

FAA Instrument Rating Written 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. The minimum safe altitude (MSA) for the VOR/DME or GPS-A at 7D3 is centered on which position?**
 - A. DEANI intersection**
 - B. WHITE CLOUD VOR/DME**
 - C. MAJUB intersection**
 - D. SOUTH VORTAC**

- 2. If an electronic glide slope malfunctions on an ILS approach with VASI in sight, what is the appropriate action?**
 - A. Continue the approach using the VASI glide slope**
 - B. Inform ATC and descend to the localizer DH**
 - C. Request an LOC approach and then descend below the VASI**
 - D. Cancel the approach and climb to a safe altitude**

- 3. When visibility is greater than 6 SM on a TAF, how is it expressed?**
 - A. Omitted from the report.**
 - B. Expressed as P6SM.**
 - C. Expressed as 6PSM.**
 - D. Noted with a plus sign.**

- 4. How many minutes of fuel reserve is required for VFR nighttime flight?**
 - A. 15 minutes.**
 - B. 20 minutes.**
 - C. 30 minutes.**
 - D. 45 minutes.**

- 5. What effect would the vortices from an airliner departing from runway 29 have on your taxi to runway 4?**
 - A. The upwind vortex would tend to remain over the runway.**
 - B. The downwind vortex will rapidly dissipate.**
 - C. The winds will push the vortices southeast of your takeoff path.**
 - D. The vortices will not affect your taxiing process.**

- 6. What does the AIRMET indicate regarding flying conditions in the stated area?**
- A. There will be icing in clouds below 10,000 feet MSL.**
 - B. The area will have low ceilings before 15Z.**
 - C. Visibility will be less than 3 SM until 15Z.**
 - D. Thunderstorms are expected throughout the region.**
- 7. If ATC approves your request for VFR-on-top, what altitude must you fly?**
- A. Appropriate IFR altitudes**
 - B. Appropriate VFR altitudes**
 - C. Maximum prescribed altitudes**
 - D. No specific altitude requirement**
- 8. What is the significance of holding at the MAP if RAIM is not available on approach?**
- A. To maintain altitude until the approach can be resumed**
 - B. To ensure no other aircraft are in the area**
 - C. To capture satellites for a valid approach**
 - D. To prepare for a go-around**
- 9. What must a pilot ensure when flying through a Class B airspace?**
- A. Filing a flight plan is optional.**
 - B. Obtaining ATC clearance prior to entry.**
 - C. Maintaining VFR conditions at all times.**
 - D. All aircraft must be visual for safe passage.**
- 10. When flying directly over a published airborne VOR checkpoint, what is the maximum error allowed for IFR flight?**
- A. Plus or minus 6° of the designated radial**
 - B. Plus or minus 4° of the designated radial**
 - C. Plus 6° or minus 4° of the designated radial**
 - D. Plus or minus 10° of the designated radial**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. The minimum safe altitude (MSA) for the VOR/DME or GPS-A at 7D3 is centered on which position?

- A. DEANI intersection**
- B. WHITE CLOUD VOR/DME**
- C. MAJUB intersection**
- D. SOUTH VORTAC**

The minimum safe altitude (MSA) for the VOR/DME or GPS-A approach at a specific airport is typically designed to provide pilots with a safe altitude to maintain during their approach and is calculated based on the location of a navigational aid that serves as a reference point. In this case, the MSA is centered on the WHITE CLOUD VOR/DME. The WHITE CLOUD VOR/DME serves as a reference point that allows for safe navigation and approach into the airport at 7D3. By centering the MSA around this VOR/DME, pilots are assured that they are maintaining an altitude that provides adequate terrain clearance and minimizes the risk of obstacles while executing an instrument approach under IMC (Instrument Meteorological Conditions). This approach utilizes existing navigational aids to establish a safe operational environment, ensuring that pilots can safely transition from en route phases to the approach and landing phases of flight, which is the primary purpose of the MSA.

2. If an electronic glide slope malfunctions on an ILS approach with VASI in sight, what is the appropriate action?

- A. Continue the approach using the VASI glide slope**
- B. Inform ATC and descend to the localizer DH**
- C. Request an LOC approach and then descend below the VASI**
- D. Cancel the approach and climb to a safe altitude**

When an electronic glide slope malfunctions during an Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach, referencing the Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI) can help maintain the appropriate glide path. The VASI is a visual aid that provides information on whether you are too high, too low, or on the correct glide slope for landing. By continuing the approach using the VASI glide slope, the pilot can safely navigate towards the runway while using the visual indications to judge the necessary adjustments to maintain the proper descent profile. This allows the pilot to effectively land the aircraft even in the presence of a malfunctioning electronic glide slope. The other options present different strategies that may not be as optimal. Informing ATC and descending to the localizer Decision Height (DH) could lead to a situation where the pilot is unprepared for landing without proper vertical guidance. Requesting a localizer approach and then descending below the VASI might result in an unsafe situation, as it ignores the guidance from the VASI that indicates the appropriate descent path. Canceling the approach and climbing to a safe altitude could remove the opportunity to land safely given the available visual cues. Thus, utilizing the VASI while continuing the approach offers a practical and safe solution when the electronic glide slope

3. When visibility is greater than 6 SM on a TAF, how is it expressed?

- A. Omitted from the report.**
- B. Expressed as P6SM.**
- C. Expressed as 6PSM.**
- D. Noted with a plus sign.**

When visibility is greater than 6 statute miles (SM) in a Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAF), it is expressed as "P6SM." The "P" indicates that the visibility is greater than 6 statute miles, while "6SM" denotes the specific threshold. This notation is essential for pilots to quickly assess potential visibility conditions during their flight planning, as it conveys significant information regarding expected weather conditions. Using "P6SM" helps to maintain clarity and uniformity in reporting, ensuring that pilots who rely on these forecasts understand that visibility may be even better than the specified minimum, which can be critical for flight safety and route planning. Other expressions such as omitting visibility or using a different notation would not provide the same level of detail or clarity.

4. How many minutes of fuel reserve is required for VFR nighttime flight?

- A. 15 minutes.**
- B. 20 minutes.**
- C. 30 minutes.**
- D. 45 minutes.**

For VFR (Visual Flight Rules) nighttime flights, the requirement is to have a fuel reserve of at least 20 minutes. This rule is intended to provide an additional safety margin for pilots since flying at night presents unique challenges, such as reduced visibility and the potential for disorientation. The 20-minute fuel reserve ensures that in the event of unforeseen circumstances, such as encountering weather that forces a diversion or having to hold due to air traffic, the pilot has enough fuel to safely manage the situation. This is especially crucial at night when it becomes more difficult to navigate and see potential hazards. While there are other reserve fuel requirements for different types of flights or conditions, the 20-minute requirement specifically addresses the additional risks associated with nighttime operations under VFR. This regulation helps maintain a higher safety standard for pilots when flying in reduced light conditions.

5. What effect would the vortices from an airliner departing from runway 29 have on your taxi to runway 4?

- A. The upwind vortex would tend to remain over the runway.**
- B. The downwind vortex will rapidly dissipate.**
- C. The winds will push the vortices southeast of your takeoff path.**
- D. The vortices will not affect your taxiing process.**

The correct response highlights how the upwind vortex from a departing airliner can impact conditions on the runway. When an aircraft takes off from a runway, it generates wingtip vortices as a byproduct of lift. These vortices are influenced by wind conditions and can drift downwind depending on the wind direction and speed. In this scenario, since you are taxiing towards runway 4 while the airliner departs from runway 29, the upwind vortex would indeed tend to remain over a section of runway 29 as it is located upwind of your taxiing route. The nature of these vortices is such that they can linger in the vicinity of the departure runway. This scenario requires a pilot to be vigilant during taxiing, as these vortices can pose a risk if the aircraft encounters them, especially in close proximity to the departure path. Understanding this is crucial for safe operations because if the upwind vortex remains close to the area where you are taxiing, it can lead to turbulence or loss of control if you inadvertently enter that part of the airspace where the vortices are present.

6. What does the AIRMET indicate regarding flying conditions in the stated area?

- A. There will be icing in clouds below 10,000 feet MSL.**
- B. The area will have low ceilings before 15Z.**
- C. Visibility will be less than 3 SM until 15Z.**
- D. Thunderstorms are expected throughout the region.**

The AIRMET is a type of aviation weather advisory that is issued for a variety of conditions that may affect the safety of flight. When interpreting an AIRMET, it typically addresses conditions that are widespread but may not be severe enough to warrant a SIGMET. In this case, the correct answer indicates that the AIRMET notes low ceilings before 15Z. This is significant for pilots because low ceilings can severely impact visibility and the ability to navigate safely, especially for those flying VFR (Visual Flight Rules). A ceiling is defined as the height at which the cloud base is found, and low ceilings can pose significant challenges for pilots, such as reduced visibility beneath the cloud cover and limitations on climbing to higher altitudes. The other statements, while they may be relevant in other forecasts or circumstances, do not represent what a typical AIRMET would indicate here. For example, AIRMETs that specifically mention icing would focus on areas where such conditions are likely, but they would include more specific details about cloud conditions and altitudes. Similarly, visibility being restricted to less than 3 statute miles would also have a different focus in its detailing—AIRMETs usually provide broader guidance rather than precise visibility limits. Lastly, thunderstorms typically fall

7. If ATC approves your request for VFR-on-top, what altitude must you fly?

- A. Appropriate IFR altitudes**
- B. Appropriate VFR altitudes**
- C. Maximum prescribed altitudes**
- D. No specific altitude requirement**

When ATC approves a request for VFR-on-top, the pilot is allowed to fly at a VFR cruising altitude, as prescribed in the regulations for VFR flight. Specifically, this means that the pilot must maintain altitudes that comply with the rules for visual flight rules, which are determined by the direction of flight. For instance, when flying VFR in the northern hemisphere, odd altitudes are used for eastbound flights and even altitudes for westbound flights. It's important to note that this permission allows the pilot to remain clear of clouds and maintain visual reference while still being under IFR in controlled airspace. Therefore, although the flight is technically under IFR rules, the altitude must still conform to VFR altitude regulations. The consideration of appropriate IFR altitudes or maximum prescribed altitudes does not apply in the context of VFR-on-top, as the permission is specifically to maintain visual flight rules at prescribed VFR altitudes.

8. What is the significance of holding at the MAP if RAIM is not available on approach?

- A. To maintain altitude until the approach can be resumed**
- B. To ensure no other aircraft are in the area**
- C. To capture satellites for a valid approach**
- D. To prepare for a go-around**

The significance of holding at the Minimum Approach Point (MAP) when RAIM (Receiver Autonomous Integrity Monitoring) is not available during an approach primarily relates to the need for valid satellite signals to ensure the safety and accuracy of navigation. When RAIM is unavailable, it indicates that there may be insufficient integrity in the GPS signals, which are crucial for the successful completion of an approach. By holding at the MAP, a pilot can maintain a safe altitude while waiting to re-establish a valid GPS signal. This action allows time to capture additional satellite signals, which can then be assessed for their integrity and reliability. Once there is confirmation of valid RAIM, the pilot can safely continue the approach or make an appropriate decision regarding diverting. This approach to holding ensures that the pilot has the necessary information to make informed decisions about the continuation of the approach, thus enhancing safety.

9. What must a pilot ensure when flying through a Class B airspace?

- A. Filing a flight plan is optional.**
- B. Obtaining ATC clearance prior to entry.**
- C. Maintaining VFR conditions at all times.**
- D. All aircraft must be visual for safe passage.**

When flying through Class B airspace, it is crucial for a pilot to obtain Air Traffic Control (ATC) clearance prior to entry. Class B airspace is designed to protect aircraft in busy terminal areas, typically surrounding major airports. This airspace frequently sees a high volume of air traffic, which can include a mix of commercial airliners and general aviation aircraft. Obtaining ATC clearance ensures that the pilot is given explicit permission to enter this controlled airspace, which allows ATC to manage all traffic effectively and maintain safety. The requirement for clearance helps keep the flow of traffic organized and reduces the risk of midair collisions. This system enhances safety and efficiency in what can often be a congested airspace environment. Other options, such as the idea that filing a flight plan is optional or maintaining VFR conditions at all times, do not align with the specific requirements for Class B airspace. In fact, while VFR pilots must avoid Class B airspace without clearance, it is not required for them to maintain VFR conditions if they are operating with clearance in that space.

10. When flying directly over a published airborne VOR checkpoint, what is the maximum error allowed for IFR flight?

- A. Plus or minus 6° of the designated radial**
- B. Plus or minus 4° of the designated radial**
- C. Plus 6° or minus 4° of the designated radial**
- D. Plus or minus 10° of the designated radial**

When flying directly over a published airborne VOR checkpoint, the maximum allowable deviation for IFR flight is plus or minus 6 degrees of the designated radial. This standard ensures that pilots maintain navigational accuracy, which is critical in the IFR environment where precise pilotage is necessary to avoid controlled airspace conflicts or terrain. The established tolerance emphasizes safety and reliability in navigation, particularly for instrument approaches and departures. To maintain this degree of accuracy, pilots rely on regular VOR checks and adhere to the guidelines set forth in FAA regulations. The correct answer reflects the importance of precise navigation, as any significant deviation could lead to issues such as loss of separation from other aircraft or navigation errors leading to dangerous situations.

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://faa-instrumentrating.examzify.com>

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

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