

NMAT Social Sciences 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 term refers to groups to which people belong and feel loyal?**
 - A. Outgroup**
 - B. Ingroup**
 - C. Social group**
 - D. Primary group**

- 2. Which term describes a group that actively opposes central norms of the wider society?**
 - A. Subculture**
 - B. Community**
 - C. Culture**
 - D. Counterculture**

- 3. A married couple living apart from either family is described by which term?**
 - A. Polygyny**
 - B. Endogamy**
 - C. Exogamy**
 - D. Neolocal**

- 4. What descent system is described as tracing kinship through the father's line?**
 - A. Matrilineal**
 - B. Endogamy**
 - C. Bilateral descent**
 - D. Patrilineal**

- 5. Which deviant adaptation involves rejecting the goals and the means and instituting new ones?**
 - A. Rebellion**
 - B. Innovation**
 - C. Ritualism**
 - D. Retreatism**

- 6. Which type forms permanent communities due to agricultural practices?**
- A. Agrarian Societies**
 - B. Pastoral Societies**
 - C. Horticultural Societies**
 - D. Hunting and Gathering**
- 7. Which statement best describes the relationship between culture and social behavior?**
- A. Culture is unrelated to social behavior**
 - B. Culture shapes social behavior**
 - C. Social behavior shapes only economic systems**
 - D. Culture is identical to social institutions**
- 8. A couple living with the wife's parents is described by which term?**
- A. Patrilocal residence**
 - B. Egalitarian**
 - C. Matrilocal**
 - D. Exogamy**
- 9. Pastoral societies are primarily defined by which economic activity?**
- A. Cultivating Cereal Grains and Permanent Communities**
 - B. Capturing, Breeding, and Taming of Animals as a Food Source**
 - C. Nomadic Gathering of Wild Plants**
 - D. Plow Agriculture and City-Building**
- 10. Which status is typically gained by a person's direct effort usually through competition?**
- A. Ascribed status**
 - B. Social status**
 - C. Master status**
 - D. Achieved status**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which term refers to groups to which people belong and feel loyal?

- A. Outgroup
- B. Ingroup**
- C. Social group
- D. Primary group

Belonging and loyalty to a group come from identifying with that group and feeling solidarity with its members. This is the ingroup—the group you see as part of “us” and to which you owe allegiance and support. You’re aware of members like yourself and you treat them as part of your circle. In contrast, those outside that identification are the outgroup. A social group is a broad term for any collection of people who share something in common, not necessarily tied to loyalty to the group. A primary group refers to close, intimate, long-lasting relationships (like family or very close friends), whose bonds are emotional, but the term describing loyalty to a belonging group is ingroup.

2. Which term describes a group that actively opposes central norms of the wider society?

- A. Subculture
- B. Community
- C. Culture
- D. Counterculture**

The concept being tested is naming a group that actively challenges the norms of the broader society. A counterculture fits this idea exactly: it’s a group that rejects or questions central values, rules, and practices of the wider culture and pursues an alternative way of life. They critique the prevailing social order and often adopt distinct beliefs, rituals, and lifestyles to stand apart. In contrast, a subculture is a group within the broader culture that shares different norms or fashions but generally remains within the overall framework of mainstream society. Culture refers to the shared beliefs and practices of a group as a whole, not a specific rebellious faction, and community denotes a social group bound by ties like location or shared interest rather than opposition to norms. So the best fit for a group actively opposing central norms is counterculture.

3. A married couple living apart from either family is described by which term?

- A. Polygyny
- B. Endogamy
- C. Exogamy
- D. Neolocal**

This item tests the residence pattern after marriage—the location where the couple sets up their new home. Neolocal residence means the married couple establishes a new, independent household away from both of their families. This reflects a move toward independence and a distinct household separate from parental homes, which is common in modern, industrialized contexts. The other terms describe different ideas. Polygyny is about a man having multiple wives, not where a couple lives. Endogamy refers to marrying within a specific social group, while exogamy means marrying outside that group. Both concern who you marry, not the living arrangement after marriage.

4. What descent system is described as tracing kinship through the father's line?

- A. Matrilineal**
- B. Endogamy**
- C. Bilateral descent**
- D. Patrilineal**

Descent systems describe how kinship is traced across generations in a society. In a patrilineal system, kinship and often property or clan membership are traced through the father's line. This means your lineage, inheritance, and family identity derive from your father and his relatives, such as your paternal grandfather or uncles, rather than from your mother's side. This stands in contrast to matrilineal systems, where lineage is traced through the mother's line; and to bilateral systems, where kinship is recognized through both parents equally. Endogamy relates to marrying within a group, not how kinship is traced. So tracing kinship through the father's line is patrilineal.

5. Which deviant adaptation involves rejecting the goals and the means and instituting new ones?

- A. Rebellion**
- B. Innovation**
- C. Ritualism**
- D. Retreatism**

In Strain Theory, people respond to the mismatch between culturally approved goals and the legitimate ways to achieve them. Rebellion is the mode where individuals reject both the current goals and the established means, and they substitute a new set of goals and new means—often aiming to create a different social order. This differentiates it from other adaptations: innovation pursues the same goals through new, possibly illegitimate means; ritualism clings to means without pursuing the goals; retreatism abandons both goals and means by withdrawing; conformity accepts both. So the idea of instituting new ones points squarely to rebellion.

6. Which type forms permanent communities due to agricultural practices?

- A. Agrarian Societies**
- B. Pastoral Societies**
- C. Horticultural Societies**
- D. Hunting and Gathering**

The key idea is that settled life emerges when people can reliably produce their own food in one place. Horticultural societies cultivate crops using simple tools and techniques, which supports building villages and staying in a fixed location rather than roaming in search of wild resources. This farming-based stability allows families to store food, develop social networks, and create permanent dwellings, so settlements become permanent over time. In contrast, hunting and gathering relies on moving to follow resources, and pastoralism centers on herding often with mobility; agrarian societies build on more advanced farming, but the initial move to permanent communities is most closely tied to the settlements that arise with horticultural practices.

7. Which statement best describes the relationship between culture and social behavior?

- A. Culture is unrelated to social behavior
- B. Culture shapes social behavior**
- C. Social behavior shapes only economic systems
- D. Culture is identical to social institutions

Culture provides shared meanings, norms, and values that guide how people behave in social situations. These cultural scripts tell individuals what is appropriate or expected, shaping everyday interactions, etiquette, and responses to others. For instance, notions of punctuality and politeness influence how people greet one another and organize activities. That's why culture shapes social behavior. Saying culture is unrelated ignores the clear influence of collective beliefs and practices. Limiting social behavior to only economic systems misses the broad range of how people act across family, religion, language, and daily life. Equating culture with social institutions confuses beliefs and practices with formal structures. The best description is that culture shapes social behavior.

8. A couple living with the wife's parents is described by which term?

- A. Patrilocal residence
- B. Egalitarian
- C. Matrilocal**
- D. Exogamy

Postmarital residence pattern explains where a couple lives after marriage. When a couple lives with the wife's family, that arrangement is matrilocal residence. It means the husband moves into the wife's kin group and household. This contrasts with patrilocal residence, where the couple would live with the husband's family. The other terms don't describe where the couple resides: egalitarian refers to equal status between genders, and exogamy refers to marrying outside one's kin group. So matrilocal is the correct description because the households centers on the wife's family after marriage.

9. Pastoral societies are primarily defined by which economic activity?

- A. Cultivating Cereal Grains and Permanent Communities
- B. Capturing, Breeding, and Taming of Animals as a Food Source**
- C. Nomadic Gathering of Wild Plants
- D. Plow Agriculture and City-Building

Pastoral societies are defined by their reliance on animal husbandry as the main way they obtain food and resources. They focus on capturing, breeding, and taming domesticated animals—such as cattle, sheep, goats, or camels—and move with their herds to find pasture. This mobile or semi-nomadic lifestyle is shaped by environments where crop farming is difficult, so the herd becomes the central economic asset for food, milk, hides, and labor. The best answer describes this emphasis on animals as the primary food source and economic base. The other options point to different ways societies produce and organize resources—cultivating crops and settling, gathering wild plants as nomads, or building cities around plow-based agriculture—so they don't capture the defining activity of pastoral groups.

10. Which status is typically gained by a person's direct effort usually through competition?

- A. Ascribed status**
- B. Social status**
- C. Master status**
- D. Achieved status**

Status in society refers to one's position within the social structure. Some statuses are ascribed, meaning you're born into them or they're assigned without your doing. Others are achieved, earned through your own actions and efforts, often involving competition. The scenario described aligns with this latter idea: a status gained through direct effort and competitive striving. This is what achieved status captures, as it reflects what you do to advance, such as excelling in education, sports, or a career. While master status refers to the single dominant identity a person holds, and can be either earned or given, the emphasis here is on the process of earning through competition, which makes achieved status the best fit.

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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://nmatsocialsciences.examzify.com>

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

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