



**RECRUIT FIREFIGHTER  
WRITTEN TEST STUDY GUIDE**

## DOING YOUR BEST ON THE RECRUIT FIREFIGHTER WRITTEN TEST

### WHAT IS THE TEST ABOUT?

Part 1 of the test measures reading comprehension and mathematics such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, square roots, and the use of decimals, fractions, and percentages. Part 2 measures job-related personal characteristics that have been demonstrated to be indicators of success as a firefighter.

### CAN YOU STUDY FOR IT?

We strongly urge:

\*When you read, concentrate on what you are reading. Try to understand its full meaning and implications.

\*Read articles or books on practical subjects. Exactly what you read is not nearly as important as how well you use it to sharpen your reading skills. So choose a subject that interests you.

\*After reading a paragraph or section, put it aside and test yourself on it.

\*Review and practice mathematics computations and applications.

\*Of course, you can't "study for" your personal characteristics. The best thing to do on this part of the test is to answer the questions honestly. Your experiences, attitudes, and interests have built up over a lifetime and would be difficult, if not impossible, to change. Any attempts to "fake" the right answer may not be correct. So, again, the best advice we can give you is to answer these questions honestly.

### QUESTION FORMAT

Questions in the Firefighter written test may be either multiple-choice or true/false. This means that each question gives you a set of answers from which to choose. You are to choose the one answer that is the best one, the one most nearly or most often correct, or the one usually true for you. Here is an example. It makes a very important point, so pay special attention to it.

The number of days in a year is

- A. 365
- B. 366
- C. 367
- D. 368

The answer you should choose is choice A, because it is the one which is most often correct. Choice B is true for leap years, but most years have 365 days. Therefore, choice A is the best answer.

## STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

1. Read the entire question carefully. Be sure that you know what the question asks, and what the choices say. On every test, people choose wrong answers simply because they failed to read the question or answers carefully, or because they chose an answer before reading all answers.
  
2. Choose the answer that is GENERALLY best. Answer according to what is generally or usually true, not by what would be true in some particular case. Remember the question about the number of days in a year. The right answer was the one that was true for most years, not the one that was true for leap years. To keep the questions short, they cannot go into a lot of detail. Sometimes there is no answer that is complete, or exactly correct, or always correct. The best answer is the one that is right, under ordinary conditions.

For example, look at this question: In reading this information, it is most important that a person

- A. read it more than once
  
- B. understand what is read
  
- C. read slowly

Some people will read this information slowly, and some people may benefit from reading it more than once. However, what is most important is that a person understands what he or she reads. Therefore, choice B is the right answer.

3. Use your time efficiently. The Firefighter written test is not a speed test, but it does not give you unlimited time, either.

\*Read at your normal speed. Don't slow down just because you are taking a test.

\*Eliminate choices you know are wrong. When you have trouble deciding on the best answer but have decided one or two answers are definitely not best, avoid further consideration of those, and concentrate on the answers you think might be correct.

\*Move right along so that you finish the test and have time to go back and do more work on the questions that need it. Numbers 4 and 5 (below) will give you a good plan for handling questions that are hard for you, helping you not to get bogged down elsewhere on the test.

4. Make decisions. When you first read a question, decide SOMETHING about it.

Your decision should be one of the following:

- a. You may decide you know the answer. You have little or no doubt about it. Mark your answer on the answer sheet. Spend no more time on that question.

b. You may decide that figuring out the answer is possible, but will take you a lot of time. Don't mark down an answer. Simply skip the question for now and come back to it later. (In answering the next question, make sure you are at the right place on your answer sheet).

c. You may decide you don't know the answer and that all you will ever be able to do is make a guess. Make the guess. Mark the answer sheet to show your guess. Don't waste any more time on that question. There is no penalty for guessing and sometimes you will guess correctly. If you can narrow down your guessing to the two or three most likely answers, you can increase your chance of guessing correctly.

5. Don't give up. Many people give up too easily on test questions. If the question looks hard, they don't even try. Here are some of the kinds of questions people give up on that they could answer if they just tried harder:

a. Mathematics questions may appear difficult because of the symbols or letters used, but remember, they all test for these basic operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, squares and square roots, the use and conversion of decimals, fractions and percentages, and the use of algebraic formulas.

b. Questions testing your ability to read, understand and use what you have read. Sometimes people give up on a question because it looks technical, when all the information needed to answer it is right there in front of them! Sometimes the reading material looks long and complicated. Look for the main idea. Look for the specific information you need to answer the question. Make reasonable inferences.

c. The personal characteristics questions will be very difficult if you try to figure out the "right" answer, but they will be very easy if you simply answer honestly.

In a test like the one for Recruit Firefighter, some questions are easy and some are hard. Probably no one will make a perfect score. If it is hard for you to figure out an answer, it is probably hard for other people too. Keep your mind on the test and try!

6. Don't change answers too much. When people change answers, they more often change from a right answer to a wrong one, than from a wrong answer to a right one. The reason seems to be that people concentrate on a special case. This results in choosing the answer on the basis of facts that are not given in the question. Or people concentrate on one part of a question and forget about the rest of the question. Remember, the best answer is the one that is usually or generally right.

7. Be at your best the day of the test and be on time. Be well rested. Get a good night's sleep before the test. Allow plenty of time to get to the test site. Plan to get there early.

Below, please find links to reference material of the type you are likely to see on the Recruit Firefighter written test. This list is not exhaustive, and there may be topics or areas presented on the test that are not represented here.

The links will take you to Khan Academy. Khan Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. Khan Academy is free to access and use.

### **Reading Comprehension**

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/sat-reading-writing-practice>

### **Rational Exponents & Fractions**

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/rational-exponents-and-radicals>

### **Time Differences**

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/3rd-engage-ny/engage-3rd-module-2/3rd-module-2-topic-a/v/times-differences-math-3rd-grade-khan-academy>

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/3rd-engage-ny/engage-3rd-module-2>

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/3rd-engage-ny/engage-3rd-module-2/3rd-module-2-topic-a/v/time-to-leave-for-home>

### **Ratios, Rates, Proportions, Percentages**

See: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/pre-algebra/pre-algebra-ratios-rates>