GENERAL

postal exam 718 computer skills test

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Understanding the Postal Exam 718 Computer Skills Test

The United States Postal Service (USPS) offers a variety of career paths, from mail carriers and clerks to sorting and distribution specialists. To qualify for many of these positions, applicants must pass the Postal Exam 718, a standardized test that assesses essential knowledge and skills. One of the critical components of the Postal Exam 718 is the Computer Skills Test, designed to gauge an applicant's proficiency with common office software and digital communication tools. This article provides a detailed guide to the Postal Exam 718 Computer Skills Test, including its structure, content areas, preparation strategies, and tips for success.

Why the Computer Skills Test Matters

In today's fast-paced postal environment, employees must efficiently manage electronic documents, track shipments, and communicate with customers and colleagues via email and online platforms. The Computer Skills Test ensures that candidates possess the foundational abilities required for these tasks. A strong performance not only demonstrates readiness for the role but also enhances your competitiveness in a crowded applicant pool.

Overview of the Postal Exam 718

The Postal Exam 718 is a comprehensive assessment that evaluates a range of skills relevant to USPS positions. It typically includes sections on:

- Reading Comprehension
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Oral Reasoning
- Computer Skills
- Situational Judgment

While each section tests different competencies, the Computer Skills Test stands out because it directly measures your ability to use technology—an increasingly vital requirement for modern postal operations.

Structure of the Computer Skills Test

The Computer Skills Test is a multiple-choice exam delivered through a computer-based platform. It is usually administered at USPS testing centers or via remote proctoring. The test covers a broad spectrum of topics, each designed to simulate real-world tasks you might encounter on the job.

Key Sections Within the Test

1. Microsoft Word Basics

   Creating and formatting documents
2. Using templates and styles
3. Inserting tables, images, and hyperlinks

- Entering and manipulating data
- Using formulas and functions (SUM, AVERAGE, IF)

- Formatting cells and creating basic charts
- Composing professional emails
- Using email folders and search functions
- Understanding email etiquette and security practices
- Using web browsers and search engines
- Identifying reliable sources
- Managing bookmarks and tabs
- Diagnosing common software issues
- Applying basic fixes (reboot, update, reinstall)
- Using help resources and support tools

Scoring and Passing Requirements

The Computer Skills Test is scored on a scale of 0 to 100. While the exact passing score may vary slightly depending on the testing center, a score of 70 or higher is generally considered competitive. Keep in mind that the overall Postal Exam 718 score is a weighted average of all sections, so a strong performance in the computer skills portion can significantly boost your overall score.

Preparation Strategies for the Computer Skills Test

Success on the Computer Skills Test hinges on both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Below are proven strategies to help you prepare effectively.

1. Build a Strong Foundation with Core Office Software

Start by mastering the basics of Microsoft Word and Excel. Numerous free tutorials are available on platforms like **LinkedIn Learning**, **Microsoft Learn**, and **Coursera**. Focus on:

- Document formatting and styling
- Data entry and basic calculations
- Creating tables, charts, and graphs

2. Practice with Sample Questions

USPS offers sample test materials, and many third-party websites provide practice questions that mirror the test's format. Use these resources to:

1. Familiarize yourself with question types
2. Identify weak areas for targeted study
3. Improve time management by simulating test conditions

3. Develop Email Etiquette Skills

Professional communication is essential in postal roles. Review guidelines on:

- Subject line clarity
- Tone and language appropriateness
- Attachment handling and file naming conventions
- Security practices (e.g., avoiding phishing attempts)

4. Enhance Internet Research Proficiency

Being able to quickly locate accurate information is a valuable skill. Practice using advanced search operators

(site:, filetype:, intitle:) and evaluate sources for credibility and relevance.

5. Familiarize Yourself with Troubleshooting Basics

While the test may not require deep technical knowledge, understanding common issues and solutions can help you answer related questions confidently. Learn how to:

- Reset applications
- Check for updates
- Use built-in help features

6. Time Management Techniques

The Computer Skills Test is timed. Practice pacing by:

- Setting a timer while completing practice tests
- Skipping difficult questions initially and returning later
- Ensuring you allocate enough time to review answers if time permits

Sample Questions and Answers

Below are sample questions that illustrate the types of problems you may encounter. Use them to test your knowledge and refine your approach.

Microsoft Word Sample

Question: Which feature allows you to automatically format headings with consistent styles?

1. Bulleted List
2. Table of Contents
3. Styles
4. Page Breaks

Answer:C. Styles. The Styles feature provides pre-defined formatting that can be applied consistently across a document.

Microsoft Excel Sample

Question: You have a column of numbers in cells A1 through A10. Which formula will give you the average of these numbers?

1. =SUM(A1:A10)
2. =AVERAGE(A1:A10)
3. =MAX(A1:A10)
4. =MIN(A1:A10)

Answer: B. =AVERAGE(A1:A10). The AVERAGE function calculates the mean of the specified range.

Email Etiquette Sample

Question: Which of the following is the most appropriate subject line for an email reminding a colleague about a meeting?

1. Reminder: Meeting Tomorrow
2. Meeting
3. URGENT: Meeting
4. Meeting Tomorrow? Maybe?

Answer: A. Reminder: Meeting Tomorrow. It is clear, concise, and provides context.

Internet Navigation Sample

Question: Which search operator would you use to find PDF documents about USPS policies?

1. site:usps.gov filetype:pdf policy
2. policy filetype:pdf usps.gov
3. usps.gov policy pdf
4. policy site:usps.gov

Answer:A. site:usps.gov filetype:pdf policy. This query restricts results to PDF files on the USPS domain containing the keyword “policy.”

Resources for Effective Study

Below is a curated list of resources that can help you prepare for the Postal Exam 718 Computer Skills Test.

Official USPS Study Materials

- USPS Career Center – Offers practice tests and study guides.
- PostalExam.org – Provides sample questions and score reports.

Online Learning Platforms

- Microsoft Learn – Free tutorials for Word, Excel, and Outlook.
- LinkedIn Learning – Paid courses with certificates.
- Coursera – Offers academic courses in computer literacy.

Practice Test Apps

- PracticePostalExam – Mobile app with practice questions.
- ExamPrepPro – Online platform for timed practice exams.

Study Groups and Forums

- Reddit r/USPS – Community discussions and tips.
- PostalExam.com Forum – Peer support and resource sharing.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even well-prepared candidates can stumble if they fall into these pitfalls:

- Ignoring Time Constraints – The test is timed; spending too long on a single question can jeopardize your overall score.
- Assuming Familiarity Equals Accuracy – Familiarity with a program does not guarantee that you will answer questions correctly; always read the question carefully.
- Neglecting Basic Troubleshooting – Overlooking simple solutions like restarting an application can lead to unnecessary confusion.
- Skipping Practice Tests – Without realistic practice, you may not develop the stamina needed for the full test.
- Overlooking Email Etiquette – Poor email formatting can result in lower scores on communication-related questions.

Test Day Tips

Preparation ends when you step into the testing center or log in for a remote session. Here are some final tips to ensure a smooth experience.

1. Arrive Early

Arriving 15–20 minutes early gives you time to settle in, verify your identification, and acclimate to the testing environment.

2. Bring Required Identification

Bring a valid photo ID (driver's license, passport, or state ID). Some testing centers may require additional documentation.

3. Check Your Equipment

If you're taking the test remotely, ensure your computer is fully charged, your internet connection is stable, and your webcam and microphone are functioning.

4. Read Instructions Carefully

Before starting, read the test instructions thoroughly. Pay attention to any specific guidelines regarding navigation, answer selection, and time limits.

5. Stay Calm and Focused

Use deep-breathing techniques if you feel anxious. Remember that the test is designed to assess your knowledge, not to trick you.

6. Review Answers if Time Allows

If you finish early, review your answers to catch any careless mistakes. Double-check that you've selected the correct options.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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