

AP Gov - Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) Cases 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. Korematsu v. United States is controversial for upholding internment. Which principle did the Court emphasize?**
 - A. Civil liberties are always protected, even in wartime**
 - B. National security interests can override individual rights in wartime**
 - C. The Court cannot hear wartime cases**
 - D. The government may not detain citizens without trial**

- 2. Reed v. Reed assessed gender discrimination by holding that such classifications must be what?**
 - A. Government can prefer one gender in all matters**
 - B. Gender-based classifications must be substantially related to an important government interest**
 - C. Gender-based classifications are always unconstitutional**
 - D. Laws may differentiate if reasonable and rational**

- 3. Comparing Bakke and Gratz, how did the cases differ in their treatment of race in admissions?**
 - A. Bakke allowed quotas; Gratz allowed automatic points**
 - B. Bakke banned race entirely; Gratz banned quotas**
 - C. Bakke allowed race as a factor but banned quotas; Gratz struck down automatic points for race**
 - D. Bakke and Gratz both upheld race-based admissions**

- 4. Griswold v. Connecticut established a constitutional right to privacy in which context?**
 - A. Freedom of speech**
 - B. Right to privacy**
 - C. Right to bear arms**
 - D. Equal protection**

- 5. Which statement about the Good-Faith Exception was addressed again to highlight its effect on admissibility of evidence?**
 - A. All evidence seized under defective warrant is admissible**
 - B. Evidence obtained in good faith may be admissible**
 - C. Warrant must be reissued immediately**
 - D. Police can ignore warrant limitations**

- 6. Near v. Minnesota is best understood as strengthening which constitutional protection?**
- A. The state's power to regulate the press**
 - B. The right to prior restraint**
 - C. The freedom of the press by prohibiting prior restraint**
 - D. The redistribution of news content**
- 7. In McCulloch v. Maryland, the Court held that Maryland could not tax the Bank of the United States because Congress has implied powers to create a national bank under which clause?**
- A. Elastic Clause**
 - B. Supremacy Clause**
 - C. Tenth Amendment**
 - D. Commerce Clause**
- 8. Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education addressed desegregation remedies after Brown. What remedy did the Court approve?**
- A. Redrawing school districts**
 - B. Busing to achieve racial balance**
 - C. Voluntary integration plans only**
 - D. Ending desegregation efforts**
- 9. Which case addressed the incorporation of the Second Amendment to apply to the states?**
- A. McDonald v. Chicago**
 - B. Heller v. District Of Columbia**
 - C. Barron v. Baltimore**
 - D. Marbury v. Madison**
- 10. Gideon v. Wainwright guaranteed the right to counsel for defendants who cannot afford one, leading to the creation of what system?**
- A. Public Defender System**
 - B. Private attorney panels**
 - C. Court-appointed counsel**
 - D. Pro bono clinics**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Korematsu v. United States is controversial for upholding internment. Which principle did the Court emphasize?

- A. Civil liberties are always protected, even in wartime**
- B. National security interests can override individual rights in wartime**
- C. The Court cannot hear wartime cases**
- D. The government may not detain citizens without trial**

In wartime, national security concerns can take precedence over individual rights. *Korematsu v. United States* shows the Court prioritizing the government's assessment of military necessity over civil liberties, upholding the exclusion and internment of people of Japanese ancestry as constitutional in the context of World War II. The Court argued that protecting the nation from espionage and sabotage required deference to executive and military judgments, even if that meant restricting basic rights like movement and liberty inside the United States. That is why the best answer describes the idea that national security interests can override individual rights in wartime. This doesn't fit the other options because the decision did not treat civil liberties as always protected, did not claim the Court cannot hear wartime cases, and it did not present a blanket rule that the government may never detain citizens without trial; in *Korematsu* the Court upheld detention in the name of national security.

2. Reed v. Reed assessed gender discrimination by holding that such classifications must be what?

- A. Government can prefer one gender in all matters**
- B. Gender-based classifications must be substantially related to an important government interest**
- C. Gender-based classifications are always unconstitutional**
- D. Laws may differentiate if reasonable and rational**

Gender-based classifications under the Equal Protection Clause must be substantially related to an important government objective. *Reed v. Reed* held that Idaho's law preferring men to be the estate administrator was unconstitutional because the sex-based distinction was not tied to an important objective in a way that substantially related to achieving it. This case helped establish that laws differentiating by gender face heightened scrutiny and cannot be arbitrary or based on stereotypes. A simple government preference for one gender in all matters isn't allowed, and some gender classifications can survive only if they satisfy that substantial-relationship requirement; purely rational-basis review is too weak for sex-based distinctions.

3. Comparing Bakke and Gratz, how did the cases differ in their treatment of race in admissions?

- A. Bakke allowed quotas; Gratz allowed automatic points
- B. Bakke banned race entirely; Gratz banned quotas
- C. Bakke allowed race as a factor but banned quotas; Gratz struck down automatic points for race**
- D. Bakke and Gratz both upheld race-based admissions

The idea being tested is how the court treats race in admissions—whether it can be used at all, and if so, how it must be used. In Bakke, the Court invalidated a quota-like portion of the medical school’s admissions program that set aside fixed seats for minority applicants. But it did not ban considering race entirely; it allowed race to be one factor among many in a holistic review of applicants, as long as it wasn’t used to create a strict quota. Gratz, by contrast, struck down the University of Michigan’s undergraduate policy because it automatically awarded a set number of points based on race. That made race a mechanical advantage rather than a nuanced, individualized consideration, effectively creating a quota. So the difference is: Bakke permitted race as a factor within a broader, individualized process, while Gratz rejected an automatic, race-based point system.

4. Griswold v. Connecticut established a constitutional right to privacy in which context?

- A. Freedom of speech
- B. Right to privacy**
- C. Right to bear arms
- D. Equal protection

The right to privacy is recognized in the context of marital decisions about contraception. Griswold v. Connecticut struck down a law that banned using contraceptives by married couples, ruling that this intrudes on the couple’s private, intimate decisions and violates a constitutional right inferred from the First, Third, and Fourth Amendments and protected by the Fourteenth Amendment’s due process. This case helps establish a “zone of privacy” around family life, later influencing how privacy is applied to other personal choices. It’s not about freedom of speech, gun rights, or equal protection.

5. Which statement about the Good-Faith Exception was addressed again to highlight its effect on admissibility of evidence?

- A. All evidence seized under defective warrant is admissible**
- B. Evidence obtained in good faith may be admissible**
- C. Warrant must be reissued immediately**
- D. Police can ignore warrant limitations**

The key idea is that evidence gathered under a search warrant can still be used in court if the police reasonably relied on that warrant and believed it was valid. This is the essence of the good-faith exception: it preserves admissibility when officers acted in good faith, even if a later judge finds the warrant defective. The reasoning is that the exclusionary rule should deter misconduct, not punish officers for genuine mistakes in the warrant process, so long as their reliance on the warrant was reasonable. In practice, this means the statement that evidence obtained in good faith may be admissible best captures the effect of the exception on whether the evidence can be admitted. It's not a blanket rule that all defective-warrant evidence is admissible, it isn't about requiring immediate reissuance of warrants, and it doesn't let police ignore warrant limits.

6. Near v. Minnesota is best understood as strengthening which constitutional protection?

- A. The state's power to regulate the press**
- B. The right to prior restraint**
- C. The freedom of the press by prohibiting prior restraint**
- D. The redistribution of news content**

The key idea is protection for freedom of the press by preventing prior restraint. Prior restraint means government censorship of material before it's published. In *Near v. Minnesota*, the Court invalidated a state law that would have allowed injunctions stopping a newspaper from printing, holding that such prior restraints violate the First Amendment. The decision also helped apply this press-protective stance to the states through due process, reinforcing that the government generally cannot bar publication in advance. So this case strengthens the protection of a free press by prohibiting prior restraint. This isn't about increasing state power to regulate the press, and it isn't about granting a right to impose prior restraints. It also has nothing to do with redistributing news content.

7. In *McCulloch v. Maryland*, the Court held that Maryland could not tax the Bank of the United States because Congress has implied powers to create a national bank under which clause?

A. Elastic Clause

B. Supremacy Clause

C. Tenth Amendment

D. Commerce Clause

The concept being tested is Congress's use of implied powers through the Necessary and Proper (Elastic) Clause to create a national bank, and why that federal power limits state taxation of federal instruments. In *McCulloch v. Maryland*, the Court held that a national bank is constitutional because Congress can enact laws that are appropriate and convenient for carrying out its enumerated powers, such as borrowing money, paying debts, and regulating currency. This authority stems from the Elastic (Necessary and Proper) Clause, which allows implied powers needed to execute those clearly listed powers. Maryland's tax would interfere with federal functions, and that conflict is resolved by recognizing that federal law, backed by the federal government's constitutional authority, supersedes state action to the extent of those powers. The Supremacy Clause underpins that federal law prevails, but the bank's justification rests on the Necessary and Proper Clause. The Tenth Amendment and the Commerce Clause aren't the bases for creating the bank in this case; the former emphasizes states' reserved powers, which the decision says do not bar implied federal powers, and the latter governs trade, not the justification for the bank's creation.

8. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* addressed desegregation remedies after *Brown*. What remedy did the Court approve?

A. Redrawing school districts

B. Busing to achieve racial balance

C. Voluntary integration plans only

D. Ending desegregation efforts

The key idea is that desegregation remedies may actively create integration, not just prohibit discrimination. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*, the Court upheld using court-ordered measures to achieve racially balanced schools, explicitly approving bus transportation of students across neighborhoods and even across district lines as a legitimate tool. This means a plan can require busing to mix students from different areas to overcome segregated patterns and move toward unitary status. The decision also noted other measures like redrawing attendance zones can be part of the remedy, but the central, practical tool the Court endorsed was busing to achieve racial balance. Voluntary plans alone weren't deemed sufficient in some cases, and ending desegregation would undermine *Brown*'s mandate.

9. Which case addressed the incorporation of the Second Amendment to apply to the states?

- A. McDonald v. Chicago**
- B. Heller v. District Of Columbia**
- C. Barron v. Baltimore**
- D. Marbury v. Madison**

Incorporation via the Fourteenth Amendment is the key idea. McDonald v. Chicago held that the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms is binding on state and local governments through the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This extends the gun-right protections recognized in Heller to the states, not just the federal government. Heller addresses the individual right to possess firearms and the scope of that right in relation to federal (DC) restrictions, but it does not itself apply to state governments. Barron v. Baltimore, by contrast, said the Bill of Rights did not restrict the states, which is the opposite position that incorporation later built on. Marbury v. Madison is about judicial review, not gun rights or incorporation. So the case that directly addresses applying the Second Amendment to the states is McDonald v. Chicago.

10. Gideon v. Wainwright guaranteed the right to counsel for defendants who cannot afford one, leading to the creation of what system?

- A. Public Defender System**
- B. Private attorney panels**
- C. Court-appointed counsel**
- D. Pro bono clinics**

Gideon v. Wainwright ensures that a person who cannot afford a lawyer gets one, so societies needed a reliable way to provide legal representation in criminal trials. That led to the establishment of publicly funded defense offices—the public defender system—where indigent defendants are assigned knowledgeable defense attorneys as a standard service. This creates a consistent, professional system for ensuring counsel, rather than leaving the right to private, often unavailable, arrangements. Private attorney panels exist in some places, and court-appointed counsel is used in others, but neither provides the uniform, government-supported framework that a public defender system does. Pro bono clinics rely on volunteers and aren't a guaranteed, nationwide method for meeting the right to counsel.

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://apgovscotuscases.examzify.com>

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

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