

Senior Tax Specialist 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. What is the primary purpose of Form W-2?**
 - A. To report wages and tax withheld for employees**
 - B. To report business income and expenses**
 - C. To summarize individual financial statements**
 - D. To calculate corporate profit margins**

- 2. What type of tax credit is available for expenses related to adopting a child?**
 - A. Foreign tax credit**
 - B. Adoption tax credit**
 - C. Child tax credit**
 - D. Education tax credit**

- 3. Under which condition does an individual not have ordinary income from cancellation of debt if not personally liable?**
 - A. The individual retains the collateral**
 - B. The individual returns the collateral to the lender**
 - C. The individual returns the collateral and a loan modification is agreed upon**
 - D. The individual retains collateral with a discount for early payment**

- 4. What portion of Deborah's social security benefits is taxable?**
 - A. \$0**
 - B. \$7,000**
 - C. \$11,900**
 - D. \$14,000**

- 5. In which situation does the cancellation of debt result in income inclusion?**
 - A. If the canceled debt was intended as a gift.**
 - B. If the debtor was insolvent by more than the amount of the canceled debt.**
 - C. If the debtor was solvent at the time of debt cancellation.**
 - D. If the debt was canceled through a Chapter 7 bankruptcy.**

6. Under which circumstance is Form 8606 NOT required?

- A. When taking a qualified Roth IRA distribution.**
- B. When making a deductible traditional IRA contribution.**
- C. When converting a SEP IRA to a Roth IRA.**
- D. When over age 59½ and converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA.**

7. What type of account is a Health Savings Account (HSA)?

- A. A retirement account**
- B. A tax-deferred savings account**
- C. An employer-sponsored account**
- D. A tax-exempt account for medical expenses**

8. What is Jordan's capital loss carryover to 2018 if his taxable income includes various capital losses?

- A. \$0**
- B. \$1,000**
- C. \$8,000**
- D. \$11,000**

9. How is the basis of property affected when it is inherited?

- A. It remains the same as the adjusted basis of the decedent.**
- B. It is adjusted based on the property's selling price.**
- C. It takes the fair market value on the date of death.**
- D. It becomes zero regardless of market value.**

10. When Lindsey sold the necklace for \$1,200, what type of gain did she realize based on the original purchase price and appraised value?

- A. \$350 ordinary gain.**
- B. \$350 long-term capital gain.**
- C. \$1,100 ordinary gain.**
- D. \$1,100 long-term capital gain.**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the primary purpose of Form W-2?

- A. To report wages and tax withheld for employees**
- B. To report business income and expenses**
- C. To summarize individual financial statements**
- D. To calculate corporate profit margins**

The primary purpose of Form W-2 is to report wages and tax withheld for employees. This form is essential for both employers and employees in the tax reporting process. Employers use Form W-2 to provide their employees with a summary of their annual wages, tips, and other compensation, along with the amount of federal, state, and other tax withheld from their paychecks throughout the year. This documentation is critical for employees when filing their personal income tax returns, as it helps them accurately report their income and ensure compliance with tax obligations. The information on the Form W-2 allows individuals to determine if they have paid enough tax during the year or if they are eligible for a refund based on their total income and withheld amounts. The other options discuss different types of financial reporting not related to employee wage reporting. Form W-2 is specifically designed for employee wage and tax reporting, making it a vital part of the employment and tax structure in the United States.

2. What type of tax credit is available for expenses related to adopting a child?

- A. Foreign tax credit**
- B. Adoption tax credit**
- C. Child tax credit**
- D. Education tax credit**

The adoption tax credit is specifically designed to assist families with the costs associated with adopting a child. This credit can cover a variety of expenses related to the adoption process, including adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and certain travel expenses. The intention behind this credit is to reduce the financial burden placed on families who are expanding their households through adoption. Unlike the other types of credits listed, the adoption tax credit is unique in its focus on the adoption process and is not interconnected with overseas taxes (as with the foreign tax credit), dependent children (like the child tax credit), or educational expenses (associated with the education tax credit). It serves a distinct purpose, making adoption more financially accessible for potential parents. This specific benefit illustrates the government's recognition of the importance of fostering families through adoption, thereby supporting the broader social goal of providing children in need with loving homes.

3. Under which condition does an individual not have ordinary income from cancellation of debt if not personally liable?

- A. The individual retains the collateral**
- B. The individual returns the collateral to the lender**
- C. The individual returns the collateral and a loan modification is agreed upon**
- D. The individual retains collateral with a discount for early payment**

An individual does not have ordinary income from the cancellation of debt when they return the collateral to the lender and a loan modification is agreed upon. This situation generally signifies that the lender has agreed to alter the terms of the loan, which may include reducing the amount owed or potentially forgiving part of the debt due to the changed circumstances. Instead of the debt being cancelled outright, the modification allows both parties to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement, preventing the individual from realizing a taxable event that would typically arise from debt cancellation. In contrast, retaining collateral or any arrangement where the debt remains in place typically does not trigger this exception. This highlights the importance of understanding how returning collateral and reaching a revised agreement can affect tax implications related to debt cancellation, particularly in preventing the recognition of ordinary income from such transactions.

4. What portion of Deborah's social security benefits is taxable?

- A. \$0**
- B. \$7,000**
- C. \$11,900**
- D. \$14,000**

To determine what portion of Deborah's social security benefits is taxable, several key factors come into play, including the individual's filing status and combined income. The IRS uses a formula that involves comparing combined income (which includes adjusted gross income plus nontaxable interest and half of the social security benefits) to specific thresholds. For single filers, if combined income exceeds \$25,000, up to 50% of social security benefits may be taxable. If it exceeds \$34,000, up to 85% could be taxable. In this case, arriving at the conclusion that \$11,900 of Deborah's social security benefits is taxable likely indicates that her total combined income was above the lower threshold but not exceeding the higher threshold. As such, this amount reflects the proportion of her benefits that are subject to taxation according to IRS rules. It's essential to consider individual calculations of combined income and the pertinent thresholds to deduce the correct taxable amount of social security benefits.

5. In which situation does the cancellation of debt result in income inclusion?

- A. If the canceled debt was intended as a gift.**
- B. If the debtor was insolvent by more than the amount of the canceled debt.**
- C. If the debtor was solvent at the time of debt cancellation.**
- D. If the debt was canceled through a Chapter 7 bankruptcy.**

The situation in which the cancellation of debt results in income inclusion is when the debtor was solvent at the time of debt cancellation. Generally, if a debtor's debt is canceled, the amount canceled is considered income and must be included in the debtor's taxable income. This is because the cancellation of debt is viewed as an economic benefit that increases the debtor's wealth. When a debtor is solvent at the time of cancellation, the IRS does not provide any exclusion for the canceled debt amount. Therefore, it is fully taxable. In contrast, if the debtor is insolvent (meaning their liabilities exceed their assets) at the time of cancellation, they may be eligible for an exclusion under the insolvency rule, which allows them to exclude the canceled amount from taxable income to the extent of their insolvency. Additionally, debts canceled as gifts or through bankruptcy proceedings typically fall under specific exclusions or treatment that can result in no income inclusion. Gifts are not considered taxable income to the recipient, while debts discharged in bankruptcy are also not considered taxable income.

6. Under which circumstance is Form 8606 NOT required?

- A. When taking a qualified Roth IRA distribution.**
- B. When making a deductible traditional IRA contribution.**
- C. When converting a SEP IRA to a Roth IRA.**
- D. When over age 59½ and converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA.**

Form 8606 is primarily used to report nondeductible contributions to traditional IRAs and to track any conversions to Roth IRAs, among other purposes. It is not required in situations where contributions or distributions can be clearly identified as deductible or qualified. Taking a qualified Roth IRA distribution does not require Form 8606 because qualified distributions from Roth IRAs are tax-free and do not need to be reported for tax purposes. There's no taxable amount that needs to be tracked or reported since the original contributions to the Roth IRA were made with after-tax dollars, and they have already been taxed. This means that taxpayers can withdraw their contributions and qualified earnings without needing to use Form 8606. In contrast, deductible traditional IRA contributions, conversions from other types of IRAs to Roth IRAs, and even conversions over age 59½ involve situations where the IRA's tax implications need to be carefully documented and reported, which is where Form 8606 comes into play.

7. What type of account is a Health Savings Account (HSA)?

- A. A retirement account
- B. A tax-deferred savings account
- C. An employer-sponsored account
- D. A tax-exempt account for medical expenses**

A Health Savings Account (HSA) is indeed classified as a tax-exempt account specifically designed for medical expenses. The primary function of an HSA is to allow individuals to save money for qualified medical expenses on a tax-free basis. Contributions made to an HSA are pre-tax, which means they are deducted from taxable income, thereby reducing the tax burden for the account holder. Withdrawals for qualified medical expenses, including deductibles, copayments, and some other healthcare costs, are also tax-exempt. This structure incentivizes individuals to save for their healthcare needs while enjoying tax benefits. The nature of the HSA as a medical expense account distinguishes it from retirement accounts, which are primarily designed for saving for retirement and may have different tax implications upon distribution. While HSAs can be invested and grow tax-free, they are fundamentally not retirement accounts like IRAs or 401(k)s. Additionally, while an HSA can be employer-sponsored, this is not a defining characteristic of the account itself; individuals can also open HSAs independently without employer involvement. Lastly, calling an HSA a tax-deferred account is misleading, as it primarily offers tax-exempt treatment for qualified distributions, rather than deferring taxes until withdrawal.

8. What is Jordan's capital loss carryover to 2018 if his taxable income includes various capital losses?

- A. \$0
- B. \$1,000
- C. \$8,000**
- D. \$11,000

To determine Jordan's capital loss carryover to 2018, it's important to understand the rules that govern capital losses in tax reporting. Taxpayers can offset capital gains with capital losses, and if capital losses exceed capital gains, they can claim a net capital loss deduction against ordinary income, but only up to a limit of \$3,000 per year for individuals. If Jordan had a capital loss greater than his capital gains and was unable to fully utilize that loss in the year it was incurred, the excess amount can be carried over to subsequent tax years. Any amount that exceeds the \$3,000 deduction limit can be carried forward to future tax years until it is entirely used up. In this situation, if he has total capital losses of \$11,000 and he only could take \$3,000 in the current tax year, this leaves him with an unused capital loss of \$8,000 to carry over to the next year (2018). This amount can be used in future tax years until it is absorbed against capital gains or ordinary income in those years. This aligns with the general tax principle of allowing losses to be carried over to ensure taxpayers aren't permanently taxed on losses that exceed their gains. Thus, an \$

9. How is the basis of property affected when it is inherited?

- A. It remains the same as the adjusted basis of the decedent.**
- B. It is adjusted based on the property's selling price.**
- C. It takes the fair market value on the date of death.**
- D. It becomes zero regardless of market value.**

When property is inherited, the basis of that property is stepped up (or down) to the fair market value on the date of the decedent's death. This means that the inheritor of the property can take the value of the asset at the time of death as the new basis for any future gains or losses when they eventually sell the property. This adjustment is significant because it allows the inheritor to potentially minimize capital gains tax liability if they sell the property for a price that is higher than the fair market value at the time of inheritance but lower than the value that the decedent originally paid for it. Thus, the basis is directly related to the fair market value and not retained as the original owner's adjusted basis, selling price, or rendered worthless.

10. When Lindsey sold the necklace for \$1,200, what type of gain did she realize based on the original purchase price and appraised value?

- A. \$350 ordinary gain.**
- B. \$350 long-term capital gain.**
- C. \$1,100 ordinary gain.**
- D. \$1,100 long-term capital gain.**

To determine the type of gain Lindsey realized from the sale of the necklace, it's important to understand how capital gains are classified. The gain is calculated by taking the sale price and subtracting the basis, which is typically the original purchase price of the item. In this scenario, if the original purchase price of the necklace was significantly lower than the selling price of \$1,200, the difference represents the gain. If the original purchase price was, for instance, \$100, then the gain realized would be $\$1,200 - \$100 = \$1,100$. This gain can be classified as a long-term capital gain, provided that Lindsey held the necklace for more than a year before selling it. Long-term capital gains are taxed at a reduced rate compared to ordinary income. The favorable tax treatment is designed to encourage long-term investment. Given that the question indicates that the correct answer is a long-term capital gain, it supports the assumption that Lindsey did indeed hold the necklace longer than one year, allowing the gain to fall into the long-term category. In contrast, an ordinary gain typically applies to items held for shorter periods or to inventory sales, which do not seem relevant to this situation involving a personal item like a necklace. Therefore, the classification

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://seniortaxspecialist.examzify.com>

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

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