Study Guide for the English to Speakers of Other Languages Test

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Study Guide for the *English to Speakers of Other Languages* Test
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Chapter 1
Introduction to the *English to Speakers of Other Languages* Test and Suggestions for Using This Study Guide
Introduction to the *English to Speakers of Other Languages* Test

The Praxis *English to Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) test is designed for prospective elementary and secondary teachers of English to speakers of other languages. The test is designed to measure the basic pedagogical knowledge necessary for a beginning teacher of ESOL in elementary or secondary schools.

Educational Testing Service® (ETS®) has aligned the questions on this test with the TESOL/NCATE Standards for the Recognition of Initial TESOL Programs in P–12 ESL Teacher Education as developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL), in collaboration with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Inc. (CAEP), formerly known as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Inc. (NCATE). ETS works in collaboration with teacher educators, higher education content specialists, and accomplished practicing teachers to keep the test updated and representative of current standards.

The *English to Speakers of Other Languages* test consists of 120 multiple-choice questions, with 20 questions based on recorded speech samples. The questions cover concepts that provide the foundation for teaching English to speakers of other languages. The questions test knowledge of essential facts, including the meanings of specific terms, understanding of relationships between and among areas of content, and the ability to apply concepts appropriately.

The content covered by the 120 questions is divided into the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Category</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
<th>Approximate Percentage of Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Linguistics and Language Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Professional Aspects of the Job</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test takers have 120 minutes to complete the test, which includes a 30-minute listening section.
The two sections of the test are broken down as indicated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Covers topics in Foundations of Linguistics and Language Learning</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part A: Oral Grammar and Vocabulary (Recorded portion of the test, approximately 15 minutes)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Approximately 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B: Pronunciation (Recorded portion of the test, approximately 15 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2: Covers all topics of the test</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Approximately 90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test is not intended to assess teaching skills but rather to demonstrate the test taker’s fundamental knowledge in the major areas of the field of ESOL.

**Suggestions for using the “Study Topics” chapter of this study guide**

This test is different from a final exam or other tests you may have taken for other courses because it is comprehensive—that is, it covers material you may have learned in courses taken during your undergraduate or graduate program. It requires you to synthesize information you have learned from many sources and to understand the subject as a whole.

Therefore, you should review and prepare for the test rather than merely become familiar with the question formats. A thorough review of the material covered by the test will significantly increase your likelihood of success. Moreover, studying for your licensing exam is a great opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of pedagogical knowledge and methods before you begin to teach, or to reflect on previous teaching experience. As you prepare to take the test, it may be particularly helpful for you to think about how you would apply the study topics and sample exercises to the classroom experience you obtained during your teacher-preparation program. Your student-teaching experience will be especially relevant to your thinking about the materials in the study guide.
We recommend the following approach for using the “Study Topics” chapter to prepare for the test:

- **Become familiar with the test content.** Learn what will be assessed in the test, covered in chapter 3.

- **Assess how well you know the content in each area.** After you learn what topics the test contains, you should assess your knowledge in each area. How well do you know the material? In which areas do you need to learn more before you take the test? It is quite likely that you will need to brush up on most or all of the areas.

- **Develop a study plan.** Assess what you need to study, and create a realistic plan for studying. You can develop your study plan in any way that works best for you. A “Study Plan” form is included in appendix A at the end of the book as a possible way to structure your planning. Remember that this is a licensure test and covers a great deal of material. Plan to review carefully. You will need to allow time to find the books and other materials, time to read the material and take notes, and time to go over your notes.

- **Identify study materials.** Most of the material covered by the test is contained in standard introductory textbooks for ESOL, linguistics, phonology, and related fields. If you do not own introductory texts that cover all the areas, you may want to borrow some from friends or from a library. You may also want to obtain a copy of state or national standards for ESOL. (One way to find these standards quickly is to go to the Web site for your state’s Department of Education. You can also access the TESOL/NCATE Standards for the Recognition of Initial TESOL Programs in P–12 ESL Teacher Education at www.TESOL.org.) Use standard school and college introductory textbooks and other reliable, professionally prepared materials. Don’t rely heavily on information provided by friends or from searching the World Wide Web. Neither of these sources is as uniformly reliable as textbooks.

- **Work through your study plan.** You may want to work alone, or you may find it more helpful to work with a group or with a mentor. Work through the topics and questions provided in chapter 3. Rather than memorizing definitions from books, be able to define and discuss the topics in your own words and understand the relationships between diverse topics and concepts. If you are working with a group or mentor, you can also try informal quizzes and questioning techniques.

- **Read chapter 4.** This chapter will sharpen your skills in reading and answering multiple-choice questions. To succeed on multiple-choice questions, you must focus carefully on each question, avoid reading things into the question, pay attention to details, and sift patiently through the answer choices.

- **Proceed to the practice questions.** Once you have completed your review, you are ready to benefit from the “Practice Questions” portion of this guide.
Suggestions for using the “Practice Questions” and “Right Answers and Explanations” chapters

- **Answer the practice questions in chapter 5.** Work on the practice questions in a quiet place without distractions. Remember that the practice questions are only examples of the way the topics are covered in the test. The test will have different questions.

- **Score the practice questions.** Go through the detailed answers in chapter 6 (“Right Answers and Explanations”) and mark the questions you answered correctly and the ones you missed. Look over the explanations of the questions you missed and see if you understand them.

- **Decide whether you need more review.** After you have looked at your results, decide whether there are areas that you need to brush up on before taking the actual test. Go back to your textbooks and reference materials to see if the topics are covered there. You might also want to go over your questions with a friend or teacher who is familiar with the subjects.

- **Assess your readiness.** Do you feel confident about your level of understanding in each of the areas? If not, where do you need more work? If you feel ready, complete the checklist in chapter 7 (“Are You Ready?”) to double-check that you’ve thought through the details. If you need more information about registration or the testing situation itself, use the resources in appendix B: “For More Information.”
Chapter 2
Background Information on The Praxis Series™ Assessments
What Are The Praxis Series™ Assessments?

The Praxis Series™ assessments are designed by ETS to assess your knowledge of specific subject areas. They are a part of the licensing procedure in many states. This study guide covers an assessment that tests your knowledge of the actual content you will be expected to teach once you are licensed. Your state has adopted The Praxis Series tests because it wants to confirm that you have achieved a specified level of mastery in your subject area before it grants you a license to teach in a classroom.

The Praxis Series tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that the test covered in this study guide is required in more than one state for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you want to move to another state, you can transfer your scores from one state to another. However, each state has specific test requirements and passing scores. If you are applying for a license in another state, you will want to verify the appropriate test and passing score requirements. You can find information for all states that use The Praxis Series tests online at www.ets.org/praxis or on the website of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

What Is Licensure?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning teaching practice.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation: some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam assesses the entire body of knowledge for the field you are entering, preparing for the test takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why Does My State Require The Praxis Series Assessments?

Your state chose The Praxis Series assessments because the tests assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain”—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers.
CHAPTER 2

What Do the Tests Measure?

The Praxis Series assessments are tests of content knowledge. They measure your understanding and skills in a particular subject area. Multiple-choice tests measure a broad range of knowledge across your content area. Constructed-response tests measure your ability to provide in-depth explanations of a few essential topics in a given subject area. Content-specific pedagogy tests, most of which are constructed response, measure your understanding of how to teach certain fundamental concepts in a subject area. The tests do not measure your actual teaching ability, however. They measure your knowledge of a subject and of how to teach it. The teachers in your field who help us design and write these tests, and the states that require them, do so in the belief that knowledge of your subject area is the first requirement for licensing. Teaching combines many complex skills, only some of which can be measured by a single test. While the test covered in this study guide measures content knowledge, your teaching ability is a skill that is typically measured in other ways—for example, through observation, videotaped practice, or portfolios.

How Were These Tests Developed?

ETS began the development of The Praxis Series assessments with a survey. For each subject, teachers around the country in various teaching situations were asked to judge which knowledge and skills a beginning teacher in that subject needs to possess. Professors in schools of education who prepare teachers were asked the same questions. These responses were ranked in order of importance and sent out to hundreds of teachers for review. All of the responses to these surveys (called “job analysis surveys”) were analyzed to summarize the judgments of these professionals. From their consensus, we developed guidelines, or specifications, for the multiple-choice and constructed-response tests. Each subject area had a committee of practicing teachers and teacher educators who wrote the specifications, which were reviewed and eventually approved by teachers. From the test specifications, groups of teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and satisfied the ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness.*

When your state adopted The Praxis Series assessments, local panels of practicing teachers and teacher educators in each subject area met to examine the tests and to evaluate each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. This is called a “validity study” because local practicing teachers validate that the test content is relevant to the job. For the test to be adopted in your state, teachers in your state must judge that it is valid. During the validity study, the panel also provides a passing-score recommendation. This process includes a rigorous review to determine how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in that state would be able to answer correctly. Your state’s licensing agency then reviewed the panel’s recommendations and made a final determination of the passing-score requirement.

Throughout the development process, practitioners in the field—teachers and teacher educators—participated in defining what The Praxis Series assessments would cover, which test would be used for licensure in your subject area, and what score would be needed to achieve licensure. This practice is consistent with how professional licensure works in most fields: those who are already licensed oversee the licensing of new practitioners. When you pass The Praxis Series assessments, you and the practitioners in your state will have evidence that you have the knowledge and skills required for beginning teaching practice.