

Texas A&M University (TAMU) POLS206 American National Government Exam 1 Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	6
Answers	9
Explanations	11
Next Steps	17

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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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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!

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Questions

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- 1. What is the purpose of the Commerce Clause?**
 - A. To allow states to regulate their own commerce**
 - B. To regulate commerce among the states**
 - C. To promote trade with foreign nations**
 - D. To establish trade agreements**

- 2. Which constitutional amendment prohibited the use of poll taxes in voting?**
 - A. 23rd Amendment**
 - B. 24th Amendment**
 - C. 25th Amendment**
 - D. 26th Amendment**

- 3. What term describes the power of the courts to review the constitutionality of laws?**
 - A. Judicial Review**
 - B. Legislative Review**
 - C. Executive Authority**
 - D. Constitutional Review**

- 4. What is the term for laws that criminalize acts retroactively?**
 - A. Ex post facto laws**
 - B. New laws**
 - C. Judicial review laws**
 - D. Administrative laws**

- 5. In the House of Representatives, what is the maximum number of representatives per 30,000 inhabitants according to the proposed structure?**
 - A. 1**
 - B. 2**
 - C. 3**
 - D. 4**

6. Which amendment abolished slavery in the United States?

- A. The First Amendment**
- B. The Thirteenth Amendment**
- C. The Fifteenth Amendment**
- D. The Nineteenth Amendment**

7. Which statement is true concerning the Articles of Confederation?

- A. They were effective in regulating commerce**
- B. They created a strong centralized power**
- C. The government was deliberately kept weak**
- D. Only one state was needed to pass laws**

8. What type of government is characterized by a centralized authority?

- A. Confederation**
- B. Unitary government**
- C. Federal government**
- D. Democracy**

9. What does the principle of "majority rule" signify in a democracy?

- A. The belief in individual rights**
- B. The idea that the majority's decision should prevail**
- C. The requirement of unanimous consent**
- D. The importance of minority opinions**

10. Which amendment granted women the right to vote?

- A. 15th Amendment**
- B. 19th Amendment**
- C. 21st Amendment**
- D. 24th Amendment**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the purpose of the Commerce Clause?

- A. To allow states to regulate their own commerce
- B. To regulate commerce among the states**
- C. To promote trade with foreign nations
- D. To establish trade agreements

The purpose of the Commerce Clause, found in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, is to grant Congress the power to regulate commerce among the states. This provision was designed to create a unified and functional national economy, ensuring that trade can occur smoothly across state lines without obstruction from state legislation. By allowing Congress the authority to manage interstate commerce, the Commerce Clause helps prevent individual states from enacting protectionist measures that could disrupt trade and create economic imbalances. Additionally, the Commerce Clause has been interpreted broadly by the courts to encompass a wide range of economic activities, not just the buying and selling of goods between states. This interpretation has allowed for significant federal regulatory authority over various economic matters. By placing this regulatory power at the federal level, the framers aimed to promote a cohesive economic environment that facilitates trade and economic growth across the country.

2. Which constitutional amendment prohibited the use of poll taxes in voting?

- A. 23rd Amendment
- B. 24th Amendment**
- C. 25th Amendment
- D. 26th Amendment

The 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution is indeed the amendment that prohibits the use of poll taxes in federal elections. Ratified in 1964, this amendment was a significant step toward eliminating barriers that were used to disenfranchise voters, particularly African Americans and low-income citizens. Poll taxes were fees that individuals were required to pay before they could vote, which effectively limited access to the ballot box for many poorer citizens who could not afford to pay these fees. This amendment's importance lies in its role in the broader Civil Rights Movement, highlighting the federal government's recognition of the need to ensure voting rights for all citizens regardless of their economic status. The amendment was later upheld in 1966 by the Supreme Court in the case of *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, which extended its application to state elections as well.

3. What term describes the power of the courts to review the constitutionality of laws?

- A. Judicial Review**
- B. Legislative Review**
- C. Executive Authority**
- D. Constitutional Review**

Judicial review is the term that specifically refers to the power of courts to examine the actions of the legislative and executive branches of government and determine whether those actions are in accordance with the Constitution. This principle is rooted in the idea of checks and balances, ensuring that no branch of government exceeds its authority or violates constitutional rights. The practice of judicial review was established in the landmark Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803. This case set the precedent for the judiciary to assert its role in interpreting the Constitution and has since allowed courts to nullify laws and executive actions that are deemed unconstitutional. This authority empowers the judicial branch to act as a guardian of constitutional principles, maintaining the rule of law and protecting individual rights as outlined in the Constitution. In contrast, legislative review and executive authority do not pertain to the courts' powers in this context, while constitutional review is a term that may be used informally but is not officially recognized in the same way that judicial review is.

4. What is the term for laws that criminalize acts retroactively?

- A. Ex post facto laws**
- B. New laws**
- C. Judicial review laws**
- D. Administrative laws**

The term for laws that criminalize acts retroactively is *ex post facto* laws. This concept is rooted in the protection of individuals against the government's ability to punish them for actions that were not considered crimes at the time they were committed. The U.S. Constitution explicitly prohibits *ex post facto* laws to ensure that citizens are not unfairly subjected to new legal penalties for actions taken before the law was in place.

Understanding this concept is important because it safeguards individual rights and maintains the integrity of the legal system. The prohibition against *ex post facto* laws reflects the principle of legality, which requires that laws be clear, publicly accessible, and established prior to action. This is fundamental in promoting justice and preventing arbitrary government enforcement. The other options do not accurately describe this legal principle; new laws do not specify any characteristic of retroactivity, judicial review relates to the courts' ability to evaluate laws against the Constitution, and administrative laws govern the activities of administrative agencies rather than criminal acts retroactively.

5. In the House of Representatives, what is the maximum number of representatives per 30,000 inhabitants according to the proposed structure?

- A. 1**
- B. 2**
- C. 3**
- D. 4**

The correct answer is rooted in the historical context of the structure of the House of Representatives as established by the U.S. Constitution. According to Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, the House of Representatives is composed of members who are apportioned among the states based on their populations. Initially, the ratio was set at one representative for every 30,000 inhabitants, which was an early proposal reflecting the aim for direct representation of the populace in Congress. This was outlined for better representation, ensuring that constituents had a voice in their government relative to their population size. However, it's important to note that while this was the initial guideline, over time, the total number of representatives has been capped at 435 since 1911, and the direct ratio for apportionment has changed due to population growth and constitutional amendments. In the context of the question, the phrase "maximum number of representatives per 30,000 inhabitants" relates directly to this foundational guideline, leading to the conclusion that the number is one representative per every 30,000 citizens. Thus, the maximum is correctly identified as one in this configuration of representation.

6. Which amendment abolished slavery in the United States?

- A. The First Amendment**
- B. The Thirteenth Amendment**
- C. The Fifteenth Amendment**
- D. The Nineteenth Amendment**

The Thirteenth Amendment is the correct answer because it explicitly states that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Ratified in 1865, this amendment was a significant milestone in American history, marking the formal abolition of slavery following the Civil War. It laid the foundation for subsequent civil rights advancements and underscored the commitment to ensuring freedom for all individuals in the nation. The other amendments mentioned address different issues: the First Amendment focuses on freedoms like speech and religion, the Fifteenth Amendment prohibits denying the right to vote based on race, and the Nineteenth Amendment grants women the right to vote.

7. Which statement is true concerning the Articles of Confederation?

- A. They were effective in regulating commerce**
- B. They created a strong centralized power**
- C. The government was deliberately kept weak**
- D. Only one state was needed to pass laws**

The Articles of Confederation established a framework for governance following the American Revolution, but one of the fundamental principles embodied in the Articles was the intention to limit the power of the central government. This decision stemmed from the colonies' recent experiences under British rule, which they found oppressive and tyrannical. In contrast to the robust federal government established later by the Constitution, the Articles created a confederation where the states retained most of their sovereignty and independence. Although this setup allowed the states to cooperate on certain matters, it ultimately resulted in a government that lacked the authority to impose taxes, regulate commerce, or enforce laws effectively. Consequently, the central government was deliberately kept weak, leading to significant challenges in governance, collective defense, and economic stability. This inherent weakness prompted the eventual drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, which aimed to create a stronger national government with more comprehensive powers. The other statements about the Articles of Confederation do not reflect the reality of their structure and function. For example, they struggled profoundly with regulating commerce between states, had no mechanism for creating a strong centralized power, and required a supermajority—typically nine out of thirteen states—to pass significant legislation, rather than just one state. Thus, the understanding that

8. What type of government is characterized by a centralized authority?

- A. Confederation**
- B. Unitary government**
- C. Federal government**
- D. Democracy**

A unitary government is characterized by a centralized authority, meaning that the central government holds the majority of power and makes decisions that are binding across the entire nation or state. In this system, any regional or local authorities derive their powers from the central government rather than having constitutional authority of their own. This can lead to a more consistent application of laws and policies throughout the country, as decision-making is concentrated in one central body. In contrast, a confederation consists of independent states that come together for specific purposes but maintain their sovereignty, which means they do not have a central authority with overarching power. A federal government, while it may involve a central authority, divides power between the national and state governments, allowing for both levels to exercise authority over different matters. Democracy, on the other hand, refers specifically to a system of government where power is derived from the people, often through elected representatives, and does not inherently define the structure as centralized or decentralized.

9. What does the principle of "majority rule" signify in a democracy?

- A. The belief in individual rights**
- B. The idea that the majority's decision should prevail**
- C. The requirement of unanimous consent**
- D. The importance of minority opinions**

The principle of "majority rule" in a democracy signifies that the decision-making process should follow the preference of the majority of voters or participants. This foundational concept underscores the belief that democratic legitimacy arises from the consent of the majority, meaning that when decisions are made, the option favored by more than half of the participants is enacted. This ensures that governance aligns with the will of the greater number of people in a society, thereby creating a system that reflects popular choice. While individual rights, unanimous consent, and the importance of minority opinions are all significant aspects of democracy, they function within the framework established by majority rule. Majority rule does not negate individual rights or the consideration of minority views; rather, it provides a mechanism for collective decision-making in which the majority's preferences lead to the outcome of policies or laws. Understanding this principle is crucial as it highlights the balance between effective governance and the need to protect the rights and voices of individuals and minority groups within the democratic framework.

10. Which amendment granted women the right to vote?

- A. 15th Amendment**
- B. 19th Amendment**
- C. 21st Amendment**
- D. 24th Amendment**

The 19th Amendment is the correct answer because it specifically states that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Ratified in 1920, this amendment marked a significant milestone in the women's suffrage movement, effectively granting women the legal right to participate in elections at the federal and state levels. It represented a culmination of efforts by women and their allies who fought for years to secure equal voting rights. The other amendments listed do not pertain to women's voting rights. The 15th Amendment, for example, was focused on prohibiting the denial of voting rights based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The 21st Amendment repealed Prohibition and does not address voting rights at all. Finally, the 24th Amendment eliminated poll taxes in federal elections, which was another barrier to voting but unrelated directly to women's suffrage. Thus, the 19th Amendment is the landmark legislation that granted women the right to vote.

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://tamu-pols206-exam1.examzify.com>

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

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