NCEES PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SURVEYING PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. What is the purpose of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)?

A. To divide land into townships and sections for easier identification and transfer of property

B. To create international land ownership laws

C. To manage zoning regulations

D. To provide geological mapping

2. What distinguishes a major subdivision from a minor subdivision?

A. It involves multiple planned developments

B. It is classified as a minor subdivision

C. It is not classified as a minor subdivision

D. It always includes public infrastructure

3. Which conditions must be met for a monument to be considered controlling?

A. It must be positioned in a publicly accessible area

B. It must be called for in a document, identifiable, and undisturbed

C. It must be agreed upon by all parties involved in the survey

D. It must be supported by historical evidence of its existence

4. What is the size of a regular township in the PLSS system?

A. 4 miles square

B. 6 miles square

C. 8 miles square

D. 10 miles square

5. What does it mean for an easement appurtenant to "run with the land"?

A. It is transferable to new owners of the property

B. It must be continuously maintained

C. It can only be used for a limited time

D. It requires special permission for use

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6. What is the legal definition of reversionary rights?

A. Rights that permit the creation of new easements

B. Rights that allow a landowner to regain title after a sale

C. Rights defined by law permitting an owner to regain certain rights in vacated easements

D. Rights that allow temporary use of another's property

7. What does "local mean time" refer to in surveying?

A. The average time based on solar positions at a specific location

B. The time based on the Greenwich Mean Time

C. The average time across all time zones

D. The standard time for a metropolitan area

8. What does the term "Absolute" imply in the context of a Fee Simple Absolute estate?

A. Limited time property

B. No limitations on time

C. Subject to government regulation

D. Conditional ownership

9. Which system involves the registration of land titles in specific areas like Chicago and Minnesota?

A. Common Law System

B. Torrens Title System

C. Adverse Possession System

D. Land Lease System

10. How many parcels are involved in a subdivision of a parent tract?

A. Only one

B. Not more than 4

C. Three or more

D. None, it's a single unit

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the purpose of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)?

A. To divide land into townships and sections for easier identification and transfer of property

B. To create international land ownership laws

C. To manage zoning regulations

D. To provide geological mapping

The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) was established primarily to facilitate the systematic division of land, which is essential in the process of land ownership and property transfers. Its design allows for the categorization of land into manageable units known as townships and sections, effectively creating a grid system across the surveyed areas. This framework simplifies the identification of parcels and helps in the clear transfer of property titles, which is crucial for both legal clarity and public access to property records. The methodology behind the PLSS not only aids in easier navigation and reference but also standardizes the way land is described, thereby promoting efficient land management and ownership documentation. The use of this system has played a significant role in the development of the western United States, impacting land sales, taxation, and the establishment of local government jurisdictions. Other options, while relevant to the broad field of land management and ownership, do not directly pertain to the primary purpose of the PLSS. For instance, international land ownership laws, zoning regulations, and geological mapping serve different functions and are not specifically aligned with the PLSS's aim to delineate land for public use and ownership clarity.

2. What distinguishes a major subdivision from a minor subdivision?

A. It involves multiple planned developments

B. It is classified as a minor subdivision

C. It is not classified as a minor subdivision

D. It always includes public infrastructure

A major subdivision is typically defined by its characteristics in terms of scale, planning, and impact on the surrounding area. The distinction between a major and a minor subdivision often hinges on regulatory definitions set forth by local zoning laws and planning commissions. In many jurisdictions, a major subdivision usually encompasses a larger number of lots or units, meaning that it significantly alters the character of the area or requires more extensive review processes. This can include more complex planning considerations such as infrastructure development, environmental impact assessments, and the need for public services. The classification of a subdivision as a major one inherently means it does not fall under the definitions and criteria established for minor subdivisions. Minor subdivisions usually involve fewer lots, simpler processes, and might not necessitate extensive infrastructure or public service provisions. Thus, characterizing a major subdivision as "not classified as a minor subdivision" accurately reflects its greater complexity and implications within local development frameworks.

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3. Which conditions must be met for a monument to be considered controlling?

A. It must be positioned in a publicly accessible area

B. It must be called for in a document, identifiable, and undisturbed

C. It must be agreed upon by all parties involved in the survey

D. It must be supported by historical evidence of its existence

For a monument to be considered controlling, it is essential that it is called for in a legal document, is identifiable, and remains undisturbed. When a monument is referenced in a legal description, such as a survey or a deed, it establishes it as a point of reference for property boundaries. Its identification ensures that it can be accurately located by surveyors, and the requirement for it to be undisturbed means that it should not have been moved or altered in a way that affects its original positional integrity. This condition is foundational in land surveying, as controlling monuments serve as reliable benchmark reference points from which boundaries are determined. If any part of this condition is not met—if the monument is not documented, not easily identifiable, or has been disturbed—it could lead to disputes or inaccuracies in property delineation. Thus, the emphasis on these three criteria encapsulates the essential characteristics that make a monument a controlling feature in surveying practices.

4. What is the size of a regular township in the PLSS system?

A. 4 miles square

B. 6 miles square

C. 8 miles square

D. 10 miles square

In the Public Land Survey System (PLSS), a regular township is defined as a square area measuring 6 miles on each side. This results in a total area of 36 square miles. Townships are established to provide a standardized method for surveying and partitioning land in the United States, particularly in areas that were formerly public lands. The use of a 6-mile square dimensions allows for consistency in land distribution and the establishment of sections within a township, where each township is further subdivided into 36 sections, each measuring 1 mile square. This systematic layout facilitates accurate mapping and navigation, making the 6-mile square township a critical component of land survey practices.

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5. What does it mean for an easement appurtenant to "run with the land"?

A. It is transferable to new owners of the property

B. It must be continuously maintained

C. It can only be used for a limited time

D. It requires special permission for use

An easement that "runs with the land" is one that is inherently tied to the property itself rather than to the individual owner. This means that when the property is sold or otherwise transferred to a new owner, the easement rights are automatically passed along with the property. The new owner inherits the benefits and obligations associated with the easement, which ensures the continued usability of the easement by current and future property owners. This concept is crucial in real estate because it provides clarity and security regarding the rights of access or usage for all parties involved. When an easement runs with the land, it eliminates the need for re-establishing or renegotiating terms with new property owners and maintains continuity in the flow of land use rights, thus safeguarding the interests of those benefiting from the easement over time. The other potential answers describe situations or conditions that do not accurately reflect the nature of an easement that runs with the land. For example, while certain easements may require maintenance, this is not a general characteristic that defines their transferability. Similarly, the temporal limitation on an easement's use or the need for special permissions are not prerequisites for its ability to run with the land. The underlying principle is the seamless continuation of rights through

6. What is the legal definition of reversionary rights?

A. Rights that permit the creation of new easements

B. Rights that allow a landowner to regain title after a sale

C. Rights defined by law permitting an owner to regain certain rights in vacated easements

D. Rights that allow temporary use of another's property

Reversionary rights refer to the legal concept wherein an original property owner retains the right to regain certain rights or ownership after a specific event occurs, such as the expiration of a lease or the termination of an easement. This definition aligns with the choice that states these rights are defined by law and enable an owner to regain certain rights in vacated easements. In the context of property and easements, if a landowner grants an easement to another party and that easement is later vacated or terminated for some reason, the original landowner may have reversionary rights that allow them to reclaim full use of the property. These rights are crucial in ensuring that original owners have a mechanism to recover their interests in land that may have been temporarily relinquished. Understanding this concept is particularly important for surveyors and real estate professionals who must navigate complex property rights and conveyances, ensuring they are aware of both current and potential future claims to property interests that may arise from reversionary rights.

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7. What does "local mean time" refer to in surveying?

A. The average time based on solar positions at a specific location

B. The time based on the Greenwich Mean Time

C. The average time across all time zones

D. The standard time for a metropolitan area

"Local mean time" is defined as the average time determined by the position of the sun at a specific location. It is based on the sundial concept, where time is measured according to when the sun is at its highest point in the sky (solar noon) for a given longitude. This means that local mean time accounts for variations in the Earth's rotation and the observer's geographical position, providing a precise method of tracking time that aligns with solar events. In surveying, understanding local mean time is essential because it allows surveyors to accurately determine positions and timings associated with various surveying activities, such as the recording of observations based on celestial bodies. This approach ties closely with the astronomical basis of surveying, giving surveyors a reliable reference that is specific to their location and necessary for precise measurements and calculations. The other concepts, such as Greenwich Mean Time and standard time for metropolitan areas, do not relate directly to the local astronomical conditions affecting the time at a specific site, which emphasizes the importance of solar positioning inherent to local mean time.

8. What does the term "Absolute" imply in the context of a Fee Simple Absolute estate?

A. Limited time property

B. No limitations on time

C. Subject to government regulation

D. Conditional ownership

In the context of a Fee Simple Absolute estate, the term "Absolute" signifies that the ownership of the property is without any limitations or conditions. This means the owner has the maximum interest in the property, allowing them the right to possess, use, and transfer the property as they see fit, without interference or restrictions from others. The absence of limitations on time denotes that this type of estate does not have a designated end or expiration; it can be held indefinitely, potentially passing to heirs without any strings attached. This level of ownership provides maximum control and flexibility in real estate law, distinguishing it from other types of estates that may come with various conditions or limitations.

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9. Which system involves the registration of land titles in specific areas like Chicago and Minnesota?

A. Common Law System

B. Torrens Title System

C. Adverse Possession System

D. Land Lease System

The Torrens Title System is a method of land registration that allows for a more straightforward and reliable way of proving ownership of real property. Under this system, the state maintains a register of land titles, and once a title is registered, it provides the owner with a conclusive proof of ownership. This eliminates the need for extensive title searches and reduces the risks associated with competing claims on the same property. In specific areas such as Chicago and Minnesota, the Torrens system simplifies property transactions and enhances certainty in ownership by creating an official record that is recognized and protected by law. The system also facilitates the transfer and mortgage of property, offering a streamlined, efficient approach to managing land rights. This model reflects a significant shift from the more traditional common law approach, which can involve complex legal doctrines and lengthy processes to establish ownership and related rights. The other options refer to different legal concepts: The Common Law System pertains to the legal traditions developed over time, with a focus on precedents. The Adverse Possession System allows individuals to gain legal ownership of land by possessing it openly and continuously for a period defined by law, which is quite different from the Torrens approach. The Land Lease System involves renting land rather than owning it outright, which also diverges from

10. How many parcels are involved in a subdivision of a parent tract?

A. Only one

B. Not more than 4

C. Three or more

D. None, it's a single unit

In the context of land development, a subdivision involves dividing a larger tract of land, known as the parent tract, into smaller parcels. The fundamental purpose of a subdivision is to create multiple individual lots for sale, development, or other uses. Therefore, to qualify as a subdivision, there must be at least two distinct parcels created. This is essential because a subdivision is defined by the act of creating separate legal entities from a larger undivided property. If there were only one parcel created, it wouldn't constitute a subdivision since subdivision by definition implies a splitting or division into parts. The minimum requirement ensures that the process of subdivision is acknowledged as creating opportunities for development and use of the land in various ways. In summary, the focus on having at least two parcels underscores the essential nature of a subdivision as a method of land division, which is central to many land use and planning activities in surveying and development contexts.

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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://ncees-principlesandpracticeofsurveying.examzify.com

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

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