

SBI PO 2011 – Detailed Analysis

The State Bank of India Probationary Officer exam consisted of two papers – Objective and Descriptive.

I. Objective Paper:

The objective paper comprised 200 questions and the time duration was 2 hours. There was subtle shift in the paper pattern as the reasoning section put less emphasis on standard reasoning sets commonly asked in bank exams and more on critical reasoning. Similarly, data interpretation was marked by very few BODMAS and number series questions unlike most bank papers. However, overall the paper was more or less on standard lines and a substantial number of questions could have been attempted by the well-prepared student.

Summary	
Total Marks	200
Number of Questions	200
Number of Sections	4
Questions Per section	50
Options	5
Marks per question	1
Negative Marking	1/4 th of marks allotted to each question

There were 4 sections in the paper, with 50 questions in each section. These were:

- 1) Reasoning
- 2) Data Analysis and Interpretation
- 3) General Awareness, Marketing and Computers
- 4) English Language

1) Reasoning:

The reasoning section was at a higher level compared to the other three sections in the paper. This was partially due to the greater weightage given to critical reasoning and the absence of some commonly asked question types such as “alphanumeric series”, “which conclusion follows” and individual logical puzzles

The breakup of this section was as shown below:

Breakup		
Area	Number of Questions	Difficulty Level
Directions and Arrangements (Circular Arrangement)	7	Difficult
Codes (Sentence Coding)	6	Easy
Critical Reasoning	10	Moderate to Difficult
Syllogisms	6	Easy
Analogies (Meaning Based + Logical)	5	Easy
Data Sufficiency	6	Moderate
Sequential Output Tracing	5	Moderate
Visual Reasoning	5	Easy to Moderate

The sentence coding, syllogism and analogy questions were fairly simple and should have been attempted. Meanwhile, the sequential output tracing, visual reasoning and data sufficiency questions were moderately difficult and each of them contained a couple of easy questions that could have been attempted. The circular arrangement set was on the difficult side and was time consuming. However, it was such that had it been solved correctly, all seven questions in this set could have been attempted immediately. There was a relatively different question type in critical reasoning where an excerpt of 2-3 lines was given followed by 5 - 6 statements. The questions involved identifying statements(s) that were a cause of the excerpt or a consequence of the excerpt or a mitigant of the excerpt and so on. While these were not very difficult, these could have been uncomfortable for someone attempting such a question for the first time. Hence, the circular arrangement and critical reasoning questions should have been attempted towards the end (time permitting).

2) Data Analysis and Interpretation

As the name suggests, the focus of this section was predominantly on data interpretation and pure quantitative aptitude had very little emphasis on it. The breakup of this section was :

Breakup		
Area	Number of Questions	Difficulty Level
Quantitative Aptitude	10	Easy
Line Graph	7	Moderate
Pie Chart	6	Easy to Moderate
Bar Chart	7	Easy
Tables	20	Moderate to Difficult

An important feature of this section was the drastically reduced focus on BODMAS and number series questions. There were 10 questions from quantitative aptitude comprising questions on BODMAS, time, speed and distance, permutations and combinations, mensuration, etc. Most of them were on the simpler side and should have been attempted first. The data interpretation sets were characterized by lengthy calculation and hence, question selection was very important to save time. The bar chart, pie chart and a table on “number of students appearing and qualifying in a test” were on the simpler side and so should have been attempted first. On the other hand, the line chart and the other sets on tables had lengthier calculations and so only one of them should have been attempted based on comfort level and time.

3) English Language

The focus in this section was less on pure vocabulary and more on understanding. However, this was a simpler section compared to the other two. The breakup of this section was:

Breakup		
Area	Number of Questions	Difficulty Level
Reading Comprehension	15 + 10	Moderate to Difficult
Faulty Construction	10	Easy to Moderate
Jumbled Sentences	5	Easy to Moderate
Close Passages	10	Easy

There were two RC passages (one of 15 questions and one of 10 questions). The passage of 10 questions was slightly on the simpler side and could have been attempted earlier. The passage of 15 questions was more difficult but contained some simple questions in between. However, reading this passage and finding the simpler questions would have taken more time and so this should have been attempted later. The faulty

construction question consisted of a sentence with a phrase being highlighted. This was to be rephrased to make the sentence meaningful. These questions were quite simple for someone with reasonably average reading skills. The jumbled sentences questions consisted of seven sentences followed by five questions. However, the given sentences were linked and so identifying the correct sequence was fairly simple. Finally, the close passage questions could have been attempted in very little time. On the whole, for a well prepared student, this section was a very good scoring opportunity in less time.

4) General Awareness, Marketing and Computers

This section had questions from four areas. The breakup was as follows:

Breakup		
Area	Number of Questions	Difficulty Level
Banking	12-13	Moderate to Difficult
Current Affairs	12-13	Easy to Moderate
Computer Awareness	13	Easy to Moderate
Marketing	11	Easy

In this section, the marketing based questions were the simplest and should have been attempted by everyone. Questions from the remaining three areas could have then been attempted based on the comfort level of students in individual areas.

II. Descriptive Test

This section was for an hour and was of 50 marks. This comprised 5 questions as given below:

Breakup		
Area	Marks	Topics
Letter Writing	10	To a branch to close a savings account
		To a friend to attend a seminar on net banking
		To a bank for a higher education loan
Paragraph Writing	8	If I were an author
		Rural Banking
		Impact of autonomy provided to banks
Essay Writing	12	Right to Education Act
		Financial Inclusion
		How technology can help banking industry
Precis Writing	10	Chief Vigilance Officer
Reading Comprehension	10	ATM and its uses