

NYSTCE Music (165) 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

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- 1. Which option best matches a concert band of 40-50 performers in terms of instrumentation?**
 - A. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three or four percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.**
 - B. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three or four percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.**
 - C. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, four clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, two baritone horns, one tuba, and three percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.**
 - D. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three percussion instruments, with a total of 50 performers.**

- 2. Which Chinese instrument is a pear-shaped plucked lute?**
 - A. Djembe**
 - B. Pipa**
 - C. Kabuki**
 - D. Maqam System**

- 3. A cadence that ends on the dominant chord is called a**
 - A. Half Cadence**
 - B. Plagal Cadence**
 - C. Authentic Cadence**
 - D. Deceptive Cadence**

- 4. A shift of the rhythmic pulse from a division of 2 to a division of 3 is called a**
 - A. Polyrhythm**
 - B. Hemiola**
 - C. Syncopation**
 - D. Tuplet**

- 5. Which tempo best describes the fourth movement of a typical four-movement classical symphony?**
- A. Slow**
 - B. Moderate**
 - C. Dance-like**
 - D. Fast**
- 6. Which term is defined as being approached by leap and resolved by down step?**
- A. Suspension**
 - B. Overtones**
 - C. Appoggiatura**
 - D. Passing Tone**
- 7. Which Chinese instrument is a pear-shaped plucked lute traditionally made with silk strings?**
- A. Pipa**
 - B. Erhu**
 - C. Maqam System**
 - D. Kabuki**
- 8. Directors should select a variety of music that is below, at, and above an ensemble's level to provide opportunities for in-depth expressive growth without technical obstacles, as well as music that challenges the students technically. Which choice expresses this approach?**
- A. Three main vocal parts involved in creating sound**
 - B. Air supply (diaphragm), vibrator (larynx), resonator (pharynx and mouth cavity)**
 - C. Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance**
 - D. Music selections for advanced HS ensembles**
- 9. The Chinese hammered dulcimer with a trapezoidal sound box is called what?**
- A. Gum Leaf**
 - B. Dizi**
 - C. Ballade**
 - D. Yangqin**

10. Which nonharmonic tone is defined as a tone that leaves early from the preparation chord by step to become part of the resolution chord?

A. Anticipation Tone

B. Appoggiatura

C. Suspension

D. Passing Tone

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which option best matches a concert band of 40-50 performers in terms of instrumentation?

A. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three or four percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.

B. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three or four percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.

C. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, four clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, two baritone horns, one tuba, and three percussion instruments, with a total of 40-50 performers.

D. Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, four saxophones, four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, one baritone horn, one tuba, and three percussion instruments, with a total of 50 performers.

Think about how a concert band of 40-50 players typically balances timbres across woodwinds, brass, and percussion. You want enough woodwinds to provide color and harmonic support, a solid brass core to project and blend, and a modest percussion section to add rhythm and texture without overwhelming the ensemble. The matching configuration uses two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, three clarinets plus one bass clarinet, which gives a flexible woodwind foundation with a clear center and enough variety (including the bassoon's darker color and the saxophones' heavier, more robust tone). Four saxophones add prominent color without crowding the core winds. In brass, four horns deliver solid mid-range power, three trumpets provide a bright, projecting upper color, and three trombones give substantial weight in the lower brass. A single baritone horn fills the mid-low range, supported by a single tuba for bass grounding. The percussion section remains three to four players, enough to add drive and color without dominating the texture. This distribution aligns well with typical rehearsal and performance needs for a 40-50 player ensemble, balancing sections for a cohesive blend. Other options tend to overpopulate or underpopulate certain sections (for example, more clarinets or extra baritone horn can skew woodwind or low-brass balance; fewer trombones can weaken the lower brass presence), making them less representative of a standard concert-band setup at this size.

2. Which Chinese instrument is a pear-shaped plucked lute?

A. Djembe

B. Pipa

C. Kabuki

D. Maqam System

Recognizing a Chinese pear-shaped plucked lute points to the pipa. The pipa is a traditional Chinese four-string lute with a distinct pear-shaped body and a fretted neck, played by plucking with the fingers or with picks on the nails. Its bright, agile melodic lines and rich ornamentation are characteristic of its playing style, making it the best match for a pear-shaped plucked lute from China. The other options don't fit: the djembe is a West African drum; Kabuki is a Japanese theater form; and the Maqam system is a melodic framework used in Middle Eastern music, not an instrument.

3. A cadence that ends on the dominant chord is called a

- A. Half Cadence**
- B. Plagal Cadence**
- C. Authentic Cadence**
- D. Deceptive Cadence**

Ending on the dominant creates a sense of open-endedness because the V chord carries strong tension that wants to resolve to I, but stopping there leaves the phrase unfinished. This unresolved pull is what defines a half cadence. For example, in C major, a progression that ends on G major feels like it's setting up the next move rather than delivering final closure—the ear expects resolution to C major next. Other cadences resolve to tonic or move to a different, more settled function (like IV to I, or V to vi), so they don't produce that same sense of anticipation and pause.

4. A shift of the rhythmic pulse from a division of 2 to a division of 3 is called a

- A. Polyrhythm**
- B. Hemiola**
- C. Syncopation**
- D. Tuplet**

A shift in how the beat is subdivided from two equal parts to three equal parts is called a hemiola. It creates a temporary cross-rhythm, where the same span of time is felt as three units instead of two, producing a sense of the pulse moving from a duple feel to a triple feel (or vice versa). You can hear it when a passage that seems to be grouped in two's suddenly emphasizes three evenly spaced notes across the same duration, or when two bars of one meter are felt with a different three-beat grouping across the span. This specific re-grouping of the pulse distinguishes hemiola from other concepts: polyrhythm involves layering two rhythms at once, syncopation centers on accented off-beats, and a tuplet is any irregular subdivision like a triplet, not the overall shift in how the beat is divided.

5. Which tempo best describes the fourth movement of a typical four-movement classical symphony?

- A. Slow**
- B. Moderate**
- C. Dance-like**
- D. Fast**

In a classical four-movement symphony, the final movement is typically fast to propel the piece to a lively, decisive close. Composers often end with a brisk tempo—allegro, presto, or similar markings—to create momentum and a sense of energetic finality. This contrasts with the second movement, which is usually slow for contrast and reflection, and with the third movement, which is frequently dance-like in character but not the primary reason for its tempo. So the fast tempo best matches the ending mood and drive of the finale.

6. Which term is defined as being approached by leap and resolved by down step?

- A. Suspension**
- B. Overtones**
- C. Appoggiatura**
- D. Passing Tone**

When a melody introduces a note that isn't part of the current harmony by leaping to it, and then resolves by moving a step downward to a chord tone, that note is called an appoggiatura. It's a nonharmonic tone that creates a brief moment of dissonance on the beat and then settles into consonance with a smooth step down to a note that belongs to the harmony. This approach by leap and resolution by downward step gives the melody a distinctive, accented color. This differs from a suspension, which starts by holding over a note from the previous chord and then resolves downward by step but isn't reached by a leap. A passing tone, by contrast, is always approached and left by step in the same direction, not by a leap. The term in question is specifically tied to that leap-into, then step-down resolution pattern.

7. Which Chinese instrument is a pear-shaped plucked lute traditionally made with silk strings?

- A. Pipa**
- B. Erhu**
- C. Maqam System**
- D. Kabuki**

A pear-shaped, plucked Chinese lute with silk strings is the pipa. The body's distinctive shape and the long fretted neck identify it, and it's played by plucking the strings with the right hand while the left hand frets and accents notes to produce expressive tone and ornaments. Silk strings point to its traditional construction, though modern versions may use synthetic materials as well. This distinguishes it from the erhu, which is a slender, two-stringed instrument played with a bow, not plucked. The Maqam System is a Middle Eastern melodic framework rather than an instrument, and Kabuki refers to a Japanese theater form with its own musical elements, not a single instrument.

8. Directors should select a variety of music that is below, at, and above an ensemble's level to provide opportunities for in-depth expressive growth without technical obstacles, as well as music that challenges the students technically. Which choice expresses this approach?

- A. Three main vocal parts involved in creating sound**
- B. Air supply (diaphragm), vibrator (larynx), resonator (pharynx and mouth cavity)**
- C. Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance**
- D. Music selections for advanced HS ensembles**

Balancing repertoire across levels to foster expressive growth while managing technical obstacles. When directors plan a concert or season, they aim to give students opportunities to explore deep expressive ideas without being hindered by insurmountable technique, while also providing material that pushes them to improve technically. The option about selecting music for an advanced high school ensemble cleanly captures this practice: it centers the act of choosing repertoire appropriate for a capable group, which naturally includes pieces at varied difficulty to support growth and to present technical challenges in a manageable, progression-friendly way. The other choices focus on aspects like voice production, the anatomical means of sound, or a broad performance-based framework, rather than the specific practice of curating repertoire across levels to nurture growth.

9. The Chinese hammered dulcimer with a trapezoidal sound box is called what?

- A. Gum Leaf**
- B. Dizi**
- C. Ballade**
- D. Yangqin**

Yangqin is the Chinese hammered dulcimer with a trapezoidal sound box, played by striking metal strings with two small mallets. Its distinct shape and playing method set it apart from other instruments in the list, and it is a staple in Chinese ensembles. The gum leaf is an Australian wind instrument made from a leaf, the dizi is a Chinese bamboo flute, and a ballade is a type of musical composition, not an instrument. So the instrument described is yangqin.

10. Which nonharmonic tone is defined as a tone that leaves early from the preparation chord by step to become part of the resolution chord?

A. Anticipation Tone

B. Appoggiatura

C. Suspension

D. Passing Tone

Nonharmonic tones are notes that momentarily step outside the current harmony to add color, then return to the expected chord. This item describes a tone that starts in the preparation chord but moves by step to join the notes of the resolution chord earlier than the change in harmony. That sense of “arriving early on the next chord” is what identifies it as an anticipation. An anticipation occurs when a pitch belongs to the upcoming harmony and is heard before the actual change, so it sounds like part of the resolution chord even though the surrounding harmony hasn’t changed yet. It’s often approached by step from a note in the previous chord and then becomes part of the new chord once the harmony changes. By contrast, a passing tone connects two chord tones by step within the same harmony; a suspension uses a tone carried over from the previous chord and resolves downward by step; and an appoggiatura is typically approached by a leap and resolved by step, often accented. The defining feature here is that the tone belongs to the upcoming, resolution chord and enters early, which is why it’s described as an anticipation.

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://nystcemusic165.examzify.com>

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

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