

DSST History of the Vietnam War 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	16

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. Linebacker II (the Christmas Bombings) targeted what in North Vietnam?**
 - A. Military bases only**
 - B. Civilian factories**
 - C. North Vietnam's political centers**
 - D. Coastal shipping**

- 2. The policy aim of containment framed U.S. actions to prevent what outcome in Southeast Asia?**
 - A. Economic collapse**
 - B. The spread of communism**
 - C. A global nuclear crisis**
 - D. Cultural hegemony by a rival power**

- 3. The Buddhist Crisis reflected tensions between the South Vietnamese regime and which religious group?**
 - A. Catholics**
 - B. Buddhists**
 - C. Muslims**
 - D. Hindus**

- 4. Which South Vietnamese leader was assassinated in a 1963 coup?**
 - A. Ngo Dinh Diem**
 - B. Ho Chi Minh**
 - C. Duong Van Minh**
 - D. Nguyen Cao Ky**

- 5. Which agreement formally partitioned Vietnam into two zones at the 1954 Geneva Conference?**
 - A. Paris Agreements**
 - B. Geneva Agreements**
 - C. Potsdam Agreement**
 - D. Yalta Agreement**

- 6. Which two North Vietnamese cities were the targets of the 1972 bombing campaign?**
- A. Hanoi and Haiphong**
 - B. Hanoi and Saigon**
 - C. Haiphong and Hue**
 - D. Da Nang and Hanoi**
- 7. Which side won the Battle of Ap Bac?**
- A. Viet Cong**
 - B. United States**
 - C. South Vietnamese Army**
 - D. French forces**
- 8. Which North Vietnamese leader, publicly known as "Ba" or "Second Son," led after Ho Chi Minh?**
- A. Vo Nguyen Giap**
 - B. Le Duc Tho**
 - C. Le Duan**
 - D. Ho Chi Minh**
- 9. Which event occurred earliest in the Vietnam conflict timeline?**
- A. The Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964**
 - B. The Buddhist Crisis in 1963**
 - C. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954**
 - D. The Tet Offensive in 1968**
- 10. The Phoenix Program was a controversial CIA-led effort to identify and neutralize civilian infrastructure supporting the National Liberation Front. Which option lists the correct program?**
- A. CORDS**
 - B. Pacification Program**
 - C. Hamlet Program**
 - D. Phoenix Program**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. Linebacker II (the Christmas Bombings) targeted what in North Vietnam?

- A. Military bases only**
- B. Civilian factories**
- C. North Vietnam's political centers**
- D. Coastal shipping**

The key idea here is the strategic aim of Linebacker II: to pressure North Vietnam's leadership to return to negotiations by targeting the centers of political power in the capital region. The campaign was designed to show that the United States could impose enough strain on Hanoi's government and decision-makers to push them back to the Paris talks. While the raids did hit military targets, energy facilities, and other strategic sites, their primary purpose was to disrupt the political leadership's ability to bargain and sustain the war effort. That focus on the government and party centers in Hanoi explains why describing the targets as political centers best captures the intent of the Christmas Bombings. The other options describe real aspects of the operation but don't reflect the central objective of pressuring North Vietnam's leadership to negotiate.

2. The policy aim of containment framed U.S. actions to prevent what outcome in Southeast Asia?

- A. Economic collapse**
- B. The spread of communism**
- C. A global nuclear crisis**
- D. Cultural hegemony by a rival power**

Containment is about stopping the spread of communism. In Southeast Asia, U.S. policymakers believed that if communism took hold in one country, nearby countries would be pressured to adopt it as well—a domino effect that could tilt the region toward communist regimes. To counter this, American strategy combined political backing for non-communist governments, military aid, economic support, and regional alliances like SEATO, all aimed at preventing communism from expanding its reach. The Vietnam era, in particular, was framed as stopping a communist victory in South Vietnam to keep neighboring states from falling under communist influence. So the objective was to prevent the spread of communism in the region, rather than focusing on preventing economic collapse, averting a global nuclear crisis, or resisting cultural influence.

3. The Buddhist Crisis reflected tensions between the South Vietnamese regime and which religious group?

- A. Catholics
- B. Buddhists**
- C. Muslims
- D. Hindus

The tension centers on the relationship between the South Vietnamese government and the Buddhist majority. Diem's regime, closely tied to Catholic elites, pursued policies that favored Catholics in administration, education, and public life, while Buddhist groups faced restrictions and harassment. This discrimination sparked widespread protests, campaigns by Buddhist leaders, and dramatic acts like monk-led demonstrations, including self-immolations, which drew international attention and exposed the regime's coercive approach. The crisis showed how state favoritism toward one religion can provoke a powerful backlash from a large, feeling-oppressed community, undermining legitimacy and prompting shifts in support from abroad.

4. Which South Vietnamese leader was assassinated in a 1963 coup?

- A. Ngo Dinh Diem**
- B. Ho Chi Minh
- C. Duong Van Minh
- D. Nguyen Cao Ky

Ngo Dinh Diem was the South Vietnamese leader who was assassinated in the 1963 coup. He had led South Vietnam since 1955, but his government faced mounting internal opposition and the Buddhist crisis, which eroded support at home and abroad. In late October into early November 1963, a group of ARVN officers rose up, seized the capital, and killed Diem and his brother Nhu. This murder marked the end of his regime and sparked a period of upheaval in South Vietnam as a new ruling arrangement formed in the aftermath. Ho Chi Minh led the North and remained alive after 1963 (dying later in 1969), so he wasn't the one assassinated in this event. The other two figures listed were not killed in this coup; one became a leader of the post-coup government, while the other was a prominent military figure who continued to play roles later in the war.

5. Which agreement formally partitioned Vietnam into two zones at the 1954 Geneva Conference?

- A. Paris Agreements
- B. Geneva Agreements**
- C. Potsdam Agreement
- D. Yalta Agreement

The question tests your knowledge of what happened at the Geneva Conference in 1954 and how Vietnam was temporarily divided. At Geneva, a set of agreements was reached to end French colonial rule in Indochina and to place Vietnam into a temporary partition along the 17th parallel. This arrangement created a northern zone, under Viet Minh influence, and a southern zone, under a non-communist government, with a demilitarized buffer area between them. Elections were slated for 1956 to decide reunification, but they never took place. This is why the Geneva Agreements are the correct match. The other options refer to different moments: the Paris Agreements are associated with the 1973 Paris Peace Accords that ended U.S. involvement in Vietnam; the Potsdam and Yalta Agreements are from 1945 and dealt with postwar arrangements in Europe, not Vietnam.

6. Which two North Vietnamese cities were the targets of the 1972 bombing campaign?

- A. Hanoi and Haiphong**
- B. Hanoi and Saigon
- C. Haiphong and Hue
- D. Da Nang and Hanoi

The bombardment in 1972 aimed to pressure North Vietnam to return to negotiations and to disrupt its war-support system by hitting the places that would most affect political authority and logistics. The two cities chosen for this intensified campaign were Hanoi, the capital and central command hub, and Haiphong, a major port and industrial center near the Gulf of Tonkin. Targeting Hanoi and Haiphong maximized political leverage—hitting the seat of government while crippling port facilities and associated industrial capacity that fed the war effort. Other cities listed—Saigon in the south, Hue inland, or Da Nang in central Vietnam—were not the focal points of this northern bombing effort, which is why Hanoi and Haiphong are the correct combination.

7. Which side won the Battle of Ap Bac?

- A. Viet Cong**
- B. United States
- C. South Vietnamese Army
- D. French forces

The battle showed that the Viet Cong could prevail against a better-equipped, American-backed force by using terrain, patient defense, and surprise to their advantage. At Ap Bac, VC units held key positions and exploited gaps in the ARVN's plan, inflicting damage and blunting the attack despite U.S. air power and advisers. The ARVN offensive stalled, suffered heavy casualties, and withdrew, while the VC demonstrated they could stand up to a conventional force and dictate the terms of engagement on the battlefield. This victory for the Viet Cong had a major impact on morale and perceptions of the ARVN and the American strategy, signaling that insurgent forces could win tactically even when supported by strong external power.

8. Which North Vietnamese leader, publicly known as "Ba" or "Second Son," led after Ho Chi Minh?

- A. Vo Nguyen Giap**
- B. Le Duc Tho**
- C. Le Duan**
- D. Ho Chi Minh**

The question tests who rose to the top political leadership in North Vietnam after Ho Chi Minh. Le Duan became the primary leader and long-time General Secretary of the Communist Party, effectively guiding policy and strategy for years. He was publicly known as "Ba" or "Second Son," signaling his position as the next main figure in the leadership line. While Vo Nguyen Giap was a renowned military commander and Le Duc Tho a key diplomat, neither held the central party leadership that directed the country for an extended period after Ho Chi Minh's era. So Le Duan is the leader who led after Ho Chi Minh.

9. Which event occurred earliest in the Vietnam conflict timeline?

- A. The Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964**
- B. The Buddhist Crisis in 1963**
- C. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954**
- D. The Tet Offensive in 1968**

Understanding the sequence of key events helps you see how the Vietnam situation evolved. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 is the earliest event among these. It ends French colonial rule in Indochina and leads to the Geneva Accords, which temporarily partition Vietnam and set the stage for separate North and South governments. That partition and the end of French involvement create the conditions for deeper U.S. involvement that unfolds in the following years. The Buddhist Crisis occurs in 1963, highlighting domestic instability in South Vietnam; the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 pushes the United States toward wider military engagement; and the Tet Offensive in 1968 marks a major turning point in public perception of the war. So, Dien Bien Phu in 1954 happened first.

10. The Phoenix Program was a controversial CIA-led effort to identify and neutralize civilian infrastructure supporting the National Liberation Front. Which option lists the correct program?

A. CORDS

B. Pacification Program

C. Hamlet Program

D. Phoenix Program

The Phoenix Program was a targeted, intelligence-driven effort designed to identify and neutralize the Viet Cong's civilian support network in South Vietnam. It operated under the broader pacification framework (CORDS) but stood out as the covert, proscribed-action component focused specifically on locating cadres, informants, and infrastructure that sustained the Viet Cong and its operations. That focus—turning gathered intelligence into action to disrupt or dismantle the VC's support structure—is what the name Phoenix became associated with. So, this option is the best match because it names the exact program described: a CIA-led initiative aimed at uncovering and neutralizing the networks behind the insurgency. The other options refer to different aspects of the broader pacification effort—CORDS being the coordinating umbrella, the Pacification Program as a general term, and the Hamlet Program as a rural relocation strategy—not the specific covert program described in the prompt.

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://dssthistoryofvietnamwar.examzify.com>

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

SAMPLE