

# Earth Science - Earth's Waters Practice Test (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 two elements make up a molecule of water?**
  - A. Hydrogen and Oxygen**
  - B. Oxygen and Carbon**
  - C. Hydrogen and Nitrogen**
  - D. Carbon and Oxygen**
  
- 2. Water that flows over the ground surface is called**
  - A. Runoff**
  - B. Groundwater**
  - C. Ponds and lakes**
  - D. Wetlands**
  
- 3. What term describes water that fills the spaces in soil and rock layers?**
  - A. Groundwater**
  - B. Surface water**
  - C. Precipitation**
  - D. Evaporation**
  
- 4. Which phrase lists three common types of wetlands?**
  - A. Marshes, swamps, and wetlands**
  - B. Marshes, swamps, and ponds**
  - C. Rivers, marshes, and wetlands**
  - D. Ponds, lakes, and wetlands**
  
- 5. The movement of energy through a body of water usually formed when winds blow across the surface transferring energy is called what?**
  - A. Wave**
  - B. Current**
  - C. Tide**
  - D. Gust**

- 6. Which feature forms when glaciers calve and break apart into the ocean?**
- A. Icebergs**
  - B. Glaciers**
  - C. Snowfields**
  - D. Pack ice**
- 7. What term describes the large, looped systems of surface currents in Earth's oceans?**
- A. Gyres**
  - B. Eddies**
  - C. Currents**
  - D. Ridges**
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ changes from surface to about 1000m depending on if located in polar or tropical regions**
- A. Temperature**
  - B. Salinity**
  - C. Density**
  - D. Pressure**
- 9. Another large system of ocean currents that affect weather and climate is known as what?**
- A. Gulf Stream**
  - B. El Niño**
  - C. Great Ocean Conveyor Belt**
  - D. Pacific Gyre**
- 10. Which ocean is the second largest by area after the Pacific Ocean?**
- A. Atlantic Ocean**
  - B. Indian Ocean**
  - C. Arctic Ocean**
  - D. Southern Ocean**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which two elements make up a molecule of water?**

- A. Hydrogen and Oxygen**
- B. Oxygen and Carbon**
- C. Hydrogen and Nitrogen**
- D. Carbon and Oxygen**

Water is formed from hydrogen and oxygen. In a water molecule, two hydrogen atoms bond with one oxygen atom, giving the chemical formula H<sub>2</sub>O. This means the molecule is made up of hydrogen and oxygen, not carbon or nitrogen. The other options involve elements that don't appear in water (carbon or nitrogen), or pairs that don't produce water (carbon with oxygen forms carbon dioxide). So the two elements that constitute a water molecule are hydrogen and oxygen.

**2. Water that flows over the ground surface is called**

- A. Runoff**
- B. Groundwater**
- C. Ponds and lakes**
- D. Wetlands**

Water that flows over the ground surface is called runoff. It occurs when precipitation cannot infiltrate the soil quickly enough—due to heavy rain, a saturated or compacted ground, or an impervious surface—so the water travels downslope as overland flow and may feed streams. Groundwater is water that has infiltrated and moves underground, not along the surface. Ponds and lakes are standing bodies of water on the surface, not flowing across the landscape, and wetlands are areas that stay saturated or flooded for periods of time but don't describe rapid surface flow. Runoff links rainfall to streams and erosion and is the term that fits water moving over the surface.

**3. What term describes water that fills the spaces in soil and rock layers?**

- A. Groundwater**
- B. Surface water**
- C. Precipitation**
- D. Evaporation**

Water that fills the spaces in soil and rock layers is groundwater. It sits in the pore spaces and fractures below the surface, forming a saturated zone that lies beneath the water table. Groundwater moves slowly through the porous material and can be stored in aquifers, which are layers with enough permeability to hold and transmit water. This is different from surface water, which collects in rivers and lakes, and from precipitation, which is water falling from the sky, or evaporation, which is water turning into vapor.

**4. Which phrase lists three common types of wetlands?**

**A. Marshes, swamps, and wetlands**

**B. Marshes, swamps, and ponds**

**C. Rivers, marshes, and wetlands**

**D. Ponds, lakes, and wetlands**

Wetlands are landscapes saturated with water long enough to influence soils and plants. Marshes and swamps are two well-known wetland types, and the phrase that includes both of these plus the word wetlands itself mirrors how people often refer to these areas as a group. Other options mix in bodies of water like ponds, lakes, or rivers, which are not wetland types. So this choice best matches the common terms used to describe wetlands as a category and its typical subtypes.

**5. The movement of energy through a body of water usually formed when winds blow across the surface transferring energy is called what?**

**A. Wave**

**B. Current**

**C. Tide**

**D. Gust**

Energy moving through water most often happens as waves. When wind blows across the surface, friction transfers some of that energy into the water, creating a disturbance that travels outward as a wave. The energy moves through the water, but the water itself mainly moves in small circular orbits as the wave passes, so the overall water mass doesn't ride along with the wave. This distinguishes waves from other water movements: a current is a steady flow of water in a direction, a tide is a regular rise and fall in sea level driven by the Moon and Sun's gravity, and a gust is a brief, strong wind. So the term that best fits is wave.

**6. Which feature forms when glaciers calve and break apart into the ocean?**

**A. Icebergs**

**B. Glaciers**

**C. Snowfields**

**D. Pack ice**

When a glacier reaches the sea, the edge of the ice experiences intense stress and cracks. Pieces break off in a process called calving, and those chunks float away as icebergs. Icebergs are formed from the glacier's freshwater ice and can be huge, with most of their mass submerged underwater. This distinguishes them from other features like pack ice, which forms from sea ice freezing in place, or snowfields, which are piles of snow on land. Glaciers are the source of calving, but the feature that forms specifically from calving into the ocean is icebergs.

**7. What term describes the large, looped systems of surface currents in Earth's oceans?**

- A. Gyres**
- B. Eddies**
- C. Currents**
- D. Ridges**

Gyres describe the large, looped systems of surface currents in Earth's oceans. They form when prevailing winds push surface water and the Coriolis effect bends that flow into circular patterns. In the Northern Hemisphere, these circulations rotate clockwise; in the Southern Hemisphere, they rotate counterclockwise. This wind-driven, rotating pattern helps move heat from the equator toward higher latitudes, shaping regional climates—for example, the Gulf Stream is part of the North Atlantic Gyre. Eddies are smaller, localized swirls within a current. Currents is a general term for any flow of water, not necessarily looped. Ridges are underwater topographic features, not circulation patterns.

**8. \_\_\_\_\_ changes from surface to about 1000m depending on if located in polar or tropical regions**

- A. Temperature**
- B. Salinity**
- C. Density**
- D. Pressure**

Temperature is the property that shows the clearest change from the surface to about 1000 meters, and this change varies with latitude. In tropical regions, the surface is heated intensely, creating a warm layer, but as you descend through the thermocline to around 1000 meters the water becomes much cooler. In polar regions, surface waters are already cold, so the temperature change with depth is smaller, and by 1000 meters the water remains cold. This latitude-dependent depth profile is why temperature is the best answer. Pressure does rise with depth everywhere, and salinity and density don't show as pronounced a latitudinal change over this depth range, making them less consistent with the prompt.

**9. Another large system of ocean currents that affect weather and climate is known as what?**

- A. Gulf Stream**
- B. El Niño**
- C. Great Ocean Conveyor Belt**
- D. Pacific Gyre**

The big idea here is the global thermohaline circulation, often called the Great Ocean Conveyor Belt. This is the continuous loop of surface and deep currents worldwide that is driven by differences in water density caused by temperature and salinity. Warm, lighter water moves toward higher latitudes near the surface, where it cools, becomes denser, sinks, and travels as deep currents to other regions, eventually rising again and completing the loop. This massive system links all the oceans and moves heat around the planet, helping to regulate climate and weather patterns. Why this best fits: it describes a global, long-lasting circulation that influences climate on a broad scale by redistributing heat and affecting nutrient and carbon exchange. The other options are important current patterns or events, but they are narrower in scope: the Gulf Stream is a major surface current within part of the system; El Niño is a tropical Pacific climate pattern that shifts surface temperatures and weather but is not a planet-scale circulation; a Pacific Gyre is a large surface current system specific to the Pacific. The Great Ocean Conveyor Belt captures the idea of the global, density-driven circulation that underpins long-term climate behavior.

**10. Which ocean is the second largest by area after the Pacific Ocean?**

- A. Atlantic Ocean**
- B. Indian Ocean**
- C. Arctic Ocean**
- D. Southern Ocean**

Think about the ocean basins by surface area. The Pacific Ocean is the largest, spanning the most area. The next largest is the Atlantic Ocean, which covers a vast expanse between the Americas and Europe-Africa and amounts to about 106 million square kilometers. The Indian Ocean is smaller than the Atlantic, and the Arctic and Southern Oceans are much smaller still. So, after the Pacific, the Atlantic is the second largest by area.

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

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

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