

# HOSA Chairside Assisting / Dental Instruments Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Use This Guide</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Questions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Answers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Explanations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>16</b>

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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 tool is specifically used to hold the articulating paper?**
  - A. Plastic instrument**
  - B. Matrix retainer**
  - C. Bur changer tool**
  - D. Articulating paper holder**
  
- 2. Which instrument's primary function is to hold and transfer amalgam material to the dental cavity?**
  - A. Amalgam condenser**
  - B. Amalgam well**
  - C. Amalgam carrier**
  - D. Cleiod/discoid**
  
- 3. What is a sharps container used for in a dental office?**
  - A. To store cotton rolls**
  - B. To store sharps like needles and blades**
  - C. To dispose of general waste**
  - D. To keep dental records**
  
- 4. Which instrument is used specifically to adjust high spots on dental restorations?**
  - A. Cleiod/discoid**
  - B. Amalgam carrier**
  - C. Amalgam condenser**
  - D. Football diamond bur**
  
- 5. What is the main advantage of using a double-ended dental instrument like the Hollenbeck?**
  - A. Enhanced precision in treatment**
  - B. Reduced time in procedures**
  - C. Improved ergonomics for the dentist**
  - D. Ability to perform multiple functions without switching instruments**

- 6. Which tool is primarily used to clean hard-to-reach areas and the grooves of the teeth?**
- A. Dental scaler**
  - B. Disposable prophy brush**
  - C. Toothpick**
  - D. Floss**
- 7. What is a mandrel disc specifically used for in dentistry?**
- A. Polishing restorations**
  - B. Punching holes in the dam**
  - C. Separating teeth**
  - D. Mixing materials**
- 8. Which of the following is used to protect, dry, and keep the patient calm during dental procedures?**
- A. Rubber dam**
  - B. Dappen dish**
  - C. Cement spatula**
  - D. Mandrel disc**
- 9. In what scenario would a dental assistant use the acorn burnisher?**
- A. To apply a topical fluoride treatment**
  - B. For polishing amalgam restorations**
  - C. To take X-rays**
  - D. To place dental crowns**
- 10. Which instrument is designed to pack and smooth out amalgam and resin materials?**
- A. Carving instrument**
  - B. Plastic instrument**
  - C. T-ball**
  - D. Amalgam carrier**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which tool is specifically used to hold the articulating paper?**

- A. Plastic instrument**
- B. Matrix retainer**
- C. Bur changer tool**
- D. Articulating paper holder**

The tool specifically used to hold the articulating paper is the articulating paper holder. This instrument is designed to grip the articulating paper firmly, allowing the dental professional to accurately apply it to the occlusal surfaces of the patient's teeth. The purpose of using an articulating paper holder is to ensure that the paper is properly positioned and stable during the occlusal assessment, providing clear marks that indicate the contact points between teeth. This tool enhances the precision of diagnosing occlusal interferences, which is crucial for effective treatment planning. In contrast, while a plastic instrument could potentially be used for various tasks in the dental office, it is not specifically designed for holding articulating paper. A matrix retainer serves a different function, primarily used during restorative procedures to hold matrices in place while a tooth is being prepared or restored. Meanwhile, a bur changer tool is utilized for changing dental burs on handpieces and does not relate to articulating paper. Therefore, the articulating paper holder is the correct tool for this specific task in dental practice.

**2. Which instrument's primary function is to hold and transfer amalgam material to the dental cavity?**

- A. Amalgam condenser**
- B. Amalgam well**
- C. Amalgam carrier**
- D. Cleiod/discoid**

The primary function of the amalgam carrier is to hold and transfer amalgam material to the dental cavity. This instrument is specifically designed to pick up the amalgam material and deliver it accurately into the prepared cavity of a tooth. The amalgam carrier typically has a double-ended design, allowing a dental professional to load it with amalgam and dispense it directly into the cavity preparations without spillage, ensuring an efficient and clean application. In comparing it to other instruments, an amalgam condenser is used to pack and condense the amalgam material into the cavity once it has been placed, thus serving a different purpose. An amalgam well serves as a container for holding the amalgam before it is picked up by the amalgam carrier, making it a storage instrument rather than one for transferring. The cleiod/discoid is designed for carving and shaping the amalgam once it has been placed in the cavity, aiding in the refinement of the restoration but not in its initial placement.

### 3. What is a sharps container used for in a dental office?

- A. To store cotton rolls
- B. To store sharps like needles and blades**
- C. To dispose of general waste
- D. To keep dental records

A sharps container is specifically designed for the safe disposal of hazardous materials, particularly sharp objects that could pose a risk of injury or infection, such as needles, scalpel blades, and other instruments with sharp edges. In a dental office, these items can be generated during various procedures, making it crucial to have a designated container that ensures safety for both staff and patients. The container is typically puncture-resistant and made from durable materials, preventing any accidental injuries or contamination. By using a sharps container, dental professionals can effectively manage waste and minimize the risk of needle-stick injuries, which are a significant concern in healthcare settings. Proper disposal of sharps also complies with health and safety regulations, ensuring that the dental office maintains high standards for infection control and public health.

### 4. Which instrument is used specifically to adjust high spots on dental restorations?

- A. Cleoid/discoid**
- B. Amalgam carrier
- C. Amalgam condenser
- D. Football diamond bur

The cleoid/discoid instrument is specifically designed for adjusting high spots on dental restorations, particularly in the context of amalgam restorations. This hand instrument features a sharp, pointed cleoid end and a rounded discoid end. The pointed end is effective at scraping and carving away excess material, allowing for precise adjustments to achieve the desired contour and occlusion in the restorative material. This capability is essential in ensuring a proper bite and harmony in a patient's dental occlusion after a restoration is placed. The other instruments serve different purposes. For example, the amalgam carrier is utilized for transporting and placing amalgam into the cavity preparation but does not have the functionality for adjustment. The amalgam condenser aids in compacting the amalgam material into the cavity but is not meant for making adjustments to high spots. The football diamond bur, while useful for shaping and finishing, is an attachment used with a dental handpiece and is not a hand instrument like the cleoid/discoid, thus lacking the specificity for manual adjustments in high spots on restorations.

**5. What is the main advantage of using a double-ended dental instrument like the Hollenbeck?**

- A. Enhanced precision in treatment**
- B. Reduced time in procedures**
- C. Improved ergonomics for the dentist**
- D. Ability to perform multiple functions without switching instruments**

The main advantage of using a double-ended dental instrument, such as the Hollenbeck, lies in its ability to perform multiple functions without the need to switch instruments. This design allows the dentist or dental assistant to utilize one tool for different tasks, such as carving, contouring, or carrying materials, which enhances efficiency during procedures. By offering two working ends, a double-ended instrument reduces the time spent searching for and exchanging tools, ultimately streamlining the workflow in the dental office. This multifunctionality not only saves time but also helps maintain a more organized workspace, contributing to a smoother experience for both the dental professional and the patient. The design of double-ended instruments often considers the various restorative and procedural needs, making them indispensable in the dental toolkit.

**6. Which tool is primarily used to clean hard-to-reach areas and the grooves of the teeth?**

- A. Dental scaler**
- B. Disposable prophylaxis brush**
- C. Toothpick**
- D. Floss**

The disposable prophylaxis brush is primarily used to clean hard-to-reach areas and the grooves of the teeth because it is designed with soft bristles that can effectively polish and clean surfaces that may be difficult to access with other tools. Its flexibility allows for thorough cleaning, especially in areas around the grooves and pits of teeth where plaque and debris tend to accumulate. This tool is often used in conjunction with prophylactic pastes during dental hygiene procedures to provide a smooth finish and ensure that all surfaces are adequately cleaned. In contrast, other tools like dental scalers are typically used to remove calculus and tartar from the tooth surfaces, while floss is essential for cleaning between teeth, removing debris, and preventing gum disease. Toothpicks can be used for manual removal of food particles but do not provide the same level of cleaning for grooves and hard-to-reach areas as a prophylaxis brush does.

**7. What is a mandrel disc specifically used for in dentistry?**

- A. Polishing restorations**
- B. Punching holes in the dam**
- C. Separating teeth**
- D. Mixing materials**

A mandrel disc is specifically designed for polishing restorations in dentistry. This instrument typically consists of a thin, circular disc attached to a mandrel, which is a rod or spindle that holds and powers the disc during use. When utilized in a dental handpiece, the mandrel disc effectively smooths and polishes various dental materials, such as composites, metal, or ceramics, to achieve a polished finish that enhances both the aesthetic appeal and functionality of restorations. Polishing is a crucial step in the restorative process because it not only improves the appearance of dental work but also helps to minimize plaque accumulation and maintain oral hygiene. In contrast, other options like punching holes in the dam, separating teeth, and mixing materials are associated with different dental procedures and instruments. For instance, a dental dam punch is specifically made for creating holes in a rubber dam, which is used to isolate teeth during procedures. Separating teeth typically involves the use of separators, like orthodontic separators or wedge-shaped devices to create space. Mixing materials is a task generally completed using spatulas or mixing bowls designed for dental impression materials or restorative agents. This is why the mandrel disc is distinctively aligned with polishing restorations.

**8. Which of the following is used to protect, dry, and keep the patient calm during dental procedures?**

- A. Rubber dam**
- B. Dappen dish**
- C. Cement spatula**
- D. Mandrel disc**

The rubber dam is a crucial tool used in dentistry to protect the patient during various procedures. It creates a barrier between the oral environment and the area being treated, helping to keep the tooth dry and free from saliva. This dry field is essential for achieving successful bonding of dental materials and enhances the visibility of the working area, allowing the clinician to perform procedures more effectively. Additionally, the rubber dam can help keep the patient calm by isolating them from the sights and sounds of the dental environment. It reduces anxiety by limiting the number of stimuli reaching the patient, which can be particularly beneficial for those with dental phobias. This calming effect contributes to a smoother treatment experience for both the patient and the dentist. Other options listed do not serve the dual purpose of protection and patient comfort. For instance, a Dappen dish is primarily used to hold dental materials like impression material or to mix dental cement. A cement spatula is a tool designed for mixing various dental cements and does not play a role in patient comfort. A mandrel disc is used in a dental handpiece for polishing and shaping materials and does not provide protection or calm the patient during a procedure.

**9. In what scenario would a dental assistant use the acorn burnisher?**

- A. To apply a topical fluoride treatment**
- B. For polishing amalgam restorations**
- C. To take X-rays**
- D. To place dental crowns**

The acorn burnisher is primarily used for polishing amalgam restorations. This instrument features a rounded end that allows it to smooth and shine the surface of the amalgam filling after it has been placed in the cavity. By using the acorn burnisher, the dental assistant can help achieve a more aesthetically pleasing and smooth surface, which is essential for both functional and cosmetic outcomes in dental restorations. In contrast, the other options represent different functions within dental practice. Applying topical fluoride involves different applicators or brushes, taking X-rays requires specific radiographic equipment, and placing dental crowns involves various other instruments designed for crown preparation and fitting. The acorn burnisher's specific design and purpose make it the ideal choice for refining the surfaces of amalgam restorations.

**10. Which instrument is designed to pack and smooth out amalgam and resin materials?**

- A. Carving instrument**
- B. Plastic instrument**
- C. T-ball**
- D. Amalgam carrier**

The T-ball instrument is specifically designed to pack and smooth out amalgam and resin materials. Its unique shape allows for effective manipulation of these materials, facilitating the process of creating a smooth and compact restoration. The rounded end is used for condensing the material into the cavity preparation, ensuring that it is adequately packed and free of voids, which is essential for the longevity and strength of the restoration. In contrast, the carving instrument is primarily used to shape and carve the surface of the material after it has been placed in the cavity, rather than for packing or smearing. The plastic instrument is typically employed for handling composite materials and is not specifically designed to compact amalgam. The amalgam carrier, while used to transport amalgam to the preparation site, does not possess the functionality required for packing and smoothing those materials once they are placed. Thus, the T-ball's design and purpose make it the most appropriate choice for this task.

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

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

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