NEW YORK STATE | Department of Civil Service

A General Guide to Multiple-Choice Tests

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this guide to give you some general information on multiple-choice tests for State civil service examinations. If you have questions, or if you need additional assistance, please contact the Exams Information Desk at the Department of Civil Service in the Albany area at 518-457-6216 or outside of the Albany area toll free at 1-877-697-5627.

The guide includes sections on:

Examination Announcement
Admission Notice
Tips for Completing Multiple-Choice Test Materials
Test Security
Conclusion

Examination Announcement The examination announcement is available online and as a printed document. The announcement contains the examination number, title, test date(s), minimum qualifications, subject(s) of examination, how to apply, and other important information. Be sure to read this information carefully.

When a multiple-choice test is part of the examination, the announcement describes the subject areas or "subtests" that will be covered. Sample test material is available for some subtests, as stated in the subtest description. You may view or print a copy of the sample test material by clicking on the active link provided in the online announcement. If you do not have access to the online announcement, you may also request a printed copy by contacting the Exams Information Desk.

Admission Notice

Shortly before the test date, you will receive an Admission Notice for the multiple-choice test. If your test is scheduled for more than one test date, you will be sent a separate Admission Notice for each test date. If you have not received your Notice three days before the test date, call (518) 474-6470 in the Albany area or toll free at 1-877-697-5627.

The Admission Notice will tell you when and where to report to take the test. Allow plenty of time to travel to the test site, to find the correct location and to park, if necessary. Be sure to bring your Admission Notice with you to the test site, along with your photo identification, and two No. 2 pencils. Unless otherwise indicated, you may also bring a quiet, hand-held, solar- or battery- powered calculator and a quiet lunch or snack. You will have to present your Admission Notice at the test center, so be sure to bring it with you on the day of the test.

Tips for Completing Multiple-Choice Test Materials

- **Read all directions, instructions, and test materials carefully.**
  Carefully read and follow all directions and any special instructions for the test. If sample test materials are provided, review them to become familiar with the subject area and format.

  Read all test materials carefully. Be sure you fully understand the question or problem and the answer choices presented before you select and mark your answer.

- **Mark your answers accurately on the separate, scannable answer sheet.**
  At the test site, you will be given several Test Booklets and a separate, scannable answer sheet for each Test Booklet. The answer sheets will be scanned and scored by computer. To receive full credit for your answers:

  - ✓ Use a No. 2 pencil to mark your answers
  - ✓ Fill in all identification information required for each answer sheet
  - ✓ As you mark your answers, be sure the Test Booklet identified on the answer sheet matches the Test Booklet you are using.
  - ✓ As you mark your answers, be sure the number and letter of the answer you mark on the answer sheet matches the answer you have selected from the Test Booklet.

- **Budget your time wisely.**
  The total time allowance is based on the amount of test material covered in a group of related examinations or "series." The maximum time allowance for a single test date is 8 hours.

  Time allowances vary with examination series. If you need to know the total time allowance for your multiple-choice test before test date, you may contact this Department for that information.

  At the test site, on the day of the test, make note of the total time allowance, the starting and stopping times, and the test materials that you must complete for your examination(s).

  After the Monitor announces that you may begin the test, you may look over your test materials to help you estimate how much time you will need to complete each part. Keep track of the time as you are working. If you skip over some questions, be sure to come back to them before you complete the test and turn in your test materials.

Test Security
All multiple-choice test materials for these examinations are the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Candidates must not remove test material from the test site or reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others.

Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law. Candidates found to have violated test security may be disqualified from their examination(s) and may also be disqualified from taking any civil service examination for five years. In some cases, violations may also result in disciplinary action, fine, and/or imprisonment.

A few final words of caution:

- Do **not** remove any test material from the test room and do not paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way, either orally or in writing.
- Do **not** discuss the test material with others. Not all candidates take the test on the same day, and you may unknowingly pass along information to a candidate who has not yet taken the test.
- Be careful to observe test security requirements before, during, and after the test.

Conclusion

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test ...

- Review this guide, the subtest titles, descriptions, and any sample test materials available to familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.

- Study and review the subject areas to be covered on the test.

On the day of the test ...

- Allow yourself enough time for traveling to the test site and locating your test room.

- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, and a photo ID containing your signature; you may also bring a quiet lunch or snack, and any other items allowed.

- Unless otherwise indicated, you may bring a quiet, hand-held, solar- or battery-powered calculator.

- Do **not** bring any device with a typewriter keyboard, such as a “Spell Checker,” “Personal Digital Assistant (PDA),” “Address Book,” “Language Translator,” “Dictionary,” or other, similar device to the test site.

- Do **not** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site. The use of such devices at the test site in the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, or other areas could result in your disqualification.

- Do **not** bring books or reference materials to the test site.

- Do **not** bring this guide or sample test materials to the test site.

During the test ...

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, and test administration materials, including Candidate Directions, Test Booklets, and answer sheets.

- Follow the Monitor's instructions; raise your hand if you have questions or need help.

- Organize your work accordingly and keep track of the time.

After the test ...

- Continue to observe test security prohibitions by not removing any test materials from the test room, by not reconstructing or reproducing test materials, and by not discussing the test.

This guide was developed to give you a better understanding of what to expect on a multiple-choice test. We hope it will help you do your best on your test.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make this information available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.



Department of Civil Service

New York State
Department of Civil Service
Albany, NY 12239
www.cs.ny.gov

Content Last Updated

2026