizza:
  - Bake for 20 minutes or until the crust is golden brown in color and the cheese is melted and beginning to bubble.
- Remove pizza from oven and allow to cool before slicing.

Chef K received an order for a pepperoni and mushroom pizza. She started preheating the oven at 400 degrees and picked up a batch of the raw pizza dough she had made earlier that day. Chef K smoothed the pizza dough out on a baking sheet and gave the dough a coat of oil. Next, she put a layer of sauce on the crust followed by a healthy amount of cheese, pepperoni, and mushrooms before placing it in the oven. When the edges were beginning to brown, Chef K removed the pizza from the oven and made sure the cheese had melted. Chef K let the pizza cool and, after a minute or so, sliced and served the pizza to the waiting customer.

S1. Based ONLY on the information provided above, which procedure, if any, did Chef K follow out of order?

- A. Preheating the oven.
- B. Adding toppings to the pizza.
- C. Slicing the pizza.
- D. Chef K followed all procedures in order.

**Sample Answer Sheet**

	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer is option D because Chef K followed all instructions in the designated order.

**10. Basic Math**

**Directions:**

In this section, you will be asked to solve math problems that require the use of addition or subtraction. Mark your answer (A, B, C, or D) on the answer sheet. Examples are provided below.

S1. What is the sum of the following numbers?

26
312
+ 453
_____

- A. 793
- B. 701
- C. 683
- D. 791

S2. What is the difference between the following numbers?

107
- 65
_____

- A. 32
- B. 42
- C. 47
- D. 57

<i>Sample Answer Sheet</i>					
	A	B	C	D	E
S1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	A	B	C	D	E
S2.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The correct answer for S1 is option D and the correct answer for S2 is option B.

## **Your Score**

Good performance on one section of the exam may offset relatively poor performance on another portion of the exam. What counts is your total score — you pass or fail the exam as a whole.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

Candidates requiring reasonable accommodation(s) will need to provide documentation to the respective hiring agency prior to the scheduled exam date.

## **On the Day of the Exam**

On your scheduled exam date, it is recommended that you show up approximately 15 minutes early to check in. Please be advised that you are restricted from bringing certain items in to the examination room. These items include, but are not limited to: cell phones, handheld computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, fitness trackers, pagers, books, backpacks, purses, calculators, notepads, watches or eyeglasses with any type of recording capabilities, food or drink, etc.

## **A Final Word About the Selection Exam**

Below are several suggestions for taking the Selection Exam. If you thoroughly review the information in this booklet and follow the suggestions, you will have a better likelihood of passing the exam.

- In general, you should work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. The time limit has been set to allow you plenty of time to answer all the exam items. If you have a question during the exam, raise your hand and a proctor will assist you.
- Always read all possible response options before marking your answer. If you do not know the answer to a question it is usually best to skip it and go on to the others. If you finish before time is called, you can go back to any items you may have skipped.
- If you are not sure of the answer to a question, eliminate the answers you know are wrong and then mark the option that is your best guess. Your score is simply the number of items you answer correctly so you should be sure to answer any skipped items even if you are only guessing.
- You should try to get a good night's sleep the night before the examination. Some candidates find that eating a snack or light meal an hour or two before the exam also aids in preparation.