
Massachusetts State Police Trooper Selection Process



Candidate Orientation Guide

Video-Based & Written Examination

Introduction

Welcome! This candidate guide has been developed to help you prepare for the Massachusetts State Police Trooper Examination. If you read through this guide carefully, you will learn about the type of examination you will be taking as well as the format of the test. You will learn about some of the types of questions that will be asked on the test and will have an opportunity to practice answering these questions. You will also be provided with instructions and helpful strategies that will help you prepare for the day of the test. We hope that you will find this guide to be a valuable tool to help you achieve your goal of becoming a Massachusetts State Trooper. Good luck!

What Kind of Test Will I Be Taking?

The examination process will consist of two sections: a reading comprehension and verbal expression section (presented via a printed booklet) and a video-based section that is designed to test the job-relevant skills and abilities that are required to perform the primary duties of the Massachusetts State Trooper position.

What Will Be On The Reading Comprehension and Verbal Expression Section of the Examination?

This section of the examination will be composed of questions that measure the following abilities: **reading comprehension** and **verbal expression**.



Reading comprehension:

This is the ability to understand written language. This ability involves both the understanding of individual words as well as patterns of words (sentences and phrases), so it is more than simply vocabulary. This is the ability to read a description of an event and understand what happened. This is also the ability to read a sentence or series of sentences and understand the meaning. This skill involves receiving information—not giving it. This ability might be used in reading narrative material such as an incident report or following written work orders.

For reading comprehension questions, you will be given a passage to read. You will then answer questions that ask you to relate the details from the passage and the meaning of the passage. In order to answer the questions correctly, you will have to understand the meaning of the passage you read.

Reading Comprehension Sample Question

Please use the following passage to answer question 1.

Unsolved Homicide

On August 1, 1987, the body of a woman was found in a wooded area outside of Framingham, MA. The cause of death was homicide. The victim was described as a Hispanic female between the ages of 25-35 with dark brown hair and brown eyes. She was approximately 5'5" tall and weighed 130 pounds. The victim was found wearing a blue-and-white striped T-shirt, white shorts and white Nike tennis shoes. She had three tattoos: an ivy pattern around her left ankle, a cross on her left shoulder and a daisy on her right hip. She was found wearing five pieces of jewelry: a pair (2) of gold hoop earrings, a silver necklace with an amethyst pendant, a sapphire ring with a gold setting on her left ring finger and a silver bracelet with a gold heart design.

Although the media devoted extensive coverage to this case, the woman has not yet been identified.

1. What articles of clothing was the victim wearing when her body was discovered?

- a. A red-and-white striped T-shirt, white shorts and white Nike tennis shoes.
- b. A blue-and-white striped sweatshirt, white shorts and white Nike tennis shoes.
- c. A blue-and-white striped T-shirt, white pants and white Nike tennis shoes.
- d. A blue-and-white striped T-shirt, white shorts and white Nike tennis shoes.

The correct answer to the above sample question is **(d)** “A blue-and-white striped T-shirt, white shorts and white Nike tennis shoes.”

Verbal expression:

This ability involves using language (either verbal or written) to communicate information or ideas to other people. These other people might include other law enforcement officers, witnesses, suspects, victims or any individuals with whom the trooper might come in contact. This ability would include vocabulary, knowledge of distinctions among words, and knowledge of grammar and the way words are ordered.

For verbal expression questions, you will be asked to choose correctly spelled words or to detect misspellings in a sentence. You may often have to choose words or phrases that will be grammatically correct in the context of a sentence.

Verbal Expression Sample Question

For question 2, please choose the word or phrase that correctly completes the sentence.

2. As the troopers arrested the three suspects, they _____ all three very carefully.
- a. search
 - b. searched
 - c. searches
 - d. will search

The correct answer to the above question is **(b)** “searched.” The sentence requires a verb in the simple past tense, and “searched” is the only option in the simple past tense.

Verbal Expression Sample Question

For question 3, determine which word in the sentence is spelled incorrectly. There will be only one misspelled word in this sentence.

3. Because Trooper Vogel responded to the home invaison call late in his shift, he had to work six hours of overtime.
- a. Because
 - b. responded
 - c. invaison
 - d. overtime

The correct answer to the above question is **(c)** “invaison.” The correct spelling of the word is “invasion.”

What Will Be on the Video-Based Section of the Examination?

The video-based section of the exam is designed to assess basic skills and abilities. These skills and abilities relate to how you would deal with real-life situations that you are likely to encounter as a state trooper. You will be shown a series of one- or two-minute scenarios. After each scenario, you will be required to answer a series of questions relating to the scene. These questions will ask you about your opinions and what you would do in the same situation. Questions will appear on the screen. The questions will be read aloud, and each question will remain on the screen for 60 seconds. Based on what you have observed in the scenario, choose the best answer from the choices you are given. Please note that you are NOT required to have any previous knowledge of state and local laws or departmental policies and procedures. Answer the questions based *only* on what you know from the scenarios.

The best way for you to answer these questions is to be honest! Select the response that most closely reflects what **you** would or would not do in a given situation.

Sample video-based scenario script

Trooper Lennox walks into the office of Sergeant Morris. He closes the door behind him, and sits down in front of the sergeant's desk.

Trooper Lennox:

They said you wanted to see me, sir?

Sergeant Morris:

Yes, Lennox. I just received a memo that you testified in court recently—for that DUI on US 93...the guy who killed two people?

Trooper Lennox:

Mitchell Allen? Yes, I was in court for that last...Tuesday.

Sergeant Morris:

Now, Lennox, I know that you've only been on duty for six months, but you know that you're only supposed to take copies of the accident report to court with you, not the originals, right?

Trooper Lennox:

Yes, sir. Did I accidentally take the originals with me?

Sergeant Morris:

You must have. Because we don't have them here. And they can't find them at the courthouse. That means that the original documentation is just gone.

Trooper Lennox:

I...I'm sorry, sir. I had no idea. The copies and the originals look alike to me.

Sergeant Morris:

That's no excuse, Lennox. The copies clearly have the word "PHOTOCOPY" stamped right on the top of the page.

Trooper Lennox:

I really am sorry, sir. It won't happen again, I promise.

Sergeant Morris:

Well, that doesn't bring our documentation back, does it? I have to say that I'm disappointed, Lennox. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to write this up.

Sample Video-based Question

4. Based on the information provided in the scenario, how would you characterize Trooper Lennox's attitude in this scene?
- a. He is suspicious that someone else is purposely trying to make him look bad.
 - b. He is eager to blame someone else for his mistake.
 - c. He is apologetic and willing to change his behavior in the future.
 - d. He is angry that he is being reprimanded for a trivial oversight.

To answer this question, choose the response that most accurately reflects your interpretation of the scenario (event)!

Instructions for the Day of the Test

When you arrive at the examination site on the day of the test, you will need to follow the proper check-in procedures. Listen carefully to and follow all instructions. Any infraction of the rules will be considered cheating, and you will be dismissed from the test. The proctors will distribute all test materials. DO NOT open any test materials or booklets until you are told to do so. The examiner will read aloud instructions for filling in your answer sheets and taking the tests. You will also find additional instructions for the video-based section of the test at the beginning of the tape. Listen carefully to these instructions and be sure to ask any questions that you may have so that you know exactly what to do.

The examiner and the video introduction will explain to you how to fill in your answer sheet, but it is helpful for you to know what to do before you take the test. When the examiner tells you to do so, write the letters of your last name, first name and middle initial in the appropriate boxes on your answer sheet and completely fill in the circle in the column beneath each letter of your name that corresponds to that letter. If any part of your name is longer than the

spaces provided, only write in the boxes and fill in the circles for as many letters of your name as possible.

You will also be instructed to fill in the test administration date, your social security number, your age, your date of birth, your race, your gender and the last year/degree of education completed. For some of these categories, you will have to write letters or numbers in boxes and then fill in the corresponding circles underneath each letter or number; for other categories, you will only have to fill in a circle.

Since your answer sheet will be machine-read, it is vital that you fill out your answer sheet clearly and correctly. If your answer sheet is marked incorrectly, you may not receive credit for your answers. When you are filling in circles, darken your answer space firmly and completely (e.g. ●). This is the only way to correctly mark the answer sheet. If you mark the answer space with Ø, ⊗ or (✓), the machine will not be able to read your answer. You will not receive credit for any responses that are incorrectly marked, even if you have chosen the correct option. Also, be sure to mark only one answer for each question. If you mark more than one option, your responses will be

marked as incorrect, even if one of them is correct.

If you decide to change an answer, make sure to erase your mark completely. An incomplete erasure may be read as a second answer, and your response will be voided.

Only the answer sheet will be scored; be sure to mark all of your answers on the answer sheet. Correct answers written in a test booklet or on other testing materials will not count.

Most importantly, make sure that each response has been marked in the correct space on the answer sheet. Question 1 must be in space 1 on the answer sheet; question 42 in space 42 on the answer sheet, etc. If you accidentally skip a line and mark answers in the wrong places, you must erase all of the incorrect responses and mark your answers again in the correct spaces.

Because you only have a limited time in which to complete the examination, be sure to look at the number of the question and ensure that you are marking the space on the answer sheet with the same number for *each* question.

Because you will have a limited period of time in which to complete this examination, be sure to pace yourself so that you can complete both sections of the exam in their entirety. If you finish early, use the extra time to look over your work and check your answers. There is no bonus for finishing early, so we recommend that you use all of your time to go over your exam thoroughly.

Test-Taking Strategies

Before the Test:

- Make sure that you get a good night's sleep the night before your exams so that you are rested and relaxed on the day you take the tests.

On the Day of the Exam:

- It is crucial that you arrive on time! Punctuality will demonstrate your enthusiasm for a career as a Massachusetts State Trooper. Besides, candidates who arrive late for the examination will be turned away. We strongly recommend that you make plans to arrive at the testing site early. Allow time for traffic delays, bad weather and any

other holdups that may arise on the day of the tests.

- Stay confident! A confident and positive attitude will help you to do your best on this exam. Keep in mind that although you should view this examination as a challenge, you should try not to succumb to stress and test-taking anxiety. Remember that by carefully reading this guide, you have prepared yourself for this test.

When You Are Unsure About an Answer:

- Remember that you should pace yourself so that you can read and carefully consider each question on both sections of the examination.
- Only correct answers will count towards your score. Selecting an answer that you are unsure of would be better than leaving a question blank. Points are not deducted for a wrong answer, and you may just select the right answer.
- If possible, try to make an educated selection rather than a random choice. Try to eliminate the answer choices you know to be wrong and try to reason among the options that

remain. If you still do not know the answer, make a selection from the answers that remain. The odds of a right answer will increase if you can select between two or three answers instead of four.

- When you make a selection that you are unsure of while taking the reading comprehension and verbal expression section of the exam, mark that question in your test booklet so that you can return to that question if time remains.

Tips and Strategies for the Reading Comprehension and Verbal Expression Section of the Examination:

- Before the test day, read entire newspaper articles for practice. Underline important details and ideas and notice different points of view and types of supporting evidence. After you have finished the article, try to summarize the main point of the article and the different arguments that may have been presented. Look over the words and sentences you have underlined. Were they the most important words and ideas? As you continue to

practice this exercise, you will become a more efficient reader and will read with greater comprehension. You will also be able to increase your vocabulary by reading more every day.

- As you read, make a list of unfamiliar words that you see. Afterwards, look up these words in the dictionary and write down their definitions in a special notebook. By writing down these words and their definitions, you will be able to remember them more easily.
- As you read, practice locating the subjects and verbs of various sentences. Try to determine why a particular kind of verb is required to complement a particular kind of subject so that you can develop your verbal expression skills.
- If you are not familiar with grammatical terms such as “singular,” “plural,” “active voice” and “passive voice,” we recommend that you consult a good grammar guide so that you are able to answer verbal expression questions correctly.

- One strategy you may find helpful when completing reading comprehension questions is to read the questions before you read the passage. The questions will tell you what important details you need to notice as you read the passage.
- Make sure that you read each question very carefully. Many candidates make mistakes on reading comprehension questions because they misunderstand the question.

Tips and Strategies for the Video-Based Section of the Examination:

- Make sure to watch the short scenarios VERY carefully and pay attention to the details. Also, pay attention to the characters’ reactions to the situations and to each other. Do you agree with what they do? Do their opinions and attitudes match your own? If you were confronted with the same situation, would you do the same sorts of things that the characters do, or would you react differently? Once you mentally determine the answers to these questions, it will be easier to select the best response.

- Think about the kinds of problems you imagine you would have to face as a Massachusetts State Trooper. Think about what steps you would take to solve these problems if you encountered them on the job. Think of several different strategies to solve each problem and then try to imagine the consequences that would arise if you followed each strategy. Enlist a friend or relative to help you act out these problems in a role-playing exercise!

General Tips for the Examination:

- If you cannot understand the meaning of a word in a sentence, passage, or scenario, think about the content of the entire passage or scenario to determine the general or overall meaning of the selection. By looking at the context, or the words or phrases around the unfamiliar word, you may be able to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
- Keep in mind that incorrect answers are sometimes designed to divert or distract you from the real response. Carefully read each answer option. Even if an option contains exact

words or phrases from a preceding passage or scenario, this does not guarantee that the option is the correct answer.

- Carefully consider answer options that contain the words “only,” “always,” “never,” and “all.” Make sure that you thoroughly read any accompanying passages and closely watch all video-based scenarios so that you can decide whether an answer option is accurate or an exaggeration. This does not mean that any answer option containing the words listed above is automatically incorrect. Again, you must pay attention to passages and scenarios to determine the validity of an answer option.

**You’re now ready for the examination—
Good luck to you!**