

NEW!

POLICE TESTING

ADVANCED POLICE APPLICATION TECHNIQUES



- John Ashburton

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

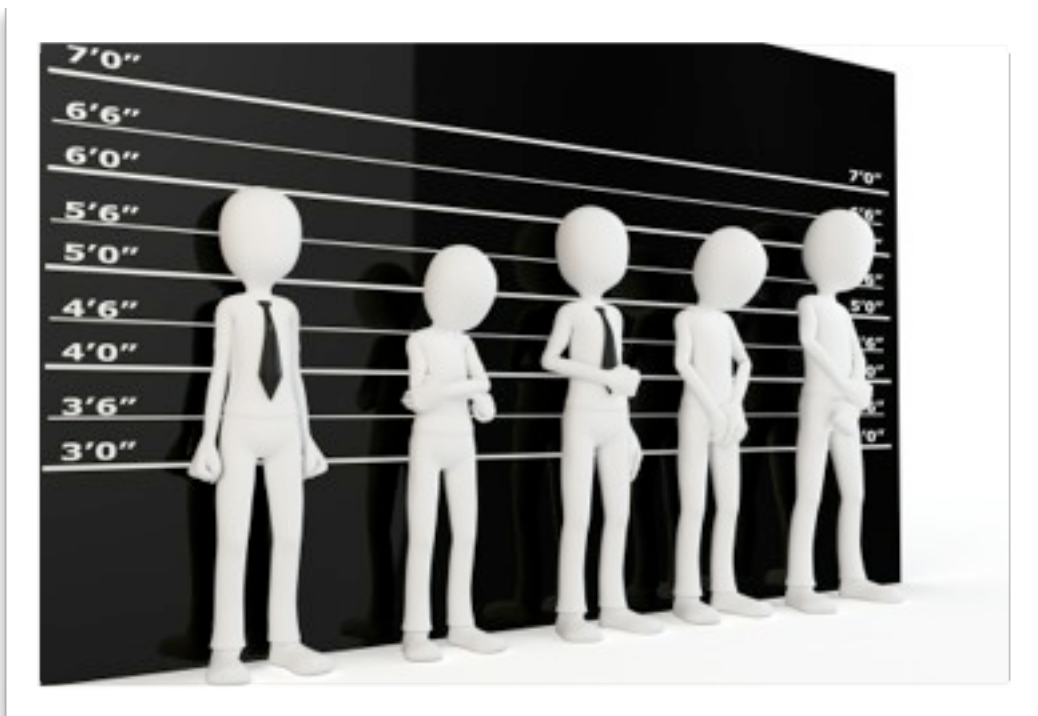


Welcome to this advanced guidebook on how to best prepare for the full range of police testing. I have two primary purposes in writing this eBook. The first is to help you optimise your preparation in lead up to each stage of your police application. The second is to ensure you perform at a peak level on each day of actual testing. My motivation for getting this information to you in an easily accessible format is to improve your chances of police selection. I believe that there are many people who may make excellent police officers, but will fail in the application process simply because they are not excellent in taking written and physical tests. This eBook will help to 'even the playing field' so to speak.

Specifically, you will be learning some top tips to make subtle yet effective enhancements to your written application, how to optimise your study techniques and how best to structure responses to writing tests. Additionally I will break down the topic of 'Exam Nerves' and explain some of what may be holding you back in achieving your best. Once you understand this you will be well on your way to a confident and competent exam performance. I will also point out some of the most common 'test traps' that can catch out even the most prepared applicants. Finally we will look at some great strategies to employ on the day of testing to ensure you deliver your absolute best.

One more thing before we get started on the content of this eBook. I urge you to complete the activities in '[Becoming a Police Officer](#)'. Regardless of what you KNOW about police testing and exam preparation, your actual performance will come down to what actions you took leading up to each phase of testing. '[Becoming a Police Officer](#)' will help you gain absolute clarity on why it is so important to you to commence a police career. Once you have this you will have no shortage of 'motivation.' In fact, you won't even need 'motivation.' If you know what you're in this for then the steps to preparation will become almost effortless. You will simply do what needs to be done because the steps are all in alignment with your mission, your purpose and highest goal of becoming a police officer.

So let's get started at the very beginning with your...



WRITTEN APPLICATION

CHAPTER TWO

So you've phoned the recruiting office and been advised to submit the written application to start off your application. Or you may have downloaded the application form from the internet. Just fill in the form quickly and wait for the actual testing to begin right? WRONG.

Underestimating the importance of your written application can be the error that costs you a place on the next recruit squad. Not only does the written application determine your success in getting to the next phase of testing, but it can be referred to throughout each phase of testing including the psychological (or selection board) interviews.

Police recruitment are looking at the content, accuracy, adherence to instruction, neatness and correctness of your application.

Let's take a look at each of these aspects in detail.

CONTENT

The content of your application will be very much prescribed by the information requested. You must fill out each part of course. However in some states you will need to include short written responses that may include a brief personal history or reasons why you are applying for the police. This is the content where you can make your application stand out from the rest. Regardless of what you write in here, the overriding and most important aspect is that it is the truth! Don't embellish and don't MSU (make shit up). This will bring you unstuck later down the track in your application process when questioned in interviews. An inconsistency in your application can even catch up with you once you're at the academy. In one case, a recruit in NSW was removed from training after failing to declare an important element of his personal history. In this case it was likely the omission, rather than the history itself, that caused the issue.



This is a good example of how important integrity is throughout each stage of your police application and indeed your subsequent police career. Police officers have been removed from duty for transgressions in integrity (lying). In fact the consequences for lying are usually far more extreme than the consequence of whatever incident the officer was trying to hide.

Telling the truth may seem an obvious point of advice - and I hope it is otherwise you may need to find another career!

So what DO you put into the content of your written responses?

Well let's start at the end. Once written, you want your response to be described as **relevant**, **succinct** and **impressive**.

Relevant: Make sure you're including only aspects that are relevant to a police application. Whilst you must declare all elements of your personal history, it is probably excessive to include your first job as a paper delivery boy or girl. Or that you were awarded "Best Bowler" in your under 10's cricket team. Stick to themes appropriate to police service. Examples of community service would fit well for example.

Succinct: You will likely receive guidance on how long your response should be. Do not waffle on longer than indicated. There is rarely circumstance where you should add in extra pages. This is an opportunity to demonstrate you can efficiently convey information in written format. This means getting the required information down in the space provided.

Impressive: Without unnecessary embellishment, you must really take this chance to show your best side to recruitment staff. Ask friends and family what they think would be relevant examples of your lifetime highlights. What is it about you that will make you stand out. Do you have relevant personal achievements that demonstrate you are a high achiever? Don't be afraid to put these in (try not to sound too cocky when you write these down though).



ACCURACY

Your application must be accurate in terms of your personal information. You cannot simply make corrections to your personal information at a later date without consequence. Your initial accuracy in this form provides an indication to recruitment staff of your ability to complete basic written tasks without error. You must also be accurate with the the correct information in the right places. Which leads to the next point.

CORRECTNESS OF APPLICATION

Once you have completed your application, make sure you have filled out the correct information in the correct spaces. If you made an error, don't simply correct it on the form - get another form and start again. The same goes for any spelling errors you may have made. It is this sort of extra effort that will distinguish your form above the rest. A corrected error is still an error. Why not put forward a blemish free application when you have the opportunity?

ADHERENCE TO INSTRUCTION

The first step here is to READ the instructions. This sounds basic but can often be skipped. The second step is to FOLLOW the instructions. If you haven't already been made aware, the police service has positions dedicated to check over the work of police officers and to ensure forms and paperwork are correct. If they are not correct they are often sent back to the officer for correction. This is often the case with errors on court documents created by police officers for basic prosecutions. So once again, your police application provides an indication to the recruitment staff of your ability to follow directions and fill out forms and paperwork correctly.

If the form says to mark boxes with an 'X' then make sure you do so and do not use a 'tick' symbol. This sounds very anal retentive and it is. However, this is the nature of police work and at this point you need to fit this mould. Also, unless stated otherwise, use a pen to complete the form.

This is the same for the amount of space allowed for written response. This space is there to be filled - not over filled.

Once you have completed the form, go over it again to make sure you have filled out EVERY box and answered ALL questions. Then go over it again. Ideally you will have a friend or family member look over your application as well. An extra pair of eyes can often pick up what we ourselves will miss in our own work. Even professional writers have a third party proof read their manuscripts.

NEATNESS

At this stage in the process, you are being represented by a piece of paper! So make sure it's the best looking piece of paper you can manage. This can also tie into adherence to instruction. If the instructions state that you are to complete the form in BLOCK CAPITALS then that goes for the entire form. If you don't have very neat writing, then the best way to improve is to practice. Please note that if there is an extended writing component you will usually be advised to complete it in your own handwriting (which is not likely to be BLOCK CAPITALS...)

Ideally you will practice writing your own material down on paper. However, another alternative is to simply grab a newspaper article or any written article and copy it down to practice your hand writing.

It should go without saying that your paper application must be completed with your OWN HANDWRITING. Do not get someone else to fill out your form for you. This comes back to the matter of integrity. You will be writing for yourself later in the testing, and more importantly, later in your career. Do not mislead police recruiting by having another person fill out your form.

If you follow these guidelines you will be submitting a high quality paper application and will be giving yourself the best opportunity to be picked out for further testing. You will also be providing a high quality reference for recruitment staff to refer back to during later stages of selection.

So in the event you are one of the chosen few to reach the next stage of testing, you will need to prepare yourself for some vigorous written exams, physical testing and interviews. In which case you will benefit from developing some...

FOCUSSED STUDY TECHNIQUES

CHAPTER THREE

Do you spend more time telling people (or yourself) that you should be studying than time actually studying? If so this chapter is definitely for you!

All the best study material along with the best of intentions will be of no use to you if you don't actually DO the study! Yet this is often the most challenging aspect of preparing for exams - be they cognitive or physical assessments. There is much to learn on the topic of 'learning' and studying.

I'm still learning new techniques in my university study now. I can tell you from personal experience it is awesome to be able to go into a closed-book written exam knowing that I've done the required preparation and having complete confidence in an excellent result. This is not just mind-over-matter but rather the result of decades in experimenting with different preparation methods and finding out what works for me.

Although study is different for all people, there are two solid principles, or 'rules' of study, that if followed will produce outstanding results. These are the two principles of successful study habits.



PRINCIPLE ONE: MANAGE THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

This is the easier half of the equation. Effectively it is about setting up the external conditions for success. Much of this can be resolved by a matter of timing. If you're part of a large family, then studying in the evenings when everyone is around and you have responsibilities to help with chores and dinner then you are unlikely have very good control over your environment. Many people find success by studying early in the morning. If you're not a morning person, then this may have the added benefit of preparing you for a career of shift work. You will soon be getting up for 6.00am police shifts so why not get practicing now?

Studying at a time of day when you have few other responsibilities is the fastest way to remove distractions. Take outrageous action like turning off your phone and email!

Depending on your personality you will benefit from different arrangements in the physical environment around you. Generally, most people will achieve better results working in a quiet and tidy area. If you don't have access to this in your house, then you can try external locations like a library.

At the other end of the scale, some prefer some background noise to assist in focus. This is a controversial topic in the field of study techniques. I personally find music of any kind to be distracting and detrimental to my study. However others benefit from quiet music of their preferred taste. You will probably know what works for you already. However if you're struggling to study effectively this can be another thing to try. Turning the music off or turning it on. This might be the difference you've been looking for. Please note the additional considerations of background noise and music discussed in *TIP TWO of PRINCIPLE TWO: Manage the Internal Environment* on the following page.

Your surroundings also play a part in what you do in your hours before and after study. If you really want to maximise your study efficiency, you may consider cutting out other distractions from other parts of your life. Going on a 'media diet' is one example of this. Whilst staying abreast of current affairs may be a useful aspect to your police selection, you can still cut down the number of distractions in your head by cutting down on media. You might like to give your favourite TV Drama the flick or cut down on social media time so you have less 'background noise' in your life.

I did this and found I immediately had more clarity in focus. It is almost as if we can only 'digest' so much information in a day. So if you cut out the crap, then you will retain more of what you want during your study.

Also make sure your equipment works! This is from basic materials like pens through to a computer with a working internet connection.

Your external environment even includes the clothes you're wearing. If you're currently in a job you hate and you are studying in that work uniform then you may struggle to maintain a positive mindset. On the other hand you may benefit from the motivation that this study session is bringing you one step closer to a new *BLUE UNIFORM* (or *khaki* for you Territory folks!). This leads to the equally important second principal...

PRINCIPLE TWO: MANAGE THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

This second principle is less well understood and probably the area where most people fall down in their study. Whilst the underlying outcome here is to have a clear, focussed and retentive mind during study, the steps to this are quite involved.

Here are my top five tips for managing your internal environment.

TIP ONE: Know Your Outcome

Why are you sitting down to study? Ask yourself these two questions:

1. What is my long term outcome of this type of study?
2. What is my immediate outcome for this actual study session?

The answer to question one is what will inspire you to sit down in the first place to study. It is the reason why you scheduled the time to study. If you are preparing for a police application, then your reasons may be along the lines of becoming a police officer. If you want to strengthen this reason, then visualise what this would mean for you. How would you feel and what would your life be like if you had already achieved this goal?

The answer to question two is what will get you keep you focussed on effective study throughout the session. If you are using one of the Police Mastery eBooks for example, like “Master the Queensland Police Exams”, then you may have an outcome to complete one entire aptitude test. Now link this to your long term outcome.

So for example, your thought process as you sit down to study may look like this:

1. My long term outcome for studying is to become a police officer. Once I've achieved this I will have a stable income for my family and I will be contributing to the community and making a difference on the street.
2. My immediate outcome for this study session is to complete one aptitude test from “Master the Queensland Police Exams.”
3. By doing this I will be improving my score on the cognitive exams during selection tests.
4. This will elevate me above many other applicants who are not doing this preparation. This will in turn maximise my chance of getting a spot on the next recruit squad and becoming a police officer.

TIP TWO: Manage Your State

Before you even start studying, make sure you are in an excellent state of mind. Remove all doubts about your abilities and adopt a state of absolute certainty that you are doing the right preparation and that you will be the most prepared applicant on the day. Again, much of this comes down to the internal questions you are asking yourself.

If you ask a question like, “Why can’t I get these answers right?” then your brain might come back with an answer of “Because you’re an idiot!”

So ask yourself better questions! Why not think “I’m concerned about the cognitive testing. How can I improve my skills in this area?” Then the previous answer makes no sense. The more likely answer to come back to you is “Practice cognitive questions and if you don’t get it right, seek further training.”

(This type of questioning is what led me to create the BONUS Chapter on numerical reasoning skills in the Police Exam Mastery Series of eBooks. There are a lot of practice tests available but very little additional training to improve results. This is also why I include such detailed explanations for each question in the aptitude test answers)

Additionally, your physical condition will play a role in your focus during study. Make sure you are not tired or hungry during study. This is another benefit to studying in the morning. If you find yourself wanting to get up all the time during a study session, you may benefit from a pre-study workout. This one tip helped me considerably in my own study. By going for a light jog or strength session outside before studying, I am always in a much more focussed and positive state. This directly transfers to better scores on tests and written exams!

Your ability to manage your state of mind is also critical in being able to link your state of mind when studying to your state of mind in the exams. This is because the recollection of information is best achieved from being in the same state of mind as when you absorbed the information. Think of it this way. Have you ever heard an old song come on the radio and immediately you remember vivid details about an old boyfriend or girlfriend. Perhaps family memories come up just from hearing a song? Part of the reason is that this song puts you into a certain state of mind and your brain *automatically* recalls that information.

This is an important consideration to make if you like listening to music during study. You will find that if you listen to the same music later on, you will recall the information much more easily. However, you will not be permitted to listen to anything during your police exams so this can work against you. Thus one of the benefits to studying in a quiet environment is that you will be replicating the exam conditions. This means you will be far more likely to get into the same state of mind in the exam as you were during study. This single piece of information can significantly enhance your performance on exam day!

TIP THREE: Reward Yourself!

Give yourself rewards at marked intervals of your study. Again, using the example of a cognitive exam practice sessions, you might choose to get up and jump around the room five times every time you complete five questions. This sounds a bit silly, but the physical action can be an incentive to your body to keep studying. Whatever makes you feel good! You can of course use food, however this can be a dangerous habit. If you're going to use something like chocolate to periodically reward yourself, then at least make it in tiny tiny quantities!



Rest is also a great reward for the mind. In fact according to the science of 'ultradian rhythms' our brains have a certain cycle that can be followed to maximise study efficiency. As far as we know, it works like this: Every 90 to 120 minutes your brain workings shift from left dominance to right dominance. the left side being your more logical side, and the right being the more creative. This shift across to the right last about 20 minutes. This can feel like a sudden loss of focus, however, it is actually the period when the best information retention occurs.

The way to use this cycle is to take a break after about 90 minutes of study. Simply close your eyes and relax for 20 minutes. If you fall asleep for 20 minutes that's ok too. This is also a much healthier and efficient manner of re-energising than caffeine or sugar blasts.

(if you are interested in optimising rest over short periods, have a look at the ["pzizz"](#) app available on Mac, Windows, iPhone or Android devices)

If you follow these three tips of knowing your outcome, managing your state of mind and developing rewarding associations to study, you will also increase your overall confidence in preparation for the coming exams. It is also fantastic preparation for the police academy where you will face more exams and more tests. More tests? Yes, the police entrance exams are just the beginning. So it is well worth taking a more detailed look at how you will perform in exams and whether or not you will suffer from...

EXAM NERVES - FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

CHAPTER FOUR

To feel some apprehension about coming tests is not only normal but useful in improving performance. If you can imagine a sliding scale of stress then your optimal performance occurs in the middle of the range. So in other words, if you have no concern over the test at all then you may be over-relaxed or careless. If you have too much stress then your physiological reactions will become detrimental to optimal performance.

Statistically, people experiencing too much stress during exams will perform about 12% lower than those who are successfully managing their state of mind¹².

Having not enough stress is generally not a problem, and you probably won't be reading this chapter anyway. Too much stress is what results in the fight or flight response. Certain studies indicate that up to 40% people in exams are suffering excessive stress³.

If you have not taken an exam in a while, you may not know exactly how you're going to react during police testing. If you suffer any of the following symptoms, you may be at risk of an adverse performance under exam conditions:

1. Frequent negative self-talk;
2. Generally being indecisive;
3. Easily becoming cranky or upset with others or yourself;
4. Problems getting to sleep or staying asleep;

¹ Hembree, R. (1988). Correlates, Causes, Effects and Treatment of Test Anxiety. Review of Educational Research. 58, 1, 47–77

² Cassady, J. & Johnson, R. (2001). Cognitive test anxiety and academic performance. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 27, 270–295.

³ Cassady, J.C. (2010). Test anxiety: Contemporary theories and implications for learning. In J.C. Cassady (Ed.), *Anxiety in schools: The causes, consequences, and solutions for academic anxieties* (pp. 7-26). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

5. Nail biting, teeth grinding or excessive fidgeting;
6. Using drugs (includes tobacco and alcohol); or
7. Emotional turbulence in your personal life

Even if you don't identify with any or many of the above statements you may simply have a negative association with exams and still suffer from excessive stress.

So what is excessive stress? Basically, this is the biochemical response in your body that is triggered when you are in perceived or real danger. The response is controlled in two parts of the body. The first is in the brain - by the hypothalamus. The second part is the adrenal cortical system in the sympathetic nervous system.

The outcome of this reaction is increased blood flow, heightened alertness and adrenaline and noradrenaline released into the body. Your blood pressure and heart rate will also rise. Many other hormones are also released to increase your body's reaction speeds and muscle strength.

Understanding and acknowledging these responses and feelings is the first step to controlling your state of mind under stressful conditions. Knowing that the response is a normal reaction will also help you manage your state.

Firstly, the actual response "fight or flight" means that your body is reaching a point of decision that you must either remain in the situation and resolve through action (fight) or remove yourself from the situation (flight). Either decision will stimulate an action. If you are experiencing total overwhelm you move to the next phase of stress which is to take no action. Otherwise known as the 'freeze' response. This is where your body fails to process the situation in a meaningful way and basically shuts down. This can even occur in exams and is often referred to as a 'lock-up', 'brain-freeze' or 'going blank'. This is a very extreme case of exam nerves and will likely result in exam failure if not overcome.

The 'stress' that forms these responses is basically a codeword for 'fear' and fears are always a matter of perception. The following fears are amongst some of the more common thoughts that cause adverse reactions during study or exams:

1. Fear of failure - "What if I don't know the answers and fail?"
2. Fear of embarrassment - "What if I fail and my parents and friends reject me?"
3. Fear of the unknown - "What if there are unexpected questions?"
4. Fear of poor preparation - "What if I'm unprepared? Have I done enough?"
5. Fear of self (negative talk) - "I'm not good enough for this"
6. Fear of success - "What if I succeed and have to do another test?"

If you remember back to the chapter on exam study and about controlling your state of mind you will see one thing in common with the above list. They are all incredible poor choices in questions to ask yourself! These questions exist to create more fear. This may be useful to spur yourself into action but a better plan is to recognise the question as a fear inducing statement and replace it with a new question. The quality of your emotional state can often be traced back to the quality of questions you ask yourself.

Now I'm not saying to simply go into the exam with "positive thinking" chanting to yourself "I can do it, I can do it, I can do it." Although this may put you in a good mood it won't help you if you haven't actually prepared! You can only trick your mind into so much! So preparation is still important.

Here are some more useful questions to ask yourself prior to the exam and during the exam.

1. "Why am I here today?"
2. "What is my outcome of completing this exam?"
3. "How much preparation did I do prior to this exam?" (If you didn't do any don't ask this question!)
4. "What will be the reward for doing well in this exam today?"

You may notice that the above questions take you out of the present moment for a minute and help to put the exam in its proper context. The questions will help you see the exam as a small event in a much bigger scheme. So some of the best strategies which follow are all about ensuring that you have useful and empowering responses to the above questions.



TOP FIVE Stress Busting Strategies

1. **Know your enemy.** Most police exams are no secret as to what the content will be. Do your research and find out what type of questions you can expect on the day. In the case of physical testing you can find out the exact requirements of each test component. Whilst you will not know each question for written exams, you can certainly identify the types of questions and then move on to step 2 below.
2. **Prepare yourself.** Once you know what the tests will include, identify what you need to improve and take action to improve it. This goes beyond training for the tests into actual rehearsal. For example, set your study environment to replicate the exam environment. If you are going to be assessed in a quiet room, then practice studying in a quiet room. If you know the order in which the physical testing is conducted, then carry out a few 'training days' with a friend. Ideally, you will conduct these tests in order. The more familiar you are with the environment you're going into the more relaxed you will be on the day.
3. **Develop self-confidence.** There is an old African proverb that says: "*If there is no enemy within then the enemy outside can do us no harm.*" You are your greatest ally and greatest enemy all at the same time. Develop your self confidence and become your own biggest fan. Stop negative talk. Today.

In addition to your self talk, take a look at the people you surround yourself with. Are they supporting your self-confidence? Many of us receive negative comments from our social circle about what we can and cannot do. A study at MIT in America indicated that for every person who tells you that you *can't* do something, it will take another SIXTEEN people to tell you that you *can* do it in order to bring you back to balance.

4. **Eat well. Live Well.** Take the time to control your diet and increase your consumption of healthy foods. Take up a regular exercise program and ensure you are getting sufficient sleep.
5. **Visualisation.** Above all, and you've heard me say this again and again, *know your outcome*. This will help you in preparation and during the exam. Develop a strong association that completing these exams will actually *help* you in achieving your goal of becoming a police officer. See yourself having completed the exam, confident that you were the most well prepared and delivered your absolute best performance.

You can also improve your brain function with appropriate preparation on the day of the exams. This will be discussed further in the final chapter of this eBook "On the Day..." But for now, lets take a look at one of the more challenging aspects of police exams...

WRITING TESTS

CHAPTER FIVE

During the police entrance exams, you will likely need to demonstrate your writing ability. Indeed, writing tests are becoming a great method of separating police applicant performance because so many people simply don't do it anymore. We pad out text messages on touch screens, tap out emails on keyboards, deliver proposals via Skype, but few of us actually *write* anything anymore. So why is this even included in police testing?!

Primarily because you will be doing a lot of handwriting as a police officer and your hand written notes may actually become evidence to be submitted in court regarding your observations and actions during any particular incident.

Example scenarios for your police testing include writing out a short summary about yourself and why you will make a good police officer, to responding to a short video summarising what occurred. Whatever the case, it is important to remember that the writing test is about just that. Writing.

Yes, the content is a key component of that, but a common error made in this test is to underestimate the value of a well structured and well presented response within which to get the message across. The following tips will help you in your preparation for your specific written test as well as assist you in performance on the exam day.

SEVEN STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WRITING TEST

1. **Plan your response.** You will likely be given an indication of how long you have to complete the task and an expected length of response. For example, if you have twenty minutes to complete two hundred words, you may decide to plan your response like this:
 - a. 0 - 5 minutes (5 minutes): Plan response and make notes.
 - b. 5 - 15 minutes (10 minutes): Write response.
 - c. 15 - 20 minutes (5 minutes): Revise and check for errors.

This is only an example plan and you may need to adjust depending on the task and your individual factors such as your writing speed. If you're a slower writer, you will need to spend more time actually writing the response.

2. **Structure your response.** Once you know what you're going to write and how much time you have, make a quick plan (in your head or on scrap paper) as to how you will put it down in writing. This may include a short introduction, a main body and a conclusion. Whether you are summarising an incident or providing your personal background, ensure that your structure is in chronological order. Your response will come across as confusing and difficult to read if you are jumping back and forth between what occurred at the beginning and the end. Keep it simple. Cover the events as they happen. By coming up with a quick plan before you put pen to paper, you will avoid missing information and trying to 'fix things up' at the end.
3. **Present like a pro.** Show off a great presentation by keeping your handwriting neat and tidy. Keep sentences concise and use paragraph breaks if you have room. The overall appearance of your written response will pre-frame the marker with an immediate assessment of your ability. If your work looks shabby on first glance, the marker may make immediate judgement that your content is also going to be sub-standard. On the flip-side, if you present a piece of writing pleasing to the eye and easy to read, the marker will be more likely to look favourably on your efforts. This may sound a bit unfair that presentation is so important. Yet ask yourself the question, "how would I feel if I had to read through *hundreds* of written responses?"
4. **Demonstrate relevance and accuracy.** Ensure you are including all the relevant information and don't waste time with anything that is not relevant. Not only will irrelevant writing waste time, it will also make your response appear shallow and unprofessional. A good question to ask before writing each part of your response is, "Is what I'm about to write answering the question?"

The information that you do put in must also be accurate to the task given (or the information that you have been provided). In other words don't MSU (make shit up) on this test just to increase your word length! If you think you need more detail, you can elaborate on certain points but make sure you are still maintaining the principle of relevance.



5. **Spelling and grammar.** This is definitely a component that you can train and improve. By following step 7 (Rehearsal) and proof-reading the document you will quickly identify if this is an area on which you need to focus. Ideally, find a friend or family member who is good at writing and ask them to proof-read your work for you. Your spelling and grammar are under close scrutiny in this test. It will provide the recruitment officers an idea of your trainability to quickly produce pieces of police writing from statements to court documents.
6. **Check your work.** On the actual test day, make sure you leave some time to check back over your work. Focus on correcting any errors in spelling and grammar. Also make sure you have included all the key information asked for in the question.
7. **Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.** Rehearse. As discussed earlier, many of us do not spend much time writing. You may be surprised at how quickly your handwriting becomes “chicken scrawl” if you’re not practised in writing for long periods. Your handwriting will also be neater and you will make fewer errors in spelling and grammar if you take time to physically practice. Additionally, you will get an idea of how fast you write. For example, does it take you five minutes to write a hundred words or fifteen minutes? Again, with practice this speed will increase. The faster you write, the more time you have to structure, consider and revise your response.

Answering the Question:

As mentioned above you may be asked to write a short response to a written, audio or video summary. Here are some key tips to boost your performance and increase your score:

1. Find the “Five W’s”. These are the who, what, where, when, and why (and how) facts of the story.
2. Read/Watch/Listen to the sample twice if permitted.
3. Take notes or underline the text (if permitted) as you go. This will aid you selecting key information when you come up with your response plan.
4. Pay attention to subtle details and read each sentence carefully. Part of this test may be to assess your attention to detail.
5. Read the **question** twice and then read it twice more once you have reviewed the summary. Then read it **again** after you have written your response. This is key to keeping your response relevant.

Finally, remember that the writing test is not there to trick you. Don’t spend too long over analysing the question. The question is simply there to provide a means to look at your written communication skills. Like many aspects of police testing there is no deliberate attempt to *trap* you into making mistakes. Having said that, there are a few areas in writing tests and other aspects of police testing that can lead the unprepared into some generic and challenging...

TEST TRAPS

CHAPTER SIX



As already mentioned, the police recruitment process is not there to trick you. It is simply a means to identify the most suitable and most capable applicants to become the next front line of police officers serving and protecting our community. In fact most aspects of police testing is fairly open and straight forward.

There are, however, a few traps that can trip you up if you're not aware. These are not specific to police testing, but rather to the generic type of testing which the police service employs to select potential recruits.

Be on the lookout for the following challenges...

1. **Social Media.** Written applications will often ask you for your contact details including social media sites such as your Facebook address. Be aware that although your phone number, address and email are simply ways to contact you, your social media sites will actually be scrutinised. So consider that anything on your social media site can basically be reviewed as part of your police application.

One useful assessment of your social media page is to ask some questions like, “What would my grandmother think of this?” or “Would this be something that would end up on current affairs TV program?” or “Would I be happy to answer questions about this in my police interview?”

2. **Multiple Choice Tests.** Some multiple choice tests, particularly aptitude tests (otherwise known as cognitive tests), deliberately ask more questions than most applicants will be able to answer. It is useful to understand that you will answer different questions at different speeds and they do not necessarily get harder as the test progresses. For example, you may be asked 100 questions. Some of these questions will take you a matter of seconds to answer, where some others will take a few minutes. If you think a question is going to take you too long, then consider making a note of that question number and keep going with the rest of the questions. You can then go back to the more difficult questions at the end if you have time. Some questions towards the end are quite easy and it may be wasted marks if you don't answer them simply because you were stuck on one question in the first half of the test.

Be careful of ‘reversing’ or ‘countering’ words in multiple choice questions and answers. For example the question may ask “Which of the following responses is **not** indicated in the text?” So in this case you are actually looking for the *wrong* or *false* answer.

Finally, remember that in multiple choice tests, that just because one of the answers repeats part of the question, it is not necessarily the right answer.

3. **Writing Tests.** Again be careful of ‘reversing’ or ‘countering’ words here that may imply the opposite of what you initially read. This just comes back to reading the questions well.
4. **Physical Testing.** Although the pass marks for each physical test are listed on police recruitment pages, it is not always made clear that on testing day you will be allowed to achieve your “best” score. So if you are only training to achieve the “pass” mark you may be unpleasantly surprised to see other applicants achieving well ahead of you.
5. **Psychological Interviews.** This is the one area of police testing where there may indeed be some underlying intent that you may not be aware of. This is that the psychologist may be analysing your behaviour and demeanour just as much as monitoring what you are saying. For example, many of the questions about your past may be designed to put you offside in an attempt to see if you become flustered. This is basically an assessment to see how you handle stressful conversation or questions. Keep this in mind during your interviews and understand that maintaining an outward image of a cool, calm and collected person will go a long way to increasing your chances of selection.

So bearing all this in mind and having made your best preparations, it is worthwhile to sit down and visualise what you expect on the actual testing day. More over, what are you going to do on the the day to ensure you turn all your preparation into outstanding results. Read on to the last chapter to learn some great tips and techniques on what to do...

ON THE DAY...

CHAPTER SEVEN

Imagine this.

Your day of testing is finally here. You're sitting down in the exam room with dozens of other hopeful candidates. The test paper is face down on the table in front of you. You look around the room and a confident expression comes across your face with a quiet knowing that you are the best prepared applicant on the day. Not only have you taken the necessary steps to increase your skills but you are in a completely confident state of mind ready to tackle whatever lies on the other side of the exam paper.

The above scenario really comes down to preparation and the actions you take in the days and months leading up to each exam. However, there are a number of actions you can take on the day to assist you in optimising your test scores and transition from a well prepared applicant to a well performing applicant.


TOP EIGHT Testing Day Strategies

1. **Live well. Eat Well. Test Well.** As already discussed in the study chapter, your overall health is vital to a good performance. The actual day of testing is no exception. So whatever you have found works for you in terms of sleep patterns, exercise habits and good nutrition must all be followed on the night before and morning of the exams. Be careful of taking an additional hit of caffeine or sugar on the morning of the test. You don't want to experience a subsequent energy crash half way through the exams. However, today is not the day to experiment with routine. You want to find out what works well before the day and then follow that.

For example, I know that I perform best after the following routine:

- a. Sleep eight hours the night before the exams.
- b. Wake up and drink 500ml of water.
- c. Go for a 30 minute light jog (During this jog I practice mental rehearsals of whatever exam I have coming up whether it be mental or physical testing).
- d. Drink a "green drink" shake.
- e. Shower, shave, get ready to go.
- f. Eat breakfast of an orange followed by porridge.

So this is not necessarily best for you. If you're not a particularly healthy eater, then today may not be the best day to start a 'diet' as your body may go *crazy* with the adjustment! Whatever the case, you get the idea that I know exactly what I'm doing when I get up. By rehearsing this routine prior to the day I also know how early I need to get up. This is the next point...

2. **Plan your morning.** Ensure you leave enough time in the morning to follow your routine and complete any responsibilities you have at home with time to spare. It can be a useful mindset to approach the exams as an opportunity to progress towards your goal of becoming a police officer. Imagine if this were a concert or a sporting event that you had been waiting all year to attend. You would want to make sure you had plenty of time to be punctual!
3. **Plan your route.** Ideally, you will have already visited the testing centre prior to the day. At the very least plan out your route the night before and make allowance for anticipated traffic conditions. If you live in a city area prone to traffic problems, it may pay to flick on the radio to listen to any traffic updates. The same goes for public transport. Not only do you want to plan your route, but visit the public transport websites and check there are no suspensions or delays anticipated on the day of your testing.
4. **Dress for success.** You may be surprised on the testing day to see how many people are unaware of this technique. Even if you are going in to sit a written exam, you must dress as if you were completing your formal interview. In fact, it is not uncommon for the recruitment officers to take note of your personal appearance on testing day. You will be judged and assessed on everything you do on each day, including before, during and after each test is conducted. Generally speaking, a casual business dress is appropriate. Thongs and singlet are out.
 
5. **Keep hydrated.** Take a bottle of water. There may be facilities at the testing centre, however this is not an area you want to leave to chance. Having a drink bottle on your person will also be noted by recruitment officers. You will give the appearance of a healthy and well prepared person.
6. **Toilet Training.** Although you may be allowed to go to the toilet during an exam, this is not always the case. Plus if you do go during, you are wasting time to answer the questions. So when you arrive, find the toilets and try to time your trip as close to the start of the exam as possible - without being late! Remember you may be called in ten minutes before the exams start.
7. **Quiet please.** Turn off your mobile phone. Turn off your iPod. Turn off your pager. Turn off anything on your person that may make a noise. One trick to watch out for is that your mobile phone alarm may go off even if your phone is turned off! I have discovered this the hard way during my very first day at Police Academy! So ensure your alarms are turned off before your turn off your phone.

8. **Manage your state.** If you've prepared as per the advice in this eBook, you are likely wearing similar clothes as when you studied and practiced and you are used to working in the same environment as this academic or physical exam. Get into an empowering state of mind and go through those same steps explained in the chapter "Exam Nerves."

Finally, remember that knowledge without action is useless. I commend you and thank you for taking the time to follow along through this eBook. I now encourage you to take action on what you have learnt. Find what steps are useful to you, or at least worth trying, and put them into action. Put them into action today. Delaying even a day can become a week which can become a month. Before you know it you will be sitting your police exams. Make sure you can look back on today as the day you decided to take action and turn your dream of becoming a police officer in to reality...

