

# Written Communication Section Preparation

**Written Communication** – Police Officers need to have good communication skills. Officers also need to have the ability to write clear and concise reports to document investigations.

Punctuation is the tool that allows us to organize our thoughts and make it easier to review and share our ideas. The standard English punctuation is as follows: period, comma, apostrophe, quotation, question, exclamation, brackets, braces, parenthesis, dash, hyphen, ellipsis, colon, semicolon. Below is an explanation of some punctuation that is commonly misused.

## **Comma ,**

Commas are primarily used to aid in clarity and to join two independent clauses with a conjunction. They set off introductory phrases and set off series. They also are used to separate independent and dependent clauses. The Oxford comma is the inclusion of a comma before coordinating conjunction in a series.

### **Examples:**

I enjoyed the singers, and I loved the dancers.

At the beginning of the performance, two dancers appeared from behind the curtain.

Even though the auditorium was packed, the audience remained silent.

I had eggs, toast, and orange juice.

Commas can also be used to note an interjection in a sentence.

### **Example:**

The criminal said the judge was an idiot.

The criminal, said the judge, was an idiot.

The criminal is speaking in the first sentence. The judge is speaking in the second.

## **Apostrophe ‘**

Apostrophes are used to mark possession and to mark contractions. They are also used to denote a quotation mark in material that is already being quoted.

### **Examples:**

It was James' car that the drunk driver hit.

"James said, 'If you come any closer I'll call the police.'"

## **Quotation ” ” “**

Quotation marks are used to inform a reader either of something that was spoken or something that is being directly copied from another work. Quotes should also be placed around a word if it is used in a specific context or otherwise bears special attention. In informal applications, quotations can also be used to denote something that is ironic.

**Examples:**

Lydia said, "Is this my prom dress?"

Dr. Shruti claims, "The use of violence against women in India is on the rise."

**Question and Exclamation ? !**

Question and exclamation marks are used to note interrogative and exclamatory sentences. Neither of these punctuation marks are commonly used in academic writing. In general, a writer should not be shouting at the reader in formal writing. The lack of conversation makes any question rhetorical, and revising the question in a statement would be the better course.

**Hyphen –**

Hyphens are most commonly used to pair compound words. Throw-away, high-speed-chase, merry-go-round, user-friendly

**Dash –**

Dashes are generally not in common use but denote a tangent within a thought. There are two kinds of dashes, an "en" dash and an "em" dash. En dashes essentially are the same glyph as hyphens but fill a different purpose. Em dashes are longer, an easy way to remember is that an en dash is the length of an "n" and an Em dash is the length of an "m".

**Example:**

I think that my dog is a genius — but doesn't everybody think their pet is?

Dashes are able to substitute for commas and semicolons in the right situation. They can replace commas to note non-essential information or semicolon to note an example. Despite, and because of this versatility dashes should not be frequently employed in your writing. The multitude of applications make dashes easy to overuse taking away from, rather than adding to clarity in your writing.

Note: Dashes can either connect to the surrounding words or be separated by a space, it is an issue of style, be sure to ask your professors if they have a preference.

**Parenthesis (), Brackets [], Braces {}**

Parenthesis note non-essential information that could be skipped without altering the meaning of a sentence. Brackets are most commonly employed in academic writing within a quotation where the writer is omitting or explaining something. In either case, the writer places a bracket within the quote [explains or places an ellipsis and] closes the bracket to continue the quote.

Braces are used quite rarely and are employed to essentially make a list within a list.

**Examples:**

Cora (the woman who lives down the street from Jane) works as a paralegal.

Professor Brown claims, “She [the novel’s central character] is an example of a strong African-American woman.”

Before I go on vacation I need to pack my bags {clothes, toiletries and shoes}, unplug the TV, and close all of the windows.

### **Ellipsis ...**

Ellipsis marks the omission of a word or words. If the omission includes the end of a sentence the glyph has four dots (....) instead of three.

### **Colon :**

Colons make the statement: note what follows. Whatever information that follows the colon must, in some way, explain, prove, or describe what ever came before it. To properly employ a colon, ensure that the clause that follows the mark is able to stand on its own (unless it is a list). Because whatever comes before the colon must be a complete sentence, your writing after the colon is not required to be.

#### **Example:**

The Bridge keeper asked me three questions: what is your name, what is your quest, what is your favorite color.

### **Semicolon ;**

A semicolon can be used to join two related main clauses.

#### **Example:**

James Left a mess at his desk after he left work; Jeff had to clean it up.

Another way to employ a semicolon to join two related main clauses is to include a conjunctive adverb such as: however, moreover, nevertheless, furthermore, consequently, or thus. Conjunctive adverbs can also be used with a comma.

#### **Example:**

James left a mess at his desk after he left work; consequently, Jeff had to clean it up.

The simplest way to deal with two independent main clauses is to make two sentences. If the topic of the two sentences are not related, or if one (or both) of the sentences are already long, joining them could make the sentence too long and be a burden on the reader.

One of the most common applications of semicolons is as a substitute for commas in a list in which commas are required for the things listed.

#### **Example:**

It’s as easy as a,b,c; 1,2,3; doe, rae, mi.

Whether you're engaging in everyday speech or writing the perfect paper, you need to be familiar with the various parts of English grammar. Knowing how to correctly use nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, and punctuation as well as how to properly structure a sentence can make or break a good grade or a professional presentation.

## Parts of Speech in English Grammar

Every time you write or speak, you use nouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and other parts of the English language. Knowing how to use these parts of speech can help you speak more eloquently, write more clearly, and feel more confident when communicating with others.

- **Noun:** names a person, place, thing, idea (*Lulu, jail, cantaloupe, loyalty*, and so on)
- **Pronoun:** takes the place of a noun (*he, who, I, what*, and so on)
- **Verb:** expresses action or being (*scrambled, was, should win*, and so on)
- **Adjective:** describes a noun or pronoun (*messy, strange, alien*, and so on)
- **Adverb:** describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb (*willingly, woefully, very*, and so on)
- **Preposition:** relates a noun or a pronoun to another word in the sentence (*by, for, from*, and so on)
- **Conjunction:** ties two words or groups of words together (*and, after, although*, and so on)
- **Interjection:** expresses strong emotion (*yikes! wow! ouch!* and so on)

## English Grammar Basics: Parts of a Sentence

After you get a good grip on the different parts of speech, it's time to put them all together to form the proper sentence. The right words and punctuation in the right order can make all the difference in good communication. Keep in mind that you need a minimum number of parts to make a complete sentence: subject/predicate/endmark.

- **Verb (also called the predicate):** expresses the action or state of being
- **Subject:** the person or thing being talked about
- **Complement:** a word or group of words that completes the meaning of the subject-verb pair
- **Types of complements:** direct and indirect objects, subject complement, objective complement

## Pronoun Tips for Proper English Grammar

The Beatles sang of "I, Me, Mine," but understanding pronouns takes a little practice. Pronouns can be objective or subjective, and can show possession. You, me, him, her, them, us . . . everyone can speak and write more clearly by understanding pronouns.

- **Pronouns that may be used only as subjects or subject complements:** I, he, she, we, they, who, whoever.
- **Pronouns that may be used only as objects or objective complements:** me, him, her, us, them, whom, whomever.

- **Common pronouns that may be used as either subjects or objects:** you, it, everyone, anyone, no one, someone, mine, ours, yours, theirs, either, neither, each, everybody, anybody, nobody, somebody, everything, anything, nothing, something, any, none, some, which, what, that.
- **Pronouns that show possession:** my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs, whose.

## English Grammar Tips for Subject-Verb Agreement

Someone or something must be present in a sentence, and that someone or something doing the action or being talked about is the *subject*. Verbs are the words that express the action the subject is doing or the state of being the subject is in. Subjects and verbs must agree if you're going to get your point across as clearly as possible. Otherwise, you end up with an incomplete sentence or a sentence that makes no sense.

- Match singular subjects with singular verbs, plural subjects with plural verbs (I run, she runs, they run).
- Amounts of time and money are usually singular (ten dollars *is*).
- *Either/or* and *neither/nor*: Match the verb to the closest subject (neither the boys nor the girl *is*).
- *Either* and *neither*, without their partners *or* and *nor*, always take a singular verb (*either* of the apples *is*).
- All subjects preceded by *each* and *every* take a singular verb (each CD *is* mine; every one of the cheeses *is* different).
- *Both*, *few*, *several*, and *many* are always plural (both/many *are* qualified; few *want* the job; several *were* hired).

## Verb Tense Tips in English Grammar

Besides showing the action or state of being in the sentence, the verb also indicates the time the action or "being" took place. By learning about the different kinds of simple, perfect, past, and present tenses, your speaking and writing will be clear and concise.

- **Simple present tense:** tells what is happening now
- **Simple past tense:** tells what happened before now
- **Simple future:** talks about what has not happened yet
- **Present perfect tense:** expresses an action or state of being in the present that has some connection with the past
- **Past perfect tense:** places an event before another event in the past
- **Future perfect tense:** talks about something that has not happened yet in relation to another event in the future

# Written Communication Sample Questions

## 1. Which of the following uses valid punctuation

- A. Paul Simon sang I am a rock, I am an island.
- B. Paul Simon sang, I am a rock; I am an island.
- C. Paul Simon sang, "I am a rock; I am an island."
- D. Paul Simon sang, "I am a rock, I am an island."

**Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow. The order of the paragraphs in the following text has been purposely modified.**

[1] In the women's relay in the 1928 Olympics, Rosenfeld began and Myrtle Cook ran the final part as the Canadian team dramatically demonstrated excellence. [2] They won the gold medal in the world record time of 48.4 seconds.

[3] Canadas' finest Olympic moments occurred in the 1920s. [4] The first competition was in the Winter Olympics which took place in 1924, at this competition, one of the athletes, Cecile Smith, finished sixth in figure skating. [5] Moreover, Canadian female athletes were to make a remarkable showing in the 1928 Summer Games in Amsterdam. [6] In many ways those Games were a sporting watershed for Canada, a high-water mark of achievement not \_\_\_\_\_ until the 1984 Summer Games.

[7] The Canadian women's 4 x 100-metre relay team in the 1928 Games was made up of a quartet of some of the finest athletes ever to represent their country. [8] Fanny Rosenfeld was \_\_\_\_\_ competitor who later coached women's hockey and baseball teams, and was named Canada's female athlete of the half-century. [9] She was an accomplished journalist who did much to promote women's sports in Canada's major daily newspapers. [10] Rosenfeld narrowly missed gold in the 100-metres, edging out her relay teammate Ethel Smith. [11] Another Canadian, Myrtle Cook, was disqualified in that race, but along with Florence Bell made up the other members of the relay team.

**2. Which of the following alternatives is the right order of the three paragraphs of the text?**

- A. B (second paragraph), C (third paragraph), A (First Paragraph)
- B. B (second paragraph) , A (First Paragraph), C (third paragraph)
- C. A (First Paragraph), C (third paragraph), B (second paragraph)
- D. C (third paragraph), A (First Paragraph), B (second paragraph)

**3. Which of the following rephrases of Sentence 4 is best in terms of style and conciseness?**

- A. When Canadian female athletes first participated in competition in 1924, one of the athletes by the name of Cecile Smith could get the sixth position in figure skating.
- B. During their first appearance in international tournaments, namely in the Winter Olympics, one of the Canadian athletes finished sixth in figure skating.
- C. Canadian women first competed in the 1924 Winter Olympics in which Cecile Smith finished sixth in figure skating.
- D. The first appearance of Canadian female athletes was in the Winter Olympics, in the competition where Cecile Smith finished sixth in figure skating.

**4. Which of the following words, if inserted in the blank in Sentence 6, would best fit the style of the sentence and the whole text?**

- A. surpassed
- B. beaten
- C. transcended
- D. surmounted

**5. Which of the following changes is needed in the text?**

- A. Sentence 1: place dramatically after demonstrated.
- B. Sentence 3: change Canadas' to Canada's.
- C. Sentence 5: change were to make to made.
- D. Sentence 9: change women's to woman's.