

# AP Government and Politics (GPO) Federalism Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



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

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# Table of Contents

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

# 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

- 1. Which founding father is recognized as a strict interpreter of the Constitution?**
  - A. Benjamin Franklin**
  - B. George Mason**
  - C. Thomas Jefferson**
  - D. John Adams**
- 2. What is the significance of Interstate Commerce?**
  - A. It restricts trade to only foreign nations**
  - B. It allows only state governments to regulate trade**
  - C. It grants Congress the power to regulate trade between states, impacting economic policy and federalism**
  - D. It eliminates trade regulations for small businesses**
- 3. What must state courts do regarding federal law?**
  - A. State courts have the option to ignore federal law**
  - B. Federal law prevails over state law only in criminal cases**
  - C. State courts must enforce federal law**
  - D. State courts can challenge federal law in court**
- 4. What is the broader impact of the Gonzales v. Raich decision on state legislation regarding marijuana?**
  - A. States can fully ignore federal regulations**
  - B. State laws can only regulate medical marijuana usage**
  - C. Federal law can override state laws regarding marijuana cultivation**
  - D. States retain exclusive control over all agricultural laws**
- 5. What is stated in the Privileges and Immunities Clause?**
  - A. All citizens must pay the same taxes**
  - B. Citizens are afforded the same rights as citizens of other states**
  - C. Each state can make its own laws without interference**
  - D. Citizens must register to vote in every state**

- 6. Which of the following is a limitation on state powers?**
- A. States can enter into treaties with foreign countries**
  - B. States are prohibited from coining money**
  - C. States have full control over immigration policies**
  - D. States can tax imports and exports without restrictions**
- 7. In federalism, what role do grants play for state governments?**
- A. They serve as a form of currency between states.**
  - B. They provide states with funding to implement federal policies.**
  - C. They are used exclusively for local governmental initiatives.**
  - D. They restrict state governments from pursuing independent programs.**
- 8. What is the main goal of a federal system of government?**
- A. To centralize power within the national government**
  - B. To distribute power between the central authority and regional units**
  - C. To eliminate the need for local governments**
  - D. To establish a unitary system of governance**
- 9. In a federal system, power is shared between which types of governments?**
- A. National and regional governments**
  - B. Local and state governments**
  - C. State and confederate governments**
  - D. Monarchy and democracy**
- 10. What does federalism allow for in terms of governance?**
- A. A single national policy for all states**
  - B. Diverse policies that meet state-specific needs**
  - C. Immediate implementation of federal policies in every state**
  - D. A unified legal system across the country**



## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

**1. Which founding father is recognized as a strict interpreter of the Constitution?**

- A. Benjamin Franklin**
- B. George Mason**
- C. Thomas Jefferson**
- D. John Adams**

Thomas Jefferson is recognized as a strict interpreter of the Constitution primarily because he believed in a narrow interpretation of its powers. Jefferson argued that the federal government should only exercise powers that are explicitly granted in the Constitution. This perspective reflects his commitment to a limited government and his apprehensions about federal overreach. Jefferson's strict constructionist view was rooted in his belief in states' rights and the importance of individual liberties, helping shape the debate around constitutional interpretation in American political thought. His influence extended into the early years of the republic, as he often used this philosophy to challenge the expansion of federal power.

**2. What is the significance of Interstate Commerce?**

- A. It restricts trade to only foreign nations**
- B. It allows only state governments to regulate trade**
- C. It grants Congress the power to regulate trade between states, impacting economic policy and federalism**
- D. It eliminates trade regulations for small businesses**

The significance of Interstate Commerce lies in the power it grants Congress to regulate trade between states, which has a profound impact on both economic policy and the framework of federalism in the United States. This authority is rooted in the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, which not only enables Congress to create uniform trade regulations that span the nation but also plays a crucial role in addressing economic issues that transcend state borders. By allowing the federal government to step in and regulate interstate trade, it helps maintain a cohesive national economy and prevents individual states from enacting conflicting trade laws that could disrupt commerce. This power has been pivotal in shaping policies that influence various aspects of the economy, such as transportation, labor laws, and business regulations. It empowers Congress to intervene in areas like civil rights and environmental laws under the umbrella of regulating commerce, effectively allowing the federal government to play a proactive role in addressing broader societal and economic concerns. The relationship between the states and the federal government in this context highlights the dynamic nature of federalism, where power and responsibility are shared and sometimes contested.

### 3. What must state courts do regarding federal law?

- A. State courts have the option to ignore federal law
- B. Federal law prevails over state law only in criminal cases
- C. State courts must enforce federal law**
- D. State courts can challenge federal law in court

State courts must enforce federal law due to the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, which establishes that the Constitution, federal laws, and treaties made under its authority are the supreme law of the land. This principle means that when state laws conflict with federal laws, state courts are obligated to uphold federal laws, ensuring consistency and uniformity in the application of the law across all states. In this context, the supremacy of federal law mandates that state courts cannot choose to ignore or disregard federal statutes; they must apply them. This is crucial for maintaining a cohesive legal framework, particularly in areas such as civil rights, commerce, and healthcare, where federal laws are designed to create uniform standards. The other choices indicate misunderstandings of the relationship between state and federal law. Federal law does not only prevail in criminal cases, nor do state courts have the authority to overlook federal statutes. Additionally, while state courts may challenge federal laws, they do so in the context of applying or interpreting those laws rather than having the latitude to disregard them entirely. This hierarchical relationship is foundational to the structure of American federalism.

### 4. What is the broader impact of the Gonzales v. Raich decision on state legislation regarding marijuana?

- A. States can fully ignore federal regulations
- B. State laws can only regulate medical marijuana usage
- C. Federal law can override state laws regarding marijuana cultivation**
- D. States retain exclusive control over all agricultural laws

The decision in Gonzales v. Raich affirmed that federal law has supremacy over state laws when it comes to marijuana cultivation, even for medical use. The Supreme Court ruled that Congress has the authority to regulate marijuana under the Commerce Clause, which means that federal regulations can preempt state laws that are inconsistent with federal policies. This pivotal ruling established that states cannot enact laws that completely disregard federal regulations regarding the cultivation and distribution of marijuana. As a result, while states may attempt to legalize and regulate marijuana, they cannot create laws that contradict federal drug policy. This has led to a complex legal landscape where state laws allowing medical or recreational marijuana use exist alongside federal laws that classify marijuana as an illegal substance. Thus, the broader impact of this ruling creates a scenario where states must navigate their marijuana legislation while considering the overarching federal law.

## 5. What is stated in the Privileges and Immunities Clause?

- A. All citizens must pay the same taxes
- B. Citizens are afforded the same rights as citizens of other states**
- C. Each state can make its own laws without interference
- D. Citizens must register to vote in every state

The Privileges and Immunities Clause is found in Article IV, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution and is designed to ensure that citizens of one state are treated equally and fairly in other states. This clause prohibits states from discriminating against citizens of other states when it comes to fundamental rights. The essence of this provision is to promote national unity and protect the rights of citizens regardless of their state of residence. Therefore, when a person travels or moves to another state, they are entitled to the same rights and privileges as the citizens of that state. This concept upholds the principle of equality among states and their citizens, which is why the choice regarding citizens being afforded the same rights as citizens of other states is accurate. The other choices do not accurately reflect the purpose or content of the Privileges and Immunities Clause. Tax obligations vary by state and are not addressed by this clause. While states can indeed create their own laws, this is covered by other constitutional provisions and not the Privileges and Immunities Clause specifically. Lastly, while voter registration can differ by state, this requirement does not relate to the intent of equal treatment of citizens under the Privileges and Immunities Clause.

## 6. Which of the following is a limitation on state powers?

- A. States can enter into treaties with foreign countries
- B. States are prohibited from coining money**
- C. States have full control over immigration policies
- D. States can tax imports and exports without restrictions

The limitation on state powers indicated in the response is that states are prohibited from coining money. This limitation is rooted in the U.S. Constitution, specifically Article I, Section 10, which explicitly restricts states from engaging in activities that could undermine the federal government's authority and the uniformity of the national currency. The framers of the Constitution recognized the necessity for a stable and cohesive monetary system, which is crucial for national unity and economic stability. Allowing individual states to coin their money could lead to a fragmented economic landscape, with varying currencies that could confuse commerce and trade. By centralizing the power to mint currency, the federal government ensures that there is a consistent medium of exchange throughout the country, thus upholding the economic integrity of the nation. In contrast, the other options represent powers or privileges that are either granted to the federal government or are not unrestricted for states. For example, states are not allowed to enter into treaties with foreign countries, control immigration policies fully, or tax imports and exports without restrictions. These limitations ensure that certain powers remain cohesive under federal control to maintain national integrity and diplomacy.

**7. In federalism, what role do grants play for state governments?**

- A. They serve as a form of currency between states.**
- B. They provide states with funding to implement federal policies.**
- C. They are used exclusively for local governmental initiatives.**
- D. They restrict state governments from pursuing independent programs.**

Grants play a crucial role for state governments by providing them with the necessary funding to implement federal policies and programs. These financial resources enable states to carry out a variety of initiatives that align with national objectives, such as healthcare, education, transportation, and public safety. By receiving grants from the federal government, states can enhance their capacity to tackle issues that may require more resources than they could allocate independently. The nature of grants, particularly categorical grants, often comes with specific guidelines that govern how the funds can be used, which fosters cooperation between state and federal levels of government. This framework facilitates the federal government's ability to influence state policies while allowing states the flexibility to address local needs and priorities, within the constraints established by the federal guidelines. In contrast, options that imply grants serve purely as currency or that they are limited to local initiatives do not accurately reflect the broader purpose of federal grants. Additionally, the idea that grants restrict state governments contradicts the fact that they often enhance states' abilities to pursue various social and economic programs—bolstering their initiatives rather than hindering them. Thus, grants serve as essential tools for fostering collaboration between different levels of government, aligning state efforts with federal goals.

**8. What is the main goal of a federal system of government?**

- A. To centralize power within the national government**
- B. To distribute power between the central authority and regional units**
- C. To eliminate the need for local governments**
- D. To establish a unitary system of governance**

The main goal of a federal system of government is to distribute power between the central authority and regional units. This structure is designed to allow for a division of responsibilities and powers, providing a balance that can accommodate diverse needs within a country. Federalism recognizes the importance of both national and local governance, ensuring that local governments have the autonomy to address regional issues while still being part of a larger national framework. This distribution of power can promote efficiency and responsiveness in governance, as different levels of government can better cater to their specific constituencies' needs. It also allows for a system of checks and balances, where both national and regional governments can limit each other's powers, preventing any single entity from becoming too powerful. In a federal system, local governments remain essential for addressing particular issues pertinent to their areas, whereas centralized power within the national government would undermine the benefits of regional representation and autonomy. Therefore, the correct choice emphasizes the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes a federal system from other forms of governance.

**9. In a federal system, power is shared between which types of governments?**

**A. National and regional governments**

**B. Local and state governments**

**C. State and confederate governments**

**D. Monarchy and democracy**

In a federal system, power is shared between national (or federal) and regional governments, which can include states or provinces. This structure is designed to allow different levels of government to operate with some degree of autonomy while still being connected under a larger governing framework. The national government typically handles issues that affect the entire country, such as foreign policy and national defense, while regional governments manage local affairs, including education and transportation, allowing them to address specific needs and circumstances unique to their areas. This division helps to maintain a balance between unity and regional diversity within a country. Other options are less accurate in describing a federal system. Local and state governments don't encapsulate the national level of authority that is crucial in federalism. State and confederate governments suggest a more decentralized structure than the federal model typically embodies. Lastly, the reference to monarchy and democracy does not pertain to the concept of federalism, as it addresses political systems rather than the distribution of power between different levels of government. Therefore, the understanding that federalism involves a partnership between national and regional governments is fundamental to grasping how this political structure operates.

**10. What does federalism allow for in terms of governance?**

**A. A single national policy for all states**

**B. Diverse policies that meet state-specific needs**

**C. Immediate implementation of federal policies in every state**

**D. A unified legal system across the country**

Federalism allows for diverse policies that meet state-specific needs by creating a system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and various regional entities, such as states. This means that while the national government can establish overarching policies, states have the autonomy to tailor their laws and regulations to address the unique issues and circumstances they face. For instance, different states may enact varying laws on education, healthcare, or environmental regulations, reflecting the preferences and needs of their populations. This adaptability is a fundamental advantage of the federal system, as it enables local governments to respond more effectively to specific local challenges and to experiment with different approaches to governance, which can lead to innovative solutions that could be adopted by others. In contrast, a single national policy for all states would not account for the individual differences among states, which can be significant in terms of culture, economy, and social issues. Immediate implementation of federal policies in every state overlooks the necessary steps of local compliance and adaptation, while a uniform legal system across the country does not exist in practice due to the concurrent powers shared under federalism.



## 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://apgopofederalism.examzify.com>**

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