

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE MONTGOMERY AREA CLERICAL TEST

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Introduction

Purpose of the Study Guide

This study guide is a tool to help you prepare for the clerical exam. It does not contain information that you must memorize. The exam measures your specific skills needed to work in clerical positions. You could take the exam and do well without reading this study guide; however, you will be better prepared if you review the information provided in this study guide before you take the exam.

About Montgomery City-County Personnel Examinations

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, Montgomery City-County Personnel takes steps to ensure that the exam content is job-related. Studies are conducted to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assisted in developing the content of the examinations. Pre-employment testing provides an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of applicants.

The Montgomery Area Clerical Test

The Montgomery Area Clerical (MAC) Test is used by the City-County Personnel Department to test individuals interested in clerical employment with the City of Montgomery, County of Montgomery, Montgomery Housing Authority, and the Montgomery Municipal Airport.

The clerical exam is made up of six different tests. These include the following:

- Clerical Speed and Accuracy (CSA)
- Numerical Computations (NUM)
- Customer Service (CS)
- Business Relations (BR)
- Written Communication (WC)
- Planning, Scheduling and Organizing (PSO)

Once you take the clerical test, your scores are valid for two years. Your scores on these six tests can be used to determine your placement on a variety of clerical registers which means that you do not need to take the clerical exam every time you apply for a clerical job. To determine if your clerical test scores can be used for a clerical job, review the job announcements which can be found at www.montgomerypersonnel.com.

How To Use This Booklet

This booklet contains a sample of the exam instructions and the different types of questions on the clerical exam. None of the sample questions will be on the exam, but they are very similar to the actual questions.

Exam Administration Issues

Exam Administration Policies

Any person may be disqualified from further consideration if he/she is found to be cheating. Cheating involves any attempt by an individual or group to enhance test scores by means other than actual knowledge or ability, including but not limited to efforts to give or receive information about the exam content or correct responses before, after or during the exam. Examples of cheating during an exam would be:

- Attempting to gain access to the exam under false pretenses;
- Failing to follow instructions;
- Talking to another candidate during the exam;
- Removing or attempting to remove exam materials from the exam site;
- Leaving the exam room, holding room or other location without permission from the Exam Administrator;
- Attempting to use notes, hand held computers or calculators when instructed not to;
- Looking at another candidate's responses or computer screen;
- Working on a test section after time has been called; and
- Giving or receiving exam information from another person.

Requests for Accommodation

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is the responsibility of the applicant with a disability to request accommodation which he/she requires in order to participate in the application or examination process. The Personnel Department reserves the right to require documentation of the existence of an ADA disability and the need for accommodation from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional. The individual will not be required to provide documentation if both the disability and the need for accommodation are obvious. If you think that you have special needs in order to take the exam, please call Barbara Montoya or Karen Cason, (334-241-2675) as soon as possible before the exam date in order to make your request.

Exam Results

You will not receive specific scores or exam information. Your exam results are simply used to determine your rank or placement on an employment list or register. Therefore, your rank will be provided based on the job(s) for which you have applied.

When vacancies occur, the top five scoring individuals at the time of the vacancy are referred to the hiring manager. Selections are made from this list of five. Therefore, the higher your rank the greater your chances of being on the lists sent to the hiring managers.

The Clerical Exam

As discussed in the previous chapter, the clerical exam is made up of six different tests. This booklet will describe each of the tests and provide a copy of the instructions and sample questions for each part of the exam.

Clerical Speed and Accuracy (CSA) Test

The Clerical Speed and Accuracy (CSA) Test is one of two timed tests in the clerical exam. It is designed to measure your skill in quickly locating and checking names and numbers and your ability to detect the differences in the numbers and spelling of names.

There are 120 questions on the test, and you have 10 minutes to respond to these questions. It is not expected that you will complete all 120 items. However, you should do your best to complete as many items as you can in the 10 minute time frame.

Sample CSA Instructions

Time Limit: 10 minutes

of Questions: 120

Purpose: This is a test of your skill in locating and checking names and numbers and your ability to detect differences in the spelling of those names and numbers.

Questions: You will compare test items to a form called TRUE LISTING to determine if the test items are the same or different from the TRUE LISTING.

The TRUE LISTING form contains names, dates, and dollar amounts and is presented as a hard copy document. There are three lists of names and dollar amounts on the form. The three lists are for three specific dates. The names of the individuals on the lists are alphabetized within the three different lists.

The test items are arranged in groups of three—a name, a date, and a dollar amount. These three items are related to a common entry on the TRUE LISTING. You must locate the correct information on the TRUE LISTING and determine if the three test items are the same or different as compared to the TRUE LISTING.

Responses: You must decide if the test items are the same as or different from the TRUE LISTING. There is only one correct answer for each item—same or different. Read each item carefully, compare it to the TRUE LISTING and choose the BEST answer. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be based on the number of correct responses you provide.

CSA Example

TRUE LISTING

February 4

Burke, A.D. \$45.54	Mixon, S.O.....\$130.33	Scott, C.H.\$133.36
Jackson, P.A. \$14.44	Russell, J.R.\$11.11	Willis, W.M.....\$88.65

February 5

Bass, T.R. \$29.36	Fomby, J.L.....\$65.91	Usher, L.R.\$88.21
Boshell, S.L. \$788.52	Mullins, H.C.\$42.34	White, C.D.....\$90.45

February 6

Butler, S.S..... \$12.25	Jones, M.R.\$6.56	McGhee, L.E.\$95.48
Cooper, B.H..... \$120.23	Klepper, R.O.....\$90.80	Moore, D.M.....\$50.82

Questions:

Based on the True Listing, which of the following are the same and which are different?

Willis, M.W.	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different
\$66.85	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different
February 5	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different

Based on the True Listing, which of the following are the same and which are different?

Butler, S.S.	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different
\$12.25	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different
February 4	<input type="radio"/> Same	<input type="radio"/> Different

Answers:

Review the TRUE LISTING. Notice that the names are in alphabetical order by date. Find the listing for Willis. The name listed in the question is not the same as the name in the TRUE LISTING. The dollar amount is different, and the date is different.

Find the listing for Butler. The name is the same as the question. The dollar amount is the same, and the date is different.

Numerical Computations (NUM) Test

The Numerical Computations (NUM) Test is the second timed test. The test is designed to measure your ability to perform numerical calculations which include addition, subtraction, multiplication and/or division.

There are 60 questions on the test, and you have 10 minutes to respond to these questions. It is not expected that you will complete all 60 items. However, you should do your best to complete as many items as you can in the 10 minute time frame.

Sample NUM Instructions

Time Limit: 10 minutes

of Questions: 60

Purpose: This test contains items related to addition (+), subtraction (-), multiplication (x), and division (/).

Questions: All questions are numerical. There are no word problems.

Responses: YOU MAY NOT USE A CALCULATOR. Calculations can be made using the provided scratch paper. All of your calculations should be reduced to the lowest terms. If your response is not a whole number, it should be accurate to two decimal places. Your answer should not include fractions or remainders.

NUM Examples

Sample Question 1: $23 + 45 =$ _____

Answer: 68

Sample Question 2: $(8 / 2) / (16 / 4) =$ _____

Answer: 1

Sample Question 3: $8 / 3 =$ _____

Answer: 2.67

Business Relations (BR) Test

The Business Relations (BR) Test is an un-timed test. The test is designed to measure your ability to deal with ethical or proper behavior when working with clients and fellow workers in problem situations.

The test is presented in a series of 12 situations with possible responses to those situations. You will read a situation and then the possible responses that are connected with that situation. For each response, you will decide if it is acceptable for the situation or unacceptable for the situation. There can be more than one acceptable and more than one unacceptable response to the situation.

Sample BR Instructions

Time limit: No time limit

of Questions: 54

Purpose: This test focuses on business relations issues dealing with ethical or proper behavior when working with clients and fellow workers in problem situations.

Questions: The test consists of 12 brief business relation situations. Read the situation. A list of possible responses is beneath each situation.

Responses: You must decide if each of the responses listed below the situation are *acceptable* or *unacceptable* as they relate to the situation. Read each response carefully and choose the BEST answer. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be based on the number of correct responses you provide.

Decision guidelines:

- Consider what should be done in a typical work environment--what would a typical office policy require you to do, what would a typical supervisor ask of you, etc.
- You are not determining which behaviors or responses are most acceptable. You are determining which of the behaviors or responses are acceptable and which are not.

BR Example

Sample Situation: Everyone in your work group has received a new computer except you. What would you do?

Sample Responses:

Assume it was a mistake and speak to your supervisor. Acceptable Unacceptable
Ask your supervisor why you are being treated unfairly. Acceptable Unacceptable
Take a new computer from a co-worker's desk. Acceptable Unacceptable
Complain to human resources. Acceptable Unacceptable

Answers:

It is acceptable for you to assume that a mistake has been made and to speak to your supervisor.

It would be unacceptable to ask your supervisor why you are being treated unfairly since this may not be true and might cause animosity with your supervisor.

It would be unacceptable to take a new computer from a co-worker's desk since this would cause animosity with your co-worker.

It would be unacceptable to get human resources involved before speaking with your supervisor.

Written Communication (WC) Test

The Written Communication (WC) Test is an un-timed test. The test is designed to measure your skill in locating and correcting errors in written communication, which requires knowledge of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and composition.

The test is a document you must edit. Possible errors for each line of the document include:

- Punctuation errors (incorrect or missing commas, periods, colons, quotation or question marks)
- Misspelled words or capitalization errors
- Grammar errors (tense, pronoun references, incorrect structure, incorrect work usage)
- Missing, duplicate or extra words

It is possible that the line of text has no errors. Each line that contains an error contains only one type of error, so there should only be one correct answer for each line.

Sample WC Instructions

Time Limit: No time limit

of Questions: 48

Purpose: This test measures your skill in locating and correcting errors in written communications, which requires knowledge of punctuation, spelling, grammar and composition.

Questions: The test is an actual sample of a written document containing errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. Please read each line of the text and determine the type of error in each line of text.

Responses: You will choose from five possible responses: A, B, C, D, or E. There is only one correct answer for each question. Read each line of the document carefully and choose the BEST answer for that line. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be based on the number of correct responses you provide.

Response key:

A = *punctuation error* (incorrect or missing commas, periods, colons, quotation or question marks) in the line of text

B = *misspelled words OR errors in capitalization* in the line of text

C = *grammar error* (tense, pronoun references, incorrect structure, incorrect word usage) in the line of text

D = *missing, duplicate or extra word* in the line of text

E = *no errors* in the line of text

WC Example

Sample Document

When Mr. Henry Jones finished his shopping, he went to the

A B C D E

cashier to pay what he bought. The cashier asked,

A B C D E

"Would you like to charge your purchase? Mr. Jones

A B C D E

agreed and asks the cashier if she would put his lunch bill on

A B C D E

the same credit card. In going thru each step in the

A B C D E

charge procedures the cashier forgot to enter the lunch

A B C D E

bill into the machine, so Mr. Jones got a free lunch.

A B C D E

Answers:

B--"shopping" is spelled incorrectly

D--missing word--insert "for" between "pay" and "what"

A--quotation mark after question mark

C--incorrect tense--"asks" should be "asked"

C--incorrect word choice--"thru" should be "through"
A--place comma after "procedure"
E--no errors

Planning, Scheduling and Organizing (PSO) Test

The Planning, Scheduling and Organizing (PSO) Test is an un-timed test. The test is designed to measure your ability to plan an activity, schedule events and organize actions and resources. The test is presented in a series of eight situations. You will be presented with five questions about each situation.

Sample PSO Instructions

Time Limit: No time limit

of Questions: 40

Purpose: This test is designed to measure your ability to plan an activity, schedule events and organize actions and resources.

Questions: The test contains eight situations related to planning, scheduling and/or organizing. Each situation is followed by a series of questions related to that situation. You should answer each question using the information provided in the situation and/or the question.

Responses: You will choose from four possible responses: A, B, C, or D. There is only one correct answer for each question. Read each response carefully and choose the BEST answer. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be based on the number of correct responses you provide.

PSO Example

Sample Situation: You have decided to have your boss and his wife over for dinner. You want to impress them with your cooking ability and your skills in managing such an occasion. To do that, you are putting a lot of work into the dinner to make sure that everything goes right.

Sample Question: What is the first thing to do in planning the dinner?

- A. Go shopping for the ingredients of the dinner.
- B. Decide on the menu of the dinner.
- C. Set the table for dinner.
- D. Prepare the salad.

Answer: B. You cannot shop for ingredients before determining what you will serve. You cannot prepare the salad until you have decided that you want to serve salad, and there is no need to set the table before you have decided on a menu or shopped for the ingredients.

Customer Service (CS) Test

The Customer Service (CS) Test is an un-timed test. The test is designed to measure your ability to deal or work with external customers and clients.

The test is presented in a series of nine situations with possible responses to those situations. You will read a situation and then the possible responses that are connected with that situation. For each response, you will decide if it is acceptable for the situation or unacceptable for the situation.

Sample CS Instructions

Time Limit: No time limit

of Questions: 38

Purpose: This test focuses on customer service which is defined as the behavior related to dealing or working with mostly external customers or clients.

Questions: The test consists of nine brief customer service situations. Read the situation. A list of possible responses is beneath the situation.

Responses: You must decide if each of the responses listed below the situation are *acceptable* or *unacceptable* as they relate to the situation. There is only one correct answer for each response. Read each response carefully and choose the BEST answer. There is no penalty for guessing. Your score will be based on the number of correct responses you provide.

Decision guidelines:

- Consider what should be done in a typical work environment-what would a typical office policy require you to do, what would a typical supervisor ask of you, etc.
- You are not determining which behaviors or responses are most acceptable. You are determining which of the behaviors or responses are acceptable and which are not.

CS Example

Sample Situation: You are a customer service clerk. You are helping a customer who has several questions. The customers waiting in line begin to tell your customer to hurry it up. How should you deal with this situation?

Sample Responses:

Explain to the customers in line that your current customer has a real need and someone will be with them as soon as possible.

Acceptable Unacceptable

Tell the people in line the more they interrupt the longer it will take.

Acceptable Unacceptable

Apologize to your current customer.

Acceptable Unacceptable

Ignore the people in line.

Acceptable Unacceptable

Answers:

- It is appropriate to explain to the customers in line they will be helped as soon as possible.
- Telling people in line the more they interrupt the longer it will take could cause a situation if the people in line are offended by your statement.
- It is appropriate to apologize to your current customer to show that you sympathize with the situation.
- It would be inappropriate to ignore the people in line. Without intervention, they might become more hostile.

General Tips for Taking the Exam

On The Day Before The Exam

On the day before the exam, you should prepare just as you would for any other important appointment. Know where you are going and explore your options for getting there.

Make sure you know how to find the exam site, and get driving directions and information about where to park ahead of time. Prepare what you should take with you to the exam.

Review the examination announcement and your schedule letter which identifies everything you need to bring with you to the exam, (for example: a driver's license or picture ID) and items not to bring to the exam.

Make sure you dress comfortably and in layers, in order to ensure your comfort during the exam.

Get plenty of rest the night before the exam and allow yourself enough time in the morning so you do not have to rush. Being rested and having a clear head on the day of the exam may help as much as any last minute review.

Be aware that you may not use cellular phones, beepers, headphones, or other similar communication devices in the exam center. The use of such devices at the exam center is strictly prohibited and can result in your disqualification.

Be aware smoking and food are not allowed at the exam center.

On The Exam Day

When you leave for the exam, allow yourself extra time to find parking, to locate the room where you will be taking the exam, to sign-in, to go to the restroom and to get yourself settled.

Be sure to bring your picture identification with you to the exam site. You will not be admitted without proper picture identification.

You will not need to bring anything else with you. This includes study materials, this booklet, pencils, communication devices, calculators, etc.

Beginning the Exam

Before you start your exam, a monitor will check your identification and sign you in to the exam site.

Once everyone is seated, the monitor will read general instructions to the group. You should listen carefully to these instructions because they may help you to perform better on the exam.