

Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of 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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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!

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Questions

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- 1. Are warning shots permitted?**
 - A. Yes, under specific circumstances**
 - B. No, they are not authorized**
 - C. Only in life-threatening situations**
 - D. Yes, but only in non-lethal circumstances**
- 2. From where does the Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) obtain its authority?**
 - A. Legislation only**
 - B. Constitution, statutes, and regulations**
 - C. Only through executive orders**
 - D. International treaties**
- 3. What are the potential outcomes that immigration judges can decide on during a hearing?**
 - A. Bond and change of address**
 - B. Removability and naturalization**
 - C. Relief and change of venue**
 - D. Refugee status and asylum applications**
- 4. What term describes the facts required to progress from one level of suspicion to another?**
 - A. Corroborative evidence**
 - B. Articulable facts**
 - C. Speculative assumptions**
 - D. Heuristic details**
- 5. What is the role of prosecutorial discretion in OPLA's work?**
 - A. It allows OPLA to enforce immigration laws at will**
 - B. It gives OPLA the authority to prioritize cases based on various factors**
 - C. It limits OPLA's capabilities in processing cases**
 - D. It is irrelevant in immigration enforcement**

6. What is the primary function of the Executive branch?

- A. Make laws**
- B. Interpret laws**
- C. Enforce laws**
- D. Debate laws**

7. How does OPLA contribute to the enforcement of immigration laws?

- A. Crafts legal arguments and defends ICE's actions in court**
- B. Develops new immigration policy**
- C. Oversees the administration of immigration benefits**
- D. Represents individuals in deportation proceedings**

8. Why are strong writing skills crucial for OPLA attorneys?

- A. To translate legal documents into layman's terms**
- B. To compose clear legal briefs and documents**
- C. To persuade judges effectively in court**
- D. To maintain internal communication among staff**

9. Which of the following best describes the role of Congress?

- A. Ensure laws are enforced**
- B. Interpret laws**
- C. Create and pass legislation**
- D. Advise the President on policies**

10. What title number encompasses immigration laws in the U.S.C.?

- A. Title 7**
- B. Title 8**
- C. Title 9**
- D. Title 10**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Are warning shots permitted?

- A. Yes, under specific circumstances
- B. No, they are not authorized**
- C. Only in life-threatening situations
- D. Yes, but only in non-lethal circumstances

The correct interpretation regarding the permissibility of warning shots generally emphasizes that they are not authorized within most legal and operational frameworks. Warning shots can create significant dangers; they can unintentionally hit bystanders, escalate a situation unnecessarily, or provoke an unwanted response. In many law enforcement and military protocols, the use of firearm discharges is tightly regulated and often only justified in direct response to an imminent threat where lethal force is warranted. Rather than using warning shots, protocols typically advocate for de-escalation techniques and non-lethal methods to manage potentially dangerous situations. This understanding reflects a broader principle in public safety and legal use of force doctrines where unnecessary discharges of firearms are generally viewed as inappropriate.

2. From where does the Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) obtain its authority?

- A. Legislation only
- B. Constitution, statutes, and regulations**
- C. Only through executive orders
- D. International treaties

The Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) derives its authority primarily from the Constitution, statutes, and regulations. This comprehensive basis for authority is crucial in understanding the scope and limitations of ERO's operations within the immigration enforcement framework. The Constitution provides the foundational legal principles that guide federal agencies, including ERO. Statutes refer to the specific laws enacted by Congress that grant agencies their powers and outlines their responsibilities. Key immigration laws, such as the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), delineate the procedures for enforcement and removal activities. Regulations, which are rules created by federal agencies that explain how the statutes will be implemented, further clarify the authority of ERO. They provide detailed guidance on how immigration laws should be applied in practice. This multi-faceted framework of authority—rooted in constitutional principles, specific laws, and regulatory guidelines—ensures that ERO operates within the bounds of the law while also achieving its enforcement objectives. The other options do not encompass the complete legal grounding that ERO requires to function effectively. Relying solely on legislation, executive orders, or international treaties would present a limited and incomplete view of ERO's authority.

3. What are the potential outcomes that immigration judges can decide on during a hearing?

- A. Bond and change of address**
- B. Removability and naturalization**
- C. Relief and change of venue**
- D. Refugee status and asylum applications**

During an immigration hearing, judges have a range of decisions they can make, with notable options including relief from removal and change of venue. The concept of relief in immigration proceedings refers to the various forms of relief from deportation that can be granted, such as cancellation of removal, adjustment of status, or asylum. This aspect is critical, as immigration judges assess the merits of individual cases and can provide protections to eligible individuals facing removal. Additionally, change of venue is an important procedural aspect that can come into play if a case might be better considered in a different jurisdiction for various reasons, which an immigration judge has the authority to decide. This allows for flexibility in the handling of cases based on circumstances such as convenience for the parties involved or the relevance of evidence presented. The other options, while relevant to immigration law, do not accurately reflect the specific decisions an immigration judge makes during hearings. Bond and change of address relate to preliminary matters rather than the core outcomes of removal proceedings. Removability concerns are addressed in the context of hearings, but naturalization is handled by different authorities. Lastly, while refugee status and asylum applications are critical immigration issues, they represent aspects of immigration law rather than formal outcomes that judges specifically decide upon during hearings.

4. What term describes the facts required to progress from one level of suspicion to another?

- A. Corroborative evidence**
- B. Articulable facts**
- C. Speculative assumptions**
- D. Heuristic details**

The term that describes the facts required to progress from one level of suspicion to another is articulable facts. These are specific, clear, and objective facts that law enforcement officers can point to as a basis for their suspicion or decision-making at different stages of legal scrutiny. In the context of investigations or police stops, articulable facts provide the necessary foundation to justify escalating levels of suspicion, starting from a mere hunch to reasonable suspicion, and eventually, to probable cause. Articulable facts help establish a legal threshold that protects individuals' rights while allowing law enforcement to act effectively. For example, if an officer observes a person engaging in suspicious behavior—such as looking around nervously while lingering near a closed business—these factual observations can form the basis for an initial stop and inquiry. In contrast to this term, corroborative evidence refers to additional evidence that supports or confirms existing facts or suspicions, whereas speculative assumptions are unvalidated beliefs or guesses without factual backing. Heuristic details typically refer to cognitive shortcuts or rules of thumb used for problem-solving and are not specifically related to legal standards of suspicion. Therefore, articulable facts are critical in the legal framework as they provide a factual basis needed for officers to justify their actions at different stages of an investigation.

5. What is the role of prosecutorial discretion in OPLA's work?

- A. It allows OPLA to enforce immigration laws at will
- B. It gives OPLA the authority to prioritize cases based on various factors**
- C. It limits OPLA's capabilities in processing cases
- D. It is irrelevant in immigration enforcement

Prosecutorial discretion is a critical concept in the work of the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA), particularly as it pertains to immigration law enforcement. This practice allows OPLA to assess and prioritize cases based on a variety of factors, such as the merits of a case, the resources available, the urgency of the situation, and broader policy considerations. By exercising this discretion, OPLA can focus on cases that align with its enforcement priorities, which can include factors such as public safety, national security, and community impact. This approach enables the agency to allocate its resources more effectively and to ensure that its enforcement actions are both just and equitable. The ability to prioritize cases helps OPLA manage its caseload and respond to emerging issues within immigration enforcement. Therefore, this role of prosecutorial discretion is vital for OPLA to function effectively in the realm of immigration law.

6. What is the primary function of the Executive branch?

- A. Make laws
- B. Interpret laws
- C. Enforce laws**
- D. Debate laws

The primary function of the Executive branch is to enforce laws. This branch is responsible for implementing and administering the laws passed by the legislature, ensuring that they are carried out effectively and efficiently. The Executive branch includes the President, Vice President, and various federal agencies and departments that work together to execute the laws of the nation. This role encompasses a wide range of activities, such as overseeing federal law enforcement, conducting foreign affairs, managing national defense, and implementing policies related to health, education, and other areas. The enforcement of laws is vital for maintaining order and ensuring that the statutes enacted by the legislative branch have practical effects on the ground. In contrast to the other options, the Executive branch does not make laws—that function belongs to the Legislative branch—or interpret laws, which is the role of the Judicial branch. The concept of debating laws is also outside the purview of the Executive branch, as that activity typically takes place within the legislative process, where representatives discuss and agree on proposed legislation.

7. How does OPLA contribute to the enforcement of immigration laws?

- A. Crafts legal arguments and defends ICE's actions in court**
- B. Develops new immigration policy**
- C. Oversees the administration of immigration benefits**
- D. Represents individuals in deportation proceedings**

The role of the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) is integral to the enforcement of immigration laws, particularly through crafting legal arguments and defending actions taken by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in court. This function is essential because it ensures that the legal framework surrounding immigration is upheld and that ICE's actions are legally sound. OPLA attorneys work to interpret and apply immigration law, providing legal guidance that supports ICE operations, thus enhancing the effectiveness of immigration enforcement. This involvement in legal defense helps to clarify the boundaries of immigration enforcement and the responsibilities of government agencies, ensuring that due process is followed in legal proceedings. By representing ICE in administrative hearings and court cases, OPLA plays a critical role in shaping the outcome of immigration enforcement actions, which can have widespread implications on policy and individual cases. Other roles listed, such as developing new immigration policy or overseeing the administration of immigration benefits, are not the primary functions of OPLA. Additionally, representing individuals in deportation proceedings falls outside of OPLA's mandate, as their focus is on representing the government rather than individual clients. Therefore, option A accurately reflects OPLA's primary contribution to immigration law enforcement.

8. Why are strong writing skills crucial for OPLA attorneys?

- A. To translate legal documents into layman's terms**
- B. To compose clear legal briefs and documents**
- C. To persuade judges effectively in court**
- D. To maintain internal communication among staff**

Strong writing skills are crucial for OPLA attorneys primarily because they enable the composition of clear legal briefs and documents. Legal briefs must convey complex legal arguments in a logical, structured, and succinct manner, ensuring that the core issues are clearly presented to judges and other decision-makers. This clarity is essential not only for effective communication but also for the successful advocacy of legal positions. Well-structured writing helps to articulate the facts, legal theories, and arguments in a way that can be easily understood and followed by those who may not have the same level of legal expertise. Effective legal documents can significantly influence the outcomes of cases by presenting compelling arguments and evidence persuasively. Additionally, while other aspects of legal communication, such as translating legal terms or internal communication, are important, the primary function of an attorney's writing in the OPLA context revolves around the creation of documents that must meet formal legal standards and be persuasive in nature. Thus, the ability to write clearly and effectively is fundamental to an attorney's success in this role.

9. Which of the following best describes the role of Congress?

- A. Ensure laws are enforced**
- B. Interpret laws**
- C. Create and pass legislation**
- D. Advise the President on policies**

The role of Congress is best described as creating and passing legislation. Congress is the legislative branch of the federal government, consisting of two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Its primary function is to draft, debate, and enact laws that address various issues and govern the nation. This involves a process where proposed laws, known as bills, are introduced, discussed, modified, and ultimately voted on. If passed by both houses, these bills are sent to the President for approval. While ensuring that laws are enforced and interpreting laws are important roles within the broader government framework, these activities fall under the executive and judicial branches, respectively. The executive branch, headed by the President, focuses on law enforcement and implementation, while the judiciary is responsible for interpreting laws through court rulings. Advising the President on policies is also a function of the executive branch, often carried out by the Cabinet and other advisors. Thus, the creation and passage of legislation is the clear and central role of Congress, distinguishing it from the functions of the other branches of government.

10. What title number encompasses immigration laws in the U.S.C.?

- A. Title 7**
- B. Title 8**
- C. Title 9**
- D. Title 10**

In the United States Code (U.S.C.), immigration laws are primarily found under Title 8. This title specifically addresses issues pertaining to aliens and nationality, covering a wide range of topics including visa regulations, deportation procedures, naturalization processes, and the overall structure of immigration policy in the United States. Title 8 is significant because it outlines the legal framework that governs who can enter the country, how long they can stay, and the requirements for becoming a citizen. This central focus makes it the appropriate reference for immigration-related legal matters. The other titles listed do not pertain to immigration; Title 7 deals primarily with agriculture, Title 9 focuses on criminal procedure, and Title 10 addresses the armed forces. This distinction reinforces why Title 8 is the correct choice in relation to immigration laws in the U.S.C.

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://principallegaladvisorpla.examzify.com>

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

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