

# ACAT Criminal Justice Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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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 level of policing enforces national laws and handles crimes that cross state lines or involve federal interests?**
  - A. Local**
  - B. Federal**
  - C. State**
  - D. International**
  
- 2. Which data source may underreport crime due to relying on reported incidents only?**
  - A. UCR**
  - B. NCVS**
  - C. Official data**
  - D. Unofficial data**
  
- 3. Who is considered to be the father of prison reform in England?**
  - A. John Howard**
  - B. Cesare Beccaria**
  - C. Jeremy Bentham**
  - D. Elmira Reformatory founder**
  
- 4. Which influential police administrator promoted leadership, staff development, and the use of technology to enhance police operations?**
  - A. O. W. Wilson**
  - B. August Vollmer**
  - C. J. Edgar Hoover**
  - D. Robert Peel**
  
- 5. Chimel v. California defined the scope of searches during arrests as...**
  - A. Limited the scope of searches during arrests to the immediate area around the arrestee**
  - B. Permitted a full-house search**
  - C. Required a warrant for all searches**
  - D. Abolished the concept of search incident to arrest**

- 6. Which feature is NOT characteristic of the Auburn System?**
- A. Panoptical design**
  - B. Congregate labor**
  - C. Lockstep marching**
  - D. Classification of prisoners**
- 7. In the SARA model, which step involves designing and implementing the chosen response strategies?**
- A. Response**
  - B. Analysis**
  - C. Scanning**
  - D. Assessment**
- 8. Which medieval title described a high-ranking official in charge of maintaining order and overseeing law enforcement, akin to a modern police chief?**
- A. Comes Stabuli**
  - B. Bow Street Runners**
  - C. London Metropolitan Police**
  - D. Sir Robert Peele**
- 9. What is the purpose of parole?**
- A. Punish offender**
  - B. Conditional release with conditions to aid rehabilitation and reduce overcrowding**
  - C. Replace prison entirely**
  - D. Increase surveillance without release**
- 10. Which commission's work in the 1930s sought to reform the criminal justice system by addressing corruption and Prohibition?**
- A. Wickersham Commission**
  - B. National Advisory Commission on CJ Standards and Goals**
  - C. Kansas City Experiment**
  - D. Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which level of policing enforces national laws and handles crimes that cross state lines or involve federal interests?**

**A. Local**

**B. Federal**

**C. State**

**D. International**

When you think about policing in the United States, there are different levels that carry authority, and the federal level is the one responsible for enforcing national laws and handling offenses that cross state lines or involve federal interests. Federal agencies operate under federal statutes and have jurisdiction over crimes that affect the country as a whole or involve interstate or international aspects—such as crimes that occur across state borders, offenses on federal property, or violations of federal programs and rights. This is why acts like interstate fraud, terrorism, or crimes on federal land fall to federal investigators, while local police focus on city or county laws and immediate community safety, and state police handle statewide concerns. An international policing body doesn't apply here because there isn't a single worldwide police force with universal enforcement authority.

**2. Which data source may underreport crime due to relying on reported incidents only?**

**A. UCR**

**B. NCVS**

**C. Official data**

**D. Unofficial data**

The data source that may underreport crime because it relies on reported incidents only is the one that collects crimes known to police from official reports. It depends on victims or witnesses actually reporting crimes to law enforcement; if people don't report, those crimes don't appear in the data. That tendency to miss unreported incidents is why this source can underestimate true crime levels, especially for offenses that people are reluctant to report. In contrast, victimization surveys like the National Crime Victimization Survey ask people about crimes they experienced regardless of whether they reported them to police, capturing a broader picture of crime, including the unreported cases.

**3. Who is considered to be the father of prison reform in England?**

- A. John Howard**
- B. Cesare Beccaria**
- C. Jeremy Bentham**
- D. Elmira Reformatory founder**

John Howard is considered the father of prison reform in England because he systematically examined prison conditions, published influential findings, and argued for humane treatment, better sanitation, separation of prisoners, education, and regular inspections. His work shed light on how prisons operated and he used his reports to push for reforms, helping spark parliamentary action toward penitentiary reform. Cesare Beccaria proposed broader European reform in criminal law, not specifically tied to England; Jeremy Bentham contributed ideas and design concepts like the Panopticon, but he isn't the figure most associated with initiating England's prison reform movement; Elmira Reformatory founder was American. So Howard is the best answer.

**4. Which influential police administrator promoted leadership, staff development, and the use of technology to enhance police operations?**

- A. O. W. Wilson**
- B. August Vollmer**
- C. J. Edgar Hoover**
- D. Robert Peel**

A strong tradition in police modernization centers on professional leadership and the careful development of staff, supported by new technology to run operations more efficiently. O. W. Wilson is the figure most closely tied to turning police administration into an organized discipline focused on these elements. His work stressed that effective policing rests on trained, capable leaders at every level, formal education and ongoing training for officers, and the systematic use of technology and administrative practices to streamline command, supervision, and operations. This combination—leadership, staff development, and technology integration—became a blueprint for modern police agencies, shaping how departments organize, train, and equip themselves to respond to crime and manage resources. While August Vollmer contributed foundational innovations in education and technology, the emphasis in this item aligns with Wilson's emphasis on structured leadership development and managerial reform. The other figures contributed in different ways, but the description best matches Wilson's broader impact on police administration.

5. **Chimel v. California** defined the scope of searches during arrests as...

**A. Limited the scope of searches during arrests to the immediate area around the arrestee**

**B. Permitted a full-house search**

**C. Required a warrant for all searches**

**D. Abolished the concept of search incident to arrest**

The key idea here is the scope of a search incident to a lawful arrest. *Chimel v. California* holds that such searches are limited to the arrestee's immediate control—the area within reach from which the arrestee might obtain a weapon or conceal or destroy evidence. In practice, that means the arrestee and the room where the arrest occurred, plus adjacent spaces directly within reach, can be searched, but a full-house rummage cannot be conducted without a separate warrant or other justification. This rationale balances officer safety and evidence preservation with Fourth Amendment protections. It explains why a full-house search is not allowed and why needing a warrant for broader searches isn't the rule governing the permissible scope of a search incident to arrest. It also shows that *Chimel* did not do away with search incidents; it refined and limited them.

6. Which feature is NOT characteristic of the Auburn System?

**A. Panoptical design**

**B. Congregate labor**

**C. Lockstep marching**

**D. Classification of prisoners**

The thing this item is testing is knowing which prison approach is associated with Auburn versus the idea of constant, individual surveillance. The Auburn System is dominated by silent, congregate labor in a shared space and tight, uniform discipline, which is why features like working in groups and marching in lockstep fit. It relies on discipline and organized labor in a common setting, not on a layout designed for constant individual observation. The panoptical design—the circular or central-observation setup intended for watching prisoners individually at all times—is not characteristic of Auburn; that design is more closely linked to systems emphasizing solitary confinement and continuous surveillance. So, the feature that does not fit Auburn is the panoptical design.

7. In the SARA model, which step involves designing and implementing the chosen response strategies?

**A. Response**

**B. Analysis**

**C. Scanning**

**D. Assessment**

In this model, the sequence matters: after identifying problems and understanding their root causes, the next phase is to turn those insights into action. The step you're looking for focuses on choosing concrete actions, planning them, and putting them into practice. This is where officers and partners design targeted interventions, coordinate resources, set timelines, and carry out the chosen strategies. The goal is to translate analysis into real-world actions and begin implementing them. After this, the cycle moves to assess how well those actions work and what needs to be adjusted. So, the step that designs and implements the chosen response strategies is the Response phase.

**8. Which medieval title described a high-ranking official in charge of maintaining order and overseeing law enforcement, akin to a modern police chief?**

**A. Comes Stabuli**

**B. Bow Street Runners**

**C. London Metropolitan Police**

**D. Sir Robert Peele**

In medieval governance, the chief figure responsible for keeping the peace and directing local enforcement was the constable, a role tied to the Latin title Comes Stabuli. Comes Stabuli literally means “Count of the Stables,” but the office functioned as the royal or regional authority in charge of maintaining order and overseeing enforcement—a clear ancestor of the modern police chief. Over time, this office evolved into what we recognize as the constable, the leader overseeing law and order. The other options come from later periods. Bow Street Runners were an 18th-century London detective group, not a medieval title. The London Metropolitan Police dates to 1829, a formalized 19th-century police force. Sir Robert Peel was the reformer who established the Metropolitan Police, not a medieval title.

**9. What is the purpose of parole?**

**A. Punish offender**

**B. Conditional release with conditions to aid rehabilitation and reduce overcrowding**

**C. Replace prison entirely**

**D. Increase surveillance without release**

Parole is the conditional release of an offender from prison before the full sentence is served, paired with supervision and specific requirements. The purpose is to support rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community while keeping public safety in mind, and it also helps manage prison overcrowding by letting offenders serve part of their sentence outside the facility under monitored conditions. Conditions can include reporting to a parole officer, maintaining employment, following laws, staying within a designated area, and participating in treatment or counseling as required. If conditions are violated, parole can be revoked and the person may return to prison to finish the sentence. This description fits best because it highlights the key ideas: release with conditions, focus on rehabilitation, community reintegration, and population management. It’s not primarily about punishment, it doesn’t imply replacing prisons entirely, and it does involve release with ongoing supervision rather than surveillance without release.

**10. Which commission's work in the 1930s sought to reform the criminal justice system by addressing corruption and Prohibition?**

**A. Wickersham Commission**

**B. National Advisory Commission on CJ Standards and Goals**

**C. Kansas City Experiment**

**D. Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy**

The central idea is recognizing a federal commission from the early 20th century that studied how law enforcement operated during Prohibition and pushed changes to the criminal justice system. The Wickersham Commission was created in 1929 and chaired by former Attorney General George W. Wickersham to examine law observance and enforcement across the United States. Its 1931 findings highlighted widespread police corruption, political influence in policing, and the problems of enforcing Prohibition, making a clear case that reforms were needed throughout policing, the courts, and corrections. It urged professionalizing police work—merit-based hiring, better training, and more centralized data—and improving coordination between police, courts, and jails, all aimed at reducing corruption and making enforcement more effective. This work embodies the era's move to reform the criminal justice system in response to the abuses and failures associated with Prohibition. The other options come from different times or contexts and don't fit the 1930s reform focus.

## 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

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

**<https://acatcriminaljustice.examzify.com>**

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

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