

# FAA Instrument Stage 1 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. In what order should you perform the fundamental skills of attitude instrument flying?**
  - A. Interpretation, control, cross-check**
  - B. Cross-check, interpretation, control**
  - C. Control, cross-check, interpretation**
  - D. Interpretation, control, cross-check**
  
- 2. Which type of chart would be best for navigating at altitudes above 24,000 feet?**
  - A. Low altitude enroute charts**
  - B. Terminal area charts**
  - C. High altitude enroute charts**
  - D. Standard terminal arrival charts**
  
- 3. What is the purpose of Minimum Safe Altitude (MSA)?**
  - A. To ensure maximum aircraft speed during approach**
  - B. To provide a minimum altitude for safe navigation and obstacle clearance**
  - C. To establish preferred flight routes**
  - D. To set altitude requirements for weather conditions**
  
- 4. What do you need to do before you can monitor your progress with a GPS flight plan?**
  - A. Activate the flight plan**
  - B. Check fuel status**
  - C. Record weather conditions**
  - D. Verify waypoints**
  
- 5. How can a pilot avoid the error of chasing vertical speed indications during attitude instrument flying?**
  - A. Focus solely on the vertical speed indicator**
  - B. Increase pitch corrections aggressively**
  - C. Cross-check other pitch instruments**
  - D. Ignore changes in altitude**

- 6. What is indicated by a missed approach point?**
- A. The point where a pilot must decide to continue or abandon a landing**
  - B. The altitude at which pilots should initiate descent**
  - C. The point in a flight plan where significant weather changes are expected**
  - D. The final approach to the runway before landing**
- 7. What is the distance from the beginning of the runway threshold to the aiming point marking?**
- A. 500 feet**
  - B. 750 feet**
  - C. 1,000 feet**
  - D. 1,500 feet**
- 8. What do the navigation blocks shown on your Multifunction Display (MFD) signify during the arrival phase of the flight?**
- A. The desired track and airspeed for approach**
  - B. The course between waypoints and track angle error**
  - C. The type of approach and landing runway**
  - D. The total distance remaining and time to destination**
- 9. To ensure reliability, what should pilots do regarding backup instruments?**
- A. They should ignore them**
  - B. Use them as the primary source**
  - C. Set and check them before flight**
  - D. Only refer to them in emergencies**
- 10. What type of navigation uses GPS data for aircraft approaches?**
- A. Conventional navigation**
  - B. Area navigation (RNAV)**
  - C. Visual flight rules**
  - D. Flight Level navigation**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. In what order should you perform the fundamental skills of attitude instrument flying?**

- A. Interpretation, control, cross-check**
- B. Cross-check, interpretation, control**
- C. Control, cross-check, interpretation**
- D. Interpretation, control, cross-check**

The correct sequence of the fundamental skills of attitude instrument flying begins with cross-check, followed by interpretation, and then control. Cross-checking involves continuously comparing the information from various instruments to gather a comprehensive understanding of the aircraft's performance and its attitude relative to the horizon. This step is crucial as it lays the groundwork for an accurate assessment of the flight situation. Once you have completed the cross-check, the next step is interpretation. This involves analyzing the data gathered from the cross-check to make sense of what the instruments are telling you about the aircraft's flight status. It is essential to interpret the information correctly to ensure proper situational awareness. Finally, after the interpretation phase, you perform control. This step entails making the necessary adjustments to the flight controls based on your interpretation of the data. Control is about responding appropriately to maintain or achieve the desired flight profile. This ordered approach is critical for effective and safe instrument flying, ensuring that pilots can rely accurately on their instruments and manage the aircraft accordingly.

**2. Which type of chart would be best for navigating at altitudes above 24,000 feet?**

- A. Low altitude enroute charts**
- B. Terminal area charts**
- C. High altitude enroute charts**
- D. Standard terminal arrival charts**

The correct choice is the type of chart specifically designed for navigation at higher altitudes, which is the high altitude enroute chart. These charts are intended for aircraft flying at and above 24,000 feet, providing the necessary information for safe and efficient navigation in the flight levels. High altitude enroute charts include detailed features such as jet routes, navigational aids, and altitude information that cater to flights operating in the more congested upper levels of airspace. They ensure that pilots can navigate safely through the high-altitude environment, accounting for issues like airspace structure and air traffic management. In contrast, low altitude enroute charts are designed for use at lower altitudes, primarily below 24,000 feet, and would not provide the required information for high-altitude operations. Terminal area charts are tailored for navigation around airports and during takeoffs and landings, focusing on terminal airspace, which is significantly lower than the altitudes in question. Standard terminal arrival charts cover the procedures for arriving at an airport but are also meant for lower altitude phases of flight. Therefore, the high altitude enroute chart is the best choice for navigating at altitudes above 24,000 feet due to its specific design and features tailored for high-altitude

### 3. What is the purpose of Minimum Safe Altitude (MSA)?

- A. To ensure maximum aircraft speed during approach
- B. To provide a minimum altitude for safe navigation and obstacle clearance**
- C. To establish preferred flight routes
- D. To set altitude requirements for weather conditions

The purpose of Minimum Safe Altitude (MSA) is to provide a minimum altitude for safe navigation and obstacle clearance. This altitude ensures that during the approach, departure, or en route phases of flight, the aircraft remains at a safe vertical distance above any terrain or obstacles in the area. MSAs are particularly critical when flying in areas where obstructions may not be readily visible, providing pilots with a defined safe altitude that enhances safety and situational awareness. This altitude is established in relation to known obstacles and is meant to give pilots confidence that they can navigate safely, reducing the risk of a collision with terrain or man-made structures. The use of MSAs ensures that there is sufficient vertical separation between the aircraft and any potential hazards, which is a crucial aspect of safe aviation practices, especially when visibility may be limited. The other options do not pertain to the specific purpose of MSA. They may address other operational aspects of flying, but they do not capture the essence of what MSA is designed to achieve in terms of safety and obstacle avoidance.

### 4. What do you need to do before you can monitor your progress with a GPS flight plan?

- A. Activate the flight plan**
- B. Check fuel status
- C. Record weather conditions
- D. Verify waypoints

In order to effectively monitor your progress with a GPS flight plan, activating the flight plan is essential. Activating the plan ensures that the GPS system is aware of your intended route and that it can provide real-time navigation support as you fly. This step establishes the framework wherein all subsequent navigation data, including position updates and waypoint tracking, is generated and displayed on your GPS unit. Without activation, the GPS may not provide accurate or relevant information concerning your flight path, making it difficult to effectively monitor your progress. Therefore, activating the flight plan is a crucial first step in ensuring that the system can provide the necessary updates and guidance throughout the flight. This step allows the pilot to receive critical alerts or deviations from the planned route, enhancing situational awareness and safety.

**5. How can a pilot avoid the error of chasing vertical speed indications during attitude instrument flying?**

- A. Focus solely on the vertical speed indicator**
- B. Increase pitch corrections aggressively**
- C. Cross-check other pitch instruments**
- D. Ignore changes in altitude**

In attitude instrument flying, managing altitude and maintaining a stable flight path can be challenging, particularly when pilots become fixated on vertical speed readings. This fixation can lead to overcorrections and a destabilization of the aircraft's flight path. The recommended approach to avoid chasing vertical speed indications is to cross-check other pitch instruments. By confirming and correlating the information from multiple flight instruments—such as the attitude indicator and altimeter—pilots can gain a holistic understanding of their aircraft's performance rather than relying solely on the vertical speed indicator. This practice encourages a more stable flight attitude and better management of altitude changes, reducing the likelihood of excessive and unnecessary adjustments that can compromise safety. Relying exclusively on the vertical speed indicator would not provide a complete picture of the aircraft's position in the sky, while aggressive pitch corrections may cause significant oscillations or a loss of control. Ignoring changes in altitude is counterproductive and poses risks, as altitude awareness is critical for safe navigation. Therefore, integrating information from various flight instruments is essential for effective aircraft control during instrument flying.

**6. What is indicated by a missed approach point?**

- A. The point where a pilot must decide to continue or abandon a landing**
- B. The altitude at which pilots should initiate descent**
- C. The point in a flight plan where significant weather changes are expected**
- D. The final approach to the runway before landing**

The missed approach point is a critical aspect of instrument approach procedures. It indicates the precise point in an instrument approach where a pilot must make a decision to either continue the descent and proceed to land or to initiate a missed approach. This decision is based on whether the pilot can visually acquire the runway environment or determine that a safe landing is possible. In essence, if the required visual references are not established at this point, the pilot must follow the missed approach procedure to ensure safety. This point is outlined in the approach procedure and represents a predefined location in the descent phase of the landing process, specifically tailored for managing potential landing issues. Other options represent different aspects of aviation operations but do not accurately describe the missed approach point's function. It's essential for pilots to understand this decision-making process, as it directly impacts the safety of the approach and landing.

**7. What is the distance from the beginning of the runway threshold to the aiming point marking?**

- A. 500 feet**
- B. 750 feet**
- C. 1,000 feet**
- D. 1,500 feet**

The distance from the beginning of the runway threshold to the aiming point marking is established as 1,000 feet. This standard is used in runway design and helps pilots recognize the correct touchdown zone during the final approach phase of landing. The aiming point marking consists of two rectangular stripes on the runway and serves as a visible target on the runway surface for pilots to aim for, aiding in consistent and accurate landings. Understanding the significance of this distance is crucial for safe aircraft operations, as it allows for a standardized landing approach across various airports.

**8. What do the navigation blocks shown on your Multifunction Display (MFD) signify during the arrival phase of the flight?**

- A. The desired track and airspeed for approach**
- B. The course between waypoints and track angle error**
- C. The type of approach and landing runway**
- D. The total distance remaining and time to destination**

During the arrival phase of a flight, the navigation blocks displayed on the Multifunction Display (MFD) serve critical functions related to your route. Specifically, these blocks indicate the course between waypoints and track angle error. Understanding the relationship between the intended course and your actual track is vital for maintaining situational awareness and ensuring you are on the correct path for your approach. Knowing the track angle error helps pilots determine if they are drifting off their intended path and allows for timely corrections to stay aligned with the desired route. This information is essential for navigating effectively, particularly during the complex phases of arrival and approach when precise positioning is crucial for safety. Other aspects like desired track and airspeed for approach or the type of approach and landing runway are equally important for flight safety and performance, but they are not specifically represented by the navigation blocks as they focus on course and track error. Similarly, while total distance remaining and time to destination are useful metrics provided by the MFD, they do not directly communicate the relationship between waypoints, which is exactly what the course and track angle error do. This distinction reinforces the importance of understanding how these navigation tools are utilized during critical flight phases.

**9. To ensure reliability, what should pilots do regarding backup instruments?**

- A. They should ignore them**
- B. Use them as the primary source**
- C. Set and check them before flight**
- D. Only refer to them in emergencies**

Ensuring the reliability of backup instruments is crucial for pilot safety, particularly in instrument flying conditions. Setting and checking backup instruments before flight allows pilots to verify that those instruments are functioning correctly and that they can be relied upon if needed. This pre-flight preparation is an essential part of standard operating procedures and helps prevent in-flight surprises. By confirming the functionality and accuracy of backup instruments before embarking on a flight, pilots create a safety net that can be critical during moments of failure in the primary flight instruments. This proactive approach helps ensure that all necessary instruments are ready for use in case they are required, especially during adverse weather conditions or system malfunctions. This practice also familiarizes pilots with the operation of backup instruments, ensuring that they are comfortable and knowledgeable about using them should the situation arise. By taking these steps, pilots contribute to a higher level of safety and reliability during their flights.

**10. What type of navigation uses GPS data for aircraft approaches?**

- A. Conventional navigation**
- B. Area navigation (RNAV)**
- C. Visual flight rules**
- D. Flight Level navigation**

Area navigation (RNAV) is a method of navigation that allows aircraft to fly on any desired flight path within the coverage of ground- or space-based navigational aids, or within the limits of the aircraft's self-contained systems. This capability is enhanced with the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) data, which provides precise location information. In the context of aircraft approaches, RNAV permits pilots to follow specific waypoints, ensuring a more efficient and direct flight path to the runway. Because RNAV systems heavily rely on GPS data, they facilitate various types of approaches, including those to airports that might not have traditional ground-based navigation aids. This technology streamlines the approach process and increases safety by allowing more precision and flexibility in routing. Conventional navigation relies solely on ground-based VOR, NDB, and other conventional aids, not making full use of GPS capabilities. Visual flight rules (VFR) are based on visual references outside the aircraft and do not involve navigation systems like GPS for approaches. Flight Level navigation refers to altitude management for cruising but does not specifically imply the use of GPS for approach navigation. Thus, RNAV stands out as the correct choice due to its integration of GPS data for more advanced and accurate aircraft approaches.

## 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://faainstrumentstage1.examzify.com>**

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

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