

California Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Written Practice Exam (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. What matrices are commonly used on primary teeth?**
 - A. Matrix band and wooden wedge**
 - B. T-band and spot welded**
 - C. Sectional matrix and ring**
 - D. Circumferential matrix**

- 2. A patient with which of the following medical conditions may benefit from prophylactic sublingual nitroglycerin?**
 - A. Diabetes**
 - B. Cardiovascular disorders**
 - C. Epilepsy**
 - D. Allergic reactions**

- 3. What is the proper method for decontaminating impressions before sending them to the laboratory?**
 - A. Only rinse with water**
 - B. Sterilize using autoclave**
 - C. Clean and disinfect**
 - D. Dry and package**

- 4. What classification would an MOD on tooth 14 be referred to?**
 - A. Class IV**
 - B. Class I**
 - C. Class II**
 - D. Class V**

- 5. What is completed to ease the placement of orthodontic bands?**
 - A. Application of fluoride**
 - B. Placement of a separator**
 - C. Teeth cleaning**
 - D. Application of a bonding agent**

- 6. What should be done FIRST if an adult patient does not have a pulse?**
- A. Perform CPR immediately**
 - B. Give them water**
 - C. Call for emergency assistance**
 - D. Elevate their feet**
- 7. According to manufacturer's directions, how long should etchant be left on tooth structure?**
- A. 10-15 seconds**
 - B. 15-20 seconds**
 - C. 30 seconds**
 - D. 1 minute**
- 8. When assisting a left-handed dentist, the assistant should hold the oral evacuator tip with which hand?**
- A. Right hand**
 - B. Left hand**
 - C. Either hand, it does not matter**
 - D. Both hands**
- 9. Which of the following demonstrates an appropriate fill level for a sharps container?**
- A. Full to the brim**
 - B. 3/4 full**
 - C. Halfway**
 - D. 1/4 full**
- 10. What type of dental material is used in making a custom provisional?**
- A. Amalgam**
 - B. Acrylic resin**
 - C. Gold alloy**
 - D. Silver filling**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What matrices are commonly used on primary teeth?

- A. Matrix band and wooden wedge
- B. T-band and spot welded**
- C. Sectional matrix and ring
- D. Circumferential matrix

The matrix band and wooden wedge (choice A) are commonly used on permanent molars for Class II restorations, not primary teeth. Choice C, the sectional matrix and ring, are used for posterior Class II restorations in permanent teeth. Choice D, circumferential matrix, is used for anterior Class II restorations in permanent teeth. Therefore, choice B, T-band and spot welded, is the correct answer for matrices commonly used on primary teeth.

2. A patient with which of the following medical conditions may benefit from prophylactic sublingual nitroglycerin?

- A. Diabetes
- B. Cardiovascular disorders**
- C. Epilepsy
- D. Allergic reactions

It is important to note that the term "prophylactic" in this context means preventative or protective. Sublingual nitroglycerin is a medication that is often used to prevent or reduce episodes of chest pain caused by cardiovascular disorders such as angina. This medication helps to relax and widen blood vessels, allowing for better blood flow and oxygen supply to the heart. Therefore, patients with cardiovascular disorders, specifically those prone to chest pain, may benefit from prophylactic sublingual nitroglycerin. It is not typically used for the other conditions listed, such as diabetes, epilepsy, or allergic reactions, as they do not have a direct impact on cardiovascular health. It is important to consult with a doctor or healthcare provider before using this medication.

3. What is the proper method for decontaminating impressions before sending them to the laboratory?

- A. Only rinse with water
- B. Sterilize using autoclave
- C. Clean and disinfect**
- D. Dry and package

Cleaning and disinfecting is the proper method for decontaminating impressions before sending them to the laboratory. Rinsing with only water may remove some debris, but it is not enough to fully decontaminate the impressions. Sterilizing using an autoclave is unnecessary and may even damage the impressions. Drying and packaging without prior cleaning and disinfecting can also cause contamination. Therefore, the most effective and appropriate method is to clean and disinfect the impressions before sending them to the laboratory.

4. What classification would an MOD on tooth 14 be referred to?

- A. Class IV
- B. Class I
- C. Class II**
- D. Class V

MOD refers to a dental filling on a tooth involving the mesial, occlusal, and distal surfaces. Therefore, MOD on tooth 14 would be referred to as a Class II classification. Option A, Class IV, refers to a restoration on the incisal edge of an anterior tooth. Option B, Class I, refers to a dental filling on a single surface of a tooth. Option D, Class V, is used for a restoration on the gingival 1/3 of a tooth, usually found on the facial or lingual surface.

5. What is completed to ease the placement of orthodontic bands?

- A. Application of fluoride
- B. Placement of a separator**
- C. Teeth cleaning
- D. Application of a bonding agent

Orthodontic bands, also known as orthodontic brackets, are a necessary component of braces used to shift teeth into proper alignment. These bands are placed around each individual tooth and help to anchor the wires used in orthodontic treatment. To make this process less difficult and more successful, orthodontic bands can be eased into place by first inserting a separator between teeth. This creates a small amount of space between teeth, making it easier to place the bands and ensuring a proper fit. The other options listed, such as application of fluoride, teeth cleaning, and bonding agent, are not directly related to the placement of orthodontic bands and therefore incorrect. While teeth cleaning may be important for overall oral health, it does not specifically aid in the placement of braces. Bonding agents are typically used for other dental procedures and are not necessary for the placement of braces. And although fluoride can help

6. What should be done FIRST if an adult patient does not have a pulse?

- A. Perform CPR immediately
- B. Give them water
- C. Call for emergency assistance**
- D. Elevate their feet

If an adult patient does not have a pulse, the first step is to immediately call for emergency assistance. This is because the individual may be experiencing a cardiac arrest and requires immediate medical attention. Option A of performing CPR should only be done after calling for emergency assistance. Giving them water or elevating their feet will not help in this situation and may even exacerbate the issue. Therefore, calling for emergency assistance is the crucial first step in providing proper medical care for an adult patient without a pulse.

7. According to manufacturer's directions, how long should etchant be left on tooth structure?

- A. 10-15 seconds
- B. 15-20 seconds**
- C. 30 seconds
- D. 1 minute

Etchant is a solution that is used to prepare tooth structure before placing dental sealants or restorations. It contains an acid that helps create a rough surface for better bonding. Leaving etchant on the tooth structure for too long can cause over-etching, leading to potential damage to the tooth enamel. Therefore, it is important to follow the manufacturer's directions for the recommended time. In this case, options A, C, and D are all longer than the correct answer of 15-20 seconds, which can increase the risk of over-etching. Option A is also shorter than the recommended time. Thus, option B is the correct answer that follows the manufacturer's directions for optimal results.

8. When assisting a left-handed dentist, the assistant should hold the oral evacuator tip with which hand?

- A. Right hand
- B. Left hand**
- C. Either hand, it does not matter
- D. Both hands

When assisting a left-handed dentist, the assistant should hold the oral evacuator tip with the left hand. This positioning is essential because it allows for optimal access and efficiency during procedures. A left-handed dentist typically manipulates instruments with their left hand, meaning that the assistant's left hand can provide suction or retract tissue without interfering with the dentist's actions. Using the left hand ensures that the assistant can maintain a clear line of sight and keeps the workflow fluid during procedures since both the dentist's and the assistant's hands will be working on the same side. Holding the evacuator in the left hand also helps create a more ergonomic setup, minimizing the risk of awkward movements or obstruction, which can enhance patient comfort and procedural success.

9. Which of the following demonstrates an appropriate fill level for a sharps container?

- A. Full to the brim
- B. 3/4 full**
- C. Halfway
- D. 1/4 full

An appropriate fill level for a sharps container is 3/4 full. It is important to leave enough empty space to safely dispose of sharps without risking overflowing the container. Option A and C are incorrect because a sharps container should never be filled to the brim or only halfway. This doesn't leave enough space for proper disposal and increases the risk of injury. Option D is incorrect because 1/4 full means the container is only a quarter full, leaving too much empty space and potentially allowing sharps to move around and cause injury. Therefore, option B is the most appropriate and safe fill level for a sharps container.

10. What type of dental material is used in making a custom provisional?

A. Amalgam

B. Acrylic resin

C. Gold alloy

D. Silver filling

Acrylic resin is the most commonly used material in making custom provisionals because it can be easily shaped and adjusted to fit the individual patient's teeth and it is also strong enough to withstand chewing and other daily activities. Amalgam is typically used for permanent fillings but is not suitable for temporary provisionals. Gold alloy is a more expensive material that is typically used in permanent restorations, not temporary provisionals. Silver filling is another common material used for permanent fillings but is not suitable for custom provisional restorations. In comparison, acrylic resin is the best option for making customized provisionals due to its versatility and strength.

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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://californiarda.examzify.com>

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

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