GENERAL

usps exam 473 study guide

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Preparing for the USPS Exam 473 can feel overwhelming, especially when you're balancing work, family, and a busy schedule. This comprehensive study guide is designed to give you a clear roadmap, actionable study tactics, and the confidence you need to ace the test. By combining an in depth understanding of the exam format with proven study methods, you'll be ready to tackle every question with ease.

What Is the USPS Exam 473?

The USPS Exam 473 is a standardized test used by the United States Postal Service to evaluate candidates for entry level positions such as Postal Clerk, Mail Carrier, and other operational roles. The exam is administered by the USPS Office of Human Resources and is part of the hiring process for a wide range of postal jobs.

Why is it important? The 473 exam determines whether you possess the knowledge, skills, and aptitude needed to perform effectively in a fast paced, customer focused environment. A strong score can open doors to a stable career with a federal agency, while a lower score may delay or prevent your application from moving forward.

Exam Format and Content Breakdown

Understanding the structure of the exam is the first step in crafting a focused study plan. The USPS Exam 473 consists of three main sections:

1. Reasoning and Comprehension (40%) – Questions that test your ability to interpret written information, solve problems, and apply logic.
2. Math (25%) – Basic arithmetic, percentages, fractions, and word problems relevant to everyday postal operations.
3. General Knowledge (35%) – Topics covering USPS policies, customer service, safety procedures, and general business knowledge.

Each section contains multiple choice questions, and the total exam lasts approximately 60 minutes. The test is offered in English only, and you will have a 30 second read and write break before the exam begins.

Key Topics Covered in the USPS 473 Exam

Below is a detailed overview of the subject areas you'll encounter, along with study tips for each.

Postal Operations

- Mail processing steps (sorting, routing, delivery)
- Postage calculation and stamp usage
- Equipment operation (e.g., sorters, scanners)
- Inventory management and loss prevention

Customer Service

- Handling customer inquiries and complaints
- Communication skills (verbal and written)
- Adhering to USPS customer service standards
- Privacy and confidentiality protocols

Math and Reasoning

- Basic arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Percentages, fractions, and decimals
- Word problems related to weight, volume, and distance
- Logical reasoning and pattern recognition

General Knowledge

- USPS policies and regulations
- Basic business principles (e.g., budgeting, scheduling)
- Health and safety guidelines
- Environmental stewardship and sustainability practices

Safety and Security

- Proper handling of hazardous materials
- Emergency response procedures
- Security measures to protect mail and facilities
- Incident reporting and documentation

Study Strategy for USPS 473

A structured approach to studying will help you cover all topics efficiently. Follow these steps to create a personalized study plan:

1. Assess Your Baseline – Take a diagnostic test or review sample questions to identify strengths and weaknesses.
2. Create a Timeline – Allocate 8–12 weeks of study time, depending on your familiarity with the material.
3. Set Weekly Goals – Break the syllabus into manageable chunks (e.g., one topic per week).
4. Use Varied Resources – Combine textbooks, online courses, flashcards, and practice tests.
5. Practice Under Real Conditions – Simulate timed tests to build stamina and time management skills.
6. Review Mistakes – Analyze errors to prevent them from recurring.
7. Stay Consistent – Study a little every day rather than cramming.

Essential Study Resources

Below are highly recommended materials that align with the USPS Exam 473 content. These resources are designed to help you master the exam's core concepts.

Official USPS Exam Prep

- USPS Hiring Guide – The official guide provides an overview of the exam structure, sample questions, and test day tips.
- USPS Test Prep Books – Look for titles specifically tailored to the 473 exam; they often include practice tests and detailed explanations.

Online Courses and Video Tutorials

- Udemy and Coursera offer courses on basic math, reasoning, and customer service skills that align with USPS exam topics.
- YouTube channels dedicated to postal exam prep provide quick tutorials on specific problem types.

Flashcards

- Create digital flashcards using Anki or Quizlet for USPS policies, math formulas, and common reasoning

patterns.

- Review flashcards daily to reinforce memory retention.

Study Groups

- Join online forums such as Reddit's /r/USPS or Facebook groups for postal exam candidates.
- Collaborate with peers to discuss difficult questions and share study materials.

Sample Questions and Answers

Practicing real exam questions is crucial. Below are five sample questions that reflect the diversity of the USPS Exam 473.

1. Reasoning: All employees who use the new scanner are required to complete training. John is an employee. Which statement must be true?

    A) John has completed training.
2. B) John uses the new scanner.
3. C) John is required to complete training.
4. D) John does not use the new scanner.

Answer: C) John is required to complete training.

- A) $0.90
- B) $0.80
- C) $0.70
- D) $1.00

Answer: A) $0.90

- A) The Post Office Security Policy
- B) The Mail Handling Manual
- C) The Customer Service Code of Conduct
- D) The Employee Handbook

Answer: A) The Post Office Security Policy

- A) Place it on the floor to avoid crushing.
- B) Handle it with care and avoid stacking heavy items on top.
- C) Ignore the label if the package is small.
- D) Use a pallet jack regardless of size.

Answer: B) Handle it with care and avoid stacking heavy items on top.

- A) 36
- B) 48
- C) 30
- D) 24

Answer: B) 48

Time Management Tips During the Exam

Mastering time management can be the difference between a solid score and a disappointing one. Here are practical strategies:

1. Read the Question Quickly – Spend about 5–10 seconds per question. If you're unsure, mark it and return later.
2. Allocate Time by Section – With 60 minutes, aim for roughly 20 minutes per section, plus a buffer for review.
3. Use the "Skip and Return" Technique – Don't get stuck. Move on and come back to challenging questions.
4. Eliminate Wrong Answers – Narrow choices to increase your odds of selecting the correct answer.
5. Keep a Steady Pace – Avoid rushing. Maintain a consistent rhythm throughout the exam.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even the most diligent test taker can fall into pitfalls. Watch out for these common errors:

- Reading questions too quickly and missing key details.
- Misinterpreting USPS policies due to unfamiliar terminology.
- Overcomplicating math problems; stick to basic arithmetic.
- Focusing too much on a single question and losing track of time.
- Neglecting the importance of rest and nutrition before the exam.

How to Register and Prepare Logistically

Before you dive into studying, make sure you've handled the administrative side of things:

1. Register Online – Visit the USPS Careers website, create an account, and complete the application. You'll receive a confirmation email with your test date.
2. Choose a Test Center – USPS offers testing at various locations. Pick one that's convenient and has good reviews.
3. Prepare Identification – Bring a government issued photo ID (e.g., driver's license, passport).
4. Know the Test Day Rules – No electronic devices, no food or drinks, and you must arrive at least 15 minutes early.

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