

NBCOT Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) Practice Test (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 condition experiences vision loss that begins in peripheral vision and may lead to total blindness?**
 - A. Macular degeneration**
 - B. Cataracts**
 - C. Glaucoma**
 - D. Presbyopia**

- 2. Which rare disease involves blockage of blood vessels in the hands and feet?**
 - A. Raynaud's Phenomenon**
 - B. Thromboangiitis obliterans**
 - C. Peripheral artery disease**
 - D. Frostbite**

- 3. What is the minimum educational requirement to become a COTA?**
 - A. A high school diploma**
 - B. An associate degree from an accredited program**
 - C. A bachelor's degree in occupational therapy**
 - D. A master's degree in occupational therapy**

- 4. Which of the following refers to the decision-making skills of a client or therapist?**
 - A. Autonomy**
 - B. Judgement**
 - C. Justice**
 - D. Competence**

- 5. Which condition is primarily treated with acetylcholinesterase inhibitors?**
 - A. Muscular dystrophy**
 - B. Multiple sclerosis**
 - C. Myasthenia gravis**
 - D. Parkinson's disease**

6. Which vision condition is characterized by clouded vision and a gradual loss of vision in the central field?

- A. Glaucoma**
- B. Cataracts**
- C. Presbyopia**
- D. Macular degeneration**

7. What is the loss of the ability to name objects called?

- A. Anomia**
- B. Ataxia**
- C. Dysphagia**
- D. Apraxia**

8. Which approach might COTAs use to enhance fine motor skills?

- A. General range-of-motion exercises**
- B. Task-specific exercises that simulate daily life activities requiring precision**
- C. Simple strength training routines**
- D. Passive shoulder stretching techniques**

9. What is the primary role of an occupational therapy assistant (COTA)?

- A. To provide therapy services independently**
- B. To assist occupational therapists in their services**
- C. To evaluate clients' progress**
- D. To manage billing and insurance**

10. What is the primary symptom of presbyopia?

- A. Inability to focus and blurred vision**
- B. Gradual loss of central vision**
- C. Tunnel vision**
- D. Spilled vision**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which condition experiences vision loss that begins in peripheral vision and may lead to total blindness?

- A. Macular degeneration**
- B. Cataracts**
- C. Glaucoma**
- D. Presbyopia**

The condition that experiences vision loss that begins in peripheral vision and may lead to total blindness is glaucoma. This eye disease is characterized by increased intraocular pressure, which can damage the optic nerve. As the disease progresses, individuals typically first experience loss of peripheral vision—a condition known as tunnel vision. If left untreated, this can eventually lead to complete vision loss, making it a serious condition requiring timely diagnosis and management. In contrast, macular degeneration primarily affects central vision, impacting the ability to see fine details and causing difficulties with tasks such as reading. Cataracts cause clouding of the lens, resulting in blurry vision, but they do not specifically lead to peripheral vision loss. Presbyopia is an age-related condition that affects the ability to focus on close objects, but it does not cause peripheral vision loss or lead to blindness.

2. Which rare disease involves blockage of blood vessels in the hands and feet?

- A. Raynaud's Phenomenon**
- B. Thromboangiitis obliterans**
- C. Peripheral artery disease**
- D. Frostbite**

Thromboangiitis obliterans, also known as Buerger's disease, is characterized by inflammation and occlusion of blood vessels, particularly in the hands and feet. This condition predominantly affects young males who are heavy smokers or have a history of tobacco use. The blockage leads to symptoms such as pain, claudication, and in severe cases, ulceration or gangrene due to insufficient blood flow. Recognizing this rare disease is essential for occupational therapy assistants, as it impacts clients' hand and foot function significantly. In contrast, Raynaud's phenomenon involves episodic vasospasm of small blood vessels resulting in temporary reduction of blood flow, typically triggered by cold or stress, but it does not create a constant blockage. Peripheral artery disease mainly involves large arteries, affecting blood flow to the limbs but is more common and involves broader systemic issues, while frostbite is damage to skin and underlying tissues due to freezing temperatures, leading to a different set of complications. Understanding these distinctions can help occupational therapy practitioners provide effective management strategies for their clients.

3. What is the minimum educational requirement to become a COTA?

- A. A high school diploma**
- B. An associate degree from an accredited program**
- C. A bachelor's degree in occupational therapy**
- D. A master's degree in occupational therapy**

To become a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA), the minimum educational requirement is indeed an associate degree from an accredited program. This requirement ensures that the individual has received the foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary to support occupational therapists in their work. An accredited program typically involves both classroom instruction and hands-on fieldwork, covering essential topics such as human anatomy, occupational therapy principles, and therapeutic techniques. An associate degree places COTAs in a vital role within occupational therapy, as they assist clients in achieving goals related to daily living and rehabilitation. This educational level is recognized by both the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and state licensure boards, making it a key credential for practice in the professional arena. Higher education levels, such as bachelor's or master's degrees, are not required for COTA certification but are relevant for occupational therapists (OTs) themselves, who require these advanced degrees.

4. Which of the following refers to the decision-making skills of a client or therapist?

- A. Autonomy**
- B. Judgement**
- C. Justice**
- D. Competence**

The term that best refers to the decision-making skills of a client or therapist is judgement. Judgement encompasses the ability to make considered decisions or come to sensible conclusions. In the context of occupational therapy, it involves evaluating situations, understanding the implications of certain choices, and making decisions that are in the best interest of the client. For therapists, good judgement is crucial when creating treatment plans, assessing client needs, and ensuring that interventions are appropriate and effective. Clients also rely on their judgement to express their needs, choose their goals, and participate actively in their own therapy. This skill is integral to providing ethical and effective therapeutic interventions. While autonomy refers to a person's right to make their own choices and direct their own life, it does not specifically address the evaluative and decision-making process itself. Justice relates to fairness and equity in treatment and access to services but does not pertain to decision-making skills. Competence refers to the ability to perform a task effectively but does not address the cognitive aspects involved in making decisions. Thus, judgement is the most fitting term when discussing the decision-making abilities of clients and therapists.

5. Which condition is primarily treated with acetylcholinesterase inhibitors?

- A. Muscular dystrophy**
- B. Multiple sclerosis**
- C. Myasthenia gravis**
- D. Parkinson's disease**

Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors are primarily used in the treatment of myasthenia gravis, a neuromuscular disorder characterized by weakness and rapid fatigue of voluntary muscles. In myasthenia gravis, there is a dysfunction in the communication between nerves and muscles because antibodies disrupt the receptors for acetylcholine at the neuromuscular junction. Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors work by preventing the breakdown of acetylcholine, thereby increasing its availability for binding to the receptors on muscles. This increase in acetylcholine helps improve muscle contraction and strength, effectively alleviating some of the symptoms associated with this condition. In contrast, muscular dystrophy is not treated with acetylcholinesterase inhibitors, as it is a genetic disorder affecting muscle tissue rather than a disorder of neuromuscular transmission. Multiple sclerosis is primarily treated with immunomodulatory drugs and not typically with acetylcholinesterase inhibitors, as it involves an autoimmune attack on the central nervous system rather than an issue at the neuromuscular junction. Parkinson's disease is usually managed with dopaminergic medications, which target dopamine deficiencies, rather than interventions aimed at acetylcholine levels.

6. Which vision condition is characterized by clouded vision and a gradual loss of vision in the central field?

- A. Glaucoma**
- B. Cataracts**
- C. Presbyopia**
- D. Macular degeneration**

Clouded vision and a gradual loss of vision in the central field is indicative of cataracts. Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to obstructed light and blurriness. This condition often develops slowly over time, affecting one's ability to see clearly, especially in bright light or when trying to read small print. Unlike other conditions such as glaucoma, which primarily affects peripheral vision due to increased pressure in the eye, or macular degeneration, which specifically impacts the central vision but does not typically cause cloudiness in the lens itself, cataracts fundamentally change the clarity of the lens. This results in a faded quality to vision, contributing to difficulties with tasks that require good central vision, such as reading or driving. Presbyopia, on the other hand, is a normal age-related change in vision affecting the ability to focus on close objects rather than being characterized by cloudiness.

7. What is the loss of the ability to name objects called?

- A. Anomia**
- B. Ataxia**
- C. Dysphagia**
- D. Apraxia**

The loss of the ability to name objects is referred to as anomia. This condition is often observed in individuals with language disorders, especially those resulting from brain injury or neurological conditions like stroke or dementia. Anomia specifically involves difficulty in retrieving words or naming items, which can significantly affect communication and everyday functioning. Ataxia, on the other hand, pertains to problems with coordination and balance, primarily due to issues in the cerebellum. Dysphagia is related to difficulty in swallowing, which can affect nutritional intake and safety during eating. Apraxia involves a disruption in the ability to perform purposeful movements or actions, despite having the desire and physical capability to do so. Understanding these distinctions highlights why anomia is the correct choice for the condition defined in the question.

8. Which approach might COTAs use to enhance fine motor skills?

- A. General range-of-motion exercises**
- B. Task-specific exercises that simulate daily life activities requiring precision**
- C. Simple strength training routines**
- D. Passive shoulder stretching techniques**

Enhancing fine motor skills is primarily achieved through specific activities that closely resemble the tasks individuals perform in their daily lives. Task-specific exercises, which directly simulate these activities, allow clients to practice the precise movements and coordination needed for skills such as writing, buttoning shirts, or using utensils. These exercises are designed to improve dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and overall fine motor control. This approach effectively engages the individual in meaningful tasks, which not only helps in skill acquisition but also promotes motivation and functional independence. By focusing on activities that require precision, COTAs can tailor interventions to the client's specific goals and needs, making the rehabilitation process more relevant and effective.

9. What is the primary role of an occupational therapy assistant (COTA)?

- A. To provide therapy services independently**
- B. To assist occupational therapists in their services**
- C. To evaluate clients' progress**
- D. To manage billing and insurance**

The primary role of an occupational therapy assistant (COTA) is to assist occupational therapists in delivering therapy services. A COTA works under the supervision and guidance of an occupational therapist, helping to implement intervention plans, support clients during therapy sessions, and aid in documenting progress. This collaboration allows for a comprehensive approach to patient care, fostering optimal outcomes through teamwork. While COTAs may have some involvement in evaluating clients' progress, the responsibility for formal evaluations and developing treatment plans largely lies with the occupational therapist. A COTA's focus is more on the implementation of the treatment plans rather than the initiation of those plans. Similarly, while managing billing and insurance may be part of a healthcare setting's administrative tasks, it is not the primary role of a COTA. Providing therapy independently does not align with the supervisory structure of occupational therapy, where collaboration between COTAs and therapists is essential for effective practice.

10. What is the primary symptom of presbyopia?

- A. Inability to focus and blurred vision**
- B. Gradual loss of central vision**
- C. Tunnel vision**
- D. Spilled vision**

The primary symptom of presbyopia is the inability to focus and blurred vision, especially for near objects. As individuals age, the lens of the eye becomes less flexible, making it more difficult to adjust focus from distant to close-up objects. This loss of flexibility leads to difficulty in reading small print or seeing details up close. People often notice that they need to hold reading material further away to see it clearly, which is a common hallmark of presbyopia. The gradual nature of these changes typically becomes apparent in the early to mid-40s and progresses with age, resulting in the characteristic blurred vision for near tasks.

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://nbcotcota.examzify.com>

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

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