



Certified Technical Documentation Specialist (CTDS)

Ten Sample Questions

These ten questions are written at the difficulty of the live exam. Six carry a figure, a data table, a configuration or a code listing; four are plain scenario questions, as on the live paper. Every one is a scenario a working technical documentation specialist would meet, and none of them appears in the live question bank.

The live exam is multistage adaptive: how you score on one stage selects the difficulty of the next, so no two candidates sit the same paper. It is a performance-based exam: each form can carry up to 5 to 12 performance-based questions alongside the multiple-choice questions, which means you build, sequence or complete something rather than only choosing from a list. Answers and full explanations follow each question here; the live exam does not disclose item-level answers.

Question 1

Domain 1: Technical Writing Foundations

DATA

Sarah Miller maps each document type to its purpose, with one purpose missing.

Document type	Purpose
Tutorial	Teach by doing
Reference	(to choose)
How-to guide	Solve one task
Explanation	Give background

Table 1.1 Document types and purpose.

What does a reference provide?

- ☐ A quick sales pitch
- ☐ Lookup facts fast
- ☐ A project timeline
- ☐ A customer story

Correct answer: B

A reference is information oriented, describing the machinery so readers can look up precise facts quickly. It does not teach a beginner, walk through a task, or narrate background, which are the roles of tutorials, how-to guides, and explanations.

Question 2

Domain 2: Audience and Information Architecture

DATA

James Carter maps each audience to its primary need, with one need missing.

Audience	Primary need
New user	Get started fast
Administrator	(to choose)
Developer	Integrate the API
Executive	See the value

Table 2.1 Audiences and needs.

What does an administrator need most?

- ☐ A Configure and secure
- ☐ B A getting started tour
- ☐ C Only sample code
- ☐ D A pricing sheet

Correct answer: A

An administrator installs, configures, and secures the product, so their primary need is guidance on setup and hardening. A getting started tour serves new users, sample code serves developers, and a pricing sheet serves buyers, not operators.

Question 3

Domain 3: Authoring and Content Development

CONFIG

Emma Wilson reviews a structured topic drafted for the manual.

```
<task id="reset">
  <title>Reset the token</title>
  <taskbody>
    <steps>
      <step><cmd>Open settings</cmd></step>
    </steps>
  </taskbody>
</task>
```

Listing 3.1 A DITA topic.

What content type does this topic model?

- ☐ A A concept overview

- ☐ B A glossary entry
- ☐ C A procedure task
- ☐ D A release note

Correct answer: C

The task element with a steps and step structure models a procedure that guides a reader through actions in order. A concept topic explains ideas, a glossary defines terms, and a release note records changes, none of which use the steps pattern.

Question 4

Domain 4: Tools, Structured Authoring and Docs-as-Code

CONFIG

David Brown reviews the pipeline that runs when writers push to the docs repo.

```
on: push
jobs:
  docs:
    steps:
      - run: vale sync
      - run: vale docs/
      - run: mkdocs build
```

Listing 4.1 A docs pipeline.

What does the vale step do?

- ☐ A Deploys the site
- ☐ B Renders diagrams
- ☐ C Signs the release
- ☐ D Lints the prose

Correct answer: D

Vale is a prose linter that checks writing against style rules, so the step enforces the style guide on every push. Deployment and rendering happen elsewhere, and signing a release is not part of a documentation build.

Question 5

Domain 5: API and Developer Documentation

CONFIG

Olivia Davis reviews part of the OpenAPI description for a users endpoint.

```
paths:
  /users/{id}:
    get:
      parameters:
        - name: id
          in: path
          required: true
```

Listing 5.1 An OpenAPI path.

Where does the id parameter come from?

- ☐ A The query string
- ☐ B The URL path
- ☐ C A cookie value
- ☐ D The request body

Correct answer: B

The in field is set to path, so the id is read from the URL segment that {id} marks in the route. A query value would use in query, and cookie or body values are described with their own in settings, not path.

Question 6

Domain 6: Publishing, Localization and Maintenance

DATA

Ava Thompson maps each localization stage to its output, with one output missing.

Stage	Output
Author	Source strings
Extract	(to choose)
Translate	Target strings
Merge	Localized build

Table 6.1 Localization stages.

What does the extract stage produce?

- ☐ A Translatable text
- ☐ B The final PDF build
- ☐ C A style guide
- ☐ D The source video

Correct answer: A

Extraction pulls the translatable strings out of the source so they can be sent to translators without touching the surrounding markup. The merge stage produces the localized build, and a style guide or source video is not an output of extraction.

Question 7

Domain 1: Technical Writing Foundations

A guide mixes teaching a beginner, listing every option, and explaining design history on one long page, so readers get lost. What principle best fixes this?

- ☐ A Add more screenshots
- ☐ B Use bigger headings
- ☐ C Split by doc type
- ☐ D Write one long page

Correct answer: C

Separating the material by document type gives each need its own page, so a learner, a lookup, and background no longer collide. Larger headings or more screenshots dress up the page without resolving the mixed purposes that confuse readers.

Question 8

Domain 3: Authoring and Content Development

Every procedure opens with a paragraph of background before the steps, so users hunting for the action read past it each time. What best serves task readers?

- ☐ A Add more background
- ☐ B Remove all headings
- ☐ C Write longer intros
- ☐ D Put steps first

Correct answer: D

Task readers want to act, so leading with the numbered steps and moving optional context below or into a linked topic serves them fastest. More background or longer intros push the action further away, and removing headings only harms navigation.

Question 9

Domain 5: API and Developer Documentation

An API reference lists every endpoint but shows no example request or response, so developers cannot tell what a call returns. What most improves it?

- ☐ A Add worked examples
- ☐ B List more endpoints
- ☐ C Hide the error codes
- ☐ D Shorten each entry

Correct answer: A

Worked request and response examples show developers exactly what to send and what comes back, which the endpoint list alone cannot convey. Hiding error codes or trimming entries removes detail, and adding endpoints does not answer what a call returns.

Question 10

Domain 6: Publishing, Localization and Maintenance

A docs site keeps pages for versions shipped years ago beside current ones, with no dates or version labels, so readers follow outdated steps. What best prevents this?

- ☐ A Publish more often
- ☐ B Version and archive
- ☐ C Delete the changelog
- ☐ D Add more sidebars

Correct answer: B

Labeling pages by product version and archiving superseded content lets readers land on steps that match their release. Publishing more often or adding sidebars does not fix stale pages, and removing the changelog hides the history readers rely on.

Published by the CertLabz Certification Board, a division of CertLabz LLC. Companion to objectives document CTDS-001. <https://certlabz.com/certifications/certified-technical-documentation-specialist.html>