

NCTJ Public Affairs Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. Which of the following is a reason for a qualified exemption when disclosing information?**
 - A. International cuisine standards**
 - B. Authority intends to publish the information**
 - C. Technical analysis of a product**
 - D. Historical perspectives on policy**
- 2. What significant event causes changes in taxation to be renewed annually in the UK?**
 - A. The Summer Statement**
 - B. The Financial Review**
 - C. The Budget**
 - D. The Fiscal Committee Meeting**
- 3. What percentage of police funding typically comes from the government?**
 - A. 30%**
 - B. 50%**
 - C. 70%**
 - D. 80%**
- 4. Which Article in the EU's Lisbon Treaty outlines the process for leaving the EU?**
 - A. Article 22**
 - B. Article 50**
 - C. Article 12**
 - D. Article 35**
- 5. Which of the following describes a major responsibility of the Chancellor of the Exchequer?**
 - A. Setting foreign policy**
 - B. Overseeing public spending and inflation**
 - C. Managing national security**
 - D. Budgeting for local governments**

- 6. Which type of governance structure combines elements of both two-tier and unitary authorities?**
- A. District councils**
 - B. Hybrid authority**
 - C. Combined authority**
 - D. County councils**
- 7. Which Cabinet Secretary is responsible for housing, communities, and local government?**
- A. Robert Jenrick**
 - B. Priti Patel**
 - C. Gavin Williamson**
 - D. Michael Gove**
- 8. Uniform Business Rates are assessed based on what criteria?**
- A. The income generated by a business**
 - B. The rateable value of a property**
 - C. The size of the workforce**
 - D. The number of customers served**
- 9. Who was a key figure in the founding of the NHS?**
- A. Winston Churchill**
 - B. Enoch Powell**
 - C. Clement Attlee**
 - D. Margaret Thatcher**
- 10. Which party holds the majority in the House of Commons?**
- A. Labour**
 - B. Conservatives**
 - C. SNP**
 - D. Lib Dems**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following is a reason for a qualified exemption when disclosing information?

- A. International cuisine standards**
- B. Authority intends to publish the information**
- C. Technical analysis of a product**
- D. Historical perspectives on policy**

A qualified exemption under the Freedom of Information Act allows for certain information to not be disclosed if it meets specific criteria. When the authority intends to publish the information, it implies that the information is in the process of being prepared for public release. This factor provides a legitimate reason for withholding the information temporarily, as releasing it prematurely could hinder the publication process and could potentially prejudice the public interest. This rationale ensures that authorities can manage sensitive information appropriately, allowing for a thorough review and presentation in a manner deemed suitable for the public. Other options, like international cuisine standards or technical analysis of a product, do not provide a context where withholding information due to the impending publication by the authority is justified. Similarly, historical perspectives on policy do not fall within the framework typically considered for qualified exemptions related to information disclosure.

2. What significant event causes changes in taxation to be renewed annually in the UK?

- A. The Summer Statement**
- B. The Financial Review**
- C. The Budget**
- D. The Fiscal Committee Meeting**

The Budget is the significant event in the UK that leads to annual changes in taxation. This event, typically presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, outlines the government's plans for taxation and public spending for the upcoming year. It includes proposed changes to tax rates, allowances, and other fiscal measures aimed at managing the economy and public finances. The Budget is a key part of the government's fiscal policy, as it sets the financial framework that will be applied and adjusted throughout the year. Other options, while related to financial oversight or economic planning, do not specifically trigger annual changes in taxation in the way that the Budget does. For instance, the Summer Statement might address economic updates and forecasts but isn't solely focused on taxation changes. Similarly, the Financial Review may provide insights into economic performance without necessarily leading to immediate tax changes, and the Fiscal Committee Meeting could involve discussions on fiscal policy but is not the formal context for announcing new tax measures. Thus, the Budget stands out as the principal mechanism through which taxation is reviewed and adjusted annually.

3. What percentage of police funding typically comes from the government?

- A. 30%**
- B. 50%**
- C. 70%**
- D. 80%**

Police funding generally receives a substantial portion from government sources, primarily at the local, regional, and national levels. The figure of around 70% is often cited as a standard benchmark, as it reflects the significant investment that government entities allocate to law enforcement to ensure public safety and maintain order. This funding is crucial for various operational aspects, including salaries, equipment, and community programs aimed at crime prevention and community relations. Additionally, governmental support is necessary to fulfill the legal and societal obligations that police departments have in serving the public effectively. In many regions, this reliance on government funding underscores the importance of accountability and transparency in how these funds are utilized, ultimately directly affecting community trust and the ability of police forces to perform their duties effectively.

4. Which Article in the EU's Lisbon Treaty outlines the process for leaving the EU?

- A. Article 22**
- B. Article 50**
- C. Article 12**
- D. Article 35**

The correct answer is Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, which specifically details the procedure for a member state to withdraw from the European Union. This article outlines the steps that a country must take to initiate the departure process, including notifying the European Council of its intention to leave. It also allows for negotiations to be conducted regarding the terms of withdrawal, thereby ensuring an orderly exit. Article 50 emphasizes the importance of a member state making its choice to leave, and it sets a framework that establishes a timeline and guidelines for the negotiations that follow. This effectively ensures that the departure is handled in a manner that respects both the withdrawing state and the remaining member states. The other choices provided do not pertain to the withdrawal process from the EU. Articles 22, 12, and 35 focus on other aspects of EU governance and policy, thus distinguishing Article 50 as the unique and relevant provision addressing the withdrawal mechanism.

5. Which of the following describes a major responsibility of the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

- A. Setting foreign policy**
- B. Overseeing public spending and inflation**
- C. Managing national security**
- D. Budgeting for local governments**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is primarily responsible for overseeing the economic and financial matters of the government, which includes managing public spending and inflation. This role involves preparing the national budget, determining how much money the government receives from taxes, and allocating funds to various public services. By controlling public spending, the Chancellor plays a crucial role in ensuring economic stability and addressing inflation concerns. This responsibility directly impacts the economy, affecting everything from public services to the overall economic health of the country. Other responsibilities, such as setting foreign policy, managing national security, or budgeting for local governments, fall under different departments or ministries within the government. Therefore, the role of the Chancellor is distinctly focused on economic matters, making the oversight of public spending and inflation a major aspect of their duties.

6. Which type of governance structure combines elements of both two-tier and unitary authorities?

- A. District councils**
- B. Hybrid authority**
- C. Combined authority**
- D. County councils**

A hybrid authority is a governance structure that integrates aspects of both two-tier and unitary authorities, which allows it to benefit from the strengths of both systems. In a two-tier system, responsibilities are divided between different levels of government, such as county and district councils, each handling certain functions. In contrast, a unitary authority consolidates those functions into a single tier of local government, simplifying the management and delivery of services. The hybrid authority model allows for specific local needs to be met effectively while still maintaining some of the collaborative and oversight functions typical of a two-tier system. This can create a more flexible governance structure suited to areas that have diverse requirements, helping to enhance local decision-making and service delivery. District councils, combined authorities, and county councils operate under more defined structures that do not integrate elements from both two-tier and unitary systems in the same way. Therefore, the hybrid authority is the option that truly embodies a combination of the two governance styles.

7. Which Cabinet Secretary is responsible for housing, communities, and local government?

- A. Robert Jenrick**
- B. Priti Patel**
- C. Gavin Williamson**
- D. Michael Gove**

The correct answer is Michael Gove, who has held the position of Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which encompasses responsibilities for housing, communities, and local government. Gove has been involved in key government initiatives related to housing policy and community development, showcasing his role in addressing issues such as buying homes, building new housing developments, and fostering community engagement. Robert Jenrick previously served in this capacity, but his time in the role concluded in September 2021. This context is crucial in understanding the evolving structure of Cabinet positions and the specific portfolios held by members of the government.

8. Uniform Business Rates are assessed based on what criteria?

- A. The income generated by a business**
- B. The rateable value of a property**
- C. The size of the workforce**
- D. The number of customers served**

Uniform Business Rates, which are a form of tax applied to most non-domestic properties in England and Wales, are primarily assessed based on the rateable value of the property. Rateable value is determined by a valuation office and reflects the estimated rental value of the property in its existing condition and use. This assessment takes into account various factors, including location, size, and the nature of the property, ensuring that the tax reflects the potential income that could be generated from the property if it were to be rented out. The other criteria mentioned, such as the income generated by a business, the size of the workforce, or the number of customers served, do not directly influence the assessment of Uniform Business Rates. These factors might vary significantly across different businesses and do not provide a consistent basis for taxation that can be fairly applied across the board. Therefore, the focus on the rateable value ensures a standardized approach to tax assessment for all businesses within the framework of Uniform Business Rates.

9. Who was a key figure in the founding of the NHS?

A. Winston Churchill

B. Enoch Powell

C. Clement Attlee

D. Margaret Thatcher

The National Health Service (NHS) was established in 1948, and a key figure in its founding was Clement Attlee. As the Prime Minister leading a Labour government at the time, Attlee played a crucial role in the NHS's creation as part of a broader agenda to provide welfare and social reform in post-war Britain. He implemented the vision for healthcare that was free at the point of use, making it accessible to all citizens irrespective of their financial situation. While Winston Churchill, Enoch Powell, and Margaret Thatcher were significant figures in British politics, they were either not directly involved in the establishment of the NHS or were associated with different periods of its history. Churchill was Prime Minister before the NHS was founded and had differing views on public health systems. Powell is more famously known for his later controversial views and policies regarding health and immigration rather than being a founder of the NHS. Thatcher, as Prime Minister in the 1980s, is more associated with reforms that influenced the structure and funding of the NHS rather than its founding. Hence, the correct association with the founding of the NHS lies with Clement Attlee, who was instrumental in laying the groundwork for one of the United Kingdom's most significant public institutions.

10. Which party holds the majority in the House of Commons?

A. Labour

B. Conservatives

C. SNP

D. Lib Dems

The Conservative Party holds the majority in the House of Commons, which means they have more elected Members of Parliament (MPs) than any other party. This majority allows them to form the government and effectively manage the legislative agenda. When a party has a majority, it can pass legislation more easily, as they typically have enough votes to secure approval without needing to rely extensively on support from smaller parties or independents. In the context of UK politics, the party in power is usually the one that commands a majority in the Commons, enabling their leader to become the Prime Minister. Other parties, such as Labour, the SNP, and the Liberal Democrats, while they may hold significant portions of seats, do not have enough MPs to claim a majority, which would allow for the same level of legislative influence and governance. This dynamic is crucial in understanding how the political landscape operates in the UK and the role of the various parties in shaping policy and public affairs.