

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY: COMBINING FORMS, SUFFIXES, AND PREFIXES FOR HEALTHCARE STUDENTS PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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 combining form indicates relationship to sugar or glycerol?

- A. Lith/o
- B. Glyc/o
- C. Hidr/o
- D. Lacrim/o

2. Which prefix means 'Backward'?

- A. Con-
- B. Retro-
- C. Extra-
- D. Intra-

3. Malignant tumor of connective tissue/non-epithelial.

- A. -osis
- B. -sarcoma
- C. -plasia
- D. -static

4. Which combining form means four?

- A. Myc/o
- B. Aden/o
- C. Quadr/i
- D. Lip/o

5. Which prefix means difficult or bad?

- A. Dys-
- B. Tachy-
- C. Neo-
- D. Ex-

6. Which suffix means 'a branch of knowledge'?

- A. -spasm
- B. -ology
- C. -sarcoma
- D. -plasia

7. Involuntary contraction, twitching.

- A. -ology
- B. -sarcoma
- C. -plasia
- D. -spasm

8. Which prefix means 'not' typically used before consonants?

- A. Endo-
- B. An-
- C. Infra-
- D. A-

9. Which combining form means lateral, to one side?

- A. later/o
- B. cutane/o
- C. sial/o
- D. gastr/o

10. Which combining form is used to denote cartilage?

- A. Hydr/o
- B. Leuk/o
- C. Chondr/o
- D. Eti/o

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which combining form indicates relationship to sugar or glycerol?

- A. Lith/o
- B. Glyc/o**
- C. Hidr/o
- D. Lacrim/o

Understanding combining forms means linking them to their most common meanings. The form *glyc/o* signals sugar or sweetness. It comes from a word root meaning sweet and appears in many terms tied to sugar, like *glycogen* (a sugar storage molecule), *glycolysis* (sugar breakdown), and *glycemia* (blood sugar). The other roots here point to stone, sweat, or tears, which don't relate to sugar. If glycerol-specific terminology were in play, *glycer/o* would be used, but for sugar-related terms, *glyc/o* is the standard. That makes *glyc/o* the best fit.

2. Which prefix means 'Backward'?

- A. Con-
- B. Retro-**
- C. Extra-
- D. Intra-

Backward is conveyed by the prefix *retro-*, which comes from Latin *retro* meaning backward or behind. It's used to describe motion or position toward the rear or a past state, as in *retroflex* (bending backward), *retroperitoneal* (behind the peritoneum), and *retrograde* (moving backward or reversing). Other prefixes have different directions: *con-* means with or together, *extra-* means outside or beyond, and *intra-* means within. So *retro-* is the one that signifies backward.

3. Malignant tumor of connective tissue/non-epithelial.

- A. -osis
- B. -sarcoma**
- C. -plasia
- D. -static

In pathology, tumors are named by the tissue they arise from and whether they are malignant or benign. A malignant tumor that comes from connective (mesenchymal) tissue—such as bone, cartilage, fat, fibrous tissue, or muscle—is called a *sarcoma*. The suffix *-sarcoma* signals this non-epithelial, connective-tissue origin and malignancy. Other endings don't fit because *-osis* denotes a condition or process, *-plasia* refers to abnormal growth (not a specific tumor type), and *-static* isn't used to name tumors. The term that correctly denotes a malignant connective-tissue tumor is *-sarcoma*.

4. Which combining form means four?

- A. Myc/o
- B. Aden/o
- C. Quadr/i**
- D. Lip/o

Quadr/i expresses the number four. It comes from Latin *quadri-* and is used as a combining form in terms like *quadrilateral* or *quadriceps*. The other roots point to different substances—*myc/o* means fungus, *aden/o* means gland, and *lip/o* means fat—so they don't convey the idea of "four."

5. Which prefix means difficult or bad?

- A. Dys-**
- B. Tachy-
- C. Neo-
- D. Ex-

Dys- is the prefix that signals something is difficult, bad, or abnormal. It comes from Greek and is used to indicate negative or impaired conditions, as in *dysuria* (painful or difficult urination), *dysplasia* (abnormal development), and *dysfunction* (impaired function). The other prefixes have different meanings: *tachy-* means fast; *neo-* means new; *ex-* means out of, away from, or former. So this prefix best conveys the idea of something being troublesome or abnormal.

6. Which suffix means 'a branch of knowledge'?

- A. -spasm
- B. -ology**
- C. -sarcoma
- D. -plasia

The suffix *-ology* denotes the study of a subject or a field of knowledge. It comes from a Greek root meaning study or science, so it forms words that name disciplines like *biology*, *psychology*, and *geology*. That makes it the best fit for "a branch of knowledge." The other suffixes have different meanings: *-spasm* refers to a sudden involuntary muscle contraction, *-sarcoma* is a type of malignant tumor, and *-plasia* means growth or formation of tissue.

7. Involuntary contraction, twitching.

- A. -ology
- B. -sarcoma
- C. -plasia
- D. -spasm**

Recognizing a suffix that denotes involuntary contraction. In medical terms, a spasm is a sudden, involuntary contraction of a muscle or group of muscles, which matches the description "involuntary contraction, twitching." The suffix -spasm is used to describe these contractions, as in bronchospasm or laryngospasm. The other suffixes refer to different ideas: -ology means the study of something, -sarcoma is a malignant tumor of connective tissue, and -plasia means growth or formation of tissue. These do not convey the idea of an involuntary muscle contraction, so they aren't correct for this definition.

8. Which prefix means 'not' typically used before consonants?

- A. Endo-
- B. An-
- C. Infra-
- D. A-**

The key concept is negation prefixes in medical terminology and how pronunciation shapes their form. The prefix meaning not or without is a-, and it is the form typically used before consonant-starting roots to ease pronunciation and preserve a smooth word flow. You can see it in terms like asymptomatic (not showing symptoms), asocial (not social), and amorphous (without a defined shape). An- is the variant used before vowels to avoid awkward consonant-vowel transitions, as in anemia or anesthesia. Endo- means within, and Infra- means below, so they do not convey negation. Therefore, the prefix that means not and is typically used before consonants is a-.

9. Which combining form means lateral, to one side?

- A. later/o**
- B. cutane/o
- C. sial/o
- D. gastr/o

The main idea here is recognizing combining forms that describe location or direction. The combining form later/o means a side or toward the side, which is why it gives the meaning "lateral" (pertaining to a side) in terms like unilateral or bilateral. This form specifically carries that sense of one side or the side of the body, so it's the correct choice for "lateral, to one side." The other roots refer to different structures: cutane/o means skin, sial/o means saliva, and gastr/o means stomach, none of which convey the sense of side or direction.

10. Which combining form is used to denote cartilage?

- A. Hydr/o
- B. Leuk/o
- C. Chondr/o**
- D. Eti/o

Cartilage is indicated by the combining form chondr/o. It comes from Greek chondros meaning cartilage, and the o- vowel lets you attach suffixes to form terms about cartilage, such as chondritis (inflammation of cartilage) or chondroma (a cartilage tumor). The other roots point to different meanings: hydr/o relates to water, leuk/o to white blood cells, and eti/o to cause or origin. So chondr/o is the form used specifically for cartilage.

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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://medterms4healthcarestudents.examzify.com>

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

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