

# SCA Barista Intermediate Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

**Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

**No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.**

**Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.**

**SAMPLE**

# Table of Contents

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Use This Guide</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Questions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Answers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Explanations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>16</b>

SAMPLE

# 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

SAMPLE

- 1. What factors influence the flavor of coffee?**
  - A. Only the roast level and brew method**
  - B. Origin, processing method, and grind size**
  - C. Water quality and brewing time only**
  - D. Grind size and brewing equipment**
  
- 2. What is the maximum final milk temperature recommended for steaming according to SCA?**
  - A. 60°C (140°F)**
  - B. 70°C (158°F)**
  - C. 75°C (167°F)**
  - D. 80°C (176°F)**
  
- 3. What role does cellulose play in coffee?**
  - A. It enhances the flavor of coffee**
  - B. It forms part of the coffee bean structure, affecting texture and extraction**
  - C. It provides caffeine content**
  - D. It influences the acidity of coffee**
  
- 4. What does the "coffee belt" refer to?**
  - A. The area where coffee processing takes place**
  - B. The region around the equator where optimal coffee-growing conditions exist**
  - C. The geographical line that separates coffee varieties**
  - D. The latitudinal range for coffee roasting**
  
- 5. What is the total weekly cost of milk waste if the barista wastes 56,000ml of milk in a week?**
  - A. 56 pounds**
  - B. 84 pounds**
  - C. 112 pounds**
  - D. 140 pounds**

- 6. What aspect of coffee does water alkalinity help to control?**
- A. Brewing time**
  - B. Bitterness**
  - C. Acidity and extraction rates**
  - D. Temperature**
- 7. How does acidity of coffee influence its taste?**
- A. It reduces bitterness in coffee**
  - B. It contributes to brightness and liveliness in flavor profiles**
  - C. It creates a smoother texture**
  - D. It adds a creamy taste to the brew**
- 8. What is "latte art" primarily about?**
- A. Creating shadows with brewed coffee**
  - B. Decorative designs created by pouring steamed milk into espresso**
  - C. Mixing coffee and flavored syrups**
  - D. Grinding coffee beans into fine particles**
- 9. In coffee brewing, what does the term "bloom" refer to?**
- A. The process of grinding coffee beans**
  - B. The initial release of gases from coffee grounds when water is added**
  - C. The cooling phase after brewing**
  - D. The final stage of coffee extraction**
- 10. What are the characteristics of Arabica coffee?**
- A. Higher levels of bitterness and acidity**
  - B. Generally sweeter and more acidic**
  - C. Less caffeine than Robusta coffee**
  - D. More oily and darker in flavor**

## Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

## **Explanations**

SAMPLE

## 1. What factors influence the flavor of coffee?

- A. Only the roast level and brew method
- B. Origin, processing method, and grind size**
- C. Water quality and brewing time only
- D. Grind size and brewing equipment

The flavor of coffee is influenced by a variety of factors, and the correct choice highlights key contributors that interact with one another to create the overall tasting experience. Origin refers to the geographical region where the coffee beans are grown. Different regions produce beans with unique characteristics due to variations in climate, soil type, altitude, and farming practices. For instance, Ethiopian coffees are known for their bright acidity and floral notes, while Brazilian coffees often have a nuttier, chocolatey profile. Processing method describes how the coffee cherries are treated after harvesting, which can significantly affect the final flavor profile. Various methods, such as washed (or wet) processing, natural (or dry) processing, and honey processing, impart different qualities to the coffee. For example, natural processing often emphasizes fruitiness and sweetness, while washed processing tends to produce cleaner and brighter flavors. Grind size plays a crucial role in the extraction process during brewing. Finer grinds increase the surface area exposed to water, which can lead to a faster extraction and potentially more intense flavors. Conversely, coarser grinds result in slower extraction and can lead to a milder taste. The grind size must be matched with the brewing method to achieve the desired flavor balance, as different methods require specific

## 2. What is the maximum final milk temperature recommended for steaming according to SCA?

- A. 60°C (140°F)
- B. 70°C (158°F)**
- C. 75°C (167°F)
- D. 80°C (176°F)

The recommended maximum final milk temperature for steaming according to the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) is 70°C (158°F). This temperature ensures that the milk maintains its sweetness and micro-foam quality, which is essential for creating well-textured milk that complements espresso in beverages like lattes and cappuccinos. Heating milk beyond this temperature can lead to scalding, which negatively affects the flavor profile by making it taste burnt or cooked. Additionally, at temperatures higher than 70°C (158°F), milk proteins may start to denature, disrupting the emulsification necessary for achieving the desired velvety texture. Keeping the steaming temperature within this recommended limit not only enhances the sensory experience of the beverage but also ensures that the milk retains its structural integrity, which is crucial for latte art and overall presentation in coffee service.

### 3. What role does cellulose play in coffee?

- A. It enhances the flavor of coffee
- B. It forms part of the coffee bean structure, affecting texture and extraction**
- C. It provides caffeine content
- D. It influences the acidity of coffee

Cellulose plays a crucial role in the structure of coffee beans. It is a form of plant fiber that contributes to the physical integrity of the bean. This structural component impacts how the coffee is prepared and ultimately affects the extraction process during brewing. When making coffee, the presence of cellulose influences the flow of water through the coffee grounds, which can affect the extraction time and the resulting flavor profile of the beverage. Additionally, because cellulose is not soluble in water, it does not contribute to flavor or aroma directly, which distinguishes its role from those elements that enhance the taste of coffee or influence acidity. Understanding cellulose's role is essential for baristas and roasters, as it enables them to control brewing parameters and achieve optimal extraction, leading to a better final product.

### 4. What does the "coffee belt" refer to?

- A. The area where coffee processing takes place
- B. The region around the equator where optimal coffee-growing conditions exist**
- C. The geographical line that separates coffee varieties
- D. The latitudinal range for coffee roasting

The term "coffee belt" specifically refers to the region around the equator where conditions are most favorable for coffee cultivation. This area typically extends between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, encompassing countries in Central and South America, Africa, and parts of Asia. The climate in this zone provides the necessary temperature, rainfall, and altitude that coffee plants require to thrive. These factors contribute to the distinct flavor profiles and qualities of coffee from various regions within the coffee belt. Understanding this geographical concept is essential for appreciating how terroir influences coffee characteristics, and it underscores the importance of climate and environmental factors in agricultural production.

### 5. What is the total weekly cost of milk waste if the barista wastes 56,000ml of milk in a week?

- A. 56 pounds
- B. 84 pounds
- C. 112 pounds**
- D. 140 pounds

To determine the total weekly cost of milk waste when a barista wastes 56,000ml of milk, it is essential to consider the cost of milk per liter. Since there are 1,000ml in a liter, 56,000ml translates to 56 liters of milk. Next, if the cost of milk is taken to be around £2 per liter, multiplying this cost by the number of liters wasted gives the total cost of the wasted milk. In this case, 56 liters multiplied by £2 results in £112. Thus, the choice of 112 pounds accurately reflects the overall cost of the wasted milk based on the given amount, making it the correct answer. The other options do not correspond to the actual calculations based on typical costs involved with milk waste.

**6. What aspect of coffee does water alkalinity help to control?**

- A. Brewing time**
- B. Bitterness**
- C. Acidity and extraction rates**
- D. Temperature**

Water alkalinity plays a significant role in influencing the acidity and extraction rates of coffee. When brewing coffee, the chemical composition of water, particularly its alkalinity, impacts how acids and other soluble compounds are extracted from the coffee grounds. Higher alkalinity can help balance the acidity in the coffee, making it taste smoother and less sharp, while also promoting a more even extraction process. This means that not only do the desirable flavors get extracted more efficiently, but it can also suppress undesirable bitter flavors that may arise from over-extraction. Furthermore, understanding the relationship between water chemistry—specifically alkalinity—and extraction is crucial for baristas aiming to achieve the desired flavor profile in their coffee. By controlling alkalinity, baristas can optimize the brewing conditions to highlight the intended characteristics of the coffee, ensuring a more harmonious cup.

**7. How does acidity of coffee influence its taste?**

- A. It reduces bitterness in coffee**
- B. It contributes to brightness and liveliness in flavor profiles**
- C. It creates a smoother texture**
- D. It adds a creamy taste to the brew**

The influence of acidity on coffee's taste is a significant aspect of flavor perception. When we discuss the acidity in coffee, it is linked to the bright and vibrant characteristics that can enhance the overall flavor profile. Acidity in this context refers to the pleasant, crisp notes that can be reminiscent of fruits or citrus, contributing to the overall liveliness of the coffee. This brightness can make certain flavors more pronounced and adds complexity to the cup, fulfilling an important role in balancing sweetness and bitterness. Therefore, a well-balanced acidity can elevate the coffee, giving it an invigorating and refreshing quality that is often sought after in specialty coffee. While bitterness and texture are relevant taste components, they do not capture the essence of how acidity specifically enhances the flavor profile in the way brightness does.

## 8. What is "latte art" primarily about?

- A. Creating shadows with brewed coffee
- B. Decorative designs created by pouring steamed milk into espresso**
- C. Mixing coffee and flavored syrups
- D. Grinding coffee beans into fine particles

Latte art is primarily focused on the creation of decorative designs by pouring steamed milk into espresso. This technique utilizes the microfoam produced during the steaming process, allowing baristas to create intricate patterns like hearts, rosettas, and tulips. The art of latte pouring not only enhances the visual appeal of the beverage but also indicates the quality of the espresso and the skill of the barista. This practice goes beyond just the aesthetic; it reflects the care and expertise in espresso preparation and milk texturing. The process involves manipulating the angle of the cup and the flow of milk to achieve symmetrical designs that showcase a barista's artistry. Other options do not pertain to latte art. Creating shadows with brewed coffee does not capture the essence of the visual designs associated with steaming and pouring milk. Mixing coffee and flavored syrups relates more to flavored beverages, while grinding coffee beans focuses on the preparation of coffee rather than the presentation aspect that latte art emphasizes.

## 9. In coffee brewing, what does the term "bloom" refer to?

- A. The process of grinding coffee beans
- B. The initial release of gases from coffee grounds when water is added**
- C. The cooling phase after brewing
- D. The final stage of coffee extraction

The term "bloom" in coffee brewing refers to the initial release of gases from coffee grounds when hot water is added. This gas, primarily carbon dioxide, is a byproduct of the roasting process and is present in the coffee grounds. When brewing begins, especially in methods like pour-over or French press, the hot water causes these gases to escape, allowing for more effective extraction of flavors during the brewing process. The bloom phase typically lasts for about 30 seconds and can enhance the resulting coffee's aroma and body. The importance of this step cannot be overstated; it prepares the coffee grounds for optimal extraction by improving water contact and reducing channeling, which can lead to uneven brewing. Understanding bloom helps baristas make informed decisions about brew time and water temperature for the best flavor profile in each cup.

**10. What are the characteristics of Arabica coffee?**

- A. Higher levels of bitterness and acidity**
- B. Generally sweeter and more acidic**
- C. Less caffeine than Robusta coffee**
- D. More oily and darker in flavor**

Arabica coffee is known for its distinct flavor profile, which typically includes a sweetness and higher acidity compared to other coffee varieties, such as Robusta. This level of sweetness contributes to a more complex and nuanced flavor experience, often highlighted by floral or fruity notes. The higher acidity gives Arabica coffee a bright and vibrant taste, which many coffee drinkers prefer. The general characteristics of Arabica beans make them a favorite among specialty coffee drinkers, who appreciate the delicate balance of flavor and acidity. This is a significant aspect of what sets Arabica apart and emphasizes its value in the coffee market. While Arabica does have fewer bitter properties compared to some other varieties, and it contains less caffeine than Robusta, the defining traits that make it appealing are its sweetness and acidity. The other options either attribute incorrect flavor characteristics or focus on comparisons that do not directly address the unique qualities of Arabica coffee itself.

SAMPLE

## 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://scabaristaintermediate.examzify.com>**

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

SAMPLE