Commercial Pilot License (CPL) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

Table of Contents

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. What qualifies as a high performance aircraft?

A. An aircraft with a max speed of over 200 knots

B. An aircraft with an engine exceeding 200 horsepower

C. An aircraft with a cruising altitude above 15,000 feet

D. An aircraft with a range greater than 1,000 nautical miles

2. How does the Vertical Speed Indicator (VSI) function?

A. By measuring the vertical speed of the aircraft using a pitot tube

B. By indicating changes in altitude through a static vent

C. Using an aneroid that expands and contracts based on pressure changes

D. By displaying the aircraft's altitude in real-time

3. What is required to be PIC in a tail-wheel aircraft?

A. Flight training in any aircraft type

B. Logged flight training and an endorsement

C. Only simulated training if no real aircraft is available

D. No requirements needed for experienced pilots

4. What are the hazards of oxygen in aviation?

A. It can cause hypoxia

B. It decreases flammability

C. It acts as an oxidizer and increases flammability

D. It is a complete fire suppressant

5. What is one exception to the restrictions on portable electronics during flight?

A. Cell phones

B. Tablets

C. Voice recorders

D. Smart watches

6. When are fuel quantity gauges usually considered accurate?

A. Always check them visually

B. Only when tanks are full

C. Only when tanks are empty

D. When calibrated regularly

7. What is the purpose of ATIS?

A. To provide weather updates during flight

B. To continuously broadcast recorded information in terminal areas

C. To assist in air traffic control clearances

D. To announce emergency landings

8. What is the appropriate fuel mixture during engine failure when establishing glide?

A. Mixture lean

B. Mixture full rich

C. Mixture at idle cut-off

D. Mixture at 50% power

9. To be pilot in command, what must a pilot have in their possession?

A. Photo ID, valid certificate, current medical

B. Flight plan, valid certificate, current medical

C. Pilot logbook, valid certificate, current medical

D. A certificate of insurance, valid certificate, current medical

10. What is the recommended procedure in case of an engine fire on the ground?

A. Set throttle to idle and wait for fire to extinguish

B. Attempt to start the engine to put out the fire

C. Shut down all electrical systems

D. Increase throttle to maximum immediately

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What qualifies as a high performance aircraft?

A. An aircraft with a max speed of over 200 knots

B. An aircraft with an engine exceeding 200 horsepower

C. An aircraft with a cruising altitude above 15,000 feet

D. An aircraft with a range greater than 1,000 nautical miles

A high-performance aircraft is defined primarily by its engine capabilities, specifically focusing on the power output measured in horsepower. When an aircraft has an engine that exceeds 200 horsepower, it typically requires additional training to operate. This training is necessary because the performance characteristics, handling, and techniques involved in flying such aircraft can be significantly different from those of lower-powered aircraft. Pilots must be aware of different aspects such as higher climb rates, increased speeds during maneuvering, and the need for more precise control inputs, all of which come into play with increased horsepower. The other choices do represent characteristics that can be found in various aircraft, but they do not universally define what constitutes a high-performance aircraft according to regulations or training requirements. For instance, not all aircraft with a max speed of over 200 knots, cruising altitude above 15,000 feet, or range greater than 1,000 nautical miles would qualify as high-performance based on the relevant training or operational standards. Thus, the definition tied to engine power is the most accurate and widely applicable measure of high performance in aviation.

2. How does the Vertical Speed Indicator (VSI) function?

A. By measuring the vertical speed of the aircraft using a pitot tube

B. By indicating changes in altitude through a static vent

C. Using an aneroid that expands and contracts based on pressure changes

D. By displaying the aircraft's altitude in real-time

The Vertical Speed Indicator (VSI) functions by utilizing an aneroid capsule that expands and contracts in response to changes in atmospheric pressure. This device is sensitive to the pressure variations associated with the aircraft's ascent or descent. When the aircraft climbs, the ambient pressure decreases, allowing the aneroid capsule to expand. Conversely, during descent, the ambient pressure increases, causing the capsule to contract. The VSI translates these dynamic movements into a vertical speed reading, typically displayed in feet per minute. This mechanism is essential for pilots as it provides an immediate indication of the rate of climb or descent, which is crucial for maintaining safe and efficient flight operations. The design is primarily based on static pressure readings rather than dynamic pressure, which is why it does not operate using a pitot tube or provide real-time altitude measurements.

3. What is required to be PIC in a tail-wheel aircraft?

A. Flight training in any aircraft type

B. Logged flight training and an endorsement

C. Only simulated training if no real aircraft is available

D. No requirements needed for experienced pilots

To be the Pilot in Command (PIC) of a tail-wheel aircraft, it is essential to have logged flight training specifically in that type of aircraft, along with receiving an endorsement from a qualified flight instructor. This requirement is in place because flying a tail-wheel aircraft involves distinct handling characteristics compared to tricycle landing gear airplanes, particularly during takeoff and landing phases. The endorsement serves to certify that the pilot has received the necessary training and demonstrated proficiency in operating the tail-wheel configuration safely. Flight training in any aircraft type does not adequately prepare a pilot for the unique challenges posed by tail-wheel aircraft. Similarly, simulated training without access to a real aircraft may not equip a pilot with the practical skills needed for actual flight situations. Furthermore, the notion that experienced pilots can operate tail-wheel aircraft without specific requirements undermines the importance of targeted training and the endorsement process, which assures safety and competence in flying these types of aircraft.

4. What are the hazards of oxygen in aviation?

A. It can cause hypoxia

B. It decreases flammability

C. It acts as an oxidizer and increases flammability

D. It is a complete fire suppressant

Oxygen serves a crucial role in aviation, particularly at higher altitudes where the air pressure is lower, making it essential for pilot and passenger safety. However, one of the significant hazards associated with oxygen in aviation is that it acts as an oxidizer and increases flammability. This means that when oxygen is present in higher concentrations, it can significantly enhance the combustion process of flammable materials. In environments with increased oxygen levels, even small sparks can ignite materials that would not normally catch fire in atmospheric conditions. This characteristic is particularly critical to consider when managing onboard systems, materials, and equipment, especially during emergencies where oxygen systems are utilized. The concept of oxygen as an oxidizer supports the need for stringent safety protocols when handling oxygen systems and the materials in proximity to these systems in aviation contexts. Understanding this property is vital for ensuring the safety of flight operations and preventing fire hazards that could arise from the presence of oxygen.

5. What is one exception to the restrictions on portable electronics during flight?

A. Cell phones

B. Tablets

C. Voice recorders

D. Smart watches

The correct choice regarding exceptions to the restrictions on portable electronics during flight is voice recorders. In many instances, voice recorders are specifically allowed to be used during flight when set to airplane mode or turned off, as they do not emit wireless signals that could interfere with the aircraft's communication and navigational systems. Portable electronics such as cell phones, tablets, and smartwatches typically have capabilities that involve active wireless communication, which can potentially disrupt aircraft systems during critical phases of flight, hence their use is generally restricted. However, voice recorders are often viewed as low-risk due to their limited functionality and lack of wireless transmission when not in active use. This makes them an exception to the general rules governing portable electronic devices on board an aircraft.

6. When are fuel quantity gauges usually considered accurate?

A. Always check them visually

B. Only when tanks are full

C. Only when tanks are empty

D. When calibrated regularly

Fuel quantity gauges are typically considered accurate when calibrated regularly. Calibration ensures that the gauges provide precise readings, reflecting the actual fuel levels in the tanks. Regular calibration takes into account various factors that can affect gauge accuracy, such as temperature fluctuations, changes in fuel density, and the condition of the gauge itself. Relying on visual checks or the state of the tanks—whether full or empty—does not account for the inherent limitations and potential inaccuracies of fuel gauges. It's important to recognize that fuel gauges can be affected by various operating conditions, and they may not provide reliable information unless they have been verified through proper calibration procedures.

7. What is the purpose of ATIS?

A. To provide weather updates during flight

B. To continuously broadcast recorded information in terminal areas

C. To assist in air traffic control clearances

D. To announce emergency landings

The purpose of ATIS, or Automatic Terminal Information Service, is to continuously broadcast recorded information in terminal areas. This service provides pilots with vital data such as current weather conditions, active runways, available approaches, and any other pertinent information that may affect flight operations at the airport. By broadcasting this information, ATIS ensures that pilots receive up-to-date details before they depart or arrive, improving situational awareness and increasing operational efficiency. The other options, while related to aviation communications, do not accurately capture the primary function of ATIS. For instance, while weather updates are an essential part of the information provided by ATIS, they do not encompass the entire purpose as ATIS also provides details about runways and other operational updates. Additionally, ATIS does not directly assist in air traffic control clearances, as that function is typically handled through other forms of communication. Lastly, ATIS is not used to announce emergency landings, which are addressed through different communication protocols aimed at managing crises effectively.

8. What is the appropriate fuel mixture during engine failure when establishing glide?

A. Mixture lean

B. Mixture full rich

C. Mixture at idle cut-off

D. Mixture at 50% power

During an engine failure, it is crucial to maximize the aircraft's performance during the glide phase. Setting the fuel mixture to full rich is appropriate in this situation for several reasons. First, a full rich mixture ensures that the engine receives the maximum amount of fuel possible. In the event of an engine failure, maintaining as much power as can be achieved — even if the engine is not functioning at full capacity — can help optimize glide performance and maintain control of the aircraft. Secondly, if there is a chance of restarting the engine during the glide, having the mixture set to full rich supplies the necessary fuel for ignition, should conditions permit a successful restart. It's also important because, during an emergency descent, the engine may be needed again as a backup, thus ensuring the correct fuel mixture is vital. Other mixture settings, such as lean or idle cut-off, would reduce the fuel supply to the engine or prevent combustion altogether, which can lead to difficulties in controlled descent and lessening the chances of successfully reigniting the engine.

9. To be pilot in command, what must a pilot have in their possession?

A. Photo ID, valid certificate, current medical

B. Flight plan, valid certificate, current medical

C. Pilot logbook, valid certificate, current medical

D. A certificate of insurance, valid certificate, current medical

A pilot in command must have a valid pilot certificate, a current medical certificate, and a photo ID in their possession when operating an aircraft. The pilot certificate demonstrates that the individual has met the necessary training and regulatory requirements to operate a specific type of aircraft. The medical certificate indicates that the pilot is physically fit to operate an aircraft. The photo ID serves as a form of identification that can be used to verify the pilot's identity and credentials. Other options contain elements that, while they may be important in different contexts, do not fulfill the specific requirement for being pilot in command. For instance, having a flight plan is crucial for navigating and ensuring safety during a flight but is not mandatory for a pilot to fulfill the command role. A pilot logbook, while essential for tracking flight hours and experiences, is not required to be in possession for the legal authority to command an aircraft. Similarly, a certificate of insurance pertains to liability coverage for the aircraft and is not a prerequisite for meeting the pilot in command requirements.

10. What is the recommended procedure in case of an engine fire on the ground?

A. Set throttle to idle and wait for fire to extinguish

B. Attempt to start the engine to put out the fire

C. Shut down all electrical systems

D. Increase throttle to maximum immediately

In the event of an engine fire on the ground, the priority is the safety of the occupants and the effective management of the situation. The recommended procedure typically begins with shutting down the engine and shutting off the fuel supply to prevent further fuel from feeding the fire. This step is crucial as attempting to start the engine to extinguish a fire can exacerbate the situation, potentially leading to more severe fire damage and jeopardizing safety. Shutting down electrical systems could be part of the emergency procedures but is often not the immediate priority compared to controlling the fire itself. Setting the throttle to idle or increasing it could also contribute to worsening the situation, as these actions can allow more fuel or air into the engine area, fueling the fire rather than extinguishing it. In summary, the proper response emphasizes controlling fuel flow and preventing further ignition sources, thus prioritizing safety and effective emergency management over ineffective attempts to engage the engine under distressed conditions.

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://commercialpilotlicense.examzify.com

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