Texas Registered Professional Land Surveyor (RPLS) Practice Test Sample Study Guide

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Featuring practice questions, answers, and explanations for each question.

Questions

1. Which type of easement typically allows access to a specific utility?

- **A. Easement appurtenant**
- **B. Easement in gross**
- **C. Easement by necessity**
- **D. Agricultural easement**

2. What requirement was mandated under the Homestead Donation Act for claiming land?

- **A. To pay half the total price upfront**
- **B. To live on and farm the land for five years**
- **C. To survey the land before claiming it**
- **D. To develop a business plan for the land**

3. Before 1854, what was the amount of land available for preemption?

- **A. 160 acres**
- **B. 320 acres**
- **C. 640 acres**
- **D. 80 acres**

4. What does "geospatial technology" encompass within surveying?

- **A. The use of technology for collecting, analyzing, and visualizing spatial data**
- **B. A method for enhancing traditional surveying techniques**
- **C. A set of software tools for 3D modeling**
- **D. A type of measurement used in geodesy**

5. What is a common example of a land boundary established through a survey?

- **A. A fence line**
- **B. A geological feature**
- **C. A constructed road**
- **D. A waterway**

6. How long is one nautical mile in feet?

- **A. 5,280 feet**
- **B. 6,080 feet**
- **C. 7,000 feet**
- **D. 8,000 feet**

7. How many acres are there in one league?

- **A. 2,000 acres**
- **B. 4,428.4 acres**
- **C. 6,000 acres**
- **D. 8,000 acres**

8. What is essential for a legal sale of land according to state law?

- **A. A written agreement**
- **B. An oral contract**
- **C. A verbal agreement**
- **D. A witness signature**

9. What is an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey?

- **A. A detailed survey required for real estate transactions**
- **B. A survey focusing on historical disputes**
- **C. A type of environmental assessment**
- **D. A survey intended for construction projects**

10. What does a locative call in surveying refer to?

- **A. Corner or boundary location**
- **B. Descriptive measurements**
- **C. Neighboring property boundaries**
- **D. General survey outline**

Answers

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

Explanations

1. Which type of easement typically allows access to a specific utility?

A. Easement appurtenant

B. Easement in gross

C. Easement by necessity

D. Agricultural easement

The answer is correct as an easement in gross is specifically designed to benefit an individual or entity rather than a particular piece of land. This type of easement is commonly used for utility companies that require access to install, maintain, or operate power lines, water pipes, sewage systems, or other utility services. Unlike easement appurtenant, which is tied to the land and benefits a particular property, an easement in gross does not depend on land ownership and is often granted to public agencies or utility companies. This flexibility makes it ideal for utility access, as it allows service providers to simplify their operations without needing to consider the needs or ownership of the land over which the easement runs. Easements by necessity and agricultural easements serve different purposes and do not primarily focus on utility access. An easement by necessity arises when a property is landlocked, requiring access across another property for use. Agricultural easements are often aimed at preserving land for farming, thus serving a distinct agricultural purpose rather than utility access.

2. What requirement was mandated under the Homestead Donation Act for claiming land?

A. To pay half the total price upfront

B. To live on and farm the land for five years

C. To survey the land before claiming it

D. To develop a business plan for the land

The requirement to live on and farm the land for five years under the Homestead Donation Act was established to ensure that the land was actively utilized and tended to by its claimant. This condition was aimed at promoting the settlement and cultivation of land, reflecting the broader goals of land policy during this period, which sought to increase the population and agricultural use of available land. By living on the land for five years and demonstrating a commitment to its development, claimants were not only investing in their own future but also contributing to the economic growth of the area. This requirement ensured that the grants of land were awarded to individuals who would take responsibility for the land and turn it into productive property, rather than allowing land to be claimed and left fallow or unused.

3. Before 1854, what was the amount of land available for preemption?

A. 160 acres

B. 320 acres

C. 640 acres

D. 80 acres

The correct answer is 320 acres, reflecting historical legislation regarding land preemption in the United States. Before the Preemption Act of 1854, the preemption laws allowed settlers, often referred to as squatters, the right to claim land that they had settled on prior to official government surveying and sales. The choice of 320 acres was significant because it balanced the need for sufficient arable land for farming and sustenance against the government's interest in managing land sales. The expectation was that this acreage would provide new settlers with enough land to establish a viable homestead. Understanding the context of land management before this legislation is crucial—it illustrates how the government aimed to stimulate settlement in areas that were otherwise undeveloped. By contrast, other options such as 160 acres or 640 acres do not accurately represent the preemption limits prior to 1854, as these figures relate to different historical laws or plans about land distribution. The 80 acres option similarly does not align with the preemption provisions of the period, indicating that the choice of 320 acres encompasses the prevailing legal framework and land-use strategy at that time.

4. What does "geospatial technology" encompass within surveying?

A. The use of technology for collecting, analyzing, and visualizing spatial data

B. A method for enhancing traditional surveying techniques

C. A set of software tools for 3D modeling

D. A type of measurement used in geodesy

Geospatial technology encompasses various tools and methodologies that facilitate the collection, analysis, and visualization of spatial data. This definition is broad and includes technologies like Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), remote sensing, and various mapping techniques that are crucial in surveying. These technologies enable surveyors to gather precise spatial information, create maps, and analyze geographic patterns, which are essential for making informed decisions in land management, urban planning, and environmental monitoring. The other options, while related, represent narrower aspects of the broader concept. Enhancing traditional surveying techniques and specific software tools like 3D modeling are just subsets of how geospatial technology can be applied, rather than encapsulating the full scope of what geospatial technology represents in the field of surveying. Similarly, the mention of measurement methods in geodesy focuses on a specific application within surveying that does not capture the comprehensive nature of geospatial technology. Thus, the choice highlighting the broad capabilities of geospatial technology in handling spatial data is the most accurate representation.

5. What is a common example of a land boundary established through a survey?

A. A fence line

B. A geological feature

C. A constructed road

D. A waterway

A fence line is a common example of a land boundary established through a survey because it typically marks the division of property ownership that has been defined and agreed upon by the property owners. Land surveys are conducted to define these boundaries precisely, ensuring that there is a clear understanding of where one owner's property ends and another's begins. While geological features, constructed roads, and waterways can influence or indicate boundaries, they may not always serve as formal property boundaries established through a legal survey. Instead, they can be natural landmarks or existing infrastructure that assist in determining boundary lines but do not themselves constitute formal boundary lines unless specifically used in the context of legal property descriptions. In contrast, a fence line usually represents a deliberate effort to demarcate property limits as part of land use planning or ownership agreements, making it a widely recognized and practical example of boundary establishment in surveys.

6. How long is one nautical mile in feet?

A. 5,280 feet

B. 6,080 feet

C. 7,000 feet

D. 8,000 feet

One nautical mile is defined as the distance corresponding to one minute of arc of latitude. This unit of measurement is especially important in maritime and aerial navigation because it reflects the curvature of the Earth and the geometric relationship between latitude and distance. In terms of feet, one nautical mile is equivalent to 6,080 feet. This conversion is crucial for navigators and surveyors as it aligns with the system used for charting and movement across bodies of water. The other options—5,280 feet, 7,000 feet, and 8,000 feet—represent various other measures of distance but are not the correct representation of a nautical mile. For example, 5,280 feet is the length of a statute mile, which is commonly used in terrestrial navigation rather than in the marine context.

7. How many acres are there in one league?

A. 2,000 acres

B. 4,428.4 acres

C. 6,000 acres

D. 8,000 acres

One league is equivalent to approximately 4,428.4 acres. This measurement originates from historical land grants and surveying methods used in various regions, particularly in Texas where land was often measured in leagues. A league specifically refers to a unit of distance that is traditionally understood as three miles; when calculating the area encompassed by a league, one must convert these miles into acres. To derive the area, we recognize that a square league measures 3 miles by 3 miles. Converting miles to feet (1 mile = 5,280 feet) gives us a square area of 15,840,000 square feet. Since there are 43,560 square feet in an acre, dividing the total square feet in a league by the number of square feet per acre results in approximately 4,428.4 acres. This historical context helps solidify the understanding of the relationship between leagues and acres in land surveying practices.

8. What is essential for a legal sale of land according to state law?

A. A written agreement

B. An oral contract

C. A verbal agreement

D. A witness signature

A written agreement is essential for a legal sale of land according to state law, particularly in Texas. This requirement stems from the Statute of Frauds, which mandates that contracts for the sale of real property must be in writing to be enforceable. The written agreement helps to clarify the terms of the sale, including the identification of the parties involved, the description of the property, and the purchase price, thereby providing protection for both the buyer and the seller. Unlike oral contracts or verbal agreements, which can lead to misunderstandings and disputes regarding the terms or even the existence of the agreement, a written contract offers clear proof of the intentions of the parties involved. Additionally, certain formalities and legal requirements must be met within a written agreement, such as signatures from the parties involved, to ensure it complies with the law. This structure and assurance are vital in real estate transactions, where the stakes are high and the potential for conflict is significant.

9. What is an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey?

A. A detailed survey required for real estate transactions

B. A survey focusing on historical disputes

C. A type of environmental assessment

D. A survey intended for construction projects

An ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey is indeed a detailed survey required for real estate transactions, particularly when title insurance is involved. This type of survey adheres to specific standards set forth by the American Land Title Association (ALTA) and the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS). It provides comprehensive information about the property, including boundaries, easements, and improvements, and helps ensure that there are no encroachments or other issues that might affect the title to the property. The purpose of an ALTA/NSPS survey is to protect both buyers and lenders by offering a clear and accurate depiction of the property's features, which is essential for assessing its value and ensuring proper title insurance coverage. This level of detail differentiates it from other types of surveys, such as those focused on historical disputes, environmental assessments, or construction projects, which do not specifically cater to the nuances of real estate transaction requirements.

10. What does a locative call in surveying refer to?

A. Corner or boundary location

B. Descriptive measurements

C. Neighboring property boundaries

D. General survey outline

A locative call in surveying specifically refers to the identification and determination of the location of corners or boundaries within a parcel of land. This involves providing the precise coordinates or descriptions necessary to define property lines clearly. Locative calls are critical in ensuring that property boundaries are documented accurately, which helps prevent disputes over land ownership and usage. They form a foundational aspect of legal descriptions in property deeds and surveys, where exact boundary delineation is essential for establishing the rights of property owners. The focus on corner or boundary location emphasizes the practical application of locative calls in establishing definitive boundaries crucial for land use, development, and ownership verification. This is fundamental to the practice of land surveying, as it directly correlates to defining how a parcel of land fits within the physical landscape. This rationale aligns with the fundamental needs of surveying, which aims to provide clarity and precision in property delineation.