

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY (GSU) POLS 1101 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT EXAM 2 PRACTICE (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

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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

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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. Historically, how often did Congress override presidential vetoes?**
 - A. Less than 10% of the time.
 - B. About 50% of the time.
 - C. Around 25%.
 - D. Never.
- 2. Which type of committee is temporary and formed for a specific purpose and is mostly investigative?**
 - A. Standing committee
 - B. Joint committee
 - C. Select committee
 - D. Conference committee
- 3. Why did the national debt double during the 1980s?**
 - A. The debt doubled because the economy grew and revenue outpaced spending.
 - B. The debt doubled mainly due to spending being cut while taxes rose.
 - C. The debt doubled because the government ran surpluses.
 - D. The debt doubled because tax cuts reduced revenue while spending rose.
- 4. Which statement best describes executive agreements vs treaties?**
 - A. Treaties require no Senate involvement; executive agreements require Senate approval.
 - B. Treaties require Senate advice and consent; executive agreements do not.
 - C. Executive agreements require Senate approval; treaties do not.
 - D. Both require Senate ratification.
- 5. Which constitutional power allows the president to direct the operations of the federal bureaucracy without new legislation?**
 - A. Veto
 - B. Treaty
 - C. Appointment power
 - D. Executive order

- 6. What does stare decisis mean and why is it important?**
- A. Stand on the decision; rely on precedent rather than changing law.
 - B. The concept that courts should overturn all prior rulings.
 - C. The requirement that all judges be elected.
 - D. The obligation to never overrule precedent.
- 7. Compare the consequences of a gridlocked Congress versus streamlined presidential action on policy outcomes.**
- A. Gridlock accelerates policy change; streamlined action slows it and increases deliberation.
 - B. Gridlock has no effect on policy; streamlined action reduces executive power.
 - C. Gridlock strengthens bipartisanship; streamlined action ensures perfect oversight.
 - D. Gridlock slows or blocks legislation; streamlined action enables rapid policy change but may reduce deliberation and checks and balances.
- 8. What are the three main levels of the federal court system?**
- A. U.S. District Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and State Supreme Court
 - B. U.S. District Court only
 - C. U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals, and District Courts
 - D. U.S. District Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court
- 9. Describe the purpose and function of standing committees in Congress.**
- A. Standing committees specialize in policy areas, draft bills, conduct hearings, and oversee agencies.
 - B. They handle only budget matters and do not oversee agencies.
 - C. They convene only to impeach officials.
 - D. They exist only in the House, not Senate.
- 10. Which category is protected under Title VII's employment discrimination prohibition?**
- A. Race
 - B. Religion
 - C. Sex
 - D. Race, color, religion, sex, or national origin

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Historically, how often did Congress override presidential vetoes?

A. Less than 10% of the time.

B. About 50% of the time.

C. Around 25%.

D. Never.

The main idea is that overrides of presidential vetoes are rare because achieving a two-thirds vote in both chambers is difficult in a divided or polarized Congress. Historically, veto overrides happen only in a minority of cases—roughly less than ten percent. That means most vetoes are sustained by the president, and only a small share are overturned when there's broad cross-party support or a critical coalition in Congress to pass the bill anyway. So the option stating less than ten percent fits the historical pattern. The other figures would imply much more frequent overrides or none at all, which history does not support, since there have been several overrides, though far from common.

2. Which type of committee is temporary and formed for a specific purpose and is mostly investigative?

A. Standing committee

B. Joint committee

C. Select committee

D. Conference committee

Temporary, purpose-specific investigative work is the hallmark of a select committee. These committees are created by Congress to probe a particular issue or event, conduct hearings, gather evidence, and report back, and they are disbanded once their assignment is complete. A famous example is the Watergate-era select committee that investigated the break-in and abuses of power. In contrast, standing committees are ongoing and handle broad policy areas; joint committees involve members from both chambers and can be permanent or temporary but aren't mainly focused on investigation; conference committees are temporary groups formed to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of a bill and focus on drafting and compromise rather than investigation.

3. Why did the national debt double during the 1980s?

A. The debt doubled because the economy grew and revenue outpaced spending.

B. The debt doubled mainly due to spending being cut while taxes rose.

C. The debt doubled because the government ran surpluses.

D. The debt doubled because tax cuts reduced revenue while spending rose.

When the government spends more money than it takes in, it must borrow to cover the gap, causing the national debt to rise. In the 1980s, tax cuts reduced federal revenue while spending increased, especially on defense and related programs. This combination produced large annual deficits, so the government borrowed more each year, leading to a substantial increase in the total debt. If revenues had outpaced or matched spending, or if taxes had risen while spending fell, the debt would not have doubled.

4. Which statement best describes executive agreements vs treaties?

- A. Treaties require no Senate involvement; executive agreements require Senate approval.
- B. Treaties require Senate advice and consent; executive agreements do not.**
- C. Executive agreements require Senate approval; treaties do not.
- D. Both require Senate ratification.

Treaties require Senate advice and consent, meaning the Senate must approve them with a two-thirds vote before they become binding international law. Executive agreements are negotiated by the president and do not require Senate approval, making them quicker to arrange but potentially less durable across future administrations. This contrast—Senate involvement for treaties versus no Senate approval for executive agreements—best captures the difference.

5. Which constitutional power allows the president to direct the operations of the federal bureaucracy without new legislation?

- A. Veto
- B. Treaty
- C. Appointment power
- D. Executive order**

Executive order. The president can direct how federal agencies operate through orders that set policy, priorities, and procedures for enforcing existing laws without needing new legislation. These orders rely on the president's constitutional duty to take care that laws be faithfully executed and to manage the executive branch. They bind agencies unless Congress passes new laws to change the policy or courts strike them down as unconstitutional or beyond statutory authority. Veto, by contrast, rejects bills; a treaty creates international obligations and needs Senate approval; appointment power shapes leadership but not the ongoing operations of the entire bureaucracy.

6. What does stare decisis mean and why is it important?

- A. Stand on the decision; rely on precedent rather than changing law.**
- B. The concept that courts should overturn all prior rulings.
- C. The requirement that all judges be elected.
- D. The obligation to never overrule precedent.

Stare decisis means to stand by things decided: courts follow prior decisions as precedent when deciding current cases. This matters because it gives the law consistency and predictability—people and governments can rely on how rules have been applied before. It also promotes fairness by treating like cases alike and reduces the risk of arbitrary rulings. At the same time, it isn't a rigid rule; when a prior ruling no longer fits new understandings or facts, higher courts can overturn or modify it or distinguish the current case. This combination of stability with room for measured change keeps the legal system reliable while allowing progress, as seen when landmark decisions shift policy over time.

7. Compare the consequences of a gridlocked Congress versus streamlined presidential action on policy outcomes.

- A. Gridlock accelerates policy change; streamlined action slows it and increases deliberation.
- B. Gridlock has no effect on policy; streamlined action reduces executive power.
- C. Gridlock strengthens bipartisanship; streamlined action ensures perfect oversight.
- D. Gridlock slows or blocks legislation; streamlined action enables rapid policy change but may reduce deliberation and checks and balances.**

Policy outcomes hinge on how power is distributed and exercised between Congress and the president. When Congress is gridlocked, passing bills becomes difficult, so policy change is slowed or blocked. Conversely, streamlined presidential action allows the president to push policies quickly through executive orders, directives, and other unilateral moves, but this speed comes at the cost of thorough deliberation and robust checks and balances. That's why the correct choice describes gridlock as slowing or blocking legislation and streamlined action as enabling rapid policy change while potentially reducing deliberation and checks and balances. The other options misstate the dynamics by suggesting gridlock accelerates change, having no effect, or strengthening bipartisanship or oversight in ways not supported by typical constitutional design.

8. What are the three main levels of the federal court system?

- A. U.S. District Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and State Supreme Court
- B. U.S. District Court only
- C. U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals, and District Courts
- D. U.S. District Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court**

In the federal court system, cases progress through three levels. The first level is the U.S. District Courts, which are the trial courts where evidence is presented and initial verdicts or rulings are made. If a party believes a legal error occurred, the case moves up to the next level, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which reviews the district court's decisions for errors of law. The highest level is the U.S. Supreme Court, which resolves important legal questions and reviews some appeals from the courts of appeals, usually through a discretionary review process called a writ of certiorari. So the three main levels are the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. State Supreme Courts are part of state government, not the federal system, and other options mix or omit these levels.

9. Describe the purpose and function of standing committees in Congress.

- A. Standing committees specialize in policy areas, draft bills, conduct hearings, and oversee agencies.**
- B. They handle only budget matters and do not oversee agencies.
- C. They convene only to impeach officials.
- D. They exist only in the House, not Senate.

Standing committees are the primary way Congress handles policy work across different subject areas. They are permanent panels that specialize in a given policy domain, draft and amend legislation, conduct hearings to gather information, and oversee how federal agencies implement laws. This structure lets members with expertise focus on details, shape policy through markup, and provide ongoing oversight via hearings, investigations, and reports. Budget and spending matter, but standing committees cover far more than just appropriations; they influence policy and monitor agency actions beyond the budget process. Impeachment is a constitutional process handled through specific steps, not the exclusive purpose of standing committees. Both the House and the Senate have standing committees, and they each assign members to subcommittees to handle more focused work. In short, standing committees organize Congress's work by subject area, turning broad policy goals into detailed proposals and oversight.

10. Which category is protected under Title VII's employment discrimination prohibition?

- A. Race
- B. Religion
- C. Sex
- D. Race, color, religion, sex, or national origin**

Title VII protections in employment prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This means employers cannot make hiring, firing, pay, promotion, or other employment decisions tied to any of these characteristics. The option that lists all five categories captures the full scope of what Title VII covers, including color and national origin in addition to race, religion, and sex. For clarity, color refers to skin color, and national origin refers to a person's heritage or country of origin. The protections apply to most employers with 15 or more employees and are enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

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://gsu-pols110exam2.examzify.com>

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

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