

AMT Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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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 first step in preparing a peripheral blood smear?**
 - A. Preparing a fixed slide**
 - B. Spreading a drop of blood onto a glass plate**
 - C. Using a centrifuge**
 - D. Staining with methanol**

- 2. What is the formula for calculating the coefficient of variation?**
 - A. Mean / Standard Deviation**
 - B. Standard Deviation / Mean**
 - C. Mean x Standard Deviation**
 - D. Mean + Standard Deviation**

- 3. The Febrile Agglutination Test is used to find antibodies related to what condition?**
 - A. Hemolytic anemia**
 - B. Syphilis**
 - C. HIV infection**
 - D. Allergic reactions**

- 4. Which immunoglobulin class is most likely to cross the placenta?**
 - A. IgA**
 - B. IgD**
 - C. IgM**
 - D. IgG**

- 5. What is the purpose of using living host cells in culture?**
 - A. To isolate resistant strains of bacteria**
 - B. To grow bacteria that can only grow in living host cells**
 - C. To determine antibiotic susceptibility**
 - D. To conduct genetic modifications**

- 6. What is the process of measuring the bending of light as it passes through a sample called?**
- A. Absorption photometry**
 - B. Pass-through refractometry**
 - C. Fluorometry**
 - D. Refraction analysis**
- 7. What type of test is described as nonspecific and preliminary in nature?**
- A. Conformity test**
 - B. Confirmatory test**
 - C. Screening test**
 - D. Diagnostic test**
- 8. What does the Direct Anti-Human Globulin Test (DAT) diagnose?**
- A. A type of inherited blood condition**
 - B. A type of anemia caused by the immune system**
 - C. A generalized immune deficiency**
 - D. A response to transfusion reactions**
- 9. Which of the following is NOT a type of acid-base imbalance?**
- A. Respiratory acidosis**
 - B. Respiratory alkalosis**
 - C. Metabolic alkalosis**
 - D. Oxygen deficiency**
- 10. What does a pregnancy test measure for?**
- A. The presence of estrogen**
 - B. The presence of hCG**
 - C. The presence of progesterone**
 - D. The presence of insulin**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the first step in preparing a peripheral blood smear?

- A. Preparing a fixed slide**
- B. Spreading a drop of blood onto a glass plate**
- C. Using a centrifuge**
- D. Staining with methanol**

The first step in preparing a peripheral blood smear involves spreading a drop of blood onto a glass slide. This step is crucial as it creates a thin, even layer of blood cells that allows for optimal visualization under a microscope. By ensuring the blood is well spread, the technician can adequately examine the morphology of the individual cells, which is vital for diagnosing various hematological conditions. To prepare the smear, typically a small drop of blood is placed on one end of a clean glass slide, and another slide is used to spread the blood across the surface by making contact with the drop at a 30 to 45-degree angle. This technique is key in achieving a sufficient thickness for examination, enabling the detection of abnormalities in cell shape, size, and distribution. The other options involve steps in the process but are not the initial actions. Preparing a fixed slide happens after the smear is created and involves techniques that preserve the cellular structure for staining and analysis. Using a centrifuge is more related to processing blood samples for specific tests rather than surface smear preparation. Staining with methanol is involved in fixing the cells after they have been smeared, not in the initial preparation.

2. What is the formula for calculating the coefficient of variation?

- A. Mean / Standard Deviation**
- B. Standard Deviation / Mean**
- C. Mean x Standard Deviation**
- D. Mean + Standard Deviation**

The coefficient of variation (CV) is a statistical measure of the relative variability of a dataset. It is calculated by taking the standard deviation and dividing it by the mean. This ratio expresses variability in relation to the size of the mean, allowing for the comparison of variability across different datasets or measurements, even when they are on different scales. Using the standard deviation in the numerator highlights how much individual data points deviate, on average, from the mean value, while the mean acts as a reference point for context. By multiplying the result by 100, the coefficient of variation can also be expressed as a percentage, which is often useful in interpreting the data. The other options do not correctly calculate the coefficient of variation. Mean divided by standard deviation, multiplication of mean and standard deviation, and adding mean to standard deviation do not reflect the proportion of variability relative to the mean and, thus, do not represent the concept of the coefficient of variation. Therefore, dividing the standard deviation by the mean is the correct approach to obtaining this important statistical measure.

3. The Febrile Agglutination Test is used to find antibodies related to what condition?

- A. Hemolytic anemia**
- B. Syphilis**
- C. HIV infection**
- D. Allergic reactions**

The Febrile Agglutination Test is primarily utilized to detect antibodies associated with bacterial infections such as typhoid fever, which is caused by *Salmonella typhi*. This test is sensitive to the presence of specific antibodies that appear during fever-inducing infections. While the detection of these antibodies can be relevant in the context of other diseases, the main application is linked with the diagnosis of systemic infections rather than the conditions suggested in the other choices. In the case of hemolytic anemia, this condition is typically associated with the destruction of red blood cells, and while there can be autoimmune factors involved, the Febrile Agglutination Test is not a standard method for diagnosing hemolytic anemia. Conditions like syphilis and HIV infection utilize different serological tests tailored to their specific pathogens, such as the RPR or VDRL tests for syphilis and ELISA or Western blot tests for HIV. Allergic reactions are identified through different means, such as skin prick testing or specific IgE assays, rather than through agglutination tests. Thus, the focus of the Febrile Agglutination Test aligns closely with the detection of antigens in febrile illnesses, illustrating its relevance to identifying infections rather than autoimmune

4. Which immunoglobulin class is most likely to cross the placenta?

- A. IgA**
- B. IgD**
- C. IgM**
- D. IgG**

The immunoglobulin class that is most likely to cross the placenta is IgG. This ability is significant because IgG is the main type of antibody found in the blood and the extracellular fluid, and it plays a crucial role in providing immunity to the fetus during pregnancy. As the pregnancy progresses, maternal IgG antibodies can transfer through the placenta into the fetal circulation, offering passive immunity to the newborn. This transfer significantly helps protect the infant from infections during the initial months of life, as the newborn's own immune system is still developing. IgA, while important for mucosal immunity and found in secretions such as breast milk, does not cross the placenta effectively. IgD is primarily found on the surface of B cells and does not play a significant role in immunity throughout the placenta. IgM, although it is the first antibody produced in response to infection and a primary response, is too large to effectively cross the placenta. Therefore, IgG is the only immunoglobulin that can efficiently traverse the placental barrier to provide the necessary immune support to the developing fetus.

5. What is the purpose of using living host cells in culture?

- A. To isolate resistant strains of bacteria**
- B. To grow bacteria that can only grow in living host cells**
- C. To determine antibiotic susceptibility**
- D. To conduct genetic modifications**

Using living host cells in culture is crucial for growing bacteria that have specific growth requirements that cannot be fulfilled in artificial media. Some bacteria, particularly those categorized as obligate intracellular pathogens, can only replicate within living cells because they rely on the cellular machinery and nutrients provided by the host. This dependency means that standard laboratory media do not provide the necessary environment or conditions for their growth. In the context of the other choices, the isolation of resistant strains of bacteria and the determination of antibiotic susceptibility can be performed using non-living media; they do not necessarily require living host cells. Similarly, while genetic modifications might involve living cells, they are not limited to the use of living hosts and can also be accomplished using plasmids or other methods in non-host systems. Hence, developing bacterial cultures specifically requires living host cells for those organisms that cannot grow outside of their natural cellular environments.

6. What is the process of measuring the bending of light as it passes through a sample called?

- A. Absorption photometry**
- B. Pass-through refractometry**
- C. Fluorometry**
- D. Refraction analysis**

The process of measuring the bending of light as it passes through a sample is referred to as refractometry. When light passes through a medium, it changes speed and direction at the interface of different media, a phenomenon known as refraction. Refractometry is specifically the method that quantifies this bending of light to infer properties about a substance, such as its concentration or composition. In this context, "Pass-through refractometry" effectively describes the method used, as it captures the key principle of measuring light's bending—in this case, by allowing light to pass through the sample for analysis. This approach is crucial in laboratory settings where determining the refractive index is essential for various analyses. The other methods mentioned do not directly focus on measuring light refraction. Absorption photometry pertains to quantifying how much light is absorbed by a sample, fluorometry deals with measuring the emission of light by a sample that has absorbed photons, and refraction analysis could imply a broader or less specific term. Therefore, "Pass-through refractometry" appropriately encapsulates the specific process described by the question.

7. What type of test is described as nonspecific and preliminary in nature?

- A. Conformity test
- B. Confirmatory test
- C. Screening test**
- D. Diagnostic test

The correct choice is a screening test, which serves as a preliminary assessment to identify potential health issues in individuals before more definitive testing is conducted. Screening tests are designed to be nonspecific, meaning they do not provide a definitive diagnosis but rather indicate the possibility of a condition that may require further investigation. Screening tests are valuable in public health and clinical practice because they can efficiently identify individuals who might benefit from more specific and invasive diagnostic tests. They often include methods such as questionnaires, simple blood tests, or imaging studies that help in flagging individuals for potential follow-up. In contrast, other types of tests mentioned, such as confirmatory tests, are intended to verify the results of initial tests and provide a definitive diagnosis. Diagnostic tests aim to establish the presence or absence of a disease with more specificity and accuracy. Conformity tests are generally related to compliance with established standards or regulations and do not fall into the category of medical testing. This framework highlights why screening tests play a crucial role in early detection and intervention, serving as the first step in a more comprehensive diagnostic process.

8. What does the Direct Anti-Human Globulin Test (DAT) diagnose?

- A. A type of inherited blood condition
- B. A type of anemia caused by the immune system**
- C. A generalized immune deficiency
- D. A response to transfusion reactions

The Direct Anti-Human Globulin Test (DAT) is primarily used to diagnose autoimmune hemolytic anemia, which is a type of anemia that occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys its own red blood cells. The DAT detects the presence of antibodies bound to the surface of red blood cells. In cases of hemolytic anemia, these antibodies can cause the red blood cells to be targeted and destroyed prematurely, leading to anemia. By identifying the presence of these antibodies, the DAT helps in confirming the diagnosis and guiding appropriate treatment for the condition. While options such as inherited blood conditions or generalized immune deficiencies might involve complex immunological aspects, they are not specifically diagnosed by the DAT. Additionally, although the DAT can be relevant in cases of transfusion reactions—where it indicates the presence of antibodies that may lead to hemolysis—the test is more directly associated with diagnosing the autoimmune aspect of hemolytic anemia rather than a transfusion reaction itself. Thus, the selection of the option related to anemia caused by the immune system accurately aligns with the primary application of the DAT.

9. Which of the following is NOT a type of acid-base imbalance?

- A. Respiratory acidosis**
- B. Respiratory alkalosis**
- C. Metabolic alkalosis**
- D. Oxygen deficiency**

The correct choice is indeed related to identifying a factor that does not fall under the classification of acid-base imbalances. In the context of acid-base imbalances, important conditions include respiratory acidosis, respiratory alkalosis, and metabolic alkalosis, all of which describe specific deviations in the body's pH level due to respiratory or metabolic processes. Respiratory acidosis occurs when the lungs cannot remove enough carbon dioxide, leading to elevated levels of carbonic acid in the body and a decrease in blood pH. Conversely, respiratory alkalosis results from excessive loss of carbon dioxide, causing an increase in blood pH. Metabolic alkalosis, on the other hand, involves an increase in bicarbonate or a loss of hydrogen ions, also resulting in a higher blood pH. Oxygen deficiency, while it can significantly affect the body's physiology and may lead to various health issues, is not classified as an acid-base imbalance. It does not directly relate to the processes of acid or base regulation in the body; rather, it primarily refers to insufficient oxygen supply, which impacts cellular metabolism and can result in conditions like hypoxia. By recognizing the defining characteristics of acid-base imbalances and how they relate to respiratory and metabolic functions, it becomes clear why oxygen deficiency does

10. What does a pregnancy test measure for?

- A. The presence of estrogen**
- B. The presence of hCG**
- C. The presence of progesterone**
- D. The presence of insulin**

A pregnancy test specifically measures the presence of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) in a person's urine or blood. hCG is a hormone produced by the placenta shortly after a fertilized egg attaches to the uterine lining. This hormone can typically be detected in the blood or urine as early as a week after conception, making it a reliable indicator of pregnancy. While estrogen and progesterone play vital roles in maintaining pregnancy and preparing the body for it, they are not the hormones primarily tested for in standard pregnancy tests. Insulin is unrelated to pregnancy testing as it regulates blood sugar levels instead of serving as a marker for pregnancy. Therefore, detecting hCG is critical for confirming pregnancy.

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:

<https://amtmls.examzify.com>

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

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