

Forensic Science Capstone 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. Which item is addressed under the factors re entry and exit in the final report?**
 - A. Lighting conditions**
 - B. Factors re Entry and Exit**
 - C. Noise levels**
 - D. Witness statements**

- 2. What is a latent print?**
 - A. A fingerprint that is visible without processing.**
 - B. A DNA sample.**
 - C. A type of footwear impression.**
 - D. A fingerprint not visible to the naked eye.**

- 3. A crime scene final report should include which of the following?**
 - A. Budget Analysis**
 - B. Witness List**
 - C. Introduction**
 - D. Personnel Financial Records**

- 4. Rectangular coordinates are best used for which kind of sketches?**
 - A. Outdoors with large open areas**
 - B. Large outdoor scenes**
 - C. Indoors with clear boundaries**
 - D. Inland bodies of water**

- 5. Which of the following is an example of class characteristics?**
 - A. Caliber of weapon and ammunition**
 - B. Location of the firing pin**
 - C. Shape of the firing chamber**
 - D. All of the above**

- 6. Which statement best defines mapping in sketch practice?**
- A. The process of drawing every object to scale in a separate plan**
 - B. The process of measuring and fixing the items present in the scene; taking and documenting these measurements**
 - C. The visual representation of color hues**
 - D. A method to create a 3D model from a 2D sketch**
- 7. When should casting of a tool mark occur?**
- A. Always after collection**
 - B. If there is no possible way to collect the tool mark**
 - C. Never**
 - D. Only if cleaning fails**
- 8. In the AVE-V framework, the Analyze component entails what action?**
- A. Determine if the prints come from the same source**
 - B. Verify by a second examiner**
 - C. Compare latent print to the exemplar**
 - D. First analyze the latent print, then the known exemplar**
- 9. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited maternally.**
- A. Unique to an individual**
 - B. Inherited maternally**
 - C. Found in the nucleus**
 - D. Degrades rapidly in light**
- 10. What are federal prosecutors called?**
- A. Public Defenders**
 - B. District Attorneys**
 - C. United States Attorneys**
 - D. Solicitors**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which item is addressed under the factors re entry and exit in the final report?

- A. Lighting conditions**
- B. Factors re Entry and Exit**
- C. Noise levels**
- D. Witness statements**

In forensic reporting, documenting how a scene was entered and exited is essential for preserving evidence integrity. The section that addresses this topic explicitly covers the factors re entry and exit—things like who accessed the scene, when they did, through which entry points, and how those actions could have influenced the evidence or its condition. That makes the item named “factors re entry and exit” the best choice, because it directly corresponds to what this part of the report is about. Other options belong to different aspects of the scene or incident: lighting conditions affect visibility and photography, noise levels are environmental details not specifically tied to entry/exit, and witness statements pertain to what people observed or reported rather than how the scene was accessed.

2. What is a latent print?

- A. A fingerprint that is visible without processing.**
- B. A DNA sample.**
- C. A type of footwear impression.**
- D. A fingerprint not visible to the naked eye.**

A latent print is a fingerprint that isn't visible to the naked eye. Latent means hidden; these prints come from sweat and oils left on a surface and require processing—like powders or chemical developers—to become visible. This invisibility is what makes latent prints central to many investigations: once you apply the right method, the print can be visualized and collected for comparison. In contrast, an obvious fingerprint can be seen without any treatment, which isn't latent. A DNA sample is a different type of evidence, and a footwear impression is a shoe print, not a fingerprint.

3. A crime scene final report should include which of the following?

A. Budget Analysis

B. Witness List

C. Introduction

D. Personnel Financial Records

Starting a crime scene final report with a clear introduction establishes the context readers need. The introduction lays out the frame of the case: the incident location, date and time, case number or identifiers, the purpose of the investigation, and who processed the scene. It may also outline the scope and the general approach used to collect and document evidence. This upfront context is essential because it ensures that everything that follows—descriptions of the scene, evidence, methods, and findings—is understood within the correct framework and is traceable and reproducible. Budget analysis is unrelated to the procedural documentation of a crime scene; it concerns financial matters that don't pertain to evidence collection or scene processing. A witness list, while potentially useful in broader case files, is not the core element used to orient a crime scene report and is not the essential opening section. Personnel financial records are likewise outside the scope of a scene report and would raise confidentiality and relevance concerns.

4. Rectangular coordinates are best used for which kind of sketches?

A. Outdoors with large open areas

B. Large outdoor scenes

C. Indoors with clear boundaries

D. Inland bodies of water

Rectangular coordinates excel when you can anchor measurements to perpendicular boundaries. Indoors, rooms have walls that meet at right angles, giving you two clear, perpendicular directions to base your x and y axes on. This lets you describe every point by two simple distances from a corner or baseline, making the sketch easy to reproduce, scale, and verify. Outdoors with large open areas lacks those consistent boundaries, so aligning a neat grid becomes awkward and less precise. Water edges and irregular outdoor features also break the straight, right-angled framework, making coordinates harder to apply consistently. Because of the clean, fixed geometry of indoor spaces, using a rectangular coordinate system works best there.

5. Which of the following is an example of class characteristics?

- A. Caliber of weapon and ammunition
- B. Location of the firing pin
- C. Shape of the firing chamber
- D. All of the above**

Class characteristics are features that place a firearm or its ammunition into a category, rather than identifying a single, unique weapon. Caliber defines the size class of both the weapon and the ammunition, marking a broad group that uses that same cartridge and projectile size. The location of the firing pin's strike is tied to the firearm's design and remains consistent within a given design family, signaling which class of firearms could have produced the mark. The shape of the firing chamber reflects the intended cartridge fit and firearm design, again grouping weapons by shared chamber geometry. Because each of these features points to a category of firearms or ammunition rather than a single, individual gun, all of the above are class characteristics. Therefore, the option that includes all of these is the best choice.

6. Which statement best defines mapping in sketch practice?

- A. The process of drawing every object to scale in a separate plan
- B. The process of measuring and fixing the items present in the scene; taking and documenting these measurements**
- C. The visual representation of color hues
- D. A method to create a 3D model from a 2D sketch

Mapping in sketch practice focuses on turning a scene into a precise, data-driven record by measuring and fixing the items present and documenting those measurements. This ground-tracks the sketch to real dimensions, capturing how far objects are from each other and from reference points so the drawing can be verified and used for later analysis. It isn't about drawing every object to scale in a separate plan, which would be creating an independent layout rather than a field-recorded map of the scene. It isn't about representing color hues, which centers on appearance rather than measurement. And it isn't about building a 3D model from a 2D sketch, which is a modeling process rather than recording exact spatial data on-site.

7. When should casting of a tool mark occur?

- A. Always after collection
- B. If there is no possible way to collect the tool mark**
- C. Never
- D. Only if cleaning fails

Casting a tool mark is used to preserve a unique impression when you cannot recover the mark directly. The imprint carries distinctive features—striations and edge details—that let examiners compare it to a suspect tool, but if the tool mark itself can't be collected or would be destroyed by attempting collection, a cast provides a durable, analysable record for later study. If the mark is accessible and collectible, you would capture and preserve it through direct collection rather than casting. Casting serves as a backup method to avoid losing the evidence when direct collection isn't possible.

8. In the AVE-V framework, the Analyze component entails what action?

- A. Determine if the prints come from the same source**
- B. Verify by a second examiner**
- C. Compare latent print to the exemplar**
- D. First analyze the latent print, then the known exemplar**

In the Analyze step, the examiner looks closely at the prints to gather data and assess quality and detail so that a meaningful comparison can be made. The action centers on inspecting the latent print first to identify usable ridge features and then considering the known exemplar to prepare the feature data from both prints for comparison. This stage is about data collection and quality assessment, not about deciding if they come from the same source. That's why the option describing first analyzing the latent print, then the known exemplar best fits. The other options describe actions that occur in later stages: determining a match is made in evaluation, verification is done by a second examiner, and the actual comparison happens during the comparison step.

9. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited maternally.

- A. Unique to an individual**
- B. Inherited maternally**
- C. Found in the nucleus**
- D. Degrades rapidly in light**

Mitochondrial DNA is inherited maternally. This happens because the mitochondria—and their DNA—come from the egg cell, and after fertilization the offspring's mitochondrial genome is transmitted through the maternal line. Sperm mitochondria are typically excluded or degraded, so the paternal contribution to mtDNA is minimal. That's why mtDNA is used to trace maternal ancestry and to compare samples when nuclear DNA is degraded or unavailable. It isn't unique to a single individual—maternal relatives share the same mitochondrial lineage for many generations. Also, mtDNA lives in the mitochondria, not the nucleus, and its relevance here isn't about light exposure or rapid degradation.

10. What are federal prosecutors called?

- A. Public Defenders**
- B. District Attorneys**
- C. United States Attorneys**
- D. Solicitors**

Federal prosecutors are called United States Attorneys. These officials run the U.S. Attorney's Offices in each federal district and are responsible for prosecuting crimes that violate federal law and for representing the United States in civil cases in federal court. They operate within the Department of Justice and are appointed by the President with Senate confirmation. This role is distinct from state or local prosecutors, who are typically known as District Attorneys and handle offenses under state law. Public defenders, on the other hand, represent defendants who cannot afford an attorney, not the government. The term Solicitors isn't used for federal prosecutors in the United States (the closest related role is the Solicitor General, who argues for the government before the Supreme Court).

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://forensicsciencecapstone.examzify.com>

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

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