# SCA BARISTA INTERMEDIATE PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

## STUDY GUIDE



## SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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

https://scabaristaintermediate.examzify.com

**Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

# 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


SAMPLE

# 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.

SAMPLE

# 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!

SAMPLE

# Questions

SAMPLE

**1. If an espresso made from medium roast beans has a 14% extraction, which dominant taste would be most likely?**

A. Bitter

B. Sour

C. Sweet

D. Spicy

**2. What is a common type of coffee tree grown commercially?**

A. Coffea canephora

B. Coffea robusta

C. Coffea arabica

D. Coffea liberica

**3. What is the significance of the coffee-to-water ratio in brewing?**

A. It affects the acidity of the coffee

B. It affects the strength and flavor profile of the final cup

C. It determines the brewing time

D. It impacts the temperature of the water

**4. What are the three elements of espresso extraction?**

A. Time, temperature, and pressure

B. Heat, grind size, and water pressure

C. Time, flavor, and grind size

D. Pressure, temperature, and brewing time

**5. True or false: A cappuccino will have higher perceived intensity in coffee flavor compared to a latte.**

A. True

B. False

C. It depends on the type of coffee used.

D. Only if the cappuccino has more espresso.

SAMPLE

**6. Why is it important for a barista to calibrate their grinder regularly?**

A. To show customers the grinder

B. To ensure coffee consistency and quality

C. To reduce noise level

D. To extend the life of the grinder

**7. What does alkalinity in water contribute to coffee brewing?**

A. It decreases extraction rates

B. It helps in flavor balance by controlling acidity

C. It neutralizes the flavor of the coffee

D. It enhances the bitterness of the brew

**8. What is reverse osmosis used for in coffee processing?**

A. To enhance flavor by brewing at higher temperatures

B. To purify water and remove unwanted minerals or compounds

C. To improve the color of the coffee

D. To add minerals beneficial for aroma

**9. What is the purpose of keeping a brewing log?**

A. To calculate the profit margins on coffee sold

B. To track variables and adjustments for consistency

C. To log customer preferences

D. To organize marketing strategies

**10. What is the ideal brewing temperature range for most types of coffee?**

A. 180°F to 190°F

B. 195°F to 205°F

C. 210°F to 220°F

D. 175°F to 185°F

SAMPLE

# Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

# Explanations

SAMPLE

## 1. If an espresso made from medium roast beans has a 14% extraction, which dominant taste would be most likely?

A. Bitter

B. Sour

C. Sweet

D. Spicy

*An espresso with a 14% extraction is on the lower end of the optimal extraction range, which typically falls between 18% and 22%. When extraction is too low, the resulting flavor can lean towards being sour. This sourness is primarily due to under-extraction, where the desirable compounds such as sugars and oils haven't been fully extracted from the coffee grounds. Instead, the extraction process has primarily pulled out the acids, which often leads to a bright and tangy flavor profile. In contrast, higher extractions are likely to pull more balanced flavors, including sweetness and even bitterness, depending on the level of roast and the brewing time. However, given the specific percentage of extraction at 14%, the outcome will likely showcase a predominance of sour notes due to the insufficient extraction of the other, more balanced flavors that extract closer to the optimal range. Thus, the dominant taste from an espresso with 14% extraction is indeed most likely to be sour.*

## 2. What is a common type of coffee tree grown commercially?

A. Coffea canephora

B. Coffea robusta

C. Coffea arabica

D. Coffea liberica

*Coffea arabica is a prevalent type of coffee tree grown commercially, accounting for approximately 60-70% of the world's coffee production. This species is favored for its higher quality beans, complex flavors, and aromatic properties, which are highly sought after in specialty coffees. Arabica coffee trees thrive in higher altitudes and require more specific growing conditions, including cooler temperatures, shade, and higher humidity. In comparison, Coffea canephora, commonly known as Robusta, does play a significant role in coffee production, but its beans are generally seen as lower quality with more bitter flavors compared to Arabica. Coffea robusta is often used in commercial instant coffees and espresso blends for its earthy flavor and higher caffeine content. Meanwhile, Coffea liberica is less commonly cultivated due to its unique and sometimes polarizing flavor profile, which includes woody and floral notes that are not preferred by all consumers.*

## 3. What is the significance of the coffee-to-water ratio in brewing?

A. It affects the acidity of the coffee

B. It affects the strength and flavor profile of the final cup

C. It determines the brewing time

D. It impacts the temperature of the water

*The coffee-to-water ratio is crucial in brewing because it directly influences the strength and flavor profile of the final cup of coffee. A proper ratio ensures that the coffee grounds are adequately saturated, allowing for optimal extraction of the flavors, oils, and aromas present in the coffee. When the ratio is balanced, it creates a well-rounded brew that showcases the intended characteristics of the coffee. If the ratio skews, it can lead to either under-extraction with weak, watery coffee or over-extraction that results in a bitter or overly strong flavor profile. Other options may touch on important aspects of brewing, but they do not capture the essence of how the coffee-to-water ratio fundamentally alters the taste and intensity of the beverage. Achieving the right balance is essential for baristas and coffee enthusiasts aiming to deliver a high-quality cup.*

SAMPLE

## 4. What are the three elements of espresso extraction?

A. Time, temperature, and pressure

B. Heat, grind size, and water pressure

C. Time, flavor, and grind size

D. Pressure, temperature, and brewing time

*The three elements of espresso extraction are time, temperature, and pressure. These factors are crucial in the brewing process, as they directly affect the quality and flavor profile of the espresso. Time refers to the duration that water is in contact with the coffee grounds. An optimal extraction time allows for the soluble compounds in coffee to dissolve correctly, ensuring a balanced flavor. If the extraction is too short or too long, it can lead to undesirable tastes. Temperature is vital because it influences the solubility of the coffee compounds. The ideal brewing temperature typically ranges between 90°C to 96°C (194°F to 205°F). If the water is too cold, extraction can be insufficient, while overheating can lead to over-extraction, resulting in bitterness. Pressure is also critical, as espresso is brewed under high pressure (typically around 9 bars), which facilitates the quick extraction of oils and flavors from the coffee grounds, creating the unique crema on top of a well-pulled shot. This pressure helps to extract the desirable elements of the coffee while preventing unwanted flavors from being overly dominant. Considering these three elements together is essential for achieving a high-quality espresso shot. Other combinations of factors, while relevant to brewing, do not encompass the fundamental aspects necessary for*

## 5. True or false: A cappuccino will have higher perceived intensity in coffee flavor compared to a latte.

A. True

B. False

C. It depends on the type of coffee used.

D. Only if the cappuccino has more espresso.

*A cappuccino typically has a higher perceived intensity in coffee flavor compared to a latte due to its unique composition. A traditional cappuccino consists of equal parts espresso, steamed milk, and milk foam. This ratio allows the bold taste of the espresso to be more forward and pronounced because there is less milk to dilute its flavor compared to a latte, which has a larger proportion of steamed milk that tends to soften the intensity of the coffee flavor. In a latte, the increased volume of steamed milk combined with a modest amount of foam results in a creamier texture and a smoother mouthfeel, which can mute the coffee's bold characteristics. This contrast in milk proportions leads to the cappuccino offering a stronger, more robust coffee profile, making the flavor perception of coffee more intense. Overall, the combination of a smaller amount of milk in cappuccinos enhances the espresso's presence, ultimately leading to a higher perceived intensity in coffee flavor.*

SAMPLE

## 6. Why is it important for a barista to calibrate their grinder regularly?

A. To show customers the grinder

B. To ensure coffee consistency and quality

C. To reduce noise level

D. To extend the life of the grinder

*Regular calibration of the grinder is crucial for ensuring coffee consistency and quality. Coffee grind size directly impacts the extraction process during brewing, affecting flavor, aroma, and overall taste. If the grind is inconsistent, it can lead to variations in extraction rates, resulting in brewed coffee that may taste overly bitter or weak. By calibrating the grinder regularly, baristas can maintain the right grind size for different brewing methods, ultimately delivering a more consistent product to customers. This consistency is essential not just for individual cups but for maintaining the overall quality standards of the coffee served. Additionally, factors such as humidity, bean type, and age can affect grind consistency, making it necessary to calibrate often to adapt to these variables. Regular calibration also benefits the barista by enhancing their skills and knowledge related to grind settings, leading to improved overall competency in crafting high-quality beverages.*

## 7. What does alkalinity in water contribute to coffee brewing?

A. It decreases extraction rates

B. It helps in flavor balance by controlling acidity

C. It neutralizes the flavor of the coffee

D. It enhances the bitterness of the brew

*Alkalinity in water plays a significant role in coffee brewing, particularly in its ability to help achieve flavor balance. When water has a certain level of alkalinity, it acts as a buffer against acidity. This means that when coffee is brewed, the alkaline compounds can help to moderate the natural acidity of the coffee, resulting in a more balanced flavor profile. This balance is crucial because coffee can often have bright, acidic notes that may be overwhelming or undesirable, especially for certain brewing methods or coffee varieties. By controlling the acidity with the right level of alkalinity, you can achieve a smoother, more rounded taste. Thus, the contribution of alkalinity to flavor balance is fundamental for producing a well-rounded cup of coffee.*

## 8. What is reverse osmosis used for in coffee processing?

A. To enhance flavor by brewing at higher temperatures

B. To purify water and remove unwanted minerals or compounds

C. To improve the color of the coffee

D. To add minerals beneficial for aroma

*Reverse osmosis is primarily utilized in coffee processing to purify water, effectively removing unwanted minerals and compounds that can adversely affect the taste and quality of the brewed coffee. By utilizing this filtration method, water is passed through a semipermeable membrane that allows only water molecules to pass while blocking larger molecules, ions, and contaminants. This results in water that is free from impurities and tailored for optimal coffee extraction. The significance of using purified water cannot be understated, as the water quality directly influences the flavor profile of the coffee. Unwanted minerals or compounds in the water can alter the extraction process, leading to imbalanced flavors or undesirable aromas. Therefore, the use of reverse osmosis ensures that the water used in brewing is as neutral and clean as possible, allowing the inherent flavors of the coffee beans to shine through without interference from impurities. While changing brewing techniques or adding minerals can influence taste and aroma, the core function of reverse osmosis in coffee processing is focused on purification rather than enhancement through temperature adjustments or additives.*

SAMPLE

## 9. What is the purpose of keeping a brewing log?

A. To calculate the profit margins on coffee sold

B. To track variables and adjustments for consistency

C. To log customer preferences

D. To organize marketing strategies

*The purpose of keeping a brewing log is primarily to track variables and adjustments for consistency in the brewing process. This log serves as a detailed record of each brewing session, including information such as coffee grind size, brew time, water temperature, and other relevant parameters. By meticulously documenting these details, baristas can identify patterns and make informed adjustments to achieve a consistent flavor profile. This practice is essential for ensuring that each cup of coffee produced is of high quality and aligns with the standards of the coffee shop, allowing baristas to replicate successful brews. While other options touch on different aspects of running a coffee business, like calculating profit margins or organizing marketing strategies, they do not relate directly to the specific focus of a brewing log. Tracking customer preferences is useful for customer service but does not address the technical aspects of brewing consistency, which is the core reason for maintaining such a log.*

## 10. What is the ideal brewing temperature range for most types of coffee?

A. 180°F to 190°F

B. 195°F to 205°F

C. 210°F to 220°F

D. 175°F to 185°F

*The ideal brewing temperature range for most types of coffee is 195°F to 205°F. This temperature range is crucial because it allows for optimal extraction of flavors and compounds from the coffee grounds. Brewing within this range helps to dissolve the desirable oils and acids, enhancing the overall flavor profile of the coffee. If the water temperature is too low, it may result in under-extraction, leading to a sour and weak taste. Conversely, if the water is too hot, there is a higher risk of over-extraction, which can produce bitter and unpleasant flavors. Therefore, maintaining the brewing temperature between 195°F and 205°F strikes a balance that maximizes the coffee's potential and yields a rich, flavorful cup.*

SAMPLE

# 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://scabaristaintermediate.examzify.com

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

SAMPLE