

# 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** ..... 9

**Explanations** ..... 11

**Next Steps** ..... 17

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. Which term describes a list of cases in a court's calendar?**
  - A. Docket.**
  - B. Record**
  - C. Brief**
  - D. Verdict**
  
- 2. What is the key significance of United States v. Lopez (1995)?**
  - A. It upheld expansive federal power over interstate commerce.**
  - B. It limited Congress's power under the Commerce Clause by striking down the Gun-Free School Zones Act as exceeding federal authority.**
  - C. It established the supremacy of state laws over federal gun regulations.**
  - D. It allowed federal regulation of all activities regardless of commerce.**
  
- 3. What does a dissenting opinion express?**
  - A. Disagreement with the majority opinion**
  - B. Agreement with the majority opinion**
  - C. Concurring with the ruling but with different reasoning**
  - D. An explanation of procedural history**
  
- 4. What is the primary function of the Exclusionary Rule?**
  - A. To exclude illegally obtained evidence from being used in court.**
  - B. To dismiss cases with no probable cause.**
  - C. To exclude all testimony from a suspect.**
  - D. To suspend trials when the defense is unavailable.**

- 5. Which pair best captures the distinct roles of subject-matter jurisdiction and personal jurisdiction?**
- A. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs the type of case; personal jurisdiction governs the parties' involvement.**
  - B. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs the trial location; personal jurisdiction governs the type of case.**
  - C. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs evidentiary rules; personal jurisdiction governs sentencing.**
  - D. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs appeals; personal jurisdiction governs pre-trial motions.**
- 6. What is Obergefell v. Hodges about?**
- A. The right to same-sex marriage under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses.**
  - B. The right to counsel in criminal prosecutions.**
  - C. The legality of capital punishment.**
  - D. The limitation of freedom of speech in public forums.**
- 7. How does the Court check the actions of the other branches of government?**
- A. Presidential veto**
  - B. Judicial Review, declaring actions unconstitutional**
  - C. Propose new laws**
  - D. Interpret budgets**
- 8. Which statement best distinguishes substantive law from procedural law?**
- A. Substantive defines rights and duties; procedural governs enforcement processes.**
  - B. Substantive governs how trials are conducted; procedural defines rights.**
  - C. Substantive is about evidence; procedural is about sentencing.**
  - D. Substantive applies only to civil cases; procedural only to criminal.**

**9. What is Gideon v. Wainwright and what principle did it establish?**

- A. It held that the Sixth Amendment guarantees counsel only for capital offenses.**
- B. It states that defendants may waive counsel.**
- C. It held that the Sixth Amendment requires providing counsel to indigent defendants in criminal prosecutions.**
- D. It applies only to federal prosecutions.**

**10. What are courts-martial?**

- A. International tribunals**
- B. Courts that try military members.**
- C. Civilian courts**
- D. Appellate courts**

**SAMPLE**

## Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

## **Explanations**

SAMPLE

1. Which term describes a list of cases in a court's calendar?

- A. Docket.**
- B. Record**
- C. Brief**
- D. Verdict**

A docket is the court's calendar—the organized list of cases scheduled for hearings and trials, with dates, times, and courtroom assignments. It's the scheduling tool that tells everyone what will be heard when, so the day runs smoothly and lawyers can plan their appearances. This differs from a record, which is the case file containing pleadings, evidence, and orders; a brief, which is a party's written argument; and a verdict, which is the court's or jury's decision at the end of a case.

2. What is the key significance of *United States v. Lopez* (1995)?

- A. It upheld expansive federal power over interstate commerce.**
- B. It limited Congress's power under the Commerce Clause by striking down the Gun-Free School Zones Act as exceeding federal authority.**
- C. It established the supremacy of state laws over federal gun regulations.**
- D. It allowed federal regulation of all activities regardless of commerce.**

The main idea tested is the limits of Congress's power under the Commerce Clause. *United States v. Lopez* held that Congress exceeded its authority when it enacted the Gun-Free School Zones Act, because simply possessing a gun in a school zone is not an economic activity that substantially affects interstate commerce. This ruling marked a notable limit on the broad use of the Commerce Clause that had characterized much of the 20th century, signaling a reassertion of state sovereignty in areas like criminal law. It clarifies that federal regulation under commerce powers hinges on activities that either affect the channels or instrumentalities of interstate commerce or have a substantial and causal link to economic activity across state lines; a purely local, non-economic act like gun possession in a school zone does not meet that test.

3. What does a dissenting opinion express?

- A. Disagreement with the majority opinion**
- B. Agreement with the majority opinion**
- C. Concurring with the ruling but with different reasoning**
- D. An explanation of procedural history**

A dissenting opinion expresses disagreement with the majority's decision. It's written by a judge who would decide the case differently and lays out an alternative legal reasoning, or points out errors in how the majority applied laws or precedents. It doesn't adopt the outcome as the court's ruling, but instead preserves another viewpoint for the record and can influence future cases. By contrast, a concurrence agrees with the ruling but offers a different reason for why, and an explanation of procedural history belongs in the case background rather than in a dissent.

**4. What is the primary function of the Exclusionary Rule?**

- A. To exclude illegally obtained evidence from being used in court.**
- B. To dismiss cases with no probable cause.**
- C. To exclude all testimony from a suspect.**
- D. To suspend trials when the defense is unavailable.**

The Exclusionary Rule exists to protect constitutional rights by keeping evidence that police obtained in violation of the Fourth Amendment out of court. This remedy deters unlawful searches and seizures by making illegally obtained information unusable in prosecutions, encouraging law enforcement to follow proper procedures. The rule applies to both federal and state prosecutions, through incorporation of the Fourth Amendment against the states. While there are recognized exceptions (such as good faith reliance on a defective warrant or inevitable discovery), the central idea is that unlawfully obtained evidence cannot be used to prove guilt. It's not about dismissing cases for lack of probable cause, excluding all testimony, or suspending trials for defense unavailability.

**5. Which pair best captures the distinct roles of subject-matter jurisdiction and personal jurisdiction?**

- A. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs the type of case; personal jurisdiction governs the parties' involvement.**
- B. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs the trial location; personal jurisdiction governs the type of case.**
- C. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs evidentiary rules; personal jurisdiction governs sentencing.**
- D. Subject-matter jurisdiction governs appeals; personal jurisdiction governs pre-trial motions.**

Subject-matter jurisdiction determines what kinds of claims a court has the authority to hear, while personal jurisdiction determines whether the court can exercise power over the specific parties involved. This separation is fundamental: a court must be able to hear the type of claim presented, and it must also have power over each defendant to render a binding judgment. So the statement is best because it cleanly matches these roles—subject-matter jurisdiction governs the type of case, and personal jurisdiction governs the parties involved. The other ideas mix in concepts like venue (where a case is heard), evidentiary rules, sentencing, appeals, or pre-trial procedures, none of which define the core duties of subject-matter versus personal jurisdiction.

## 6. What is Obergefell v. Hodges about?

- A. The right to same-sex marriage under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses.
- B. The right to counsel in criminal prosecutions.
- C. The legality of capital punishment.**
- D. The limitation of freedom of speech in public forums.

The main concept being tested is how constitutional rights protect personal liberty and equality in intimate relationships under the Fourteenth Amendment. Obergefell v. Hodges is the 2015 Supreme Court decision that holds same-sex marriage is a constitutional right nationwide. It grounds this in the Due Process Clause, which protects fundamental liberties, including the choosing of a marriage partner, and the Equal Protection Clause, which requires that laws treat similarly situated people equally. Because marriage is treated as a fundamental liberty, state laws banning or refusing to recognize same-sex marriages violate both due process and equal protection. The Court required states to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and to recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere, underscoring that denying this right serves discriminatory purposes incompatible with the Fourteenth Amendment. The ruling builds on previous cases recognizing personal autonomy, dignity, and equality in family life. This case is not about the right to counsel in criminal prosecutions, the legality of capital punishment, or limits on free speech in public forums, which are addressed in other contexts and cases.

## 7. How does the Court check the actions of the other branches of government?

- A. Presidential veto
- B. Judicial Review, declaring actions unconstitutional**
- C. Propose new laws
- D. Interpret budgets

Judicial Review is the power of the Court to examine actions of the other branches and declare them unconstitutional. This authority, rooted in the Constitution and established in Marbury v. Madison, ensures that both laws and executive actions must align with the Constitution. The Court reviews statutes enacted by Congress and actions taken by the President to determine if they violate constitutional rights or exceed the powers granted to each branch. When a violation is found, the Court can strike down the law or invalidate the action, providing a check that keeps the other branches within constitutional limits. This mechanism is a core feature of how the system of checks and balances functions. Other listed possibilities reflect powers of the legislative or executive branches rather than the judiciary. A presidential veto is the president rejecting legislation, not a court review. Proposing new laws is a legislative function, and interpreting budgets relates to how money is allocated and spent, not the Court's constitutional review.

**8. Which statement best distinguishes substantive law from procedural law?**

- A. Substantive defines rights and duties; procedural governs enforcement processes.**
- B. Substantive governs how trials are conducted; procedural defines rights.**
- C. Substantive is about evidence; procedural is about sentencing.**
- D. Substantive applies only to civil cases; procedural only to criminal.**

Substantive law defines rights and duties — the actual rules that determine what people may or may not do and what remedies or penalties follow from violations. It tells you, for example, what constitutes a breach of contract, what crimes exist and their penalties, or who owns a piece of property. Procedural law, on the other hand, governs the mechanics of enforcing those rules: how a case is started, what steps must be followed, how evidence is gathered and admitted, what rights a defendant has, and how judgments are reviewed or appealed. So a contract breach, for instance, is a substantive issue (what counts as a breach and what remedy is available). The process of suing for that breach, the rules about presenting evidence, timelines, and due process rights are procedural concerns. The other statements misplace elements: procedural governs trial procedures and rules of evidence, not substantive rights; substantive isn't confined to civil cases alone—both civil and criminal contexts rely on substantive rules, with procedural rules applying to both as well.

**9. What is Gideon v. Wainwright and what principle did it establish?**

- A. It held that the Sixth Amendment guarantees counsel only for capital offenses.**
- B. It states that defendants may waive counsel.**
- C. It held that the Sixth Amendment requires providing counsel to indigent defendants in criminal prosecutions.**
- D. It applies only to federal prosecutions.**

The right to counsel for indigent defendants in criminal prosecutions is the fundamental idea here. Gideon v. Wainwright held that the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of an attorney is a fundamental right that must be provided by the states to defendants who cannot afford one, ensuring a fair trial. The decision also made this right applicable to state prosecutions through the Fourteenth Amendment, so it isn't limited to federal cases. This establishes that the government must appoint counsel for those who cannot pay, at no cost to the defendant, when imprisonment is a possibility. The other statements misstate the scope by suggesting limits to capital offenses, permitting waivers in a way Gideon does not, or applying only to federal prosecutions.

## 10. What are courts-martial?

- A. International tribunals
- B. Courts that try military members.**
- C. Civilian courts
- D. Appellate courts

Courts-martial are the military justice system's trial courts that try service members for violations of military law. They operate under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and handle offenses that affect the armed forces, not civilian crimes. There are different kinds of courts-martial—for example, some involve a judge alone and others include a panel of service members as a jury—depending on the seriousness of the offense. They can impose punishments authorized by military law, such as confinement, reductions in rank, or a discharge from the service. They are distinct from civilian courts and from international tribunals, though they share the goal of enforcing discipline within the military.

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](mailto: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