

Sociology - Society, Culture, and Social Theories 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. What term refers to the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society?**
 - A. Material culture**
 - B. Nonmaterial culture**
 - C. Cultural Universals**
 - D. Beliefs**

- 2. The integration of international trade and finance markets.**
 - A. Globalization**
 - B. Diffusion**
 - C. Subcultures**
 - D. Preindustrial societies**

- 3. Which method involves gathering data from a natural environment without lab experiments or surveys?**
 - A. Field Research**
 - B. Primary source collection**
 - C. Random sample**
 - D. Operational Definition**

- 4. Which theorist argued that societies grow through struggles between different social and political classes?**
 - A. Karl Marx**
 - B. Herbert Spencer**
 - C. Emile Durkheim**
 - D. Auguste Comte**

- 5. The process involving increasing interconnectedness of world economies through trade and finance is known as:**
 - A. Globalization**
 - B. Diffusion**
 - C. Culture lag**
 - D. Preindustrial societies**

- 6. What term refers to laws, morals, values, beliefs, and customs that govern social life?**
- A. Social facts**
 - B. Norms**
 - C. Mores**
 - D. Taboos**
- 7. Which approach has less control over time but may feel more 'real world'?**
- A. Natural/field experiments**
 - B. Lab based experiments**
 - C. Survey**
 - D. Ethnography**
- 8. Who is associated with the view that ideas and beliefs can shape the economy?**
- A. Marx**
 - B. Weber**
 - C. Durkheim**
 - D. Mead**
- 9. Testing a hypothesis using cause-and-effect logic is known as which method?**
- A. Experiment**
 - B. Survey**
 - C. Longitudinal study**
 - D. Ethnography**
- 10. Which term describes the condition in which the individual is isolated from society, work, and sense of self?**
- A. Alienation**
 - B. False Consciousness**
 - C. Class Consciousness**
 - D. Myth of Meritocracy**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What term refers to the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society?

- A. Material culture**
- B. Nonmaterial culture**
- C. Cultural Universals**
- D. Beliefs**

Think about culture in terms of what you can touch versus what you can't. The ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that guide how people think and behave are intangible aspects, so they fall under nonmaterial culture. This broad category includes values, norms, language, symbols, and religious or philosophical beliefs—things that give meaning to everyday life but aren't physical objects. Material culture would cover the physical things people create, like clothing, tools, and buildings. Cultural universals are traits that appear across many cultures, not a label for the intangible content itself. Beliefs are part of nonmaterial culture, but the question points to the broader set of ideas and attitudes, making nonmaterial culture the right fit.

2. The integration of international trade and finance markets.

- A. Globalization**
- B. Diffusion**
- C. Subcultures**
- D. Preindustrial societies**

Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness of economies worldwide, especially in trade and finance. The integration of international trade and finance markets means that goods, services, and capital move across borders more freely and rapidly. Companies source inputs from different countries, production spans multiple nations, and investment and borrowing cross borders through foreign exchange markets and cross-border lending. This creates more interconnected economic activity and interdependence among nations. The other terms describe different ideas: diffusion is about the spread of ideas or technologies, subcultures are cultural groups within a larger society, and preindustrial societies refer to historical periods before industrialization. The phenomenon that best captures the integration of trade and finance across borders is globalization.

3. Which method involves gathering data from a natural environment without lab experiments or surveys?

- A. Field Research**
- B. Primary source collection**
- C. Random sample**
- D. Operational Definition**

The main idea being tested is gathering data in real-world settings through direct observation and immersion, rather than in a controlled lab or via surveys. This approach, field research, involves studying people and social phenomena where they naturally occur—on the street, in workplaces, or within communities—so data reflect genuine behavior and interactions as they unfold in everyday life. It emphasizes context and spontaneity, capturing nuances that lab experiments or structured surveys might miss. Why this fits best: field research purposely avoids the artificiality of a lab and the structured formats of surveys, aiming to observe how things work in their natural environment. It can include watching how people interact, taking notes, and sometimes engaging with participants in non-experimental ways to understand social processes. In contrast, collecting primary sources focuses on obtaining original documents or artifacts rather than observing living behavior in situ. A random sample is a sampling technique used to select participants or cases, often within a study that could be survey-based or experimental. An operational definition specifies exactly how a variable will be measured, which is about measurement rules rather than the setting of data collection.

4. Which theorist argued that societies grow through struggles between different social and political classes?

- A. Karl Marx**
- B. Herbert Spencer**
- C. Emile Durkheim**
- D. Auguste Comte**

The idea being tested is that social change is driven by conflicts between social classes. Karl Marx is the thinker who argues that societies grow through struggles between different social and political classes, especially the tension between those who own the means of production and those who don't. He frames history as a sequence of modes of production that generate class antagonisms, crises, and revolutions, pushing society from one major form to another—like capitalism to socialism—through the pressure of these conflicts. This contrasts with other theorists who describe social change in different ways. Herbert Spencer emphasizes evolutionary progress of society through a form of natural social development, not specifically through class struggle. Emile Durkheim focuses on social cohesion and the functions of institutions to maintain order and solidarity. Auguste Comte highlights the progression of human thought through stages and the rise of positivist science. None of these center class conflict as the primary engine of historical growth in the way Marx does.

5. The process involving increasing interconnectedness of world economies through trade and finance is known as:

- A. Globalization**
- B. Diffusion**
- C. Culture lag**
- D. Preindustrial societies**

Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness of world economies through trade and finance, creating a network where goods, services, capital, information, and people move across borders with growing ease. It includes global supply chains, multinational corporations, international financial markets, and trade agreements that link national economies into a single system. This makes it the best answer because the question describes economic interdependence on a global scale driven by trade and financial flows. The other terms describe different ideas: diffusion is about the spread of ideas or cultural practices, culture lag is the delay between technological change and social adjustment, and preindustrial societies refer to societies before industrialization, not the process of global economic integration.

6. What term refers to laws, morals, values, beliefs, and customs that govern social life?

- A. Social facts**
- B. Norms**
- C. Mores**
- D. Taboos**

Social facts are the recurring patterns and structures that govern social life, existing outside any one person and constraining actions. Laws codify these patterns; morals, values, beliefs, and customs express them; together they form the social order. They show up in institutions, rituals, and shared understandings that people typically follow even when not actively choosing them. Norms are expectations for behavior, mores are stronger, morally charged norms, and taboos are strong prohibitions. While those are important pieces of social life, the broad set of laws, morals, values, beliefs, and customs is best captured by social facts because they highlight the external, coercive, and collective nature that shapes everyday conduct.

7. Which approach has less control over time but may feel more 'real world'?

A. Natural/field experiments

B. Lab based experiments

C. Survey

D. Ethnography

The idea here is the trade-off between control and realism. Field or natural experiments are carried out in real-world settings, so the timing and conditions aren't as tightly controlled as in a lab. Interventions unfold within the natural flow of events, which means researchers can't schedule every moment or standardize every variable. That looser temporal control is balanced by a stronger sense of how people actually behave in everyday contexts, making the findings feel more applicable to the real world. In contrast, lab-based experiments offer precise timing and carefully controlled conditions, but at the cost of artificiality. Surveys and ethnography bring their own strengths, but they aren't defined by manipulating time within real-world settings in the same way as field experiments.

8. Who is associated with the view that ideas and beliefs can shape the economy?

A. Marx

B. Weber

C. Durkheim

D. Mead

Ideas and beliefs can steer economic life when cultural values shape how people work, save, and invest. Max Weber argued that religious and cultural ideas can create a "spirit" that drives capitalist practices. His classic example is the Protestant Ethic, which linked disciplined work, frugality, and a rational approach to time with the development of capitalism. Weber's perspective shows the economy isn't driven only by material conditions but also by the meanings people attach to work and profit, which can steer economic development. This sets him apart from others who emphasize different factors: Marx focuses on material conditions and class struggle; Durkheim on social cohesion and institutions; Mead on how individuals create meaning through interaction.

9. Testing a hypothesis using cause-and-effect logic is known as which method?

- A. Experiment**
- B. Survey**
- C. Longitudinal study**
- D. Ethnography**

Testing a hypothesis with cause-and-effect logic is best achieved through the experimental method. In experiments, a researcher actively manipulates an independent variable to observe its impact on a dependent variable, while keeping other factors constant. Random assignment to groups helps ensure that observed differences are due to the manipulation rather than preexisting differences, which strengthens claims of causality. Other approaches don't aim for this level of control. Surveys look at relationships between variables and typically identify associations rather than causal effects. Longitudinal studies track changes over time and can suggest temporal order, but without controlled manipulation they can't definitively establish causality. Ethnography emphasizes deep, qualitative understanding of social contexts rather than testing causal hypotheses through controlled experiments. So, the method described is the experimental method.

10. Which term describes the condition in which the individual is isolated from society, work, and sense of self?

- A. Alienation**
- B. False Consciousness**
- C. Class Consciousness**
- D. Myth of Meritocracy**

Alienation describes the condition where a person feels estranged from their surroundings, their work, and even their sense of self. In sociology, especially in Marxist thought, this occurs when workers do not control the means of production or the products of their labor, so their work becomes separate from their own humanity. When someone feels cut off from society, disconnected from the tasks they perform, and detached from who they are, that aligns with the classic experience of alienation. The other terms refer to different misperceptions or recognitions about social relations: false consciousness is about misunderstanding one's true position in society, class consciousness is awareness of one's class and collective interest, and the myth of meritocracy is the belief that outcomes are solely the result of individual merit. None of these capture the sense of isolation from society, work, and self in the way alienation does.

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://sociologysocietyculture.examzify.com>

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

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