

HAIR DESIGN STATE BOARD PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



Prepare with structure. Pass with confidence



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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 technique utilizes a thermal pressing comb only once on each side to achieve a moderate level of straightness?**
 - A. Light Press
 - B. Medium Press
 - C. Soft Press
 - D. Hard Press
- 2. What term describes a non-mirror image with unequal distribution of weight and/or length in hair design?**
 - A. Asymmetry
 - B. Symmetry
 - C. Uniformity
 - D. Proportion
- 3. What technique involves forcing hair between the thumb and back of the comb to create tension?**
 - A. Silk Press
 - B. Polishing
 - C. Ribboning
 - D. Sculpting Curls
- 4. What is the main active ingredient in relaxers?**
 - A. Calcium hydroxide
 - B. Sodium hydroxide
 - C. Amines
 - D. Potassium hydroxide
- 5. What is the effect of a proper pH balance on hair?**
 - A. Helps maintain hair elasticity
 - B. Prevents color fading
 - C. Enhances hair volume
 - D. Increases hair dry time

- 6. What styling method is often associated with achieving wave patterns in hair?**
- A. Finger Waves
 - B. Curling
 - C. Perming
 - D. Twisting
- 7. What technique involves using a comb to create a cushion at the base of the scalp for added height and volume?**
- A. Back-Brushing
 - B. Back-Combing
 - C. Teasing
 - D. Braid Padding
- 8. Which hair type should consider using a moisturizing shampoo most?**
- A. Curly hair
 - B. Straight hair
 - C. Fine hair
 - D. Oily hair
- 9. Which layer of hair provides a protective outer coating?**
- A. Medulla
 - B. Cortex
 - C. Cuticle
 - D. Fibrous layer
- 10. Which haircut technique is best for achieving a layered look?**
- A. Clipper cutting
 - B. Slide cutting
 - C. Chunking
 - D. Point cutting

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which technique utilizes a thermal pressing comb only once on each side to achieve a moderate level of straightness?

- A. Light Press
- B. Medium Press**
- C. Soft Press
- D. Hard Press

The technique that utilizes a thermal pressing comb only once on each side of the hair to achieve a moderate level of straightness is known as a Medium Press. This method is specifically designed for creating a smoother texture while still allowing for some natural wave or curl to remain in the hair. A Medium Press is particularly effective for clients who want their hair straightened but do not desire it to be completely flat or pin-straight. By applying the thermal pressing comb briefly on both sides, the stylist can reduce frizz and smooth the hair without completely eliminating its natural texture. This technique is distinct from other pressing methods, which use varying levels of pressure and frequency of comb application. For instance, a Light Press may involve less pressure and is intended for minimal straightening, while a Hard Press would require multiple passes of the comb on each side to achieve a very sleek, straight finish. Understanding the specific outcomes associated with each pressing technique allows stylists to tailor their approach to meet the individual preferences of their clients.

2. What term describes a non-mirror image with unequal distribution of weight and/or length in hair design?

- A. Asymmetry**
- B. Symmetry
- C. Uniformity
- D. Proportion

The term that describes a non-mirror image with unequal distribution of weight and/or length in hair design is asymmetry. This concept is important in hair design because asymmetrical styles create visual interest and uniqueness, allowing for a more dynamic and modern appearance. In asymmetry, one side of the hairstyle may look different from the other, whether through varying lengths, textures, or shapes, which can enhance the features of the individual. Asymmetrical designs are often favored for their artistic flair, providing the stylist with the opportunity to play with proportions and create a look that stands out. This stylistic choice contrasts with symmetry, where both sides of a hairstyle are identical in length and weight, leading to a more balanced and traditional appearance. Uniformity refers to a consistent or identical look throughout, which doesn't apply to designs that intentionally diverge in shape or length. Proportion relates to the relationship between different elements within a design, but does not specifically denote the unequal distribution that defines asymmetry. Recognizing these terms and their distinctions is key for anyone studying hair design, as it provides a foundation for creating and understanding various styles.

3. What technique involves forcing hair between the thumb and back of the comb to create tension?

- A. Silk Press
- B. Polishing
- C. Ribboning**
- D. Sculpting Curls

The technique that involves forcing hair between the thumb and back of the comb to create tension is known as ribboning. This method allows for the careful manipulation of the hair, creating a smooth and sleek finish, which is especially beneficial in various styling procedures. By applying pressure in this manner, the stylist can ensure that the hair strands are evenly distributed and styled effectively, resulting in polished waves or curls. This technique is particularly valuable in achieving a defined curl or wave pattern, as it allows for more control over the hair's movement and texture, enhancing the overall look. Other techniques, such as a silk press, focus on straightening and smoothing the hair without involving the same kind of tension and manipulation as ribboning. Polishing generally refers to smoothing the surface of the hair to add shine, while sculpting curls involves arranging hair into specific shapes, but does not typically involve the thumb and comb technique for creating tension.

4. What is the main active ingredient in relaxers?

- A. Calcium hydroxide
- B. Sodium hydroxide**
- C. Amines
- D. Potassium hydroxide

The main active ingredient in relaxers is sodium hydroxide. This compound is a powerful alkaline agent that works effectively to break down the disulfide bonds in the hair's protein structure, allowing the hair to be straightened. Sodium hydroxide is commonly found in chemical relaxers due to its strong alkalinity, which is essential for the relaxing process. When applied to the hair, sodium hydroxide raises the pH, causing the hair to swell and soften, which facilitates the alteration of the hair's structure. This process is critical for achieving the desired straightened look, especially for those with naturally curly or textured hair. While other options, such as calcium hydroxide, amines, and potassium hydroxide, may also be present in various hair products, they are not the primary active ingredient in relaxers specifically designed for hair straightening. For instance, calcium hydroxide is often used in combination with other ingredients in certain types of relaxers, but it does not function solely as the active component like sodium hydroxide does. This makes sodium hydroxide the most commonly recognized and utilized ingredient in the formulation of hair relaxers.

5. What is the effect of a proper pH balance on hair?

A. Helps maintain hair elasticity

B. Prevents color fading

C. Enhances hair volume

D. Increases hair dry time

A proper pH balance is essential for maintaining hair elasticity, which directly impacts the hair's overall health and manageability. Hair has a natural pH level that typically ranges from 4.5 to 5.5. When the hair is within this optimal pH range, the cuticle layer remains closed and tight, which prevents the hair from becoming brittle or prone to breakage. This tight cuticle structure allows for greater flexibility and resilience, enabling the hair to stretch and return to its original shape without sustaining damage. In contrast, if the hair pH is too high (alkaline), the cuticle can become raised, leading to increased moisture loss and reduced elasticity. Conversely, if the pH is too low (acidic), it can lead to a rough and unmanageable texture. Maintaining a balanced pH, therefore, is crucial for promoting elasticity, which is vital for healthy, vibrant-looking hair that is less susceptible to styling damage and environmental factors.

6. What styling method is often associated with achieving wave patterns in hair?

A. Finger Waves

B. Curling

C. Perming

D. Twisting

The styling method that is most commonly associated with achieving wave patterns in hair is finger waves. This technique involves shaping the hair into S-shaped waves using the fingers and a comb, creating a structured and elegant look. It is a classic technique often used in vintage hairstyles and is characterized by its fluid movement and defined shape. Finger waves are created by setting the hair in a wet state with the use of gel or mousse, which helps maintain the shape and structure as it dries. The method requires a specific manipulation of the hair strands and is typically used on medium to short hair lengths. The end result creates a smooth, glossy wave effect that is visually appealing and historically significant in the evolution of hair styling. While curling can create waves, it typically results in looser curls rather than the defined pattern achieved with finger waves. Perming also creates waves but involves a chemical process that alters the hair's structure permanently. Twisting can create texture but does not specifically result in the same kind of wave patterns as finger waves do. Therefore, finger waves are distinctly recognized for their ability to craft elegant, continuous wave patterns in hair.

7. What technique involves using a comb to create a cushion at the base of the scalp for added height and volume?

- A. Back-Brushing
- B. Back-Combing**
- C. Teasing
- D. Braid Padding

The technique involving the use of a comb to create a cushion at the base of the scalp for added height and volume is back-combing. This method is widely utilized in hairstyling to achieve a fuller look, especially in updos or styles that require significant volume at the roots. During back-combing, the stylist takes small sections of hair and pushes them towards the scalp using a comb. This action interlocks the hair strands, creating a base of tangles which results in the desired height and provides a strong foundation for the hairstyle. The hair can then be lightly smoothed over the top to create a polished appearance while maintaining the underlying volume. While back-brushing and teasing are sometimes used interchangeably in casual conversation, back-combing specifically refers to the technique of combing the hair back towards the scalp, making it distinct in the context of creating bulk at the base. Braid padding and other options listed do not focus specifically on puffing up the roots in the same way that back-combing does, and they typically involve different styling methods altogether.

8. Which hair type should consider using a moisturizing shampoo most?

- A. Curly hair**
- B. Straight hair
- C. Fine hair
- D. Oily hair

Curly hair should consider using a moisturizing shampoo because this hair type tends to be drier and more prone to frizz. The natural oils produced by the scalp have a harder time traveling down the twists and turns of each curl, which leads to less moisture being distributed along the hair strand. Moisturizing shampoos are designed to provide additional hydration and nourishment, helping to maintain softness and elasticity in curly hair. Choosing a shampoo that emphasizes moisture can help combat dryness, enhance curl definition, and reduce breakage, making it especially beneficial for those with curly textures. This makes moisturizing shampoo an essential product in the hair care routine of individuals with curly hair, aiding in the management of their unique needs.

9. Which layer of hair provides a protective outer coating?

- A. Medulla
- B. Cortex
- C. Cuticle**
- D. Fibrous layer

The cuticle is the layer of hair that provides a protective outer coating. It consists of flat, scale-like cells that overlap like shingles on a roof, creating a barrier against environmental damage, moisture loss, and physical wear. This outer layer is essential for maintaining the hair's integrity and appearance, as it protects the inner layers of the hair shaft—specifically the cortex and medulla—from damage caused by heat styling, chemical processes, and UV exposure. The function of the cuticle is crucial because it helps to keep the hair smooth and shiny, while also preventing the penetration of harmful substances. Proper care and maintaining the health of the cuticle can significantly impact the overall health and beauty of the hair.

10. Which haircut technique is best for achieving a layered look?

- A. Clipper cutting
- B. Slide cutting**
- C. Chunking
- D. Point cutting

The technique that best achieves a layered look is slide cutting. This method involves the stylist using the scissors in a sliding motion along the hair shaft to create soft layers and texture rather than blunt cuts. By allowing the stylist to remove bulk from the hair without taking away length significantly, slide cutting produces a more dynamic and feathered effect that enhances movement in the hairstyle. This creates the illusion of layers, giving body and dimension to the hair. While other techniques like clipper cutting can achieve different styles, they are generally better suited for precise, uniform cuts, typically found in short hairstyles. Chunking is effective for removing weight and creating texture, but it doesn't specifically create layered effects as slide cutting does. Point cutting is utilized primarily for softening the ends of hair and providing subtle texture, but does not inherently create layers in the overall design of a haircut like slide cutting does. Thus, slide cutting stands out as the superior method for achieving that layered look.

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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://hairdesign.examzify.com>

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

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