

NCEES PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SURVEYING PRACTICE EXAM (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. What does the term "section corner" refer to in the PLSS system?**
 - A. A point marking the start of a property line
 - B. A point where two range and township lines intersect
 - C. A reference point for geological surveys
 - D. A location for public land auctions
- 2. What is the primary purpose of meander lines in surveying?**
 - A. To create legal property boundaries
 - B. To facilitate the measurement of water bodies
 - C. To indicate government property
 - D. To establish building codes
- 3. What is the characteristic that differentiates real property from personal property?**
 - A. Easily moved
 - B. Fixed and immovable
 - C. Consumable
 - D. Not subject to ownership
- 4. What is a direct benefit of using "angle of elevation" in surveying?**
 - A. To calculate horizontal distances
 - B. To determine the height of objects
 - C. To analyze slope stability
 - D. To configure land usage
- 5. A sudden and perceptible change in land due to water action is called what?**
 - A. Reliction
 - B. Erosion
 - C. Avulsion
 - D. Subsidence
- 6. What is the purpose of datum reference in elevation surveys?**
 - A. To verify land ownership
 - B. To establish a basis for measuring heights
 - C. To calculate land area
 - D. To determine land use

- 7. What is one advantage of using photogrammetry in surveys?**
- A. It provides quick estimations without measurements
 - B. It allows for detailed terrain measurement from images
 - C. It eliminates the need for skilled surveyors
 - D. It is the least expensive survey technique
- 8. What is the purpose of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)?**
- A. To divide land into townships and sections for easier identification and transfer of property
 - B. To create international land ownership laws
 - C. To manage zoning regulations
 - D. To provide geological mapping
- 9. What does a condominium refer to?**
- A. A single-family home
 - B. A complex of individually owned apartments or houses
 - C. A government-owned building
 - D. A rental apartment building
- 10. What type of survey focuses on legal land measurement?**
- A. Hydrographic surveying
 - B. Territorial surveying
 - C. Geodetic surveying
 - D. Construction surveying

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What does the term "section corner" refer to in the PLSS system?

- A. A point marking the start of a property line
- B. A point where two range and township lines intersect**
- C. A reference point for geological surveys
- D. A location for public land auctions

The "section corner" in the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) specifically refers to a point where township and range lines intersect, effectively marking the corners of sections within a township. In the PLSS framework, each township is typically divided into 36 sections, and the intersection of these lines designates both the physical location of the sections and serves as a critical reference point for land surveying and property delineation. Understanding this, it highlights the importance of section corners in land management, real estate, and legal descriptions. Such corners are essential for establishing property boundaries and ensuring accurate land records. While other choices refer to different aspects related to land and property, they do not embody the specific definition of a section corner as established by the PLSS. For instance, the start of a property line pertains to parcel boundaries, while geological surveys and public land auctions refer to distinct activities that do not fundamentally define what a section corner is.

2. What is the primary purpose of meander lines in surveying?

- A. To create legal property boundaries
- B. To facilitate the measurement of water bodies**
- C. To indicate government property
- D. To establish building codes

The primary purpose of meander lines in surveying is indeed to facilitate the measurement of water bodies. Meander lines are typically established along the edges of rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water. These lines help to define the sinuous and irregular boundaries of such natural features. By using meander lines, surveyors can create a systematic way to measure and describe the extent of water bodies without the need to account for every bend and curve in the shoreline. This simplifies the process of surveying these areas and effectively communicates the location and boundaries of water bodies for legal and administrative purposes. Establishing these lines in surveys also assists in regulating land use and managing resources adjacent to water bodies. This clarification highlights the role meander lines play in surveying practices, particularly in relation to defining boundaries and facilitating accurate measurements, thereby reaffirming option B as the most appropriate choice.

3. What is the characteristic that differentiates real property from personal property?

- A. Easily moved
- B. Fixed and immovable**
- C. Consumable
- D. Not subject to ownership

Real property is fundamentally characterized by its fixed and immovable nature. This means that it cannot be relocated; it is intrinsically tied to the land it occupies. This distinction is essential in understanding property rights and legal ownership because real property typically includes land and anything permanently attached to it, such as buildings, roads, and trees. In contrast, personal property may be easily moved (like furniture or vehicles) and does not have the same legal implications regarding ownership or transfer. The fixed and immovable aspect of real property has significant implications for taxes, mortgages, and regulatory requirements, making it a core principle in property law. This characteristic helps to outline the differences in the treatment and management of various types of property.

4. What is a direct benefit of using "angle of elevation" in surveying?

- A. To calculate horizontal distances
- B. To determine the height of objects**
- C. To analyze slope stability
- D. To configure land usage

Using the angle of elevation in surveying primarily allows surveyors to determine the height of objects. This geometric concept involves measuring the angle formed between a horizontal line and the line of sight to a point that is above the observer's level. When the angle of elevation is known, along with the distance from the observer to the base of the object, surveyors can apply trigonometric principles, specifically the tangent function, to calculate the height. This is particularly useful when determining the heights of structures, trees, or any other vertical elements that may not be easily measured directly. The process of determining the height based on the angle of elevation is essential in various applications, including construction projects, environmental studies, and landscape assessment. Thus, it enhances the surveyor's ability to collect vital data that influences project design and execution.

5. A sudden and perceptible change in land due to water action is called what?

- A. Reliction
- B. Erosion
- C. Avulsion**
- D. Subsidence

A sudden and perceptible change in land due to water action is termed avulsion. In the context of land and property law, avulsion refers specifically to the process by which a significant change occurs in the land boundary due to the rapid alteration of a river's course or the sudden removal of land by water action, such as floods or significant storms. This can lead to substantial changes in land ownership or property rights, as the boundaries of land can shift dramatically. This term is distinct from other processes like erosion, which is a gradual wearing away of land over time; reliction, describing the gradual receding of water that exposes land; and subsidence, which refers to ground sinking due to various geological factors. Understanding these terms and their implications is critical for surveyors and property professionals as they navigate legal and environmental considerations in their work.

6. What is the purpose of datum reference in elevation surveys?

- A. To verify land ownership
- B. To establish a basis for measuring heights**
- C. To calculate land area
- D. To determine land use

The purpose of a datum reference in elevation surveys is to establish a consistent and stable baseline for measuring heights. A datum serves as a reference point that allows surveyors to measure vertical distances accurately. By utilizing a specific datum, all surveyed elevation data can be compared and analyzed uniformly. This consistency is critical for various applications, including engineering projects, construction, and geographical mapping, where precise elevation data is essential. In elevation surveys, a datum typically refers to a specific level, such as mean sea level, that is universally accepted and used as a starting point for measurements. Thus, knowing the datum ensures that all height measurements are relative to the same reference point, facilitating accurate communication and assessment of elevations across different locations.

7. What is one advantage of using photogrammetry in surveys?

- A. It provides quick estimations without measurements
- B. It allows for detailed terrain measurement from images**
- C. It eliminates the need for skilled surveyors
- D. It is the least expensive survey technique

Using photogrammetry in surveys offers significant advantages, particularly in its ability to allow for detailed terrain measurement from images. This method involves capturing photographic images from aerial or ground positions, which are then processed to extract three-dimensional coordinates. One of the main strengths of photogrammetry lies in its capability to produce highly accurate and detailed representations of the terrain, including elevation data, contours, and spatial relationships. This is accomplished through sophisticated software that analyzes the photographs and calculates measurements based on known parameters. As a result, surveyors can gather extensive data over large areas more rapidly than traditional surveying methods, all while maintaining a high level of precision. This advantage makes photogrammetry especially useful in applications such as topographic surveys, landscape modeling, urban planning, and environmental studies, where an accurate depiction of the terrain is crucial. The capacity to visualize complex landscapes and geological features in detail is significant for decision-making processes in engineering, land-use planning, and conservation efforts. In summary, the ability to derive detailed terrain measurements from images is a core benefit of photogrammetry, underscoring its utility in modern surveying practices.

8. What is the purpose of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)?

- A. To divide land into townships and sections for easier identification and transfer of property**
- B. To create international land ownership laws
- C. To manage zoning regulations
- D. To provide geological mapping

The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) was established primarily to facilitate the systematic division of land, which is essential in the process of land ownership and property transfers. Its design allows for the categorization of land into manageable units known as townships and sections, effectively creating a grid system across the surveyed areas. This framework simplifies the identification of parcels and helps in the clear transfer of property titles, which is crucial for both legal clarity and public access to property records. The methodology behind the PLSS not only aids in easier navigation and reference but also standardizes the way land is described, thereby promoting efficient land management and ownership documentation. The use of this system has played a significant role in the development of the western United States, impacting land sales, taxation, and the establishment of local government jurisdictions. Other options, while relevant to the broad field of land management and ownership, do not directly pertain to the primary purpose of the PLSS. For instance, international land ownership laws, zoning regulations, and geological mapping serve different functions and are not specifically aligned with the PLSS's aim to delineate land for public use and ownership clarity.

9. What does a condominium refer to?

- A. A single-family home
- B. A complex of individually owned apartments or houses**
- C. A government-owned building
- D. A rental apartment building

A condominium refers specifically to a type of real estate ownership that involves a complex of individually owned units. In a condominium, each owner has title to their specific unit while sharing ownership of common areas and facilities such as hallways, swimming pools, and other amenities with all other unit owners. This arrangement allows for both private ownership and communal living, distinguishing it from other types of residential properties, such as single-family homes, where the entire property is individually owned. Condominiums are structured to provide the benefits of ownership similar to that of a single-family home, yet they also incorporate shared responsibilities and costs associated with common areas. Such housing arrangements are often found in urban settings, where land space is limited, making them a popular choice for many buyers. This concept and structure make "a complex of individually owned apartments or houses" the correct characterization of a condominium.

10. What type of survey focuses on legal land measurement?

- A. Hydrographic surveying
- B. Territorial surveying**
- C. Geodetic surveying
- D. Construction surveying

The focus of legal land measurement is indeed best represented by territorial surveying. This type of surveying is essential for defining property boundaries, establishing land ownership, and resolving land disputes. Territorial surveying often involves the preparation of legal descriptions and the documentation of land parcels in a manner that complies with legal standards. Surveyors engaged in this field need to have a thorough understanding of land laws, property rights, and the appropriate methodologies to accurately delineate property lines. Hydrographic surveying primarily deals with the measurement and description of features that are submerged under water, such as a riverbed or sea floor, and is not relevant to legal land boundaries. Geodetic surveying focuses on the measurement of the Earth's geometric shape, orientation in space, and gravity field, which, while important for large-scale mapping and navigation, does not specifically address legal land measurements. Construction surveying is concerned with providing accurate layouts for construction projects, involving positioning structures on the ground, but it does not specifically deal with legal property boundaries or ownership issues.

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://ncees-principlesandpracticeofsurveying.examzify.com>

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

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