

SOIL JUDGING NATIONAL PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

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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 combination of horizons indicates a glossic horizon?**
 - A. E/Bt or Bt/E
 - B. AB or AC
 - C. O/A or O/Bt
 - D. C/Bg or Bg/E
- 2. What characteristics typically indicate a clayey soil?**
 - A. Loose and grainy texture
 - B. Sticky texture when wet and low permeability
 - C. Dry and powdery feel
 - D. Bright coloration and high drainage
- 3. Residuum soils are most likely formed from which type of rock?**
 - A. Igneous
 - B. Metamorphic
 - C. Volcanic
 - D. Sandstone
- 4. What is the minimum thickness for an argillic horizon to be classified properly?**
 - A. 10 cm
 - B. 6 cm
 - C. 8 cm
 - D. 12 cm
- 5. In soil judging, what is represented by the acronym HTM?**
 - A. High Tension Moisture
 - B. Hydraulic Transport Mechanism
 - C. Horizontal Tillage Method
 - D. Angled slopes and artifacts
- 6. What is the difference between macropores and micropores in soil?**
 - A. Macropores are too small for water retention
 - B. Macropores facilitate drainage, while micropores retain moisture
 - C. Macropores are not affected by soil compaction
 - D. Micropores only exist in sandy soils

- 7. What is the role of earthworms in soil health?**
- A. They decompose inorganic materials
 - B. They aerate the soil and enhance organic matter decomposition
 - C. They provide nitrogen fixation
 - D. They deter harmful pests
- 8. What happens to the minimum thickness required if the arg/camb horizon exceeds 25 cm?**
- A. It remains at 18 cm
 - B. It becomes 25 cm
 - C. It must be increased to 30 cm
 - D. It is disregarded
- 9. What is soil structure?**
- A. The chemical composition of soil
 - B. The arrangement of soil particles and the spaces between them
 - C. The color of the soil material
 - D. The total depth of the soil layer
- 10. Which soil order is associated with alati's characteristic of being composed mainly of fragments?**
- A. Alfisol
 - B. Vertisol
 - C. Ultisol
 - D. Andisol

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which combination of horizons indicates a glossic horizon?

- A. E/Bt or Bt/E
- B. AB or AC
- C. O/A or O/Bt
- D. C/Bg or Bg/E

A glossic horizon is characterized by a specific set of properties, primarily showing evidence of clay illuviation and a distinctive transitional texture and color. This horizon is frequently found between an eluvial (E) horizon, which is lighter in color due to leaching, and a more illuvial (Bt) horizon, which accumulates clay or other materials. In the correct answer, the presence of both E and Bt horizons indicates a clear transition in soil characteristics. The E horizon represents a zone where materials have been leached out, generally making it lighter in color, while the Bt horizon indicates a zone rich in clay that has been deposited through illuviation. The combination of these horizons suggests significant pedogenic processes that define a glossic horizon, including the accumulation of clay and alterations in texture and structure. Understanding the nature and transition between these horizons is essential for identifying a glossic horizon in soil profiles. This signifies the importance of horizon characteristics in soil classification and interpretation, which are crucial skills in soil judging.

2. What characteristics typically indicate a clayey soil?

- A. Loose and grainy texture
- B. Sticky texture when wet and low permeability
- C. Dry and powdery feel
- D. Bright coloration and high drainage

Clayey soils are characterized by their unique physical properties due to the small particle size of clay minerals. One of the defining traits is their sticky texture when wet, which occurs because water is held tightly by the small particles, creating a cohesive mass that can easily stick to surfaces. This sticky quality can make it difficult to work with clay soil when it is wet. Additionally, clayey soils have low permeability, meaning they do not allow water to pass through easily. This is a result of the close packing of clay particles, which creates tiny pores that can retain water but restrict drainage. Consequently, clayey soils can become waterlogged and may take a considerable amount of time to dry out when saturated. These properties make option B the clear indicator of clayey soil, distinguishing it from other soil types such as sandy or loamy soils, which exhibit different textures and drainage characteristics.

3. Residuum soils are most likely formed from which type of rock?

- A. Igneous
- B. Metamorphic
- C. Volcanic
- D. Sandstone

Residuum soils are formed from the in situ weathering of rock material, meaning they develop directly from the underlying bedrock without significant transportation of materials. Metamorphic rocks, characterized by their alteration under heat and pressure, often break down into mineral components that contribute to the formation of residuum soils. These soils typically inherit properties from the metamorphic rock, which can include a variety of mineral types and compositions influenced by the original rock's characteristics. While other types of rocks can contribute to soil formation—igneous rocks might yield sandy or clayey soils, and sandstone can produce relatively sandy soils—the nature of metamorphic rocks offers a more complex source of mineral diversity that aids in developing rich, layered soils. Thus, residuum soils are most commonly associated with metamorphic rocks due to their formation process and resultant soil characteristics.

4. What is the minimum thickness for an argillic horizon to be classified properly?

- A. 10 cm
- B. 6 cm
- C. 8 cm**
- D. 12 cm

The correct minimum thickness for an argillic horizon to be classified properly is 8 cm. The argillic horizon is characterized by the accumulation of clay, and its identification is key in understanding soil properties and classification. The 8 cm threshold is established in soil taxonomy as it ensures that the horizon has sufficient thickness to represent a significant and functional layer within the soil profile. This thickness allows for the horizon to exhibit the necessary properties, such as clay illuviation and the influence on soil physical and chemical behavior. Horizon classification standards are based on observable characteristics; therefore, a thickness of less than 8 cm would fail to sufficiently represent these important attributes, which could lead to misclassification.

5. In soil judging, what is represented by the acronym HTM?

- A. High Tension Moisture
- B. Hydraulic Transport Mechanism
- C. Horizontal Tillage Method
- D. Angled slopes and artifacts**

The acronym HTM in soil judging refers to "Hydraulic Transport Mechanism." This term encompasses the processes and factors that affect the movement of water through soil, which is critical in understanding soil behavior and its management. Understanding hydraulic transport mechanisms helps with evaluating soil properties such as permeability and moisture retention, both essential in soil judging. Effective water movement is vital for vegetative growth, nutrient transport, and overall soil health. The concept of hydraulic transport underscores the importance of water in shaping soil features and influences agricultural practices, environmental management, and engineering considerations within soils. Familiarity with this mechanism aids soil judges in making informed observations about soil profiles and their capabilities.

6. What is the difference between macropores and micropores in soil?

- A. Macropores are too small for water retention
- B. Macropores facilitate drainage, while micropores retain moisture**
- C. Macropores are not affected by soil compaction
- D. Micropores only exist in sandy soils

Macropores and micropores are both crucial for understanding soil behavior, particularly in terms of water movement and retention. The distinction lies primarily in their size and function. Macropores are larger soil pores that can range from about 0.08 mm to several millimeters in diameter. These spaces facilitate the movement and drainage of water through the soil, allowing it to flow freely due to gravity. They play an important role in aeration and the rapid transport of water, which is essential for plant roots and microbial activity. Because of their size, macropores cannot retain water effectively; instead, they allow excess water to drain away. In contrast, micropores are smaller soil voids, typically less than 0.08 mm in diameter. These pores are capable of retaining water due to their size, holding moisture that is available for plant use. The water retained in micropores is often held tightly enough that it cannot be evaporated easily or drained away, which is critical for maintaining hydration in the soil. Therefore, the correct choice accurately reflects the roles of macropores and micropores: macropores facilitate drainage, whereas micropores are effective at retaining moisture within the soil matrix. Understanding this distinction helps in assessing soil health, drainage capabilities,

7. What is the role of earthworms in soil health?

- A. They decompose inorganic materials
- B. They aerate the soil and enhance organic matter decomposition**
- C. They provide nitrogen fixation
- D. They deter harmful pests

The role of earthworms in soil health is fundamentally important, particularly in their ability to aerate the soil and enhance organic matter decomposition. As earthworms burrow through the soil, they create channels that allow air, water, and nutrients to penetrate deeper into the soil profile. This aeration improves soil structure and promotes better root growth for plants. Additionally, earthworms consume organic matter, such as decaying leaves and plant material, and break it down in their guts. This process not only helps to decompose organic materials more efficiently but also enriches the soil with nutrient-rich castings that are beneficial for plant health. The presence of earthworms in the soil signifies a healthy ecosystem that supports plant growth and enhances soil fertility. In contrast, other roles suggested in the options, such as decomposing inorganic materials, providing nitrogen fixation, and deterring harmful pests, do not accurately represent the activities of earthworms. These activities are typically associated with different soil organisms or processes rather than the direct functions of earthworms within the soil ecosystem.

8. What happens to the minimum thickness required if the arg/camb horizon exceeds 25 cm?

- A. It remains at 18 cm
- B. It becomes 25 cm**
- C. It must be increased to 30 cm
- D. It is disregarded

When determining the minimum thickness requirement for horizons in soil classification, specific criteria are set based on the characteristics of those horizons. In the case of argillic (arg) or cambic (camb) horizons, if the thickness exceeds 25 cm, the established standard indicates that the minimum thickness requirement for that horizon becomes 25 cm. This is crucial because horizons that are sufficiently thick demonstrate more developed properties and greater soil functionality, which can affect its classification and potential use in agriculture and land management. Thus, once the argillic or cambic horizon reaches a thickness beyond 25 cm, it aligns with the classification guidelines that raise the minimum required thickness to ensure adequate representation of the soil's characteristics. The other possibilities would misrepresent the thickness requirements, either retaining a lower threshold that's not applicable when the horizon exceeds 25 cm, suggesting a higher threshold unnecessarily, or invalidating the consideration of thickness altogether, which would compromise systematic soil classification approaches.

9. What is soil structure?

- A. The chemical composition of soil
- B. The arrangement of soil particles and the spaces between them**
- C. The color of the soil material
- D. The total depth of the soil layer

Soil structure refers to the arrangement of soil particles and the spaces between them, which significantly influences soil properties and behaviors. This structure can affect water movement, root development, and the way air and nutrients are exchanged within the soil. Different types of soil structures, such as granular, blocky, or platy formations, can impact soil fertility, drainage, and how easily the soil can be worked. Understanding soil structure is crucial because it plays a vital role in determining how soil functions in the ecosystem, including its capacity for supporting plant life and its resilience in the face of erosion or compaction. The arrangement of particles also affects how soil can retain moisture and nutrients, making it an essential factor to consider in soil management and conservation practices. In contrast, other aspects like the chemical composition of soil, color, and depth are important characteristics but do not define structure. They influence the soil's fertility, appearance, and physical properties but do not describe how the individual soil particles are organized.

10. Which soil order is associated with alati's characteristic of being composed mainly of fragments?

- A. Alfisol**
- B. Vertisol
- C. Ultisol
- D. Andisol

The correct answer is Alfisol. Alfisols are typically characterized by a clay-rich horizon that is formed under moist conditions, often appearing granular or blocky, and they are fertile and support a wide range of vegetation. They develop under forest or savanna ecosystems and are found in temperate regions. The mention of being composed mainly of fragments aligns with the profile that can form in Alfisols due to the weathering of parent materials and the accumulation of organic matter. These soils are known for having relatively high fertility and are often used for agriculture due to their nutrient-holding capacity. In contrast, Vertisols, found in areas with pronounced wet and dry seasons, are characterized by large amounts of clay that shrink and swell, creating cracks, while Ultisols are strongly weathered soils found in humid temperate regions. Andisols, formed from volcanic ash, are typically light and well-aggregated due to their mineral composition. Each of these soil orders has distinct properties that do not primarily associate with the concept of being fragmental like Alfisols.

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:

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

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