

AP GOV – SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES (SCOTUS) CASES 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 case introduced the 'Lemon test' for evaluating Establishment Clause concerns?**
 - A. Engle v. Vitale (1962)
 - B. Abington School District v. Schempp (1963)
 - C. Reynolds v. United States (1879)
 - D. Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)
- 2. Dale v. Boy Scouts of America held that private groups may exclude members if it would violate which concept?**
 - A. The group's fundamental principles
 - B. Civil rights protections
 - C. Public policy
 - D. State regulations
- 3. Which case established that the federal government may regulate interstate commerce under the Constitution?**
 - A. Wickard v. Filburn (1942)
 - B. McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
 - C. Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)
 - D. United States v. Lopez (1995)
- 4. Gregg v. Georgia refined the death penalty by allowing it under what conditions?**
 - A. Death penalty is unconstitutional in all states
 - B. Death penalty is allowed if guided by a two-stage trial and proportionality review
 - C. Death penalty must be mandatory for certain offenses
 - D. The Court replaced the death penalty with life imprisonment
- 5. Which case held that the press cannot be censored in advance except in exceptional circumstances?**
 - A. Near v. Minnesota (1931)
 - B. New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)
 - C. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)
 - D. Roth v. United States (1957)

- 6. Rostker v. Goldberg addressed whether whom could be required to register for the draft?**
- A. Whether women can serve in combat roles
 - B. Whether men must register for the draft while women are exempt
 - C. Whether the draft violates the First Amendment
 - D. Whether the President can issue a national emergency draft
- 7. Shaw v. Reno addressed racial gerrymandering and held that such schemes can be challenged in court under which principle?**
- A. Judicial restraint
 - B. Due process only
 - C. Racial gerrymandering cannot be challenged
 - D. Equal Protection
- 8. Which case balanced religious freedom with state interests in education by allowing Amish exemptions from compulsory schooling beyond 8th grade?**
- A. Reynolds v. US
 - B. Wisconsin v. Yoder
 - C. Engel v. Vitale
 - D. Abington SD v. Schempp
- 9. Which case set the stage for modern interpretations of the Commerce Clause limits by ruling that certain activities cannot be regulated under federal power?**
- A. Wickard v. Filburn (1942)
 - B. Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)
 - C. United States v. Lopez (1995)
 - D. Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States (1964)
- 10. What did the Court decide about mandatory non-denominational prayer in public schools in Engel v. Vitale?**
- A. Permitted in all cases
 - B. Permitted if voluntary
 - C. Prohibited in public schools
 - D. Allowed only for graduation ceremonies

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which case introduced the 'Lemon test' for evaluating Establishment Clause concerns?

- A. Engle v. Vitale (1962)
- B. Abington School District v. Schempp (1963)
- C. Reynolds v. United States (1879)
- D. Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)**

The question tests your knowledge of which case created the framework used to evaluate Establishment Clause concerns, known as the Lemon test. Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971) is the case that introduced this test. It asks whether a government action has a secular purpose, whether its primary effect neither advances nor inhibits religion, and whether it avoids excessive government entanglement with religion. If any prong is violated, the action is likely unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause. Earlier cases like Engle v. Vitale and Abington School District v. Schempp are key for showing when religious activities in public schools cross the line, but they did not establish the Lemon test. Reynolds v. United States deals with free exercise rather than establishment. So the case that introduced the Lemon test is Lemon v. Kurtzman.

2. Dale v. Boy Scouts of America held that private groups may exclude members if it would violate which concept?

- A. The group's fundamental principles**
- B. Civil rights protections
- C. Public policy
- D. State regulations

The key idea is the right of private associations to control membership to preserve their own expressive message. In Dale v. Boy Scouts of America, the Court said the Boy Scouts are an expressive association, and forcing them to admit a gay Scoutmaster would undermine the group's ability to express its beliefs and mission. Allowing exclusion preserves the organization's fundamental principles—the values and purpose it aims to promote. Civil rights protections and public policy or state regulations focus on governmental duties or anti-discrimination norms, not on private groups' right to shape their own membership to maintain their message.

3. Which case established that the federal government may regulate interstate commerce under the Constitution?

- A. Wickard v. Filburn (1942)
- B. McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- C. Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)**
- D. United States v. Lopez (1995)

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) is the case that established the federal government's power to regulate interstate commerce under the Constitution. The Court held that Congress can regulate not only the buying and selling of goods across state lines but also navigation and the broader channels of interstate commercial intercourse. It rejected a state-granted monopoly and affirmed that the Commerce Clause gives Congress authority over interstate navigation and other related activities, laying the groundwork for a broad federal regulatory power over economic activity that crosses state lines. Later cases like Wickard v. Filburn build on this by applying the power to local activities with a substantial aggregate effect on interstate commerce, while United States v. Lopez later introduces limits. McCulloch v. Maryland deals with federal supremacy and implied powers rather than commerce itself.

4. Gregg v. Georgia refined the death penalty by allowing it under what conditions?

- A. Death penalty is unconstitutional in all states
- B. Death penalty is allowed if guided by a two-stage trial and proportionality review**
- C. Death penalty must be mandatory for certain offenses
- D. The Court replaced the death penalty with life imprisonment

A two-stage trial and proportionality review provide the framework Gregg v. Georgia uses to permit the death penalty. The Court held that capital punishment can be constitutional if the process includes a separate sentencing phase to weigh aggravating and mitigating factors, followed by appellate or proportionality review to ensure the sentence fits the crime and isn't imposed arbitrarily. This safeguards against the arbitrariness that Furman v. Georgia flagged by requiring guided discretion and careful consideration before death is imposed. It's not a blanket ban, it doesn't mandate death for certain offenses, and it doesn't replace the penalty with life imprisonment.

5. Which case held that the press cannot be censored in advance except in exceptional circumstances?

- A. Near v. Minnesota (1931)
- B. New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)**
- C. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)
- D. Roth v. United States (1957)

Freedom of the press and the prohibition on prior restraint. The press normally cannot be censored before publication; the government may only justify stopping publication in exceptional circumstances, especially when national security is directly at risk and there would be immediate, irreparable harm. In the Pentagon Papers case, the Court said the government bears a heavy burden to show such a need for prior restraint, and the mere claim of classified information isn't enough. Because that standard wasn't met, publication could proceed. This emphasis on exceptional circumstances for prior restraint is what makes this case the best answer. The other cases involve related or different issues—Near v. Minnesota reinforces that prior restraints are disfavored in general, Hazelwood deals with school-sponsored student speech, and Roth concerns obscenity rather than pre-publication censorship.

6. Rostker v. Goldberg addressed whether whom could be required to register for the draft?

- A. Whether women can serve in combat roles
- B. Whether men must register for the draft while women are exempt**
- C. Whether the draft violates the First Amendment
- D. Whether the President can issue a national emergency draft

Rostker v. Goldberg tests how the draft can be structured when gender distinctions are involved. The Court held that it is constitutional to require only men to register for a potential draft, while women are exempt. The key idea is that the draft's purpose is tied to selecting people for combat roles, and at the time women were barred from combat assignments. Because the military's planning and manpower needs depended on having a pool of male draftees, Congress could justify a male-only registration as a legitimate way to meet those needs. This ruling focuses on who must register rather than on whether women can serve in combat or on broader constitutional rights.

7. Shaw v. Reno addressed racial gerrymandering and held that such schemes can be challenged in court under which principle?

- A. Judicial restraint
- B. Due process only
- C. Racial gerrymandering cannot be challenged

D. Equal Protection

Racial classifications by state action are governed by the Equal Protection Clause, so Shaw v. Reno rests on strict scrutiny of how districts are drawn. When a redistricting plan uses race as the predominant factor in creating boundaries, it must be narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. If it isn't, the plan violates equal protection. That's why racial gerrymandering is something plaintiffs can challenge in court under the Equal Protection Clause. It isn't about due process, nor about judicial restraint, and the idea that such schemes cannot be challenged is inconsistent with the decision.

8. Which case balanced religious freedom with state interests in education by allowing Amish exemptions from compulsory schooling beyond 8th grade?

- A. Reynolds v. US
- B. Wisconsin v. Yoder**
- C. Engel v. Vitale
- D. Abington SD v. Schempp

When a law burdens religious practice, the law must meet a level of scrutiny that gives strong weight to the religious freedom of individuals, especially when the government's interest in enforcing the law isn't uniquely compelling. In Wisconsin v. Yoder, the Supreme Court held that Amish families could exempt their children from compulsory schooling beyond 8th grade because continuing high school would seriously violate their religious beliefs and the state's interest in universal education wasn't compelling enough to override that religious practice. The Court emphasized that educating Amish children within their own community and in accordance with their beliefs would still prepare them to participate in society, while imposing the state's schooling requirement would impose a significant burden on religious exercise. Reynolds v. US is about polygamy and government interest, not education exemptions; Engel v. Vitale and Abington v. Schempp deal with school prayer and the Establishment Clause, not exemptions from secular education requirements.

9. Which case set the stage for modern interpretations of the Commerce Clause limits by ruling that certain activities cannot be regulated under federal power?

- A. Wickard v. Filburn (1942)
- B. Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)
- C. United States v. Lopez (1995)**
- D. Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States (1964)

The main idea being tested is where the line is drawn around Congress's power under the Commerce Clause. United States v. Lopez is the pivotal ruling that tightened those boundaries by holding that the Gun-Free School Zones Act cannot be justified as regulating interstate commerce, because carrying a gun in a local school zone is a non-economic, substantial-regulation-from-far-away activity that does not meaningfully affect interstate commerce. This case signals a shift toward a more restrained interpretation of the Commerce Clause—one that requires a direct economic connection or a fit within the traditional categories (such as channels or instrumentalities of commerce, or activities with a substantial economic effect). By contrast, other landmark decisions either expanded federal power (like the broad reading seen in earlier cases) or upheld regulation when the link to commerce was clear, but Lopez is the briefest, clearest articulation that not every local activity can be regulated by Congress under the Commerce Clause, setting the modern approach.

10. What did the Court decide about mandatory non-denominational prayer in public schools in Engel v. Vitale?

- A. Permitted in all cases
- B. Permitted if voluntary
- C. Prohibited in public schools**
- D. Allowed only for graduation ceremonies

The decision centers on government promotion of religion in public schools and the Establishment Clause. Engel v. Vitale held that a daily, state-written prayer recited in public schools is unconstitutional, even though the prayer was non-denominational and voluntary in appearance. The Court explained that having the government compose and endorse a prayer in a public school amounts to official endorsement of religion, which the First Amendment forbids. Therefore, mandatory or school-sponsored prayer in public schools is not allowed.

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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