



Preparation Manual

Federal Air Marshal Assessment Battery

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Transportation
Security
Administration

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Introduction

Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to help you prepare to take the TSA Federal Air Marshal (FAM) Assessment Battery (FAB). This manual will familiarize you with the Logic-Based Reasoning Test, the Writing Test, and the Situational Judgment Test, and will give you a chance to study some sample questions and explanations for the correct answers to each question. If you have not had much practice taking written, multiple-choice assessments, you will have an opportunity to see what the tests look like and to practice answering questions similar to those on the tests.

Organization of the Manual

This manual is organized into the following four sections:

Section I: Tips for taking the FAB

Section II: Preparation material for the Logic-Based Reasoning test

Section III: Preparation material for the Writing Skills assessment, including a practice test and explanations of correct responses

Section IV: Preparation material for the Situational Judgment test

Section I

Test Taking Tips

- 1.** You will do your best on the test if you stay calm and relaxed. Take a few deep, slow breaths to help you maintain your calm.
- 2.** Pay careful attention to all directions before beginning.
- 3.** For each question, read the entire question and all response options carefully before deciding upon an answer.
- 4.** If you do not know the answer to a question, eliminate the response options that you know to be incorrect or probably incorrect and then guess from the remaining response options.
- 5.** Your score is based only upon the number of questions you answer correctly. You are not penalized for answering questions incorrectly. Therefore, you should answer every question.
- 6.** If you finish before time is up, go back and check your answers. (Note: You can only go back and check answers for the Logic-Based Reasoning Test and Writing Skills Test. During the Situational Judgment Test, you can NOT go back to review or answer previous questions once you move to the next question.)
- 7.** Ignore any patterns of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, or Es. The correct answer positions are chosen randomly and there is no way to improve your chances by guessing based on an answer pattern.

Section II

The Logic-Based Reasoning Test

Introduction

Purpose of this Section

Reasoning is a critical competency for successful performance in the FAM positions. Correct reasoning is useful for decision-making and problem solving activities that prevail on the job.

In this section of the manual, you will read some useful information about reasoning correctly, and effective strategies for working through logical reasoning problems. In addition to familiarizing you with the test and instructions, this section will give you a chance to study some sample questions and explanations for the correct answers to each question.

Educated Guessing

There is no penalty for guessing on this test; therefore, you should answer every question. If you guess blindly, you have at least a one in five chance of getting the correct answer (or better, depending on the question). However, your chance of choosing the correct answer by merely guessing is greatly improved by using a little mental detective work to eliminate one or more response options that are probably or certainly wrong.

A poor guessing strategy is to try to determine the next answer based on its letter or on some pattern of letters among the answer choices. There may be several Ds or As or any other letter in a row, or there may not be. Trying to uncover some pattern in these letters and guessing based on that pattern is not an effective test-taking strategy.

Preparing For Logical Reasoning Questions

Logical Reasoning

The questions in this examination are designed to test your ability to read and understand complex written material from which you intend to take some action and/or to derive conclusions it. The type of reading that these questions ask you to do is different from ordinary reading, in which you simply follow the general meaning of a series of sentences to see what the writer thinks about a topic. Rather, it is the type of reading you have to do with complex material when you intend to take some action or draw some conclusion based on that material. The test asks you to make logical conclusions based on facts you are given in various paragraphs. These conclusions need to be based only on the facts in those paragraphs. Therefore, answering requires careful reading and focused thought about what information is given and what information is not given.

The types of problems within this test can be referred to as “logic games.” Broadly, they require you to either put things (e.g., events or people) in order/sequence or put them into groups.

The following information will give you some suggestions about how to approach the questions and some information about how you can develop your reasoning skills.

Reading the Paragraph

Some paragraphs in the test are drawn from written materials relating to FAMS or Government work, whereas others represent non-governmental general scenarios. Even within the Government-related paragraphs, there may be some facts that do not apply to every Government department or agency. For test taking purposes, it is important that you **accept every fact in the paragraph as true**. Remember that you are not being judged on your knowledge of the set of facts given, but rather on your ability to read and reason based upon those facts.

Not all information is of the same type. There can be information about events and there can be information about groups (or categories) of things. Information can also be positive (for example, “Joe will be on Team B”), or negative (for example, “Joe cannot be on Team B”).

Question Types

This test has two sections. One section has questions that can be answered “True” or “False” or “Cannot be Determined,” and the other has multiple choice questions.

True/False Questions

In this section you will be presented with scenarios that measure your ability to determine whether a conclusion is True, False, or Cannot be Determined based on a given set of facts. In each of these scenarios, a set of facts is given, followed by a series of proposed conclusions. You will then decide whether each conclusion is True, False, or Cannot be Determined based on the given set of facts. For example:

“If Greg is on Team A, then Mary must be on Team B”

True

False

Cannot be Determined

It is important to read the conclusion carefully. Do not skim over the conclusion statement.

The task in these questions is to determine what **can** and **cannot** be validly concluded based on the facts in the paragraph. If the conclusion cannot be determined with certainty to be true or false based on the facts in the paragraph then it should be marked “Cannot be Determined.”

Multiple Choice Questions

In this section, you are provided with a scenario that includes a set of facts. Each scenario is followed by a series of multiple-choice questions. Using only the information given in the statements, and assuming that the facts are true, you will select the correct answer for each question. You may wish to draw a rough sketch to help you answer some of the questions.

Reasoning About Groups or Categories

As was stated before, not all information is of the same type. There can be information about events or situations, and there can be information about individuals and groups (or categories). Next, we discuss some tips on how to deal with information about groups or categories.

“All” Statements

A statement about groups that begins with the words “all,” “each,” or “every” gives you some important information limiting the possible solutions to a given problem/scenario. For example, the statement “there must be exactly four employees in the office every week” tells you that solutions to the scenario that involve more or less than four employees in the office during any week are not possible.

“All,” “each,” and “every” are KEY WORDS that signify important information about how solutions to a given problem/scenario are limited.

Reasoning From "None" and "Not" Statements

Information that something is **NOT** true is useful information. For example, you may learn that one group is **NOT** a part of another group. This is the same as saying that there is no overlap between the two groups.

"No" and "not" are KEY WORDS that signify important information about how groups, objects, or people are related.

A Few Final Cautions About Wording

In general, you should pay attention to any words that provide information about groups or linked events. This includes negative words (such as "cannot" or "none"). It also includes positive words (such as "all" or "must" or "always"). You should also watch for connectors such as "whenever" or "unless" or "except," since these words sometimes contain key information about relations among the facts given in the paragraph.

Look for KEY WORDS such as "cannot," "none," "all," "must," and "always."

Using Shorthand

You may find it helpful to use shorthand in order to list the facts provided within a question. The goal is to simplify a lot of information into an easily readable cue. For example, the following facts:

If John is chosen for the job then Bruce is also chosen.

There are no more than 2 people in room A.

can be more simply written as:

$J \rightarrow B$ OR *If J, then B*

$A \leq 2$ OR $A < 3$

Using a Diagram

The best way to approach each scenario is to first spend time thinking through the rules of the scenario. Drawing a diagram based upon the facts provided is a useful way of summarizing the information to see more easily what answers are or are not possible. Drawing a diagram involves making a quick sketch of the scenario facts.

For example, suppose a scenario provides you with the following facts:

John, Erica, Carol, and George must be placed into one of three rooms, rooms 1, 2, and 3. Each room must include at least one person.

*John can only be placed in room 1.
Carol cannot be placed in room 2.
John must be in the same room as Erica.
Carol cannot be placed in the same room as John.*

A good approach is to draw a diagram with 3 columns, one for each room, and then to fill in the columns based on what information is known.

Starting with the first two facts (Facts 1 and 2), we know that John must be in room 1 and Carol cannot be in room 2:

1	2	3
J	No C	

Fact 3 requires that Erica join John:

1	2	3
J E	No C	

Finally, Fact 4 states that John and Carol cannot be in the same room. Thus, Carol cannot be in room 1. Fact 2 also says that Carol cannot be in room 2. Therefore Carol must be placed in room 3. Since this leaves nobody in room 2, and each room requires at least one person, and George is the only person not yet assigned to a room, he must be placed in room 2:

1	2	3
J E	No C G	C

Thus, drawing a diagram has allowed us to determine who must be in each room. This exercise demonstrates the usefulness of using a diagram to simplify the facts within a scenario.

**Remember
These Tips
When Taking
the Logic-Based
Reasoning Test**

1. In the True/False/Cannot be Determined section, always base your answer on whether the paragraph provides you with enough information to know that the conclusion is definitely true or is definitely false. If the paragraph does not provide enough information to know this with certainty, then you should answer “Cannot be Determined.”
2. Remember NOT to use any outside factual information to reach your conclusion.
3. Read the paragraph very carefully. Also, within the multiple choice section, be sure to read all of the answer choices carefully before you mark the one you think is correct.
4. Pay special attention whenever the question uses words such as “all,” “some,” or “none.” Other terms such as “unless” or “except” or “only” are also important. These words help to define the facts from which you must draw conclusions.
5. Use shorthand and/or draw a diagram to map out the scenario in order to help you see what conclusions are or are not possible.
6. Take the sample test and study the explanation for each of the questions very carefully. This will help you fine-tune your reasoning on the actual test.

LOGIC-BASED REASONING PRACTICE TEST

This practice test contains questions that are similar to, but not exactly the same as, the questions on the real test. This practice test is followed by detailed explanations of every question. These explanations will give you information about why the correct response options are correct and why the incorrect response options are incorrect. Understanding the reasons for the correct and incorrect response options should assist you in distinguishing between right and wrong answers on the test.

TRUE/FALSE/CANNOT BE DETERMINED ITEMS

The following scenario will measure your ability to determine whether a conclusion is True, False, or Cannot be Determined based on a given set of facts. In this scenario, a set of facts is given, and followed by a series of proposed conclusions. Use only the information given in the statements and assume all of the facts are true. Decide whether each conclusion is True, False, or Cannot be Determined based on the given set of facts. If there appears to be more than one potential alternative for a proposed conclusion, then you should mark Cannot Be Determined. You may wish to draw a rough sketch to help you answer some of the questions.

*You must use **only** the information provided in the paragraph, without using any outside information whatsoever.*

It is suggested that you take not more than 6 minutes to complete questions 1 through 3. The questions on this practice test will not be on the real test, but the real questions will be similar in form and difficulty to these. The explanations for the correct and incorrect responses are found after the sample questions.

As part of an annual family tradition, the Rory family has rented a vacation condo for four weeks. The Rory family includes Frank, Mary, Steven, Darla, Amy, Ulysses, Courtney, and George. Each family member must visit the condo, but they do not have to stay all four weeks. When visiting, a person must stay for a week. There must be at least two family members at the condo each week, but no more than five family members at a time.

- Frank and Mary will be there the first and fourth week.
- Darla and Courtney must be at the condo at the same time.
- Amy, Ulysses, and Courtney are available to visit any time after week one.
- Steven and George will alternate their visits at the condo starting week one. One of them will be at the condo each week.

- 1) **If Courtney chooses to stay at the condo week four, then Amy and Ulysses will not be able to stay that week.**

True False Cannot be Determined

- 2) **If Frank and Mary decide to have week four alone to themselves in the condo, George visits the condo once.**

True False Cannot be Determined

MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS

In the following scenario, a set of facts is given, followed by a question. Use only the information given in the statements, assume that the facts are true, and select the BEST answer for the question. You may wish to draw a rough sketch to help you answer the question.

Below are a set of facts. All of the facts are true. Based on the facts given, you are to determine the BEST answer to the question.

Facts:

As part of an annual family tradition, the Rory family has rented a vacation condo for four weeks. The Rory family includes Frank, Mary, Steven, Darla, Amy, Ulysses, Courtney, and George. Each family member must visit the condo, but they do not have to stay all four weeks. When visiting, a person must stay for a week. There must be at least two family members at the condo each week, but no more than five family members at a time.

- Frank and Mary will be there the first and fourth week.
 - Darla and Courtney must be at the condo at the same time.
 - Amy, Ulysses, and Courtney are available to visit any time after week one.
 - Steven and George will alternate their visits at the condo starting week one. One of them will be at the condo each week.
- 3) **During what week is it NOT possible for the condo to be filled to maximum capacity?**
- A) Week 1
 - B) Week 2
 - C) Week 3
 - D) Week 4

Analysis of Logical Reasoning Practice Test Questions

1. Correct Answer: True
The conclusion: “If Courtney chooses to stay at the condo week four, then Amy and Ulysses will not be able to stay that week” must logically be true based on the information provided.

Several relevant pieces of information lead to this conclusion:

- 1) There can be no more than 5 people staying in the condo during any week.
- 2) Frank and Mary will both be staying in the condo during week four.
- 3) Steven and George will alternate their visits at the condo starting week one. One of them will be at the condo each week.
- 4) Darla and Courtney must be at the condo at the same time.

Thus, it can be determined that there will be 3 people staying in the condo during week four (Frank and Mary, and either Steven or George), and there is room for no more than 2 other people. If Courtney is also in the condo during week four, that brings the total up to 5, because Darla and Courtney must be at the condo at the same time. (Frank, Mary, either Steven or George, Courtney, and Darla will be in the condo.) There is no additional room for Amy and Ulysses.

This situation can be illustrated through a diagram:

1	2	3	4
FM S or G No A,U,C,D	S or G	S or G	FM S or G CD

2. Correct Answer:
Cannot be Determined

The truth of the conclusion: “If Frank and Mary decide to have week four alone to themselves in the condo, George visits the condo once” cannot be determined based on the information provided.

The only information provided about George is the fact that either Steve or George must be staying at the condo each week. It is not specified whether Steven or George will visit the condo first. If Steven visits the condo during week one, then George will visit the condo during week two, Steven will visit again during week three, and neither will visit during week four (because Frank and Mary will be alone in the condo that week). In this case, the conclusion is true—George will have only visited once during week 2:

1	2	3	4
FM S No A,U,C,D	G	S	Only FM

However, it is also possible that George visits the condo during week 1, in which case Steven visits the condo during week 2, and George visits again during week 3. In this case, the conclusion is false—George will have visited the condo twice, not once:

1	2	3	4
FM G No A,U,C,D	S	G	Only FM

Therefore, it is not possible to know whether George will visit the condo once or twice without knowing whether Steven or George will be the first to visit the condo during week 1—information that is not provided within the scenario.

3. Correct Answer:

A) Week 1.

There are several key pieces of information used to determine that the condo cannot be filled to maximum capacity during week one:

- 1) The maximum capacity for the condo is five people at one time.
- 2) Amy, Ulysses, and Courtney are available to visit any time after week one.
- 3) Steven and George will alternate their visits at the condo starting week one. One of them will be at the condo each week.
- 4) Darla and Courtney must be at the condo at the same time.

Therefore, the people who CANNOT be in the condo during week one include Amy, Ulysses, Courtney, and Darla (who must be in the condo at the same time as Courtney). That leaves only Frank, Mary, and either Steven or George (who alternate visits to the condo)—a total of three people, below the maximum capacity of five:

1	2	3	4
FM S or G No A,U,C,D	S or G	S or G	FM S or G

Section III

The Writing Test

Introduction

Purpose of this Section

This section of the manual has been developed to help you prepare for the Writing Test.

This guide provides information that will refresh your knowledge of some basic rules of English grammar, syntax, usage, and sentence and paragraph organization. Only a short summary of each topic is provided. For more in-depth study, you may want to refer to English textbooks or writing handbooks. A reference list with some suggested readings is provided. Also, this guide presents a sample of the types of questions you can expect to find on the Writing Skills Test along with the correct answers and the rationale for them.

Preparing for the Writing Test

Sentence Construction

A sentence is a grammatically independent group of words that serves as a unit of expression.

A sentence normally contains a stated *subject* (the noun(s) and/or pronoun(s) to which the sentence refers), and it must contain a *predicate* (the part that says something about or directs the subject) that consists of at least one word, a verb. Even the single-word command *Go!* is a sentence because it has an unstated, but implied, subject – whoever or whatever is being directed to go – and a verb.

Use of Phrases in Sentences

A phrase is a group of related words lacking a subject and/or a predicate. A phrase can be used as a noun, adjective, adverb, or verb. On the basis of their form, phrases are classified as *prepositional*, *participial*, *gerund*, *infinitive*, and *verb* phrases.

Use of Clauses in Sentences

Clauses are grammatical units containing a subject and a verb. They can be either dependent or independent. An independent clause expresses the main thought of the sentence and can stand alone as a sentence (**Example:** She laughed.). A dependent clause expresses an idea that is less important than the idea expressed in the main clause and cannot stand alone as a sentence (**Example:** As she was laughing...).

Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Phrases and Clauses

- A *restrictive* phrase or clause provides information that is necessary to identify specifically what is being described. A *nonrestrictive* phrase or clause provides information that is incidental to the meaning of the sentence.
- Generally speaking, restrictive phrases and clauses are not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. Nonrestrictive phrases and clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Examples: The blue house that he built on a hill is quite large.

The blue house, which he built on a hill, is quite large.

The first sentence is written about a man who built several blue houses but only one on a hill. Therefore, the phrase *that he built on a hill* is essential for knowing which blue house is being referred to. The phrase is therefore restrictive and is not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

The second example is written about a man who built only one blue house, and it happens to be on a hill. Therefore, *which he built on a hill* is not essential for knowing which house is being referred to. The phrase is therefore nonrestrictive and is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Examples: We should congratulate the student who won the prize.

Pat, who won the prize, deserves our congratulations.

In the first sentence the clause *who won the prize* is essential for indicating the person who should be congratulated. The clause is therefore restrictive and is not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

In the second sentence, the person to be congratulated is identified as Pat, and the clause *who won the prize* is not essential for identifying the person. The clause is therefore nonrestrictive and is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Verb

Definition: A word or phrase used to assert an action or state of being.

Verb Voice

The *voice* of a verb shows whether the subject performs an action (active voice) or receives it (passive voice).

Example (active voice): The consultant wrote a proposal.

Example (passive voice): The proposal was written by the consultant.

Verb Tense

The tense of a verb shows the time of the action of the verb. There are an active and a passive form of all tenses in English. The six English verb tenses are:

<i>Tense Voice</i>	<i>Examples of Active Voice</i>	<i>Examples of Passive</i>
Present is being taken	she takes; she is taking	she is taken; she
Past she was being taken	she took; she was taking	she was taken;
Future taken	she will take; she will be taking	she will be
Present perfect taken	she has taken; she has been taking	she has been
Past perfect taken	she had taken; she had been taking	she had been
Future perfect been taken	she will have taken; she will have been taking	she will have

The *present* tense represents action that is taking place now.

Example: She *is attending* training today.

The *past* tense represents action that took place in past time.

Example: He *wrote* five letters yesterday.

The *future* tense places action in future time.

Example: She *will attend* the meeting later today.

Verb Mood

The *present perfect* tense represents action completed before the present time.

Example: He *has taken* training.

The *past perfect* tense represents action that occurs before another past action.

Example: She counted the letters he *had written*.

The *future perfect* tense represents action that will be completed before a specific time in the future.

Example: By next week, he *will have completed* the analysis.

The *mood* of a verb shows whether an action is fact (indicative mood), something other than fact, such as a possibility, wish, or supposition (subjunctive mood), or a command (imperative mood).

Example of indicative mood: They *are going* to the ball game.

Example of subjunctive mood: I insist that he *go* to the ball game.

Example of imperative mood: *Go* now!

The subjunctive mood is also used to express a condition contrary to fact.

Example: I wish I *were* president.

Other Rules Related to Verbs

Transitive verbs require direct objects to complete their meaning.

Example: The baseball player *signed the autographs*.

Intransitive verbs do not require direct objects to complete their meaning.

Example: The boat *has docked*.

Linking verbs are not action verbs; rather, they express a state of being or existence. The various forms of the verb *to be* are primary linking verbs.

Linking verbs never take objects but, instead, connect the subject to a word or idea in the predicate. **Examples:** It *was* he who bought the tickets. His proposal *is* unacceptable. Some dogs *are* excitable.

The verb *to be* can also be used with another verb as a helping (auxiliary) verb to create a verb phrase.

Examples: Flights *have been delayed*. The contract will *have to be reviewed*.

Infinitive

Definition: An infinitive is the form of a verb that expresses action or existence without reference to person, number, or tense. **Example:** *To run* is relaxing. The form consists of the work “to” and the verb.

- A split infinitive has a word or several words between the *to* and the *verb* following it. Splitting an infinitive is generally considered incorrect, especially if more than one word intervenes between *to* and the verb. **Incorrect example:** You should try *to*, if you can, *attend* the briefing. **Correct usage:** You should try *to attend* the briefing, if you can.
- An infinitive may be used as the subject of a sentence or as the object of a verb or preposition. **Example:** *To become* champion has been her lifelong dream.
- An infinitive may be used as an adjectival modifier. **Example:** He had several papers *to review* during the trip.

Gerund

Definition: A gerund is the form of a verb ending in *ing* that is used as a noun. In fact, another name for a gerund is a verbal noun.

- A gerund may be used as the subject of a sentence. **Example:** *Drawing* was his favorite personal activity.
- A gerund may be used as the object of a verb or a preposition. **Example:** She preferred *walking* over *bicycling*. *Walking* is the object of the verb *preferred* and *bicycling* is the object of the preposition *over*.

Participle

Definition: A participle is a form of the verb used as an adjective. Simple participle forms end in *ed* or *ing*. **Examples:** The candidate felt *betrayed*. The New Year’s Eve party was *exciting*.

- When a participial phrase seems to modify a word that it cannot sensibly modify, then it is a dangling phrase. **Incorrect example:** Sailing on the open sea, many dolphins were spotted. (*Sailing* does not modify dolphins.) **Correct usage:** Sailing on the open sea, we spotted many dolphins.

Noun

Definition: A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action.

- A common noun identifies one or more of a class of persons, places, things, qualities, ideas, or actions that are alike. **Examples:** The girl chained her *bicycle* to the *fence*.
- A proper noun identifies a particular person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action. (*Note:* Proper nouns must be capitalized.) **Examples:** *Joe Brown* drove his *Lincoln Towncar* to the *Kennedy Center*.
- A collective noun identifies a group of people or things that are related or acting as one. **Examples:** The *jury* arrives at the courthouse each day at nine in the morning. The *platoon* travels by night in order to avoid detection. Collective nouns are *single* in number; thus, they take a singular verb.
 - If the individual members of the group are referred to, then the plural verb can be used. **Example:** A group of employees *are* sharing supplies with each other.
- The possessive of a singular noun is formed by adding an apostrophe and *s* to the noun. **Examples:** the boy's sweater; Alice's car
- The possessive of a plural noun ending in *s* is formed by adding an apostrophe only. **Examples:** officers' salaries; workers' union

Pronoun

Definition: A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun, most frequently to eliminate monotonous repetition of the noun. There are nine types of pronouns:

- Demonstrative pronouns point out a specific person or thing. **Examples:** this, that, these, those
- Indefinite pronouns refer to people or things generally rather than specifically. **Examples:** all, any, anybody, anyone, anything, both, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, few, many, most, much, neither, no one, nobody, none, nothing, one, other, several, some, somebody, someone, something, such

- Verbs used with indefinite pronouns must agree with the pronoun in number.
Examples: none *is*; much *is*; everyone *is*; many *are*
 - *None* is generally used in a singular sense. If you think of *none* as *no one person or thing*, then it is easy to see that it is singular in meaning and takes a singular verb. However, when *none* is used in the sense of *not two* or *no amount*, then a plural verb is used. **Example:** None of the team members *are* in agreement.
- Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions. **Examples:** who, what, which
- Relative pronouns relate a subordinate part of a sentence to the main clause.
Examples: who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose, which, whichever, what, that

Who and *whoever* are used as subjects in a sentence or phrase, while *whom* and *whomever* are used as objects in a sentence or phrase. **Examples:** *Who* will get the tickets? *Whoever* is going will buy the tickets. I need to give tickets to *whom*? The tickets will be given to *whomever* I see first.
- Personal pronouns refer to persons or things and change form in three different persons: first person (the person speaking), second person (the person spoken to), and third person (person or thing spoken about).
 - First person pronouns: I, we (used as subject of sentences and clauses) me, us (used as objects of verbs and prepositions)
 - Second person pronoun: you (used for singular and plural, for subjects and objects)

- Third person pronouns: he, she, it, they (used as subject of sentences and clauses)
him, her, it, them (used as objects of verbs and prepositions)

Examples: Bill and *I* are going. She told Sally and *me*.

- Possessive pronouns determine ownership or possession without using an apostrophe followed by an *s*. **Examples:** my, mine, our, ours, yours, his, hers, its, their, theirs (*Note: it's* is not a possessive pronoun; it is the contraction of *it is*.)
- Reflexive pronouns refer back to the noun or pronoun used as the subject of the sentence. **Examples:** I burned *myself*. You are deceiving *yourself*. John excused *himself*.
- Intensive pronouns are used to emphasize the previous noun or pronoun.
Examples: You *yourself* must register. Anne *herself* must finish it.

Adjective and Adverb

Definitions: An adjective is a word that modifies a noun. An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

- An adjective or an adverb should be placed so that there is no doubt as to which word it modifies. **Example:** The *angry* boy *quickly* threw the ball. *Angry* is an adjective modifying the noun *boy*. *Quickly* is an adverb modifying the verb *threw*.
- Adjectives and adverbs show degrees of quality or quantity by means of their positive, comparative, and superlative forms. The positive form expresses no comparison at all. The comparative form adds an *-er* to the positive form of the adjective or adverb or prefixes the positive form with the word *more* to express a greater degree or a comparison between two persons or things. The superlative form adds an *-est* to the positive form of the adjective or adverb or prefixes the positive form with the word *most* to express the greatest degree of quantity or quality among three or more persons or things.

Examples:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
short	shorter	shortest
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
big	bigger	biggest
quickly	more quickly	most quickly

- Many adverbs have the characteristic *ly* ending. **Example:** quickly, slowly, angrily

Article

Definition: An article is a word that refers to a noun and gives definiteness or indefiniteness to the noun.

- The English articles are *a*, *an*, and *the*.

A and *an* are the indefinite articles. They are used for general nouns or when the audience does not know which thing you are referring to. *A* is used before words that begin with a consonant, and *an* is used before words that begin with a vowel.

Examples: *An* attorney will meet you today. *A* file is missing from my desk.

The is the definite article. It is used when the audience knows which thing is being referred to. **Example:** *The* attorney that you met with last week has returned your call.

Preposition

Definition: A preposition is a word that connects a noun to some other word in the sentence. Prepositions usually establish a relationship of time or location. The use of a preposition automatically creates a prepositional phrase. **Examples:** *in* a month; *after* a year; *on* the table; *behind* the door.

- There are over 40 prepositions in English, some of which are: *about*, *around*, *before*, *at*, *below*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*, *through*, *up*, *upon*, and *with*.

Conjunction

Definition: A conjunction (also known as a connective) is a word that joins together sentences, clauses, phrases, or words.

- Conjunctions that connect two or more parts of a sentence that are of equal rank (Example: two nouns or verbs or phrases, etc.) are called coordinating conjunctions. **Examples:** *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, and sometimes *yet*

- Subordinating conjunctions connect dependent (subordinate) clauses to independent (main) clauses. Subordinating conjunctions include *though, if, as, when, while, and since*.
Example: *Since he took the course for his own advancement, his employer wouldn't pay for it.*
- Correlative conjunctions are pairs of words that connect sentence elements that are of equal rank. Correlative conjunctions must always appear together in the same sentence.
Examples: *either-or, neither-nor, whether-or, both-and, and not only-but also*

Examples used in sentences:

Neither the manager *nor* the employee had a reasonable solution to the problem. *Whether* he stayed home *or* went to work depended on a change in his symptoms.

Both the program office *and* the budget office agreed on the increase in funding for the new equipment.

She was outstanding *not only* in her academic coursework *but also* in her fitness training.

Avoiding Verb, Noun, and Pronoun Shifts

Unnecessary shifts in person, number, tense, or voice confuse readers and seriously weaken communication. The examples below indicate these types of errors.

A shift in person occurs when a writer shifts back and forth among the first, second, and third persons. **Incorrect example:** *If you* want to pass the physical, *a person* has to exercise daily.

A shift in number occurs when a plural pronoun is used to refer back to a singular antecedent or vice versa. **Incorrect example:** *Anyone* who shops in that department store must seriously consider *their* budget.

Unnecessary shifts in tense more commonly occur within a paragraph rather than within an individual sentence. **Incorrect example:** After the historian *spent* several hours describing the armies' strategies, he *gave* a horrifying account of the attack. He *points* out in great detail what *is* going on in the minds of each of the soldiers.

A shift in voice occurs when a writer makes unnecessary shifts between the active and the passive voice. **Incorrect example:** *I wrote* the journal article; the *book chapter* was also *written* by me. (In this example, the first clause is active voice and the second shifts to passive voice.)

Sentence Organization within Paragraphs

When two sentence elements are joined by a conjunction, they should have parallel structure.

Correct example: She was outstanding not only *in her academic coursework* but also *in her fitness training*.

Incorrect example: She was outstanding not only *in her academic coursework* but also *she excelled in fitness training*.

A paragraph presents a larger unit of thought than a sentence can contain.

A paragraph must meet certain requirements:

- A paragraph should have *unity*, that is, internal consistency. It should not digress from the dominant idea expressed in the topic sentence.
- A paragraph should have *completeness*. It should present enough detailed information about the topic sentence to answer any general questions the reader may have. More specific questions would require additional paragraphs with new topic sentences.
- A paragraph should have *coherence*. Sentences should flow into each other so that the reader experiences the paragraph as an integrated unit, not as a collection of separate sentences.
- A paragraph should have *order*. Like structure in a larger work, order in a paragraph grows partly out of the material and is partly imposed by the writer. Most paragraphs and essays follow one of the two patterns that follow.
 - *From the general to the particular:* This type of paragraph begins with a topic sentence that serves as an introductory summary of the topic. The remaining sentences explain or illustrate this statement, so that the idea becomes increasingly clear as the paragraph progresses. The topic sentence is usually at or near the beginning of the paragraph.
 - *From the particular to the general:* This type of paragraph is the reverse of the previous pattern. It begins with a series of explanatory or illustrative statements that lead to a general statement or summary. The topic sentence is usually at or near the end of the paragraph.

A paragraph can be looked upon as a microcosm, an exact parallel in miniature of the entire work:

- It has a dominant idea, usually expressed in a topic sentence.
- The dominant idea is developed by examples, comparisons, explanations, or arguments to make the meaning of the topic sentence clear.
- There may be a concluding restatement of the topic idea.

Capitalization

Definition: Capitalization is the use of capital letters to place special emphasis on particular letters to set them off from lower-case letters.

- Sentences always begin with a capital letter.
- The first letter of a quotation is always capitalized.
- Proper nouns, that is, nouns that name particular persons, places, or things, must be capitalized. **Examples:** Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, Brooklyn Bridge
- Titles that precede a proper name are capitalized; those that follow a proper name are not. **Examples:** Chairperson John Smith and John Smith, the chairperson

Punctuation

Definition: Punctuation is the use of periods, commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, exclamation points, dashes, apostrophes, brackets, parentheses, slashes, and quotation marks to convey the pauses and gestures that we use in speech to clarify and emphasize meaning.

- Use a period to end a sentence. **Example:** She went to the beach.
- Use a period after abbreviations. **Examples:** Mr. Ms. U.S. Corp.
- Use a comma to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence.
Example: Suzanne made a presentation at the conference, and then she spent the remainder of the day touring the city.

- Use a comma to separate an introductory phrase or clause from the main clause of a sentence. **Example:** After completing the work, the contractor left the site.
- Place a comma after every item in a series. **Example:** The new office is furnished with a desk, a computer, two chairs, and a supply cabinet.
- Two or more adjectives that modify the noun that they precede are separated by commas. **Example:** The cold, windy morning was not a good beginning for their vacation.
- Commas are used to set off the items in a date. **Example:** On Monday, August 17, 1998, he became the head of the office. Commas are not used when only the month and year are given. **Example:** August 2002
- A semicolon is used to separate elements in a series when some of the elements already contain commas. **Example:** Sally wishes us to attend the first, third, and fifth sessions on Wednesday; the second, fourth, and sixth sessions on Thursday; and the first only on Friday.
- A semicolon is used to join two closely related independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction. **Example:** The project began slowly; thereafter, additional staff were assigned to it.

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WRITING PRACTICE TEST

It is suggested that you take no more than 15 minutes to answer questions 1 through 8 below.

For questions 1, 2, and 3 choose the one answer that represents a correction that should be made to the sentence. If no correction is necessary, choose (D).

1. Once a request to carry firearms into a foreign country are approved, a Federal Air Marshal must notify the Office of Foreign Operations for coordination of the request.
 - A) change carry to for carrying
 - B) change are to is
 - C) change coordination to coordinating
 - D) no correction is necessary

2. Supervisor Smith knows that it is important for his Federal Air Marshals to understand each of the fundamental principals that apply to all methods of dog training.
 - A) change knows that to knows which
 - B) change each to each and every one
 - C) change principals to principles
 - D) no correction is necessary

3. The geographical area composing much of the border between the United States and Mexico is considered to have a desert climate.
 - A) change between to from
 - B) insert a comma after area
 - C) change is to are
 - D) no correction is necessary

Instructions: For question 4, choose the one answer that is the best revision to the underlined word(s) or phrase(s) in the paragraph. If no revision to the underlined word(s) or phrase(s) is necessary, choose option (E). If there are two underlined sections in the same paragraph, each possible answer will consist of two revisions, one for each underlined section. The two revisions will be separated by a slash (/). The first revision will be for the first underlined section in the paragraph, and the second revision will be for the second underlined section in the paragraph.

4. The passenger's use of a fraudulent document was a hindrence to the identification of the passenger.
 - (A) fraudelant / hindrence
 - (B) fraudulant / hindrence
 - (C) fraudulent / hindrance
 - (D) fraudulant / hindrance
 - (E) no correction is necessary

For questions 5 and 6, select the correct paragraph order to create a passage that is well-organized, clear, and coherent. If no correction is necessary, choose (D).

5.

- (1) TSA also recognizes that transportation assets, such as airplanes and tunnels, are part of larger systems, such as the national aviation system or a mass transit system. Taken together, all the individual transportation systems form the national transportation system (i.e., a "system of systems"). The behavior of transportation systems cannot be fully explained by confining observations to individual cars, vessels, and aircraft or fixed infrastructure. An attack on a specific asset must be analyzed for how it will impact the larger transportation system within which it resides. Impacts to a specific transportation system may then have ripple-effects on other transportation systems that could result in cascading failures.
- (2) In December 2005, we made a risk-based choice to change our operations to better meet this threat. Before the change, our screening workforce was spending a lot of time searching for items that no longer posed a significant risk - items that would no longer be useful to terrorists intent on taking control of an aircraft. Based on analysis of threats, vulnerabilities and consequences, we removed the most innocuous of these from our list of items that are prohibited beyond the checkpoint. The time and labor we used to spend detecting them has been shifted to finding explosives instead.
- (3) The nature of the current threat has changed since September 11, 2001. The deployment of measures like hardened cockpit doors, the Federal Flight Deck Officer Program, a vastly expanded Federal Air Marshal Program, and others have greatly reduced the risk of an attack similar to those of September 11. Today, explosives pose the greatest risk to our transportation systems.
- (4) Delivering the best security we can means using risk to guide our decisions - maximizing our resources by directing them where they are most needed. Working with our network of federal and industry partners, we identify the areas of greatest risk throughout transportation systems and act to prevent attacks and mitigate their potential consequences. To meet future threats, we are ensuring that we maintain surge capacity to respond when and where they emerge.

A) 4 – 3 – 2 – 1

B) 3 – 4 – 1 – 2

C) 2 – 3 – 4 – 1

D) no correction is necessary

- 6.
- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Immediately following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) was closed to general aviation aircraft because of its proximity to downtown Washington, D.C.(2) After conducting a thorough security review in partnership with other Departments of Homeland Security and Defense agencies, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) developed a security plan that balances the special security needs of the airport with the economic importance of general aviation flights.(3) ASOs are specially trained law enforcement officers who are authorized by the TSA to fly onboard each general aviation aircraft operating into or out of DCA.(4) The plan, called the DCA Access Standard Security Program, or DASSP, allows a total of 48 general aviation flights a day leaving from designated "gateway airports." All of these flights must have an Armed Security Officer (ASO) onboard. |
|--|

- A) 1 – 4 – 2 – 3
B) 1 – 4 – 3 – 2
C) 1 – 2 – 4 – 3
D) no correction is necessary

Answers to the Writing Skills Questions

1. **Correct Answer: B** A verb must agree with its subject in number. The subject, “request,” is singular and, therefore, the verb should be changed from “are” to “is.”
2. **Correct Answer: C** The correct use of the word “principles” refers to rules, laws, or standards that are applied to the method of dog training. By contrast, the word “principal” means first or foremost in importance.
3. **Correct Answer: D** No change to the sentence is necessary.
4. **Correct Answer: C** The words “fraudulent” and “hindrance” are spelled correctly in this sentence while various incorrect spellings of these words are used in A, B, and D.

5. **Correct Answer: A** The most logical order of the passages is 4, 3, 2, 1. It is not logical to begin the passages with paragraphs 2 or 3, as indicated in Responses B and C, because they appear to complete information that has been presented earlier and, therefore, depend on information in the other two paragraphs in order to be understood. This also eliminates Response D. This leaves Response A, which begins with paragraph 4. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.
6. **Correct Answer: C** The most logical order of the passages is 1, 2, 4, 3. The first paragraph introduces the issue and sets the stage for the remaining paragraphs describing the actions taken to address the issue. Accordingly, paragraph 1 should be the first paragraph. Paragraphs 2 and 4 elaborate on the resolution to the issue introduced in paragraph 1 and therefore must follow paragraph 1. Paragraph 2 logically comes before paragraph 4 because paragraph 2 explains that a plan was put in place whereas paragraph 4 elaborates on the specifics of the plan. Finally, paragraph 3 is clearly the concluding paragraph because it further defines the role of the ASO which is introduced in paragraph 4. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.

Section IV

The Situational Judgment Test

Introduction

Purpose of this Section

The purpose of this section is to help you prepare to take the Video-Based Situational Judgment Test. The Situational Judgment Test is a computerized test that assesses judgment by having you watch a job-related video and determine the effectiveness of various responses to the scenario. Your observation skills are also assessed by questions about various visual details in the video. Federal Air Marshals must detect, deter, and defeat hostile acts targeting U.S. air carriers, airports, passengers, and crews. They operate independently without backup, blend in with passengers and rely on their training, including investigative techniques and criminal terrorist behavior recognition. As a result, they will need to use visual observation skills and excellent judgment to recognize and take action in urgent or critical situations. This test is designed to select trainees who will be able to absorb and evaluate visual cues and who will be able use critical thinking skills to make effective decisions on the job.

This section of the manual will familiarize you with the test and the instructions and will give you a chance to view some sample questions.

Educated Guessing

There is no penalty for guessing on this test. Only one answer can be selected for each question. You will not be able to move to the next page without answering all of the questions.

Preparing For Situational Judgment Questions

Situational Judgment

Observation and judgment are critical competencies for successful performance in the Federal Air Marshal job. Acute observation and sound judgment are essential for decision-making and problem solving activities that prevail on the job.

This is not a knowledge-based exam for which one can study. The questions in this examination are designed to test your ability to absorb and recall incoming visual information as well as to choose the most constructive course of action when faced with professional dilemmas.

The test asks you to evaluate the effectiveness of various responses to a video scenario on a 4-point scale ranging from “Extremely Ineffective” to “Extremely Effective.” The test then asks you to recall specific visual details from the video.

Watching the Video

Each video in the test is drawn from some kind of job situation that may be encountered in FAM work. You are not being judged on your knowledge of the specific roles and responsibilities of a FAM, but rather on your ability to absorb information and apply judgment to a situation.

Answering the Situational Judgment Questions

In this section of the test, you will be presented with a series of follow up responses to the video, followed by a rating scale that asks you to evaluate the effectiveness of each response. For example:

“Hold off on filing the report until you can obtain all necessary details”

- (1) Extremely Ineffective
- (2) Ineffective
- (3) Effective
- (4) Extremely Effective

“Explain that your coworker prevented you from being able to file the report on time”

- (1) Extremely Ineffective
- (2) Ineffective
- (3) Effective
- (4) Extremely Effective

Answering the Observation Questions

In this section of the test, you will find a series of questions referring to various details of the video, followed by a series of choices.

Only one response will be correct:

“What type of bag was the individual who argued with the gate agent carrying?”

- Brown paper bag
- White plastic shopping bag
- Black duffle bag
- Brown leather handbag

The observation questions make it important to not only pay attention to the situation unfolding in the video, but also to the details within the video that may not seem relevant to the situation.