

Introduction to Commercial Vendor Online Practice Tests

RMRoberts.com receives a lot of email and we read a lot of blogs that question the accuracy and difficulty of the practice tests offered on our site for the CompTIA A+ Exam. We assure you that the practice tests are really accurate and reflect the true difficulty level of the CompTIA A+ practice exam. People who have taken the CompTIA A+ Exam and are familiar with my practice tests always tell us that the practice tests we offer cover the appropriate material and are of the same difficulty level as the certification exam.

We would like to take a few minutes to give you an insight (sample) of the commercial “*Online Vendor Practice Test*” that so many people take, and then they end up with an unnecessary purchase of a commercial test bank of preparation questions.

Vendor Online Practice Tests

Students are always troubled by the fact that they never know for sure when they are ready to take the “THE TEST”. The actual CompTIA certification exam today is not as difficult as you would expect. Most on line practice test are provided by commercial vendors as “free services” are actually much harder than the actual CompTIA certification exam of their choice. In many instances, the questions do not correlate directly to the exam desired, at the realistic level of difficulty. I have found that a score of 60% (500 weighted) on a commercial vendor “free test” often results in the vendor telling you that you have a “Failed” response and need to purchase additional test materials that they offer the questions to better prepare you for a fee.

The on line vendor tests are not designed to indicate if you are ready to take the real certification exam, but are designed to fail you and humiliate you so that you will desire to buy their test bank of questions and other test preparation material such as study guides.

Whereas, in actuality we have found that this same score on the vendor test will result in a successful challenge to the CompTIA exam. You have to remember that commercial vendors have a financial stake in your failing their “free” practice test .

At RMRoberts.com, we are experienced educators and provide you with free back-up materials to the commercial products from G-W.com. Our website Practice Exams are free, with no hidden extras. WYSYWIG. Any materials sold by us are marketed by G-W.com and we clearly indicate which materials these are.

To illustrate this point I have designed a sample of a commercial, 10 question exam which would be offered for “FREE” by a vendor in order to stress the point. These questions are written at the difficulty level that most online vendor practice test samples

are written. The exam will only take a few minutes and you can grade it, and feedback will be provided at the end.

Example of “Typical, Sample, Free” Vendor Practice Exam

1. Which method can be used to access Windows Task Manager? (Choose all that apply)

- A. Right-click on the Taskbar and select Task Manager from the drop down menu items.
- B. Press Ctrl-Shift-Esc keys simultaneously.
- C. Press Ctrl-Alt-Del keys simultaneously
- D. Press Pres Ctrl – Ins - End Keys simultaneously.

2. Which jumper setting correctly represents binary number 7?

- A. 1001
- B. 0111
- C. 1111
- D. 1011

3. Which is a characteristic of the NTFS file system? (Choose all that apply)

- A. NTFS can be configured for disk quotas.
- B. NTFS can be compressed.
- C. NTFS uses volume mount points.
- D. NTFS uses a default cluster size of 4 kB.

4. What is the most important factor when choosing a new motherboard?

- A. Form factor
- B. Price
- C. CPU speed.
- D. Chip set.

5. What is the most important thing to do when performing preventive maintenance?
- A. Run an antivirus suite.
 - B. Document when the maintenance was performed and provides details of the process.
 - C. Backup all important data files before performing any type of preventive maintenance.
 - D. Disconnect the computer from the Internet.

6. What is the maximum data transfer speed for DVD x16 per second?
- A. 1.5 GB
 - B. 21.13 MB
 - C. 1044 kB
 - D. 10.57 MB

7. Which BIOS beep error code indicates a processor problem?
- A. One short beep.
 - B. Two long beeps followed by one short beep.
 - C. Three short beeps.
 - D. Five short beeps.

8. Which are the correct default resource configuration values for COM1?
- A. IRQ4, 02FEh
 - B. IRQ4, 03F8h
 - C. IRQ3, 02F8h
 - D. IRQ3, 02FEh

9. Which is the correct method for installing the Windows System Recovery Console?
- A. Click **Run** and then click **Start** and enter the CD ROM drive location of the installation CD and then type the following command **/i386/winnt32.exe/cmdcons**.
 - B. Click **Run** and then click **Start** and enter the CD ROM drive location of the installation CD and then type the following command **li386\winnt32.exe\cmdcons**.
 - C. Click **Run** and then click **Start** and enter the CD ROM drive location of the installation CD and then type the following command **/cmdcons.exe/start**
 - D. Click **Run** and then click **Start** and enter the CD ROM drive location of the installation CD and then type the following command **li386 /cmdcons.exe/install**

10. Which registry key is designed to insure that the correct program opens when you select a file using windows Explorer?

- A. HKEY_CURRENT_USER
- B. HKEY_USERS
- C. HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE
- D. HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT

Our Comments and Answers for the Test.

Question 1 is an example of choosing the least used method to access Windows Task Manager. The answers A and B are correct, but you were probably looking for Ctrl-Alt-Del, not Ctrl-Shift-Esc. You most likely didn't even realize that the Windows Task Manager can be opened by using the correct answer key combination. Another important fact is that the phrase "*Choose all that are correct*" is not used on the exam. When, in fact, multiple answers are on the test, CompTIA indicates on the test the exact number of correct answers. For example this question would be stated "*Choose two correct answers*" to be more realistic.

Question 2 is an example of an old technology often seen on practice tests and is no longer valid. Early adapter cards were configured using jumpers, but today's test reflects today's technology, and adapter cards are configured automatically by software with defaults. Computer devices no longer use jumpers to configure binary coding. I believe many vendors do not upgrade their test items, but rather just add more to the list of test questions, which results in a larger, but invalid, test bank.

Question 3 is an example of a question intentionally designed to be missed by a student. By nature, even the best prepared student will be very reluctant to choose all four answers as correct, when in fact all four answers are correct for question 3. As stated earlier, CompTIA exams always indicates the number of correct responses for the question.

Question 4 is a favorite example. This question could only be answered correctly by a lucky guess, or if you purchased the author's study materials, their book or study guide. Question 4 is an example of an "*opinion*" question, not an objective type of question. For a test item to be valid and objective, you should be able to find a consistent correct answer from multiple sources, not one person's opinion. Which is the correct answer, well what is your *opinion*?

Question 5 is another example of an "*opinion*" type of question. Opinion questions typically start with phrases or words such as "*The most important*" in the question stem.

Question 6 this is an objective question, but what professional has time to memorize a complete matrix of DVD transfer speeds. Again this test item is designed to fail, not evaluate knowledge of the subject matter.

Question 7 or similar questions are often seen on practice tests, but they are not accurate because BIOS manufacturer's beep codes are not consistent. In fact computer equipment manufacturers often have custom codes made for their own machines. The correct answer for this question is intended to match AMI BIOS, which uses five short beeps.

Question 8 is another classic you will encounter often on vendor practice tests. While legitimate, the actual CompTIA test is based on modern technologies such as plug-n-play. We have never heard of an encounter with a question asking about default memory and IRQ assignments for a device. Early CompTIA tests did in fact ask about default IRQ and memory assignments, and it was an important aspect then, but not now.

Question 9 this is an example of a legitimate question, and a similar question may be actually encountered on a CompTIA exam. After all there will be a few difficult questions on the exam. We believe CompTIA does design the test so that no individual will actually achieve a 100 percent (or 900 weighted) score, while at the same time all well prepared students will pass the test with a score they can be proud of. In the world of testing, a perfect score would reflect that the test may have been compromised. The correct answer to question 9 is B.

Question 10 the answer is D. We included this difficult question in order to make the test a nice even number of 10 questions so that it can be scored easily.

Final Grade and Summary

Now grade your test..... “You fail!”, but this is no surprise. Your failure was the exact intent of the practice test items presented here as samples of commercially prepared tests. Don’t you feel unprepared? And if you are using this test as an indicator, but will not feel prepared to take the real CompTIA exam anytime soon.

Even if you did do well on this practice test, the scoring will fail you if you miss just one item. A ten question test will be composed of 1.25 items per test domain. Missing one item in a single domain section will guarantee generating a failing score when the test is automatically graded. Sound familiar?

The true quality of test items will vary greatly between vendors. This is the main reasons that I provide “FREE” test items on my web site so that you, and your students can truly evaluate test readiness. After all, they have just finished your entire course and now they go on line and take a practice test that indicates that they cannot possibly pass the real test. This is an example of unprofessional ethics.

If you wish to take a practice exam that will give you a more realistic evaluation, take my CompTIA A+ Essentials exam. That will be a real indicator if you are ready or need more review.

http://www.rmroberts.com/FTP_files/CompTIA_Aplus_2007_Practice_Test_Essentials_220_601.pdf

We would like to hear from you. Send an email with your comments to Test@RMRoberts.com.