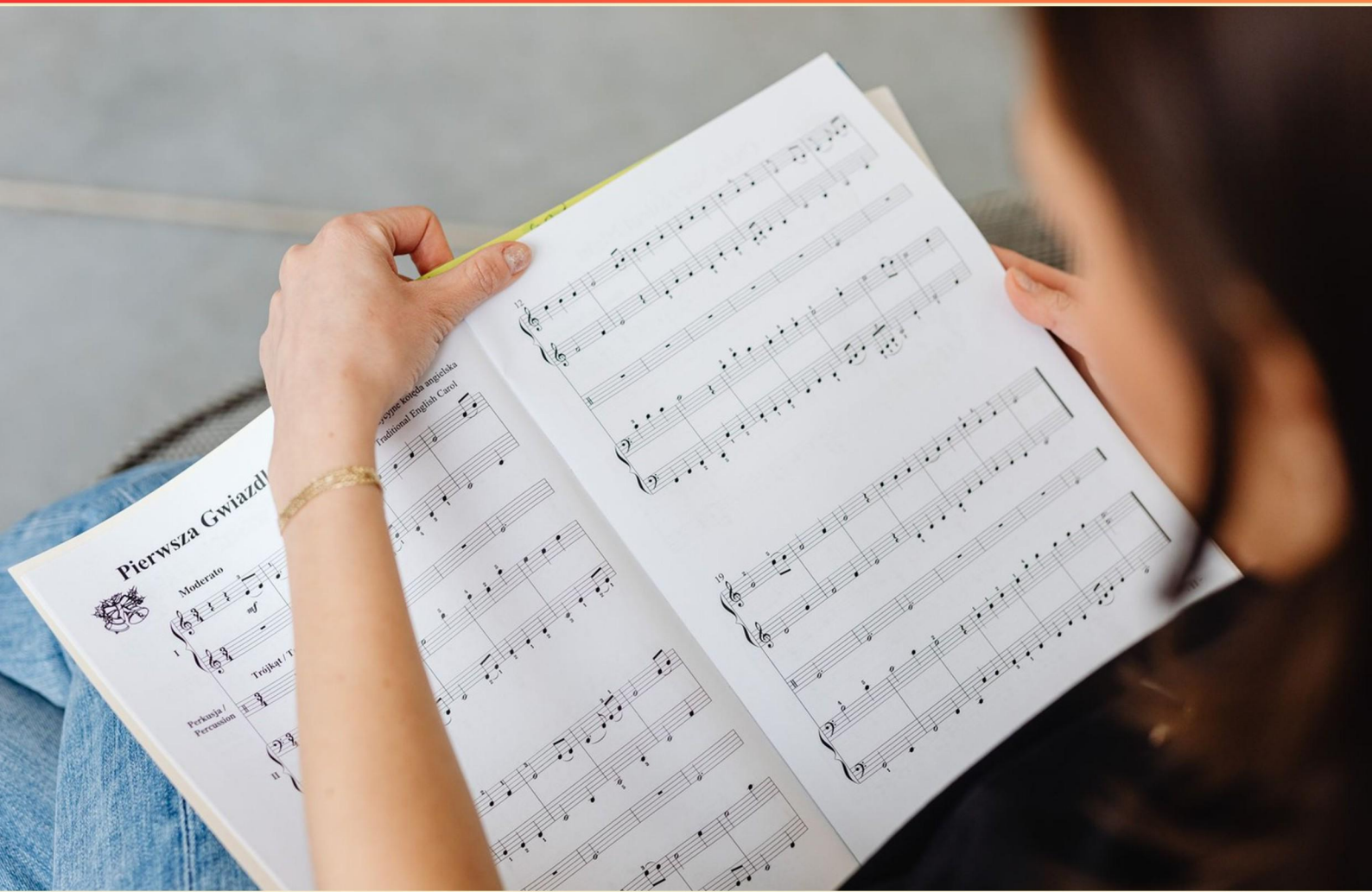


ACADEMIC DECATHLON MUSIC PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Which term best describes creating collages of sound by editing and recombining recorded sounds?**
 - A. Tape music
 - B. Digital synthesis
 - C. Acousmatic performance
 - D. Live sampling

- 2. True or false: The chromatic scale in Western tuning consists solely of half-step intervals.**
 - A. False
 - B. It depends on the key
 - C. Only in atonal tuning uses it
 - D. True

- 3. On a standard piano, where is middle-C located relative to the keyboard ends?**
 - A. It is the leftmost key
 - B. It is the highest note
 - C. It is equidistant from both sides
 - D. It is located at the keyboard's center

- 4. What is a general consequence of equal temperament for tuning interactions across keys?**
 - A. It allows playing in many keys with comparable tuning
 - B. It preserves pure intervals in all keys
 - C. It eliminates the possibility of chromatic notes
 - D. It requires perpetual retuning during performance

- 5. An arch contour is characterized by which pattern?**
 - A. Arch contour
 - B. Flat contour
 - C. Wave contour
 - D. Inverted arch contour

6. How many chromatic scale pitches is most Western music based on?

- A. Five
- B. Six
- C. Seven
- D. Eight

7. How do chordophones make sound?

- A. The membrane vibrating produces sound waves
- B. The vibrating strings create sound waves
- C. A vibrating column of air produces sound waves
- D. The frame vibrates to produce sound waves

8. What is the function of the dominant pitch?

- A. It is like a second gravitational center and sets melodies in motion by pulling them away from the tonic.
- B. It is the highest pitch in the scale.
- C. It always resolves to the tonic immediately.
- D. It has no influence on melodic direction.

9. Which two ethnomusicologists categorized instruments into four groups?

- A. Alfred Redfield and Maria Lopez
- B. Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel
- C. Carl Stumpf and Guido Bianchi
- D. Philip Tagg and Steven Feld

10. Which notes are chromatic?

- A. Notes borrowed from outside the key.
- B. Notes strictly within the key.
- C. Notes that form perfect intervals.
- D. Notes that are only in major keys.

Answers

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1. A
2. D
3. C
4. A
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Which term best describes creating collages of sound by editing and recombining recorded sounds?

- A. Tape music**
- B. Digital synthesis
- C. Acousmatic performance
- D. Live sampling

Manipulating recorded sounds into a collage through editing and recombining is characteristic of tape music. This approach uses magnetic tape to cut, splice, layer, speed up or slow down, reverse, and layer various sound fragments to create new textures from found or recorded material. It's a technique that grew out of the musique concrète tradition, where the emphasis is on assembling a sonic tapestry from existing recordings rather than generating new sounds from synthesis. Digital synthesis, on the other hand, builds tones from generators and algorithms rather than editing actual recordings. Acousmatic performance focuses on how the sound is perceived in a space or through loudspeakers rather than the specific method of creating the sound. Live sampling involves capturing and manipulating sounds in real time, often during performance, which is different from the studio collage process of editing a recording into a fixed, multi-layered piece.

2. True or false: The chromatic scale in Western tuning consists solely of half-step intervals.

- A. False
- B. It depends on the key
- C. Only in atonal tuning uses it
- D. True**

In Western tuning, the octave is divided into 12 equal steps called semitones or half steps. A chromatic scale simply moves through every one of those semitones in order, so each successive pitch is a half step higher than the previous one. For example, starting on C, the sequence goes C, C sharp, D, D sharp, E, F, F sharp, G, G sharp, A, A sharp, B, and back to C. Each adjacent pair is a half-step apart, which is exactly why the chromatic scale is described as consisting solely of half-step intervals. This is different from diatonic scales (like major or minor), which mix whole steps and half steps. Enharmonic spellings (such as C sharp and D flat) represent the same pitch in this tuning, so the half-step pattern remains intact. Therefore, the statement is true.

3. On a standard piano, where is middle-C located relative to the keyboard ends?

- A. It is the leftmost key
- B. It is the highest note
- C. It is equidistant from both sides**
- D. It is located at the keyboard's center

Middle C acts as a central reference point on the piano. On a standard 88-key keyboard, it sits near the middle of the instrument, with roughly the same number of keys to the left (lower pitches) as there are to the right (higher pitches). That central position is why it's described as equidistant from both ends. It isn't the leftmost key or the highest note, but the central note that anchors the layout of the keyboard. Knowing this helps you orient yourself quickly when locating other notes.

4. What is a general consequence of equal temperament for tuning interactions across keys?

- A. It allows playing in many keys with comparable tuning**
- B. It preserves pure intervals in all keys
- C. It eliminates the possibility of chromatic notes
- D. It requires perpetual retuning during performance

Equal temperament divides the octave into twelve equal steps, so every semitone has the same size in every key. This uniform spacing lets you modulate and play in many keys with tuning that remains consistently close across all of them, which is why it's described as having comparable tuning from one key to another. The trade-off is that the intervals aren't perfectly pure in any single key, since the sizes are tempered to fit all keys simultaneously. Chromatic notes aren't eliminated; they're simply organized into equal steps like the other notes. And once the system is set, there's no need to retune during performance. So the main outcome is that you can navigate multiple keys with tuning that stays broadly in line across them.

5. An arch contour is characterized by which pattern?

- A. Arch contour**
- B. Flat contour
- C. Wave contour
- D. Inverted arch contour

An arch contour is defined by an arch-shaped curve: a single, smooth convex line that rises from one endpoint, reaches a peak, and then descends to the other endpoint. This arch-like pattern is what sets it apart from a flat contour (a straight line with no rise), a wave contour (alternating peaks and troughs), or an inverted arch contour (a curve that opens downward). So the arch-shaped pattern best describes an arch contour.

6. How many chromatic scale pitches is most Western music based on?

- A. Five
- B. Six
- C. Seven**
- D. Eight

Western music generally uses a diatonic set of seven pitches per octave. These seven notes form the backbone of most melodies and harmonies in tonal music, including major and minor scales, and they repeat names after each octave (the same seven letter names cycle again). While a chromatic scale includes all twelve semitones within an octave, the everyday framework of Western tonality rests on those seven core pitches, with chromatic elements added as accidentals or passing tones rather than as the primary pitch set. That's why seven is the best answer.

7. How do chordophones make sound?

- A. The membrane vibrating produces sound waves
- B. The vibrating strings create sound waves**
- C. A vibrating column of air produces sound waves
- D. The frame vibrates to produce sound waves

Chordophones produce sound when their strings under tension vibrate. When a string is plucked, bowed, or struck, it vibrates at a fundamental frequency plus harmonics. Those vibrations are transferred to the instrument's body and its soundboard, which act as a resonator and radiate the vibrations into the air as sound waves. The pitch depends on string length, tension, and mass per unit length, while the frame mainly helps amplify the sound. Other families produce sound with vibrating membranes or vibrating air columns, not with vibrating strings.

8. What is the function of the dominant pitch?

- A. It is like a second gravitational center and sets melodies in motion by pulling them away from the tonic.**
- B. It is the highest pitch in the scale.
- C. It always resolves to the tonic immediately.
- D. It has no influence on melodic direction.

The dominant creates a sense of forward motion and pull in tonal music. It centers on the fifth scale degree and uses chords built on that note (the dominant triad or seventh chord) to generate tension that eagerly wants to resolve to the tonic. This tension supplies direction to melodies: lines tend to move away from the tonic toward the dominant area and then resolve back, with the leading tone often stepping up to the tonic to strengthen the pull. In practical terms, in C major the G major (or G7) chord pushes the harmony toward C major, giving that satisfying arrival when the tonic is reached. The idea that the dominant is simply the highest pitch misses its real role, and it doesn't always resolve immediately—voices may linger or cadences may vary—but the dominant's function as a guiding, gravitational force is what best explains its influence on melodic motion.

9. Which two ethnomusicologists categorized instruments into four groups?

- A. Alfred Redfield and Maria Lopez
- B. Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel**
- C. Carl Stumpf and Guido Bianchi
- D. Philip Tagg and Steven Feld

Classifying how sound is produced is a fundamental approach in ethnomusicology, and the four-category system by Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel groups instruments by their vibrating source: aerophones, chordophones, membranophones, and idiophones. Aerophones make sound from vibrating air (for example, flutes and trumpets). Chordophones produce sound via vibrating strings (such as violins and guitars). Membranophones generate sound through a vibrating membrane (drums like timpani or snare). Idiophones create sound from the instrument's own material vibrating (like xylophones, cymbals, or rattles). This Hornbostel-Sachs framework became a standard reference in studying world instruments. The other names listed are known for different work in the field and did not formulate this particular four-group classification.

10. Which notes are chromatic?

A. Notes borrowed from outside the key.

B. Notes strictly within the key.

C. Notes that form perfect intervals.

D. Notes that are only in major keys.

Chromatic notes are pitches that do not belong to the key's diatonic scale. They're the altered tones—sharps or flats—that a composer borrows from outside the key to add color, tension, or to approach a harmony more smoothly. For example, in C major, the diatonic notes are C D E F G A B; a note like C# (or Db) is chromatic because it isn't part of that scale and might be used as a passing tone or borrowed from a related key to create a specific effect. This is why the idea described as notes borrowed from outside the key is the correct characterization. Notes strictly within the key stay diatonic; notes that form perfect intervals aren't about chromaticism; and chromatic notes aren't limited to major keys—they can occur in minor keys and other tonal contexts as well.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

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We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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