

US Sailing Basic Keelboat Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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. When sailing downwind, which phrase describes your course?**
 - A. Off the wind**
 - B. On the wind**
 - C. Close hauled**
 - D. Abeam**

- 2. Which term refers to the joining of two lines together by interweaving their strands?**
 - A. Sloop**
 - B. Splice**
 - C. Spar**
 - D. Snub**

- 3. What is the lower, aft corner of the sail called?**
 - A. Coaming**
 - B. Clew**
 - C. Cleat**
 - D. Cockpit**

- 4. A vessel taking on water is described as what?**
 - A. Flood**
 - B. Forepeak**
 - C. Foot**
 - D. Flooding**

- 5. Which statement best describes yawl rig?**
 - A. It has three masts**
 - B. It has two masts with a taller mizzen**
 - C. It has two masts with a mizzen shorter than the main**
 - D. It has a single mast**

- 6. Which term refers to a wire support for a mast that is part of the standing rigging?**
- A. Stanchions**
 - B. Stay**
 - C. Spreader**
 - D. Starboard**
- 7. An incoming current is called what?**
- A. Flood**
 - B. Following sea**
 - C. Foot**
 - D. Fore**
- 8. Which term is used to describe a nautical rope?**
- A. Line**
 - B. Rope**
 - C. Cable**
 - D. Knot**
- 9. Which term describes a boat that is under the power of sail or engine?**
- A. Underway**
 - B. Afloat**
 - C. Beached**
 - D. In Motion**
- 10. Which term describes sailing in a direction with the wind forward of the beam (about 70 degrees from the bow)?**
- A. Close Hauled**
 - B. Close Reach**
 - C. Adrift**
 - D. Charter**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When sailing downwind, which phrase describes your course?

- A. Off the wind**
- B. On the wind**
- C. Close hauled**
- D. Abeam**

Downwind means the wind is coming from behind you, so the course is described as off the wind. That term is used for points of sail where the wind is from aft, including broad reaches and running. It contrasts with sailing toward the wind (on the wind) and with up-close-to-the-wind positions like close hauled. Abeam describes wind from the side, which is a different point of sail, not downwind.

2. Which term refers to the joining of two lines together by interweaving their strands?

- A. Sloop**
- B. Splice**
- C. Spar**
- D. Snub**

Joining two lines by interweaving their strands is called a splice. Splicing strengthens the connection and creates a smooth, continuous length that won't snag on hardware or fittings, which is why it's preferred over tying a knot when two pieces of line need to be joined or extended. The other terms refer to unrelated things: a sloop is a type of sailboat, a spar is a pole used to support sails, and a snub is a way of securing or handling a rope around an object without creating a joined end through weaving.

3. What is the lower, aft corner of the sail called?

- A. Coaming**
- B. Clew**
- C. Cleat**
- D. Cockpit**

In sail terminology, corners of a sail are defined by how the edges meet. The lower edge is the foot, and the rear edge is the leech. The point where the foot and leech meet on the aft side—the bottom rear corner—is called the clew. This is also typically where the sheet attaches on many sails, which is why the term feels especially right for this corner. The other terms refer to non-sail parts: coaming is the raised edge around a cockpit, a cleat is a device for securing lines, and a cockpit is the area where the crew sits and steers.

4. A vessel taking on water is described as what?

- A. Flood
- B. Forepeak
- C. Foot
- D. Flooding**

Flooding is the term used to describe a vessel taking on water. It denotes the ongoing process of water entering the hull, causing the interior to rise and the vessel to become more hazardous if not addressed. Forepeak refers to a specific forward compartment, not the condition of water intrusion. Foot is a term related to the sail or a bottom edge, not the vessel's status. Flood, while related, doesn't capture the ongoing ingress as clearly as flooding does in this context.

5. Which statement best describes yawl rig?

- A. It has three masts
- B. It has two masts with a taller mizzen
- C. It has two masts with a mizzen shorter than the main**
- D. It has a single mast

A yawl rig is a two-masted sailplan where the aft mizzen mast is placed behind the rudder post and is shorter than the main mast. This combination—two masts with a mizzen smaller than the main—defines the yawl and helps balance the sail plan without adding a tall aft mast. So the best description is two masts with a mizzen shorter than the main, positioned aft of the rudder post. It's not three masts, not a mizzen taller than the main, and not a single-mast rig. The shorter mizzen aids handling and helm balance, especially when the larger mainsail is in use or reefed.

6. Which term refers to a wire support for a mast that is part of the standing rigging?

- A. Stanchions
- B. Stay**
- C. Spreader
- D. Starboard

In sailing, the fixed wires that hold the mast in place are called the standing rigging. A wire that provides fore-and-aft support to the mast is a stay. There are stays running to the bow (forestay) and to the stern (backstay), both under constant tension to keep the mast upright and correctly aligned. Stays are distinguished from running rigging (lines used to adjust sails) and from other components: stanchions are posts for lifelines, spreaders are rigid pieces that spread the shrouds, and starboard is simply the boat's right-hand side.

7. An incoming current is called what?

- A. Flood**
- B. Following sea**
- C. Foot**
- D. Fore**

In nautical terms, an incoming current is called a flood. During flood tide, water moves toward the shore, creating a current that runs toward land. The opposite is ebb, when the current flows away from land. The other terms refer to different concepts: a following sea describes waves coming from behind the vessel, the foot is the bottom edge of a sail, and fore means toward the bow. So the correct term for an incoming current is flood.

8. Which term is used to describe a nautical rope?

- A. Line**
- B. Rope**
- C. Cable**
- D. Knot**

On a sailboat, the term for the rope used to control sails and rigging is line. In nautical usage, line is the standard word for these ropes—everything from halyards to sheets and guys. Rope is the general everyday word, but sailors use line to refer to the actual rope involved in running rigging and control tasks. Cable denotes a thicker, often wired or fiber rope, not the typical sailing line. A knot is a tying method, not the material itself. So line is the correct term.

9. Which term describes a boat that is under the power of sail or engine?

- A. Underway**
- B. Afloat**
- C. Beached**
- D. In Motion**

When a boat is not tied to shore, not moored, and not at anchor, and it has propulsion—whether from its sails or its engine—it's described as underway. This term is the standard way sailors indicate a vessel that can move under its own power or is already moving, distinguishing it from boats that are simply floating passively, beached, or otherwise stationary. Afloat means the boat is floating but may be stationary; beached means it's resting on land; in motion isn't the formal nautical term used in this context. So underway best captures the idea of a vessel that can and may be moving under sail or power.

10. Which term describes sailing in a direction with the wind forward of the beam (about 70 degrees from the bow)?

- A. Close Hauled**
- B. Close Reach**
- C. Adrift**
- D. Charter**

When the wind comes from forward of the beam, you're on a close reach. An angle of about 70 degrees from the bow places the wind ahead of the side but not directly ahead, which is exactly what a close reach describes: you're sailing fast enough with the wind coming from forward of the beam, and you trim the sails a bit more than you would for a tighter upwind course to catch that wind efficiently. Close-hauled would be wind even closer to the bow (more upwind and with sails tightened), while a beam reach has the wind from the side (90 degrees from the bow). Adrift isn't a point of sail at all—it means the boat isn't under sail power. Charter isn't a sailing term for a direction or point of sail.

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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://ussailingbasickeelboat.examzify.com>

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

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