

North Dakota Cosmetology Practice Exam (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

- 1. What are the basic units of living things referred to?**
 - A. Organs**
 - B. Tissues**
 - C. Cells**
 - D. Systems**
- 2. Which tool is primarily used for foiling in hair coloring?**
 - A. Brush**
 - B. Comb**
 - C. Foil sheets**
 - D. Sponge**
- 3. What is the recommended pH of hair conditioners?**
 - A. 0 to 3**
 - B. 4 to 6**
 - C. 6 to 8**
 - D. 9 to 11**
- 4. What type of massage involves a deep rubbing movement applying pressure with fingers and palms?**
 - A. Friction**
 - B. Effleurage**
 - C. Petrissage**
 - D. Vibration**
- 5. What is the purpose of a neutralizing shampoo?**
 - A. To add moisture to the hair**
 - B. To enhance hair color**
 - C. To re-balance the pH level of hair**
 - D. To clarify buildup on the scalp**
- 6. What is the average growth rate of healthy hair per month?**
 - A. About a quarter of an inch**
 - B. About half an inch**
 - C. About an inch**
 - D. About three-quarters of an inch**

- 7. Which type of product is used to hold hairstyles in place?**
- A. Conditioner**
 - B. Hair gel**
 - C. Leave-in spray**
 - D. Shampoo**
- 8. Which ingredient in skincare is known to act as a humectant?**
- A. Sodium chloride**
 - B. Glycerin**
 - C. Coconut oil**
 - D. Aloe vera**
- 9. What term describes the varying degrees of warmth exposed during a color or lightening process?**
- A. Hue**
 - B. Contributing pigment**
 - C. Base color**
 - D. Tone**
- 10. What is the main skill tested in the practical section of the North Dakota Cosmetology Exam?**
- A. Theoretical knowledge of cosmetology**
 - B. Hands-on application of cosmetology techniques**
 - C. Client consultation techniques**
 - D. Product knowledge and selection**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What are the basic units of living things referred to?

- A. Organs**
- B. Tissues**
- C. Cells**
- D. Systems**

Cells are considered the fundamental units of living things because they are the smallest structures capable of performing all life processes. Every living organism, from the simplest bacteria to complex multicellular organisms like plants and animals, is composed of one or more cells. Cells carry out essential functions such as metabolism, energy production, growth, and reproduction. They also contain genetic material that helps in the transfer of hereditary information. In contrast, organs, tissues, and systems are hierarchical structures built from cells. Tissues are groups of similar cells that perform a specific function, organs are composed of multiple tissue types working together, and systems are collections of organs that collaborate to carry out complex functions. Thus, while these terms describe larger organizational structures in biological systems, cells are uniquely distinguished as the basic operational units of life.

2. Which tool is primarily used for foiling in hair coloring?

- A. Brush**
- B. Comb**
- C. Foil sheets**
- D. Sponge**

The tool that is primarily used for foiling in hair coloring is foil sheets. These sheets are crucial because they provide a barrier that allows the stylist to apply lightener or color to specific sections of hair without the mixture bleeding into other areas. Foil sheets facilitate the application of color while also reflecting heat back to the hair, which can enhance the processing time and overall effectiveness of the color application. In the context of foiling, the other tools like brushes, combs, and sponges serve different purposes. Brushes are typically used for applying the color or lightener, while combs might assist in sectioning the hair or detangling. Sponges are generally not used in the foiling process for coloring hair, as their application method and texture do not lend themselves well to this technique. The specific design and function of foil sheets make them the most suitable tool for achieving the precise and clean application required in foiling hair coloring.

3. What is the recommended pH of hair conditioners?

- A. 0 to 3
- B. 4 to 6**
- C. 6 to 8
- D. 9 to 11

The recommended pH of hair conditioners is typically between 4 and 6. This range is slightly acidic, which is beneficial for the hair cuticle. When the pH is in this range, it helps to close the cuticle, making the hair smoother, shinier, and more manageable. This acidity also helps to maintain the hair's natural moisture balance and reduces frizz. Formulating conditioners within this pH range is important because it allows the product to effectively condition the hair without causing damage that can occur with higher pH levels. Many hair concerns, such as damage and porosity, can be exacerbated when products have a pH that is too high (like in the ranges indicated by the other choices). Overall, maintaining a pH that is close to the natural pH of hair and skin, which is typically around 4.5 to 5.5, is essential for the overall health and appearance of hair.

4. What type of massage involves a deep rubbing movement applying pressure with fingers and palms?

- A. Friction**
- B. Effleurage
- C. Petrissage
- D. Vibration

The type of massage that involves a deep rubbing movement applying pressure with fingers and palms is known as friction. This technique focuses on producing heat in the tissues and increasing circulation through intense manipulation of the skin and underlying structures. Friction techniques can be particularly effective for breaking down adhesions, increasing local blood flow, and releasing tension in specific areas. In contrast, effleurage is characterized by long, sweeping strokes that are usually light and relaxing, aimed at warming up the tissues or finishing a massage. Petrissage involves kneading motions that lift and squeeze the muscles, promoting relaxation and improving circulation but is not primarily focused on deep rubbing. Vibration entails shaking or trembling movements applied to different parts of the body, usually to stimulate muscle response, but does not involve the pressure associated with friction techniques. Hence, the most accurate description for the deep rubbing movement that applies significant pressure is indeed friction.

5. What is the purpose of a neutralizing shampoo?

- A. To add moisture to the hair
- B. To enhance hair color
- C. To re-balance the pH level of hair**
- D. To clarify buildup on the scalp

The purpose of a neutralizing shampoo is to re-balance the pH level of hair. After chemical processes like perming or relaxing, hair can become either too alkaline or too acidic. Using a neutralizing shampoo helps to restore the hair to its natural pH level, which is typically around 4.5 to 5.5. This restoration is essential for maintaining the health and integrity of the hair, as it can prevent damage, reduce frizz, and enhance overall appearance. Other options, such as adding moisture or enhancing hair color, do not directly relate to the primary function of a neutralizing shampoo. While some shampoos might offer moisturizing properties or color-enhancing effects, the distinct role of a neutralizing shampoo is specifically tied to pH balance, making it essential after certain hair treatments. Clarifying buildup on the scalp is also not the primary purpose; that function is typically associated with different types of cleansing shampoos.

6. What is the average growth rate of healthy hair per month?

- A. About a quarter of an inch
- B. About half an inch**
- C. About an inch
- D. About three-quarters of an inch

The average growth rate of healthy hair is approximately half an inch per month. This rate can vary based on factors such as genetics, health, and age, but half an inch is widely recognized as the typical estimate in the cosmetology field. Understanding this growth rate is essential for hair care and planning haircuts or treatments, as it helps professionals anticipate how quickly hair will grow back after being cut and to provide clients with informed recommendations for maintaining their hairstyles. The other growth rates presented in the other choices do not align with the commonly accepted average for healthy hair growth. While it's useful to know that some individuals may experience slightly slower or faster growth, half an inch remains the standard figure for optimal hair health in a typical scenario.

7. Which type of product is used to hold hairstyles in place?

- A. Conditioner
- B. Hair gel**
- C. Leave-in spray
- D. Shampoo

Hair gel is specifically formulated to provide hold and structure to different hairstyles. Its thick, viscous texture allows it to adhere to the hair strands, enabling stylists and individuals to mold and fix hair into various shapes and styles. When applied, hair gel can create a firm hold that lasts for an extended period, making it ideal for achieving specific looks or maintaining hairstyles throughout the day. Conditioners, leave-in sprays, and shampoos serve different purposes in haircare. Conditioners and leave-in sprays typically focus on nourishing and hydrating the hair rather than providing hold. Shampoos are primarily used for cleaning the hair and scalp, removing dirt and product build-up, rather than styling it. Thus, the choice of hair gel is both accurate and effective for achieving the desired hold and style.

8. Which ingredient in skincare is known to act as a humectant?

- A. Sodium chloride**
- B. Glycerin**
- C. Coconut oil**
- D. Aloe vera**

Glycerin is recognized as a humectant, which is a substance that helps to attract moisture to the skin. This property makes it highly effective in skincare products, as it draws water from the environment into the skin, facilitating hydration. By maintaining moisture levels, glycerin contributes to the skin's softness and smoothness, helping to prevent dryness and improve overall texture. The other options do not function as humectants in the same way. Sodium chloride, commonly known as salt, does not have humectant properties and is more often used for its preservative qualities. Coconut oil primarily acts as an emollient, which means it helps to soften and soothe the skin but does not attract moisture. Aloe vera, while hydrating, is primarily known for its soothing and healing properties rather than its ability to pull moisture into the skin. Thus, glycerin is the substance that stands out for its humectant qualities in this context.

9. What term describes the varying degrees of warmth exposed during a color or lightening process?

- A. Hue**
- B. Contributing pigment**
- C. Base color**
- D. Tone**

The term that best describes the varying degrees of warmth exposed during a color or lightening process is "contributing pigment." When hair is lightened, the chemical process removes the natural color, but underlying pigments in the hair affect the final result. These underlying pigments can range from warm tones, like golds and reds, to cooler tones, like blues and greens. Understanding contributing pigments is essential in hair coloring because they influence the outcome of the color applied to the hair. For example, if you lighten dark hair, the warm tones of the underlying pigments will often become more visible, which may lead to a warmer final shade than anticipated. Other concepts mentioned, such as hue, base color, and tone, refer to different aspects of color. Hue relates to the basic color family (like red or blue), base color refers to the primary color of the hair before any processes are applied, and tone generally describes the overall quality or richness of color. While these are important elements in the color process, it is the contributing pigment that specifically addresses the warmth present during both color application and lightening.

10. What is the main skill tested in the practical section of the North Dakota Cosmetology Exam?

- A. Theoretical knowledge of cosmetology**
- B. Hands-on application of cosmetology techniques**
- C. Client consultation techniques**
- D. Product knowledge and selection**

The practical section of the North Dakota Cosmetology Exam primarily assesses the hands-on application of cosmetology techniques. This portion of the exam is designed to evaluate a candidate's ability to effectively demonstrate skills such as cutting hair, applying color, performing chemical treatments, or executing nail services. It emphasizes practical execution rather than knowledge alone, ensuring candidates can translate their theoretical understanding into real-world applications. Focusing on hands-on skills is crucial in the beauty industry, as practical ability is essential for success in providing services to clients. This section allows examiners to observe not only the candidate's technical proficiency but also their adherence to safety and sanitation standards, which are vital in a professional cosmetology setting. The other options reflect valuable aspects of a cosmetologist's training and knowledge. While theoretical knowledge is important, the ability to apply that knowledge in a practical setting is what ultimately defines a successful cosmetologist. Client consultation techniques and product knowledge certainly play a role in overall service delivery but are not the main focus of the practical exam, which prioritizes demonstrated skill in executing the specific tasks required in the field.

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://northdakotacosmetology.examzify.com>

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