

US Supreme Court Cases 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. Which case shaped Confrontation Clause interpretation by requiring cross-examination for certain testimonial evidence?**
 - A. Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**
 - B. Miranda v. Arizona (1966)**
 - C. Crawford v. Washington (2004)**
 - D. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)**

- 2. Which case struck down a provision of the Defense of Marriage Act and recognized federal recognition of same-sex marriages?**
 - A. Loving v. Virginia**
 - B. Obergefell v. Hodges**
 - C. Windsor v. United States**
 - D. Lawrence v. Texas**

- 3. Which case addressed prior restraint at the state level?**
 - A. New York Times Co. v. United States**
 - B. Near v Minnesota**
 - C. Branzburg v. Hayes**
 - D. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier**

- 4. Bethel v. Fraser (1986) concluded that schools may ban vulgar and lewd speech. Which constitutional principle does this reflect?**
 - A. The First Amendment prohibits censorship in schools**
 - B. The First Amendment does not prohibit schools from banning vulgar and lewd speech**
 - C. The Fourth Amendment rights apply to schools**
 - D. The Tenth Amendment reserves powers to states**

- 5. Which case held that government may not compel students to salute the flag or engage in patriotic expression?**
 - A. Schenck v. United States**
 - B. Brown v. Board of Education**
 - C. Dred Scott v. Sandford**
 - D. West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette**

- 6. Which case recognized the right to same-sex marriage?**
- A. Windsor v. United States**
 - B. Obergefell v. Hodges**
 - C. Lawrence v. Texas**
 - D. Loving v. Virginia**
- 7. The Craig v. Boren decision struck down which type of gender-based policy?**
- A. A law mandating identical drinking ages for all genders**
 - B. A law requiring women to receive preferential treatment in jury selection**
 - C. A law banning alcohol sales to any minor**
 - D. A law allowing different drinking ages by gender**
- 8. Which case introduced the undue burden standard for abortion restrictions?**
- A. Casey**
 - B. Lopez**
 - C. Hernandez**
 - D. Adarand**
- 9. Which case guaranteed the right to counsel for the accused at trial, regardless of ability to pay?**
- A. Miranda v. Arizona**
 - B. Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States**
 - C. Wickard v. Filburn**
 - D. Gideon v. Wainwright**
- 10. Which case established that Congress can regulate interstate commerce including navigation?**
- A. Gibbons v. Ogden**
 - B. Wickard v. Filburn**
 - C. United States v. Morrison**
 - D. National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which case shaped Confrontation Clause interpretation by requiring cross-examination for certain testimonial evidence?

- A. **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**
- B. **Miranda v. Arizona (1966)**
- C. **Crawford v. Washington (2004)**
- D. **Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)**

The key idea is that the Confrontation Clause requires cross-examination for testimonial statements offered against a defendant. Crawford v. Washington (2004) established that when the government tries to admit a witness's testimonial statements who did not testify at trial, the defendant must have had an opportunity to cross-examine that witness. If the declarant is unavailable and there was no prior opportunity for cross-examination, the statement is inadmissible. This case reshaped Confrontation Clause doctrine by replacing the older focus on reliability with a requirement that testimonial evidence be subjected to cross-examination. Crawford also draws a sharp line between testimonial and non-testimonial statements, emphasizing that statements given to police in the course of investigating a crime are generally testimonial and thus subject to this cross-examination rule. However, statements made for purposes other than establishing past events for prosecution (non-testimonial) may not trigger the same requirement. Other choices don't fit because they address different constitutional issues. Brown v. Board of Education centers on racial segregation in public schools, Miranda v. Arizona concerns rights of suspects during police interrogation, and Plessy v. Ferguson deals with the legality of racial segregation.

2. Which case struck down a provision of the Defense of Marriage Act and recognized federal recognition of same-sex marriages?

- A. **Loving v. Virginia**
- B. **Obergefell v. Hodges**
- C. **Windsor v. United States**
- D. **Lawrence v. Texas**

The main idea is how federal recognition of marriages is treated when a state licenses a same-sex marriage. Windsor v. United States targeted the Defense of Marriage Act, specifically the provision that defined marriage for federal purposes as a union between one man and one woman. The Court held that this federal definition violated the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment because it denied federal benefits to same-sex couples who were legally married under their state law. In other words, if a state recognizes a same-sex marriage, the federal government must recognize that marriage for federal programs and benefits. This was a pivotal step toward equality and set the stage for broader recognition later, such as Obergefell v. Hodges, which extended marriage equality nationwide. The decision is distinct from Loving v. Virginia (interracial marriage), Lawrence v. Texas (sodomy laws), and Obergefell (nationally legalizes same-sex marriage), placing Windsor as the case that struck down the federal restriction in DOMA and acknowledged federal recognition of same-sex marriages.

3. Which case addressed prior restraint at the state level?

- A. New York Times Co. v. United States
- B. Near v Minnesota**
- C. Branzburg v. Hayes
- D. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier

Prior restraint—the government stopping publication before it occurs—is a central limit on government power over speech. *Near v. Minnesota* is the landmark case that addresses this at the state level. In this decision, Minnesota tried to enjoin a weekly newspaper from publishing, but the Supreme Court ruled that the state could not use prior restraint to suppress the press; the First Amendment applies to state governments through the Fourteenth Amendment, so state actions that censor publication before it happens are generally unconstitutional. The ruling establishes a strong presumption against prior restraints on the press and reinforces the idea that states must respect press freedom just as the federal government does. The other cases deal with different issues—federal government attempts at prior restraint, journalist-source privileges, or school censorship—so they don't fit as directly with the question about state-level prior restraint.

4. *Bethel v. Fraser* (1986) concluded that schools may ban vulgar and lewd speech. Which constitutional principle does this reflect?

- A. The First Amendment prohibits censorship in schools
- B. The First Amendment does not prohibit schools from banning vulgar and lewd speech**
- C. The Fourth Amendment rights apply to schools
- D. The Tenth Amendment reserves powers to states

The principle being tested is that rights in public schools are not the same as rights in the broader public sphere. In *Bethel v. Fraser*, the Court held that student speech can be regulated by school officials when it is vulgar or lewd and disrupts the educational environment. This recognizes that while students do retain First Amendment protections, those protections are not absolute inside a school setting, where the school has a legitimate interest in promoting decency and order. So, the decision reflects that the First Amendment does not prohibit schools from banning vulgar and lewd speech. Why this fits: *Fraser* involved a student giving a risqué nomination speech at a school assembly; the Court said such indecent speech could be restricted by the school to protect the school's educational mission. The other options don't fit because they either claim an absolute censorship ban in schools (which *Fraser* rejects), apply the Fourth Amendment (which deals with searches and seizures, not speech rights here), or invoke the Tenth Amendment (which concerns states' powers and is not the basis for school speech rules).

5. Which case held that government may not compel students to salute the flag or engage in patriotic expression?

A. Schenck v. United States

B. Brown v. Board of Education

C. Dred Scott v. Sandford

D. West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette

The case tests a person's right not to be forced into expressing beliefs or patriotic sentiments by the government. It holds that in public schools, students cannot be compelled to salute the flag or participate in patriotic rituals because doing so would amount to forcing them to express a view they may not hold. In this decision, the Court struck down a state requirement that students salute the flag and recite the pledge, noting that forcing students to pledge allegiance violated their First Amendment freedoms of speech and, in effect, their freedom of conscience. The ruling emphasized that the government cannot compel individuals to convey messages or beliefs, especially in a setting like a school where personal beliefs and religious convictions may differ. This decision marked a limit on state power to compel certain expressions, protecting students' autonomy over their own beliefs. For additional context, this case overturned a prior wartime ruling that allowed compulsory flag salute, clarifying that the First Amendment protections extend to students and that compelled patriotic expression is unconstitutional. Other listed cases address different constitutional issues—one deals with the limits on speech during wartime, another with racial segregation in education, and another with the moral and legal status of enslaved people—so none specifically establish the rule about compulsory patriotic expression in schools.

6. Which case recognized the right to same-sex marriage?

A. Windsor v. United States

B. Obergefell v. Hodges

C. Lawrence v. Texas

D. Loving v. Virginia

Same-sex marriage is recognized as a constitutional right under the Fourteenth Amendment, protected as a fundamental liberty and guaranteed by equal protection. The ruling held that state bans on same-sex marriage violate these guarantees because they deny a core personal choice to a group of citizens and treat related couples differently. As a result, states must license marriages between same-sex couples and recognize those marriages performed in other states, creating a nationwide standard. The decision highlights dignity and the government's obligation to respect same-sex relationships on the same terms as opposite-sex ones. This differs from Windsor, which dealt with federal recognition of marriages for federal purposes rather than a broad right; and from Lawrence and Loving, which address different issues—privacy in intimate conduct and interracial marriage, not the nationwide recognition of same-sex marriage.

7. The Craig v. Boren decision struck down which type of gender-based policy?
- A. A law mandating identical drinking ages for all genders
 - B. A law requiring women to receive preferential treatment in jury selection
 - C. A law banning alcohol sales to any minor
 - D. A law allowing different drinking ages by gender**

Gender-based classifications receive heightened scrutiny under equal protection, meaning a policy must be substantially related to an important government objective to be valid. In Craig v. Boren, the Court struck down an Oklahoma law that allowed different drinking ages for men and women, ruling that this kind of gender-based difference failed the substantial-relationship test. The state's justification of protecting public safety wasn't shown to be sufficiently persuasive or necessary, and there were less discriminatory ways to achieve the objective. So the policy that allowed different drinking ages by gender is unconstitutional. The other options describe non-gender-based or unrelated policies, so they don't fit what the Court addressed.

8. Which case introduced the undue burden standard for abortion restrictions?
- A. Casey**
 - B. Lopez
 - C. Hernandez
 - D. Adarand

The main idea here is how abortion restrictions are evaluated in constitutional terms. The undue burden standard looks at whether a law places a substantial obstacle in a woman's path to obtaining an abortion before the fetus is viable. This standard was first introduced by Planned Parenthood v. Casey in 1992. The Court kept the right to an abortion but moved away from Roe's trimester framework to this more flexible test, focusing on the practical impact of the regulation rather than rigid scrutiny levels. Under Casey, a regulation is permissible if it does not impose a substantial obstacle to the abortion decision. So while states can regulate abortion, they must ensure their laws don't create that substantial barrier. The Court gave examples like waiting periods or required counseling as potentially valid, provided they don't impose an undue burden. When a provision actually creates a substantial obstacle, it fails the test and is struck down. The other cases mentioned involve different constitutional issues—such as racial classifications or federalism—and do not establish the undue burden standard for abortion restrictions.

9. Which case guaranteed the right to counsel for the accused at trial, regardless of ability to pay?

- A. Miranda v. Arizona**
- B. Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States**
- C. Wickard v. Filburn**
- D. Gideon v. Wainwright**

The main idea here is the right to counsel as a fundamental safeguard in criminal trials. The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to have an attorney, and the Supreme Court later held that this right applies to state prosecutions through the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause. *Gideon v. Wainwright* explains that when a defendant cannot afford an attorney, the state must provide one. This ensures a fair trial by giving the accused meaningful legal assistance to navigate the proceedings, prepare a defense, and challenge the prosecution. The decision overruled *Betts v. Brady*, which had allowed the government not to appoint counsel in many non-capital cases. So, the case that guarantees the right to counsel for the accused at trial, regardless of ability to pay, is *Gideon v. Wainwright*. The other listed cases address different issues: *Miranda v. Arizona* concerns informing suspects of their rights during interrogation, while *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* and *Wickard v. Filburn* deal with federal regulation of commerce.

10. Which case established that Congress can regulate interstate commerce including navigation?

- A. Gibbons v. Ogden**
- B. Wickard v. Filburn**
- C. United States v. Morrison**
- D. National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius**

Regulatory power over interstate commerce includes activities like navigation that cross state lines. In *Gibbons v. Ogden*, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress has authority to regulate navigation as part of interstate commerce, even when a state grants a monopoly or attempts to control routes between states. The Court held that the federal license for competing steamboat operations supersedes inconsistent state laws, because navigation is a channel of commerce among the states and thus falls under federal power. This broad interpretation set the stage for Congress to regulate not just trade in goods, but the entire flow of commercial intercourse across state borders. The other cases build on or constrain that broad view in different ways, but *Gibbons v. Ogden* is the foundational decision establishing that Congress can regulate interstate navigation as part of commerce.

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://ussupremecourtcases.examzify.com>

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

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