

# USNA Third-Class Midshipman (3/C) Professional Competency Assessment (PCA) 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. What types of information might tactical intelligence include?**
  - A. Only military tactics and strategies**
  - B. Local economy and social reactions to operations**
  - C. Enemy troop movements exclusively**
  - D. The weather reports for the operational area**
  
- 2. Which submarine class carries the Dry Deck Shelter?**
  - A. Ohio (SSGN)**
  - B. Virginia**
  - C. Seawolf**
  - D. Los Angeles**
  
- 3. What distinguishes the Ready Reserve?**
  - A. It provides a pool of active duty personnel**
  - B. It consists solely of support staff**
  - C. It has trained service members ready for active duty**
  - D. It includes all reserve members without restriction**
  
- 4. What type of guidance system does the MK 48 Advanced Capability (ADCAP) Heavyweight Torpedo use?**
  - A. Electromechanical guidance**
  - B. Acoustic-homing**
  - C. GPS navigation**
  - D. Magnetic guidance**
  
- 5. Which of the following is an example of offensive Electronic Attack?**
  - A. Using jammers to prevent enemy radar operation**
  - B. Employing frequency agility to enhance communication**
  - C. Implementing measures for self-protection against enemy attacks**
  - D. Tracking enemy EM energy for future operations**

- 6. Which ships are considered Service Support USNS ships?**
- A. Fleet Ocean Tugs, Hospital Ships, and Cable Laying Ships**
  - B. Only armed patrol vessels**
  - C. Civilian commercial vessels for Army logistics**
  - D. Container ships for transporting civilians**
- 7. What is the main purpose of Electronic Protection (EP)?**
- A. To enhance enemy combat capabilities**
  - B. To protect friendly forces from the effects of electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) use**
  - C. To conduct offensive electronic warfare actions**
  - D. To gather intelligence on enemy operations**
- 8. What is the mission of the Air Force?**
- A. To protect land territories from maritime threats**
  - B. To conduct combat operations solely in space**
  - C. To fly, fight, and win in air, space, and cyberspace**
  - D. To focus exclusively on ground forces battalions**
- 9. What does EMCON stand for?**
- A. Emergency Contact**
  - B. Emission Control**
  - C. Electronic Coordination**
  - D. Environmental Monitoring**
- 10. What is the primary responsibility of the Department of the Treasury within the intelligence community?**
- A. Enforces laws regarding narcotics and controlled substances**
  - B. Analyzes foreign intelligence related to US economic policy**
  - C. Leads Air Force global integrated ISR operations**
  - D. Oversees intelligence activities within the Army**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What types of information might tactical intelligence include?**

- A. Only military tactics and strategies**
- B. Local economy and social reactions to operations**
- C. Enemy troop movements exclusively**
- D. The weather reports for the operational area**

Tactical intelligence encompasses a broad range of information that is vital for understanding and effectively responding to the operational environment in military contexts. While it includes enemy troop movements, it also extends beyond merely tracking those movements. The inclusion of local economy and social reactions to operations provides commanders with critical insights into the operational landscape. Understanding the local populace's perceptions and their reactions can significantly influence operational effectiveness and the success of missions. For instance, if the local economy is struggling or if the populace is reacting negatively toward military operations, this information allows military leaders to adjust their strategies to minimize dissent and maximize support from the local population, thus ensuring a more comprehensive approach to operations. In contrast, the other options focus too narrowly. Limiting intelligence solely to military tactics and strategies overlooks the broader picture necessary for tactical decision-making. Focusing exclusively on enemy troop movements does not take into account the environmental and social factors that can affect those movements. Lastly, while weather reports are indeed important, they represent just one aspect of the diverse information tactical intelligence should incorporate. Hence, the choice highlighting local economy and social reactions effectively captures the multidimensional nature of tactical intelligence.

**2. Which submarine class carries the Dry Deck Shelter?**

- A. Ohio (SSGN)**
- B. Virginia**
- C. Seawolf**
- D. Los Angeles**

The Ohio class submarines, specifically the SSGN variant, are designed to carry the Dry Deck Shelter (DDS). The DDS serves as a deployment platform for Special Forces operations and can facilitate the launch and recovery of SEAL delivery vehicles as well as other special operations equipment. This capability is critical for enhancing the operational flexibility of the Ohio-class submarines, allowing them to conduct covert missions without the need to surface. The SSGN variant of the Ohio class has been specifically modified to support these operations, making it uniquely suited for this purpose compared to the other submarine classes. The Virginia class is equipped for various missions, including special operations, but it does not have the specific configuration to carry the DDS. While the Seawolf and Los Angeles classes are also capable submarines with distinct features, they do not operate with the Dry Deck Shelter, focusing instead on other mission sets and technologies.

### 3. What distinguishes the Ready Reserve?

- A. It provides a pool of active duty personnel
- B. It consists solely of support staff
- C. It has trained service members ready for active duty**
- D. It includes all reserve members without restriction

The Ready Reserve is distinguished by its composition of trained service members who are prepared to be called into active duty when the need arises. This group is composed of individuals who have completed their initial training and can quickly mobilize to support military operations. The members of the Ready Reserve typically maintain their military skills and readiness, allowing them to serve as an immediate resource in times of national emergency or conflict. In contrast, the other options do not accurately reflect what the Ready Reserve entails. The Ready Reserve is not a pool of active duty personnel, as those are members already serving full-time. It also does not consist solely of support staff, as it encompasses a variety of military roles and specialties. Additionally, it is not an unrestricted group of all reserve members; it specifically includes those who have met the required training and readiness standards to respond promptly.

### 4. What type of guidance system does the MK 48 Advanced Capability (ADCAP) Heavyweight Torpedo use?

- A. Electromechanical guidance
- B. Acoustic-homing**
- C. GPS navigation
- D. Magnetic guidance

The MK 48 Advanced Capability (ADCAP) Heavyweight Torpedo employs an acoustic-homing guidance system, which is essential for its operation in underwater environments. Acoustic-homing works by utilizing sound waves to detect and track its target, allowing the torpedo to home in on the noise generated by a target vessel. This method is effective because it can operate in a challenging underwater setting, often with multiple noise sources that could potentially obscure other guidance systems. The acoustic-homing capabilities of the MK 48 torpedo enable it to be highly versatile and effective against a range of surface ships and submarine threats. This system allows the torpedo to adapt its path in real time based on the sounds it receives, which is crucial for successfully engaging targets that may be maneuvering or attempting to evade. Other guidance systems mentioned in the choices do not align with the operational design of the MK 48. Electromechanical guidance is typically less flexible and cannot adapt as effectively to dynamic environments. GPS navigation is not suitable for underwater applications, as GPS signals cannot penetrate water effectively. Magnetic guidance is also not commonly used for modern torpedoes, as it tends to be less reliable compared to acoustic methods in the underwater domain.

**5. Which of the following is an example of offensive Electronic Attack?**

- A. Using jammers to prevent enemy radar operation**
- B. Employing frequency agility to enhance communication**
- C. Implementing measures for self-protection against enemy attacks**
- D. Tracking enemy EM energy for future operations**

Using jammers to prevent enemy radar operation is an example of offensive Electronic Attack because it directly disrupts or damages the enemy's ability to detect and respond to friendly forces. The primary aim of this action is to deny the enemy the use of their radar systems, which are crucial for surveillance, targeting, and situational awareness. This offensive action seeks to create an advantage by impairing the enemy's operational capabilities, thus facilitating friendly operations. In contrast, employing frequency agility to enhance communication focuses on improving one's own communications rather than attacking or degrading enemy capabilities. Implementing measures for self-protection against attacks is defensive in nature, designed to safeguard assets rather than offensively targeting an enemy system. Tracking enemy electromagnetic energy is more about intelligence gathering and future operations planning; it does not actively disrupt or impair enemy systems and therefore does not classify as an offensive action.

**6. Which ships are considered Service Support USNS ships?**

- A. Fleet Ocean Tugs, Hospital Ships, and Cable Laying Ships**
- B. Only armed patrol vessels**
- C. Civilian commercial vessels for Army logistics**
- D. Container ships for transporting civilians**

Service Support USNS ships are specifically designed to provide essential support to naval operations, which includes a variety of logistical and medical capabilities. Fleet Ocean Tugs, Hospital Ships, and Cable Laying Ships play crucial roles in maintaining naval readiness and operational sustainability. Fleet Ocean Tugs are vital for towing and assisting vessels, particularly in times of crisis or during complex operations. Hospital Ships are equipped to provide medical assistance and care to service members and, in some instances, civilians, which is critical during humanitarian missions or in areas affected by conflict. Cable Laying Ships are used to install and maintain undersea cables, which are important for communications and data transfer across naval and commercial networks. These ships collectively enhance the Navy's operational flexibility by ensuring that support and specialized services are available as needed during missions, training, or disaster relief operations. Other options listed, such as armed patrol vessels, civilian commercial vessels, or container ships for transporting civilians, do not fulfill the specific roles associated with Service Support USNS missions. Hence, the inclusion of Fleet Ocean Tugs, Hospital Ships, and Cable Laying Ships as Service Support USNS ships emphasizes their importance in supporting the broader naval mission.

## 7. What is the main purpose of Electronic Protection (EP)?

- A. To enhance enemy combat capabilities
- B. To protect friendly forces from the effects of electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) use**
- C. To conduct offensive electronic warfare actions
- D. To gather intelligence on enemy operations

The main purpose of Electronic Protection (EP) is to safeguard friendly forces from the detrimental effects of electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) use. This includes ensuring that communication and radar systems remain operational and effective in the face of potential electronic threats, such as jamming or spoofing employed by adversaries. Through EP measures, military operations can maintain operational integrity and effectiveness, thereby minimizing vulnerabilities to electronic attacks that could compromise mission objectives. In essence, EP encompasses a range of tactics and strategies designed to fortify friendly assets against electronic threats, thereby enabling a more reliable command and control structure during operations. Each of the incorrect choices reflects a misunderstanding of the role of EP, as they do not align with its protective nature but instead imply offensive or counterproductive actions not in line with the core objectives of Electronic Protection.

## 8. What is the mission of the Air Force?

- A. To protect land territories from maritime threats
- B. To conduct combat operations solely in space
- C. To fly, fight, and win in air, space, and cyberspace**
- D. To focus exclusively on ground forces battalions

The mission of the Air Force encompasses a broad range of responsibilities that involve operating in air, space, and cyberspace. This reflects the modern nature of warfare, where control of these domains is essential for strategic advantage and operational success. The focus on "fly, fight, and win" underscores the commitment to achieving air superiority and conducting various combat operations. This mission includes defending the nation, supporting joint and coalition forces, and ensuring readiness to address threats across all three domains. The other options do not accurately capture the comprehensive scope of the Air Force's mission. Protecting land territories from maritime threats relates more to naval operations, while focusing exclusively on ground forces battalions is outside the realm of the Air Force's core responsibilities. Additionally, conducting combat operations solely in space overlooks the critical functions that take place in the air and cyberspace domains. Together, these distinctions illustrate why the chosen mission statement effectively reflects the Air Force's multifaceted operational capabilities.

## 9. What does EMCON stand for?

- A. Emergency Contact
- B. Emission Control**
- C. Electronic Coordination
- D. Environmental Monitoring

EMCON stands for Emission Control. This term is commonly used in military operations to refer to the practice of managing and reducing the electromagnetic emissions of a platform to avoid detection by adversaries. By controlling emissions, naval vessels and aircraft can operate in stealth mode, enhancing their survivability and operational effectiveness. Emission Control is crucial in scenarios where maintaining the element of surprise or avoiding enemy radar is essential. The other options do not accurately reflect this concept, as they pertain to different contexts unrelated to military operational tactics.

## 10. What is the primary responsibility of the Department of the Treasury within the intelligence community?

- A. Enforces laws regarding narcotics and controlled substances
- B. Analyzes foreign intelligence related to US economic policy**
- C. Leads Air Force global integrated ISR operations
- D. Oversees intelligence activities within the Army

The primary responsibility of the Department of the Treasury within the intelligence community is to analyze foreign intelligence related to US economic policy. This role is crucial as the Treasury plays a significant part in shaping and evaluating the economic landscape, particularly in terms of how foreign developments can affect the US economy, financial markets, and overall economic security. The Department of the Treasury has various tools at its disposal to analyze and respond to economic threats, including sanctions and regulatory actions. By gathering and interpreting intelligence regarding foreign economic activities, the Treasury can inform policy decisions that impact national interests. This analytical role is vital for understanding how global trends and actions might influence U.S. economic strategies or security. Other aspects, such as law enforcement related to narcotics or oversight of intelligence activities within military branches, fall outside the Treasury's primary focus and are typically managed by other agencies or departments better suited to those specific roles. The Air Force global integrated ISR operations also pertain to military intelligence rather than the economic analysis that is central to the Treasury's mission.

## 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://usna3cpca.examzify.com>**

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

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