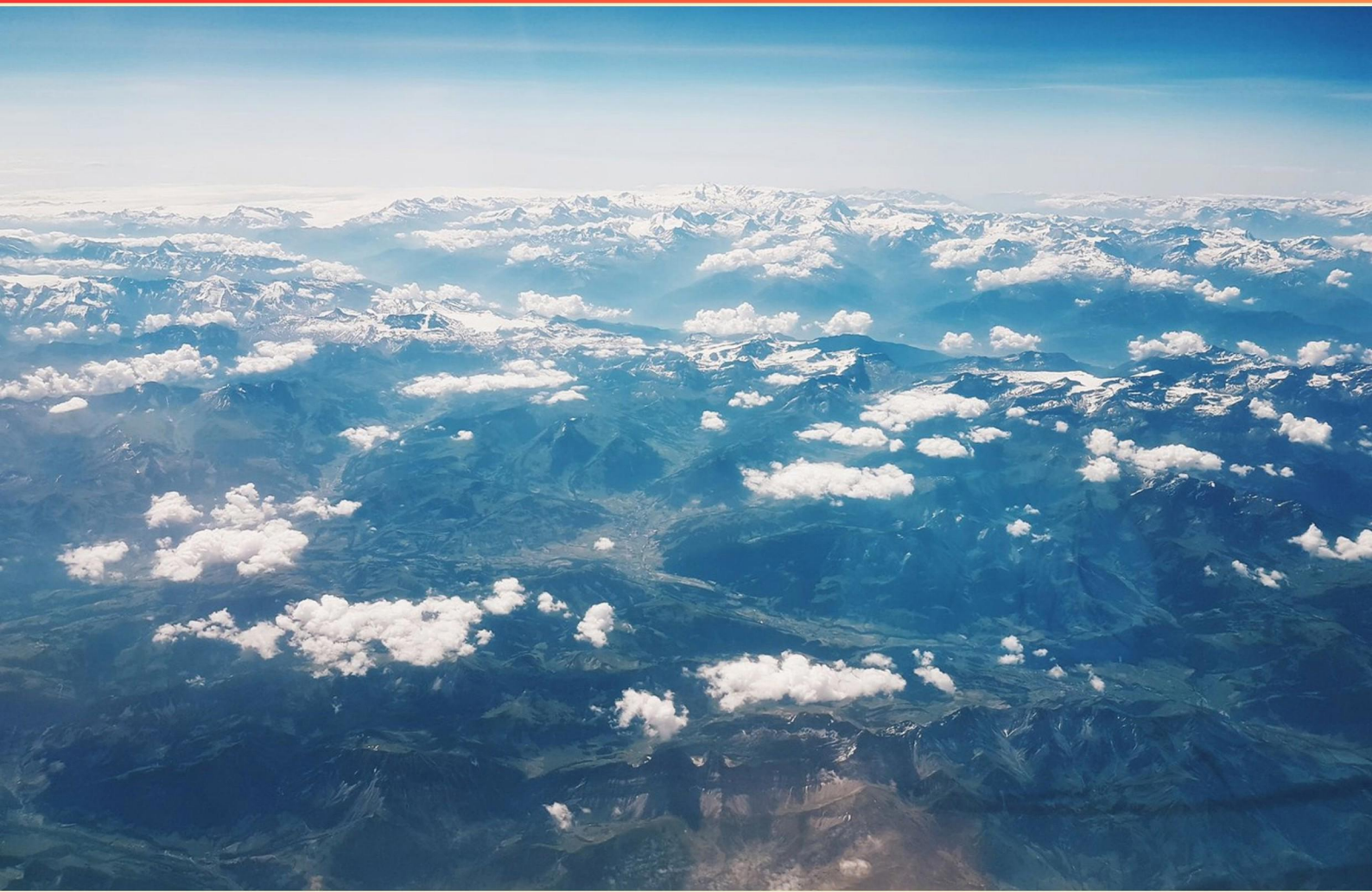


DSST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



Prepare with structure. Pass with confidence



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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	16

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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 of the following is NOT one of the eight kingdoms of organisms?**
 - A. Protist
 - B. Gymnosperm
 - C. Mammal
 - D. Eubacteria

- 2. What is the distribution of water on Earth?**
 - A. 80 percent freshwater, 20 percent saltwater
 - B. 50 percent freshwater, 50 percent saltwater
 - C. 97 percent saltwater, 3 percent freshwater
 - D. 75 percent freshwater, 25 percent saltwater

- 3. What resources are typically most affected by an increasing population?**
 - A. Gold, silver, and precious stones
 - B. Fuelwood, water, and arable land
 - C. Technology and infrastructure
 - D. Human capital and labor

- 4. What does porosity refer to?**
 - A. The ability of soil to purify water
 - B. The percentage of total volume of a rock that has spaces
 - C. The rate at which water can flow through soil
 - D. The amount of water an aquifer can store

- 5. Which of the following describes ecosystem services?**
 - A. Resources produced solely by artificial ecosystems
 - B. Resources that are produced by both natural and artificial ecosystems
 - C. Only the natural resources that cannot be artificially replicated
 - D. Resources that come from urban areas only

- 6. What primary goal did the Biodiversity Treaty aim to achieve?**
 - A. Increase commercial farming
 - B. Preserve biodiversity and ensure the fair use of genetic resources
 - C. Expand industrial development
 - D. Reduce carbon emissions

- 7. What term describes fresh water found on the Earth's land surface?**
- A. Groundwater
 - B. Wastewater
 - C. Surface water
 - D. Rainwater
- 8. Which term describes a pollutant that is directly released into the air by human activity?**
- A. Secondary pollutant
 - B. Point source pollutant
 - C. Transported pollutant
 - D. Primary pollutant
- 9. What is meant by infrastructure in an urban context?**
- A. Natural resources available in rural areas
 - B. All of the things that a society builds for public use
 - C. The policies governing land use
 - D. Forests and green spaces in a city
- 10. What term is used for animals that only eat plants?**
- A. Carnivores
 - B. Herbivores
 - C. Decomposers
 - D. Omnivores

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following is NOT one of the eight kingdoms of organisms?

- A. Protist
- B. Gymnosperm
- C. Mammal**
- D. Eubacteria

The classification of living organisms has expanded beyond the traditional five kingdoms to include eight kingdoms, which are based on genetic and evolutionary relationships. In this system, organisms are classified into various categories, including protists, plants, fungi, and animals. Among the options presented, mammals are not classified as a separate kingdom. Instead, mammals belong to the kingdom Animalia, which encompasses a vast range of multicellular organisms that share certain characteristics, such as being heterotrophic and having complex cellular structures. The distinction of mammals within their own category is more specific, dealing with their subclassification within Animalia, rather than representing a separate kingdom. In contrast, protists, gymnosperms, and eubacteria fit into the classification of the eight kingdoms. Protists form a diverse group including organisms that do not fit into the other kingdoms, gymnosperms represent a group of seed-producing plants, and eubacteria consist of true bacteria that are characterized by their prokaryotic cells. Therefore, mammals being part of the Animalia kingdom makes them not part of the eight kingdoms in this classification context.

2. What is the distribution of water on Earth?

- A. 80 percent freshwater, 20 percent saltwater
- B. 50 percent freshwater, 50 percent saltwater
- C. 97 percent saltwater, 3 percent freshwater**
- D. 75 percent freshwater, 25 percent saltwater

The distribution of water on Earth reflects the vast prevalence of saltwater in the world's oceans. Approximately 97 percent of the Earth's water is found in the oceans, which is classified as saltwater. This leaves only about 3 percent of the total water on Earth as freshwater, which is used for drinking, agriculture, and other essential needs. The small fraction of freshwater is primarily stored in glaciers and ice caps, while an even smaller portion is found in rivers, lakes, and groundwater. Understanding this distribution is crucial for comprehending global water resources and challenges, particularly in relation to water scarcity and the importance of managing freshwater sources effectively.

3. What resources are typically most affected by an increasing population?

- A. Gold, silver, and precious stones
- B. Fuelwood, water, and arable land**
- C. Technology and infrastructure
- D. Human capital and labor

An increasing population significantly impacts resources that are essential for sustaining human life and economic activity. Fuelwood, water, and arable land are fundamental resources that must meet the needs of a larger number of people. Fuelwood is often used as a primary energy source, especially in developing regions. As the population grows, the demand for fuelwood increases, leading to potential deforestation and depletion of local forests. This not only affects the availability of fuel but also impacts biodiversity and contributes to climate change. Water is another critical resource that faces pressure from population growth. Increased demand for drinking water, agricultural irrigation, and sanitation can lead to over-extraction and pollution of water bodies, resulting in water scarcity, which can severely impact human health and agricultural productivity. Arable land is essential for food production. A rising population increases the demand for food, necessitating more land to be cultivated. This can lead to land degradation, loss of soil fertility, and the conversion of natural habitats into agricultural land, affecting ecosystems and biodiversity. In summary, fuelwood, water, and arable land are most directly affected by increases in population, as they are vital resources required for energy, sustenance, and food production.

4. What does porosity refer to?

- A. The ability of soil to purify water
- B. The percentage of total volume of a rock that has spaces**
- C. The rate at which water can flow through soil
- D. The amount of water an aquifer can store

Porosity refers specifically to the percentage of the total volume of a rock or soil that consists of spaces or voids. These spaces can be filled with air or water, and this characteristic is crucial for determining the capacity of the material to hold groundwater. High porosity indicates that a material can store more water, which is essential for understanding groundwater resources, aquifer characteristics, and the overall hydrological cycle. While the ability of soil to purify water, the rate at which water flows through soil, and the storage capacity of aquifers are important concepts in environmental science and hydrology, they relate more to the functionalities and behaviors of soils and rocks rather than the definition of porosity itself. Thus, the correct choice captures the fundamental aspect of porosity and its significance in environmental studies.

5. Which of the following describes ecosystem services?

- A. Resources produced solely by artificial ecosystems
- B. Resources that are produced by both natural and artificial ecosystems**
- C. Only the natural resources that cannot be artificially replicated
- D. Resources that come from urban areas only

Ecosystem services refer to the benefits and resources provided by both natural and artificial (or managed) ecosystems that support human life and promote well-being. This includes a wide range of services such as pollination of crops, purification of air and water, carbon sequestration, soil fertility, and recreational opportunities, among others. Both types of ecosystems contribute to these services, as natural ecosystems like forests, wetlands, and oceans play a crucial role in offering these benefits, while artificial ecosystems, such as agricultural lands and urban green spaces, can also provide valuable services. This comprehensive definition emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans with various ecosystems, recognizing that both natural and human-designed environments contribute to sustainable living and resource provision. Thus, acknowledging the contributions of both types of ecosystems aligns well with the understanding of how these services operate in the real world.

6. What primary goal did the Biodiversity Treaty aim to achieve?

- A. Increase commercial farming
- B. Preserve biodiversity and ensure the fair use of genetic resources**
- C. Expand industrial development
- D. Reduce carbon emissions

The Biodiversity Treaty, also known as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), was established with the primary goal of preserving biodiversity and ensuring the fair and equitable use of genetic resources. This treaty acknowledges the intrinsic value of biodiversity and its critical importance for sustainable development, ecosystem stability, and human well-being. By aiming to protect various forms of life on Earth, from ecosystems to species and genetic diversity, the treaty seeks to safeguard the natural heritage for future generations. Additionally, the fair use of genetic resources ensures that the benefits arising from the use of these resources are shared fairly, particularly with the countries and communities that have historically maintained these genetic resources. This not only promotes conservation efforts but also supports the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities. Other options, such as increasing commercial farming or expanding industrial development, do not align with the core objectives of the Biodiversity Treaty, which focuses on sustainable practices rather than promoting exploitation. Reducing carbon emissions relates more to climate treaties and agreements rather than directly addressing biodiversity. Thus, the emphasis on both preservation and equitable sharing of biological resources underscores the treaty's comprehensive approach to biodiversity conservation.

7. What term describes fresh water found on the Earth's land surface?

- A. Groundwater
- B. Wastewater
- C. Surface water**
- D. Rainwater

The term that describes fresh water found on the Earth's land surface is surface water. This includes all the water bodies that are visible, such as rivers, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. Surface water plays a crucial role in the hydrologic cycle and is a primary source of freshwater for ecosystems, drinking water, and agricultural irrigation. Groundwater refers to water that is stored beneath the Earth's surface in aquifers, which often feed into surface water sources but is not itself visible on the land surface. Wastewater is water that has been used and contaminated by human activities, thus not representing fresh water. Rainwater is fresh water that falls from the atmosphere but is not classified as surface water until it collects in bodies like streams or lakes on the land. Therefore, surface water is the most accurate term to describe fresh water that can be found above ground, readily accessible, and observable.

8. Which term describes a pollutant that is directly released into the air by human activity?

- A. Secondary pollutant
- B. Point source pollutant
- C. Transported pollutant
- D. Primary pollutant**

A primary pollutant is a substance that is emitted directly into the atmosphere from a source due to human activities. This includes pollutants like carbon monoxide from vehicle exhaust, sulfur dioxide from industrial processes, and volatile organic compounds from paint and solvents. The main characteristic of primary pollutants is that they are introduced into the environment in their original form and can have immediate harmful effects on air quality and human health. In contrast, secondary pollutants are not emitted directly but are formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions involving primary pollutants. For example, ground-level ozone is created when sunlight reacts with pollutants like volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides. Transported pollutants refer to those that are moved from one location to another by wind or water currents, and point source pollutants typically involve specific, identifiable locations of discharge, but they are often a category within primary pollutants. Understanding the distinction between primary and secondary pollutants is crucial in environmental science and policy-making, as it informs strategies for pollution control and management.

9. What is meant by infrastructure in an urban context?

- A. Natural resources available in rural areas
- B. All of the things that a society builds for public use**
- C. The policies governing land use
- D. Forests and green spaces in a city

In an urban context, infrastructure refers to the essential systems and facilities that a society constructs to support its functioning and improve the quality of life for its residents. This includes roads, bridges, water supply systems, sewage treatment plants, electrical grids, public transportation, and communication networks, among others. These structures are critical for providing services, facilitating transportation, and ensuring public health and safety within cities. By focusing on "all of the things that a society builds for public use," this definition captures the broad scope of infrastructure that plays a vital role in urban development and everyday life. Investing in effective infrastructure is key to economic growth and sustainability in urban areas, as it enhances accessibility, mobility, and overall urban living conditions, thereby influencing the quality of urban life significantly.

10. What term is used for animals that only eat plants?

- A. Carnivores
- B. Herbivores**
- C. Decomposers
- D. Omnivores

Herbivores are defined as animals that primarily consume plants. This classification includes a diverse range of species, from large mammals like elephants and cows to smaller creatures such as rabbits and various insects. The digestive systems of herbivores are specifically adapted to efficiently process plant material, which can be difficult to break down due to its cellulose content. In ecosystems, herbivores play a crucial role as primary consumers, forming the second tier in the food chain after producers (plants) and serving as a vital source of energy for carnivores, which are organisms that eat other animals. The understanding of herbivores is essential in ecological studies, as it relates to the larger concepts of habitat dynamics, energy transfer, and ecosystem balance.

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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://dsstenvironmentalsci.examzify.com>

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

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