

# AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PLANNERS (AICP) PRACTICE EXAM (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. What is the typical amount of solid waste created by a person in a household each day?**
  - A. Approximately 2.5 lbs.
  - B. Approximately 4.5 lbs.
  - C. Approximately 6.5 lbs.
  - D. Approximately 8.5 lbs.
- 2. What significant impact did the Erie Canal have on New York City?**
  - A. It decreased shipping costs and opened trade routes to the Great Lakes
  - B. It increased inflation rates in urban areas
  - C. It limited the growth of new cities
  - D. It promoted international shipping
- 3. What was the major regional development program known as during the early years of the New Deal Era?**
  - A. The Tennessee Valley Authority
  - B. The USHA Program
  - C. The Greenbelt Towns
  - D. The PWA Program
- 4. What is the area of one square mile in acres?**
  - A. 320 acres
  - B. 640 acres
  - C. 1280 acres
  - D. 160 acres
- 5. According to ethical guidelines, planners are expected to engage which group in their activities?**
  - A. Only wealthy citizens
  - B. Disadvantaged citizens
  - C. Fellow professionals
  - D. Government officials

- 6. Which of the following describes the impact of the ordinance of 1785?**
- A. Limited land speculation
  - B. Opened the west to rapid settlement
  - C. Centralized land ownership
  - D. Increased government control over land
- 7. The quote, "Make no small plans, they have no magic to stir men's (or women's) blood" is attributed to which notable planner?**
- A. Frank Lloyd Wright
  - B. Daniel Burnham
  - C. Richard Nixon
  - D. Daniel Boone
- 8. A summary of goals and policies and a detailed methodology for implementation are components of what?**
- A. A fiscal district plan.
  - B. A joint planning document.
  - C. A central city development plan.
  - D. A preliminary land use document.
- 9. Who is known as the "Father of modern environmental policy"?**
- A. Clarence Arthur Perry
  - B. Patrick Geddes
  - C. Ian McHarg
  - D. Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.
- 10. What does "empty ritual" mean in the context of citizen participation?**
- A. More meetings without results
  - B. Excessive government control
  - C. Lack of public interest
  - D. Unused resources for citizens

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is the typical amount of solid waste created by a person in a household each day?**

- A. Approximately 2.5 lbs.
- B. Approximately 4.5 lbs.**
- C. Approximately 6.5 lbs.
- D. Approximately 8.5 lbs.

*The typical amount of solid waste generated by an individual in a household each day is approximately 4.5 pounds. This figure is based on studies and statistics collected from various municipalities and environmental agencies that track waste generation trends. It reflects not only domestic waste but also includes items discarded from everyday activities, such as food packaging, paper products, and other disposable materials. This figure plays a crucial role in waste management practices and planning efforts, as it helps municipalities forecast waste collection and disposal needs, as well as set recycling and reduction goals. Understanding the average waste generation is vital for developing sustainable practices, educating the community on waste reduction, and implementing effective recycling programs aimed at minimizing the environmental impact of solid waste.*

**2. What significant impact did the Erie Canal have on New York City?**

- A. It decreased shipping costs and opened trade routes to the Great Lakes**
- B. It increased inflation rates in urban areas
- C. It limited the growth of new cities
- D. It promoted international shipping

*The Erie Canal had a profound impact on New York City by significantly decreasing shipping costs and opening up vital trade routes to the Great Lakes region. By connecting the Hudson River with Lake Erie, the canal provided a direct and efficient means for transporting goods between the interior of the United States and the Atlantic Ocean. This dramatically lowered the expenses associated with moving goods, allowing for lower prices for both consumers and businesses. The canal effectively transformed New York City into a major trade hub, facilitating commerce not just within the state but across the entire nation, and it played a crucial role in enhancing the overall economic development of the region during the 19th century. This economic boom helped establish New York City as one of the world's foremost commercial centers. In contrast, other choices such as increasing inflation rates in urban areas, limiting the growth of new cities, and promoting international shipping do not accurately reflect the direct benefits and transformations brought about by the Erie Canal. Instead, the canal's legacy is primarily tied to its ability to connect regions economically and foster robust trade, boosting both local and national economies.*

### 3. What was the major regional development program known as during the early years of the New Deal Era?

- A. The Tennessee Valley Authority**
- B. The USHA Program
- C. The Greenbelt Towns
- D. The PWA Program

*The Tennessee Valley Authority, commonly referred to as the TVA, was a significant regional development program established during the early years of the New Deal Era. Initiated in 1933, the TVA aimed to improve economic conditions in the Tennessee Valley, which had been severely affected by the Great Depression. This program focused on providing jobs, improving infrastructure, and boosting the economy through the development of hydroelectric power, flood control, and the modernization of agriculture. The TVA is noteworthy for its comprehensive approach to regional development, combining environmental stewardship with economic planning. It represented a shift in how the federal government engaged with local communities, implementing large-scale projects that transformed the region's infrastructure and economy. This program is often seen as a model for subsequent federal initiatives aimed at regional revitalization. In contrast, while the other options listed had roles in development and planning, they are not as closely associated with the overarching goal of regional recovery and modernization in the manner that the TVA was during its inception. The different programs served varied purposes, with some focused more specifically on housing or public works, but the TVA stands out as a cornerstone of New Deal developmental strategy.*

### 4. What is the area of one square mile in acres?

- A. 320 acres
- B. 640 acres**
- C. 1280 acres
- D. 160 acres

*A square mile is a unit of area that is equivalent to the area of a square with sides that are each one mile long. To understand how many acres are in a square mile, it is important to know the conversion factors between these units. One mile is equal to 5,280 feet, and an acre is defined as 43,560 square feet. To find the total number of acres in a square mile, we can start by calculating the total area of one square mile in square feet: 1 mile x 1 mile = 5,280 feet x 5,280 feet = 27,878,400 square feet. Next, we can divide this total by the size of one acre: 27,878,400 square feet ÷ 43,560 square feet/acre ≈ 640 acres. Thus, one square mile contains exactly 640 acres. This factual basis supports the selection of the response that states there are 640 acres in a square mile. Knowing this helps clarify land area conversions, which can be critical in planning and land management scenarios often encountered in the AICP exam.*

**5. According to ethical guidelines, planners are expected to engage which group in their activities?**

- A. Only wealthy citizens
- B. Disadvantaged citizens**
- C. Fellow professionals
- D. Government officials

*Engaging disadvantaged citizens is critical in planning activities because it ensures that all voices in the community are heard and considered, particularly those who may otherwise be marginalized or overlooked in the planning process. Ethical guidelines emphasize inclusivity and social equity, which require planners to actively involve underrepresented groups in their work. This involvement helps to address historical inequalities and ensures that the planning outcomes are beneficial to all segments of the population, especially those who may lack the resources or power to advocate for their interests effectively. In contrast, the other options suggest a more exclusive engagement. Focusing solely on wealthy citizens may reinforce existing disparities and limit access to resources, while only engaging fellow professionals or government officials could result in a disconnect from the community's actual needs and preferences. Planners are tasked with fostering community well-being, making it essential to prioritize collaboration with disadvantaged citizens to achieve more equitable and sustainable outcomes.*

**6. Which of the following describes the impact of the ordinance of 1785?**

- A. Limited land speculation
- B. Opened the west to rapid settlement**
- C. Centralized land ownership
- D. Increased government control over land

*The ordinance of 1785 was instrumental in shaping land policy in the United States, thereby significantly impacting westward expansion. It established a systematic process for surveying and selling land in the western territories, which in turn facilitated the organized settlement of these areas. By creating a clear framework for land distribution, it made it easier for settlers to buy land in a formal and structured manner rather than relying on informal means of acquisition. This systematization encouraged more people to move west, as it provided both opportunities for land ownership and mechanisms for governance in newly settled areas. Thus, it directly contributed to the opening of the west to rapid settlement. Understanding the context of the ordinance helps clarify why the other options do not align as closely with its outcomes. For example, rather than limiting land speculation, the ordinance ultimately promoted it by making land more accessible. Furthermore, it did not centralize land ownership; instead, it distributed land in a way that enabled individuals to acquire property. Lastly, while the ordinance did introduce some governmental structure regarding land management, it primarily aimed at promoting settlement rather than increasing government control over land.*

**7. The quote, "Make no small plans, they have no magic to stir men's (or women's) blood" is attributed to which notable planner?**

- A. Frank Lloyd Wright
- B. Daniel Burnham**
- C. Richard Nixon
- D. Daniel Boone

*The quote "Make no small plans, they have no magic to stir men's (or women's) blood" is attributed to Daniel Burnham, a significant figure in urban planning and architecture. This statement reflects Burnham's visionary approach and his belief in the power of ambitious, grand-scale planning. He was known for his work on the Chicago Plan and the 1909 Plan of Chicago, both of which aimed at transforming urban environments through large, impactful projects. Burnham's philosophy underscores the importance of aiming high and thinking big when it comes to urban development, emphasizing that visionary planning can inspire communities and drive progress. By advocating for large, transformative ideas, he aimed to motivate public engagement and create lasting, meaningful change in the urban landscape, making this quote representative of his impact on the field of planning. Regarding the other options, while Frank Lloyd Wright was an influential architect known for his innovative designs, he did not specifically express this planning philosophy. Richard Nixon, primarily recognized for his political career, does not fit into the context of urban planning. Daniel Boone, celebrated as an American frontiersman, similarly does not relate to the field of urban planning.*

**8. A summary of goals and policies and a detailed methodology for implementation are components of what?**

- A. A fiscal district plan.**
- B. A joint planning document.
- C. A central city development plan.
- D. A preliminary land use document.

*The correct choice identifies a fiscal district plan as a document that encompasses a summary of goals and policies, as well as detailed methodologies for implementation. Fiscal district plans are typically created to guide the financial and physical development of a specified area, ensuring that the goals align with the community's overall development framework and that there are clear processes in place for achieving those objectives. These plans serve to integrate various elements such as land use, infrastructure, public services, and economic development within a given district, making them instrumental in the planning process where fiscal considerations are paramount. Other document types, while valuable in their contexts, do not emphasize the same level of detail regarding fiscal strategies or methodologies specific to the financial management of a district. For example, a joint planning document may focus on collaborative goals between entities but may not delve into detailed financial methodologies. Similarly, a central city development plan might guide urban development but lacks the focused financial implications of a fiscal district plan. Lastly, a preliminary land use document typically provides an initial overview of zoning or land allocation without the comprehensive strategy for implementation that characterizes a fiscal district plan.*

## 9. Who is known as the "Father of modern environmental policy"?

- A. Clarence Arthur Perry
- B. Patrick Geddes
- C. Ian McHarg**
- D. Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.

*The title of "Father of modern environmental policy" is attributed to Ian McHarg due to his pioneering work in the field of landscape architecture and planning which emphasized the importance of integrating ecological principles into urban and regional planning. His influential book, "Design with Nature," published in 1969, advocated for a planning framework that respected natural systems and processes. McHarg developed innovative techniques for assessing land suitability based on environmental criteria, thereby encouraging planners to consider the ecological implications of their decisions. His ideas laid the groundwork for a more sustainable approach to planning, where environmental conservation and responsible land use were prioritized. This holistic view has significantly informed contemporary environmental policies and practices, making him a pivotal figure in the movement toward sustainable development. Therefore, McHarg's contributions to environmental policy and planning are recognized as foundational in the establishment of a modern approach to these fields.*

## 10. What does "empty ritual" mean in the context of citizen participation?

- A. More meetings without results**
- B. Excessive government control
- C. Lack of public interest
- D. Unused resources for citizens

*In the context of citizen participation, "empty ritual" refers to practices that involve a series of meetings or engagement efforts that ultimately do not lead to meaningful impact or outcomes. When these gatherings occur without yielding tangible results or improvements, they are perceived as mere rituals. Stakeholders might feel that their input is welcomed but then neglected when decisions are made, leading to disillusionment with the process. This reflects a failure in the participatory framework, where the intent to involve citizens exists but falls short of actual influence or change. Thus, the characterization as "more meetings without results" encapsulates the essence of "empty ritual" by highlighting the disconnect between participation and actionable outcomes. Understanding this concept emphasizes the importance of ensuring that citizen participation is structured effectively, with clear pathways for feedback to inform real decision-making rather than just performative engagements.*

## 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://aicp.examzify.com>

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

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