

Bibliography Frequently Asked Questions

1. I am going to take the E-6 exam, and I know I need to study the BIBs for E-6, but do I have to study the BIBs for E-4 and E-5 as well?

No. The bibliographies (BIBs) are stand-alone. The BIBs for each paygrade cover all the references you should study for the paygrade of the exam you are going to take. You do not have to study BIBs for lower pay grades.

Navy advancement exams are not criterion-referenced– i.e., pass/fail. Rather, advancement exams are norm-referenced exams to enable the Navy Advancement Center (NAC) to rank order candidates. Why is this important? Our goal is to allow the most qualified and most knowledgeable Sailors to garner the top Final Multiple Score (FMS). The goal is to create an exam that allows the most qualified Sailors in each paygrade to advance.

2. What are the BIBs?

The development of a rating's exam bibliography (BIB) begins with the selection of enlisted rating Fleet Subject Matter Experts (FSMEs) (E-7/8/9) who attend their rating's Advancement Exam Readiness Review (AERR) panel. The FSMEs start the process by visualizing a Sailor on the job, and creating an exam outline to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform that job. The outline itself is similar to the outline of a book, with sections, subsections, and importance/coverage weightings.

Next, the FSMEs select questions to complete each section. When finished, the FSMEs validate each item by referencing it to a published reference. This ensures that the answer exists in print and/or electronically for every question on an exam and the reference material is available to all Sailors even if the activity is not directly performed in every workplace. While there may be more than one reference where this information may be found, only one primary reference is listed for each question. When all the items have been selected for an exam, the attached references become the Bibliography. This process results in an exam specific BIB for each advancement cycle.

BIBs are normally posted six months prior to exam administration dates. NAC must change bibliography information as references are updated and Fleet instructions change. Therefore, it's critical that each advancement candidate check the bibliography a few times prior to the exam administration date to see if there are any changes.

Obtaining materials for advancement study is the responsibility of the candidate. In addition to references listed on a BIB, candidates may be able to obtain the same information from on-the-job training, formal training, official publications, training manuals, and even "generic" books. For example, the computer books referenced on the IT BIB should be considered "generic." That is, any publications covering similar content will suffice.

3. Some of my BIB references have chapters, some don't. How is bibliography detail decided for each rating?

Fleet Subject Matter Experts (FSMEs) from your individual rating decide what detail should be given to reference material. While some rating FSMEs provide chapters or more detailed sections used to reference particular questions on the exam, others decide not to detail

individual publications. Their decisions are based on a number of factors that include the overall number of references required for the entire bibliography, the importance of a particular reference to a rating, and the size of an individual reference. Another factor is reference accuracy and the publication date. No standard is set, giving FSMEs bibliography options to meet their individual rating needs.

4. When/where are the Bibliographies (BIBs) published?

BIBs are posted six months prior to the actual examination date:

Active duty BIB Web posting dates:

CYCLE	DATE
January (E7)	July
March (E4/5/6)	October
September (E4/5/6)	April

Reserve BIB Web posting dates:

CYCLE	DATE
February (E7)	August
February (E4/5/6)	September
August (E4/5/6)	March

Note: Advancement candidates should revisit their exam specific bibliography frequently to ensure no changes have posted since the last download.

BIBs are posted and available from the Navy COOL website. A link on the Navy Advancement Center website will automatically direct you to Navy COOL. Once there, you can select your rating from the Advancement Exam Bibliographies dropdown and hit Go. Then select the appropriate paygrade to view your BIBs and associated exam Topics and Subtopics.

5. How can I tell if I am using the correct BIBs?

Check for the correct rating, paygrade, and exam date on Navy Cool website.

6. What is the best way to prepare for an upcoming advancement exam?

Preparing for your advancement exam can seem overwhelming. Although there are many resources available, there is no quick way to prepare for your exam. Most importantly, you should not wait until the last minute to gather your materials and begin preparing. The following information is geared toward helping you develop a preparation plan that will make the most of your time and effort.

After you are sure you meet eligibility requirements to take your advancement exam, you need to obtain your current BIB for your rating and paygrade. This can be accomplished by going to the Navy Advancement Center NKO or Navy COOL websites.

On Navy COOL, select 'Bibliography for Advancement' and choose your rating and hit Go. Since your BIB is exam-specific and posted six months prior to exam administration, you can use it to develop your long-range strategy for exam preparation.

Now that you have determined which references were used to create your exam questions, you can begin reviewing your references. Depending on the content of the reference and the amount of time you have to prepare before exam administration, plan how much time you will need daily/weekly to cover each reference.

7. Is knowing/reviewing my NRTC good enough preparation for the exam?

No. NRTCs give you minimum knowledge. Advancement exams differentiate among fully qualified candidates on the basis of who has the most well-rounded rating knowledge. The NRTCs may be a place to start your preparation, but it is definitely not the place to end it. Two good tools to assist you in preparation for taking your exam are the BIB and the Topics/Subtopics list.

8. How are the various elements of my rating covered on the exam?

When you download your bibliography from the Navy COOL portal, you will see a link for "Rating Topics and Subtopics" under the BIB link. Your exam was developed from (but may not have used all of) the Occupational and Professional Military Knowledge Topics and Subtopics. Topics and Subtopics are presented in alphabetical order, not necessarily the order of importance.

Why is this information important? The Topic and Subtopic list gives you insight into how the FSMEs from your rating compartmentalized the information. Within each Topic, you can see how the FSMEs broke down the information. By applying the references from the exam bibliography to listed Topics and Subtopics, you can better prepare and understand how your exam was designed. The Topic and Subtopic list can be a very powerful tool in your study strategy. You should also review your Profile Sheets to determine how well you performed on the various topics from previous exams you have taken for that paygrade.