

# Criminal Justice SDC Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



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

**Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

**No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.**

**Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.**

**SAMPLE**

# Table of Contents

**Copyright** ..... 1

**Table of Contents** ..... 2

**Introduction** ..... 3

**How to Use This Guide** ..... 4

**Questions** ..... 5

**Answers** ..... 8

**Explanations** ..... 10

**Next Steps** ..... 15

SAMPLE

# 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

SAMPLE

- 1. At what stage of the criminal process does the defendant enter a plea?**
  - A. Booking**
  - B. Arraignment**
  - C. Preliminary hearing**
  - D. Trial**
  
- 2. The due process clause of the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment specifies that states may not deny life, liberty, or property without due process of law.**
  - A. 5th**
  - B. 1st**
  - C. 14th**
  - D. 6th**
  
- 3. Who were considered the first real detectives?**
  - A. Bobbies**
  - B. London Metropolitan Police**
  - C. Bow Street Runners**
  - D. Privateers**
  
- 4. Who was the first director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?**
  - A. Henry Fielding**
  - B. J. Edgar Hoover**
  - C. Alfred The Great**
  - D. Sir Robert Peel**
  
- 5. Murder is defined as?**
  - A. the unlawful killing of a human being with malice**
  - B. the unlawful killing of a human being with malice**
  - C. the natural death of a human under a doctor's care**
  - D. the killing of a human being by another**

- 6. Petty theft (larceny) is defined as:**
- A. the taking of property from inside a residence**
  - B. the taking of property under the amount of \$500**
  - C. the taking of property over the amount of \$500**
  - D. the taking of property from a public place**
- 7. Which theory posits that deviant behavior is more likely where social institutions fail to exert control over the population?**
- A. Routine Activity Theory**
  - B. Social Disorganization Theory**
  - C. Labeling Theory**
  - D. Self-Control Theory**
- 8. Which landmark case granted juveniles rights such as notice of charges and the right to counsel?**
- A. Kent v. United States**
  - B. Nix v. Williams**
  - C. Atkins v. Virginia**
  - D. In re Gault**
- 9. During which stage are issues of fact and law examined to reach a conviction or acquittal?**
- A. Trial**
  - B. Sentencing**
  - C. First Appearance**
  - D. Arrest**
- 10. Which theories view criminal behavior as the result of conflict between social classes?**
- A. Social Conflict Theories**
  - B. Social Learning Theory**
  - C. Routine Activity Theory**
  - D. Control Theory**

## Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

## **Explanations**

SAMPLE

**1. At what stage of the criminal process does the defendant enter a plea?**

- A. Booking**
- B. Arraignment**
- C. Preliminary hearing**
- D. Trial**

Entering a plea happens at arraignment. After charges are filed and the defendant is processed, the court formally informs them of the charges and asks for a response. This is when the defendant may plead guilty, not guilty, or, in some cases, no contest, and it often sets the stage for possible plea negotiations. Booking is just the arrest processing, preliminary hearings focus on probable cause, and trials are where the case is decided on the evidence.

**2. The due process clause of the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment specifies that states may not deny life, liberty, or property without due process of law.**

- A. 5th**
- B. 1st**
- C. 14th**
- D. 6th**

The essential idea is how due process protections reach state governments. The phrase “due process of law” appears in both the Fifth and the Fourteenth Amendments, but they operate against different governments. The Fifth Amendment bars the federal government from depriving anyone of life, liberty, or property without due process. The Fourteenth Amendment does the same for state governments. Because the question asks about state action, the clause that applies to states is the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Over time, the Supreme Court has applied many rights from the Bill of Rights to the states through this clause via the incorporation doctrine.

**3. Who were considered the first real detectives?**

- A. Bobbies**
- B. London Metropolitan Police**
- C. Bow Street Runners**
- D. Privateers**

The idea being tested is the origin of organized investigative work—who first focused on solving crimes by pursuing leads and gathering information, rather than just patrolling. Bow Street Runners were formed in 1749 under the direction of the Bow Street magistrates in London. They were a small, paid group dedicated to investigation: they collected tips, followed leads across the city, and actively hunted suspects, not simply enforcing orders in a single parish. This systematic, detective-focused approach set them apart as early professional investigators and influenced later developments in policing. Their work represents one of the first real steps toward a dedicated detective function within law enforcement. The other options reflect later or different roles in policing. The term often used for the modern- era London police refers to a broad police force established in 1829, which centralized policing but came after the Bow Street era and is not the first detectives. Privateers, on the other hand, were private individuals authorized to attack ships during wartime and have no connection to detective work.

#### 4. Who was the first director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?

- A. Henry Fielding
- B. J. Edgar Hoover**
- C. Alfred The Great
- D. Sir Robert Peel

The question tests knowledge of who first led the FBI as it exists today. J. Edgar Hoover is the correct answer because he became the agency's first director when the Bureau of Investigation was renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1935 and then led the organization for several decades, shaping its structure, methods, and national reach. The other figures are not connected to the FBI: Henry Fielding was an 18th-century British writer and magistrate, Alfred the Great was a medieval English king, and Sir Robert Peel was a British statesman who helped create modern policing in Britain.

#### 5. Murder is defined as?

- A. the unlawful killing of a human being with malice**
- B. the unlawful killing of a human being with malice
- C. the natural death of a human under a doctor's care
- D. the killing of a human being by another

Murder requires an unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought. The unlawful part means the death isn't legally justified or excused, such as in self-defense or a lawful act misapplied. Malice aforethought is the mental element, usually meaning an intent to kill or to cause serious bodily harm, or a reckless disregard for human life. When both elements are present, the act fits the traditional definition of murder. If the death results from natural causes or an accidental event, or if there's no malice or unlawful conduct, it isn't murder. The broader phrase "the killing of a human being by another" is too inclusive and could cover situations like manslaughter or justifiable homicide that don't involve malice.

#### 6. Petty theft (larceny) is defined as:

- A. the taking of property from inside a residence
- B. the taking of property under the amount of \$500**
- C. the taking of property over the amount of \$500
- D. the taking of property from a public place

Petty theft is defined by the value of what's taken, not by where the item is taken from. The important distinction is whether the property's value falls below a set monetary threshold; below that limit, the offense is petty theft (larceny), and above it, the offense is grand theft. The other descriptions focus on location or misstate the threshold, which don't determine whether the theft is petty. So, stating that the property is taken for less than the specified amount aligns with the value-based threshold that separates petty theft from grand theft in this context. Remember, exact dollar amounts for the threshold can vary by jurisdiction, but the principle remains: value drives the classification.

**7. Which theory posits that deviant behavior is more likely where social institutions fail to exert control over the population?**

- A. Routine Activity Theory
- B. Social Disorganization Theory**
- C. Labeling Theory
- D. Self-Control Theory

When social institutions fail to exert control over the population, deviance is more likely to emerge. This idea is the core of Social Disorganization Theory, which says crime and deviance flourish in communities where key institutions like family, schools, religious groups, and neighborhood organizations are weak, inconsistent, or unable to coordinate norms and supervision. When supervision wanes and social ties fray, informal social control erodes, making it easier for deviant behaviors to take hold and spread. Factors such as poverty, high residential turnover, and diverse, unstable populations disrupt these networks and reduce collective efficacy—the community’s shared ability to maintain order and norms. This perspective contrasts with other theories. Routine Activity Theory centers on the opportunity structure—crime happens when a motivated offender and a suitable target meet in the absence of capable guardians—focusing on situational factors rather than the community’s control capabilities. Labeling Theory emphasizes how being labeled as deviant can lead to a self-fulfilling trajectory, while Self-Control Theory focuses on individual traits that predispose someone to crime. The idea that deviance rises when social institutions don’t control behavior best captures the influence of neighborhood structure and social cohesion, which is why this theory fits the statement.

**8. Which landmark case granted juveniles rights such as notice of charges and the right to counsel?**

- A. Kent v. United States
- B. Nix v. Williams
- C. Atkins v. Virginia
- D. In re Gault**

The main concept here is due process protections for juveniles in delinquency proceedings. In the landmark ruling, the Supreme Court extended several important due process rights to young defendants, including notice of the charges and the right to counsel, ensuring juveniles aren’t adjudicated without basic legal safeguards. This decision came after concerns that youths could be found delinquent without having timely knowledge of what they were accused of or access to an attorney to defend them. It also established that juveniles have the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to avoid compelled self-incrimination, just as adults do in criminal trials. The other cases address different issues: one focused on whether youths could be waived to adult court and the procedures around that, another on the exclusion of evidence, and another on the death penalty for intellectually disabled individuals. Thus, the case that specifically grants notice of charges and the right to counsel to juveniles is In re Gault.

**9. During which stage are issues of fact and law examined to reach a conviction or acquittal?**

- A. Trial**
- B. Sentencing**
- C. First Appearance**
- D. Arrest**

The trial is the stage where both the facts of the case and the applicable law are examined to reach a conviction or an acquittal. In court, the prosecution and defense present evidence, witnesses are questioned, and objections and rulings on admissibility guide what can be considered. The judge clarifies the legal standards and instructions, and the jury (or the judge in a bench trial) applies the law to the proven facts. The determination rests on whether the evidence meets the standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, leading to a guilty verdict or a not guilty verdict. Other stages serve different purposes: a first appearance deals with probable cause and bail, arrest marks the initial detention, and sentencing occurs after a conviction to determine punishment.

**10. Which theories view criminal behavior as the result of conflict between social classes?**

- A. Social Conflict Theories**
- B. Social Learning Theory**
- C. Routine Activity Theory**
- D. Control Theory**

Criminal behavior is viewed as a product of power dynamics and inequality in society. Social Conflict Theories argue that laws and law enforcement reflect the interests of those in power, and crime often emerges from the economic and social marginalization of less powerful groups. When resources, opportunities, and status are unequally distributed, conflict between social classes can lead people to engage in acts that are defined as criminal, or to resist or push back against a system that confines them. In this view, crime is not just about individual choices but about how social structure creates and reinforces inequality, and how the state uses criminalization to maintain the existing order. By contrast, other theories focus on different mechanisms: learning through observation and reinforcement explains crime as something people adopt from their environment; routine activity theory centers on the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of guardianship, highlighting opportunity rather than structural conflict; and control theory emphasizes the role of social bonds and self-control in preventing crime.

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

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

SAMPLE