

General Educational Development (GED) Civics 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 of these is one of the 13 original states?**
 - A. Pennsylvania**
 - B. New York**
 - C. Missouri**
 - D. California**

- 2. What is the role of the U.S. Senate in relation to the President?**
 - A. To elect the President**
 - B. To advise and consent on treaties and appointments**
 - C. To impeach the President**
 - D. To create legislation without the President's approval**

- 3. Who vetoes bills in the United States?**
 - A. The Congress**
 - B. The Supreme Court**
 - C. The President**
 - D. The Vice President**

- 4. Who is the current President of the United States?**
 - A. Joe Biden**
 - B. Barack Obama**
 - C. Donald Trump**
 - D. George W. Bush**

- 5. What is the significance of Independence Day?**
 - A. To celebrate the end of the Civil War**
 - B. To commemorate the signing of the Constitution**
 - C. To mark the formation of the United Nations**
 - D. To celebrate the Declaration of Independence**

- 6. How old must citizens be to vote for President?**
 - A. Sixteen (16) years old**
 - B. Eighteen (18) years old**
 - C. Twenty-one (21) years old**
 - D. Twenty-five (25) years old**

- 7. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?**
- A. Benjamin Franklin**
 - B. James Madison**
 - C. Thomas Jefferson**
 - D. Alexander Hamilton**
- 8. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?**
- A. Nationalism**
 - B. Environmental Issues**
 - C. Religion**
 - D. Communism**
- 9. What protects the basic rights of Americans?**
- A. The Constitution**
 - B. State laws**
 - C. The Supreme Court**
 - D. The Bill of Rights only**
- 10. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?**
- A. Ended the Revolutionary War**
 - B. Granted citizenship to all**
 - C. Freed the slaves in the Confederate states**
 - D. Civil rights for women**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which of these is one of the 13 original states?

- A. Pennsylvania**
- B. New York**
- C. Missouri**
- D. California**

The correct response is Pennsylvania, which was one of the 13 original states that formed the United States following the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Pennsylvania played a significant role in American history, being the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia. New York is also among the original states and was one of the key states involved in the early formation of the United States, known for its influential role in commerce and immigration. Missouri and California, however, were not part of the original 13 states. Missouri was admitted to the Union in 1821, and California became a state much later, in 1850.

2. What is the role of the U.S. Senate in relation to the President?

- A. To elect the President**
- B. To advise and consent on treaties and appointments**
- C. To impeach the President**
- D. To create legislation without the President's approval**

The role of the U.S. Senate in relation to the President primarily involves advising and consenting on treaties and appointments. This constitutional function is outlined in Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The Senate must approve certain presidential appointments, including cabinet members, ambassadors, and federal judges, which ensures a system of checks and balances between the branches of government. Additionally, any international treaties negotiated by the President must be ratified by a two-thirds majority in the Senate, reflecting the Senate's critical role in foreign policy decisions. This process ensures that the President cannot unilaterally make appointments or commitments that might significantly impact the country without the Senate's input. The requirement for Senate approval serves as a way to involve the legislative branch in significant executive decisions and to maintain a balance of power. Consequently, this advisory and consent function is a fundamental aspect of the Senate's relationship with the President, highlighting the collaborative nature of governance in the U.S. system.

3. Who vetoes bills in the United States?

- A. The Congress
- B. The Supreme Court
- C. The President**
- D. The Vice President

In the United States, the authority to veto bills is vested in the President. This power allows the President to reject legislation passed by Congress, thereby preventing it from becoming law. When a bill is presented to the President, he or she has the option to sign it into law or to issue a veto, which sends the bill back to Congress along with the reasons for the rejection. The veto process is a critical part of the checks and balances system established by the U.S. Constitution. It ensures that no single branch of government can dominate the legislative process without cooperation from the others. If the President vetoes a bill, Congress can still override that veto with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, allowing them to enact the legislation despite the President's objections. This function is distinct from the roles of other entities mentioned. Congress is responsible for drafting and voting on legislation, while the Supreme Court interprets laws but does not have the authority to veto them. The Vice President holds a primarily supportive role in the legislative process, often presiding over the Senate, but does not possess the power to veto bills. Thus, the President's veto power is a key component of the legislative process in the U.S. government.

4. Who is the current President of the United States?

- A. Joe Biden
- B. Barack Obama
- C. Donald Trump**
- D. George W. Bush

The correct answer is Joe Biden. He became the 46th President of the United States after winning the election in November 2020 and took office on January 20, 2021. As the current president, his administration focuses on various issues, including COVID-19 response, economic recovery, and climate change. Barack Obama, who served as the 44th president from 2009 to 2017, and Donald Trump, the 45th president from 2017 to 2021, are both former presidents. George W. Bush served as the 43rd president from 2001 to 2009, which makes them all ineligible as the current president. Knowing the correct current president is crucial for understanding the structure of the U.S. government and its leadership at a given time.

5. What is the significance of Independence Day?

- A. To celebrate the end of the Civil War
- B. To commemorate the signing of the Constitution
- C. To mark the formation of the United Nations
- D. To celebrate the Declaration of Independence**

The significance of Independence Day lies in its commemoration of the Declaration of Independence, which was adopted on July 4, 1776. This pivotal document marked the formal assertion of the American colonies' intention to separate from British rule and establish their own governance based on the principles of individual liberty and self-determination. Independence Day embodies the values of freedom and democracy that the United States was founded upon, serving as a reminder of the struggles endured to achieve those rights and the importance of maintaining them. The day is widely celebrated across the nation with festivities, including fireworks, parades, and educational events, reflecting the collective pride and patriotic spirit of the American people. This celebration honors not just the historical event itself, but also the ideals of independence and the ongoing journey toward achieving those principles for all citizens.

6. How old must citizens be to vote for President?

- A. Sixteen (16) years old
- B. Eighteen (18) years old**
- C. Twenty-one (21) years old
- D. Twenty-five (25) years old

Citizens must be eighteen years old to vote for President. This age requirement is established by the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which was ratified in 1971. The amendment was a response to calls for lowering the voting age, particularly in light of the Vietnam War, where many young people were being drafted at the age of eighteen but were not allowed to vote. Therefore, the decision to set the voting age at eighteen ensures that citizens who are eligible to participate in national decisions, such as electing a President, are of an age where they can also be considered responsible for military service and other civic duties. By extending the right to vote to individuals who are eighteen or older, the amendment promotes greater involvement of younger citizens in the democratic process.

7. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. James Madison
- C. Thomas Jefferson**
- D. Alexander Hamilton

Thomas Jefferson is recognized as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. He was tasked with drafting this vital document in June 1776, as part of a committee appointed by the Continental Congress. Jefferson's eloquent prose and philosophical ideas, particularly those reflecting Enlightenment values of individual rights and government by consent, were pivotal in articulating the colonies' reasons for seeking independence from British rule. His work laid the foundation for key concepts in American democracy, emphasizing the importance of liberty and equality. This declaration was formally adopted on July 4, 1776, marking the birth of the United States as an independent nation. Understanding Jefferson's role underscores the significance of individual contributions to historical documents that shape national identity and principles.

8. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

- A. Nationalism
- B. Environmental Issues
- C. Religion
- D. Communism**

The primary concern of the United States during the Cold War was communism. This ideological conflict was characterized by the U.S. and its allies opposing the spread of communism, which was primarily represented by the Soviet Union and its satellite states. The U.S. believed that the expansion of communism posed a significant threat to democracy and capitalism, leading to various policies aimed at containment. This included military interventions, support for anti-communist regimes, and economic aid to countries to prevent them from turning to communism. The intense rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during this period influenced global politics, military strategies, and economic policies, leading to events such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Overall, the focus on communism significantly shaped U.S. domestic and foreign policy throughout the Cold War era.

9. What protects the basic rights of Americans?

- A. The Constitution**
- B. State laws**
- C. The Supreme Court**
- D. The Bill of Rights only**

The Constitution is the foundational document of the United States that establishes the framework of government and protects the rights of its citizens. It encompasses a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government and guarantees certain fundamental rights. While the Bill of Rights—comprising the first ten amendments to the Constitution—specifically enumerates individual liberties such as freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, these rights are ultimately protected by the Constitution as a whole. The Constitution serves as the supreme law of the land, meaning that any laws or actions that contradict it can be challenged and overturned. State laws and the Supreme Court play vital roles in interpreting and enforcing constitutional rights, but they do so within the context of the Constitution itself. Consequently, the Constitution is the cornerstone of legal protection for the basic rights of Americans, making it the more comprehensive answer in this context. The assertion is that it is the Constitution that guarantees the overarching protection of rights, thereby establishing a foundational legal structure for all citizens.

10. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

- A. Ended the Revolutionary War**
- B. Granted citizenship to all**
- C. Freed the slaves in the Confederate states**
- D. Civil rights for women**

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, was a pivotal document in U.S. history that declared the freedom of all enslaved people in Confederate states that were in rebellion against the Union. This was a strategic move during the Civil War, aimed at weakening the Confederacy by disrupting their labor force and encouraging enslaved individuals to escape or join Union forces. Although it did not immediately free all enslaved people, as it applied only to areas controlled by the Confederacy, it was a crucial step towards the eventual abolition of slavery across the entire nation, which was formally achieved with the 13th Amendment. The other options do not relate to the Emancipation Proclamation. Ending the Revolutionary War refers to events that occurred decades prior, while granting citizenship to all pertains to later developments in civil rights. Civil rights for women also emerged significantly later, particularly during the suffrage movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, the choice highlighting the freeing of slaves in Confederate states accurately reflects the primary impact of the Emancipation Proclamation.

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://gedcivics.examzify.com>

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

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