

California Notary Public

Practice Test

March 24, 2026

Time limit: 60 minutes

Solution key: <https://www.californiacerts.com/resources/pdfs/ca-notary-public/practice-solution.pdf>

1. Can a notary public translate "Notary Public" into Spanish ("Notario Publico") in their advertising?
 - A. Yes, but only if they are fluent in Spanish
 - B. Yes, if they also include the English term "Notary Public"
 - C. No, unless they charge a lower fee for Spanish-speaking clients
 - D. No, it is strictly prohibited and carries severe penalties including suspension or revocation of the commission

2. A member of the public requests a photocopy of a specific line item from your notary journal. What must their written request include?
 - A. The date of the act, the county where it took place, and the signer's date of birth.
 - B. The name of the notary, the date of the request, and the document type.
 - C. The names of the parties, the type of document, and the month and year in which the notarial act occurred.
 - D. A subpoena and the names of the parties involved.

3. If a notary public changes their business or residence address, they must notify the Secretary of State by certified mail or physical delivery within how many days?
 - A. 14 days
 - B. 60 days
 - C. 10 days
 - D. 30 days

4. How many days does a notary public have to file their oath of office and bond with the county clerk after the commission starting date?
 - A. 15 days
 - B. 45 days
 - C. 60 days
 - D. 30 days

5. What is the penalty for charging more than the maximum statutory fee for a notarial act?
 - A. Up to \$1,500
 - B. Up to \$750
 - C. Up to \$500
 - D. Up to \$2,500

6. What is the maximum fee a notary public may charge a member of the public for a photocopy of a line item from their journal?
 - A. \$15 per page
 - B. \$0.30 per page
 - C. No fee can be charged
 - D. \$1.00 per entry

7. For which type of document is a Notary Public explicitly forbidden from certifying a copy?
- A. The Notary's own journal (upon subpoena)
 - B. A Power of Attorney
 - C. A Birth Certificate
 - D. A standard contract between two private parties
8. A notary public must maintain a sequential journal of all official acts. If the journal is lost, stolen, misplaced, or destroyed, what must the notary do?
- A. Notify the county clerk within 15 days
 - B. Wait until the end of the commission term to report it
 - C. Purchase a new journal and continue notarizing without notification
 - D. Immediately notify the Secretary of State by certified or registered mail
9. Where must a notary public keep their active, sequential journal when not in use?
- A. In a locked desk drawer accessible to their employer
 - B. In any safe place at their primary place of business
 - C. In a locked and secured area under the direct and exclusive control of the notary
 - D. At the county clerk's office
10. What is the penalty for willfully failing to notify the Secretary of State of a change of address or name within 30 days?
- A. An infraction with a fine of up to \$500
 - B. A civil penalty of up to \$1,500
 - C. A misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$1,000
 - D. Immediate revocation of the notary commission
11. Can a California notary public perform a notarial act on a document written in a foreign language?
- A. Yes, but only if the notary is fluent in the foreign language.
 - B. No, the document must be translated into English first.
 - C. Yes, provided the notary is able to communicate with the signer and the notarial certificate is in English.
 - D. No, notaries can only notarize documents written in English.
12. A signer brings you a document with blanks that have not been filled in. What is the appropriate action to take?
- A. Refuse to notarize the document until the signer fills in the blanks.
 - B. Fill in the blanks for the signer, then notarize the document.
 - C. Notarize the document as is, since the contents are not the notary's responsibility.
 - D. Have the signer cross out the blanks and initial them, then notarize.
13. Which of the following acts constitutes a misdemeanor regarding the notary seal?
- A. Using the seal to stamp a piece of scrap paper to check its ink level
 - B. Any person who without authorization makes, manufactures, or uses a notary seal
 - C. Forgetting to lock the seal in a secure area for one day
 - D. Defacing the seal after the commission has expired
14. A notary fails to require a thumbprint in their journal for a document conveying real property. What is the maximum civil penalty?
- A. \$1,500
 - B. \$2,500
 - C. \$10,000
 - D. \$750

- 15.** When taking an acknowledgment, what must the notary public determine about the signer?
- A. That the signer is personally before the notary and is positively identified
 - B. That the signer understands the legal implications of the document
 - C. That the signer is willing to swear an oath regarding the truthfulness of the document
 - D. That the signer signed the document in the physical presence of the notary
- 16.** Which notarial act specifically requires the signer to swear or affirm that the contents of a document are true?
- A. A Copy Certification
 - B. A Proof of Execution
 - C. An Acknowledgment
 - D. A Jurat
- 17.** When recording a fee in the notary journal, what should a notary do if they did not charge a fee for the notarial act?
- A. Write "0" or "No Fee" in the fee space.
 - B. Only record acts where a fee was charged.
 - C. Leave the fee space blank.
 - D. Draw a line through the entire entry.
- 18.** An employee identification card issued by an agency or office of the State of California is presented as ID. Is this acceptable?
- A. Yes, if it is current or issued within the last 5 years
 - B. Yes, but only if accompanied by a secondary form of identification
 - C. No, state employee ID cards are never acceptable
 - D. Yes, even if it expired 10 years ago
- 19.** A notary is asked to notarize a document that contains blank spaces in the text. What must the notary do?
- A. Refuse to notarize the document until the blanks are filled in or crossed out by the signer.
 - B. Notarize the document and cross out the blank spaces.
 - C. Ask the signer what belongs in the blanks and write it in for them.
 - D. Notarize the document as is.
- 20.** If a notary public's journal is stolen, lost, misplaced, destroyed, or damaged, how quickly must they notify the Secretary of State?
- A. Prior to purchasing a new journal
 - B. Immediately
 - C. Within 10 days
 - D. Within 30 days
- 21.** Which of the following documents is a notary NOT permitted to certify as a copy?
- A. A power of attorney
 - B. A birth certificate
 - C. A journal line entry requested by a member of the public
 - D. A power of attorney and a journal line entry
- 22.** For which of the following documents is a notary public required to obtain the right thumbprint of the signer in their active journal?
- A. A last will and testament
 - B. A standard commercial lease

- C. A deed of trust affecting real property
- D. A mechanic's lien

23. If a peace officer asks to seize a notary's journal while investigating a criminal offense, what must the notary do?

- A. Surrender the journal and obtain a court order before notifying the Secretary of State.
- B. Hand over only photocopies of the relevant pages.
- C. Surrender the journal and notify the Secretary of State by certified mail within 10 days, including a copy of the receipt.
- D. Refuse, because the journal is under the exclusive control of the notary.

24. When completing a certificate of acknowledgment, what must be enclosed in a box at the top of the certificate?

- A. The notary's official seal
- B. A notice stating that the document is valid only in California
- C. The notary's commission expiration date
- D. A notice stating that the certificate verifies only the identity of the individual who signed the document to which it is attached, and not the truthfulness, accuracy, or validity of that document.

25. Can a notary public use a single credible witness to identify a signer?

- A. Yes, if the witness is related to the signer by blood or marriage
- B. Yes, if the credible witness personally knows the signer, is personally known to the notary, and presents acceptable ID
- C. Yes, but the single credible witness does not need to provide their own ID
- D. No, California law always requires two credible witnesses

26. If a signer does not possess acceptable identification, how can their identity be established?

- A. By the notary verifying their identity on a social media platform
- B. By the oaths of two credible witnesses who personally know the signer and have acceptable ID
- C. By relying on an expired driver's license issued 10 years ago
- D. By having the signer provide a thumbprint instead of ID

27. What is the maximum civil penalty for a notary who willfully states as true any material fact known to be false in an acknowledgment?

- A. \$10,000
- B. \$1,500
- C. \$750
- D. \$2,500

28. How much is the required surety bond for a California notary public?

- A. \$15,000
- B. \$10,000
- C. \$25,000
- D. \$20,000

29. What is a "Proof of Execution by a Subscribing Witness"?

- A. A specialized acknowledgment used only for real estate transactions.
- B. An act where a witness appears on behalf of the principal signer to prove the principal signed the document.
- C. A jurat that is administered remotely using audio-visual communication.

D. An act where the notary proves their own execution of the notarial certificate.

30. Which document is strictly prohibited from being notarized using a Proof of Execution by a Subscribing Witness?

- A. A commercial business contract
- B. A Power of Attorney
- C. A Grant Deed
- D. An Affidavit of Support

31. Can a California Notary Public provide legal advice or choose the type of notarial certificate (e.g., Acknowledgment vs. Jurat) for a client?

- A. Yes, it is the notary's duty to ensure the correct certificate is attached.
- B. Yes, if the notary has taken a state-approved training course.
- C. No, the signer must choose the certificate type, or the notary must refuse the notarization.
- D. No, but the notary can call the Secretary of State to ask for legal advice on behalf of the client.

32. Which of the following is NOT a requirement for a matricula consular card to be considered acceptable identification?

- A. It must contain a signature and a serial or identifying number
- B. It must be current or issued within the past 5 years
- C. It must contain a photograph and description of the person
- D. It must contain the signer's social security number

33. What must a notary do with their journal(s) when they resign, are disqualified, or their commission expires without renewal?

- A. Retain the journals for a period of 10 years, then destroy them.
- B. Give the journals to their employer.
- C. Deliver all notarial journals to the county clerk in the county where their current oath of office is on file within 30 days.
- D. Destroy the journals securely to protect the signers' privacy.

34. Under California law, which two types of documents is a Notary Public specifically allowed to certify as copies?

- A. Birth Certificates and Marriage Licenses
- B. Wills and Living Trusts
- C. Powers of Attorney and copies of the Notary's journal
- D. Driver's Licenses and Passports

35. When completing a jurat, the notary must administer an oath or affirmation. What else is uniquely required for a jurat compared to an acknowledgment?

- A. The signer must have two credible witnesses verify their identity
- B. The notary must verify the truthfulness of the document's contents
- C. The signer must provide a thumbprint in the journal for any type of document
- D. The signer must sign the document in the physical presence of the notary

36. Which of the following forms of identification is acceptable for a notary to rely upon if it is current or issued within the last 5 years?

- A. A student identification card without a serial number
- B. A social security card
- C. A birth certificate
- D. A driver's license issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles

- 37.** If a signer cannot sign their name due to a physical disability, how can a Notary Public proceed with a signature by mark?
- A. By having the signer stamp their thumbprint on the document instead of a signature.
 - B. By attaching a special medical certificate to the notarial act.
 - C. By having a single credible witness vouch for the signer's identity.
 - D. By requiring two witnesses to observe the mark, with one witness writing the signer's name next to the mark.
- 38.** If a notary public has a direct financial or beneficial interest in a transaction, they may not perform any notarial act. Which of the following is an exception to this rule?
- A. The notary is named individually as a principal to the transaction
 - B. The notary is a beneficiary of the trust document being notarized
 - C. The notary is receiving a large commission based on the closing of the real estate transaction being notarized
 - D. The notary is acting as an agent, employee, insurer, attorney, escrow, or lender for a person having a direct financial or beneficial interest
- 39.** What is the maximum fee a California notary public may charge for administering an oath or affirmation to one person and executing the jurat?
- A. \$20
 - B. \$25
 - C. \$15
 - D. \$10
- 40.** For which of the following notarial acts is a notary public required to identify the signer using satisfactory evidence?
- A. Acknowledgment only
 - B. Neither, personal knowledge is sufficient
 - C. Both an acknowledgment and a jurat
 - D. Jurat only
- 41.** What is the civil penalty for a notary public who fails to provide the Secretary of State with a copy of a line item from their notary journal upon request?
- A. Up to \$10,000
 - B. Up to \$1,500
 - C. Up to \$750
 - D. Up to \$2,500
- 42.** When a notary public's commission is no longer valid, what must they do with their notary seal?
- A. Mail it to the Secretary of State
 - B. Destroy or deface it so it cannot be used again
 - C. Surrender it to the county clerk
 - D. Keep it in a secure location indefinitely
- 43.** How many active sequential journals may a California notary public keep at any one time?
- A. Up to two, provided they are stored securely.
 - B. As many as necessary to accommodate multiple business locations.
 - C. One
 - D. One for mobile notarizations and one for office use.
- 44.** What is the minimum age requirement to become a notary public in California?
- A. 25 years old
 - B. 18 years old

- C. There is no minimum age requirement
- D. 21 years old

45. A client requests that you notarize a document that is written in a language you do not understand. Can you perform the notarization?

- A. Yes, as long as the notary can communicate with the signer and the notarial certificate is in English.
- B. Yes, but the notary must translate the entire document into English before notarizing.
- C. No, unless the notary uses a certified interpreter to translate the document.
- D. No, a notary cannot notarize a document written in a language they do not understand.