

# TOWES

## Test of Workplace Essential Skills

### Preparation Guide

332 6 Avenue SE Calgary, Alberta T2S 4S6 p:403.410.3200 f:403.297.4070  
tower@bowvalleycollege.ca www.tower.com



**BOW VALLEY**  
COLLEGE

TOWES is the sole property of Bow Valley College and is sold through authorized distributors only.

TOWES is the sole property of Bow Valley College  
and is sold through authorized distributors only.

Copyright © 2000 Bow Valley College. All rights reserved.

Published 2011.

For more information contact:

Conrad Murphy,  
Director of TOWES & Career Advancement Centre  
Bow Valley College,  
332 - 6 Avenue SE, Calgary, AB, T2G 4S6  
Phone: (403) 410-3200 Fax: (403) 297-4070

or  
visit: [www.towes.ca](http://www.towes.ca)  
and  
[www.bowvalleycollege.ca](http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca)

The development of TOWES was funded by the National Literacy Secretariat.



## About the TOWES test

The Test of Workplace Essential Skills or TOWES, measures some of the essential or basic skills people use at work. These skills include reading, using forms and other documents and solving problems that involve numbers.

The questions are grouped into problem sets. Each problem set contains 2-6 questions and a workplace document that you will use to answer the questions. The workplace documents in the problem sets are taken from real workplace situations, and can include forms, maps, charts, manuals or regulations.

Some of the work situations in the test may not be familiar to you, but you probably have enough general ability to answer the questions. Remember TOWES tests your ability to find and use information from workplace documents. All of the information needed to answer the questions is contained in the document samples.

## Writing the test

1. Before the test begins, listen to the instructions. Ask questions if you aren't sure.
2. Survey the test by taking 3 minutes to look through the test booklet. This will give you an idea of how to plan your time.
3. Relax, there is plenty of time to complete all of the questions. Take the time to read each question carefully and study the workplace example. Imagine yourself as a worker who needs to solve the problem. What looks complex at first will start to make sense if you take it one step at a time.
4. Rephrase the question in your own words. What is the question asking for? When, why or how much?
5. Attempt all questions in the test. Sometimes the first question in a problem set may be more difficult than the others, so don't get discouraged as the next question might be a lot easier. If too many questions are skipped, you may not receive a score, so it is best to attempt all questions, even if you have to guess.
6. Questions can be completed in any order.
7. If you change an answer, erase or cross out the previous answer. All TOWES tests are marked by hand, so make sure that your final answer is clear to the test marker.
8. Check to make sure that questions were not missed, especially on fold-out pages.



## What will the exam cover?

- Reading text in sentences and paragraphs

You will be asked to read selections from manuals, regulations, notices, brochures and other reading materials used by workers. Questions will ask you to find and interpret information.

- Using documents

In these questions, you will read maps, tables, diagrams, plans and similar materials. You may be asked to enter information on sales slips or other types of forms.

- Solving problems with numbers

You will be asked to work with problems that may require you to count money, budget, measure, calculate or use graphs.

All of the tasks are done by some workers in Canada every day.



## Sample Question

The **Brewer Valve Problem** shown on the next two pages is an example of the type of problem set and questions found in the TOWES test. It has been chosen as an example because it demonstrates the range of questions that you will find on the actual test. Many TOWES questions are less difficult than this one, while others are more difficult. Practice your skills by doing these questions.

***Now, turn over the page and answer the questions in the Brewer Valve Problem***



# Brewer Valve Problem

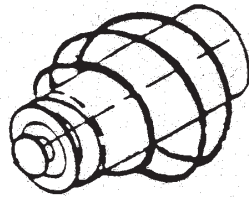
Brewer valves are found in automatic coffee machines. They open to allow hot water to mix with the coffee.

Look at the drawing and parts listing for the Eaton brewer valve on the page opposite.



**Question** What is the name of the part shown here?

1



\_\_\_\_\_

**Question** What is the part number of the two “O” rings used in this valve?

2

\_\_\_\_\_

**Question** What part number would a repair person use to order the whole valve?

3

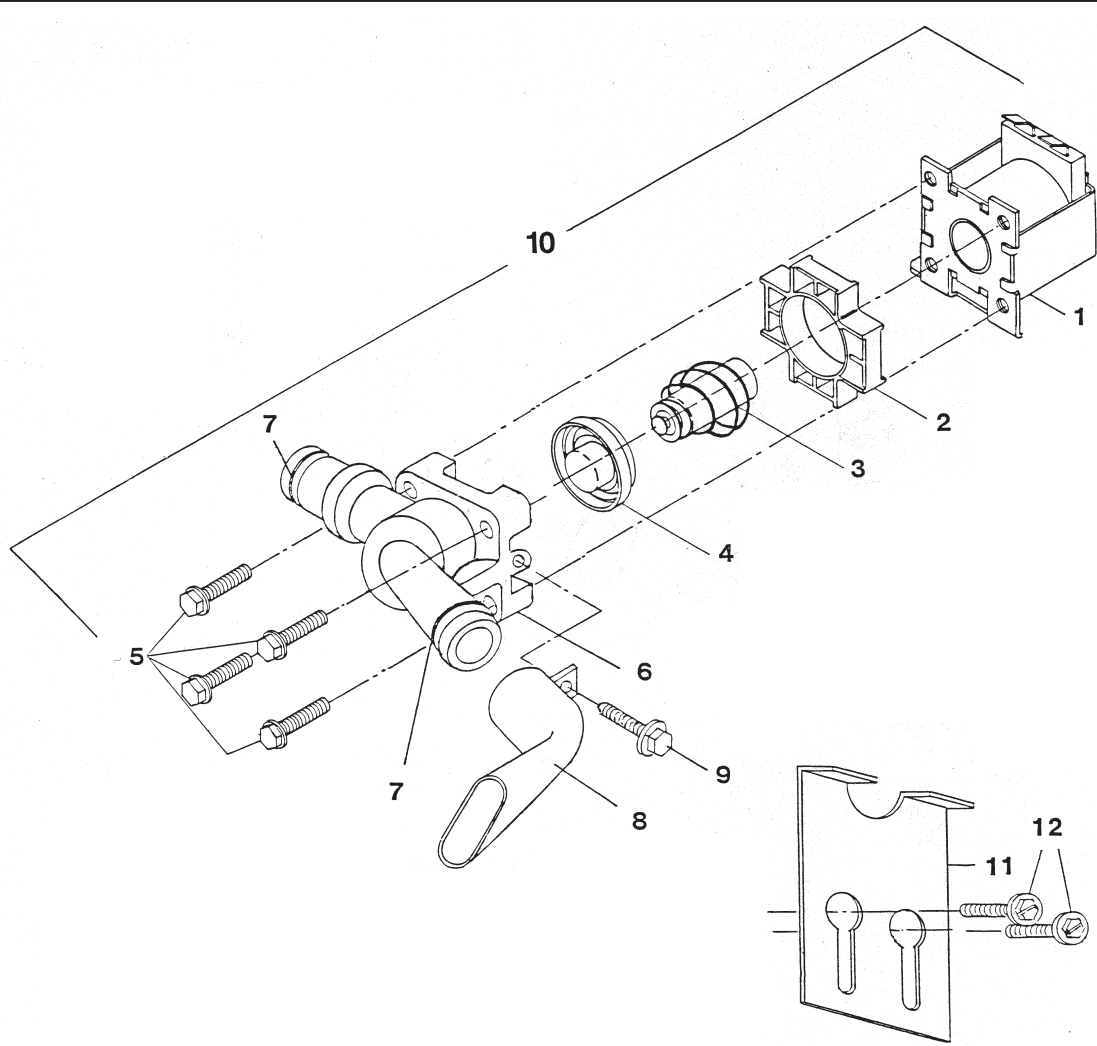
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question** On the drawing, highlight or circle the picture of the parts that are not included when Item 10 is ordered.

4

*Mark the brewer valve diagram*





## EATON BREWER VALVE ASSEMBLY

Items with Part Numbers are Stocked by RMI

1.	Coil, Red .....	30596
2.	Adapter .....	27787
3.	Armature and Spring .....	30598
4.	Diaphragm .....	27793
5.	Screw, Valve Mounting	
6.	Body, Brewer Valve, White .....	28732
7.	"O" Ring, 1/2 x 5/8 .....	14759
8.	Spout, Brewer Valve, Black .....	28733
9.	Screw, 6 x 5/16, PH, Type 25, SCP .....	28825
10.	Valve Asm Brewer (Includes Items 1-9) .....	30854
11.	Bracket, Brewer Valve Retainer .....	28814
12.	Screw, 8-32 x 3/8, HH, SCP .....	14806

**NOTE:** Items 11 and 12 are Sold Separately from Valve Asm, Item 10

# How to Evaluate your Work

Check your responses to the Brewer Valve Problem.

**Question** *What is the name of the part shown here?*

1

**Answer: Armature and Spring**

This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in an assembly drawing
- identifying the correct number in a table

In order to locate the information needed, you must correctly match the object to the one shown on the drawing. When you find the same part, you can see that it is labeled with the number 3. The next step is to find the row numbered 3 in the table below the drawing. Beside number 3 is the name of the part, Armature and Spring.

**Question** *What is the part number of the two “O” rings used in this valve?*

2

**Answer: 14759**

This question also tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing
- locating information in a table format
- locating information by matching a single word

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. The answer asks for a number not a name. To find the answer to this question, you could search the drawing if you happen to know what an “O” ring looks like. You could even eliminate all the parts that don’t look like a ring until you are able to select the correct answer, the part labeled 7 in the drawing. You will have to use the table with the title “Eaton Brewer Valve Assembly” and notice that it includes “Items and Part Numbers.” Scan the table to find the row starting with 7 or showing the words “O” rings in the second column. Look across the row to find the part number in the third column (far right).



**Question 3** *What part number would a repair person use to order the whole valve?*

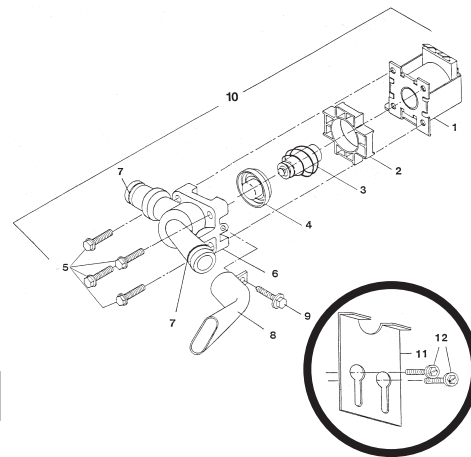
**Answer: 30854**

Again, this is a question on how to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing and in a table
- interpreting a line to mean, includes multiple parts
- interpreting “(Includes Items 1-9)” as the “whole valve”.
- identifying the column which shows order numbers

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. The word “order” tells you that a part number is required. In this question you can find the information in two ways. The first is to interpret the long line numbered 10 on the drawing as “**the whole valve**”. You could also scan the table and find the words “(**Includes Items 1-9**)”. Once you have decided that 10 is the part number, you must locate the correct order number in the column to the right and find 30854.

**Question 4** *On the drawing, highlight or circle the picture of the parts that are not included when Item 10 is ordered.*



**Answer:**

This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing
- identify that the line numbered 10 includes items 1-9.
- infer that parts 11 and 12 are not included.

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. It is important to notice that the word “not” is underlined. In order to answer the question, you must determine that **Item 10 includes Items 1 to 9**. Once those are eliminated, only 11 and 12 are left. Another way to figure that out is to look at the chart and read the NOTE which tells you that “parts are sold separately” which means they are not included. Once the parts not included are identified, you highlight or circle them.

## On test day:

### What do you need to bring?

- pen, pencil and eraser
- highlighter
- basic calculator (non-programmable)
- some of the print found on the screen is small. If you have trouble reading small print, bring a magnifying glass. If you have glasses, including reading glasses, bring them.

Other materials, such as calculators, dictionaries, thesaurus, PDAs, cell phones, electronic dictionaries or language translators are NOT permitted. They will be picked up by the test administrator for the duration of the test if they are brought into the testing session.

### How long does the test take to write?

TOWES takes about 2-3 hours to write. Ask your test administrator before the test begins how long you will have to write. If you are able to choose what time you write the test, choose the time when you concentrate best.

### Test Taking Tips

- Be positive about your abilities. TOWES tests skills that you use every day.
- Read this booklet carefully and prepare for the test.
- Get a good night's sleep and have something to eat before the test.

### Know the answers to these questions

- What is the purpose of the test?
- What types of questions will be asked?
- Where do I take the test? Address and room number. Plan to arrive early.
- What do I need to bring?
- How will I get my results? Your test administrator is the only person who is authorized to release your test results to you. Do not contact TOWES for your test results.



## Where to get help

Adults continue to learn all their lives, but most adults have some gaps in their learning. For example, an individual may be very familiar with most math functions but never have really understood fractions. Sometimes lack of use makes skills a bit “rusty.” After writing the test, you may realize that you need to improve your skills in some areas. There are many drop-in learning centres and volunteer tutoring programs in most communities that can help you to learn specific skills. If you prefer a more structured learning environment, you may want to enroll in a class to enhance your skills.

- Call your local Community College, School Board or other educational provider.
- Seek out other learning opportunities in your community. The local library may be able to help with books, video and other learning resources.
- Practice reading and problem solving every day. Tackle those manuals and forms that look so difficult. Get someone to help you.
- Try out the practice exercises and self assessments at <http://measureup.towes.ca> .

# Good luck on TOWES!

