

# PS4700 American Political Thought 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 work is associated with a radical call for independence and a republic without monarchy?**
  - A. Paine's Common Sense**
  - B. The Slavery Issue**
  - C. The Declaration of Independence**
  - D. The Citizen Militia**
  
- 2. What term describes Hobbes's idea that political authority arises from a covenant with a sovereign to escape the state of nature?**
  - A. Divine Right**
  - B. Popular Sovereignty**
  - C. Natural Law**
  - D. Social Contract**
  
- 3. Natural Aristocracy refers to leaders who rise due to?**
  - A. Noble birth and titles**
  - B. Talent, virtue, intelligence, and merit rather than inherited wealth**
  - C. Random selection**
  - D. Wealth and popularity**
  
- 4. Which historian argued that the Constitution was designed to protect the economic interests of elites, especially property owners?**
  - A. C. Beard**
  - B. John Adams**
  - C. Jonathan Mayhew**
  - D. A. R. Amar**
  
- 5. Which meeting focused on fixing the issues of the Articles of Confederation and designing a new national government?**
  - A. The Continental Congress**
  - B. The Convention**
  - C. The Philadelphia Conference**
  - D. The Assembly of Confederation**

- 6. Which figure is described as reading Leviathan and writing Commonwealth of Oceana, proposing republic and rotations in office?**
- A. James Harrington**
  - B. Alexander Hamilton**
  - C. Thomas Jefferson**
  - D. John Boucher**
- 7. Which figure is described as a Federalist with Puritan characteristics, emphasizing austerity, work ethic, and frugality?**
- A. John Adams**
  - B. James Otis**
  - C. Nathaniel Ward**
  - D. John Dickinson**
- 8. What best describes Marshall's jurisprudence regarding the Constitution?**
- A. Strict textualism**
  - B. Originalism**
  - C. Broad interpretation of the Constitution**
  - D. Judicial restraint**
- 9. Parliament and the King refers to a conflict in 17th-century England over sovereignty between which institutions?**
- A. Parliament and the King**
  - B. The common law and the crown**
  - C. The merchants and the crown**
  - D. The church and the state**
- 10. Which figure is described as Puritan and moderate, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, and describing the colony as a 'City Upon a Hill'?**
- A. John Winthrop**
  - B. Roger Williams**
  - C. Thomas Jefferson**
  - D. Alexander Hamilton**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which work is associated with a radical call for independence and a republic without monarchy?**

- A. Paine's Common Sense**
- B. The Slavery Issue**
- C. The Declaration of Independence**
- D. The Citizen Militia**

The key idea is a radical push for independence and a republic without monarchy. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* argues plainly that the colonies should break from Britain and reject hereditary rule as tyrannical. It makes the case for a new political order based on republican principles—government derived from the people's consent, with no king or hereditary rule. Its accessible language and direct critique of monarchy helped mobilize popular support for independence and the creation of a republic. The Declaration of Independence also argues for breaking away, but it doesn't prescribe a specific form of government; it states universal rights and the justification for independence, leaving the exact structure of government to be decided later. The other options focus on different topics and do not center on promoting independence tied to a republic without monarchy.

**2. What term describes Hobbes's idea that political authority arises from a covenant with a sovereign to escape the state of nature?**

- A. Divine Right**
- B. Popular Sovereignty**
- C. Natural Law**
- D. Social Contract**

The idea being tested is the social contract—the notion that political authority rests on an agreement among individuals to give up some freedoms in exchange for order and protection provided by a sovereign. In Hobbes's view, life in the state of nature would be a perpetual struggle with no security, so people consent to a covenant that establishes a central authority with the power to enforce peace. The legitimacy of this authority comes from that consent to escape chaos, not from divine decree or from the people's later voting power, and not from universal moral law. Divine Right locates authority in God's will, not a human agreement; Popular Sovereignty says rulers derive authority from the people generally, often in democratic settings; Natural Law refers to universal moral principles that govern behavior, not the source of political power in Hobbes. Social contract is the term that captures the specific idea of a covenant with a sovereign to escape the state of nature.

### 3. Natural Aristocracy refers to leaders who rise due to?

- A. Noble birth and titles
- B. Talent, virtue, intelligence, and merit rather than inherited wealth**
- C. Random selection
- D. Wealth and popularity

Natural aristocracy is the idea that leaders rise because of merit—talent, virtue, intelligence, and proven ability—rather than because of birth or inherited status. This view holds that authority in a republic should come from qualities actually worthy of leadership, not from belonging to a privileged class. It contrasts with hereditary rule, where titles and power pass by blood, and with rulers chosen by luck or popularity or wealth alone. In this way, it supports a leadership ideal grounded in character and capacity, often associated with the educated or virtuous elite, who earn influence through their actions and public service rather than through birthright. Historically, thinkers who used this term emphasized that a society benefits when its leadership emerges from merit rather than accident of birth, aligning with democratic hopes for capable and principled governance.

### 4. Which historian argued that the Constitution was designed to protect the economic interests of elites, especially property owners?

- A. C. Beard**
- B. John Adams
- C. Jonathan Mayhew
- D. A. R. Amar

The main idea being tested is the economic interpretation of the Constitution—the claim that the document was designed to protect the economic interests of the elite, especially property owners. Charles A. Beard argued this view, most famously in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. He contended that the framers were largely property owners whose economic concerns shaped the structure and provisions of the Constitution. By analyzing the backgrounds of the founders and the economic context of the era, he suggested that features such as protections for private property, limits on direct taxation, and the balance of power between different branches and states served to secure the interests and influence of the wealthy. This perspective contrasts with readings that emphasize republican virtue, universal liberty, or democratic ideals as the driving force behind the founding. The other figures on the list are associated with different aims or periods: John Adams advocated strong centralized government and order but not this specific economic interpretation; Jonathan Mayhew was a colonial-era religious-political writer with different concerns; A. R. Amar is a modern constitutional scholar focusing on democratic and textual analyses rather than an elite-property protection argument.

5. Which meeting focused on fixing the issues of the Articles of Confederation and designing a new national government?
- A. The Continental Congress
  - B. The Convention**
  - C. The Philadelphia Conference
  - D. The Assembly of Confederation

The central idea is replacing the weak framework of the Articles of Confederation with a stronger national government. This was addressed at the meeting held in Philadelphia in 1787, the Constitutional Convention (often called the Philadelphia Convention). Delegates gathered specifically to fix the Articles' problems—no power to tax, no national executive or judiciary, and no effective ability to regulate commerce—and to design a new structure for the United States. The result was a written Constitution that created a national government with three branches, endowed with powers like taxation, regulation of interstate and international commerce, and a system of checks and balances. The Continental Congress operated under the Articles earlier and wasn't the event to draft a new framework; terms like the Philadelphia Conference aren't the standard label for this gathering, and the Assembly of Confederation isn't a recognized historical meeting for this purpose. So this Philadelphia gathering is the one that focused on fixing those issues and designing a new national government.

6. Which figure is described as reading Leviathan and writing Commonwealth of Oceana, proposing republic and rotations in office?
- A. James Harrington
  - B. Alexander Hamilton**
  - C. Thomas Jefferson
  - D. John Boucher

The figure described is James Harrington. He authored Commonwealth of Oceana in the mid-17th century, a famous republican treatise that lays out a mixed constitution and, notably, a system of rotations in office and annual elections to prevent the entrenchment of power. The phrase about reading Leviathan signals engagement with early modern political theories around sovereignty and the social contract, but Harrington's contribution is in proposing a practical republican framework with rotating magistracies to maintain liberty and prevent corruption. The other names aren't known for writing Oceana or for advocating this rotating-office approach. Alexander Hamilton is linked with later Federalist thought and a strong central government, Thomas Jefferson with republican ideals and rights, and John Boucher is not associated with this work.

**7. Which figure is described as a Federalist with Puritan characteristics, emphasizing austerity, work ethic, and frugality?**

- A. John Adams**
- B. James Otis**
- C. Nathaniel Ward**
- D. John Dickinson**

Adams embodies the blend of a Federalist political stance with Puritan-infused New England discipline, where public virtue is expressed through austerity, hard work, and frugality. His New England upbringing gave him a reputation for seriousness, thrift, and a disciplined, principled approach to both life and government. As a leading Federalist, he argued for a strong central government to preserve liberty and order, aligning with a view that governance should reflect moral seriousness and economic prudence. James Otis is tied to Puritan influence and colonial rights advocacy, but not to the Federalist faction. Nathaniel Ward is a Puritan minister whose work predates the Federalist era, focused more on religious and community concerns. John Dickinson, while a pivotal Revolutionary figure, favored weaker central authority and different constitutional tendencies, not the Puritan-infused austerity associated with the Federalist ideal. Thus, John Adams best fits the description.

**8. What best describes Marshall's jurisprudence regarding the Constitution?**

- A. Strict textualism**
- B. Originalism**
- C. Broad interpretation of the Constitution**
- D. Judicial restraint**

Marshall's approach treats the Constitution as a framework that supports a strong national government with powers that extend beyond what is written in the text, whenever necessary to carry out federal duties. He relied on implied powers under the Necessary and Proper Clause and argued for the supremacy of federal law over state law, a view that comes out clearly in decisions like *McCulloch v. Maryland*, where Congress's power to charter a national bank was upheld and states were barred from taxing it. In *Gibbons v. Ogden*, he defined commerce broadly to include many forms of economic activity, allowing Congress to regulate interstate trade. These choices show a broad interpretation of the Constitution, emphasizing national power and functional purposes over a narrow, word-for-word reading or solely the framers' original intent, and they also contrast with the idea of judicial restraint that defers to legislative judgments. This broad, flexible reading helped establish a stronger federal government in the early republic.

**9. Parliament and the King refers to a conflict in 17th-century England over sovereignty between which institutions?**

- A. Parliament and the King**
- B. The common law and the crown**
- C. The merchants and the crown**
- D. The church and the state**

The main idea is the struggle over sovereignty between the legislature and the monarch in 17th-century England. During this period, kings claimed prerogative power to govern and make policy with minimal Parliament constraint, while Parliament argued that it held the authority to tax, legislate, and oversee the government. This dispute produced several key moments and documents—the Petition of Right limiting royal taxation and detention, political crises, the Civil War, and ultimately the Bill of Rights of 1689—which established that the monarch’s powers are bound by law and that Parliament stands as the ultimate authority in political decision-making. This shift paved the path toward a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary sovereignty. Other options touch on related themes, like the influence of common law, economic interests, or church-state relations, but they don’t capture the central constitutional clash of this era: who holds the ultimate sovereignty—the King or Parliament.

**10. Which figure is described as Puritan and moderate, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, and describing the colony as a 'City Upon a Hill'?**

- A. John Winthrop**
- B. Roger Williams**
- C. Thomas Jefferson**
- D. Alexander Hamilton**

The idea being tested is who framed Massachusetts Bay Colony as a model community and led it as its first governor. John Winthrop fits, a Puritan leader who helped establish the colony and served as its first governor. In his 1630 sermon aboard the Arbella, he described the colony as a “City Upon a Hill,” a morally exemplary Christian commonwealth meant to be watched by the world and to guide others. Roger Williams, though also a Puritan, advocated religious liberty and separation of church and state and later founded Rhode Island, not the Massachusetts governorate or that emblematic vision. Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton belong to the broader Founding Era with different roles and contexts, not the Massachusetts Bay leadership or the City Upon a Hill metaphor. So the figure described is John Winthrop.

## 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://ps4700americanpolthought.examzify.com>**

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

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