



Justice, Management, and Educational Consultants



SSPO Guide

September 2020

Preamble

The Ontario Association Chiefs of Police (OACP) and TNT Justice Consultants have prepared this SSPO study guide for applicants in preparation for the SIGMA Assessments SSPO test. It is noteworthy to mention that the creation and dissemination of this SSPO study guide is done with the explicit permission of SIGMA Assessments. This study guide is intended to be a general, supplemental support for applicants and does not in any manner guarantee nor impact the outcome of test scores.

Introduction

The SSPO (Sigma Survey for Police Officers) was designed to identify candidates who have the cognitive skills to use sound practical judgment in police situations and who are capable of writing meaningful and credible police incident reports. The SSPO (Part B Exam) is broken into two major sections, starting with Section A, consists of 44 questions which measure: spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. Section B consists of 30 questions and is based on Police Problem-Solving. This section contains descriptions of situations that are relevant to the work of police officers. Each situation is followed by a series of multiple-choice questions that require you to identify the best response or course of action.

Disclaimer: Applicants that purchase online cognitive tests and/or applicants that utilize free practice tests online shall assume the sole responsibility for seeking and/or practicing cognitive tests online. SIGMA ASSESSMENTS, the OACP and TNT Justice Consultants **DO NOT** promote or endorse the use of any specific practice test platform. This guide is meant to be utilized as supplemental support and general preparation advice for applicants.

Tips on Preparation and Practice

- ✦ The SSPO is a timed test, therefore, it is suggested that applicants maintain a good pace and do not spend too much time on a single question.
- ✦ If the applicant is planning on using practice tests, please ensure those tests use the same question style as outlined in this document.
- ✦ It is suggested that applicants use practice tests to determine which components are most challenging and to practice those components more than other sections.
- ✦ It is noteworthy to mention that practice tests are not about memorizing. Rather, they are steeped in understanding the questions which will only assist in answering those questions or similar question in the future.
- ✦ Before taking the SSPO, applicants should ensure that they are well rested and in a quiet setting with no distractions.
- ✦ In general, test prep companies are essentially providing their clients with a variety of cognitive ability tests to practice. These may assist applicants in becoming familiar with cognitive tests. However, these DO NOT guarantee success nor can it be determined whether practice tests will impact the overall score.

Section A: Incident Report Writing Aptitude

Police officers are frequently required to write incident reports. Section A contains three sections, *Spelling*, *Vocabulary*, and *Grammar and Punctuation*, which assess skills important to writing these reports

SPELLING

The essence of testing how to spell properly is considered to be the main component of communication. Spelling also seeks to test literacy and the ability to recognise the more difficult words in a sentence.

During the exam, you will see a list of 28 words that a police officer might use in writing a report. Read each word and decide whether or not it is spelled correctly. If you think that it is spelled correctly, select “YES” if you think that it is spelled incorrectly, select “NO.”

Sample Question:

1. carr
2. truck

In the first example, the correct answer is “No” because the correct spelling is “car” rather than “carr”

In the second example the correct answer is “Yes” because truck is spelled correctly

Suggested practice tips:

1. **Word Mapping:** As an applicant, you may choose a word to practice the recognition of its sound and spelling. It is suggested to say the word, count the syllables, and write the word down according to how it sounds. Practice repeating the word and look up the definition to ensure it is well understood in the context of the sentence.
 - a. Example: **Light**
 - i. Stretch Out Sound: /LLL III TTT/
 - ii. Sound 1 [L] Sound 2 [I] Sound 3 [T]
 - iii. Practice repeating the silent “IGH” and try to figure out the more complicated parts of the word.
 - iv. Look for word pairings that sound the same: Bright, Night, Might, Fright, Tight.
 - v. Write the word down and use in a sentence:
 1. To save electricity, you must turn off the light.
 2. The colour of the paint is light and bright.
 3. This container of soap is light in weight.
 4. My puppy is the light of my life.
 5. Light the candle.

To help you better, we have placed the references below (on Page 3) to resources online that can support you for this section:

- **100 most commonly misspelled** words in English
- Spelling Bee Words.
- Practice and Review Tips on how to become a better speller

VOCABULARY

The essence of testing vocabulary is to examine the depth and breadth of vocabulary and the recognition of words, along with the associated meanings and how it is used in context.

Use the contextual clues in each sentence to identify the answer choice that is closest in meaning to the underlined example.

Sample Question:

The officer questioned the suspect until he got a full confession. Confession most nearly means:

- a) Admission
- b) Discussion
- c) Report
- d) Denial

The correct answer would be “A” because “confession” most nearly means “admission”

Suggested Practice Tips

1. Read a variety of literary sources, which includes books, magazines, online sources, social media articles, YouTube channels, television documentaries, academic sources, etc.
2. Document words and phrases that are new and look up the meaning.
3. Practice using the new word/phrase in a sentence that makes the most sense to you, as the individual.
4. Search for synonyms and antonyms to familiarize the various ways in which these words can be used in a sentence.
5. Document all new words and create a Journal.
6. Be creative! Utilize different methods to memorize the words, such as; flashcards, sticky notes, practice games either alone, or in a study group.

Example: *Revoke.*

Definition: *To annul by calling back or taking back.*

Sentence: *The judge revoked the client’s license.*

Synonym: *cancel, take back, rescind, drop off*

Antonym: *Keep, Continue*

<https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/spelling-and-word-lists/misspelled.html>

<https://www.spelling-words-well.com/hard-spelling-bee-words.html>

<https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/for-students-and-parents/spelling-test-study-habits.html>

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

For each question, you will be given a series of four sentences that might be a part of a police officer's report. Your task is to decide which one of the four sentences is written correctly.

Sample Question:

- a) I ain't spoke to the Sergeant.
- b) I ain't spoken to the Sergeant.
- c) I had not spoke to the Sergeant.
- d) I had not spoken to the Sergeant.

The correct answer would be "D" because it is on the only sentence that is written correctly.

Suggested Practice Tips

¹Utilizing online or hard copy sources to practice the following areas:

1. **Nouns:** Describes a person, place or thing (**dog, bird, flower, bottle, ship, car**)
2. **Adjectives:** Describes a noun (**The flower is pretty, the rabbit is white, the baby is sweet**)
3. **Verbs:** Describes an action (The dog **runs** quickly, I **jumped** over the fence, you **danced** all night)
4. **Appositives:** Modifies a Noun (Joe's grandmother, **the baker**, is visiting next week)
5. **Tense Consistency:** Seeks to identify situations that happened in the past in which the past tense is to be used. For situations that are happening in the moment, use the present tense. For situations that have yet to happen, use the future tense.
 - a. The Titanic could have survived, however the captain's crew **travelled** too quickly causing the ship to hit the iceberg.
 - b. The Titanic is **travelling** from England to New York.
 - c. The Titanic **will travel** from England to New York, once the ship sets sail.
6. **Proper use of Apostrophes:** Demonstrates possession, contractions and to separate the "s" from plural numbers and letters.
 - a. This is **Joe's** classroom vs. This is the **students'** classroom.
 - b. IT'S=IT IS, DON'T=DO NOT**
 - c. I received two A's and three B's this semester.**
7. **Quotations:** The purpose of a quotation is to highlight the meaning of the sentence, or to support an argument.
 - a. Janice said, **"I need to show more effort in class"**.
 - b. **"Alex is trying to get a job this year"**, his father said.
8. **Commas:** A comma is meant to be a pause in a sentence, which often highlights a certain point.
 - a. **Effortlessly, lightly, and beautifully** the dancers moved across the stage.

¹ https://owl.purdue.edu/owl_exercises/punctuation_exercises/basic_punctuation/punctuation_exercise.html

Section B: Police Problem Solving

Problem Solving: The essence of problem solving encourages the development of critical and creative thinking within time constraints. It also provides the ability to develop skills in dealing with situations that can be potentially challenging, through exerting environmental control and understanding of the situation at hand. Lastly, problem solving is a long-term skill that is malleable and continuously grows/adapts over time.

The situations in Section B are described in one or more paragraphs or in the form of a map. They are then followed by a number of questions, each with four choices, one of which is more correct than the others. Your task is to decide which of the choices is the most correct one.

Sample Question:

1. Which of the following pieces of police equipment would be essential at night but less essential in the daylight hours?
 - a) Two-way radio
 - b) Flashlight
 - c) List of other officers on duty
 - d) Handcuffs

The flashlight is the most correct answer because flashlights are rarely used during daylight hours.

Suggested Tips

1. Read the question thoroughly for the first time and re-read it for a second time to collect details you may have missed.
2. Scan the answers to determine the best possible option.
3. Collect the important information within the question which best matches the options as the potential answer.
4. Analyze any patterns, clues or hints that are presented within the context.
5. Draw a comparison chart with the details provided (if time permits) e.g.,: what is essential information vs. filler.
6. Engage in a process of elimination through critically thinking.
7. Attempt to utilize practice questions under “real time” to test personal speed prior to taking the test.
8. Practice speed reading to determine if the information within the context is being absorbed. If not, start slow and work towards a moderate speed based on the time allotment of the test.

ⁱ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/revoked>