

LINGUISTICS: NATURAL CLASSES OF SOUNDS PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



**SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE
WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS**

**VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

<https://linguisticsnaturalclassofsounds.examzify.com>



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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 set represents low vowels?

- A. /æ, a/
- B. /æ/
- C. /i, /
- D. /e, /

2. Which set lists all voiceless non-nasal stops (p, t, k,)?

- A. /p, b, m, w/
- B. /p, t, k, /
- C. /p, b/
- D. /b, d, g/

3. Which symbol represents a velar nasal stop?

- A. /m/
- B. /ŋ/
- C. /n/
- D. /p/

4. Which natural class includes dental, alveolar, and postalveolar sounds?

- A. The class [+labial]
- B. The class [+coronal]
- C. The class [+dorsal]
- D. The class [+sonorant]

5. Which symbol is a front vowel sound?

- A. u
- B.
- C. i
- D. o

6. How might a language's phonotactics constrain a natural class?

- A. They may restrict vowel harmony patterns across the language.
- B. They determine the phoneme inventory size.
- C. They may restrict which sequences of the class are allowed in onset, coda, or cluster positions.
- D. They only affect stress placement.

7. What is the natural class of glottal sounds?

- A. Glottal stops and glottal fricatives.
- B. Bilabial stops.
- C. Dental fricatives.
- D. Velar nasals.

8. What is the complement of the natural class [-consonantal]?

- A. Vowels
- B. Consonants
- C. Nasals
- D. Glides

9. Which symbol represents a glottal stop?

- A. w
- B. h
- C. ʔ
- D. j

10. How can natural classes guide phonotactics in a language?

- A. By choosing orthographic representations.
- B. By predicting which sounds can occur in particular environments based on shared features.
- C. By determining syllable stress patterns.
- D. By dictating historical sound changes.

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which set represents low vowels?

A. /æ, a/

B. /æ/

C. /i, /

D. /e, /

Low vowels are produced with the tongue low in the mouth, leaving the jaw fairly open. In many dialects of English, the classic low vowels include /æ/ (the vowel in “cat”) and /a/ (an open vowel found in dialects that contrast it, as in words like “spa” or “pass” depending on the variety). A set that includes both /æ/ and /a/ thus represents low vowels. In contrast, high vowels like /i/ and / / involve a high tongue position, and mid vowels like /e/ and / / sit between high and low, so they aren’t low vowels.

2. Which set lists all voiceless non-nasal stops (p, t, k,)?

A. /p, b, m, w/

B. /p, t, k, /

C. /p, b/

D. /b, d, g/

Voiceless non-nasal stops are consonants produced with a complete oral closure, without any vocal fold vibration and without nasal airflow. The sounds that fit this description are p, t, k, and : p is a voiceless bilabial stop, t is a voiceless alveolar stop, k is a voiceless velar stop, and is the glottal stop, a voiceless stop produced at the glottis. Other options mix in voiced stops (b, d, g), a nasal (m), or a non-stop (w), which do not meet all the criteria. Therefore, the set that lists all voiceless non-nasal stops is p, t, k, .

3. Which symbol represents a velar nasal stop?

A. /m/

B. /ŋ/

C. /n/

D. /p/

Think about how IPA encodes place and manner. A nasal stop means the oral cavity is completely blocked and air is released through the nose; velar refers to the back of the mouth where the tongue contacts the velum (soft palate). The symbol that captures this combination is [ŋ], the velar nasal stop—it’s the sound you hear in the ending of “sing” (the “ng” sound). The other symbols point to different articulations: [m] is a bilabial nasal (both lips), [n] is an alveolar nasal (tongue at the ridge just behind the teeth), and [p] is a bilabial stop (a front-mouth closure). So [ŋ] is the correct symbol because it represents both the velar place of articulation and the nasal stop manner.

4. Which natural class includes dental, alveolar, and postalveolar sounds?

- A. The class [+labial]
- B. The class [+coronal]**
- C. The class [+dorsal]
- D. The class [+sonorant]

Coronal sounds are articulated with the tongue tip or blade at the front part of the mouth. Dental, alveolar, and postalveolar are all produced in that front region, so they belong to the same natural class. This unites sounds like the dental fricatives (θ , δ), the alveolars (t , d , s , z), and the postalveolars ($\int$, ε , t , d) under one place-of-articulation feature. The other options don't group these sounds by the same property: labial refers to the lips, dorsal to the back of the tongue, and sonorant is a manner/phonation category rather than a single place of articulation.

5. Which symbol is a front vowel sound?

- A. u
- B. ε
- C. i**
- D. o

Frontness is about where the tongue sits in the mouth during articulation. The symbol i represents a high front vowel, meaning the tongue is raised high and positioned toward the front of the mouth. That front, high position gives the familiar "ee" sound, as in "see." By contrast, u is a high back vowel (tongue raised high but toward the back, like the oft-spoken "oo" in "food"), ε is a mid-central vowel (tongue sits mid and near the center of the mouth), and o is a mid-back vowel (tongue is mid height and toward the back). So i is the front vowel among the options.

6. How might a language's phonotactics constrain a natural class?

- A. They may restrict vowel harmony patterns across the language.
- B. They determine the phoneme inventory size.
- C. They may restrict which sequences of the class are allowed in onset, coda, or cluster positions.**
- D. They only affect stress placement.

Phonotactics sets where sounds can appear and how they can combine within a syllable. A natural class is simply a group of sounds that share features. When phonotactics constrains a natural class, it does so by specifying which sequences that class may form and in which positions those sequences may occur—such as onsets, codas, or specific clusters. So, a language might allow members of a given natural class to appear only at the beginning of a syllable, or only in certain consonant clusters, or only in certain contexts before or after other sounds. This is how the same feature-based group of sounds gets distributional limits across the syllable structure, shaping which members of the class can surface where. For example, if a language forbids a whole natural class from appearing in codas, that class is being constrained by phonotactics in a very direct way.

7. What is the natural class of glottal sounds?

A. Glottal stops and glottal fricatives.

B. Bilabial stops.

C. Dental fricatives.

D. Velar nasals.

Natural classes group sounds by shared articulatory properties. Glottal sounds are produced at the glottis, the opening between the vocal folds. The glottal stop [ʔ] blocks airflow, while the glottal fricative [h] allows air to pass with friction. Together, they form the glottal consonants—the natural class of glottal sounds. Options that involve other places of articulation don't fit: bilabial stops use both lips, dental fricatives use the teeth, and velar nasals involve the velum.

8. What is the complement of the natural class [-consonantal]?

A. Vowels

B. Consonants

C. Nasals

D. Glides

Natural classes are defined by feature values, and the complement of a class is everything that has the opposite feature value. The class [-consonantal] picks out sounds that are not consonantal—typically vowels. The complement of that class, then, is the set of sounds that are consonantal, i.e., [+consonantal], the consonants. So the complement is consonants. The choice describing vowels would be the class itself, not its opposite.

9. Which symbol represents a glottal stop?

A. w

B. h

C. ʔ

D. j

A glottal stop is made by completely closing the vocal folds at the glottis and then releasing them, producing a momentary stop there. In IPA, this sound is written with the symbol ʔ. That symbol specifically marks a stop produced at the glottis, which distinguishes it from other symbols that represent different sounds: w is a voiced labio velar approximant, h is a voiceless glottal fricative, and j is a palatal approximant. So ʔ is the correct representation for the glottal stop.

10. How can natural classes guide phonotactics in a language?

- A. By choosing orthographic representations.
- B. By predicting which sounds can occur in particular environments based on shared features.**
- C. By determining syllable stress patterns.
- D. By dictating historical sound changes.

Natural classes are sets of sounds that share specific features and tend to behave alike in a language. Phonotactics is all about which sound sequences are allowed in particular positions or environments. When you describe those constraints with natural classes, you can say that only sounds from a certain class may appear in a given slot or in certain combinations, rather than listing every individual sound. This makes the rule broad, systematic, and predictive because any two sounds that share the relevant features will be governed by the same restriction. For example, a language might permit only coronal consonants to appear in a certain onset cluster, or it might require a particular class of sounds to occur before a vowel. By using the natural class concept, this constraint applies to all members of that class, not just one or two specific sounds, capturing the general pattern efficiently. The other options miss the point because orthography relates to writing, not phonotactic legality; stress patterns concern prosody rather than allowable sound sequences; and historical sound changes describe diachronic shifts, not current distributional constraints.

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://linguisticsnaturalclassofsounds.examzify.com>

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

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