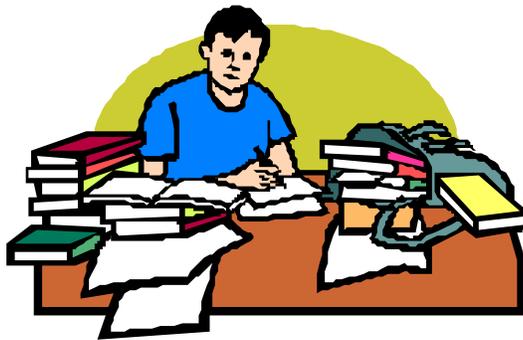


# HOW TO PREPARE GUIDE



## YOUTH SERVICES SENIOR AIDE--60805 WRITTEN EXAMINATION

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Job Preview</b> .....	3
<b>How the Written Examination was developed</b> .....	3
<b>Sample Test Items</b> .....	5
<b>Study Suggestions</b> .....	7
<b>Exam Administration Information</b> .....	7
<b>Test-Taking Tips</b> .....	8
<b>Banded Scoring</b> .....	9
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b> .....	11

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE YOUTH SERVICES SENIOR AIDE - 60805 WRITTEN EXAMINATION

## I. INTRODUCTION

A written examination is being given for the Youth Services Senior Aide classification. The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for the written exam. Since all the material you will need at the time of the exam will be provided when you take the exam, you will not be allowed to have this guide with you at the exam.

## II. JOB PREVIEW

The Youth Services Senior Aide job is beginning-level professional work in the supervision and social development of delinquent youth. Employees in this class assist students in social interaction adjustment and are responsible for controlling and maintaining custody of students and safeguarding them from other students. Employees also coordinate the intake/orientation process for students entering a campus, review case records and reports, and perform general administrative duties as assigned by the supervisor.

## III. HOW THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION WAS DEVELOPED

A study of the Youth Services Senior Aide classification was conducted prior to the development of the examination. A number of employees who work in this class and their supervisors participated in the study. When the information was completed, the results showed that a new employee in the classification of Youth Services Senior Aide must be able to perform several important duties. Some of these are listed below.

- ✓ Observes students at all times following oral and written instructions in order to ensure students are adhering to rules and maintaining proper decorum.
- ✓ Interacts with students, parents, staff, and other individuals in order to exchange information.
- ✓ Instructs students on the program elements in order to ensure students learn the components, such as changing directions, aggression replacement training, slogans, and social skills.
- ✓ Observes students cleaning living area and performing personal hygiene activities in order to ensure students are orderly and following directions.
- ✓ Maintains facility housekeeping plan to include the oversight of students performing routine cleaning of living units, bathrooms, and staff areas in order to ensure living and working areas are clean and orderly.
- ✓ Briefs staff coming in at shift change in order to inform them of any problems that may have occurred on the previous shift and ensure consistency within the unit.
- ✓ Escorts students to school, dining hall, and sick call in order to ensure safety of students and staff.
- ✓ Transports/escorts student for clinical/medical appointments arranged by medical personnel in order to ensure students arrive safely at appointments.
- ✓ Performs searches of students, buildings, and the grounds in order to recover any weapons, contraband, or other unauthorized items.
- ✓ Leads/participates in physical training in order to ensure that students understand expectations and ensure that students are supervised at all times.
- ✓ Leads project adventure activities such as tower and climbing wall in order to ensure the safety of the students and staff, provide learning opportunities, and enhance student responsibility.
- ✓ Conducts outdoor activities such as sports in order to provide social and recreational activities for students.
- ✓ Monitors students assigned to individual/group activities such as arts and crafts, group games, and field trips in order to give directions, answer questions, and ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

- ✓ Observes verbal and nonverbal behavior exhibited by students such as changes in emotions, temperament, and facial expression in order to provide appropriate intervention to ensure the safety of self and others and report observations to appropriate supervisor/professional.
- ✓ Administers first aid and/or medications following instructions from doctors and nurses, training, and policies and procedures in order to ensure health and safety of students and staff.
- ✓ Administers basic emergency first aid such as applying Band-Aid to a cut or preventing injury during a seizure using first aid kits, tongue blades, and towels in order to provide emergency care to injured or suddenly ill students until medical assistance arrives.
- ✓ Administers CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) in order to provide emergency care to injured or suddenly ill youths until medical assistance arrives.

The study also showed that several knowledges, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are associated with the above activities. These KSAs are described below.

- ✓ **Knowledge of English to include grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, and form**
- ✓ Ability to communicate orally in one-on-one situations
- ✓ Ability to communicate orally in group situations
- ✓ **Ability to compose correspondence such as letters, memoranda, and reports to include clarity, content, conciseness, grammar, and spelling**
- ✓ Ability to identify and make appropriate decisions to include prioritizing
- ✓ Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships
- ✓ **Ability to plan/organize to include managing time, prioritizing job tasks, and planning strategically**
- ✓ **Ability to read and comprehend narrative information**
- ✓ Ability to take criticism for unpopular decisions
- ✓ Ability to use persuasion and tact when dealing with persons
- ✓ Ability to use discretion and good judgment
- ✓ **Ability to perform basic mathematical calculations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and percentages**

The examination for Youth Services Senior Aide will measure the KSAs in **bold print**. The KSAs found in the dimensions that are not in bold print must be demonstrated during the probationary period if you are hired into the Youth Services Senior Aide position.

#### IV. SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

The Youth Services Senior Aide exam is divided into five sections: Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Knowledge of English, Ability to compose correspondence, and Planning/Organizing.

To test your **math skills**, you will be given several sets of numerical data. These data sets will be presented as a table of numbers, a mathematical formula, or in narrative form. Use the information provided to answer the questions.

##### Example 1

What is 15% of 1500?

- (A) 2.25
- (B) 22.25
- (C) 225
- (D) 255

Answer **(C)** is correct. 15% of 1500 is 225.

To test your **reading comprehension skills**, you will answer questions that will test your ability to read and comprehend written information.

##### Example 2

You are given a short paragraph. Read the paragraph and then select from the four options the statement that best summarizes the main idea of the paragraph.

To produce effective business letters, a correspondent should always formulate in his or her mind, or on paper, a simple but definite plan of what to say and how to say it.

According to the passage, which statement is true?

- (A) Some preparation for writing a letter is necessary.
- (B) There should be no direct dictation.
- (C) More attention should be given to the proper form than to content.
- (D) You do not need preparation in writing a letter.

Answer **(A)** is correct. The passage indicates that effective business letters require a correspondent to formulate a plan of what to say and how to say it.

To test your **knowledge of English**, you will answer questions that will test your knowledge of Standard English.

##### Example 3

In the following question, an asterisk (\*) replaces a punctuation mark. Select the letter that indicates the missing punctuation mark.

She said Mary's file cannot be completed today (\*) therefore, Mary asked for an extension.

- (A) period (.)
- (B) colon (:)
- (C) semicolon (;)
- (D) comma (,)

Answer **(C)** is correct. The correct punctuation mark is a semicolon.

To test your **ability to compose correspondence**, you will be presented information that will ask you to choose the sentence that represents Standard English, or you may be asked to arrange sentences in proper order.

**Example 4**

The sentences in the following paragraph may or may not be in the proper order. Choose the answer that lists the sentences in the most logical order.

1. I have a son named John.
2. He will start tomorrow.
3. That means he is old enough to start school.
4. He is five years old.

- (A) 1-2-3-4  
(B) 2-4-3-1  
(C) 1-4-3-2  
(D) 4-3-2-1

Answer **(C)** is correct. This represents the most logical order of the four sentences.

To test your **planning/organizing skills**, you will be given a series of scenarios and asked to make decisions based on the information provided.

**Example 5**

Read the situation and answer the following question based on the information provided.

Your supervisor will be out of the office today. You arrived at work at 8:00 AM. You have an appointment today at 11:00 AM with your doctor who has advised you that the appointment should not be rescheduled. You need to leave by 10:30 AM and will not return to the office. Michelle Thomas, an Administrative Support Assistant I, is the only other employee in the office today. However, she does not type. Your supervisor left a note listing the following tasks that must be completed today:

1. Type the Anderson report (2 hours to complete).
2. Sort and distribute mail (30 minutes to complete).
3. Call Miriam Houston about the Anderson report (10 minutes to complete).
4. Post the new dividend rates by 12 PM today (20 minutes to complete).
5. Set up the conference room for the next day's 8:00 am meeting (20 minutes to complete).
6. File dividend reports (2 hours to complete).

Which of the following tasks would you be forced to perform yourself?

- (A) File dividend reports  
(B) Set up the conference room  
(C) Type the Anderson report  
(D) Sort and distribute the day's mail

The correct answer is **(C)**. Since Ms. Thomas cannot type, you must type the Anderson report.

## V. STUDY SUGGESTIONS

You may find some of the following ideas helpful in preparing for the exam.

- ✓ Make up your own tests and take them.
- ✓ Pretend that you are in a real testing situation and try not to talk to anyone else while you are taking the sample tests.
- ✓ Practice following instructions. Read sections of how-to books or instruction manuals you may have at home and practice taking notes or highlighting important aspects of the sections.
- ✓ Study the Sample Test Items in this How to Prepare Guide.

## VI. EXAM ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- ✓ Do **NOT** bring this Guide to the exam location. You will not be permitted to bring it in the testing room.
- ✓ Do **NOT** bring any of your study materials to the exam. This includes notes, manuals, and other study materials.
- ✓ **You must bring the test-scheduling card** that you will receive from the State Personnel Department to the exam. This letter lists the examination title, location of exam, and date, day, and time of examination.
- ✓ **You must also bring picture identification** to the exam location. This may be your driver's license, a military identification card, or a passport.
- ✓ **You will not be allowed to enter the exam location or take the exam without your NOTIFICATION LETTER AND PICTURE IDENTIFICATION.**
- ✓ **Bring several number 2 pencils with erasers** to the exam. It is also recommended that you bring a **highlighter**.
- ✓ You may bring a calculator to use for the exam. Small solar-powered or battery-operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions), are not allowed. Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

If you need testing accommodations due to a health problem or disability, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389.

# TEST-TAKING TIPS

- ✓ **Listen** to the test monitors and follow their instructions carefully.
- ✓ If you are not sure of an answer, **go with your first choice**.
- ✓ Work through the test **without spending too much time on any one item**.
- ✓ If you cannot decide on the best answer to a question, **skip it and go back to it later**.
- ✓ Use your watch or the clock in the room to **keep track of your time** during the test.
- ✓ It is to your advantage to **answer as many questions as possible**, even if you must guess. There is no penalty for guessing.
- ✓ **Mark your answers on the answer sheet and NOT in the test booklet**. Only answers clearly marked on the answer sheet will be given credit.
- ✓ If you have a question at any time before or during the exam, **ask the monitor for assistance**.

## VII. BANDED SCORING

When the written exam for Youth Services Senior Aide is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you performed on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (i.e., 67 out of 80, 93 out of 100). Rather, you will be informed into which band (i.e., 1, 3, 6, 10) your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

### **What is banding?**

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to perform the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and statistically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

### **Misconceptions about banding.**

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

**Misconception:**        ***Each band should have the same number of people.***

We do not force bands to be a certain size. The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times it may be small. People's scores determine the size of the bands. We never know how many people will be in each band until we receive the test scores.

**Misconception:**        ***Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.***

Band numbers do have meaning. Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Consider that in school two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into the same band. Just because one student made a 94.5 and one student made a 94.3, the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 of a point means that the student who scored 94.5 is smarter or is a better student. The scores are so close to each other that they are basically the same.

For example, think of the achievement tests that children take in school. The fine print on these tests always informs you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score, which uses some type of grouping technique such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding. Banding compares your performance on the test to the other test takers' performance and groups your score with others that are statistically the same.

**Misconception:**        ***Band numbers are the same as letter grades.***

Band numbers are not the same as letter grades. Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," and so on. In school, a predetermined numerical range of scores (i.e., 90-100, 80-90, 70-80) equals an alphabetical value (i.e., A, B, C). This grading system is a form of banding. In this case, unlike grade school, the width of bands is not set in advance. Scores are banded only in relation to one another, so you compete against other test takers. The scores of all test takers determine the width of the bands, and your score is set in relation to the scores of your peers.

**Misconception:**        ***A banded score on one test has the same value as a banded score on another test.***

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared from test to test. Consider that a test taker scored 88 on one test, and the highest score of all test takers was 89. It is likely for this exam that the test taker who scored 88 would be in Band 1. However, if the same person scored the same grade on another test, and the highest score of all test takers was 100, he/she may be in Band 2 or Band 3. Candidates' scores vary on each test, and since candidate scores determine the width of bands and into which band test takers fall, the value of a banded score varies from test to test.

**Misconception:** **People with the most seniority who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.**  
People with the most experience do not always fall into the top bands. Time spent in a job may not be the same as possessing a knowledge, skill, or ability needed to perform the job. The people with the strongest knowledges, skills, and abilities (or who did best on the exam) will be in the top bands. Some of the people in the top bands will have been in similar jobs for a long period of time, and others will have been in similar jobs for a short period of time. Years of service do not always equal proficiency. Candidates with seniority or experience do not automatically perform best on the test. Regardless of seniority, candidates who display the appropriate knowledges, skills, and abilities perform best on the test.

**Misconception:** **A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.**  
A band number of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. For one test, there may only be 4 bands, and for another test, there may be 14 bands. Therefore, your success on the test based on your position in a band varies from test to test. Your standing in a band does not indicate whether or not you pass or fail the test. The true test of success in your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

**Misconception:** **Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."**  
Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." The "Rule of 10" determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

**Misconception:** **People in a band do not differ.**  
When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ at all. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

## VIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***What if I need to reschedule a written exam?***

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written exam.

### ***Are there any vacancies for the Youth Services Senior Aide?***

You may contact the Department of Youth Services' Personnel Division in order to get information on current or future vacancies.

### ***How are vacancies filled for the Youth Services Senior Aide?***

The top ten applicants on the register are sent to the Department of Youth Services for consideration. Since the banded scoring process is used, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. Therefore, all names within a band are certified out to the agency, which may include more than 10 names. The names of people not selected stay on the register to be considered for future jobs. Persons are usually hired at the minimum of the pay range.

### ***How long will I remain eligible for appointment?***

If you pass the examination, your name will remain on the employment register two years after you are placed on it. You will be notified by mail when to reapply.

### ***How can I find out my standing on the register?***

You can obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at [www.personnel.alabama.gov](http://www.personnel.alabama.gov). From the home page, you should click on "Applicants" and then "Register Standings", and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

### ***How long will it take for me to receive a score?***

It typically takes from 4 to 6 weeks to calculate final grades following a test administration. When final grades have been calculated, all candidates are sent a score card in the mail containing their grade from the examination. If you determine that all other candidates have received their score cards and you have not, please call the State Personnel Department. We will check your mailing address and, if necessary, send you a new score card or a letter with your grade enclosed.