

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Transitional Parole Officer

Candidate Preparation Guide

Prepared By:



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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NOTE: In this Guide, an effort has been made to provide information about the intended format, content, logistics, and evaluation of the Transitional Parole Officer examination. However, it is possible that minor alterations may be made in the testing procedures between the time this Guide is distributed and the administration of the test. We will work with the Human Resources Division to provide you with any updates that may be required.

INTRODUCTION

This Candidate Preparation Guide is designed to help you prepare for the Transitional Parole Officer examination. The Transitional Parole Officer examination consists of the following three primary test components: the Technical Knowledge (TK) Test, the Basic Skills Test (BST) section, and the General Personality Survey (GPS).

The **Technical Knowledge (TK)** Test is designed to measure job-relevant knowledge in specific areas determined to be important to the effective performance of Transitional Parole Officers.

The **Basic Skills Test (BST)** section is designed to assess a series of specific skills, including Language Skills, Reading Comprehension, Computation, Decision Making, Forms Checking, Filing Names, and Filing Numbers. These skills have been determined to be important to the effective performance of Transitional Parole Officers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The **General Personality Survey (GPS)** is designed to measure work-related personality characteristics, behavioral tendencies, and attitudes determined to be important to the effective performance of Transitional Parole Officers.

All Transitional Parole Officer test components will be scored and your scores from all test components will be combined to determine your continued eligibility in the selection process.

Please note that the order in which the test components are administered is the same as the order in which they are listed above (i.e., TK, BST, and GPS). This guide provides an overview of the testing procedures, the types of questions you will encounter on each test component, and the systematic methods of study and preparation that you should use in preparing for each test component.

You should review this guide as many times as necessary to become comfortable with the information and test-taking strategies presented.

This Candidate Preparation Guide is organized into the following sections:

Section 1: General Information: This section provides you with general information regarding the schedule and logistics for the Transitional Parole Officer examination.

Section 2: Technical Knowledge Test Overview: This section describes how to access the reading list from which questions will be drawn for the TK Test and provides test preparation / test-taking strategies.

Section 3: Basic Skills Test Overview: This section describes the skill components measured in the BST section of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.

Section 4: General Personality Survey Overview: This section describes the characteristics measured in the GPS section of the exam and provides example questions and test-taking strategies.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Date, Time, and Location:

The computerized online written exam which contains all examination components listed above will be administered to Transitional Parole Officer candidates on February 15, 2025. Testing will take place at multiple testing locations and candidates will be assigned to either a morning or an afternoon testing session. Two weeks prior to the exam date, you will receive a Notice to Appear that indicates the date and site where you will test and the arrival and testing times for your session. Please make note of your testing time to ensure you show up on time. Late arriving candidates may be disqualified from testing.

II. Exam Timing:

The overall time allotted to complete the Transitional Parole Officer testing will be 150 minutes (2 hours, 30 minutes). Some portions of the exam will be timed and some will not. The entire list of test components is below, with timed and untimed portions detailed. Untimed portions include (a) the instructions for each individual BST component and (b) the entire GPS component. Where a portion is untimed, we recommend an approximate time limit you should try to stick to in order to ensure you can complete the entire testing process in the allotted time. In general, we recommend spending no more than 3 minutes on any untimed instructions components.

Test Component	Number of Test Questions	Timed or Untimed Component	Time Limit or Recommended Time
Overall Testing Instructions	--	Timed	10 minute time limit
Technical Knowledge (TK) Test	20	Timed	40 minute time limit (timer begins when instructions for this test component appear on screen)
Basic Skills Test (BST) Components:			
BST Language Skills – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Language Skills – questions	25	Timed	5 minute time limit
BST Reading Comprehension – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Reading Comprehension – questions	23	Timed	10 minute time limit
BST Computation – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Computation – questions	40	Timed	5 minute time limit
BST Decision-Making – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Decision-Making – questions	20	Timed	5 minute time limit
BST Forms Checking – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Forms Checking – questions	42	Timed	5 minute time limit
BST Filing Names – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Filing Names – questions	50	Timed	1.5 minute time limit
BST Filing Numbers – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Filing Numbers – questions	75	Timed	2 minute time limit
General Personality Survey (GPS)	155	Untimed	40 minutes or less recommended

total = 450

150 minutes = total session time

III. General Guidelines:

When participating in the Transitional Parole Officer examination, follow these general guidelines:

1. **Read all of the instructions carefully and pay careful attention to any additional instructions provided by administrators.** Instructions will be provided for each test component. It is very important that you read these instructions carefully before starting each test component to ensure that you understand the procedures that need to be followed.
2. **Read each question carefully.** Mistakes in responding to questions often occur because a candidate overlooked a key word or phrase. Be sure to identify the key words and phrases in the question, check the details of the possible answers with the details you identified, one-by-one. If every detail doesn't match, consider that answer suspect and try another, always keeping in mind you are looking for the single best possible answer.
3. **Test administrators will be available to help you.** If you have any questions about the testing procedures, ask for assistance or clarification. However, keep in mind that administrators will not explain the meaning of any question, define words, or give, in any manner, guidance on answering questions.
4. **Take a mental break if and when needed.** If you are having difficulty concentrating at any point during the exam, take a brief mental break. Take a minute to clear your mind and relax. Of course, you must keep in mind the time limit for the exam, but a brief mental break may be worth the time it takes.
5. **Review what you need to bring with you to the test site prior to your exam date.** Before you appear for testing you should follow the direction on your Notice to Appear and bring only a photo ID to the test site. Failure to bring the required documentation or information may result in you being ineligible to take the exam.
6. **Do NOT bring any electronic communication devices (i.e., cell phones, laptops, smartwatches, tablets) into the test site.** Communication devices should be left at home or in your car. Candidates found with any kind of communication device on them during testing will be disqualified from the testing process.

IV. Technical Knowledge (TK) Test Guidelines:

The TK Test questions are designed to measure job-related knowledge in particular topic areas drawn from the published reading list. These are all multiple-choice questions with a single correct answer. The guidelines below are applicable to this test component in particular.

1. **Be sure to answer ALL questions in the allotted time.** When completing the TK Test, the result is the same whether you respond incorrectly to a question or do not respond at all (e.g., you receive no credit for the question). When you respond you have the opportunity, even if by chance, to answer the question correctly. Therefore, you should respond to all TK Test questions even if you are not sure of the correct answer.
2. **Pay attention to the timer.** This test component will have its own separate timer. You will have 40 minutes to respond to 20 multiple-choice questions. A countdown timer will be visible on screen so you can keep track of the time you have remaining during this portion of the exam.
3. **Use your time wisely.** You should have plenty of time to answer all of the questions in this section but be sure to keep track of the timer. Read carefully and pay attention to details when reading and responding to the questions but be sure to keep up a pace that will allow you to answer all questions in the allotted time. If you complete this test component before the time has

expired, it is a good idea to review your responses to the questions and particularly to make sure that you have answered every question. If you have finished all questions and are satisfied with your answers before the time expires, you may move on to the next section. You do NOT have to wait until the entire 40 minutes has run out. Keep in mind, however, that once you exit the TK Test component of the exam, you will NOT be permitted to return to this component.

4. **Anticipate where possible.** Try to answer the question in your mind before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and choose the closest alternative.
5. **Use the process of elimination.** If you don't know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices that are clearly wrong. This will save you time by reducing the number of answers you have to re-read and re-evaluate before making your final choice.

V. Basic Skills Test Section (BST) Guidelines:

This section contains seven (7) test components or “sub-tests” – Language Skills, Reading Comprehension, Computation, Decision Making, Forms Checking, Filing Names, and Filing Numbers. These are all multiple-choice questions with a single correct answer. The guidelines below are applicable to these seven test components in particular.

1. **Gauge your confidence before submitting an answer.** On the BST components, be aware that your score will be based on both speed (i.e., how many questions you answer) and accuracy (i.e., how many questions you answer *correctly*). In general, it is best to answer as many questions as you possibly can, as long as you are reasonably confident in your answers. This is because **there is a small penalty for incorrect answers; however, a single correct answer will gain you more points than a single incorrect answer will lose**. A single correct answer will make up for 2 to 5 incorrect answers. This is why, even though there is a small penalty for incorrect answers, it is still in your best interest to answer as many questions as possible as long as you are doing more than just blindly guessing. If, for example, you can eliminate some answer choices that are clearly wrong, or if you feel that you are fairly to reasonably confident in the right answer, it is to your benefit to go ahead and answer the question. If, on the other hand, you truly have no idea what the right answer is, and you feel that your answer would be nothing more than a completely random guess, then it may be to your benefit to leave the question unanswered.
2. **Pay attention to the timer.** Each BST component will be timed separately. On each of these components, after reading the instructions, you will have a specified amount of time to respond to the exam questions in that test component. Section 3 of this guide specifies the time limit for each BST component, as does the table on page 6. Within each test component, a countdown timer will be visible on screen so you can keep track of time during the exam administration.
3. **Use your time wisely.** The BST components are intentionally “speeded” components. They are designed to gauge how quickly *and* accurately you can answer the questions. You should therefore work quickly, but also pay attention to accuracy. Do take the time to read carefully, but do NOT spend too much time agonizing over any one question. If you truly have no idea of an answer, skip the question and move on. You can always come back to it if you have time leftover once you have answered the rest of the questions on that test component. If you complete a test component before the time for that component has expired, you may review your responses to the questions in that component or go back to answer any unanswered questions if you choose, before moving on to the next component. However, once the timer has expired on a test component, you will automatically be moved forward to the next component and will not be able to return to any prior questions. Do NOT panic if time runs out before you have answered all of the questions in a test component. In fact, BST component is designed such that most people will not get through all of the questions. Simply work as quickly and accurately as you can.

4. **Anticipate where possible.** Try to answer the question in your mind before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and choose the closest alternative.
5. **Use the process of elimination.** If you don't know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices that are clearly wrong. This will save you time by reducing the number of answers you have to re-read and re-evaluate before making your final choice.

VI. General Personality Survey (GPS) Guidelines:

The fifth test component – the GPS – measures work-related attitudes, behavioral tendencies, and personal characteristics. These questions will ask the extent to which you agree that a particular statement describes you at work. The guidelines below are applicable to this test component in particular.

1. **Be sure to answer ALL questions in the allotted time.** This test component is UNTIMED; however, we recommend that you complete the questions within 40 minutes or less. This component is NOT speeded. You should have plenty of time to answer all questions on this component, as most people finish the questions in 20 minutes or less. Even if no single point on the rating scale describes you or the way you feel perfectly, be sure to provide a response to every statement. Candidates who do not respond to all statements on the GPS may be disqualified from the selection process.
2. **Use extra time wisely.** If you complete this test component before your overall testing session time has expired, it is a good idea to review your responses to the questions and particularly to make sure that you have answered every question. Once the timer has expired, you will automatically be moved forward and will not be able to return to any prior questions. If you have finished all questions and are satisfied with your answers before the time expires, you may move on to the end of the exam. You do NOT have to wait until the entire testing session time has run out.

SECTION 2: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE TEST OVERVIEW

The TK Test is designed to assess job-related knowledge in particular topic areas drawn from the published reading list. The reading list for the 2025 Transitional Parole Officer exam can be found by visiting <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/2025-transitional-parole-officer-examination>.

All TK Test questions will be presented as multiple-choice questions supported directly by one or more reference sources found on the reading list. Each multiple-choice question will be followed by four possible response options, and candidates must choose the single correct answer from among the four choice. Test preparation and test-taking strategies are listed below.

I. TK TEST PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Multiple-choice tests, such as the Technical Knowledge (TK) Test, are designed to test your knowledge of a particular subject area. You can improve your performance on the TK Test primarily by having a command over all of the relevant material that will be covered. This section of the guide provides some strategies to assist you in preparing for the exam.

1. Focus Your Attention

When studying any reference source material from the reading list, you must focus your attention on the material you are studying if you expect to remember it. There are three things you can do that will help you focus your attention on the material you read.

First, since you tend to pay closer attention to things that interest you than to things that do not, you can try to make the material more meaningful or interesting. One way to do this is to apply it to you. Try to think of examples of the material that can be tied to your work or to the work you hope to be doing one day.

The next thing you can do is to eliminate distractions from your environment. These distractions compete for your attention and affect your recall of the material that you study. It is difficult to pay attention to several things at the same time. Instead, people usually switch back and forth, paying attention first to one thing and then the other. Unfortunately, you will not remember any material that did not receive attention. This means that listening to the radio while you are studying, or studying in a noisy area, will leave gaps in your memory of the material you are trying to learn.

Third, take notes! Studies have consistently shown that you are significantly more likely to remember something if you write it down versus if you merely read it. In fact, some studies have shown that writing something down one time is roughly equivalent to reading it seven times – in other words, you are seven times more likely to remember it if you write it down.

Finally, you should avoid trying to learn or memorize material when you are tired. Fatigue reduces the amount of material that you can remember. This means that it might be better to get a good night's sleep and study in the morning rather than staying up a few hours extra and sleeping late. Surely, you must have noticed how your attention wanders if you go without sleep for long periods of time.

2. A Method for Studying: SQ3R

SQ3R stands for **survey, question, read, recite, and review**. These five elements make up a set of study habits that will help you perform well on the test.

SURVEY

"Survey" means to find the limits or borders of an area. Survey the material you have to study to get a rough idea of the content and organization of the material before beginning in-depth study efforts.

To survey a body of information, scan it from start to finish. By skimming over the pages, you will get an idea of what is to come. In most documents, this type of survey is made much easier through the use of headings. Bold, large, or major headings introduce big or important elements; smaller headings introduce subareas of these important elements. Another helpful overview of the material can be found in summaries such as chapter summaries, overviews, or statements of objectives. By looking over such summaries, you can get a quick view of the important parts or pieces of the material covered.

Surveying the study material gives you an idea of how long it will take to cover the material. This will help you to break the assignment down into reasonable time blocks. Material should be read in chunks of a reasonable size. You should carve out a specific section that you will try to understand before moving on. A chunk might be all of the material under a major heading. If the material under the heading runs for many pages, you might want to reduce the material to be understood to each of the minor headings, taking one at a time.

QUESTION

Most people need a reason to do things. In studying text material, a question becomes a reason. If you have some questions to begin with, the material that you are reading will take on more life and be more meaningful.

Before beginning each study session, look over the material you intend to cover. Develop some questions that you expect to be answered in the material. There are several ways to develop these questions. One way is to begin with the list of headings from the chapter or document outline. Write a question for each major and minor heading. Developing questions can provide a reason for reading the material and can help the information become more meaningful to you.

READ

For most people, reading means the same thing as studying. When they say that they have studied material, they often mean that they have read it through several times. Reading is important, but it will be done more effectively when the *survey* and *question* steps have been completed.

The most effective way to pace yourself is to decide on the number of chunks that will be read and understood in a given study session. You can use the questions you developed through the previous step as your definition of understanding. Once you can answer these questions, you can move on to the next section. A good time to take breaks is between these sections, not in the middle of them. This might be a way of rewarding yourself for successfully completing the reading of each section.

It is important to ensure that you understand the material you are reading. One way to do this is to look up the definitions of all new and unfamiliar terms. You should make a list of the words and phrases that you do not understand. If these terms are technical terms that you have not encountered before, the chances are that the answer is somewhere in the chapter or document that you are reading. Have a notebook available so that you can mark down each of these terms, leaving a space for their definition. The quicker you get to know the meaning of all the terms, the more effective your studying will be. If the term or word is not technical, but simply a large or uncommon word that you are not sure of, look it up in a dictionary. If you feel it would be helpful,

record the definitions of these non-technical terms in your notebook, as well. You might want to use it to keep track of all important terms, even those you understand.

Another good way to make your reading time as useful as possible is to mark or underline the text while you are reading. This will make you a more active participant in the studying process. In addition, it will help you to focus on the major ideas and keep you from getting bogged down in details. Your underlining or highlighting can also make it easier for you to find relevant material later for review or to answer questions on the test.

In marking or underlining the text, you should actually go through the text and underline key words and concepts that are important in understanding the material in the chunk you are reading. You can also make notes to yourself right on the text page or in a separate notebook. The value of note-taking to aid memory was highlighted in the previous section.

If you choose to use the underlining and marking method, here are a few guidelines:

- 1) Read the whole section before doing any underlining or marking.
- 2) Do not mark or underline too much. The value of the technique lies in highlighting only the most important material.
- 3) Use ink if possible so that the underlining and notes do not disappear or become unclear in the course of studying.
- 4) Use symbols as much as possible. For example, use "?" as a symbol for questions you have; use "*" to stand for a particularly important idea.

RECITE

If you have the material practically memorized, and at the "tips of your fingers," you will be able to complete questions more quickly, and have more time to handle difficult questions and check your work. Do you remember a time when you went to the store to buy several items? You did not have time to write out a list, so you just repeated the items out loud several times on the way to the store. After several repetitions, you had memorized the list. If you had paid attention to what was happening, you would have realized that the act of reciting the list made the difference between remembering the list and forgetting it. This is just as true of study material as it is of shopping lists.

It is very helpful to recite with another individual. He or she can ask you questions about portions of the material, which will make you recite the relevant material in a formal way. It is not even necessary to choose someone who is familiar with the material. The person only has to be able to recognize that what you have said is what is written in the reference material or in your notes.

In order to be most effective, recitation should take place quite soon after you have first learned or read the material. This is important because the greatest amount of information is lost or forgotten within a short period of time after it is first learned.

Do not try to cover too much information at once. Depending on the number of pages covered, this might be all of the information in one major section or chapter.

REVIEW

Reviewing the material to be covered will help you to understand and organize the material better. Review any notes you have taken, questions you have asked or answered, and passages you have underlined or highlighted in the text.

Review is done just before beginning a new study session. In this form of review, you are actually preparing yourself for new learning by strengthening old learning. This helps to ensure that any old learning that is needed as a basis for new learning is correct and available.

Another form of review is done before the test itself. This review can be done quite effectively in a group with other test takers. This cuts down on some of the drudgery of pre-test studying and also increases the meaning of much of the information. That is, while you are taking the test, you can more easily remember the information if you think back to who said what and how the review conversation went.

In summary, the SQ3R method of study is based on sound learning principles and gives you a simple formula to follow:

SURVEY	Skim the reading material and create manageable chunks to study.
QUESTION	Develop a purpose for reading by asking questions that you expect to have answered in the reading material.
READ	Read and re-read the material until you understand it thoroughly.
RECITE	Write down or talk about what you just learned to improve retention and integrate new information into your knowledge base.
REVIEW	Look over highlighted text and notes and integrate new information with old information.

3. ***Practice, practice, practice.***

You are encouraged to create, have others create, or find (perhaps online) practice tests or quizzes to not only test your knowledge of the material but to help you get used to the multiple-choice test-taking experience as well. As you do so, you are encouraged to identify the kinds of errors you tend to make or patterns among your incorrect answers so you can focus any further studying.

II. **TK TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES**

This section of the guide provides some strategies that may assist you on test day when you are actually taking the exam.

1. **Make sure you understand the test format and requirements.**

- Read and/or listen to all of the directions carefully.
- Make sure you know how to correctly mark your answer on each test component.
- Make sure you know how much time you have to complete each test component, as well as the overall testing process. Pay attention to any on-screen timers to make sure you know how much time is remaining in the test period.

2. **Read carefully and avoid rushing too much.**

- When there is an overall time limit to the test, it is tempting to rush through the reading of the questions and response options, and to answer too quickly. Note, you should have sufficient time to read carefully through all the TK questions and response options. Do not agonize for several minutes over one question but do take the time needed to carefully read and consider each response option.

- Be sure to read every alternative and decide what you think about each (e.g., bad, good, or possible) before choosing one. You may think the first choice is best, but then discover that the third choice is actually even better. Don't risk getting a question incorrect simply because you didn't read all of the answer choices.
- Read carefully, re-reading if there is time and paying close attention to key words or phrases that you must not overlook. Make note of key words or phrases that may impact your answer. Be sure not to overlook critical words such as "not" or "except" or qualifying words such as "always," "never," "some," "most," etc. Remember that "and" means that one element of the alternative must be present or true in addition to another element for the alternative to be correct. "Or" means that only one of the elements of the alternative must be present or true for it to be a correct alternative.
- Double-check to make sure you have marked the answer you intended to choose. When there are a limited number of questions on an exam, careless marking errors are costly. Check yourself as you go, but then also before you exit an exam portion, go back over every question and double-check your answers if you have time.

3. Proceed through the questions strategically.

- Try to answer the question before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and pick the closest alternative. A thorough knowledge of the tested material will allow you to answer the questions without looking at the answer choices.
- Consider the rationale behind your answer. If someone were to ask you why you chose a particular answer, would you be able to provide support for it? If not, you may wish to re-think your answer.
- Use the process of elimination. If you do not know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices which are clearly wrong. This will save you time by reducing the number of choices you have to re-read and re-evaluate before selecting your final choice.
- Answer easier questions first. This will save your time and focus for tackling more difficult questions during your remaining time on this test section.
- If you have difficulty understanding a specific term, re-read the sentence to determine its meaning without worrying about the meaning of a particular word. Try to understand the general message of the sentence or paragraph. The meaning of the unfamiliar word should become clearer once you understand the general context within which it has been placed.
- Tackle complex questions methodically. Divide and conquer! Break up the material into smaller segments in your mind, and then concentrate on one segment at a time. One approach is to first read the possible answers and then re-read the question. This tells you what to concentrate on while reading the question. Concentrate on the parts of the question directly related to the possible answers, even if you do not understand the entire question. You may not need to understand the entire question to find the correct answer. Also, focus on the topic sentences, which are usually the first and last sentences of a question. Read the difficult questions twice. The first time, read for the general meaning and do not get bogged down by individual words or phrases that you do not understand. The second time, read for more precise understanding. The first reading will provide the context so that the second reading is more meaningful.

- Be aware that an incorrect alternative may look attractive by containing an exact phrase from the relevant material. Or an incorrect alternative may contain a phrase or sentence that is used out of context. For example, an idea that is expressed but then rejected in the relevant material, may be presented as an idea that was supported. The trick here is to, once again, read very carefully.
- If all else fails, guess! You will not lose any more credit for an incorrect response than you will for no response, so even if you must guess, respond to every question. If the test period is about to end and you believe there will be a substantial number of questions (e.g., more than 5 or 10) that you will not be able to complete, reserve some time (e.g., a minute) toward the very end of the test period to respond to these questions, even if you must guess. While your guesses may not be correct, the alternative is to leave these questions blank and be assured of getting them wrong.

SECTION 3: BASIC SKILLS TEST OVERVIEW

The Basic Skills Test (BST) section is designed to assess a series of specific skills determined to be important to the effective performance of Transitional Parole Officers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The BST section contains seven (7) components, or sub-tests. Each of the seven components measures one of the following specific skills: Language Skills, Reading Comprehension, Computation, Decision-Making, Forms Checking, Filing Names, or Filing Numbers.

Each BST question will be followed by two, three, four, or five response alternatives. For each question, you should identify the single best answer and record the response chosen.

On each BST component, the instructions for that component are untimed. Be sure to read through the instructions thoroughly for each component, but do not dwell on the instructions as you do not want to run out of time to complete the later testing components. Try to limit your time to only 3 minutes to read each set of instructions. After reading the instructions on a BST component and moving to the questions, the timer for that component will begin. Each BST component will have its own time limit, which will be specified on the exam and will be shown via a countdown timer on screen. The time limits for each BST component are specified later in this section as well as in the table on page 6 of this guide.

I. **Skills Measured:**

The BST section of the exam measures the following seven (7) skill components:

1. **Language Skills:** The ability to recognize and apply correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and word usage.
2. **Reading Comprehension:** The ability to read a passage and answer literal and inferential questions about it.
3. **Computation:** The ability to solve basic arithmetic problems (add, subtract, multiply, divide) using whole numbers, decimals, percents, and simple fractions.
4. **Decision Making:** The ability to read a set of rules or procedures, follow them, and apply them to new situations.
5. **Forms Checking:** The ability to verify the accuracy of completed forms by comparing them to written information.
6. **Filing Names:** The ability to insert names in a list in alphabetical order.
7. **Filing Numbers:** The ability to insert numbers in a list in numerical order.

II. **BST Component Descriptions and Sample Questions:**

The sections below present more information regarding how each of the above characteristics will be measured via the BST components, along with general test preparation strategies and sample questions relating to each skill area. The correct answers for each sample item are listed and explained on pages 29-34. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.

1. **Language Skills:**

The Language Skills component of the exam contains 25 questions that require you to read a sentence and recognize correct or incorrect spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, or word usage in that sentence. For each question, a sentence will be presented, and part of that sentence will be underlined. The underlined portion of the sentence may or may not contain an error in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, or word usage. Watch for any or all of these potential errors, as it will NOT be stated what type of error you are looking for on each question. If the underlined part of the sentence does contain an error, you are to select the response option that provides the correct response to replace the underlined portion. If the underlined part of the sentence does NOT contain an error, you are to select the option that reads "NO CHANGE."

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 25 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Language Skills Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 29 of this booklet.

In each example questions below, part of the sentence is underlined. If the underlined part of the sentence contains an error in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, or word usage, select the response option that would be the correct replacement for the underlined portion. If the underlined part of the sentence does NOT contain an error, select "No change."

- 1) The staff meeting will be held on Wensday.
 - A. Wendsday
 - B. Wednesday
 - C. Wendseday
 - D. No change
- 2) The principal the company owes on the loan is \$3,100.00.
 - A. Principal the company owes
 - B. principle the company owed
 - C. principle the company owes
 - D. No change
- 3) Featuring a range of safety enhancements, we gave our top-rating to this model.
 - A. this model received our top-rating
 - B. we gave our top rating to this model
 - C. this model received our top rating
 - D. No change
- 4) Klein Brothers, inc. advertised for an experienced receptionist.
 - A. Klein Brothers, Inc.
 - B. Klein brothers, Inc.
 - C. Klein brothers, inc.
 - D. No change

Language Skills Test Preparation

The best preparation for performing successfully on many of the BST components, including the Language Skills component, is practice. Practice for this component may involve reading, reviewing, and editing written documents, whether published documents or documents created by colleagues, friends, or family. Online quizzes are easily available to test your ability to recognize proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and word usage.

Further, study materials can easily be found online as well. Research and study commonly misspelled words and their correct spellings, along with commonly misused or mixed-up words (e.g., their, there, they're) and their proper usage. Study the rules of punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, and grammar, including commonly violated grammar rules.

2. **Reading Comprehension:**

The Reading Comprehension component of the exam contains 23 questions and measures the ability to read a passage of information and answer questions about it. Some questions will ask about information that can be found directly in the passage. Some questions will ask you to make an inference about what has been stated in the passage. Still other questions will ask about the purpose of or meaning behind the passage as a whole.

Each passage of information will have numerous questions associated with it. Each question appears on a separate page of the exam, but the passage always appears at the top of the page. You are not required to memorize any of the information in the passage. You can always refer back to the passage to help you answer the questions. All questions will be multiple-choice and will have one correct answer.

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 10 minutes to complete as many of the 23 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Reading Comprehension Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 30 of this booklet.

An example passage of information is presented below, followed by 3 example questions associated with that passage. For each question, select the one best response. You may refer back to the information in the passage to help you answer the questions.

Example Passage:

If an attention line is used in a letter, it must appear on the envelope. Attention lines are typed in capital and lowercase letters for regular mailings using commercial envelopes. They are typed entirely in capitals for mass mailings that will be presorted for automatic processing.

Example Questions:

- 5) When addressing a large number of letters that are to be sorted before mailing, the attention line should be typed in:
 - A. lowercase letters.
 - B. capital letters.
 - C. capital and lowercase letters.
 - D. abbreviated form.

- 6) Which one of the following is used for regular mailings?
 - A. lowercase letters only.
 - B. capital letters only.
 - C. commercial envelopes.
 - D. automatic processing.

7) The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- A. ensure an attention line is always used when mailing a letter.
- B. provide guidelines for which types of envelopes should be used.
- C. ensure the attention line is typed in all capital letters.
- D. provide guidelines for proper processing and mailing of letters.

Reading Comprehension Test Preparation

As with other components, the best preparation for the Reading Comprehension component is practice. Reading any and all types of information you can get your hands on will help you with this test component. Reading different types of materials – novels, textbooks, technical information, news articles, short stories, etc. – will help ensure you come across as many different types of passages as you can. Practice writing summaries of what you have read, or telling someone else about what you have read by summarizing the main points. Make sure you can identify the main idea of the content. Study resources, tips, and quizzes can be easily found online to help enhance your performance on a Reading Comprehension assessment.

Enhancing your vocabulary is also likely to improve your reading comprehension ability. Again, the best strategy for this is practice. While you are reading anything and everything you can find, make note of any words you do not know the meaning of. Look up the word's definition, and search for synonyms for that word using a thesaurus. Keep a running list of the words you are looking up so you can study them periodically and keep the information fresh in your mind.

3. **Computation:**

The Computation component contains 40 straightforward math equations that require you to add, subtract, multiply, or divide using whole numbers, decimals, percents, and simple fractions. Pay close attention to the symbols used to make sure you know exactly which function (add, subtract, multiply, divide) you are being asked to perform.

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 40 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Important Note: You will NOT be allowed to use a calculator or scratch paper to help you solve these equations.

Example Computation Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on pages 30-32 of this booklet.

For the following example questions, choose the response option that provides the correct answer to the equation. If the correct answer to the equation is not listed, choose X (response option E).

8) $360 \div 4 =$

- A. 32
- B. 90
- C. 180
- D. 356
- E. X

9) $7.2 + 5.1 =$

- A. 7.3
- B. 12.21
- C. 12.3
- D. 35.2
- E. X

10) 25% of 500 =

- A. 5/500
- B. 1/5
- C. 5.25
- D. 125
- E. X

11) $16 \times 4 =$

- A. 12
- B. 20
- C. 46
- D. 64
- E. X

12) $1.5 \times 36 =$

- A. 45
- B. 48.5
- C. 52
- D. 54
- E. X

13) $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{5} =$

- A. $\frac{1}{8}$
- B. $\frac{2}{8}$
- C. $\frac{1}{15}$
- D. $\frac{2}{15}$
- E. X

14) $5.25 - 2.52 =$

- A. 2.37
- B. 2.73
- C. 3.27
- D. 3.33
- E. X

15) $\frac{5}{6}$ of 30 =

- A. $\frac{30}{6}$
- B. 25
- C. 36
- D. 150
- E. X

Computation Test Preparation

Practice is critical for this component. Have friends or family members create math problems for you to solve involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division using whole numbers, decimals, percents, or fractions. You can also easily find several free online quizzes to test your mathematical computation ability. We advise you to find and take as many of those quizzes as possible as practice for the actual exam.

Depending on your current level of understanding, you may also find it helpful to study mathematical information that you can easily find online regarding how to solve general addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems. If you struggle with or do not understand how to compute a percentage of a number, how to add or multiply fractions, or how to do computations with decimals, study this information and make sure you know it before the exam.

4. **Decision Making:**

The Decision Making component contains 20 questions that require you to read and understand a set of rules or procedures, then decide how best to apply those rules or procedures to given situations.

For these questions, the given rules or procedures will remain visible for your reference at any time while answering the related questions. You do NOT need to memorize any of the information presented. Also note that multiple questions will be asked about each set of rules or procedures that are presented on the exam.

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 20 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Important Note: The rules and/or procedures provided for the Decision-Making questions are NOT rules or procedures that are likely to be encountered in the job of Transitional Parole Officer. The information and questions presented on the exam (and in this preparation guide) are designed to assess candidates' general decision-making capability in following and applying any types of rules, procedures, or directions.

Example Decision Making Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 32 of this booklet.

For the following example questions, read the example set of procedures or decision rules provided. Use the information contained in the procedures to decide on the best course of action to be taken for each situation presented in the questions.

Shipping Order Procedures

Ship all new orders immediately, except under the circumstances listed below.

1. When the new order is between \$1,000 and \$3,000, always obtain authorization from the Unit Supervisor before shipping it.
2. When the new order is over \$3,000, always obtain authorization from the Department Manager before shipping it.

- 16) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 1-3615

Previous Balance Due: \$200.00

Past Due: 30 Days

New Order Amount: \$650.00

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

17) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 4-4679

Previous Balance Due: \$0.00

Past Due: No Amount Past Due

New Order Amount: \$1,254.37

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

18) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 2-2009

Previous Balance Due: \$1,450.00

Past Due: 15 Days

New Order Amount: \$3,000.50

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

Decision-Making Test Preparation

As with other components, practice is the best preparation strategy for this section. Practice reading and following any kind of instructions or procedural manuals and following the directions, rules, or procedures given. You should also be able to easily find online quizzes that will test your ability to understanding and apply rules, procedures, instructions, or directions.

5. **Forms Checking:**

The Forms Checking component presents information in a paragraph, and then that same information entered into a form. There may be errors or mismatches in how the information from the paragraph was entered into the form. Pieces or lines of information in the form (e.g., dates, numbers, descriptions, amounts) will be labeled with a circled number. For each numbered piece of information, you will be asked to determine whether the information entered into the form is **Correct** (matches the information in the paragraph) or **Incorrect** (does not match the information in the paragraph).

You will be presented with a total of 42 items to check across the various forms presented. You do not have to check every line on every form – only those lines that have circled numbers in front of them. You will have 5 minutes to respond to as many items as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Forms Checking Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 33 of this booklet.

Sample Paragraph:

On March 14, 2004, a check of the 635 orders for the week showed that all orders were processed on time. Of these orders, 86 were partial shipments. Of the 86 partial shipments, 79 were shipped with some items back-ordered, and 7 were shipped with some items missing due to discontinued stock.

Sample Form:

19	Date of Report	3-14-2004
20	No. of Orders for Week	635
	No. of Partial Shipments	86
	No. of Shipments with Back Orders	79
21	All Orders Processed on Time for the Week	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Directions: For each problem, mark the circle to indicate whether the information given is correct or incorrect.

	Correct	Incorrect
19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Forms Checking Test Preparation

Practice is critical for the Forms Checking component. Have friends or family members create forms for you to check. You may also be able to find free online quizzes to test your attention to detail in checking forms in this way. We advise you to find and take as many of those quizzes as possible as practice for the actual assessment. Note that spatial reasoning is a closely related ability, so quizzes that test your spatial reasoning may help bolster your ability in this area as well.

6. **Filing Names:**

The Filing Names component contains 50 items that require you to view a target name and then determine where, in a list of other names, that target name should be filed alphabetically. After reading the instructions for this component, you will have 1.5 minutes to respond to as many of the 50 items as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Filing Names Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on pages 33-34 of this booklet.

Directions: Each bolded name at the top of a box or list is to be “filed” in alphabetical order in the group of names below it. You are to select the place where it belongs. It may belong at the beginning, between two of the names, or at the end.

Item 22	Item 23	Item 24	Item 25
CHARLES	MEAD	GILBERT	SMITH
<input type="radio"/> ANDERSON	<input type="radio"/> DOUGLAS	<input type="radio"/> HUNTER	<input type="radio"/> SCHMIDT
<input type="radio"/> BAKER	<input type="radio"/> HUGHES	<input type="radio"/> JOHNSON	<input type="radio"/> SMITHERS
<input type="radio"/> DAVIS	<input type="radio"/> LEWIS	<input type="radio"/> MARKS	<input type="radio"/> SMYTHE
<input type="radio"/> EVANS	<input type="radio"/> ROSS	<input type="radio"/> MURPHY	<input type="radio"/> SNIDER
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Filing Names Test Preparation

As with other components, practice is critical to success on the Filing Names component of the exam. Any time you have the opportunity to place things in alphabetical order, be sure to do so. Have friends or family members create lists of items or names for you to alphabetize. This can be done easily by writing the items or names each on a separate index card and having you alphabetize the index cards. You may also be able to find free online quizzes to test your ability to alphabetize quickly in this way. We advise you to find and take as many of those quizzes as possible as practice for the actual assessment.

7. **Filing Numbers:**

The Filing Numbers component contains 75 items that require you to view a target 6-digit number and then determine where, in a list of other numbers, that target number should be filed numerically. After reading the instructions for this component, you will have 2 minutes to respond to as many of the 75 items as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Filing Numbers Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 34 of this booklet.

Directions: Each bolded number at the top of a box or list is to be “filed” in numerical order in the group of numbers below it. You are to select the place where it belongs. It may belong at the beginning, between two of the numbers, or at the end.

Item 26	Item 27	Item 28	Item 29
302516	827910	459276	763214
<input type="radio"/> 147915	<input type="radio"/> 259420	<input type="radio"/> 563170	<input type="radio"/> 742179
<input type="radio"/> 272163	<input type="radio"/> 633785	<input type="radio"/> 713467	<input type="radio"/> 763227
<input type="radio"/> 488079	<input type="radio"/> 791775	<input type="radio"/> 824313	<input type="radio"/> 763409
<input type="radio"/> 514762	<input type="radio"/> 904321	<input type="radio"/> 878905	<input type="radio"/> 770185
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Filing Numbers Test Preparation

Practice placing items in numerical order. Have friends or family members create lists of numbers for you to order. This can be done easily by writing each number on a separate index card and having you place the index cards in numerical order. You may also be able to find free online quizzes to test your ability to quickly place items in numerical order. We advise you to find and take as many of those quizzes as possible as practice for the actual assessment.

III. **Basic Skills Test Example Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 29 example questions presented in the prior section, along with explanations where needed of why the correct answer is correct. Where helpful, this section also includes tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Basic Skills Test components of the exam.

1. **Language Skills**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Language Skills Answer Key

Example Question 1) B. Wednesday

The underlined portion of the sentence contains an error in spelling. The correct spelling (including the capitalization) is “Wednesday.”

Example Question 2) D. No change

The underlined portion of the sentence contains no errors. The response options examine different possibilities for word usage (principal vs. principal), capitalization (Principal vs principal), and consistency of verb tense (“owes/is” vs “owed/is”). When referring to an amount of money owed or invested, the correct spelling of the word is “principal” (not capitalized). The word “principle” refers to a standard, rule, or guiding belief. The capitalized word “Principal” would only be used when referring to a specific individual who holds the job of a school principal (e.g., Principal Smith). Further, the company “owes” because the principal “is” \$3,100 – i.e., these verbs must both be present tense to be consistent within the same sentence. If the company “owed” the principal, then the sentence would need to state “was” \$3,100 – i.e., the verbs would both need to be past tense to be consistent within the same sentence.

Example Question 3) C. this model received our top rating.

The underlined portion of this sentence contains errors in punctuation and grammar. The underlined portion of the sentence states “we gave our top-rating to this model.” Option C is the only one of the listed responses that grammatically fits the sentence and contains no punctuation or other errors. Grammatically, the underlined portion of the sentence cannot begin with “we.” It must begin with “this model” because the phrase “featuring a range of safety enhancements” describes the model. “We” do not feature a range of safety enhancements; rather, “this model” features a range of safety enhancements. Therefore, either A or C must be correct. A cannot be correct because top rating should not be hyphenated. The correct answer is therefore “C. this model received our top rating.”

Example Question 4) A. Klein Brothers, Inc.

The underlined portion of the sentence contains an error in capitalization. “Klein Brothers, Inc.” is the name of the company, and therefore every word in the company name should be capitalized. Option A is therefore the correct answer.

Language Skills Test-Taking Strategies

Watch for any or all potential errors in this section. Remember that the underlined part of the sentence may contain an error in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar, or word usage. The underlined part of the sentence might even contain more than one error. It will NOT be stated what type of error you are looking for on each item. Also remember that it is not always the case that the underlined part of the sentence does contain an error. If the

underlined part of the sentence does NOT contain an error, you are to select the option that reads “NO CHANGE.” A good strategy is to be methodical. Always read the underlined part of the sentence and every single response option. If you know every response option contains an error, then the original sentence must be correct, and you would select “NO CHANGE.”

2. **Reading Comprehension**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Reading Comprehension Answer Key

Example Question 5) B. capital letters.

The last sentence of the sample passage states that “They (attention lines) are typed entirely in capitals for mass mailings that will be presorted for automatic processing.” Thus, when addressing a large number (mass mailing) of letters that are to be sorted before mailing, the attention line should be typed in capital letters.

Example Question 6) C. commercial envelopes.

The second sentence of the passage states that “Attention lines are types in capital letters and lowercase letters for regular mailings using commercial envelopes.” Thus, commercial envelopes are using for regular mailings.

Example Question 7) D. provide guidelines for proper processing and mailing of letters.

As a whole, the passage discusses how to properly process and mail different types of letters (i.e., how the attention line should appear in one circumstance versus another, what kind of envelope is used, etc.).

Reading Comprehension Test-Taking Strategies

Though it is tempting, particularly when under a time limit, to start answering questions before reading the entire passage, the best strategy is to read the entire passage first, at least one time. Do not spend an excessive amount of time reading the passage. Certainly do not feel like you have to memorize any of the information in the passage, as it will always be visible on screen for every question that relates to that passage. But do take the time to read through the passage at least once before attempting to answer the associated questions. This will actually lead to a more streamlined and time-efficient approach to answering the questions. It will ensure that you are reading the passage as a whole at least once, which will help you figure out the purpose of the passage and ensure you have seen all of the information in the passage. If you try to read only a portion of the passage at a time while answering questions that pertain to just that portion, you are likely to miss parts of the information and even more likely to have difficulty piecing together the message that the passage as a whole is trying to convey.

3. **Computation**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Mathematical Computation Answer Key

Example Question 8) B. 90

Dividing 360 into 4 equal parts results in an answer of 90. This answer can be verified by reversing the equation to show that $90 \times 4 = 360$.

Example Question 9) C. 12.3

Adding 5.1 to 7.2 results in an answer of 12.3. For equations involving decimals, you may find it helpful to break down the numbers into the whole number portions versus the decimal portions. Adding the whole number portions of 5 and 7 results in a total of 12. Adding the decimal portions of .1 and .2 results in a total of 0.3. Adding these two results of 12 and 0.3 results in a final total of 12.3.

Example Question 10) D. 125

For equations like this, keep in mind that the word “of” indicates multiplication. In order words, this equation could be rewritten as $25\% \times 500$. Additionally, 25% can be rewritten as either .25 or as $25/100$, whichever is easier for you. So you can rethink of the equation as $.25 \times 500$ or as $25/100 \times 500$. Any of these equations results in a final answer of 125. A tip that may be helpful for some individuals is to think of 25% as “half of 50%” or “half of a half.” If it’s easy for you to determine that 50%, or half, of $500 = 250$, then it may be easy to do that in your head first and then take half of that number (250) to get down to 125.

Example Question 11) D. 64

Multiplying 16 by 4 results in an answer of 64. It may be helpful or easier for some individuals to think of multiplication as simply adding a number to itself multiple times. In this case 16×4 is the same as adding 16 to itself 4 times, or $16 + 16 + 16 + 16 = 64$.

Example Question 12) D. 54

Multiplying 1.5×36 results in an answer of 54. For multiplication or addition problems, keep in mind that the order of the numbers makes no difference. So if it is easier to consider 36×1.5 instead, think of it that way. Also remember that multiplication can be thought of as adding a number to itself multiple times. In this case 36×1.5 is the same as adding 36 to itself 1.5 times, or $36 + \text{half of } 36$, or $36 + 18 = 54$.

Example Question 13) E. X

Adding fractions can be tricky. Keep in mind that for the numerators (top numbers) of fractions to be simply added to one another, the denominators (bottom numbers) of those fractions must be the same. In this case $(1/3 + 1/5)$, the denominators are 3 and 5, are not the same, and therefore cannot be added together to get a denominator of 8. In order to get each fraction to have a common denominator, an easy method is to multiply the denominators together. In this case $3 \times 5 = 15$, so 15 can be a common denominator for each fraction. However, you must make sure that the fraction is equivalent when the denominator is 15 to the original fraction shown in this equation. In other words, a fraction of $1/3$ would be equivalent to a fraction of $5/15$. This is because if you are multiplying the denominator (3) by 5 to get 15, you also need to multiply the numerator (1) by 5 to get to 5. In other words, the fraction of $1/3$ become an equivalent fraction of $5/15$. Likewise, the fraction of $1/5$ becomes $3/15$ because if you multiply the denominator (5) by 3 to get 15, then you also need to multiply the numerator (1) by 3 to get 3. In other words, the fraction of $1/5$ becomes the equivalent fraction of $3/15$. Now the equation can be rewritten as $5/15 + 3/15$. Now that both denominators are the same, the numerators (3 and 5) can be added together to get a final answer of $8/15$. As this is not one of the listed answers, the correct answer is not shown, and therefore you must select option E. X.

Example Question 14) B. 2.73

Subtracting decimals can also be tricky. Keep in mind that for subtraction or division, the order of the numbers does matter. So do not attempt to reorder the numbers in a subtraction

or division equation. It might be helpful to breakdown the number you are subtracting. In other words, it may be easier to think first about subtracting $5.25 - 2.00$, which leaves 3.25 . But now you have only subtracted 2 and therefore need to subtract another $.52$. The next step would therefore be $3.25 - .52$. Even if you don't know for certain that this answer is 2.73 exactly, it is clear that the answer would be less than 3.00 . This eliminates C and D as possible correct answers and leaves A and B as possibilities. If you cannot find the exact correct answer, you may be able to at least eliminate incorrect answers and narrow down the possible correct answers.

Example Question 15) B. 25

Remember that the word "of" indicates multiplication. This equation can therefore be thought of as $\frac{5}{6} \times 30$. Keep in mind that a whole number can be thought of as a fraction with a denominator of 1. So it may be easier for some people to think of this equation as $\frac{5}{6} \times \frac{30}{1}$. Multiplying across the numerators (5×30) and across the denominators (6×1) results in an answer of $\frac{150}{6} = 25$. Another thing to keep in mind is that the order in which you multiply and divide (as long as these are the only two functions in the equation) does not matter. So it may be easier for some people to think of this equation as $30 \times 5 \div 6$ (i.e., $150 \div 6 = 25$), or even as $30 \div 6 \times 5$ (i.e., $5 \times 5 = 25$).

Computation Test-Taking Strategies

For these questions, pay close attention to the symbols used to make sure you know exactly which function you are being asked to perform:

- Add (+)
- Subtract (-)
- Multiply (X)
- Divide (\div)

For questions where a word is used in place of a symbol, pay close attention to make sure you know which function you are being asked to perform. For example, " $\frac{7}{8}$ of 32" indicates $\frac{7}{8}$ multiplied by 32. Study rules regarding order of operations so you know when you might be able to flip the orders of number or of operations (e.g., multiplication and division or addition and subtraction) to help you think about the equation in an easier way.

4. Decision-Making

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Decision-Making Answer Key

Example Question 16) A. Ship immediately

Example Question 17) C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

Example Question 18) B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager

For these questions, the shipping procedures listed provide various rules only for new orders. Therefore, all you need to pay attention to for these questions is the amount of the new order provided in each question. Any new orders between \$1,000 and \$3,000 need authorization from the Unit Supervisor. This applies to question 17, as the new order amount is \$1,254.37. Any new orders over \$3,000 need authorization from the Department Manager. This applies to question 18, as the new order amount is \$3,000.50. All other new orders (i.e., new order less than \$1,000) should be shipped immediately. This applies to question 16, as the new order amount is only \$650.00.

Decision-Making Test-Taking Strategies

Paying close attention to details is the most important strategy for these questions. Make sure you are very carefully reading and following each detail of the instructions, rules, or procedures provided. Pay attention to the order or sequence of any procedures or rules stated, if applicable, and pay very close attention to any exceptions noted to a specific rule or instruction.

5. Forms Checking

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Forms Checking Answer Key

Sample Item 19) Correct

The date mentioned in the paragraph is March 14, 2004. Though written in a different format, the information entered into the form in the Date of Report line, matches the date mentioned in the paragraph, and is therefore Correct.

Sample Item 20) Correct

The paragraph mentioned that there was a check conducted of the 635 orders for the week. The form notes 635 as the number of orders for the week and is therefore Correct.

Sample Item 21) Incorrect

The paragraph mentioned that all orders were processed on time. The form, however, indicates “No” under the section “All Orders Processed on Time for the Week” and is therefore Incorrect.

Forms Checking Test-Taking Strategies

Attention to detail is critical for these types of items. When numbers are presented, pay close attention to the order of the numbers, as items may have the same numbers in them, but not in the same order – e.g., 123 in the paragraph versus 132 in the form. If the order is different, then you should select Incorrect. Also pay close attention to numbers that are different but at first glance may look the same. It may be easy, for example, to confuse 6 with 9 or confuse 3 with 8 if you are trying to work very quickly. If there are decimals or symbols included in a number, pay close attention to the placement of those symbols. For example, 11.00 is NOT the same as 1.100. If a description is provided, pay close attention to each word in the description to make sure it matches what was provided in the paragraph. For example, “400 large, blue buttons” is NOT the same as “400 large, black buttons,” but the difference may be easy to overlook if you are not being careful or are trying to move too quickly. Always keep in mind that accuracy is just as important as speed on this assessment.

6. Filing Names

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Filing Names Answer Key

Example Question 22) CHARLES belongs between BAKER and DAVIS alphabetically

Example Question 23) MEAD belongs between LEWIS and ROSS alphabetically

Example Question 24) GILBERT belongs before HUNTER alphabetically

Example Question 25) SMITH belongs between SCHMIDT and SMITHERS alphabetically

Filing Names Test-Taking Strategies

For the Filing Names component, it is a very useful strategy to complete the easy items first. Several items will be presented on a page, and completing the easiest ones first will free up your time and focus to spend the remainder of your time on this component working on the more difficult items. Easier items are likely to be those where the target name and every other name in the list begin with different letters.

For more difficult items, where the target name begins with the same letter as many or all of the other names in the list, we recommend working through these items systematically. If the first letter of every name on the list is the same as the target name, then focus on the second letter and alphabetize based on that. If the second letter of every name on the list is the same as the target name, then focus on the third letter and alphabetize based on that. And so on.

7. Filing Numbers

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Filing Numbers Answer Key

Example Question 26) 302516 belongs between 272163 and 488079 numerically

Example Question 27) 827910 belongs between 791775 and 904321 numerically

Example Question 28) 459276 belongs before 563170 numerically

Example Question 29) 763214 belongs between 742179 and 763227 numerically

Filing Numbers Test-Taking Strategies

For the Filing Numbers component, it is a very useful strategy to complete the easy items first. Several items will be presented on a page, and completing the easiest ones first will free up your time and focus to spend the remainder of your time on this component working on the more difficult items. Easier items are likely to be those where the target number and every other number in the list begin with different digits.

For more difficult items, where the target number begins with the same digit as many or all of the other numbers in the list, we recommend working through these items systematically. If the first digit of every number on the list is the same as the target number, then focus on the second digit and determine numerical order based on that. If the second digit of every number on the list is the same as the target number, then focus on the third digit and determine numerical order based on that. And so on.

SECTION 4: GENERAL PERSONALITY SURVEY OVERVIEW

In addition to the knowledge and skills needed by Transitional Parole Officers, certain work-related attitudes, behaviors, and personal characteristics are also important to effective performance. The General Personality Survey (GPS) will be used to assess these important characteristics.

This portion of the exam process is NOT timed. We strongly recommend, however, that you respond to these items quickly with the first response that comes to mind. We suggest spending no more than 40 minutes on this component. This should be easy to do, as most candidates complete this component in 20 minutes or less.

No preparation is necessary (or expected) for the GPS component of the exam. However, this component will be scored, and your score will be combined with your scores on the other test components to determine your continued eligibility in the selection process.

The GPS contains a series of 155 short statements. You will read each statement (see examples below) and then decide the degree to which you agree with each statement as it applies to you.

I. **Characteristics Measured:**

The GPS measures characteristics categorized into the following five (5) major dimensions:

1. **Agreeableness** – the degree to which an individual seeks to please, support, and cooperate with others.
2. **Conscientiousness** – the degree to which an individual persists at tasks, pursues goals, and takes an organized approach to assignments.
3. **Extraversion** – the degree to which an individual enjoys the company of others and prefer influencing or persuading others.
4. **Openness** – the degree to which an individual enjoys thinking about and analyzing a variety of topics, coming up with new ideas, and trying new things.
5. **Stability** – the degree to which an individual remains even-tempered and retains a positive attitude, even in difficult circumstances.

These characteristics vary in the degree to which they are critical for effective performance in any particular job, including the Transitional Parole Officer job. Your task in this section of the exam is simply to indicate how accurately each statement describes you, your characteristics, and your behaviors at work.

II. GPS Instructions and Sample Questions:

Instructions

On the GPS, you will see the following directions.

Directions:

On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's work behaviors. Please use the rating scale next to each phrase to indicate how accurately each statement describes you at work. Please be frank in your responses, and describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future.

If you are completing this survey as part of a hiring, selection, or promotion process, please keep the following points in mind: (1) your responses to questions on this survey are subject to verification; (2) this survey includes questions designed to measure the extent to which persons describe themselves candidly and openly; and (3) providing untrue or misleading responses may invalidate your results and adversely affect your chances of selection or promotion.

Sample Item

S1. Enjoy organizing employee events

- ☐ Very Inaccurate
- ☐ Moderately Inaccurate
- ☐ Neither Inaccurate Not Accurate
- ☐ Moderately Accurate
- ☐ Very Accurate

As an example, if you felt that the phrase "enjoy organizing employee events" was a very inaccurate description of you at work, you would mark the circle next to "Very Inaccurate" to indicate your response.

The survey includes 155 phrases, and the typical completion time is approximately 20 minutes.

III. General Tips for Completing the GPS:

This section presents general tips that may help you to more successfully get through the GPS component of the exam.

1. **Make sure you understand the rating scale.** Read each item and the rating scale carefully, so you know exactly which rating most closely describes you or your behaviors at work as related to the specific statement or question presented.
2. **Work quickly.** Do not spend too much time thinking about your responses to these statements. Respond with your first instinct regarding how accurately the statement describes you at work.
3. **Respond honestly.** It is possible that others may have suggested or will suggest that you respond in certain ways to try to increase your chances of success, even if those responses do not accurately reflect your typical behaviors, attitudes, or personal characteristics. There are two important reasons why you should respond honestly. First,

the GPS contains internal mechanisms that can be used to identify candidates who are not responding honestly. If the pattern of your responses suggests that you are not responding honestly, you may be disqualified from the selection process. Second, research has shown that candidates who attempt to guess what kinds of responses are desirable on the GPS component very often guess incorrectly and thereby *hurt* their chances of success on the assessment.

4. **Respond to every statement.** Even if no single point on the rating scale describes you, your typical behavior, or your personal characteristics perfectly, be sure to provide a response to every statement. Candidates who do not respond to all statements on the GPS component may be disqualified from the selection process.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this Guide gives you a better understanding of what to expect for the Transitional Parole Officer examination and provides you with some suggestions for preparation. The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive; we encourage you to engage in additional preparation strategies that you believe will enhance your chances of performing effectively on the exam.

BEST OF LUCK!