

METAR Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAF) Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

SAMPLE

- 1. How is 6/8ths sky cover reported in METAR?**
 - A. CLR**
 - B. BKN**
 - C. OVC**
 - D. SCT**
- 2. Which weather phenomena are reported in the remarks section of METARs?**
 - A. Funnel clouds**
 - B. Lightning only**
 - C. Precipitation only**
 - D. Funnel clouds, lightning, precipitation, and thunderstorms**
- 3. What does TAF stand for in aviation meteorology?**
 - A. Terminal Airport Forecast**
 - B. Terminal Aerodrome Forecast**
 - C. Technical Air Forecast**
 - D. Transitional Aerodrome Forecast**
- 4. What is indicated by the weather phenomenon contraction "TS"?**
 - A. Moderate rain**
 - B. Thunderstorm**
 - C. Light snow**
 - D. Heavy fog**
- 5. What is the final element of the body of the METAR report?**
 - A. Temperature**
 - B. Dew Point**
 - C. Visibility**
 - D. Altimeter setting**

- 6. If an airport operates on a part-time basis, what will be indicated in place of forecast text when the airport is closed?**
- A. NIL**
 - B. OFF**
 - C. CLOSED**
 - D. STOP**
- 7. What safety considerations are critical when interpreting a TAF?**
- A. Focusing only on temperature**
 - B. Ignoring visibility reports**
 - C. Recognizing all relevant weather conditions**
 - D. Considering only wind speed**
- 8. If the METAR weather grouping includes the contraction "VC", what does this denote?**
- A. That the weather conditions are occurring at the airport**
 - B. That the weather conditions are occurring within 5 to 10 miles of the airport**
 - C. That the weather conditions are severe**
 - D. That the weather conditions are improving**
- 9. What is the maximum distance from the aerodrome for which a TAF forecast is valid?**
- A. 3 statute miles**
 - B. 5 statute miles**
 - C. 10 statute miles**
 - D. 15 statute miles**
- 10. What is indicated by the presence of TCU in METAR?**
- A. Towering Cumulus Clouds**
 - B. Thunderstorm Clouds**
 - C. Cumulonimbus Clouds**
 - D. Cirrus Clouds**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. How is 6/8ths sky cover reported in METAR?

- A. CLR
- B. BKN**
- C. OVC
- D. SCT

In METAR reports, sky cover is expressed using specific terms that denote the amount of the sky that is obscured by clouds. When the sky cover is described as 6/8ths, it signifies that three-quarters of the sky is covered by clouds. The term "BKN," which stands for "broken," is used to indicate that between 5/8ths and 7/8ths of the sky is obscured by clouds. Since 6/8ths falls within this range, it is accurately represented as BKN in a METAR report. This term helps pilots and aviation personnel understand the current cloud conditions and make informed decisions regarding flight operations. Other terms like "CLR" (clear), "OVC" (overcast), and "SCT" (scattered) represent different levels of sky cover. "CLR" is used when there are no significant clouds, "OVC" indicates the sky is completely covered (8/8ths), and "SCT" suggests that only a small portion of the sky, typically less than 5/8ths, is covered with clouds. Thus, BKN is the most appropriate choice for reporting 6/8ths sky cover.

2. Which weather phenomena are reported in the remarks section of METARs?

- A. Funnel clouds
- B. Lightning only
- C. Precipitation only
- D. Funnel clouds, lightning, precipitation, and thunderstorms**

The remarks section of METARs is designed to provide additional information that is not included in the standard format of the report. This section can contain a variety of specific weather phenomena that are significant for aviation and meteorological purposes. Funnel clouds, lightning, precipitation types, and thunderstorms can all significantly impact flight operations and safety. The inclusion of these elements helps pilots and air traffic controllers to have a clearer understanding of the current weather conditions. Funnel clouds indicate potentially severe weather conditions, while thunderstorms present many dangers, including strong winds, turbulence, and lightning. Precipitation information, whether it's rain, snow, or other forms, impacts visibility and runway conditions. Including all these phenomena in the remarks section allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the aviation weather situation at the airport. In contrast, focusing solely on one aspect—like lightning, or precipitation—would not convey the full spectrum of relevant weather hazards. Each of the phenomena mentioned contributes valuable context when making critical operational decisions in aviation, which is why the remarks section includes a variety of significant weather reports together.

3. What does TAF stand for in aviation meteorology?

- A. Terminal Airport Forecast
- B. Terminal Aerodrome Forecast**
- C. Technical Air Forecast
- D. Transitional Aerodrome Forecast

TAF stands for Terminal Aerodrome Forecast in aviation meteorology, which is crucial for providing weather forecasts for specific airports and their immediate surroundings. These forecasts cover a period of 24 to 30 hours and include information about expected weather conditions such as visibility, wind direction, wind speed, and significant weather phenomena that could impact flight operations. The term "aerodrome" is specifically used to refer to a defined area on land or water intended for the arrival, departure, and surface movement of aircraft, making it appropriate for the context of aviation. The TAF is essential for pilots and air traffic controllers to ensure safe flight operations and avoid adverse weather conditions while planning for arrivals and departures. Other options, though they may seem similar, do not accurately reflect the terminology used within the aviation meteorology field. For instance, "Terminal Airport Forecast" and "Technical Air Forecast" divert from the standard nomenclature adopted in meteorological reporting. Meanwhile, "Transitional Aerodrome Forecast" does not align with the established usage that focuses on terminal aerodromes. Thus, the correct designation as TAF is indeed "Terminal Aerodrome Forecast."

4. What is indicated by the weather phenomenon contraction "TS"?

- A. Moderate rain
- B. Thunderstorm**
- C. Light snow
- D. Heavy fog

The contraction "TS" specifically refers to "thunderstorm" in meteorological terminology. This abbreviation is widely used in aviation weather reports, including METARs and TAFs, to alert pilots and meteorological services about the presence of thunderstorms in the vicinity of an airport or aerodrome. Thunderstorms can involve severe weather conditions, including heavy rainfall, strong winds, and lightning, making them critical to monitor for flight safety. In aviation reports, understanding this contraction is crucial as it directly impacts flight operations, including take-offs and landings. Other weather phenomena such as rain, snow, or fog are represented by different terms and abbreviations. Therefore, recognizing "TS" as indicating a thunderstorm is essential for correctly interpreting weather conditions in aviation contexts.

5. What is the final element of the body of the METAR report?

- A. Temperature**
- B. Dew Point**
- C. Visibility**
- D. Altimeter setting**

In a METAR report, the final element typically provided is the altimeter setting. This component indicates the atmospheric pressure and is crucial for pilots to ensure accurate altitude readings. It assists in maintaining proper altitude across different terrain and weather conditions, which is essential for safe aircraft operations. The sequence of information in a METAR is meticulously designed for clarity and efficiency, with visibility, temperature, and dew point being provided earlier in the report. While each of these elements plays a vital role in assessing flight conditions, the final presentation of the altimeter setting serves as a conclusive measurement critical for navigation and safety.

6. If an airport operates on a part-time basis, what will be indicated in place of forecast text when the airport is closed?

- A. NIL**
- B. OFF**
- C. CLOSED**
- D. STOP**

When an airport operates on a part-time basis and is closed, the forecast text will indicate "NIL." This signifies that there are no applicable forecasts for the period when the airport is not in operation. In the context of aviation weather reporting, using "NIL" is a clear way to communicate that there are no weather expectations or conditions to report for that airport during the time it is closed, making it important for pilots and flight planners to understand that they should not expect any relevant data. The other options do not accurately convey that there is no forecast applicable for a closed airport. "OFF" or "CLOSED" might imply the presence of some information or activity status, while "STOP" does not fit the standard terminology used in TAF reporting. Thus, "NIL" is the most precise and widely accepted term for such scenarios in aviation communications.

7. What safety considerations are critical when interpreting a TAF?

- A. Focusing only on temperature**
- B. Ignoring visibility reports**
- C. Recognizing all relevant weather conditions**
- D. Considering only wind speed**

Recognizing all relevant weather conditions is essential when interpreting a TAF because it provides a comprehensive view of the expected weather at an airport over a specific time frame, typically covering a duration of 24 to 30 hours. TAFs include various elements, such as wind, visibility, precipitation, and significant weather phenomena, which are crucial for safe flight operations. Ignoring any of these aspects could lead to misjudgments about the safety and feasibility of flying, as pilots need to prepare for all potential weather changes that might affect takeoff, landing, and in-flight operations. Each component carries weight; understanding the impact of thunderstorms, low visibility, gusty winds, or rapid temperature changes is critical for aviation safety. Thus, considering the full spectrum of relevant weather conditions allows pilots and operators to make well-informed decisions and ensures enhanced safety during flight operations.

8. If the METAR weather grouping includes the contraction "VC", what does this denote?

- A. That the weather conditions are occurring at the airport**
- B. That the weather conditions are occurring within 5 to 10 miles of the airport**
- C. That the weather conditions are severe**
- D. That the weather conditions are improving**

In interpreting METAR reports, the contraction "VC" stands for "in the vicinity." When this notation appears in a weather grouping, it indicates that certain weather conditions, such as precipitation or reduced visibility, are occurring within a range of 5 to 10 miles of the airport, but not directly at the airport itself. This is important for pilots and meteorologists as it communicates potential hazards that could affect flight safety without indicating that those conditions are at the immediate location of the airport. Understanding this designation helps aviation professionals to make informed decisions about flight operations and safety, as they can recognize that while the weather conditions are not directly affecting the airport at that moment, they are close enough to warrant attention.

9. What is the maximum distance from the aerodrome for which a TAF forecast is valid?

- A. 3 statute miles**
- B. 5 statute miles**
- C. 10 statute miles**
- D. 15 statute miles**

The correct answer is that the TAF forecast is valid for a maximum distance of 5 statute miles from the aerodrome. TAFs, or Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts, are specifically designed to provide weather information that is pertinent to pilots for aircraft operations near an airport. The forecasting zone extends to 5 statute miles in all directions from the aerodrome, as this range gives pilots the adequate information needed for takeoff, approach, and landing operations, acknowledging the areas most impacted by the activity at the airport. This concise coverage ensures that pilots receive relevant weather information without becoming overwhelmed by data from farther distances that may not influence their immediate flight operations. This focus on the airport vicinity is fundamental to the utility of TAFs for maintaining safety in aviation.

10. What is indicated by the presence of TCU in METAR?

- A. Towering Cumulus Clouds**
- B. Thunderstorm Clouds**
- C. Cumulonimbus Clouds**
- D. Cirrus Clouds**

The presence of TCU in a METAR report indicates Towering Cumulus Clouds. These clouds are characterized by their vertical development and can signal instability in the atmosphere. They often indicate rising air and potential for further development into thunderstorms, although TCU itself does not mean that a thunderstorm is currently occurring. Towering Cumulus Clouds are important for pilots and meteorologists to recognize because they can indicate conditions that may lead to severe weather, such as the potential development of cumulonimbus clouds if the atmosphere continues to destabilize. Understanding the significance of TCU enhances situational awareness regarding potential weather changes. The terms in the other options represent different types of clouds, but they are not accurately described by the TCU abbreviation in METAR. Cumulonimbus clouds, for instance, are associated with thunderstorms and are represented by the abbreviation CB, whereas cirrus clouds are denoted by the abbreviation CI. Thunderstorm clouds as a general category do not have a specific abbreviation indicating only towering cumulus. Therefore, recognizing that TCU specifically refers to Towering Cumulus Clouds aligns with aviation meteorological communication and practices.