

Dantes General Anthropology Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of 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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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!

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Questions

- 1. What concept defines the basic building blocks of culture?**
 - A. Rituals**
 - B. Social practices**
 - C. Traditions**
 - D. Expressions**
- 2. Which political structure is considered a transitional form between tribe and state?**
 - A. Band**
 - B. State**
 - C. Chiefdom**
 - D. Tribe**
- 3. Which type of society is most commonly thought to engage in warfare?**
 - A. Bands**
 - B. Food foragers**
 - C. States**
 - D. Chiefdoms**
- 4. What is a common feature of anthropoids?**
 - A. Side eyes**
 - B. Binocular vision**
 - C. Wet nose**
 - D. Dental combs**
- 5. Which anthropologist focused on the relationship between culture and personality development in Samoa?**
 - A. Margaret Mead**
 - B. Mary Douglas Leakey**
 - C. Emile Durkheim**
 - D. Levy-Bruhl**

- 6. What unique aspect is associated with the Mayan Indians concerning their social structure?**
- A. Time/Astronomy/math**
 - B. Pyramids and cannibalism**
 - C. Religious urban centers**
 - D. Polytheistic beliefs**
- 7. Which ancient civilization moved directly from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age without a significant Bronze Age?**
- A. Egypt**
 - B. Hittites**
 - C. Africa**
 - D. Sumerians**
- 8. Armchair anthropologists primarily relied on what for their research?**
- A. Direct field observations**
 - B. Their own cultural experiences**
 - C. Materials collected by others**
 - D. Technological tools for measurement**
- 9. What kinship system involves a system of descent that is traced through fathers?**
- A. Paternal Descent**
 - B. Matrilineal Descent**
 - C. Patrilineal Descent**
 - D. Lineal Descent**
- 10. What is defined as a change or alteration in the nitrogenous bases of DNA?**
- A. Mutation**
 - B. Recombination**
 - C. Adaptation**
 - D. Selection**

Answers

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

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Explanations

1. What concept defines the basic building blocks of culture?

- A. Rituals
- B. Social practices**
- C. Traditions
- D. Expressions

The concept that defines the basic building blocks of culture is best captured by social practices. Social practices encompass a wide range of activities and behaviors that are learned and shared within a community, forming the foundation of how individuals interact, communicate, and perceive the world around them. These practices include rituals, traditions, norms, and daily routines that shape an individual's cultural identity and influence social organization. Rituals, while significant, are specific types of social practices that often relate to ceremonial actions and events. Traditions represent the transmission of cultural elements over time but are also subsets of broader social practices. Expressions, in the context of culture, could refer to artistic or communicative outputs, which are manifestations of the underlying social practices. Therefore, social practices are more encompassing and foundational as they reflect the ongoing interactions and shared meanings that constitute a culture, making this the most accurate answer for defining the basic building blocks of culture.

2. Which political structure is considered a transitional form between tribe and state?

- A. Band
- B. State
- C. Chiefdom**
- D. Tribe

The correct answer is chiefdom, as it represents a political structure that serves as a bridge between tribal societies and more complex state societies. In a chiefdom, leadership is more centralized than in tribes, where authority is typically more decentralized and based on kinship. Chiefs in chiefdoms often possess more social and political power, which allows them to enforce decisions and mobilize resources more effectively than tribal leaders. Chiefdoms may have a formalized structure with a hierarchy, where a chief is recognized as a leader with authority over a number of villages or clans. They often have a system of tribute, wherein members of the society provide goods to the chief, illustrating a step towards economic stratification and political organization that further differentiates chiefdoms from tribes. This transitional nature is critical in anthropology to understand the evolution of social organization and governance, highlighting how societies can progress from egalitarian structures to more stratified ones as they become increasingly complex.

3. Which type of society is most commonly thought to engage in warfare?

- A. Bands
- B. Food foragers
- C. States**
- D. Chiefdoms

The type of society most commonly associated with engaging in warfare is states. In anthropological terms, states are large, complex societies with centralized governments and hierarchical political structures. These features often lead to organized military forces, which can mobilize resources and personnel to engage in warfare, whether for expansion, conquest, or defense against external threats. States have the capacity to support larger population centers and resource allocation that can sustain military campaigns, unlike smaller, less centralized societies. Their political organization allows for the establishment of laws, governance, and formal military leadership, which are crucial for conducting warfare. Furthermore, historical and contemporary examples of state-level societies show a tendency towards conflict, driven by competition for resources, territory, and power. In contrast, bands and food foragers typically operate with egalitarian social structures that prioritize subsistence and communal living, where warfare is rare or limited due to their nomadic lifestyle and reliance on local resources. Chiefdoms may engage in conflict, but their warfare tends to be less organized and frequent compared to states, often driven by disputes over resources or prestige rather than large-scale military campaigns. Thus, states are the clear answer for the type of society most frequently involved in warfare.

4. What is a common feature of anthropoids?

- A. Side eyes
- B. Binocular vision**
- C. Wet nose
- D. Dental combs

A common feature of anthropoids is binocular vision. Binocular vision is characterized by the ability to focus on an object with both eyes, allowing for depth perception and a three-dimensional view of the environment. This adaptation is crucial for animals, including anthropoids, that rely on visual acuity to navigate their surroundings, locate food, and detect predators. Anthropoids, which include monkeys, apes, and humans, have evolved this trait to enhance their ability to thrive in various ecological niches, where precise depth perception is vital for activities like jumping between branches or catching prey. This visual system sets them apart from other primate groups that may have different visual adaptations. The other options do not accurately represent a common feature of anthropoids. For example, while side eyes may assist in peripheral vision, they are not characteristic of anthropoids who generally possess forward-facing eyes to enhance their binocular vision capabilities. Similarly, a wet nose is a feature more typical of some non-anthropoid mammals, such as dogs, rather than primates. Dental combs are primarily associated with certain prosimians, and not with all anthropoids. Thus, binocular vision stands out as a defining characteristic of anthropoid primates.

5. Which anthropologist focused on the relationship between culture and personality development in Samoa?

A. Margaret Mead

B. Mary Douglas Leakey

C. Emile Durkheim

D. Levy-Bruhl

The anthropologist who focused on the relationship between culture and personality development in Samoa is Margaret Mead. Mead's seminal work, particularly her study "Coming of Age in Samoa," explores how the cultural environment of Samoa influences the development of personality in adolescents. She emphasized that the socialization practices and cultural norms of the Samoan society contribute significantly to shaping individual personality traits, contrasting these with the more restrictive and stress-inducing contexts of Western cultures. Her research highlighted the interplay between culture and personal identity, suggesting that personality development cannot be separated from cultural influences. This pioneering approach helped establish the field of cultural anthropology and illustrated the importance of context in understanding human behavior and development.

6. What unique aspect is associated with the Mayan Indians concerning their social structure?

A. Time/Astronomy/math

B. Pyramids and cannibalism

C. Religious urban centers

D. Polytheistic beliefs

The unique aspect associated with the Mayan Indians concerning their social structure is primarily their intricate understanding of time, astronomy, and mathematics. The Maya developed a complex calendar system that was immensely accurate for its time, integrating astronomical observations to predict celestial events. This understanding was deeply embedded in their social organization, influencing agricultural practices, religious ceremonies, and societal events. The significance of time and astronomy in Mayan culture reflects their advanced knowledge and their belief that celestial movements were tied to agricultural rhythms and religious significance. Mathematics also played a critical role, evident in their numeral system, which included the concept of zero—a sophisticated development that facilitated their calendrical system and other aspects of governance. While the other choices reflect certain aspects of Mayan culture, they do not encapsulate the distinctive combination of timekeeping, astronomy, and mathematics that are foundational to understanding the Mayan social structure and its organization. The unique integration of these elements into the societal framework is what sets the Maya apart in anthropological studies.

7. Which ancient civilization moved directly from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age without a significant Bronze Age?

- A. Egypt**
- B. Hittites**
- C. Africa**
- D. Sumerians**

The ancient civilization that transitioned directly from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age without a significant Bronze Age is indeed found in Africa, particularly in certain regions where specific cultural practices and technological developments evolved. In some areas of Africa, traditional societies utilized iron tools and weapons before the widespread adoption of bronze technology, which was more prominent in other ancient civilizations. The development of iron smelting and the use of iron for agricultural tools and weaponry were crucial for these societies, aligning with an early transition to the Iron Age. This direct shift allowed them to bypass the epoch characterized by bronze metallurgy, which was essential for many other civilizations around the Mediterranean and Near East. Understanding this transition provides insight into how different environmental, social, and economic factors influenced technological advancements in various regions, showcasing the diversity in the development of early human societies.

8. Armchair anthropologists primarily relied on what for their research?

- A. Direct field observations**
- B. Their own cultural experiences**
- C. Materials collected by others**
- D. Technological tools for measurement**

Armchair anthropologists focused their research on materials collected by others rather than conducting fieldwork themselves. This approach involved analyzing existing reports, documents, and artifacts that were gathered and presented by travelers, missionaries, colonial officials, and other observers. By synthesizing this second-hand information, they developed theories about different cultures and societies. This method allowed them to formulate ideas about human behavior and cultural practices without engaging directly with the communities under study. This reliance on pre-existing materials reflects the limitations of their methodology and highlights a significant contrast to contemporary anthropological practice, which emphasizes immersive participation and direct observation as essential for understanding cultural contexts deeply.

9. What kinship system involves a system of descent that is traced through fathers?

- A. Paternal Descent**
- B. Matrilineal Descent**
- C. Patrilineal Descent**
- D. Lineal Descent**

The correct answer, which is patrilineal descent, refers to a kinship system in which lineage and inheritance are traced through the father's side of the family. In societies that practice patrilineal descent, children typically belong to their father's lineage, and family names, property, and titles are passed down from father to son. This system emphasizes the male line as the primary avenue for social and familial identity, influencing social structures, such as inheritance rights and familial obligations. Understanding patrilineal descent is essential in anthropology as it reveals the cultural significance assigned to paternal relationships in various societies. It contrasts with matrilineal descent, where lineage is traced through the mother's side, showcasing different societal values regarding gender roles and inheritance. This distinction highlights the diversity in kinship practices around the world, making it a crucial concept for understanding family dynamics in different cultures.

10. What is defined as a change or alteration in the nitrogenous bases of DNA?

- A. Mutation**
- B. Recombination**
- C. Adaptation**
- D. Selection**

A mutation is defined as a change or alteration in the nitrogenous bases of DNA. This process can occur in various ways, including substitutions, insertions, or deletions of bases within the DNA sequence. Mutations are essential for the diversity of genetic information and can lead to variations in traits among organisms. Mutations can occur naturally during DNA replication or can be induced by environmental factors such as radiation or chemicals. They play a crucial role in evolution, as they provide the raw material for natural selection to act upon, leading to the development of new traits that can be beneficial, neutral, or detrimental to an organism's survival and reproduction. In contrast, recombination refers to the process by which genetic material is shuffled and rearranged during sexual reproduction, creating new combinations of alleles without changing the DNA sequence itself. Adaptation refers to the evolutionary process through which populations become better suited to their environment, often as a result of selection acting on mutations. Selection is the process by which certain traits increase in frequency within a population due to their advantageous nature in a given environment. While all these terms are related to genetics and evolution, it is mutation that specifically addresses changes in the nitrogenous bases of DNA.

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://dantesgenanthropology.examzify.com>

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