

# DSST Criminal Justice 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. Which Amendment sets out the requirements for criminal trials, including right to an attorney even if they could not afford one and right to a speedy trial?**
  - A. 5th**
  - B. 4th**
  - C. 8th**
  - D. 6th**
  
- 2. What is the average age of men entering prison today?**
  - A. 20-25**
  - B. 26-30**
  - C. 31-35**
  - D. 36-40**
  
- 3. Part II crimes include all crimes not Part I including what type of crime?**
  - A. Blue-collar**
  - B. Cybercrime**
  - C. White collar**
  - D. Property crime**
  
- 4. What type of law governs the operations and rulemaking of government agencies?**
  - A. Constitutional law**
  - B. Criminal law**
  - C. Civil law**
  - D. Administrative law**
  
- 5. Which type of offender is most likely to be placed in protective custody?**
  - A. juvenile offender**
  - B. drug user**
  - C. child molester**
  - D. violent offender**

- 6. Voir dire is used to determine what?**
- A. To determine guilt beyond a reasonable doubt**
  - B. To decide the verdict**
  - C. To determine juror qualifications and fitness to serve**
  - D. To select jurors for the panel**
- 7. Which agency decides which drugs are illegal?**
- A. FDA**
  - B. NIH**
  - C. DEA**
  - D. CDC**
- 8. Which agency is primarily responsible for combating drug trafficking and determining drug illegality?**
- A. FBI**
  - B. CIA**
  - C. NSA**
  - D. DEA**
- 9. Which age group has the highest percent of prison populations?**
- A. 21-25**
  - B. 26-30**
  - C. 31-35 (19% of prisoners are in this age category)**
  - D. 36-40**
- 10. Which Latin term means 'to have the body' and allows the accused to appear in court?**
- A. Ex parte**
  - B. Corpus delicti**
  - C. Writ of mandamus**
  - D. Habeas corpus**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which Amendment sets out the requirements for criminal trials, including right to an attorney even if they could not afford one and right to a speedy trial?**

- A. 5th
- B. 4th
- C. 8th
- D. 6th**

The rights around a criminal trial are defined by the Sixth Amendment, which sets the framework for how a defendant is treated in court. It guarantees a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, the right to be informed of the charges, and the right to confront and compel witnesses. Most importantly, it includes the right to the assistance of counsel. The requirement that a lawyer be provided for those who cannot afford one comes from how this amendment has been interpreted in cases like *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which made clear that indigent defendants must have access to counsel. The speedy trial protection is also part of this same amendment, ensuring prosecutions proceed without undue delay. Other amendments cover different protections—search and seizure (Fourth), due process and self-incrimination (Fifth), or punishment limits (Eighth)—but the combination of the right to a speedy trial and the right to counsel in criminal cases is rooted in the Sixth Amendment.

**2. What is the average age of men entering prison today?**

- A. 20-25**
- B. 26-30
- C. 31-35
- D. 36-40

When thinking about age at intake, the key idea is that most people who end up in prison do so in the early stages of adulthood. The age-crime pattern shows that offending peaks in the late teens to the mid-20s, so when new inmates are admitted, the average age tends to be in the lower 20s. That makes the 20-25 range the best fit for the typical entry age, because it captures the period when many first-time offenders are arrested and sent to prison. Older age ranges would overstate how old people are at first imprisonment, since entry commonly occurs earlier rather than later in adulthood. So, the average age of men entering prison today is best represented by the 20-25 years bracket.

**3. Part II crimes include all crimes not Part I including what type of crime?**

- A. Blue-collar
- B. Cybercrime
- C. White collar**
- D. Property crime

Part II offenses cover every crime not included in Part I, and that group includes white-collar crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, and forgery. Property crimes are Part I offenses, so they don't belong to Part II. Blue-collar isn't a formal category in this system, and cybercrime isn't singled out as its own Part II category, though many cyber offenses fall under Part II as nonindex offenses. So the type of crime included in Part II as described here is white-collar crime.

**4. What type of law governs the operations and rulemaking of government agencies?**

- A. Constitutional law**
- B. Criminal law**
- C. Civil law**
- D. Administrative law**

Administrative law is the field that governs how government agencies operate and create rules. It covers the procedures agencies must follow to issue regulations, enforce them, and resolve disputes, including processes like notice-and-comment rulemaking that invite public input and ensure transparency. It also includes how agencies interpret statutes, conduct investigations, and adjudicate cases against individuals or organizations. The authority for these actions comes from laws passed by the legislative branch and is bounded by constitutional principles and checks and balances. This focus on agency structure, rulemaking, and administrative processes distinguishes it from other areas of law, such as constitutional law (which deals with the powers and limits of government and fundamental rights), criminal law (which defines crimes and punishments), and civil law (which governs private disputes between individuals and organizations).

**5. Which type of offender is most likely to be placed in protective custody?**

- A. juvenile offender**
- B. drug user**
- C. child molester**
- D. violent offender**

Protective custody is used when an inmate faces a real threat to their safety in the general population. A child molester is especially at risk because crimes against children carry intense stigma and can provoke violent responses from other inmates, so corrections plans frequently place such individuals in protective custody to keep them safe. The other options don't typically trigger this level of targeted protection: juvenile offenders are usually housed in separate juvenile facilities or settings, drug users aren't inherently protected solely for their drug use, and violent offenders are generally placed in the general population unless there's a specific credible threat against them.

**6. Voir dire is used to determine what?**

- A. To determine guilt beyond a reasonable doubt**
- B. To decide the verdict**
- C. To determine juror qualifications and fitness to serve**
- D. To select jurors for the panel**

Voir dire is the process of questioning potential jurors to assess their eligibility and their ability to serve impartially. The goal is to uncover biases, conflicts of interest, prior knowledge about the case, language or mental health issues, or other factors that could prevent a fair, neutral deliberation. This screening helps ensure the jury that sits in judgment can evaluate the evidence objectively. It's not about determining guilt or deciding the verdict during the questioning, and while it leads to who sits on the panel, its primary function is to identify who is qualified and fit to serve.

**7. Which agency decides which drugs are illegal?**

- A. FDA
- B. NIH
- C. DEA**
- D. CDC

The main idea here is who has the authority to place a drug into a controlled or illegal category. The Drug Enforcement Administration is the federal agency that determines which substances are illegal by scheduling them under the Controlled Substances Act. It weighs factors such as potential for abuse, medical usefulness, and safety, and it finalizes the schedules, often after consulting the FDA and other health agencies for medical and scientific input. The FDA, while it assesses and approves medicines for medical use and safety, does not decide which drugs are illegal. NIH is focused on biomedical research, and the CDC handles public health and disease control. So, the agency responsible for deciding illegal status and scheduling is the DEA.

**8. Which agency is primarily responsible for combating drug trafficking and determining drug illegality?**

- A. FBI
- B. CIA
- C. NSA
- D. DEA**

The agency tasked with enforcing controlled substances laws and fighting drug trafficking is the Drug Enforcement Administration. The DEA, part of the Department of Justice, is specifically designated to enforce the Controlled Substances Act, which defines which drugs are illegal and how they are scheduled. It conducts investigations, coordinates domestic and international drug interdiction, and works with other law enforcement partners to dismantle trafficking networks. The FBI handles a wide range of federal crimes but is not the primary agency for drug enforcement; the CIA focuses on foreign intelligence, and the NSA on signals intelligence. So the DEA is the agency most closely associated with combating drug trafficking and determining drug illegality.

**9. Which age group has the highest percent of prison populations?**

- A. 21-25
- B. 26-30
- C. 31-35 (19% of prisoners are in this age category)**
- D. 36-40

The main point this question tests is understanding how prison populations are distributed by age. The data show that the early-to-mid-thirties age group holds the largest share, about one-fifth of prisoners. Because this group has the highest percentage among the options, it is the best answer. In many criminology data sets, incarceration peaks in the late twenties to mid-thirties due to a combination of higher offending risk, more years of potential offending accumulated, and the time needed for sentencing to accumulate, which keeps this age range at the top of the distribution. The other age ranges have smaller shares, so they do not represent the largest portion of prisoners.

**10. Which Latin term means 'to have the body' and allows the accused to appear in court?**

- A. Ex parte**
- B. Corpus delicti**
- C. Writ of mandamus**
- D. Habeas corpus**

Habeas corpus is the principle that a person can be brought before a court to challenge the legality of their detention. The phrase translates to “you shall have the body,” capturing the requirement to produce the detained person in court so a judge can determine whether the detention is lawful. This protects the accused from unlawful confinement and ensures due process. The other terms describe different legal ideas: ex parte refers to proceedings involving only one side, with no input from the other party; corpus delicti means the body of the crime, i.e., the facts establishing that a crime occurred, not the detainee's rights; and a writ of mandamus is an order compelling government officials to perform a duty, not a remedy for unlawful detention. Thus, habeas corpus best fits the description.

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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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://dsstcrimjustice.examzify.com>**

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

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