

US Judicial System - Constitution, Courts, and Cases Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

Table of Contents

Copyright 1

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3

How to Use This Guide 4

Questions 5

Answers 8

Explanations 10

Next Steps 15

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

- 1. Who wrote the Marbury v. Madison decision?**
 - A. Thomas Jefferson**
 - B. John Marshall**
 - C. John Jay**
 - D. James Madison**

- 2. What is a concurring opinion?**
 - A. Agrees with the majority for the same reasons**
 - B. Supports the majority for different reasons**
 - C. Is a dissenting view**
 - D. Sets a separate holding**

- 3. What is the purpose of the District of Columbia courts?**
 - A. To Handle Local System Without State Courts**
 - B. To Supervise Military Law**
 - C. To Interpret Federal Tax Law**
 - D. To Adjudicate Tribal Disputes**

- 4. A non-military court that handles civilian matters is called what?**
 - A. Civilian tribunal.**
 - B. Court of Federal Claims**
 - C. Court of Appeals**
 - D. Courts-martial**

- 5. Which body confirms federal judges?**
 - A. The President**
 - B. The Senate**
 - C. The House**
 - D. The Supreme Court**

- 6. What is the typical action taken by appellate courts when reviewing a lower court decision?**
 - A. They hear appeals to determine if legal errors occurred.**
 - B. They conduct new trials with new juries**
 - C. They issue executive orders**
 - D. They evaluate only the credibility of witnesses again**

- 7. Inferior courts are best defined as?**
- A. Courts above the Supreme Court.**
 - B. Courts below the Supreme Court created by Congress.**
 - C. State courts with no federal authority.**
 - D. Courts of limited jurisdiction within a single state**
- 8. The concept of precedent in the legal system serves to**
- A. Allow arbitrary rulings**
 - B. Maintain consistency in legal decisions**
 - C. Bypass the need for written opinions**
 - D. Require new trials in every case**
- 9. Judicial review is the power to what?**
- A. The power to declare laws unconstitutional**
 - B. The power to appoint judges**
 - C. The power to interpret tax statutes**
 - D. The power to regulate commerce**
- 10. Which article of the Constitution governs life tenure for Article III judges?**
- A. Article II**
 - B. Article III**
 - C. Article IV**
 - D. Article I**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. Who wrote the Marbury v. Madison decision?

- A. Thomas Jefferson
- B. John Marshall**
- C. John Jay
- D. James Madison

Identifying the author of the Supreme Court's Marbury v. Madison opinion. John Marshall, the Chief Justice at the time, wrote the opinion that established the principle of judicial review. In 1803, Marshall explained that Marbury had a right to his commission but that the Court could not issue a writ of mandamus because the relevant provision of the Judiciary Act of 1789 extended the Court's original jurisdiction beyond what the Constitution permits. This reasoning created the power for the judiciary to review and strike down laws or executive actions that conflict with the Constitution, shaping the Court's role for generations. James Madison is involved as the defendant in the case, and Thomas Jefferson and John Jay were not the authors of this decision (Jefferson was a political leader of the era, and Jay had served as Chief Justice earlier but did not write this opinion).

2. What is a concurring opinion?

- A. Agrees with the majority for the same reasons
- B. Supports the majority for different reasons**
- C. Is a dissenting view
- D. Sets a separate holding

A concurring opinion occurs when a judge agrees with the outcome the court reaches but writes separately to present different reasoning or emphasis. The judge joins the majority's result but explains why they arrived at the same conclusion using a separate line of argument, which can highlight an alternative interpretation of the law or policy considerations. This is distinct from a dissent, where the judge does not agree with the result at all. Multiple concurring opinions can exist, each offering its own rationale while still affirming the same decision.

3. What is the purpose of the District of Columbia courts?

- A. To Handle Local System Without State Courts**
- B. To Supervise Military Law
- C. To Interpret Federal Tax Law
- D. To Adjudicate Tribal Disputes

The District of Columbia courts exist to handle the District's own local legal system, applying DC laws and providing trials and appeals for local matters. DC does not have state courts, so its Superior Court and Court of Appeals serve as the local judiciary, handling criminal and civil cases, family matters, probate, and other local issues. Federal tax questions, military law, and tribal disputes fall outside this local scope and are handled by federal or tribal courts as appropriate. So the main purpose is to manage the District's local judicial system without relying on state courts.

4. A non-military court that handles civilian matters is called what?

- A. Civilian tribunal.**
- B. Court of Federal Claims**
- C. Court of Appeals**
- D. Courts-martial**

Think of the distinction between military and civilian justice. A non-military court that handles civilian matters is described as a civilian tribunal. This term captures the general forum for civilian issues, as opposed to a military court like a court-martial. The other options name specific federal courts or a military tribunal: a Court of Appeals is an appellate court within the federal system, a Court of Federal Claims handles monetary claims against the U.S. government, and Courts-martial are military courts. So the general, appropriate label for a non-military civilian forum is civilian tribunal.

5. Which body confirms federal judges?

- A. The President**
- B. The Senate**
- C. The House**
- D. The Supreme Court**

The main idea here is how presidential appointments are checked by Congress. The President can nominate federal judges, including Supreme Court justices, but the Constitution gives the Senate the power to confirm those nominees through its advice and consent role. The Senate conducts hearings, questions the nominee, and votes to confirm or reject. A successful confirmation allows the person to hold the judgeship; without Senate approval, the nomination cannot become reality. The House has no role in this confirmation process, and the body being filled—the judiciary—receives the appointment after Senate approval.

6. What is the typical action taken by appellate courts when reviewing a lower court decision?

- A. They hear appeals to determine if legal errors occurred.**
- B. They conduct new trials with new juries**
- C. They issue executive orders**
- D. They evaluate only the credibility of witnesses again**

Appellate review focuses on whether legal errors occurred in how the lower court handled the case. The appellate court uses the trial record and the parties' briefs to check that the law was correctly applied, that proper procedures were followed, and that constitutional rights were protected. It does not re-litigate facts or hear new evidence; witnesses' credibility and new testimony are generally not re-evaluated on appeal. Instead, the court can affirm the decision, reverse it, or remand for correction of errors or for a new trial if necessary. Actions like issuing executive orders aren't part of the appellate function, since the role is to review legal error, not to create or enforce new policy.

7. Inferior courts are best defined as?

- A. Courts above the Supreme Court.
- B. Courts below the Supreme Court created by Congress.**
- C. State courts with no federal authority.
- D. Courts of limited jurisdiction within a single state

Inferior courts are the federal courts that sit below the Supreme Court, created by Congress to carry out federal judicial business. This is rooted in Article III, which allows Congress to ordain and establish lower federal courts as needed. These courts—such as federal district courts and the U.S. Courts of Appeals—operate under federal law and exist to handle cases that come under federal jurisdiction. They are part of the national judiciary and their authority comes from Congress, not from being state courts or from being higher than the Supreme Court. The best description, then, is that they are courts below the Supreme Court created by Congress.

8. The concept of precedent in the legal system serves to

- A. Allow arbitrary rulings
- B. Maintain consistency in legal decisions**
- C. Bypass the need for written opinions
- D. Require new trials in every case

Precedent keeps the law stable by having courts follow established rulings in similar cases. This is the idea of *stare decisis*: once a court decides a rule for a particular set of facts, that rule guides future decisions in comparable situations. Such consistency makes outcomes predictable and fair, because people and lawyers can rely on how the law has been applied before. Written opinions explain the reasoning behind those rules, so future courts can apply the same logic to new controversies. While courts can distinguish different facts or overrule or modify old rulings when appropriate, the overall goal is to avoid arbitrary results and to create a coherent, evolving body of law. The other statements miss the point: precedent does not bypass written opinions—those opinions are what create the rules—and it does not demand new trials in every case, which would undermine efficiency and stability.

9. Judicial review is the power to what?

- A. The power to declare laws unconstitutional**
- B. The power to appoint judges
- C. The power to interpret tax statutes
- D. The power to regulate commerce

Judicial review is the courts' power to examine laws and government actions to ensure they comply with the Constitution and to strike down those that don't. This creates a check and balance, letting the judiciary prevent unconstitutional laws or actions from taking effect. The concept was established in the Supreme Court's *Marbury v. Madison* decision, which holds that courts have the authority to review and invalidate laws that conflict with the Constitution. That's why the correct description is the power to declare laws unconstitutional. Appointing judges is a function of the executive and legislative branches, interpreting tax statutes is part of applying the law (not the defining power of judicial review), and regulating commerce is a legislative power that courts may interpret in specific cases, not the core function of judicial review itself.

10. Which article of the Constitution governs life tenure for Article III judges?

- A. Article II
- B. Article III**
- C. Article IV
- D. Article I

The idea being tested is how the Constitution protects the independence of federal judges. Article III establishes that judges shall hold their offices during good behavior, which effectively means life tenure under normal circumstances. This long tenure helps judges decide cases free from political pressures, without fearing reappointment or election losses. Article III also provides that their salaries cannot be diminished while they serve, further safeguarding independence. The mechanism for removing judges—impeachment and conviction—comes from the impeachment process described in Article II, so while tenure is for life, it is not absolute: judges can be removed for misconduct through the impeachment process. The other articles govern different branches and functions: one article covers the presidency and executive power, another handles Congress, and another addresses relations between states. None of those establish the lifetime tenure for Article III judges, making this article the one that directly governs that aspect of the judiciary.

SAMPLE

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://usjudicialsysconstitutioncourtscases.examzify.com>

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

SAMPLE