



Royal Canadian Mounted Police    Gendarmerie royale du Canada

# PREPARATORY GUIDE FOR THE TELECOM OPERATOR APTITUDE TEST

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Canada

This *Preparatory Guide for the Telecom Operator Aptitude Test* was developed by RCMP Research Branch. Research Branch, a branch of the Human Resources Directorate, was responsible for the development of the current version of the Telecom Operator Aptitude Test (TOAT). The preparatory guide is designed to familiarize you with what to expect when writing the TOAT. It includes recommendations and suggestions about how you can best prepare yourself for the TOAT. It also includes several practice questions similar in format to those that appear on the TOAT. In addition, this preparatory guide includes the answers to the practice questions, and a detailed set of rationales for the answers.

**Please be advised that should you decide to write the RCMP Police Aptitude Test (RPAT) within 1 year of writing the Telecom Operator Aptitude Test (TOAT), your most recent performance on the TOAT will be applied towards your RPAT score, for sections that are common to both tests.**

## INTRODUCTION

The TOAT is a multiple-choice test that forms one component of the process used by the RCMP to select telecom operators. The test is designed to evaluate your potential aptitude for the job of telecom operator. The test measures two skills that have been identified as essential in completing the duties of a telecom operator. These skills include English Composition (Spelling, Grammar, and Vocabulary) and English Comprehension.

There are 50 multiple-choice questions in total on the TOAT. You will have 45 minutes to answer them. Each multiple-choice question will have four possible options. One and only one of these options is the correct or best answer.

### Some general test taking strategies

1. Listen to the instructions carefully. It is important that you clearly understand what you are expected to do. If you are unclear, ask questions **before** you start the exam. Not following the instructions provided will probably result in a lower obtained score. As well, not following the instructions provided could disqualify you from the telecom operator selection process.
2. Read the questions carefully. Make sure you understand what the question is asking before answering.
3. Try to arrive at an answer before looking over the choices. However, read all of the offered choices before selecting your final answer.
4. If you are unsure of an answer, eliminate the options you know are wrong. Even if you can only eliminate one option, you will at least limit your guess to fewer options and, therefore, increase your chances at guessing correctly.
5. Do not get hung up on any one question. If you are having difficulties with one particular question, make your best guess at the answer and move on. You can always come back later and spend more time with the question. If you waste time on a question to which you do not know the answer, you might not reach some questions to which you do know the answer and, therefore, will not get the points.
6. Never leave a question unanswered. Guess at any questions to which you do not know the answer.
7. Bring a watch to the test. While the test administrator will occasionally announce the time remaining, it is better to have a timepiece available so that you can better judge your time. Time management is a valuable test taking skill.
8. **Do not panic.** Exams can be very stressful events. If you feel yourself getting too anxious during the test, take a couple of minutes to collect yourself. When you are ready, proceed with the test. It

may be a good idea to move on from a question that is causing you to panic and come back to it later.

*Some general practice exercises that can be completed to improve your TOAT score*

1. There are examination guides available to prepare for jobs similar to the RCMP telecom operator position (e.g., public safety dispatcher, 911 operator), most including some evaluation similar to what is included on the TOAT . While many are American, the constructs being evaluated may be very similar.
2. There are several guides available for other standardized tests such as the American Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the Graduate Records Exam (GRE), the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), etc. While what is being measured on these exams might differ to some extent, most include some evaluation of composition and/or comprehension that overlaps with the TOAT. Note that the levels required to pass some of these test are not the same as the TOAT, especially for exams such as the GRE and LSAT. Treat them as only practice to get you familiar with the type of question you can expect to see on the TOAT, and not as an indicator of how well you will do on the TOAT.

## **THE TELECOM OPERATOR APTITUDE TEST'S SECTIONS**

### **COMPOSITION**

This section will examine your ability to articulate, in a written format, complex thoughts in a clear and concise manner so that others can understand. Specifically, this section will examine your knowledge of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Some of the sources used to create this section include *ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic reference (1997)*, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1984)*, Shaw's (1993) *Errors in English and ways to correct them*, and Strunk Jr. & White's (1979) *The elements of style*. Using these references may be helpful in improving your performance.

In all, there will be 39 English Composition questions on the TOAT. These will include 10 spelling, 10 grammar, and 19 vocabulary questions.

*Some additional practice exercises that can be completed to improve your English composition performance.*

1. Read, read, and then read some more.
2. Familiarize yourself with the use of dictionaries and thesauruses. When reading, identify any words that you do not know and look up the definition of these words in a dictionary.
3. Use memory aids to help you remember the correct spelling. For example, mnemonics such as "i before e except after c" can be very useful.
4. Make it a point to learn at least one new word every day.
5. Practice with a friend by having him/her verbally dictate to you short written passages while you attempt to write out the passage. Afterwards, check your spelling.
6. Try to spot spelling mistakes in newspapers or other documents. Confirm your findings by looking up the correct spelling in a dictionary.
7. Do crosswords puzzles found in newspapers, magazines, and puzzle books. Continue to challenge yourself by progressively completing more difficult puzzles.

### Practice Composition questions

1. Both women have made previous complaints, none of which were followed through because of insufficient evidence or strong fear of retaliation by the suspect. The suspect is attempting to intimidate the women and is known for irrational behaviour.

Which word in the sentences above is misspelled?

- a) insufficient
  - b) retaliation
  - c) intimidate
  - d) irracionale
2. On the night of the accident, coeficient of friction testing was conducted using police transport on a cycloidal skid mark.

Which word in the sentence above is misspelled?

- a) accident
  - b) coeficient
  - c) friction
  - d) cycloidal
3. Which word completes the next sentence?

Once she became a public figure, she had to give \_\_\_\_\_ her anonymity.

- a) about
  - b) back
  - c) in
  - d) up
4. Which words complete the next sentence?

My partner and \_\_\_\_\_ went to the home and \_\_\_\_\_ knocking on the door.

- a) I, began
  - b) me, began
  - c) me, begun
  - d) I, begun
5. Which of the following is the best definition of the word **amendment**?

- a) cancellation by making invalid or outdated
  - b) identification by comparison and elimination
  - c) improvement by revision or correction
  - d) protection by establishing rules and laws
6. Which of the following words can be defined as: “**The process of deriving general principles from particular instances**”?

- a) concoction
- b) deduction
- c) induction
- d) reduction

## COMPREHENSION

This section is designed to evaluate your ability to read and accurately interpret written material. You will be presented with a series of short passages. For each of these passages, two or three questions will be asked to determine if you have correctly interpreted the content of the particular passages.

In all, there will be four short passages presented to you. Accompanying these passages will be a total of eleven questions.

*Some additional practice exercises that can be completed to improve your English Comprehension performance:*

1. As with the composition exercises, read, read, and then read some more.
2. It is important to challenge yourself to the reading level expected to adequately perform the job of telecom operator. A selection of magazines that have similar levels of reading as that on the TOAT include Canadian Geographic, Saturday Night, and some of the longer articles in MacLean's. Your local library should have a selection of these and similar magazines.
3. Have a friend read an article or passage that you have also read. Discuss the contents of the text to confirm your interpretation of the message.

### Practice Comprehension questions

#### Questions 7 to 9 refer to the following passage<sup>1</sup>:

Throughout its long history, China has seen the rise and fall of a large number of secret organizations. Originally, most of them had no criminal intent. They were simply brotherhoods based on shared political purposes and mutual assistance. However, some of them fell under the control of dishonest people. They then drifted into crime and ended up posing a threat to the social order. This was the case for two of the largest secret organizations of Chinese modern history, the Tsing and Hong organizations.

Many criminal organizations such as the Tsing and Hong and many others controlled brothels, opium dens, casinos and drug trafficking operations. They forced business owners to give them a percentage of their profit. They also committed more serious crimes such as abduction, the trade of women and children, and even assassinations. To achieve impunity from the law, they corrupted government and colonial officials. It was not uncommon for leaders of these organizations to occupy legitimate positions in companies or even in government agencies. They used these jobs as a front for their illegal activities. Each organization had its own system of laws and punishments. The internal law of the Hong organization had five possible punishments: capital punishment, corporal punishment, caning, degradation and banishment. A strict hierarchy existed and obedience to superiors was mandatory. New members, called apprentices, were placed under a master and were at his service. In the golden age of the Tsing and Hong organizations, a powerful leader could recruit thousands of apprentices.

7. According to the above passage, which one of the following statements is true?
  - a) Chinese secret organizations have always threatened the social order.
  - b) Financial assistance is encouraged in Chinese criminal organizations.
  - c) Few criminal organizations are known in China; only two are known today.
  - d) Some secret Chinese organizations have not turned to crime.

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<sup>1</sup>This passage was taken from : © Zhang, X., Editions Marcel Meihtry, 1996

8. According to the previous passage, which one of the following statements is true?
- a) Criminal organizations bribed government employees and senior officials to avoid facing consequences of their misdeeds.
  - b) All leaders of these organizations had legitimate positions in businesses or in the government.
  - c) The trade of women and children was the main activity of Chinese criminal organizations.
  - d) Prostitution is one of the rare illegal businesses in which Chinese criminal organizations did not participate.
9. Which one of the following statements is supported by the above passage?
- a) In the Hong organization, only apprentices had to obey their superiors.
  - b) In the Hong organization, a person's rank could not be lowered as a form of punishment.
  - c) In the Hong organization, the penalty for disobedience was corporal punishment.
  - d) In the Hong organization, the leader recruited many new members.

## ANSWERS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### English Composition

1. The correct answer is “d”.  
The correct spelling for option d is “irrational” (i.e., without the “e” at the end).
2. The correct answer is “b”.  
The correct spelling for option b is “coefficient” (i.e., two “f”s).
3. The correct answer is “d”.  
*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1984)* defines the phrase ‘**give up**’ as “to cease to do some action: ABANDON”. This definition works well at completing a meaningful sentence. The definition associated with the other options, when one actually exists, do not.
4. The correct answer is “a”.  
The first blank is for one of the subjects of the verbs “to go” and “to begin”. “I” and not “me”, which is used as an object of a verb, is the appropriate pronoun to use as the subject of the verbs. Next, the sentence is written in the past (went is the past tense of “to go”). Began is the past tense of “to begin”.
5. The correct option is “c”.  
*ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic reference (1997)* defines amendment as “the act of changing for the better; improvement.” *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1984)* defines amendment as, “the act of changing or modifying for the better.”  
Option “c” is the best match of these definitions.
6. The correct option is “c”.  
The bolded text in the question is one of the definitions of induction provided by *ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic reference (1997)*. *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1984)* defines induction as, “inference of a generalized conclusion from particular instances,” paralleling the definition provided in *ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic reference (1997)*.

### English Comprehension

7. The correct answer is “d”.  
Option “a” is wrong because the passage includes the statement stating, “Originally, most of them (secret organizations) had no criminal intent.” The concept of financial assistance as stated in option “b” is never mentioned in the passage. Therefore, it is not supported by the passage. Option “c” mentions that ONLY two criminal organizations are known. The passage actually implies that there are more than the two (“This was the case for **two of the largest** secret organizations of Chinese modern history”). Option “d” is the only option supported by the passage (“some of them [*not all*] fell under the control of dishonest people”).

8. The correct answer is “a”.  
Option “b” is wrong because it states that **all** leaders had legitimate positions in businesses or in the government. The passage states that it was not uncommon for this to be, but not that it always happened. Option “c” is wrong because the passage makes no claim that the trade of women and children is the main activity of the secret organizations, only that it is one of the illegal activities performed. Option “d” is wrong because it is specifically mentioned in the passage that the organizations controlled brothels. Option “a” is the only option supported by the passage (“To achieve impunity from the law, they corrupted government and colonial officials”).
9. The correct answer is “d”.  
Option “a” is wrong because the passage includes the statement, “A strict hierarchy existed and obedience to superiors was mandatory.” This statement is not limited to being an apprentice. Option “b” is wrong because the passage identifies degradation (i.e., a reduction in rank) as a form of punishment. Option “c” is wrong because the passage never specifies any penalty that is associated with a particular crime. Option “d” is the only option supported by the text (“a powerful leader could recruit thousands of apprentices”. Apprentices was earlier in the passage defined as new members).

## REFERENCES

*ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English language: An encyclopedic reference (1997)*. Scarborough, Canada: ITP Nelson.

Shaw, H. (1993). *Errors in English and ways to correct them* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: Harper Paperbacks.

Strunk Jr., W., & White, E.B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). New York: Macmillan Publishing.

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