

GACE Middle Grades Science 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

- 1. What do we call carnivores that feed on primary consumers?**
 - A. Tertiary consumers**
 - B. Secondary consumers**
 - C. Primary consumers**
 - D. Autotrophs**
- 2. Which model represents an idea through visual means, like a flow chart?**
 - A. Theory model**
 - B. Exploratory model**
 - C. Strategic model**
 - D. Visualization model**
- 3. What distinguishes a mixture from a compound?**
 - A. Mixtures consist of a single particle**
 - B. Mixtures are formed by chemical change**
 - C. Mixtures can be separated by physical change**
 - D. Mixtures have fixed compositions**
- 4. Which part of the plant is responsible for the transportation of food?**
 - A. Xylem**
 - B. Phloem**
 - C. Cortex**
 - D. Pericycle**
- 5. What defines a mechanical wave?**
 - A. A wave that does not require a medium**
 - B. A wave that travels through a vacuum**
 - C. A disturbance that travels through a material**
 - D. A wave generated by a periodic electric field**

- 6. Which scientists contributed significantly to our understanding of inheritance through his work on pea plants?**
- A. Gregor Mendel**
 - B. Charles Darwin**
 - C. Gregor Johann Mendel**
 - D. Louis Pasteur**
- 7. What is the primary function of plastids in plant cells?**
- A. Production of energy**
 - B. Cell division**
 - C. Storage**
 - D. Photosynthesis**
- 8. What type of weathering involves changes in the shape and size of rocks without altering their chemical makeup?**
- A. Chemical weathering**
 - B. Mechanical weathering**
 - C. Physical weathering**
 - D. Biological weathering**
- 9. Which biome covers 75% of the Earth's surface and is organized by the depth of water?**
- A. Tundra biome**
 - B. Desert biome**
 - C. Marine biome**
 - D. Forest biome**
- 10. How do nonspecific defense mechanisms protect the body?**
- A. By recognizing specific pathogens**
 - B. By providing a general defense against a variety of infections**
 - C. By producing antibodies**
 - D. By eliminating waste**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What do we call carnivores that feed on primary consumers?

- A. Tertiary consumers**
- B. Secondary consumers**
- C. Primary consumers**
- D. Autotrophs**

The term used to describe carnivores that feed on primary consumers is secondary consumers. In an ecological food chain or food web, primary consumers are usually herbivores that directly consume autotrophs (plants). Secondary consumers, on the other hand, are the organisms that eat these herbivores. This position in the food chain allows secondary consumers to obtain energy by preying on primary consumers. For example, a snake that eats a rabbit would be classified as a secondary consumer, since the rabbit is the primary consumer that feeds on plants. Understanding the roles of different consumers in an ecosystem is key for grasping concepts in ecology, such as energy flow and trophic levels. Each level of the food chain relies on the level below it for energy transfer, highlighting the interconnectedness of organisms within an ecosystem.

2. Which model represents an idea through visual means, like a flow chart?

- A. Theory model**
- B. Exploratory model**
- C. Strategic model**
- D. Visualization model**

The most suitable choice for representing an idea through visual means, such as a flow chart, is a visualization model. Visualization models specifically focus on the use of graphical representations to convey information, ideas, or processes. They are designed to aid in understanding complex concepts by presenting them in a clear and visual format. A flow chart is an excellent example of this since it visually outlines the steps or components of a process, making it easier to comprehend the relationships and flow of the information. While theories and exploratory models have their own importance in scientific discourse, they do not primarily focus on the visual representation of ideas. A strategic model typically involves planning and operational frameworks rather than purely visual elements. Therefore, the visualization model effectively captures the essence of using visual means to represent ideas.

3. What distinguishes a mixture from a compound?

- A. Mixtures consist of a single particle
- B. Mixtures are formed by chemical change
- C. Mixtures can be separated by physical change**
- D. Mixtures have fixed compositions

A mixture is distinguished from a compound primarily by the way its components interact and can be separated. In a mixture, the individual substances retain their distinct properties and can be combined in varying proportions. This characteristic allows mixtures to be separated into their original components through physical methods such as filtering, distillation, or simply by using a magnet for magnetic materials. In contrast, a compound consists of two or more elements that are chemically bonded together in a fixed ratio, resulting in a substance with unique properties that are different from those of the individual elements. Chemical changes typically occur during the formation of a compound, which also means that separation requires chemical reactions, not just physical changes. This distinction is essential in understanding how materials are categorized in chemistry and is foundational for further study in topics such as solutions, reactions, and material properties.

4. Which part of the plant is responsible for the transportation of food?

- A. Xylem
- B. Phloem**
- C. Cortex
- D. Pericycle

The phloem is specifically responsible for the transportation of food in plants. It is a type of vascular tissue that primarily moves the sugars and nutrients produced during photosynthesis from the leaves, where they are synthesized, to other parts of the plant that require energy and nutrients for growth and development. This process is vital for the plant's overall health and functioning, as it ensures that all cells have the necessary resources to perform their roles, including growth and reproduction. In contrast, xylem is responsible for transporting water and dissolved minerals from the roots to the rest of the plant, while the cortex and pericycle are involved in structural support and facilitating growth or the formation of new roots, but they do not play a direct role in the transportation of food. Understanding the distinct roles of these plant structures helps clarify the essential functions they perform within the plant's life cycle.

5. What defines a mechanical wave?

- A. A wave that does not require a medium
- B. A wave that travels through a vacuum
- C. A disturbance that travels through a material**
- D. A wave generated by a periodic electric field

A mechanical wave is defined by its requirement to travel through a material medium, which can be a solid, liquid, or gas. This definition emphasizes that mechanical waves involve disturbances that move through these materials by transferring energy without the permanent displacement of the medium itself. For example, when a person creates ripples in a pond by throwing a stone, the water molecules oscillate and pass energy along, but they do not travel with the wave itself. The other options do not meet the criteria for a mechanical wave. Waves that do not require a medium are classified as electromagnetic waves, while those traveling through a vacuum fall into the same category, as they can propagate through empty space. Finally, waves generated by a periodic electric field pertain to electromagnetic radiation rather than mechanical waves. This understanding clarifies why choice C is the only option that correctly identifies the essential characteristic of mechanical waves.

6. Which scientists contributed significantly to our understanding of inheritance through his work on pea plants?

- A. Gregor Mendel
- B. Charles Darwin
- C. Gregor Johann Mendel**
- D. Louis Pasteur

Gregor Johann Mendel is recognized for his groundbreaking work in genetics, specifically through his experiments with pea plants. In the mid-19th century, he conducted systematic breeding experiments that focused on the inheritance of certain traits, such as flower color and seed shape. By analyzing the patterns of how traits were passed down through generations, he was able to establish fundamental principles of inheritance that laid the groundwork for the field of genetics. Mendel's meticulous approach included keeping detailed records of his experiments and applying mathematical ratios to understand the patterns he observed. This led to the formulation of what are now known as Mendelian laws of inheritance, such as the Law of Segregation and the Law of Independent Assortment. His work remained largely unrecognized during his lifetime but was rediscovered in the early 20th century, ultimately earning him the title of the "father of modern genetics." While other scientists have made significant contributions to biology and the understanding of evolution and microorganisms, it is Mendel's specific research on inheritance and his use of pea plants that directly relates to this question.

7. What is the primary function of plastids in plant cells?

- A. Production of energy
- B. Cell division
- C. Storage**
- D. Photosynthesis

The primary function of plastids in plant cells is photosynthesis. Plastids are double-membraned organelles found in plants and algae, with chloroplasts being the most well-known type. Chloroplasts contain chlorophyll, the pigment responsible for capturing light energy. This light energy is then used to convert carbon dioxide and water into glucose and oxygen during the photosynthetic process. While plastids also play roles in storage—such as storing starch, lipids, and proteins—photosynthesis is their defining and most crucial function, as it directly relates to the plant's ability to produce energy in the form of glucose. Other types of plastids, like amyloplasts and chromoplasts, specialize in storing starch and pigments, respectively. However, the fundamental role of chloroplasts in converting light energy into chemical energy through photosynthesis is essential for plant life and thus underpins the larger function of plastids in overall energy production in plants.

8. What type of weathering involves changes in the shape and size of rocks without altering their chemical makeup?

- A. Chemical weathering
- B. Mechanical weathering
- C. Physical weathering**
- D. Biological weathering

Mechanical weathering refers to the process where rocks break down into smaller pieces without any change to their chemical composition. This type of weathering occurs through physical forces such as freeze-thaw cycles, thermal expansion, or abrasion. For example, when water seeps into cracks in a rock and freezes, it expands and can cause the rock to fracture. The rock's material and chemical structure remain the same, illustrating the concept of mechanical weathering effectively. The distinction between mechanical weathering and other types is critical. Chemical weathering, on the other hand, involves changes in the mineral composition of rocks through chemical reactions, leading to a transformation in the rock's structure. Biological weathering incorporates the actions of living organisms, such as plant roots breaking apart rock, but still fundamentally relies on physical processes. Understanding mechanical weathering is vital for grasping how terrain can change over time without altering the fundamental materials present within the rocks. This knowledge is applicable in various fields, including geology, environmental science, and earth science education.

9. Which biome covers 75% of the Earth's surface and is organized by the depth of water?

- A. Tundra biome**
- B. Desert biome**
- C. Marine biome**
- D. Forest biome**

The marine biome is the correct answer because it encompasses the vast oceans and seas that cover approximately 75% of the Earth's surface. This biome is characterized by its organization based on various factors, including the depth of water, which creates distinct habitats such as the intertidal zone, the pelagic zone, the benthic zone, and more. Each of these zones has unique environmental conditions and life forms adapted to them, influencing biodiversity and ecosystems within the marine biome. This classification highlights the significance of water depth in determining the types of organisms that can thrive in different regions of the ocean, making the marine biome a complex and vital aspect of Earth's ecology. Other biomes, such as tundra, desert, and forest, cover much less of the Earth's surface and do not primarily use water depth as a defining characteristic.

10. How do nonspecific defense mechanisms protect the body?

- A. By recognizing specific pathogens**
- B. By providing a general defense against a variety of infections**
- C. By producing antibodies**
- D. By eliminating waste**

Nonspecific defense mechanisms are crucial for the body's immune response as they provide a general defense system that protects against a wide range of pathogens rather than targeting specific ones. These mechanisms include physical barriers like skin and mucous membranes, inflammatory responses, and various immune cells that act quickly to neutralize threats. For example, when the skin is breached or pathogens enter the body, inflammatory responses and the activation of white blood cells occur, which help to prevent the spread of the infection. This broad-spectrum action is what distinguishes nonspecific defenses from specific immune responses, which are tailored to attack particular pathogens based on their unique antigens. The role of nonspecific defenses is essential for immediate protection as the body prepares its more targeted immune responses, thus serving as the first line of defense against infections.

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://gacemiddlegradesscience.examzify.com>

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