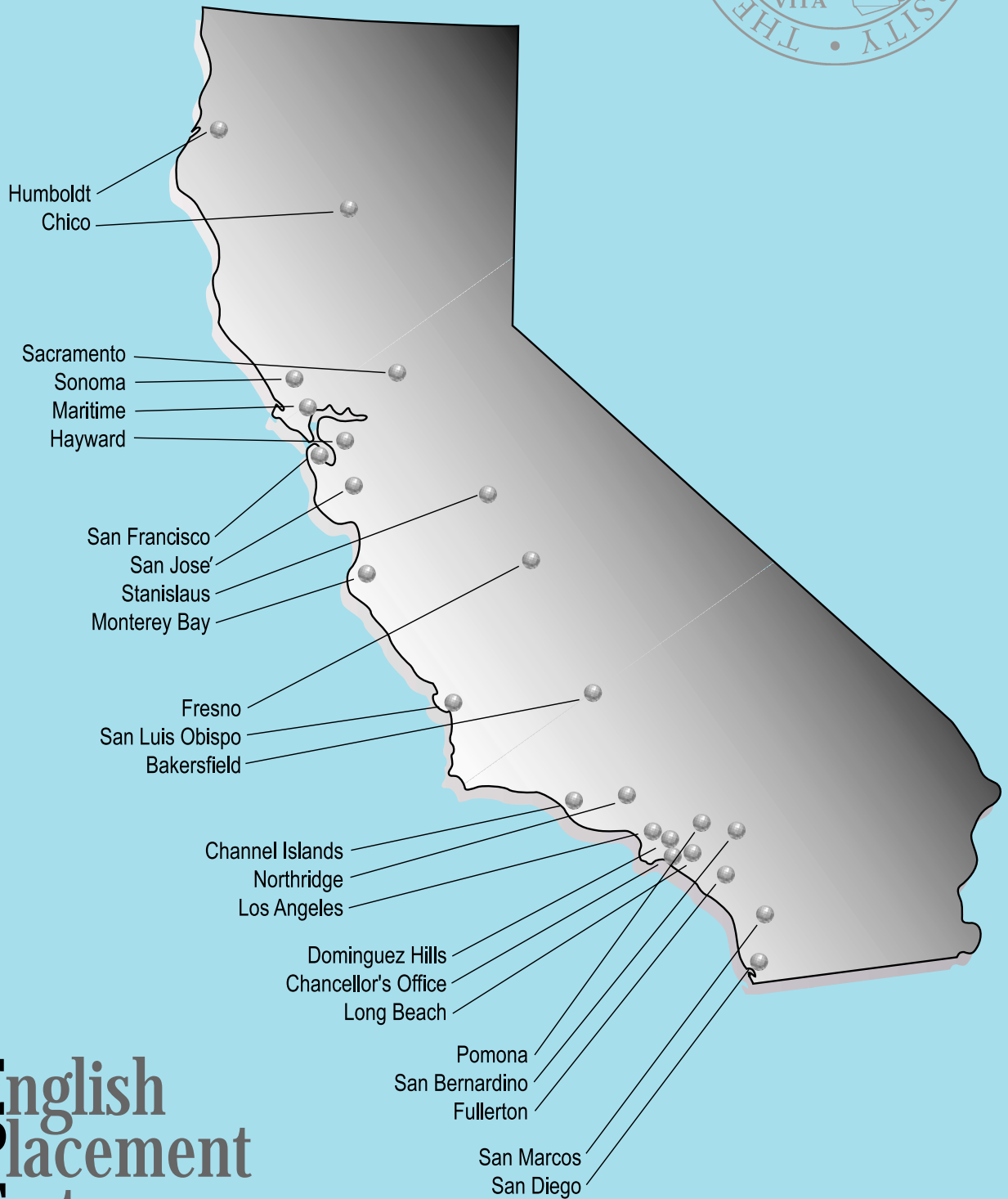


THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Focus on English



English Placement Test

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While additional copies of *Focus on English* may not be available, the publication may be downloaded from the web for duplication. The URL for *Focus on English* is:

<http://www.calstate.edu/ar/ept.pdf>

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Basic Skills Assessment at the California State University

New students enrolling at the 23 campuses of the California State University (CSU) will be joining more than 390,000 students and 22,000 faculty members in an academic program requiring college-level skills in reading, writing, and computation. Students need to master these basic skills not only to accomplish college-level work but also to meet society's need for a literate, educated citizenry. Because some students admitted to the California State University lack the necessary proficiency in reading, writing, or math to succeed in college, the CSU has designed tests in English and mathematics to identify those students who could benefit from additional pre-baccalaureate study in these areas. Students who cannot demonstrate the level of proficiency in English and mathematics expected by faculty of entering freshmen will be placed in special courses or programs during their first term of enrollment to increase that proficiency and mastery.

This brochure provides information about the English Placement Test (EPT). Another brochure, called *Focus on Mathematics*, available from the CSU Chancellor's Office or online at <http://www.calstate.edu/ar/fom.pdf>, provides information about the math assessment test, the Entry Level Mathematics Test (ELM).

Nature and Purpose of the English Placement Test

The English Placement Test, developed cooperatively by the CSU faculty and Educational Testing Service (ETS), is designed to assess the level of analytical reading and writing skills of students entering the California State University. The test has no effect on admissions decisions.

The CSU English Placement Test must be completed by all non-exempt undergraduates prior to enrollment in the CSU. Entering students have one year to complete required developmental courses.

EPT Exemptions

Students are exempt if they can present proof of one of the following:

- a score of 550 or above on the verbal section of the college Board SAT I Reasoning Test taken April 1995 or after*
- a score of 24 or above on the enhanced ACT English Test taken October 1989 or later
- a score of 680 or above on the College Board SAT II Writing Test taken May 1998 or after*
- a score of 3, 4, or 5 on either the Language and Composition or Literature and Composition examination of the College Board Advanced Placement Program
- completion and transfer to the CSU of a college course that satisfies the requirement in English Composition, provided such course was completed with a grade of C or better

*Students who took the SAT I Reasoning Test before April 1995 or the SAT II Writing Test before May 1998 should contact the campus Admissions and Records Office or Test Office for appropriate exemption scores.

—Note 1: The College Board SAT and Achievement Tests were replaced by SAT I and SAT II, respectively, beginning March 1994. Since April 1, 1995, the SAT I and SAT II exams have been scored on a new scale.

—Note 2: Beginning in May 1998, SAT II: Writing Test scores increased about 10-20 points. The adjustment was made to make Writing Test scores more comparable to scores on other SAT II subject tests. Although scores are higher, their relative rank compared to scores for tests taken before May 1998 remains the same.

About 27 percent of regularly admitted students are exempt from taking the EPT based on the above criteria. All other admitted students must take the test.

EPT Placement and Design

Once admitted, students required to take the test must take it at their earliest opportunity. The test must be taken before enrollment in any classes at the CSU. The fee for taking the EPT is \$18. EPT fees are non-refundable and subject to change. The test may not be repeated. Students will receive necessary information and registration materials by mail, usually from the admission office of the campus they plan to attend. The test is offered on all CSU campuses three times a year. Special demand test dates may be scheduled on some campuses during other months of the year, but students should not rely on such dates being scheduled. Students who do not demonstrate requisite competence on the English Placement Test are required to enroll in appropriate remedial or developmental programs/activities during the first term of enrollment and each subsequent term until such time as they demonstrate competence. Such courses or programs do not convey credit toward the baccalaureate degree. Students must complete and pass all remedial work during the first year of enrollment in the CSU.

Once a year, summaries of EPT aggregate student performance by high school are provided on the World Wide Web (<http://www.asd.calstate.edu/performance>) for those students who took the test and enrolled in the CSU for the fall term. Companion data for the ELM are also provided in the same place.

Since its beginning in 1977, the EPT has been given to more than 575,000 students. Approximately 40,000 first-time freshmen are tested each year. Of those students enrolling in the fall of 2001, approximately 54 percent demonstrated proficiency in reading and/or writing skills needed to succeed in college-level work. The remaining 46 percent were placed in appropriate remedial courses. The California legislature provides funding for EPT testing and also provides funding for campuses to establish developmental reading/writing programs.

Because the EPT is designed to place students in appropriate classes that will help them succeed in college-level work, it is not as difficult as some other English tests. The EPT is a placement test, not an admission or achievement test. Ongoing evaluation of the EPT shows that it measures students' abilities accurately, and that it is useful to students and their advisers in selecting appropriate courses and programs.

The EPT consists of a 45-minute essay and two 30-minute multiple-choice subsections: Reading Skills and Composing Skills.

Essay Question—45 minutes

The essay portion of the test requires students to read a brief passage in which an argument is made or a position is taken.

Students are asked to analyze and explain the ideas presented in the passage, and then take a position that they support by providing reasons and examples from their own experience, observations, or reading.

Because the writing assignment requires students to analyze the passage's ideas in developing their own position on the subject, it integrates the critical reading and expository writing skills that are both essential to college-level work.

For example, students might first read a passage on how tobacco companies have agreed to settle a lawsuit and give millions of dollars to the state. Students are then asked to explain how they would choose to spend the money (for example, on health care for smokers or on an anti-smoking campaign) and to support that position.

Students who cannot read effectively will not be able to write an appropriate essay; they may misunderstand or misread the passage.

Students are now able to have their writing skills diagnosed through the CSU/EPT Diagnostic Writing Service. For more information, please turn to page 12.

Please turn to page 13 for the EPT scoring guide, an EPT topic with sample essays, and commentaries.

Assessment of Reading Skills—30 minutes

Part A: Reading Comprehension

Students will be asked to analyze the ideas presented in brief passages (typically 100-150 words).

Students should be able to read closely in order to

- identify important ideas
- understand direct statements
- draw inferences and conclusions
- detect underlying assumptions
- recognize word meanings in context
- respond to tone and connotation

Students may be asked to select the answer choice that best summarizes a passage, explains the purpose of a passage, focuses on a specific detail, explains a word in context, compares/contrasts two aspects of a passage, explains the implications or suggestions made in a passage, identifies causal relationships, etc.

Directions: Each passage below is followed by questions based on its content. Answer all questions following a passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage.

Questions 1-3 are based on the following passage.

The search for a workable panacea is not new. Spanish explorers sought the Fountain of Youth. Millions of Americans used to seek health and contentment in a patent medicine called Hadacol. During the past two decades, however, more and more people have been turning to various branches of psychology for magic solutions, hoping that psychology can take care of any problem, cure the common cold, or solve the riddle of existence.

1. From the passage one can infer that the word “panacea” means
 - (A) utopia
 - (B) religion
 - (C) cure-all
 - (D) life style
2. According to the passage, what do the Fountain of Youth and Hadacol have in common?
 - (A) Neither really existed.
 - (B) Both brought their discoverers great fortunes.
 - (C) Both helped to end the search for magic solutions.
 - (D) Both were thought to have great power.
3. What does the passage call into question?
 - (A) People’s expectations of psychology
 - (B) People’s use of the lessons of history.
 - (C) The relationship between psychology and medicine.
 - (D) The legitimacy of the field of psychology.

Answer key: 1.C 2.D 3.A

Part B: Vocabulary in Context

Students should be able to understand the meaning of a particular word or phrase in the context of a sentence.

Students will be asked to consider grammatically similar words and choose the one that fits most logically into each sentence in place of a nonsense word, “gliff.”

Directions: For each of the following questions, choose the best word or phrase to substitute for the underlined portion containing gliff, a nonsense word.

4. Though Mr. Rivera is a gliff man and could live anywhere he chooses, he still lives in the small house in which he was born.
 - (A) an unhappy
 - (B) a wealthy
 - (C) an ambitious
 - (D) a strong
5. The water looked fine for swimming but, in fact, the currents in the river were gliff.
 - (A) contaminated
 - (B) soothing
 - (C) treacherous
 - (D) unnoticeable
6. Many of the problems we have with our natural resources could be gliffed if all of us did what we could to conserve those resources.
 - (A) avoided
 - (B) defined
 - (C) publicized
 - (D) understated

Answer key: 4.B 5.C 6.A

Part C: Logical Relationships

Students should be able to read two related statements and understand the relationship between them to see how

- they may contrast
- they may illustrate cause and effect
- they may contradict each other
- they may show cause and effect
- one may explain the other
- one may provide a more specific example to illustrate the other
- one may explain consequence
- one may clarify something implied by the other

Students will be asked to find exactly what the second sentence does in relation to the first and/or how the two sentences relate to each other.

Directions: In each of the following questions, two underlined sentences have an implied logical relationship. Read each pair of sentences and the question that follows, and then choose the answer that identifies the relationship.

7. The Historic Dominguez Rancho Adobe, usually visited by those in search of tranquility, became a political battleground.

The cities of Compton and Carson each claimed ownership of the estate.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It makes a comparison.
- (B) It provides factual support.
- (C) It describes an inevitable result.
- (D) It introduces a different point of view.

8. Harry typically vacations in Tahoe.

Two years ago, Harry spent his vacation in Madrid.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It clarifies an assumption.
- (B) It notes an exception.
- (C) It adds emphasis.
- (D) It draws a conclusion.

9. Teresa has missed the last three practices of the dance step.

She cannot perform the maneuver.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It states a consequence.
- (B) It suggests a cause.
- (C) It offers proof.
- (D) It limits a preceding idea.

Answer key: 7.B 8.B 9.A

Assessment of Composing Skills—30 minutes

Part A: Construction Shift

Students should be able to rephrase a sentence by beginning with a different construction and producing a new sentence that does not change the meaning of the original. These questions ask students to

- find a more economical or effective way of phrasing a sentence
- find a more logical way of presenting a fact or idea
- provide appropriate emphasis
- achieve sentence variety

Students may be asked to spin out a sentence using an introductory phrase beginning with a gerund or an adverb, etc; or to avoid slow starts, they may be asked to consider a more appropriate noun phrase, or to consider a phrase that includes parenthetical information.

Directions: The following questions require you to rewrite sentences in your head. Each question tells you exactly how to begin your new sentence. Your new sentence should have the same meaning and contain the same information as the original sentence.

10. The student senate debated the issue for two hours and finally voted down the resolution.

Rewrite, beginning with Having debated the issue for two hours, . . .

The next word or words will be

- (A) the issue
- (B) it
- (C) the student senate
- (D) a vote

11. The tree fell away from the house when it was struck by lightning.

Rewrite, beginning with Struck by lightning, . . .

The next words will be

- (A) It was when
- (B) it fell when
- (C) the tree fell
- (D) and falling

12. Watson maintains that the worsening economic plight of the poor is reflected in the rising unemployment rate.

Rewrite, beginning with Watson maintains that the rising unemployment rate . . .

The next words will be

- (A) reflects the
- (B) and the plight of
- (C) is what worsens
- (D) is worse

Answer key: 10.C 11.C 12.A

Part B: Sentence Correction

Students should be able to find the best way of correcting a sentence in order to resolve problems of

- clarity
- sentence predication
- parallel structure
- subordination and coordination
- modification
- sentence boundaries

Students are asked to select the best way to phrase an underlined portion of a sentence. This question type tests the students' understanding of syntax, usage, and idiom rather than specific knowledge of grammatical rules.

Directions: In each of the following questions, select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. Choice (A) is the same as the underlined portion of the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose answer (A).

13. Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and tossed them to the dogs lying under the table.

- (A) tossed them
- (B) tossing them
- (C) tossed the bread
- (D) they tossed

14. Many doctors are now convinced of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.

- (A) of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.
- (B) of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.
- (C) that the reduction of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.
- (D) that a fiber-rich diet reduces the risk of colon and heart diseases.

15. Painters studied in Florence for the opportunity both to live in Italy and for seeing the art treasures.

- (A) and for seeing the art treasures.
- (B) and to see the art treasures.
- (C) as well as the art treasures to be seen.
- (D) as well as seeing the art treasures.

Answer key: 13.C 14.D 15.B

Part C: Missing Sentence

Students should be able to select an appropriate sentence that most logically

- begins a paragraph
- fits in the middle of a paragraph
- ends a paragraph

Students may be asked to find the most appropriate topic sentence (one that most successfully generalizes what follows); to find the most appropriate middle sentence (adds specifics or carries the paragraph forward in some way); or to find the sentence that logically concludes the paragraph.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a passage with a missing sentence indicated by a series of dashes. Read each passage and the four sentences that follow it. Then choose the sentence that can best be inserted in place of the long dash (———).

16. ———. Scholars hold differing opinions. Some trace the roots of Mexicans in the United States all the way back to the earliest migrations across the Bering Strait. Others start with Aztec society to demonstrate the historical continuities between contemporary Chicanos and their Aztec ancestors. A third group identifies the “Spanish Borderlands” period (1540-1820) as the earliest phase of Chicano history.
- (A) When does Chicano history begin?
 - (B) There is continuing interest in Chicano history.
 - (C) Chicano history has fascinated scholars for many years.
 - (D) Few are concerned about setting a precise date for the origin of Chicano history.
17. Many Easterners think that all California college students surf every day, wear sunglasses indoors as well as outdoors (even on rainy days), and mingle with the superstars daily. ———. A recent survey of students on a large, urban CSU campus revealed that only 2 percent had surfed, and although 40 percent did wear sunglasses, 15 percent of those were doing so on their doctors’ recommendations. As for the superstars, barely 10 percent had met a Hollywood actor.
- (A) The possibilities of such stereotypes are endless.
 - (B) Stereotypes, however, are often misleading.
 - (C) Probably both Easterners and Californians would like to fit all of those stereotypes.
 - (D) Most California students do live up to those enviable stereotypes.
18. Accompanying the article on humor were pictures of a leering Groucho Marx and a grinning Sigmund Freud, one a brilliant humorist and the other a brilliant analyst whose own study of humor has been largely ignored. The unlikely pair attracted readers to the article, whose author made two major points. Serious studies of humor are rarely undertaken. ———.
- (A) Comics would urge us to laugh, not soberly to study laughter.
 - (B) What a joke a Freudian analysis of the Marx Brothers would have been.
 - (C) The studies that are made are rarely taken seriously.
 - (D) Freud was interested in all aspects of the human mind.

Answer key: 16.A 17.B 18.C

Part D: Supporting Sentence

Students should be able to read a sentence and decide which of four subsequent sentences will give appropriate logical support by

- adding relevant detail
- stating a probable cause or explanation
- providing a supporting example

Students will be asked to discriminate among sentences that might all seem related to the original sentence, but only one of which provides logical support for the original.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a topic and four sentences. Select the sentence that provides the best support for the topic presented.

19. Chester Nakamura is an expert on Samurai swords.
- (A) The swords are richly decorated, and their engravings have meaning to the collector.
 - (B) Collectors around the world seek his advice about swords they plan to buy.
 - (C) Each Samurai took pride in his sword.
 - (D) Many people in the United States have extensive collections of such swords.
20. It is not true that intellectual development stops after age 17.
- (A) Older people commonly complain of poor memory.
 - (B) Many older people can learn at least as well as young people can.
 - (C) People in their 60s, 70s, and 80s have been studied.
 - (D) Sometimes depression can cause what is assumed to be mental deterioration.

Answer key: 19.B 20.B

Test Score Reporting

Essay Score

Each essay is read independently and scored holistically by two faculty members who use a scoring guide that defines levels of performance on the essay. The two readers' scores are totaled to give the student's reported Essay score, which falls between scores of 2 (low) and 12 (high). (See page 13 for a scoring guide and sample essays.) Students must write on the assigned topic, demonstrate an understanding of the reading passage, and support their generalizations with specific reasons and examples. Such matters as clarity of thought, fluency, careful organization, development of ideas, and the use of clear and precise language all have an important influence upon the score given by each reader.

A different topic is used each time the test is given; all students taking the test at the same time write on the same topic. Topics are designed to allow all students to display their best writing. The topics selected are of general interest and should be accessible to all groups of EPT candidates. All essay topics are pretested at CSU campuses and are given final approval by the English Placement Test Development Committee.

A total Essay score of 6 or below strongly suggests that a student is not prepared for college-level writing. An Essay score of 7 is borderline. A low Essay score, combined with a Composing Skills score below 146, suggests that a student should have at least a one-semester (or quarter equivalent) pre-college writing course. A low Essay score combined with a Reading Skills score that is below 141 suggests that a student needs a year of developmental work before taking freshman English.

Reading Skills Score

This portion of the test presupposes a close relationship between reading and writing, and assumes that some students may best profit from special instruction in writing when their skill in reading is also strengthened. All of the reading material is accessible to and appropriate for college-bound students. Much of the content is of special interest to Californians and reflects the diversity of cultural experience in the state.

A Reading Skills score below 151 suggests that the student is not prepared for the demands of college-level reading and would benefit from a developmental course that includes analytical reading and writing.

The lower the Reading Skills score the more likely it is that the student should take two semesters of developmental reading and writing before enrolling in freshman English.

Composing Skills Score

Lack of skill in sentence construction and paragraph development seriously undermines a student's ability to succeed at college-level work. This section of the test presents sentence- and paragraph-level problems that commonly occur in the writing of students not yet prepared for college-level work.

This portion of the test requires that the student understands the conventions of academic writing. The EPT is designed to assess how well students can handle the kind of language that they will encounter as college students. For this reason, the conventions of standard written English that serve as criteria for the judgment of performance on this section of the test are those found in most college reading and required of students on papers and examinations.

How a Teacher Can Help Prepare Students for the EPT

To enhance students' performance on the **Reading Skills** portion of the test, course work should encourage and require analytical reading of nonfiction as well as fiction. Many students are placed in remedial coursework because of low Reading Skills scores.

While there are many ways to teach the skills measured by the **Composing Skills** section of the test, one of the most effective methods is to ask for revision of student written work.

Preparation for the essay portion of the test requires that students practice essay writing by reading arguments and responding to another's position. Evidence suggests that the greatest improvement in student writing comes about when careful and sensitive evaluation of essays is followed by revision in the light of that criticism. Some teachers have experimented successfully with student scoring of essays in accordance with scoring guides as a way of helping students to evaluate their own and others' work. The scoring guides and sample papers in this book may be of use to classroom teachers who wish to help students understand how their EPT essays will be scored. Teachers may also want to encourage their students to use the Diagnostic Writing Service (DWS) described below. DWS provides practice both in the multiple-choice part of the EPT and in the essay.

The English Placement Test Online

Students can have their reading, composing, and essay writing skills diagnosed through the CSU/EPT Diagnostic Writing Service (DWS). To reach this service, go online at <http://www.essayeval.org>.

For the reading and composing skills sections of the test, students may take a free, self-correcting practice exam which is made up from questions on previous EPT statewide exams. Once they submit the test, the tests are scored instantly and students are provided with explanations of any questions they miss.

For the essay portion of the test, students can have their writing diagnosed by CSU faculty for a small fee. Through this service, individual students, or entire classes of students, can submit essays responding to EPT essay questions and have their essays read by CSU faculty. Within 10 business days, students should receive their essays back online, with diagnostic comments. DWS is also available as a paper-and-pencil service. Students using the paper service must wait about three to four weeks to receive their reader feedback.

The DWS Comments

The comprehensive DWS comments provide specific diagnostic help to the students and to their teachers. Specifically, the DWS comments explain to students

- how fully and effectively they have responded to the essay task
- how well they have developed and supported their argument
- how well-chosen their examples are
- how sound their reasoning is
- how well they have organized and connected their ideas
- how well they have maintained control of sentences, of diction, and of syntax
- how well they have shown command of standard written English

EPT Scoring Guide, Sample Topic, and Sample Essays

CSU English Placement Test Scoring Guide

At each of the six score points for on-topic papers, descriptors of writing performance are lettered so that:

- a. = response to the topic
- b. = understanding and use of the passage
- c. = quality and clarity of thought
- d. = organization, development, and support
- e. = syntax and command of language
- f. = grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 6: Superior

A **6** essay is superior writing, but may have minor flaws.

A typical essay in this category:

- a. addresses the topic clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task
- b. demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the passage in developing an insightful response
- c. explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth
- d. is coherently organized and developed, with ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples
- e. has an effective, fluent style marked by syntactic variety and a clear command of language
- f. is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 5: Strong

A **5** essay demonstrates clear competence in writing. It may have some errors, but they are not serious enough to distract or confuse the reader.

A typical essay in this category:

- a. addresses the topic clearly, but may respond to some aspects of the task more effectively than others
- b. demonstrates a sound critical understanding of the passage in developing a well-reasoned response
- c. shows some depth and complexity of thought
- d. is well organized and developed, with ideas supported by appropriate reasons and examples
- e. displays some syntactic variety and facility in the use of language
- f. may have a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 4: Adequate

A **4** essay demonstrates adequate writing. It may have some errors that distract the reader, but they do not significantly obscure meaning.

A typical essay in this category:

- a. addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the task
- b. demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage in developing a sensible response
- c. may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively
- d. is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples
- e. demonstrates adequate use of syntax and language
- f. may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 3: Marginal

A **3** essay demonstrates developing competence, but is flawed in some significant way(s).

A typical essay in this category reveals *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- a. distorts or neglects aspects of the task
- b. demonstrates some understanding of the passage, but may misconstrue parts of it or make limited use of it in developing a weak response
- c. lacks focus, or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking
- d. is poorly organized and developed, presenting generalizations without adequate and appropriate support or presenting details without generalizations
- e. has limited control of syntax and vocabulary
- f. has an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with meaning

Score of 2: Very Weak

A **2** essay is seriously flawed.

A typical essay in this category reveals *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- a. indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task
- b. demonstrates very poor understanding of the main points of the passage, does not use the passage appropriately in developing a response, or may not use the passage at all
- c. lacks focus and coherence, and often fails to communicate its ideas
- d. has very weak organization and development, providing simplistic generalizations without support
- e. has inadequate control of syntax and vocabulary
- f. is marred by numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning

Score of 1: Incompetent

A **1** essay demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in writing skills.

A typical essay in this category reveals *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- a. suggests an inability to comprehend the question or to respond meaningfully to the topic
- b. demonstrates little or no ability to understand the passage or to use it in developing a response
- c. is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent
- d. is disorganized and undeveloped, providing little or no relevant support
- e. lacks basic control of syntax and vocabulary
- f. has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning

Readers should not penalize ESL writers excessively for slight shifts in idiom, problems with articles, confusion over prepositions, and *occasional* misuse of verb tense and verb forms, so long as such features do not obscure meaning.

EPT Sample Essay Topic

The sample topic below is similar to the topic students will be assigned in the Essay Section of the test. Other topics are listed on page 21. The topic is followed by six sample student essays at every score point (1-6). Each essay is followed by comments on the scoring.

Directions: You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your essay should be as well organized and as carefully written as you can make it.

“For many Americans, the concept of success is a source of confusion. As a people, we Americans greatly prize success. We are taught to celebrate and admire the one who gets the highest grades, the one voted most attractive or most likely to succeed. But while we often rejoice in the success of people far removed from ourselves—people who work in another profession, live in another community, or are endowed with a talent that we do not especially want for ourselves—we tend to regard the success of people close at hand, within our own small group, as a threat.”

Explain Mead’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Student Essays and Commentaries (Scores 6-1)

Score of 6: Superior

“He Who Dies with the Most Toys Wins”

In her book *The Egalitarian Error*, Margaret Mead states, “We are taught to celebrate and admire the one who gets the highest grades, the one voted most attractive or most likely to succeed. But while we often rejoice in the success of people far removed from ourselves—we tend to regard the success of people close at hand, within our small group, as a threat.” It is this occurrence, she says, that makes the “concept of success” complicated, seemingly contradictory, and thus often “a source of confusion.” But is this the case in society? Success is seen as a source of happiness and security, a source of pride. It is thought of as a good thing to be successful. But success can become threatening when your classmates, neighbors, or coworkers are more successful than you. Then your pride is hurt. Though success itself is a good and positive thing, it creates competition that can foster negative interactions.

In this society, we are taught to look to those people who are far out of reach as role models. We should strive to achieve the degree of success that they have. We should strive for greatness displayed in public so that, in the future, young children will be striving in turn to be like us. We look to famous actors, computer moguls, and people famous for being rich as the distant but maybe attainable goal that we should always work toward. We celebrate them when they turn out another great movie or another great computer program. They illustrate Mead’s statement that we celebrate the success of those far away from us. But more locally, things could not be more different.

How many times have you been compared to your older brother or sister? Or, how many times have your younger siblings been compared to you? Instead of giving them a brotherly pat on the back for doing a good job in school, or getting a raise at work, this comparison created hostile feelings. Also, teachers that grade on the curve constantly put students in direct competition with each other. So instead of congratulating your

successful classmates on a job well done, you feel threatened because you are being graded against them. On the other hand, if some stranger in a different school gets an A, why should you care? Sports teams are also a prime example of how success of others nearby can become threatening. Schools have forgotten the meaning of good sportsmanship and have replaced it with a desire to win, fueled by the fear that an opponent's success might mean that they are better than you. Even youngsters can't play a friendly soccer game without such worries looming over them. But this time it is the parents who are threatened by the success of the other side. This idea of others' success being threatening is still present when you leave the soccer field and go back to your neighborhood. Cars, yard appearance, and satellite dishes represent success and create posturing among neighbors, as I have seen in my very own neighborhood.

I believe that success of people nearby is seen as threatening because it directly affects us. It affects how we feel about ourselves and what others think of us. This is not so much true when the image of success is far removed. Becoming an actor is seen as an impossible achievement, so we look up to anyone that has accomplished it. But it is not quite so close to home, and so it is more personally meaningful to be beaten out by people that you know in some activity that you take pride in. This is where success creates competitiveness and envy.

Commentary for 6 essay

This essay illustrates the scoring guide's criteria for a score of 6. The superior response indicates that the writer is very well prepared to handle college-level reading and writing.

- The writer demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the passage in developing an insightful response.
- The summary of Mead is complete and accurate, although paraphrase may have been preferable to lengthy quotation in the first sentence.
- The writer explores the issues of success and jealousy thoughtfully and in depth, and has a clear sense of how to write and where to place the thesis: "Though success itself is a good and positive thing, it creates competition that can foster negative interactions."
- The writer understands how to organize a coherent, well-focused, logical response.
- The use of examples for support is more than a list; this writer also explains the relevance of these cogent examples (e.g. paragraph 3).
- Although there are occasional grammatical errors ("Instead of giving them a brotherly pat on the back . . . this comparison created hostile feelings"), they do not obscure intended meaning and represent the exception in a fluent response.

.....
Score of 5: Strong

I think that what Mead is trying to say is that we admire other people's success and accomplishments only when we don't know those people and if they succeed at things that don't matter to us. For example, you might admire someone who can play classical piano because you don't play and aren't really into classical music all that much. But if you want to be a great blues guitarist and the guy next door is a lot better than you, then it's different. When it's someone close to you that you associate with all the time, instead of admiration you feel threatened.

I think the first part of what Mead is saying is true. We admire people we don't know all the time. When we watch television we see actors, musicians, and models that we admire because of their success. We read in the newspapers and magazines about people who are really smart or are super athletes who made it to the Olympics. We all look up to other people we don't know and admire their success.

I think the second part of her statement is somewhat true but at the same time somewhat false. I do think that sometimes people allow themselves to get so caught up with being the best that they start to compete with their close friends or family members. If someone in that group happens to do something better you might feel a bit threatened.

For example, both me and my sister started to take horseback riding lessons. At first she was a lot better than I was. But once I got the hang of things I gradually became better than her. She was so upset that I had succeeded in horseback riding that she quit. She didn't see that she too had succeeded. I was just a better rider. She didn't see that even if I had succeeded more, the activity could still be fun for her.

I do believe, though, that people close to you can succeed and you won't feel threatened by it. I have played the violin for eight years and my best friend has only played for three. We both did orchestra through school and both of us had no private lessons. I happened to be better and had more success than she in playing. But she never held it against me. She never once felt threatened by my talent for playing the violin. She might have felt different if we were actually in the same family and had been playing the same amount of time, but probably not. She isn't a competitive person.

I do know that some people, instead of admiring a person's success, take it as a threat. But I do think for the most part people, especially true friends, will be happy and admire all your success and accomplishments if you do the same for them. Mead is only part right. Whether you feel threatened by a successful person or not doesn't just depend on how far away the person is, but on how you choose to view things.

Commentary for 5 paper: Strong

This essay illustrates the scoring guide's criteria for a score of 5. The clear competence indicates that this writer is quite ready to handle college-level reading and writing.

- The essay clearly addresses the topic and demonstrates a sound critical understanding of the passage in developing a well-reasoned response. The first paragraph accurately paraphrases Mead's main point and nicely uses the examples of the piano and guitar players to illustrate it. Unlike less able writers, this writer does not repeat the word "confusion" but summarizes the ideas in her own words "instead of admiration you feel threatened."
- The essay shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Paragraph organization could be stronger. The writer needs to pay attention to writing more focused topic sentences.
- The reasons and examples are appropriate although the examples sometimes serve to support a point already adequately made (paragraph 2).
- Despite a few distracting errors (e.g., "both me and my sister"), a preference for colloquial diction, and a tendency to begin sentences with "I think" (see openings of first three paragraphs), the writer displays good control of language and some variety in sentence structure.

Score of 4: Adequate

"Source of Confusion"

The concept of success is often misunderstood by many people. When someone succeeds we are suppose to praise and admire them for what they have done or accomplished. Instead, we see them as a threat and try to overpower or outdo them. For this reason, I agree with Margaret Mead that "the concept of success is a source of confusion."

Imagine you are competing with other classmates to be the top student in your class. If someone succeeds over you, you will most likely be jealous of their success, rather than praise

them. Part of being human is that we desire what we don't have. We desire someone else's accomplishments and want to succeed over others. Our will to succeed overpowers our will to admire, therefore, we want what other people have.

Society competes in almost everything. We compete in jobs, school, social status, and power. For example, if another country invented a bomb that the United States did not have, we would do everything in our power to invent one. In order to stay in control, we must not let others succeed. For them to succeed would mean that we fail.

No one wants to fail and no one likes to fail. This forces us to have the desire to succeed. We become threatened when we fail and another accomplishes what we cannot. Confusion sets in because many emotions are replaced with fear. We may admire someone for succeeding but we also feel anger and jealousy towards them. With these mixed emotions we cannot praise nor admire those that have succeeded over us. With this, success becomes "a source of confusion."

Commentary for 4 paper—Adequate

This essay illustrates the scoring guide's criteria for a score of 4. The adequate response to the topic suggests that this writer should be able to handle college-level reading and writing.

- The writer demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage and develops a sensible response. The writer seems to discover what she thinks in the final paragraph. A quick plan would probably have resulted in a more focused reply.
- The topic is treated somewhat simplistically, for the writer never recognizes or explores Mead's point that our feelings about success vary with its proximity to us.
- The essay is organized and developed adequately, but it would have benefited from more and better examples: The example of students competing for grades is taken from Mead and extended no further, and that of the bomb is not especially relevant to Mead's point about the American attitude toward success.
- In place of more specific support, the writer provides generalities that are sometimes vague or imprecisely phrased: For example, "Society competes in almost everything."
- The essay does have some errors (pronoun/antecedent agreement—"someone . . . they" and "suppose to" for "supposed to") but generally demonstrates control of mechanics, usage, and sentence structure.

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Score of 3: Marginal

I think Mead means in calling the concept of success "a source of confusion" because we are not all the same and we do not think the same. Some of us might think that having alot of money is being successful, while others think that being successful is being happy with you and your family. I think Mead is also saying that we consider people to be successful when they are not close to us or when they are from another community because we do not want people that are within our group to be considered successful.

In a way I think we are selfish because we want to be the only one who is successful in a group. Because we want to get all the admirations and attentions. If anybody else that is in our group is considered successful we take it as a threat because we want to be the only ones that are successful.

I agree with Mead because not always are the right people recognized for being successful. In my family I am the "successful one" because I'm going to go to college and work and get good grades. On the other hand there's my brother who does not get good grades and by parents do not consider him to be successful. In my opinion he is successful because he is trying to do better and he is not giving up eventhough he does not get the good grades.

People often define success as different things. I define success as a person who does not give up eventhough they are not doing well. They are successful because they are still trying and not giving up. It is true what Mead said about considering a threat people that are successful that are near you because you do not want to feel inferior to people that are said to be successful.

Commentary for 3 paper—Marginal

This essay illustrates the scoring guide’s criteria for a score of 3. Although the essay suggests some developing competence, it is flawed in significant ways which suggest that the writer needs remedial work before succeeding in college-level reading and writing.

- The writer demonstrates a limited understanding of Mead’s passage, and because of this misunderstanding, the response is weak.
- The thesis is never clearly stated.
- The overall essay has problems with focus and organization, suggesting that the writer did not have a plan before beginning.
- Although there is an attempt at development in this four-paragraph essay, the examples are often confusing and tangential; for example, the second paragraph attempts development, but it merely repeats a previous point (“In a way I think we are selfish . . .”).
- Most of the final paragraph is tangential, as it concerns the writer’s—not Mead’s—notions of success.
- The sentence-level problems are not as severe as those in some essays in the 3 range; however, moments of confusion and circular reasoning confound the reader. For example, the final sentence says, “It is true what Mead said about considering a threat people that are successful that are near you because you do not want to feel inferior to people that are said to be successful.”
- The essay has an accumulation of errors in mechanics and usage (“admiration and attentions”).

Score of 2: Very Weak

Some people see the concept of success as a source of confusion, even if they don’t realize it. Margaret Mead, the author of *Egalitarian Error*, quotes, “For many Americans the concept of success is a source of confusion.” I think what she means is that success is something people don’t see and they confuse themselves in trying to see if they really succeeded in what they wanted to do. I agree with Mead because people get confused when he or she has succeeded or not.

Sure some people know that when he or she gets a good grade or when he or she wins a prize that he or she has succeeded. But do people realize what succeeding in life really is? It seems that when a person wins a contest, other people often say that he has succeeded. What are the people really celebrating? Are they celebrating his or her accomplishments or are they just celebrating because he or she beat the other contestants and he or she was the best in the game? I think it is because he or she beat the other contestants. No one ever say, “Congratulations you have succeeded in winning the game.”

A lot of people tend to keep going at their job or school and not even know that he or she has succeeded in something throughout his or her life. Confusion makes the person keep trying harder and makes he or she climb more steps in life. Confusion can be good.

Commentary for 2 paper—Very Weak

This essay illustrates the scoring guide’s criteria for a score of 2. The serious flaws here indicate that this writer will need some considerable help before succeeding at college-level reading and writing.

- The writer demonstrates a very poor understanding of the passage and, specifically, does not understand what Mead means by “confusion,” nor that the “confusion” has to do with ambivalence—in this case, having more than one emotion or attitude at one time.

- Because the writer misunderstands the passage, she is unable to use it in responding to the prompt.
- The essay lacks focus and coherence, and it often fails to communicate its ideas: For example, in the third paragraph, the writer says, “Confusion makes the person keep trying harder and makes he or she climb more steps in life.”
- This three-paragraph essay is undeveloped and shows little organization within paragraphs.
- The simplistic generalizations (“Confusion can be good.”) exist without support.
- The sentence control is often inadequate: For example, in the first paragraph, the writer states, “I agree with Mead because people get confused when he or she has succeeded or not.”
- Because the writer misuses “confusion” and the essay’s point seems to turn on that word, the essay fails to make sense.

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Score of 1: Incompetent

After reading a small paragraph of The Egalitarian Error by Margaret Mead, she states that success is “a source of confusion.” I have to disagree with that. I think everyone in their own way celebrate success some may celebrate bigger than other. That is true because if you get good grades in high school your parents would give money instead of buying you a car. But say you win the biggest game in college football then you get a party and people will know who you are. I think it is the way you see life.

In a way I do know why Margaret Mead may have stated that is because when you know if you succeeded, or when do you know that someone or your self succeed. Take myself I have never so I think have success. The only think is my grade but to me that is not success. When your in school your teachers, parents, and yourself think that you are too be getting good grades. When I was high school my friends would get money for every A or B on their report card. I wouldn't, I thought why are my friends succeed but not me because I never got money. So I was confused. I think when people get older they realize it wasn't confusion you were just enjoying your success different.

Success can mean any different to people. To some it may be confusing or not but it is up to that person to make that choice. Success to me can be very different to the person next to me.

Commentary for 1 paper—Incompetent

This essay illustrates the scoring guide’s criteria for a score of 1. The fundamental deficiencies here clearly indicate that this writer is not yet ready to succeed at college-level reading and writing.

- The writer seems unable to understand the passage and does not use it to produce a meaningful response.
- The essay does not have a clear thesis early in the paper.
- The essay is illogical, unfocused, and disorganized.
- At the paragraph level, the writer has no sense of topic sentences or of how to use specific examples to support a statement.
- A series of disconnected thoughts about success appear in place of argument and support.
- Most sentences show serious problems with usage, word choice, sentence construction, and idioms: for example, “. . . that is because . . .” (first sentence of paragraph 2); or “Success can mean any different to people” (first sentence of paragraph 3).
- The writing suggests second-language interference.

Other Sample EPT Topics

1. “Because of cell phones, hiking in wilderness areas may be safer than before, but it is also noisier than ever. Although people might bring cell phones with them to use in case of an emergency, emergencies are rare. More often, people receive incoming business and even social calls. Technology seems to be following us everywhere: into the wilderness, and then back into civilization. Anywhere at any time, everyone else present can be disturbed by one person’s call. Because more people in these circumstances are bothered by cell phones than are helped, these gadgets should not be permitted in certain public places or designated natural areas.”

—Lois Quaide

Explain Quaide’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

2. “The purpose of public universities should be to train the appropriate number of people for the professions. In order to fulfill this purpose, the number of students admitted to each field of study should be pre-set, as in Sweden, so that no more people are trained than will be needed to fill the estimated number of openings in each profession.”

—Phyllis Stein

Explain Stein’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

3. “Two-thirds of adolescent and adult Americans drink alcohol, and of those, 8 to 12 percent will become alcoholics or problem drinkers. To combat this huge public-health crisis, we should begin a national system of licensing, with appropriate penalties. Applicants for a drinking license would first be required to study a manual containing basic information about alcohol and the law, much like the driver’s manual we all memorized in high school. Next they would have to pass a written test, after which they would receive a drinking license. License holders, and only license holders, would then be able to buy alcoholic beverages (including beer). Most of the problem drinkers would, at some point, probably face arrest on alcohol-related offenses. If convicted, they would lose their license. A liquor store or bar caught selling to an unlicensed drinker would lose its license as well.”

—Earl Rochester

Explain Rochester’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

4. “Ours is an open, fast-moving society—equipped with cars, trains, planes—that makes it too easy for us to move away from the people and places of our past. Not too many families live together in the same neighborhood; generally, we travel long distances in order for grandchildren and grandparents to spend time together, and often we lose track of old friends we never see again. As a result, we tend to lack the close, supportive relationships that people in former generations enjoyed. The advantages to living in such a highly mobile society are thus outweighed by the disadvantages.”

—Perry Patetic

Explain Patetic’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Comparison of State Board of Education English Standards and The CSU Multiple-Choice Section of The EPT and DWS

State Board English-Language Arts Content Standards		CSU EPT/DWS (Multiple-Choice)
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.1 and 1.2 and 1.3	Reading Skills Section I A <i>This section tests the ability to understand and analyze prose (non-fiction) reading passages.</i>
Reading Comprehension	2.0 and 2.1 and 2.2 and 2.4	
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.2	Reading Skills Section I B <i>Gliff This section tests the ability to choose the best word or phrase to substitute into a sentence.</i>
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.2	Reading Skills Section I C <i>This section tests the ability to see logical relationships between sentences.</i>
Reading Comprehension	2.0 and 2.2	
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.3	Composing Skills Section II A <i>This section tests the ability to rewrite a sentence.</i>
Reading Comprehension	2.0 and 2.2	
Writing Strategies	1.9	
English Language Conventions	1.0 and 1.1	
Reading (Word Analysis)	1	Composing Skills Section II B <i>This section tests the ability to choose the best version of a given sentence.</i>
Writing Strategies	1.9	
English Language Conventions	1.0 and 1.1	
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.2	Composing Skills Section II C <i>This section tests the ability to understand sentence relationships within a passage and to provide a necessary missing sentence.</i>
Reading Comprehension	2.0 and 2.2	
English Language Conventions	1.1	
Reading (Word Analysis)	1.0 and 1.2	Composing Skills Section II D <i>This section tests the ability to select a sentence that provides the best support for the topic presented.</i>
Reading Comprehension	2.0 and 2.2	
English Language Conventions	1.1	

Comparison of State Board of Education English Standards and The CSU Essay Section of The EPT and DWS

State Board English-Language Arts Content Standards		CSU EPT/DWS (Essay)
Reading/Word Analysis, Fluency, Systematic Vocab Development	1.0	Response to Writing Task
Reading Comprehension If a short reading passage:	2.0, 2.2 2.4, 2.5	
Writing Strategies	1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5	Development
Writing Applications	2.1 a,b,c,d,e; 2.3 a,b,c; 2.4c	Organization
Writing Strategies	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4	
Writing Applications	2.1, a,b,c,d,e; 2.3 a,b,c; 2.4 a,b,c,d	Sentence Control
Writing Strategies	1.5, 1.9	
Written English Language Conventions	1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3	Grammar, Usage, and Diction
Written English Language Conventions	1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3	

The alignment is both direct and indirect in the case of reading prompts; the standards do not mention any emphasis on understanding a task.

Some areas in the EPT repeat the Content Standards more than once.



TEST DATE: MARCH 2002

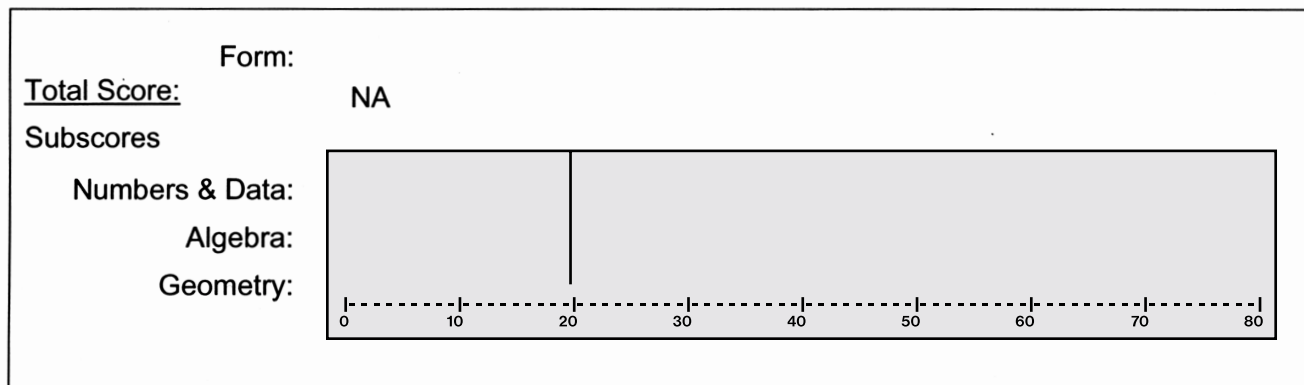


Scores Reported to: BAKERSFIELD
POMONA

English Placement Test

Form:	Y1
<u>Total Score:</u>	151
Subscores	
Essay (raw score):	008
Reading Skills:	152
Composing Skills:	147

Entry Level Mathematics Test



SEE OTHER SIDE FOR SCORE EXPLANATIONS.

English Placement Test

What do my English Placement Test (EPT) scores mean?

The EPT Total Score is reported on a scale of 120-180. The CSU has determined that a Total Score of 151 or higher indicates that you are ready to undertake coursework that requires college-level writing. However, there may be some slight variation in the way campuses use scores to establish preparedness for college-level course work. You can find out what the campus of your choice does by consulting the campus catalog or course schedule.

Your EPT subscores may help your campus's writing faculty focus instruction where it is most needed. Essay subscores range from 2, the lowest score, to 12, the highest. A score of 0 means the essay did not address the assigned topic. Subscores in Reading Skills and Composing Skills are reported on the same scale (120-180) as the EPT Total Score.

Entry Level Mathematics Test

What do my Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) scores mean?

The ELM Total Score is reported on a scale of 0-80. The CSU has determined that a Total Score of 50 or higher indicates that you are ready to undertake college-level coursework in mathematics. However, there may be some slight variation in the way campuses use scores to establish preparedness for college-level coursework. You can find out what the campus of your choice does by consulting the campus catalog or course schedule.

Your ELM subscores may help your campus's mathematics faculty focus instruction where it is most needed. ELM subscores are shown graphically as ranges in relation to the "cut score" of 50. These ranges indicate your level of proficiency in the three content areas the test covers.

For more information about EPT and ELM scores and what they mean, you can consult the EPT/ELM *Information Bulletin*. You can obtain the *Information Bulletin* from your campus Admissions and Records Office or Test Office. You can also consult the *Information Bulletin* on-line at www.ets.org/csu.

Interpretation of Test Results

Individual test results are sent to each student and to the campus where the student intends to enroll. On each campus, students are placed into appropriate classes on the basis of their test scores.

The Total (T) score shows how well the student did on all three sections of the test. The T score is reported on a scale ranging from a low of 120 to a high of 180. Students scoring below 151 may experience some problems in regular college work; those scoring 145 or below are likely to have such problems. Scores lower than 140 indicate the probability of real difficulty for the student unless considerable help is made available.

The Reading Skills (R) and the Composing Skills (C) scores indicate performance on those sections of the EPT. Scores on these two sections of the test are also distributed on the 120-180 scale, and score levels for these skills may be interpreted in approximately the same way as is the T score. The Essay (E) score is a sum of two independent judgments on a scoring scale from 0-6; hence, the best possible score is 12. The essay score is reported as a raw score, and separated from the other scores to minimize confusion.

Each score report for the EPT thus provides the following scores:

Reading Skills	R120 to R180
Composing Skills	C120 to C180
Essay	E 0 to E 12
Total Score	T120 to T180

At the request of the California Legislature, summary information about the performance of students from each high school is provided annually to school districts. While these reports should be seen only as a score distribution for those who have taken the test (not, for instance, an evaluation of all students, or even all college-bound students), the information should be useful to administrators and faculty assessing high school English programs.

The following sample score reports, with some interpretive comments, show the usefulness of the information provided by the EPT.



The California State University
Office of the Chancellor
Student Academic Support
www.calstate.edu