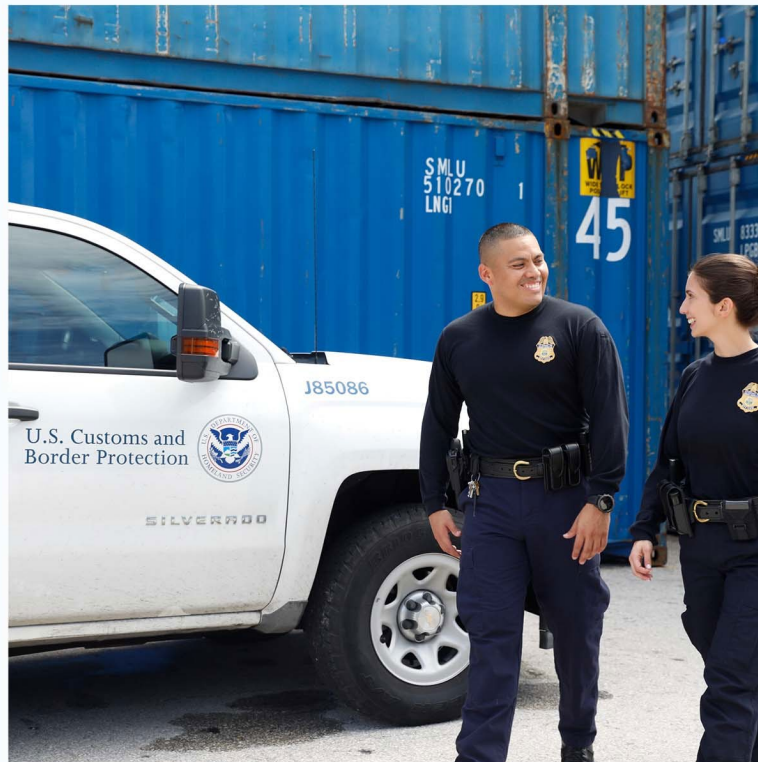# CBP OFFICER
ENTRANCE EXAM
PREPARATION GUIDE

JOIN AMERICA'S FRONTLINE

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

CBP ETHOS

Our shared identity, beliefs, and aspirations

WE are the guardians of our Nation's Borders.

WE are America's frontline.

WE safeguard the American homeland at and beyond our borders.

WE protect the American people against terrorists and the instruments of terror.

WE steadfastly enforce the laws of the United States while fostering our Nation's economic security through lawful international trade and travel.

WE serve the American people with vigilance, integrity, and professionalism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION CORE VALUES

VIGILANCE   SERVICE   INTEGRITY

APPLICATION PROCESS

Being a Customs and Border Protection Officer (CBPO) can be both mentally and physically challenging. As a result, the hiring process to become a CBPO is intentionally rigorous to ensure that those selected can carry out the duties that are expected of them.

1. Apply

2. Entrance Exam

3. Qualifications Review

4. Background Investigation

Medical Exam

Fitness Test

Completed Concurrently

5. Interview

6. Polygraph Exam

7. Random Drug Test

For more information about each step, visit the Current Applicant Resources page at
www.cbp.gov/careers/car

EXAM LOGISTICS

> **Shortly after completing your application on USAJobs, you will receive an email from CBPEntry_Support@psionline.com. If you did not receive this email, please check your Spam folder. If you are still having issues, please email CBP at CBPApplicantContactCenter@cbp.dhs.gov.**

Important Note

The information below is subject to change at any time. Always review your exam-related emails for the most up-to-date information.

Registering

The Entrance Examination is administered by a vendor. You will first need to register an account with the vendor's system. This registration is separate from the registration you completed for your USAJobs account. You will also be asked by the vendor to verify your email address.

Please read and follow the instructions in the email communications from the testing vendor. The emails will be from CBPEntry_Support@psionline.com. The instructions indicate how to complete the Entrance Examination and the deadline for doing so. The instructions also indicate how to request a Reasonable Accommodation if you have a disability (i.e., mental or physical covered by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act 1990) that would interfere with completing the online assessment.

Rescheduling or Canceling

The link to take the Candidate Experience Record (CER) is active for 48 hours. You can exit the CER and return to it anytime within the 48 hours. The link to take the Writing Skills Test (WST) is active for 5 days. <u>Once you click the link, you must complete the exam. You cannot exit and return to it at a later time. If you do not complete this exam, then your current application for CBP Officer will be</u> <u>considered abandoned. You may reapply to the position during the next open period.</u>

You can reschedule the proctored portion of the Entrance Examination, or cancel without penalty, up to 24 hours before your appointment time. If you cancel your exam less than 24 hours before your appointment time or do not check in at the test center for your appointment, then your current application for CBP Officer will be considered abandoned. You may reapply to the position during the next open period. Use the link in the confirmation email you received after you scheduled your exam to change your appointment.

Test Day

We recommend taking the unproctored portions of the Entrance Examination on a desktop, laptop, or tablet. For the WST, we recommend blocking off an hour to complete the exam. When completing the unproctored portions of the Entrance Examination, please make sure you are alone and in a quiet space. You are not allowed to use any outside aids unless approved for a reasonable accommodation. Make sure you have allotted enough time to complete the assessments within the deadline.

Please arrive 15 minutes early for your proctored exam appointment to allow enough time to check in and get settled before the start of your exam. Make sure you bring a copy of your confirmation email, either printed or on a mobile device, and a valid form of identification. A list of valid forms of identification is included in the confirmation email. You are not permitted to bring a cellphone into the testing room. Depending on the test center, you may also not be able to bring your wallet, keys, or other personal items into the testing room. Bottled water will be allowed into the testing room. If you have any questions regarding test center procedures, you can contact the test center listed on your exam scheduling notice.

EXAM FORMAT

You will take the entrance exam on a computer.

The Entrance Examination consists of 4 parts: The Experience Record, the Writing Skills Test, the Logical Reasoning Test, and the Arithmetic Reasoning Test.

The Experience Record and Writing Skills Test are completed at home. The Logical Reasoning Test and Arithmetic Reasoning Test are completed at a Test Center.

At the Test Center: If you believe that your testing room computer is not functioning or that there is an issue with your testing area, please notify your proctor. Your proctor will give you scratch paper, pencils, and a calculator to use during the exam. You will not be able to bring your own materials into the testing room.

The CBP Officer (CBPO) exam consists of three sections with breaks after each section
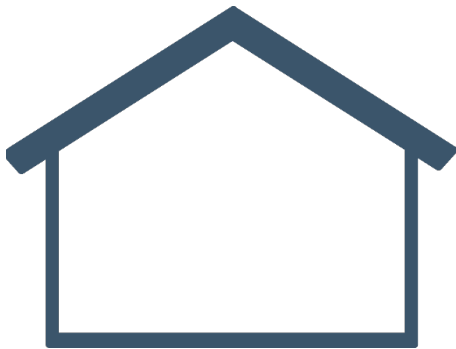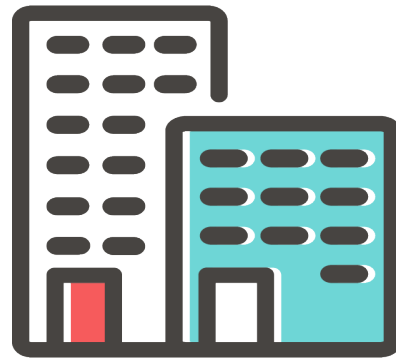
At Home

Experience Record

60 Minutes

Writing Skills Test

63 Minutes

At Test Center

CBPO System Functionality Navigation Preview

5 Minutes

Part A: Logical Reasoning

81 Minutes

5 Minute Break

Part B: Arithmetic Reasoning

87 Minutes

* The times above are the maximum allowable time to complete each section; many test takers complete each section in less time.

LOGICAL REASONING

Logical reasoning is a crucial tool for CBP Officers

CBP Officers must make critical decisions in a short amount of time based on their ability to read and understand laws, legal commentary, and regulations. Although CBP Officers memorize some information, most of their decisions must be made through reasoning. National security depends on this ability.

The logical reasoning section is designed to identify trainees who will be able to handle the demanding academic workload of the academy as well as the complex decisions made daily by CBP Officers.

PREPARING FOR QUESTIONS

Educated Guessing

There is no penalty for guessing on this test. **You should answer every question.** Even if you do not know the answer, you will have a one-in-five chance of getting it right. As you approach each question, be sure to eliminate answers that you know are wrong. Even if you can eliminate just an answer or two, your chances of choosing the correct answer will increase!

Reading the Paragraph

Every paragraph in this section is drawn from written material relating to CBP or government work. While answering the questions in this section, **you must accept every fact in the text as true.**

Remember that you are not being judged on your knowledge of facts but rather your ability to reason on the basis of given facts.

The type of information in the reading will vary. It is important to be able to distinguish between positive and negative information. Also, information may be presented about categories, groups, and events.
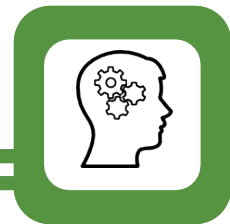
THE LEAD-IN PHRASE

How to Read a Lead-In Phrase

A lead-in phrase will ask you to complete a sentence by choosing one of several responses. It will typically be presented at the end of a paragraph, which you must read in order to find the correct answer. The lead-in phrase is often the **most important part of the logical reasoning question.**

A lead-in phrase can be positive or negative. Positive lead in phrases are followed by four invalid conclusions and one valid conclusion. You must find the valid conclusion. An example of a positive lead in question is featured below.

> "From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that..."

Negative lead-in phrases are followed by four valid conclusions and only one invalid conclusion. In this case, you must find the invalid one. In other words, you should determine what **cannot** be validly concluded based on the facts in the paragraph.

> "From the information given above, it CANNOT be validly concluded that..."

LOGICAL REASONING
REASONING ABOUT GROUPS/CATEGORIES
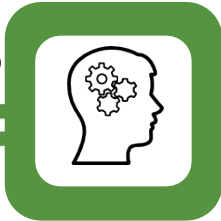
In this section, we will review how to process information about groups and categories

"All" Statements

A statement about two groups that begins with the words **"all"** or **"every"** gives you some important information about how the two groups are related. The words *"all"* and *"every"* tell you that everything in the first group is also in the second group.

Keep in mind that the *"all"* statement does not provide sufficient information to determine whether or not all members of the second group are included in the first group!

During the test, you must identify groups and understand the relationships between the groups in order to be able to identify valid and invalid conclusions. Below are some examples illustrating this concept.

True	All the people at my party speak Spanish.
Valid conclusion	**Some people who speak Spanish are at my party.** *There are many people who speak Spanish, and some of them are at my party.*
Invalid conclusion	All the people who speak Spanish are at my party. *There are many people who speak Spanish, but we do not know if they are all at my party.*
True	All Supreme Court justices are lawyers.
Valid conclusion	**Some lawyers are Supreme Court Justices.** *There are many lawyers, and some of them are Supreme Court Justices.*
Invalid conclusion	All lawyers are Supreme Court Justices. *Not all lawyers are Supreme Court Justices.*
True	Every CBP officer works for the U.S. Government.
Valid conclusion	**Some employees of the U.S. government are CBP Officers.** *There are many U.S. government employees, and some of them are CBP Officers.*
Invalid conclusion	Everyone working for the U.S. government is a U.S. Border Patrol Agent. *Not all U.S. government employees are Border Patrol Agents. Some U.S. government employees are CBP Officers.*

REASONING ABOUT GROUPS/CATEGORIES

"None" and "Not" Statements

Information that something is **NOT** true is useful information and cannot be overlooked. You can draw conclusions about either group as it relates to the other since you can count on the fact that the two groups have no members in common.

For example, if you can say that *"None of the stolen cars recovered from the rail yards were cars stolen from Canada,"* you can also say that *"None of the cars stolen from Canada were recovered from the rail yards"* because you know that the first statement means that there is no overlap between the two groups.

As you work through the practice test, think about each negative phrase or term you find. Sometimes, our ordinary speech habits can cause us to jump to conclusions. Take care to assume only as much as is definitely indicated by the facts as given, and no more.

For example, a detective might make a statement such as *"some of the bloodstains were not human blood"* simply because only some of the samples had come back from the laboratory. The detective is trying to suggest that at least some of the bloodstains were not human blood. The rest of the bloodstains may or may not be human blood.

Reasoning About Parts of a Group

The term *"some"* is an intentionally imprecise reference– it refers to an unknown number and implies nothing about the entire group. Unless information is provided in the paragraph to the contrary, treat *"some"* as meaning *"at least some."*

Statements that include words such as *"most,"* *"a few,"* or *"almost all"* should also be considered carefully. For example if you read, *"Many CBP Officers are not fluent in French,"* you may be tempted to infer that there are at least a few CBP Officers who are fluent in French, but that would be wrong. In this case, you do not know if **any** CBP officers are fluent in French so you cannot make that assumption.

Remember that if the statement only applies to **part** or **some** of the group, you cannot assume anything about the entire group.

For example, in the statement "Some CBP Agriculture Specialists are taking specialized training," the term "some CBP Agriculture Specialists" refers to an unknown number of CBP Agriculture Specialists. The fact that we know that "some CBP Agriculture Specialists are taking specialized training" implies nothing about the entire group of the CBP Agriculture Specialists; there may or may not be CBP Agriculture Specialists who are not taking specialized training. Unless information is provided in the paragraph to the contrary, treat "some" as meaning "at least some."

LOGICAL REASONING
"IF-THEN" STATEMENTS

> An "If-Then" statement covers information about events or situations. The concept of cause and effect is crucial for succeeding in this section.

The idea of cause and effect is based on one thing leading to another thing. Cause and effect means that when the first thing happens, the later event **MUST** follow.

The cause and effect relationship also informs you that if the effect never occurred, the cause must not have occurred.

If First Salem Bank suspects that Mr. Tubill deposited funds stemming from criminal activity, First Salem Bank is required to report Mr. Tubill's deposit to the authorities.	If First Salem Bank is **NOT** required to report Mr. Tubill's deposit to the authorities, then First Salem Bank does **NOT** suspect that Mr. Tubill deposited funds stemming from criminal activity.

Incorrect: If First Salem Bank is required to report Mr. Tubill's deposit to the authorities, then First Salem Bank suspects Mr. Tubill deposited funds stemming from criminal activity.

Based on the information, we do not know if there are other reasons why First Salem Bank is required to report Mr. Tubill's deposit. For example, there might be a law requiring banks to report all deposits over $10,000 regardless of whether they suspect criminal activity.

Statements that illustrate cause and effect are referred to as "if-then" statements. The first event in this statement is referred to as "if" and the second event is referred to as "then." "If-then" statements can also be used to illustrate other relationships aside from cause and effect such as expressing permission or obligation. For example one might say, "If an officer places an individual under arrest, the arrestee must be provided with Miranda warnings."

Remember that with these statements, the two pieces of information are **always** true. In other words, whenever the first event or situation occurs, the second event or situation **MUST** occur. Also, the "if-then" statement works in one direction only; the reverse of the "if-then" statement is most likely invalid.

You cannot validly switch the order of the two statements in this type of sentence. If you do, your conclusion may be wrong and may lead to costly errors in real-life situations.

LOGICAL REASONING
# "IF-THEN" STATEMENTS

Valid and Invalid Conclusions from "If-then" Statements

Below are examples of valid and invalid conclusions from "If-Then" Statements

True	If a person is a CBP Officer, the person is an employee of the U.S. government.
Valid Conclusion	**If a person is not an employee of the U.S. government, the person is not a CBP Officer.**
Invalid Conclusion	If a person is an employee of the U.S. government, the person is a CBP Officer.
True	If a criminal receives a pardon, the criminal will be released.
Valid Conclusion	**If a criminal is not released, the criminal has not received a pardon.**
Invalid Conclusion	If a criminal is released, the criminal has received a pardon.
True	If a person is convicted of murder, that person is guilty of a felony.
Valid Conclusion	**If a person is not guilty of a felony, that person has not been convicted of murder.**
Invalid Conclusion	If a person is guilty of a felony, that person has been convicted of murder.
True	If a person lives in Germany, the person lives in Europe.
Valid Conclusion	**If a person does not live in Europe, the person does not live in Germany.**
Invalid Conclusion	If a person lives in Europe, the person lives in Germany.
True	If a car has no gas, the car will not run.
Valid Conclusion	**If a car runs, the car has gas.**
Invalid Conclusion	If a car does not run, the car has no gas.

LOGICAL REASONING
CAUTIONS ABOUT WORDING
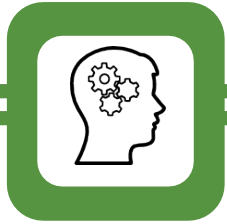
Pay attention to words that provide information on groups or on like events.

Positive Words: all, some, most, always
Negative Words: seldom, never, illegal, prohibited
Negative Prefixes: non-, un-, dis-
Connectors: whenever, unless, except

Double Negatives

When a sentence has two negatives, it actually has a positive meaning.

For example, if a sentence says "There are no training opportunities that are not available," the sentence is saying that there ARE training opportunities available (No and Not cancel each other out).
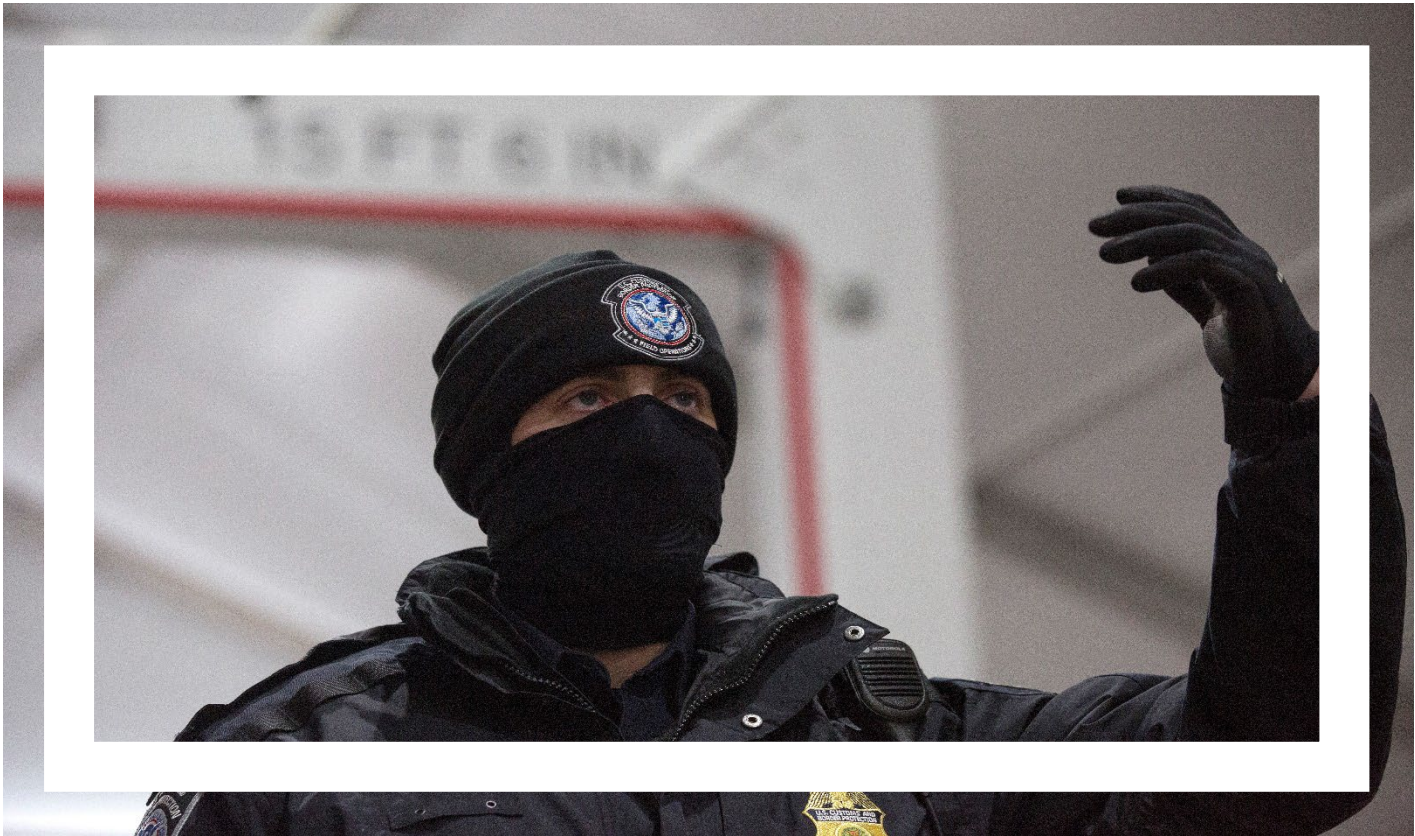
Watch out for the word "only"

This word creates very strong statements

Watch out for the word "not" since that makes the sentence have the opposite meaning

FINAL TEST-TAKING TIPS
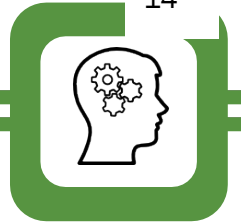
☑ In questions with positive lead statements, always choose the only conclusion that can definitely be drawn from the information given in the paragraph.

☑ Remember **NOT** to use any outside factual information to reach your conclusion.

☑ Read the lead-in sentence and the paragraph very carefully. Also, read all the answer choices before you mark the one you think is correct.

☑ Pay special attention whenever the question uses words such as "all," "some," or "none." Other terms such as "unless" or "except" or "only" are also important. These words help to define the facts from which you must draw conclusions.

☑ Pay special attention whenever you see a negative prefix such as "non-" or a negative verb such as "disconnect" or "unfasten." These may be crucial to understanding the basic facts in the paragraph.

☑ Ignore any advice you may have received in the past about avoiding an answer that contains the word "all" or the word "none." These may be signs of an incorrect response in some tests, but not in this test. You will find these words in both right and wrong response options.

☑ Take the sample test and study the explanation for each of the questions very carefully. This may help you fine-tune your reasoning on the actual test.

LOGICAL REASONING
PRACTICE TEST

You are now ready to take a practice logical reasoning test

It is suggested that you take no more than 20 minutes to complete questions 1-8. The practice test contains questions that are similar to, but not exactly the same as the questions on the real test. The practice test is followed by detailed explanations of every practice test question. These explanations will give you information about why the correct response options are correct and why the incorrect response options are incorrect. Understanding the reasons for the correct and incorrect response options should assist you in distinguishing between a right and wrong answer on the test.

Some questions will ask you to select the only answer that can be validly concluded from the paragraph. These questions include a paragraph followed by five response options. Preceding the five response options will be the phrase *"From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that."* In other questions you will be asked to select the only answer that cannot be validly concluded from the paragraph. These questions include a paragraph followed by five response options. Preceding the five response options will be the phrase *"From the information given above, it CANNOT be validly concluded that."*

You must use only the information provided in the paragraph, without using any outside information whatsoever.

1. Often, crimes are characterized as either *malum in se*—inherently evil—or *malum prohibitum*—criminal because they are declared as offenses by a legislature. Murder is an example of the former. Failing to file a tax return illustrates the latter. Some jurisdictions no longer distinguish between crimes *malum in se* and *malum prohibitum*, although many still do.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that

Ⓐ many jurisdictions no longer distinguish between crimes *malum in se* and *malum prohibitum*

Ⓑ some jurisdictions still distinguish between crimes *malum in se* and *malum prohibitum*

Ⓒ some crimes characterized as *malum in se* are not inherently evil

Ⓓ some crimes characterized as *malum prohibitum* are not declared by a legislature to be an offense

Ⓔ sometimes failing to file a tax return is characterized as *malum in se*

2. A trucking company can act as a *common carrier* — for hire to the general public at published rates. As a common carrier, it is liable for any cargo damage, unless the company can show that it was not negligent. If the company can demonstrate that it was not negligent, then it is not liable for cargo damage. In contrast, a *contract carrier* (a trucking company hired by a shipper under a specific contract) is only responsible for cargo damage as spelled out in the contract. A Claus Inc. tractor-trailer, acting under common carrier authority, was in a 5-vehicle accident that damaged its cargo. A Nichols Inc. tractor-trailer, acting under contract carrier authority, was involved in the same accident, and its cargo was also damaged.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that, in reference to the accident,

Ⓐ if Claus Inc. is liable, then it can show that it was not negligent

Ⓑ if Claus Inc. cannot show that it was not negligent, then it is not liable

Ⓒ if Claus Inc. can show that it was not negligent, then it is not liable

Ⓓ if Nichols Inc. is liable, then it cannot show that it is negligent

Ⓔ if Nichols Inc. can show that it is not negligent, then it is not liable

3. A rapidly changing technical environment in government is promoting greater reliance on electronic mail (email) systems. As this usage grows, there are increasing chances of conflict between the users' expectations of privacy and public access rights. In some investigations, access to <u>all</u> email, including those messages stored in archival files and messages outside the scope of the investigation, has been sought and granted. In spite of this, some people send messages through email that would never be said face-to-face or written formally.

*From the information given above, it **CANNOT** be validly concluded that*

Ⓐ some email messages that have been requested as part of investigations have contained messages that would never be said face-to-face

Ⓑ some messages that people would never say face-to-face are sent in email messages

Ⓒ some email messages have been requested as part of investigations

Ⓓ email messages have not been exempted from investigations

Ⓔ some email messages contain information that would be omitted from formal writing

4. Phyllis T. is a former federal employee who was entitled to benefits under the Federal Employee Compensation Act because of a job-related, disabling injury. When an eligible federal employee has such an injury, the benefit is determined by this test: If the beneficiary is married or has dependents, benefits are 3/4 of the person's salary at the time of the injury; otherwise, benefits are set at 2/3 of the salary. Phyllis T.'s benefits were 2/3 of her salary when she was injured.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that, when Phyllis T. was injured, she

Ⓐ was married but without dependents

Ⓑ was not married and had no dependents

Ⓒ was not married but had dependents

Ⓓ was married and had dependents

Ⓔ had never been married

5. Some 480,000 immigrants were living in a certain country in 1999. Although most of these immigrants were not employed in professional occupations, many of them were. For instance, many of them were engineers and many of them were nurses. Very few of these immigrants were librarians, another professional occupation.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that, in 1999, in the country described above,

    Ⓐ most immigrants were either engineers or nurses

    Ⓑ it is not the case that some of the nurses were immigrants

    Ⓒ none of the engineers were immigrants

    Ⓓ most of those not employed in professional occupations were immigrants

    Ⓔ some of the engineers were immigrants

6. Despite the fact that HIV is not easily transmitted, its deadly potential requires that law enforcement officers protect themselves from becoming infected by it. At the Callen Precinct, officers use only disposable items for collecting evidence whenever blood is present. While investigating a particular crime scene where blood was present, Detective R.C. of the Callen Precinct used only disposable items for collecting evidence.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that, when collecting evidence at a crime scene,

    Ⓐ Detective R.C. does not always use disposable items when blood is present

    Ⓑ whenever blood is not present, Detective R.C. does not use only disposable items

    Ⓒ Detective R.C. uses only disposable items whenever blood is not present

    Ⓓ no officers at the Callen Precinct use non-disposable items whenever blood is present

    Ⓔ some officers at the Callen Precinct do not use disposable items exclusively whenever blood is present

7. Impressions made by the ridges on the ends of the fingers and thumbs are useful means of identification, since no two persons have the same pattern of ridges. If finger patterns from fingerprints are not decipherable, then they cannot be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type. If they cannot be classified by these characteristics, then it is impossible to identify the person to whom the fingerprints belong.

*From the information given above, it **CANNOT** be validly concluded that*

    Ⓐ if it is possible to identify the person to whom fingerprints belong, then the fingerprints are decipherable

    Ⓑ if finger patterns from fingerprints are not decipherable, then it is impossible to identify the person to whom the fingerprints belong

    Ⓒ if fingerprints are decipherable, then it is impossible to identify the person to whom they belong

    Ⓓ if fingerprints can be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type, then they are decipherable

    Ⓔ if it is possible to identify the person to whom fingerprints belong, then the fingerprints can be classified by general shape and contour or pattern type

8. Explosives are substances or devices capable of producing a volume of rapidly expanding gases that exert a sudden pressure on their surroundings. Chemical explosives are the most commonly used, although there are mechanical and nuclear explosives. All mechanical explosives are devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air. While nuclear explosives are by far the most powerful, all nuclear explosives have been restricted to military weapons.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that

    Ⓐ all explosives that have been restricted to military weapons are nuclear explosives

    Ⓑ no mechanical explosives are devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air

    Ⓒ some nuclear explosives have not been restricted to military weapons

    Ⓓ all mechanical explosives have been restricted to military weapons

    Ⓔ some devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air, are mechanical explosives

PRACTICE TEST ANSWERS

Logical Reasoning Practice Test Answers

1. Correct Answer: B) some jurisdictions still distinguish between crimes *malum in se* and *malum prohibitum*

This question is concerned with classification of crimes into sets — that is, with the classification of crimes as either *malum in se* or *malum prohibitum*. The last phrase in the last sentence tells us that many jurisdictions make the distinction between these two categories of crimes. Response B follows from that sentence, because if many jurisdictions make the distinction, some jurisdictions make the distinction. From the fact that many jurisdictions make the distinction, it cannot be inferred that many do not make the distinction. Therefore, Response A is incorrect.

Responses C, D, and E are based on erroneous definitions of the two classes of crimes. The paragraph tells us that all crimes characterized as *malum in se* are inherently evil. Response C is false because it cannot be the case that SOME crimes characterized as *malum in se* are NOT inherently evil. The paragraph also tells us that all crimes characterized as *malum prohibitum* are declared as offenses by a legislature. Response D is false because it cannot be the case that SOME crimes characterized as *malum prohibitum* are NOT declared by a legislature to be an offense. In the paragraph, we are told that filing a tax return late is *malum prohibitum*, rather than *malum in se*. Response E is incorrect because it cannot be the case that failing to file a tax return is *malum in se*.

2. Correct Answer: C) if Claus Inc. can show that it was not negligent, then it is not liable

The second sentence states the liability rule for common carriers: all common carriers are liable for cargo damage unless they can show that they are not negligent; if they can show that they are not negligent, then they are not liable for cargo damage. Claus Inc. is a common carrier, and accordingly this rule applies to it. From this rule it follows that if Claus Inc. can show it was not negligent, then it is not liable, Response C. Response A contradicts this rule by claiming that when Claus Inc. is liable it can show that it was not negligent. Response B contradicts this rule by claiming that Claus Inc. is not liable even when it cannot show that it is not negligent. Responses D and E concern Nichols Inc., a contract carrier. However, the terms of the Nichols Inc. contract were not disclosed in the paragraph, so neither response is supported.

3. Correct Answer: A) some email messages that have been requested as part of investigations have contained messages that would never be said face-to-face.

This is an example of a test question with a negative lead-in statement. It asks for the conclusion that is NOT supported by the paragraph. That means that four of the statements are valid conclusions from the paragraph while one is not.

Response B (some messages that people would never say face-to-face are sent in email messages) is a valid conclusion because it restates a fact given in the last sentence of the paragraph. Response E (some email messages contain information that would be omitted from formal writing) is valid because it restates the other fact in the last sentence of the paragraph.

The next-to-last sentence in the paragraph is the source of both response C (some email messages have been requested as part of investigations) and response D (email messages have not been exempted from investigations).

Both of these choices restate information in that sentence, based on the fact that access to e-mail messages was sought and granted. This leaves only the first option, response A (Some email messages that have been requested as part of investigations have contained messages that would never be said face-to-face). This is the only choice that does NOT represent a valid conclusion, because even though we know from the paragraph that there is a group of email messages that are requested in investigations and also that there is a group of messages that contain information that people would not say face-to-face, there is nothing that says that these groups overlap. We simply do not know.

4. Correct Answer: B) Phyllis T. was not married and had no dependents.

This question concerns an either/or situation. The paragraph states that benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act are awarded at one level (3/4 of salary) if a beneficiary is married or has dependents when injured and at another level (2/3 of salary) if this is not true.

Phyllis T. is eligible for benefits under the Act. The paragraph states that Phyllis T."s benefit level was 2/3 of her salary. Given this benefit level, it is clear that Phyllis T. did not meet either of the conditions for the 3/4 level. Therefore, responses A, C, and D cannot be correct (A states that she was married, C states that she had dependents, and D states that she both was married and had dependents). Response E goes beyond the facts given because prior marriages are not listed as a factor relating to this benefit. The one correct conclusion is that Phyllis T. did not meet either requirement to qualify for the higher benefit level (3/4 of salary), so response B is the correct answer to the question.

5. Correct Answer: E) some of the engineers were immigrants

Response E is correct because it restates the third sentence in terms of the overlap between immigrants and engineers in the country described in the paragraph. Response A says that most immigrants are engineers or nurses, which are professional occupations. However, the second sentence says that most immigrants are not employed in professional occupations, so Response A is false. Response B is false because it denies that there is any overlap between immigrants and nurses, even though this overlap is clear from the third sentence of the paragraph. Response C is false because it denies the overlap between immigrants and engineers. Because the paragraph does not give complete information about the non-professionals (immigrant and non-immigrant) in the country described in the paragraph, Response D is invalid.

6. Correct Answer: D) no officers at the Callen Precinct use non-disposable items whenever blood is present

The second sentence of the paragraph states that whenever blood is present, all officers at the Callen Precinct use only disposable items for collecting evidence. This is the equivalent in meaning to answer D, that no officers use non-disposable items when collecting evidence in the presence of blood. Response E contradicts the second sentence in the paragraph by stating that some officers to not use disposable items exclusively when blood is present. Responses A, B, and C refer to the evidence gathering procedures of Detective R.C., who is identified in the third sentence of the paragraph as working for the Callen Precinct. Response A contradicts the sense of the second sentence by stating that Detective R.C. does not always use disposable items when blood is present. Responses B and C refer to R.C.'s evidence gathering when blood is not present. However, the paragraph does not give us information about evidence gathering in that case.

7. Correct Answer: C) if fingerprints are decipherable, then it is impossible to identify the person to whom they belong

This question asks for the response option that cannot be validly concluded from the information in the paragraph. The only response option that cannot be validly concluded is Response C, so the correct answer to question 7 is Response C. Response C is invalid because the paragraph does not provide enough information to conclude whether or not it would be possible to identify the person to whom the fingerprints belong from the mere fact that the fingerprints are decipherable.

Response A refers to a condition where it is possible to identify the person to whom fingerprints belong. Based on the final sentence in the paragraph, this condition of fingerprints means that the fingerprints could be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type. Based on the second sentence, the ability to classify the fingerprints means that the fingerprints are decipherable.

Since Response B refers to a condition in which finger patterns from fingerprints are not decipherable, we know from the second sentence that, in that circumstance, they cannot be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type. From the final sentence in the paragraph, we can infer that since they cannot be classified by these characteristics, then it is impossible to identify the person to whom the fingerprints belong.

According to the second sentence, fingerprints cannot be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type when they are not decipherable. Therefore, if fingerprints can be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type, then the fingerprints must be decipherable, Response D. According to the third sentence, it is impossible to identify the owner of a set of fingerprints when the fingerprints cannot be classified by general shape and contour or by pattern type. Therefore, if it is possible to identify the person to whom fingerprints belong, then the fingerprints must be able to be classified by general shape and contour or pattern type, Response E. Notice that Responses D and E are valid based on the same type of reasoning. The first and second statements of the second sentence were made opposite and reversed in Response D, and the first and second statements of the final sentence were made opposite and reversed in Response E.

8. Correct Answer: E) some devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air, are mechanical explosives

The correct answer is E. The third sentence states the overlap between all mechanical explosives and devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air. From this, we can safely conclude that some devices in which a physical reaction is produced, such as that caused by overloading a container with compressed air, are mechanical explosives.

Response A is incorrect because the paragraph does not provide sufficient information to validly conclude that all explosives which have been restricted to military weapons are nuclear weapons. It may be that some types of explosives other than nuclear weapons also have been restricted to military weapons.

Responses B and C are incorrect because they contradict the paragraph. Response B contradicts the third sentence, and Response C contradicts the last sentence.

Response D is incorrect because the paragraph provides no information about whether or not mechanical explosives are restricted to military weapons.

ARITHMETIC REASONING
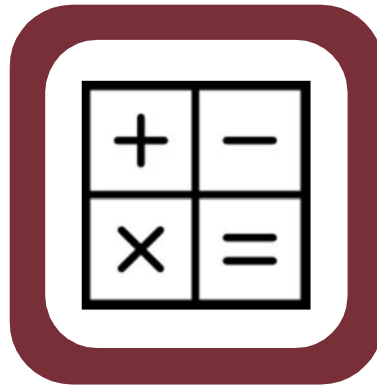
Arithmetic reasoning is an essential skill for CBP Officers

CBP Officers must often make quick mental calculations during the course of their duties. This section of the entrance exam will test your ability to perform these basic math functions. There are many different strategies to determine the answer to math problems. This section of the guide contains some widely used methods that you can practice to prepare for what you will see on the exam.
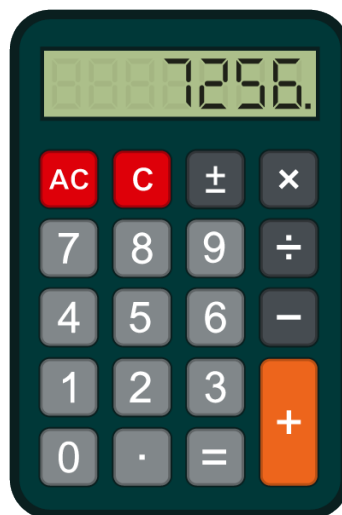
Calculators are not required for the arithmetic reasoning section of the exam but you may use one if you choose. The test proctor will provide you with scratch paper, pencils, and a calculator. **When you take the exam you may only use the calculator provided by the test proctor.**

If you plan on using a calculator during the exam, you should use one while taking the practice exam.

ADDING AND SUBTRACTING FRACTIONS
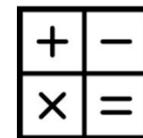
Definitions

Whole Number: An integer (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Fraction: A number that represents part of a whole number (1/ 2)

Numerator: The top number in a fraction (**1**/ 2)

Denominator: The bottom number in a fraction (1/ **2**)

Mixed Number: A fraction that contains a whole number and a fraction (9 1/4)

Adding and subtracting fractions *with* the same (common) denominator

Add or subtract the numerators (the top number) and keep the denominator (the bottom number)

Example: Adding

5/8 + 6/8 = 11/8

Example: Subtracting

4/5—1/5 = 3/5

Example: Adding

1/3 + 1/2 + 3/4 =

4/12 + 6/12 + 9/12 = 19/12

**Example: Subtracting**

4/5—1/3 =

12/15-5/15 = 7/15

Adding and subtracting fractions *without* the same (common) denominator

First, find a common denominator (the bottom number), then add or subtract the numerators (the top number) and retain the denominator (the bottom number)

Quick Reminder:
To quickly find a common denominator, simply multiply the denominators of each fraction together.

MULTIPLYING AND DIVIDING FRACTIONS
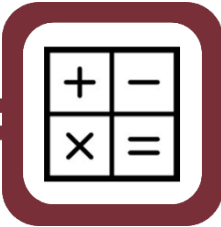
Multiplying Fractions

Multiply the numerators (top numbers), then multiply the denominators (bottom numbers)

Dividing Fractions

Invert the second fraction (the divisor), and multiply the numerators and denominators

Example: Multiplying

$$\frac{3}{7} \times \frac{2}{4} = \frac{6}{28} = \frac{3}{14}$$

Example: Dividing

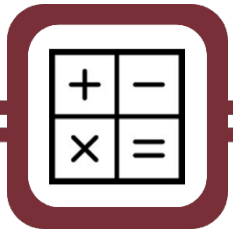$$\frac{5}{8} \div \frac{3}{4} = \frac{5}{8} \times \frac{4}{3}$$

$$\frac{20}{24} = \frac{5}{6}$$

Quick Reminder...

<u>Always</u> reduce the answer to its lowest terms!

$$\frac{20}{24} = \frac{5}{6}$$

ARITHMETIC REASONING
WORKING WITH DECIMALS

Adding and Subtracting Decimals

```
  .35
+ .78
 1.13
```

Definition

Decimal: A fraction expressed in another form, where numbers begin with a period (.75 = 3/4)

Quick Reminder...

Notice that the decimal points are aligned and that in the sum, the **whole number is placed to the left of the decimal point**

Multiplying Decimals

1 Count the number of decimal places (to the right of the decimal) in each number and add the two decimal place counts together

2 Multiply the two numbers together

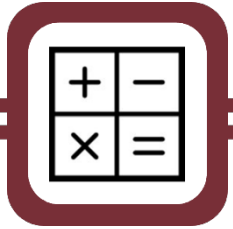**3** Place the decimal point at the total number of places you counted

Example: Multiplying

6.021 x .4 ➡ 6021 x 4

= 24084 ➡ 2.4084

Since there are 3 decimal places in 6.021 and 1 decimal place in .4, the total number of decimal places needed in the result (24084) is 4. So, 24084 is written as 2.4084.

ARITHMETIC REASONING
WORKING WITH DECIMALS

Dividing Decimals

If the divisor is not a whole number, move the decimal point to the right to make it whole. Move the decimal point in the dividend the same number of places.

$2.64 \div .02 \rightarrow 264 \div 2 = 132$

In the example above, the decimals in 2.64 and .02 are moved **two** places to make .02 become 2.

Dividend ÷ Divisor = Quotient

$25.164 \div .06 \rightarrow 2516.4 \div 6 = 419.4$

In the example above, the decimals in 25.164 and .06 are moved **two** places to make .06 become 6.

Word Problems Using Decimals

Example: Multiplication

Cargo weighing 6,520 tons arrived at the Marin Port of Entry and was assessed a fee of 6 cents per ton. What was the total amount?

6 cents = $.06

6, 520 x .06 = 391.20

Answer: $391.20

Example: Division

If inspection stickers cost 30 cents each, how many stickers can be purchased for $12.60?

30 cents = $.30

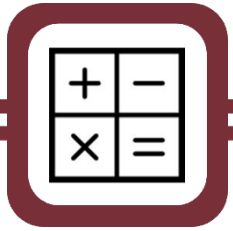12.60 ÷ .30

1260 ÷ 30 = 42

Answer: 42 stickers

ARITHMETIC REASONING
WORKING WITH DECIMALS

Definition: Percentage
A fraction expressed in another form, where 23/100 = 23%

Changing a percent to a decimal
Move the decimal point two places to the left and drop the percent sign.

Example

57% ➜ **.57**

Finding the percentage of a number
Change the percent to a decimal and multiply by the decimal.

Example

16% of 40 = .16 x 40 = 6.40
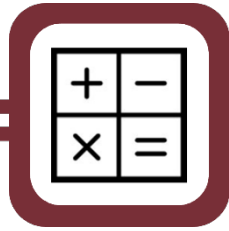
Calculating what percent one number is of another number
Divide the second number by the first number. Finally, multiply the result by 100 or move the decimal two places to the right.

Example

What percent of 40 is 6.40?

6.40 ÷ 40 = .16 (x100) = 16%

ARITHMETIC REASONING
WORD PROBLEMS USING PERCENTAGES

Example

CBP Officer Crawford inspected 400 containers for undeclared goods. If 18% of the containers held undeclared goods, how many containers held undeclared goods?

$$400 \times .18 = 72$$

Answer: 72 containers

Example

Each year an office is allocated funds to provide bonuses to all of its employees. One year, the office received the same amount of bonus funds, but lost 10% of its employees. By what percentage will the bonus amounts increase for the remaining employees in the office?

$$100\% - 10\% = 90\%$$

Bonuses for the 10% divided up among the 90% remaining:

$$.10 \div .90 = .111$$

Answer: The bonus amounts for the remaining employees would increase 11%

Example

In June 2003, the number of CBP agriculture specialists employed full-time in one large office was 80. One year later, the number increased by 15%. What was the total number of CBP agriculture specialists employed in the office in June 2004?

There are two ways to solve this problem.

1

$$80 \times .15 = 12$$

$$12 + 80 = 92$$

Answer: 92 CBP Agriculture Specialists

2

Total Agriculture Specialists in the office = 100%

$$100\% + 15\% = 115\% = 1.15$$

$$80 \times 1.15 = 92$$

Answer: 92 CBP Agriculture Specialists

Quick Reminder

In the example above, in the number of CBP Agriculture Specialists had **decreased** 15%, then:

$$100\% - 15\% = .85$$

$$80 \times .85 = 68$$

ARITHMETIC REASONING
AVERAGES

Example

Find the average of 4, 8 and 15.

1. Find the sum of the numbers 4 + 8 + 15 = 27

2. Divide the sum by the number of items (3). 27 ÷ 3 = 9

Calculating Averages

Example

The average weight of 3 canines working at a medium-size airport is 130 lbs. and the smallest canine weighs 110 lbs. If the other two canines are equal weight, how much do the other two canines weigh?
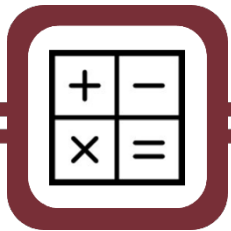
1. Find the total weight in pounds of the 3 canines   3 x 130 = 390

2. Subtract the weight of the smallest canine   390—110 = 280

3. Divide the result by 2   280 ÷ 2 = 140

Answer: The two remaining canines weigh 140 pounds each.

ARITHMETIC REASONING
UNKNOWN VALUES

Unknown Values

To solve a math problem that has one or more unknown values, set up an equation to represent all of the values in the problem, substituting a letter of the alphabet such as *a, b, x,* or *y* for the unknown value.

Example	Example
A passenger purchased a vase from an art dealer for $1,210. She later learned that the dealer sold her the vase for 110% of its actual value. What was the actual value of the vase?	An officer rented a car for six days and was charged $450. The car rental company charged $35 per day plus $.30 per mile driven. How many miles did the officer drive the car?

1. Think carefully about what you need to find in order to solve the problem.

Goal: Find the actual value of the vase (unknown value)

2. Set up your equation. Do this by substituting X for the actual value of the vase (the unknown value)

$1,210 = 110% of X

$1,210 = 1.1X

3. Move your known values to the right side of the equation by dividing each side of the equation by 1.1 and solve:

1.1X ÷ 1.1 = 1,210 ÷ 1.1

X = 1,210 ÷ 1.1

X = 1, 100

Answer: The actual value of the vase is $1,100.

1. Think carefully about what you need to find in order to solve the problem.

Goal: Find the number of miles the officer drove (unknown value)

2. Set up your equation. Do this by substituting X for the number of miles the officer drove (the unknown value)

6(35) + .3X = 450

210 + .3X = 450

3. Subtract 210 from both sides and then, divide both sides by .3

.3X = 450—210

.3X = 240

X = 240 ÷ .3
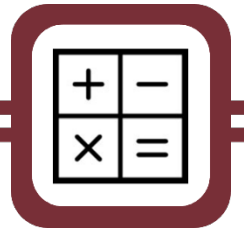
X = 800

Answer: The officer drove 800 miles.

ARITHMETIC REASONING
RATIOS AND PROPORTIONS

Definitions

Ratio: Expresses the relationship in quantity, amount, or size between two or more things.

Example

If you purchase a season ticket to the 2017 football games and tickets for the 2017 ballet season in the ratio of 5:3, then you had 5 sets of football tickets for every 3 sets of ballet tickets you purchased.

Example

An importer under investigation sent 500 containers to the U.S. Two hundred containers were shipped to New Jersey, and the remaining were shipped to Pennsylvania and Virginia in the ratio of 2:3. How many of the containers were shipped to Pennsylvania and how many were shipped to Virginia?

1. What do we know?

We know that 200 of the 500 containers were shipped to New Jersey; so, we are working with 300 containers shipped to Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Ratio 2:3 —> Out of every 5 containers: 2 went to Pennsylvania; 3 went to Virginia

Pennsylvania = 2/5 and Virginia = 3/5

2. Solve for the number of containers sent to Virginia

$$\frac{3}{5} \times 300 = 180 \text{ containers}$$

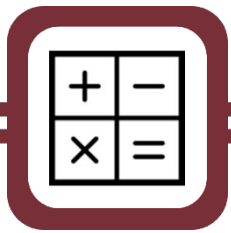3. Solve for the number of containers sent to Pennsylvania

$$\frac{2}{5} \times 300 = 120 \text{ containers}$$

Answer: 120 containers were shipped to Pennsylvania, and 180 containers were shipped to Virginia.

Useful Equations

Rate = Distance ÷ Time

Time = Distance ÷ Rate

Distance = Rate x Time

Example

If Officer Davis drove 520 miles in 8 hours, how long would it take her to drive 650 miles at the same rate?

Calculate the miles per hour Officer Davis is traveling

$$\frac{520\ Miles}{8\ Hours} = \frac{65\ Miles}{1\ Hour} = \frac{650\ Miles}{x\ Hours}$$

Cross multiply to find out how many hours it would take her to drive 650 miles

$$650 = 65x$$
$$X = 10$$

Answer: It would take Officer Davis 10 hours to drive 650 miles going 65 mph

Example

Officer Hilton was asked to perform secondary inspection of 7 individuals. After 2 hours, he had completed inspecting 4 of the individuals. Working at this same rate, how long will it take him to complete all of the inspections?

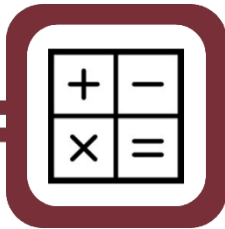1. Set up an equation

$$4/7X = 2$$

2. Solve for X

$$X = 2 ÷ 4/7$$

$$X = 3.5$$

Answer: It would take him 3.5 hours to complete all of the inspections.

ARITHMETIC REASONING
EXPRESSING WORD PROBLEMS

Some of the word problems in the test require you to choose from among several equations, the one equation that expresses or represents a solution to the problem.

Example

An agency purchased surplus computer printers priced at $220 each. For every 20 printers purchased, the 20th printer was purchased at a 40% discount. What equation represents the total price paid, if the agency purchased 100 printers?

The equation would be:

$$100(220) - [100/20 \times (220 \times .4)]$$

100(220) is the total price of the computers without a discount

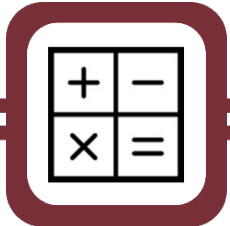[100/20 x 220 x .4] Is the discount

Quick Reminder...

This type of problem does not actually require you to solve the problem. Instead, you are asked only to find the one equation, from among a choice of four equations that represents the correct way to solve the problem.

CALCULATING TIME

Some questions in the test will require you to work with an element of time (hours and minutes) and certain types of measures (length, width, and area of a square or rectangle). Remember the following basics.

60 seconds = 1 minute; 60 minutes = 1 hour; 24 hours = 1 day
Area = L x W (the area of a square or rectangle is obtained by multiplying its length by its width)
Rate = Distance divided by Time (R = D/T)
Time = Distance divided by Rate (T = D/R)
Distance = Rate multiplied by Time (D = R x T)
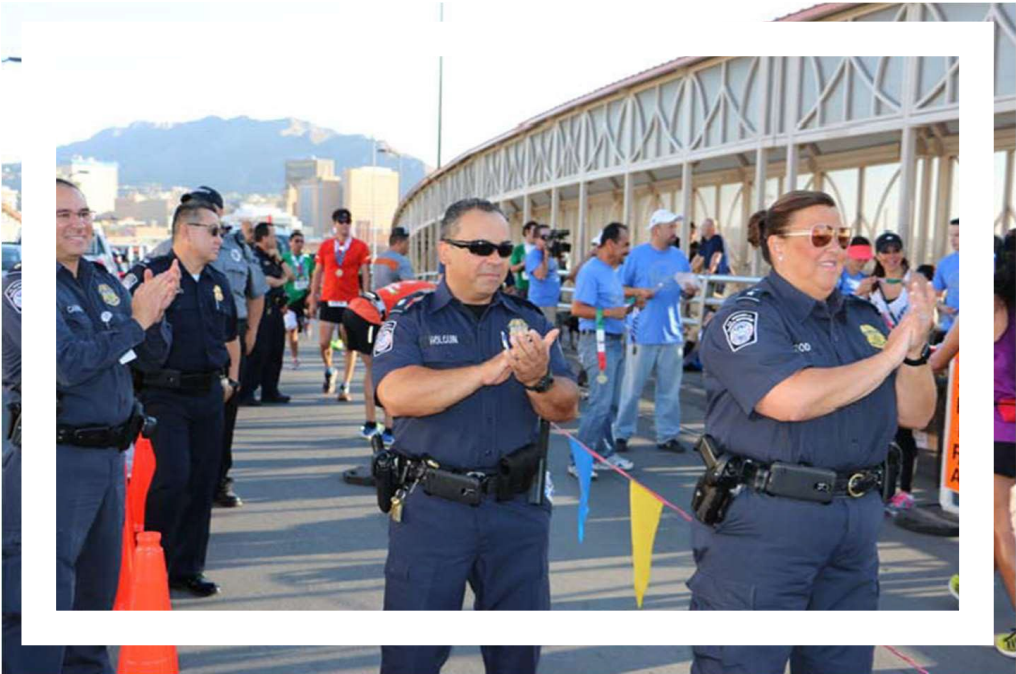
CBP Officers applaud as runners complete the Run International U.S. Mexico 10K race at the top of the Paso Del Norte international crossing in El Paso, Texas.

Arithmetic Reasoning Practice Test

The questions in this part of the test require you to solve math word problems involving operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, calculating percentages and averages, solving rate problems, and calculating simple probabilities. These operations reflect the type of mathematical operations that CBP officers routinely perform. Some of the questions in the actual test will be easier and some harder than these sample questions. We suggest that you take no more than 14 minutes to answer questions 1 through 6 below. If the exact answer is not given as one of the response choices, you should select response E, "none of these."

Calculators are not required for this exam but you may use one if you choose.

1. Staff at a law enforcement training academy purchase badges at $32 each for all the graduates of the academy. The last training class graduated 25 new officers. What is the total amount of money the academy staff will spend on the badges for these new officers, if the badge vendor provided the academy a 20% discount on each badge?

    Ⓐ$ 800

    Ⓑ$ 790

    Ⓒ$ 640

    Ⓓ$ 16

    Ⓔnone of these

2. The gross weight of merchandise in a container examined by an officer was 108 pounds. According to policy, the officer was required to convert this weight into kilograms. If the formula for conversion is 1.8 pounds for each kilogram, what was the gross weight of the container load in kilograms (rounded to the nearest tenth)?

    Ⓐ194.0

    Ⓑ166.6

    Ⓒ60.0

    Ⓓ45.0

    Ⓔnone of these

3. An Agriculture Specialist and her dog found a total of 1,500 packages wrapped in plain brown paper hidden in a large mail container. Upon inspection, the officer found that some of the packages had legal CBP stickers on them and some had illegal stickers from another country. The ratio of packages with legal stickers to packages with illegal stickers was 2:3. How many packages contained illegal stickers?

    Ⓐ 1,000

    Ⓑ 900

    Ⓒ 600

    Ⓓ 500

    Ⓔ none of these

4. While working the evening shift, Officer K took 8 hours to complete a task at his work station and Officer M took 10 hours to complete the same task at his work station. How many hours would it take Officer K and Officer M to complete the same task working together, each working at his own work station?

    Ⓐ 9

    Ⓑ 8 1/9

    Ⓒ 4 4/9

    Ⓓ 6 3/4

    Ⓔ none of these
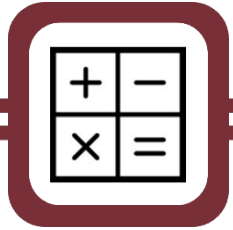
5. Three dogs in a canine team are in charge of inspecting cargo for prohibited fruits, vegetables, and meats at an international airport. Last week, one of these dogs identified 20 cartons of prohibited fruits among 120 total cartons on a flight arriving from overseas. Assuming that the dog selected the first carton to be inspected totally at random, what was the probability that this carton contained a shipment of prohibited fruit?

Ⓐ 1/3

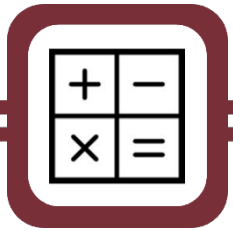Ⓑ 1/4

Ⓒ 1/5

Ⓓ 1/6

Ⓔ none of these

6. One day, Officer Ferong spent 4 hours processing passengers from a flight from Brazil at a rate of 16 passengers every 40 minutes. The next day, she spent 4 hours processing passengers at a rate of 18 every 40 minutes. What was the average number of passengers she processed during these two 4-hour periods?

Ⓐ 283

Ⓑ 204

Ⓒ 141.5

Ⓓ 102

Ⓔ none of these

Solutions to the Arithmetic Reasoning Questions

1. **Correct Answer: C,** $32 x 25 = 800; 800 x .20 = 160; $800 - 160 = $640. The second way to calculate the problem is, $800 x .80 = $640.

2. **Correct Answer: C,** 108 ÷ 1.8 = 60.0 kg

3. **Correct Answer: B,** Legal stickers = 2/5; illegal stickers = 3/5; 3/5 x 1,500 = 900.

4. **Correct Answer: C,** Let Officer K's hours be represented by 1/8 and Officer M's hours be represented by 1/10. This says that Officer K completes 1/8 of the job per hour and Officer M completes 1/10 of the job per hour. Together, they work 1/8 + 1/10 = 18/80 of the job per hour, which when reduced to its lowest terms, is 9/40.

Therefore, if **T** is the amount of time it takes the two of them to finish the job, then 9/40 of the job per hour x **T** (hours) has to equal 1 job. So, 9/40 x **T** = 1 and **T** = 40/9 = 4 4/9 hours (four and four-ninths hours).

5. **Correct Answer: D,** 20 cartons out of 120 total cartons contained prohibited fruit. Therefore, if you randomly selected one carton from the 120 cartons, the probability of selecting one of the prohibited cartons of fruit is 20 out of 120 or 20/120 = 1/6.

6. **Correct Answer: D,** 16/40 = .40 (this says Officer Ferong processed passengers at a rate of .40 per minute on the first day); .40 x 60 = 24 passengers per hour; and 24 x 4 = 96 passengers every four hours. For the next day, the calculations are 18/40 = .45 x 60 = 27 x 4 = 108. The average of 108 and 96 is 108 + 96 = 204/2 = 102.

Dulles CBP Intercepts a Ghanaian Impostor and a Sri Lankan Impostor One Week Apart

CBP also Intercepts Four Counterfeit Foreign Passports from Africa

STERLING, Va.—U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers detected two men, a Sri Lankan and Ghanaian, as imposters to the passports they possessed upon their arrivals at Washington Dulles International Airport on January 16 and January 23 respectively.

CBP Officers arrested Kofi Kyei Asare Takyi, 44, of Accra, Ghana, on Monday for providing a false statement in application and use of a passport (18 USC 1542).

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia is prosecuting Takyi.

In the other imposter case, Dulles CBP Officers referred the Sri Lankan man to a secondary examination. He arrived January 16 from Accra and presented a Canadian passport under another individual's name to CBP Officers. During that secondary examination, CBP Officers determined the man to be a mismatch to the passport and ordered him removed.

The Privacy Act prohibits CBP from releasing his name since he was not criminally charged.

"The U.S. government offers foreign nationals a means to lawfully immigrate to the U.S. Using another person's identity documents is a very serious violation of U.S. immigration law that could result in criminal prosecution," said Wayne Biondi, CBP Port Director of the Area Port of Washington Dulles. "Customs and Border Protection Officers remain ever vigilant to intercept those who violate our nation's laws or pose potential harm to the U.S."

Additionally, CBP Officers seized four counterfeit foreign passports during a baggage inspection of a Nigerian-born U.S. citizen on January 3. CBP officers discovered the four passports—two South African, one Nigerian, and one Kenyan— inside a jacket pocket in a carry-on bag. Each passport was of poor quality and contained a fraudulent U.S. travel visa and counterfeit CBP admission stamp. That traveler arrived from Nigeria.

Charges and allegations contained in criminal complaints are merely accusations, and defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

On a typical day, CBP Officers process the admission of more than one million passengers and pedestrians at our nation's international ports of entry.

WRITING SKILLS

Writing Skills

This guide provides information that will refresh your knowledge of some basic rules of English grammar, syntax, usage, sentence and paragraph organization, and punctuation. Only a short summary of each topic is provided. For a more in-depth study, you may want to refer to English textbooks or writing handbooks. A reference list with some suggested readings is provided. Also, this guide presents a sample of the types of questions you can expect to find on the Writing Skills Test along with the correct answers and the rationale for them.

WRITING SKILLS
SENTENCE COMPONENTS

Basic Definitions
A sentence is a grammatically independent group of words that serves as a unit of expression.

A sentence normally contains

A Stated Subject

(the noun(s) and/or pronoun(s) the sentence is about)

A Predicate
(the part that says something about or directs the subject)
Word + A Verb

Even the single-word command "Go!" is a sentence because it has an unstated but implied subject, whoever or whatever is being directed to go and a verb.

Use of Phrases in Sentences

Phrase

A group of related words lacking a subject and/or a predicate.

A phrase can be used as a noun, adjective, adverb, or verb. On the basis of their form, phrases are classified as prepositional, participle, gerund, infinitive, and verb phrases.

Use of Clauses in Sentences

Clauses

Grammatical units containing subject and verb.

A clause can be either **dependent** or **independent**.

An independent clause expresses the main thought of the sentence and can stand alone as a sentence (Example: She laughed.).

A dependent clause expresses an idea that is less important than the idea expressed in the main clause and cannot stand alone as a sentence (Example: As she was laughing…).

WRITING SKILLS
TYPES OF CLAUSES

Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Phrases and Clauses

Restrictive

A phrase or clause that provides information that is necessary to identify specifically what is being described.

———————————

Generally speaking, restrictive phrases and clauses are <u>not</u> separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Example 1:

The blue house that he built on a hill is quite large.

The restrictive phrase "*that he built on a hill*" is essential for knowing to which blue house the sentence is referring. Because the phrase is essential to the meaning of the whole sentence, it is not put aside by commas. With the information provided by this restrictive phrase, it can be validly concluded that the man built more than one blue house, but only the one on the hill is quite large.

Example 2:

We should congratulate the student who won the prize.

The clause *who won the prize* is essential for indicating the person who should be congratulated. The clause is therefore restrictive and is not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Nonrestrictive

A phrase or clause that provides information that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

———————————

Separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Example 1:

The blue house, which he built on a hill, is quite large.

The nonrestrictive phrase "*which he built on a hill*" is not essential for knowing to which blue house the sentence is referring. Because the phrase is not essential to the meaning of the whole sentence, it is put aside by commas. With the information provided by this nonrestrictive phrase, it cannot be concluded that the man built more than one blue house.

Example 2:

Pat, who won the prize, deserves our congratulations.

The person to be congratulated is identified as Pat, and the clause *who won the prize* is not essential for identifying the person. The clause is therefore nonrestrictive and is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

WRITING SKILLS
VERBS

Verb: A word or phrase used to assert an action or state of being

Verb Voice: The voice of a verb shows whether the subject performs an action (active voice) or receives it (passive voice)

Verb Tense: The tense of a verb shows the time of the action of the verb. There are active and passive forms of all tenses in English

Tense	Examples of Active Voice	Examples of passive voice
Present	She takes; she is taking	She is taken; she is being taken
Past	She took; she was taking	She was taken; she was being taken
Future	She will take; she will be taking	She will be taken
Present Perfect	She has taken; she has been taking	She has been taken
Past Perfect	She had taken; she had been taking	She had been taking
Future Perfect	She will have taken; she will have been taking	She will have been taken

Present: Action is taking place right now

Past: Action took place in the past

Future: Action takes place in future time

Present Perfect: Action completed before the present time

Past Perfect: Action that occurs before another past action

Future Perfect: Action that will be completed before a specific time in the future.

WRITING SKILLS
VERBS

Verb Mood

Indicative Mood
Shows an action is a fact

Example: They are going to the ball game.

Subjunctive Mood
Shows an action as a possibility, wish, or idea

Example: I wish that he would go to the ball game.

Imperative Mood
Shows an action is a command

Example: Go to the ball game!

Scot Osborne, Tucson Field Office

Other Rules Relating to Verbs

1. Transitive verbs require direct objects to complete their meaning.
Example: The baseball player *signed the autographs*.

2. Intransitive verbs do not require direct objects to complete their meaning.
Example: The boat *has docked*.

3. Linking verbs are not action verbs; rather, they express a state of being or existence.
The various forms of the verb to be are primary linking verbs. Linking verbs never take objects but, instead, connect the subject to a word or idea in the predicate.

Example: He *was* the one who bought the tickets. His proposal *is* unacceptable.

4. The verb to be can also be used with another verb as a helping (auxiliary) verb to create a verb phrase.
Example: Flights *have been delayed*. The contract *will have to be reviewed*.

Infinitive

An infinitive verb expresses action or existence without reference to person, number, or tense.

The form consists of the word "to" and the verb.

<u>Example</u>: It is relaxing *to run*

A split infinitive has a word or several words between the *to* and the *verb* following it. Splitting an infinitive is generally considered bad form.

<u>Incorrect Example</u>: You should try *to,* if you can, *attend* the briefing.

<u>Correct Usage</u>: You should try *to attend* the briefing, if you can.

An infinitive may be used as the subject of a sentence or as the object of a verb or preposition.

<u>Example</u>: *To become* champion has been her lifelong dream.

An infinitive may be used as an adjectival modifier.

<u>Example</u>: He had several papers *to review* during the trip.
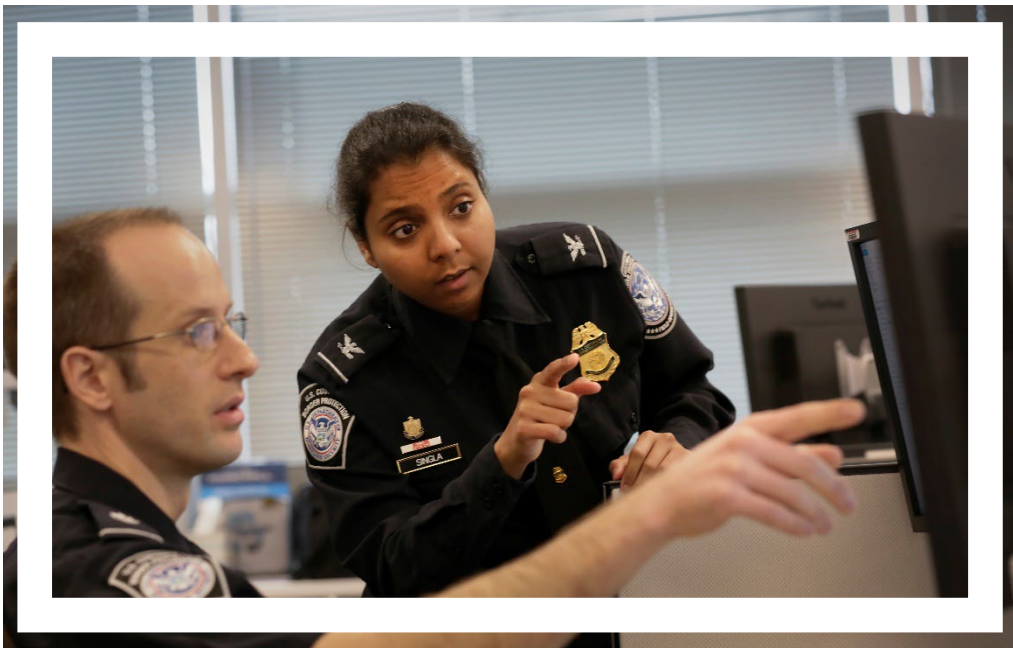
Gerund

A gerund is the form of a verb ending in *ing* that is used as a noun.

A gerund may be used as the subject of a sentence.

<u>Example</u>: *Drawing* was his favorite activity.

A gerund may be used as the object of a verb or preposition.

<u>Example</u>: She preferred *walking* over *bicycling*. *(Walking* is the object of the verb *preferred* and *bicycling* isthe object of the preposition *over.)*

Participle

A participle is a form of the verb used as an adjective. Simple participle forms end in *ed* or *ing*

<u>Examples</u>: The candidate felt *betrayed*. The New Year's Eve party was *exciting.*

When a participle phrase seems to modify a word that it cannot sensibly modify, then it is a dangling participle.

<u>Incorrect Example</u>: Sailing on the open sea, many dolphins were spotted. (*Sailing* does not modify dolphins.)

<u>Correct Usage</u>: Sailing on the open sea, we spotted many dolphins.

WRITING SKILLS
NOUNS

Nouns

Noun: a word that names a person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action.

Proper Noun: identifies a particular person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action.

Example: *Joe Brown* drove his *Lincoln Towncar* to the *Kennedy Center.*

Collective Noun: identifies a group of people or things that are related or acting as one. Collective nouns are *single* in number; thus, they take a singular verb.

Example: The *jury is* arriving at the courthouse now

If the individual members of the group are referred to, then the plural verb can be used.

Example: A group of *employees are* sharing supplies with each other.

Proper nouns must be capitalized!

Possessive

The possessive of a singular noun is formed by adding an apostrophe and "s" to the noun.

Example: the boy's sweater, Alice's car

The possessive of a plural noun ending in "s" is formed by adding an apostrophe only.

Example: officers' salaries, workers' union

Articles

An article is a word that refers to a noun and gives definiteness or indefiniteness to the noun. English articles are *a*, *an*, and *the*.

Indefinite Articles (a, an)

A and *an* are used for general nouns or when the audience does not know which thing you are referring to. *A* is used before words that begin with a consonant, and *an* is used before words that begin with a vowel.

Example: *An* attorney will meet you today. *A* file is missing from my desk.

Definite Article (the)

The is used when the audience knows which thing is being referred to.

Example: *The* attorney that you met with last week has returned your call.

WRITING SKILLS
PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun, most frequently to eliminate monotonous repetition of the noun.

Demonstrative Pronouns	Point to a specific thing. <u>Examples</u>: this, that, these, those
Indefinite Pronouns	Refer to people or things generally rather than specifically. <u>Examples</u>: all, both, someone, such Verbs used with indefinite pronouns must agree with the pronoun in number <u>Examples</u>: none *is*, everyone *is*, much *is*, many *are* *None* is generally used in a singular sense. However, when *none* is used in the sense of *not two* or *no amount*, then a plural verb is used. <u>Example</u>: None of the team members are in agreement.
Interrogative Pronouns	Are used to ask questions. Interrogative pronouns include who, what, which. <u>Example</u>: Which sandwich should I order?
Reflexive Pronouns	Refer back to the noun or pronoun used as the subject of the sentence. <u>Example</u>: I burned myself.
Possessive Pronouns	Determine possession without using an apostrophe followed by an s. <u>Examples</u>: yours, mine, ours
Intensive Pronouns	Are used to emphasize the previous noun or pronoun. <u>Examples</u>: You *yourself* must register.
Relative Pronouns	Relate a subordinate part of a sentence to the main clause. <u>Examples</u>: who, whoever, which, what
Personal Pronouns	Refer to persons or things and change form in three different persons: **First Person Pronouns:** *I, we* (used as subject of sentences and clauses) *me, us* (used as objects of verbs and prepositions. **Second Person Pronoun:** *you* (used for singular and plural, for subject and objects) **Third Person Pronouns:** *he, she, it, they* (used as subject of sentences and clauses) *him, her it, them* (used as objects of verbs and prepositions) <u>Examples</u>: Bill and *I* are going. She told Sally and *me*.

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Adjective

A word that modifies a noun

Adverb

A word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb

An adjective or an adverb should be placed so that there is no doubt as to which word it modifies.

Examples: The *angry* boy *quickly* threw the ball.
In this example angry is the adjective modifying boy. Quickly is an adverb modifying the verb threw.

Adjectives and adverbs show degrees of quality or quantity by means of their positive, comparative, and superlative forms. The positive form expresses no comparison at all. The comparative form adds an -er to the positive form of the adjective or adverb, or prefixes the positive form with the word more to express a greater degree or a comparison between two persons or things. The superlative form adds an -est to the positive form of the adjective or adverb, or prefixes the positive form with the word most to express the greatest degree of quantity or quality among three or more persons or things.

Examples:
Positive: short, beautiful, big
Comparative: shorter, more beautiful, bigger
Superlative: shortest, most beautiful, biggest

Many adverbs end in -ly

Examples: quickly, slowly, angrily, happily

Preposition

A preposition is a word that connects a noun to some other word in the sentence. Prepositions usually establish a relationship of time or location. The use of a preposition automatically creates a prepositional phrase.

Examples: in a month; after a year; on the table; behind the door

There are over 40 prepositions in English, some of which are:

about, around, before, at, below, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, through, up, upon, and with.

WRITING SKILLS
CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunction

A conjunction (also known as a connective) is a word that joins together sentences, clauses, phrases, or words.

Coordinating conjunctions are words that connect two or more parts of a sentence that are of equal rank (Example: two nouns or verbs or phrases, etc.)

Examples: and, but, or, nor, for, and sometimes yet

Sentence Example: Neither the manager nor the employee had a reasonable solution to the problem.

Subordinating conjunctions connect dependent (subordinate) clauses to independent (main) clauses.

Examples: though, if, as, when, while, and since.

Sentence Example: Since he took the course for his own advancement, his employer wouldn't pay for it.

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of words that connect sentence elements that are of equal rank. Correlative conjunctions must *always* appear together in the same sentence.

Examples: either-or, neither-nor, whether-or, both-and, and not only-but also

Sentence Example: She was outstanding not only in her schoolwork but also in her fitness training.

Avoiding Verb, Noun, and Pronoun Shifts

Unnecessary shifts in person, number, tense, or voice confuse readers and seriously weaken communication. The examples below indicate these types of errors.

A shift in person occurs when a writer shifts back and forth among the first, second, and third persons.

Correct example: If you want to pass the physical, you have to exercise daily.

Incorrect example: If you want to pass the physical, a person has to exercise daily.

A shift in number occurs when a plural pronoun is used to refer back to a singular antecedent or vice versa.

Correct example: *Anyone* who shops in that department store must seriously consider *one's* budget.

Incorrect example: *Anyone* who shops in that department store must seriously consider *their* budget.

Unnecessary shifts in tense more commonly occur within a paragraph rather than within an individual sentence.

Correct example: After the historian *spent* several hours describing the armies' strategies, he *gave* a horrifying account of the attack. He *pointed* out in great detail what *was* going on in the minds of each of the soldiers.

Incorrect example: After the historian *spent* several hours describing the armies' strategies, he *gave* a horrifying account of the attack. He *points* out in great detail what *is* going on in the minds of each of the soldiers.

A shift in voice occurs when a writer makes unnecessary shifts between the active and the passive voice.

Correct example: *I wrote* the journal article. *I also wrote* the book chapter.

Incorrect example: *I wrote* the journal article. The *book chapter was* also *written* by me.

When two sentence elements are joined by a conjunction, they should have parallel structure.

Correct example: She was outstanding not only *in her academic coursework* but also *in her fitness.*

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Capitalization

Is the use of capital letters to place special emphasis on particular letters to set them off from lowercase letters.

Sentences *always* begin with a capital letter. The first letter of a quotation is *always* capitalized.

Proper nouns, that is, nouns that name particular persons, places, or things, *must* be capitalized.

<u>Examples</u>: Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, Brooklyn Bridge

Titles that precede a proper name are capitalized; those that follow a proper name are not.

<u>Examples</u>: Chairperson John Smith and John Smith, the chairperson

Punctuation

Is the use of periods, commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, exclamation points, dashes, apostrophes, brackets, parentheses, slashes, and quotation marks to convey the pauses and gestures that we use in speech to clarify and emphasize meaning.

Periods (.)	Commas (,)
Use a period to end a sentence and after abbreviations.	Use a comma to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence.
Example:	<u>Example</u>: Suzanne made a presentation at the conference, and then she spent the remainder of the day touring the city.
She went to the beach.	Use a comma to separate an introductory phrase or clause from the main clause of a sentence.
Dr., Mr., Rev.	<u>Example</u>: After completing the work, the contractor left the site. Place a comma after every item in a series.
Semicolons (;)	
A semicolon is used to separate elements in a series when some of the elements already contain commas.	<u>Example</u>: The new office is furnished with a desk, a computer, two chairs, and a supply cabinet.
<u>Example</u>: Sally wishes us to attend the first, third, and fifth sessions on Wednesday; the second, fourth, and sixth sessions on Thursday; and the first only on Friday.	Two or more adjectives that modify the noun they precede are separated by commas.
A semicolon is used to join two closely related independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.	<u>Example</u>: The cold, windy morning was not a good beginning for their vacation.
	Commas are used to set off the items in a date.
<u>Example</u>: The project began slowly; thereafter, additional staff were assigned to it.	<u>Example</u>: On Monday, Aug. 17, 1998, he became the head of the office. Commas are not used when only the month and year are given. <u>Example</u>: August 2002

A paragraph can be looked upon as a microcosm, an exact parallel in miniature of the entire work.

It has a dominant idea, usually expressed in a topic sentence.

The dominant idea is developed by examples, comparisons, explanations, or arguments to make the meaning of the topic sentence clear.

There may be a concluding restatement of the topic idea.

A paragraph presents a larger unit of thought than a sentence can contain. A paragraph *must*

1. **Have unity:** It should not digress from the dominant idea expressed in the topic sentence;

2. **Have completeness:** It should present enough information to answer any general questions the reader may have;

3. **Have coherence:** Sentences should flow into each other so that the reader interprets the paragraph as an integrated unit and not as a collection of separate sentences;

4. **Have order:** The paragraph can be organized from the general to the particular or vice versa. Either way, the order of sentences and ideas in the paragraph should be logical.

From the general to the particular:

This type of paragraph begins with a topic sentence that serves as an introductory summary of the topic. The remaining sentences explain or illustrate this statement, so that the idea becomes increasingly clear as the paragraph progresses. The topic sentence is usually at or near the beginning of the paragraph.

From the particular to the general:

This type of paragraph is the reverse of the previous pattern. It begins with a series of explanatory or illustrative statements that lead to a general statement or summary. The topic sentence is usually at or near the end of the paragraph.

WRITING SKILLS
PRACTICE TEST

It is suggested that you take no more than 15 minutes to answer questions 1 through 8 below.

For questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 choose the one answer that represents a correction that should be made to the sentence. If no correction is necessary, choose Ⓓ.

1. Once a request to carry firearms into a foreign country are approved, a CBP Officer must notify the Office of Foreign Operations for coordination of the request.

 Ⓐchange to carry to for carrying

 Ⓑchange are to is

 Ⓒchange coordination to coordinating

 Ⓓno correction is necessary

2. Supervisor Smith knows that it is important for his CBP Agriculture Specialists to understand each of the fundamental principals that apply to all methods of dog training.

 Ⓐchange knows that to knows which

 Ⓑchange each to each and every one

 Ⓒchange principals to principles

 Ⓓno correction is necessary

3. The geographical area composing much of the border between the United States and Mexico is considered to have a desert climate.

 Ⓐchange between to from

 Ⓑinsert a comma after area

 Ⓒchange is to are

 Ⓓ*no correction is necessary*

4. When writing a report on a drug smuggling incident, it is important to add all dates, times, names, and quotes associated from the case for future reference.

 Ⓐchange on to around

 Ⓑchange incident to incedent

 Ⓒchange from to with

 Ⓓno correction is necessary

For sample questions 5 and 6, choose the one sentence which is correct in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling and which exemplifies usage suitable to a formal letter or report.

5.

   Ⓐ The impact of this training requirement will be measured by the number of new CBP Officers who successfully complete the probationary period.

   Ⓑ The impact that this training requirement has will be measured by the number of new CBP Officers who successfully complete the probationary period.

   Ⓒ The impact of this training requirement will be measured by the number of new CBP Officers which successfully complete the probationary period.

   Ⓓ The impact that this training requirement has will be measured by the number of new CBP Officers which successfully complete the probationary period.

6.

   Ⓐ The migrant's use of a fraudulent document was a hindrance to the identification of the migrant

   Ⓑ The migrant's use of a fraudelent document was a hindrence to the identification of the migrant.

   Ⓒ The migrant's use of a fraudulent document was a hindrance to the identification of the migrant.

   Ⓓ The migrant's use of a fraudulent document was a hindrance to the identification of the migrant.

For questions 7 and 8, select the correct paragraph order to create a passage that is well-organized, clear, and coherent. If no correction is necessary, choose Ⓓ

7.

(1)   First used on a wide scale in 1970, narcotic detector dogs save countless staff hours in locating narcotics in vehicles, mail, unaccompanied baggage, and on cargo ships. A dog and its handler can check 500 packages in 30 minutes; it would take a mail examiner several days to inspect as many. At border ports, a dog can inspect a vehicle in about two minutes; the same search by a CBP Officer would take at least 20 minutes. Therefore, the use of narcotic detector dogs has greatly enhanced the fight against illegal drug smuggling into the U.S.

(2)   While not exactly high-tech, a unique tool in CBP's drug fight is its force of narcotic detector dogs, their trainers, and the CBP Officers who work with these canine detectors.

(3)   This fight continues today, extending into the high-tech world of the 21st century. Through diligence, close inspection, sophisticated technology, and the sacrifice of lives, CBP has given an excellent account of itself in fighting the flow of illegal drugs into this country.

(4)   Since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, liquor smuggling has naturally decreased. In later years, however, the illegal entry of narcotics and dangerous drugs increased to threatening proportions. During the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, federal officers faced the almost overwhelming task of fighting the influx of opium, heroin, cocaine, hashish, marijuana, and amphetamines into the U.S.

Ⓐ 4 – 3 – 2 –1

Ⓑ 3 – 4 – 1 – 2

Ⓒ 2 – 3 – 4 – 1

Ⓓ no correction is necessary

8.

> **(1)** Project Shield America will have two operational components. The first will be to reach out and form partnerships with U.S. manufacturers and distributors of the sensitive technology, weapons, and equipment sought by terrorists. The second will be to investigate and halt those attempting to acquire and illegally export weapons components to groups intent on harming America.
>
> **(2)** Beginning immediately, field offices will identify the specific U.S. firms in their areas that manufacture or distribute materials of interest. Agents will then visit these firms and provide them with materials about Project Shield America, information about U.S. export controls, and data about the items sought by terrorists. Most importantly, the agents will encourage these firms to notify agents if they are approached by customers looking to acquire and export their products illegally.
>
> **(3)** In sum, under the banner of Project Shield America, we will partner with U.S. industries to prevent their technological accomplishments from being exploited by terrorists. While some of these materials may seem relatively innocuous and have relatively little monetary value, they can have enormous strategic value in the hands of America's adversaries. These "minor" technological goods could easily become the necessary components for major weapons development by terrorist groups or rogue nations.
>
> **(4)** At the same time, agents will step up their efforts to investigate and prosecute those who attempt to acquire and illegally export sensitive technology, weapons, and equipment to international terrorist organizations. These efforts will include undercover probes and other investigative techniques. The Office of Strategic Investigations will redirect its resources towards the objective of denying terrorist organizations access to these materials. Assistance from U.S. manufacturers and distributors will be crucial in this effort.

Ⓐ 1 – 4 – 2 – 3

Ⓑ 1 – 4 – 3 – 2

Ⓒ 1 – 2 – 4 – 3

Ⓓ no correction is necessary

1. **Correct Answer: B**, A verb must agree with its subject in number. The subject, "request," is singular and, therefore, the verb should be changed from "are" to "is."

2. **Correct Answer: C,** The correct use of the word "principles" refers to rules, laws, or standards that are applied to the method of dog training. By contrast, the word "principal" means first or foremost in importance.

3. **Correct Answer: D,** No change to the sentence is necessary.

4. **Correct Answer: C,** The correct term is "associated with" and not "associated from." Objects are "associated with" one another, which means they are related to each other in some way.

5. **Correct Answer: A,** The correct answer is (A). The sentence should read as follows: The impact of this training will be measured by the number of new CBP Officers who successfully complete the probationary period. This is a well-constructed sentence in both grammar and syntax.

6. **Correct Answer: C,** The words "hindrance" and "fraudulent" are spelled correctly in this sentence while various incorrect spellings of these words are used in A, B, and D.

7. **Correct Answer: A,** The most logical order of the passages is 4, 3, 2, 1. It is not logical to begin the passages with paragraphs 2 or 3, as indicated in Responses B and C, because they appear to complete information that has been presented earlier and, therefore, depend on information in the other two paragraphs in order to be understood. This also eliminates Response D. This leaves Response A, which begins with paragraph 4. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.

8. **Correct Answer: C,** The most logical order of the passages is 1, 2, 4, 3. The first paragraph introduces Project Shield America and defines the two operational components of the project. Accordingly, paragraph 1 should be the first paragraph. Paragraphs 2 and 4 elaborate on the two operational components of the project introduced in paragraph 1 and therefore must follow paragraph 1. Paragraph 2 logically comes before paragraph 4 because paragraph 2 elaborates on the first operational component of the project whereas paragraph 4 elaborates on the second operational component. Finally, paragraph 3 is clearly the concluding paragraph because it provides a summation and closing for the entire passage. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.

CONGRATULATIONS
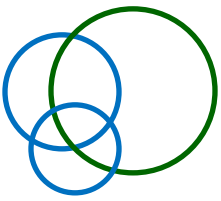
You have completed all the practice sections for the CBP Officer Entrance Exam
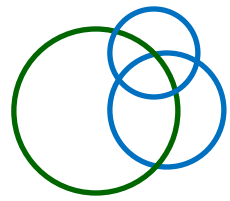
We recommend that you continue reviewing the concepts until test day. You can also find out more about a career in U.S. Customs and Border Protection by visiting the links below.

CBP Careers Website
www.cbp.gov/careers

Twitter
@CBPJobs

LinkedIn
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Instagram
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