

The Praxis® Study Companion

# Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications

5545



# Welcome to the *Praxis*® Study Companion

## Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a *Praxis*® test.

Using the *Praxis*® Study Companion is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

- An overview of the *Praxis* tests
- Specific information on the *Praxis* test you are taking
- A template study plan
- Study topics
- Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
- Test-taking tips and strategies
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your teaching career begins with preparation. Good luck!

## Know What to Expect

### Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the *Praxis* tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency's testing requirements at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

### How are the *Praxis* tests given?

*Praxis* tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 34).

### **What should I expect when taking the test on computer?**

When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the [What to Expect on Test Day](#) video to see what the experience is like.

### **Where and when are the *Praxis* tests offered?**

You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The *Praxis* tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the *Praxis* web site for more detailed test registration information at [www.ets.org/praxis/register](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register).

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*The Praxis® Study Companion guides you through the steps to success*

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# 1. Learn About Your Test

*Learn about the specific test you will be taking*

## Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications (5545)

Test at a Glance			
<b>Test Name</b>	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications		
<b>Test Code</b>	5545		
<b>Time</b>	2 hours		
<b>Number of Questions</b>	90 selected-response questions and 3 integrated constructed-response questions		
<b>Format</b>	Selected response: 75% of total score Integrated constructed response: 25% of total score		
<b>Test Delivery</b>	Computer delivered		
	<b>Content Categories</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Questions</b>	<b>Approximate Percentage of Examination</b>
	I. Development and Characteristics of Learners	17	14%
	II. Planning and the Learning Environment	20	17%
	III. Instruction	20	17%
	IV. Assessment	17	14%
	V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities	16	13%
	VI. Integrated Constructed-Response Questions	3	25%

### About This Test

The Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications test is designed for examinees who plan to teach students with severe to profound disabilities at any grade level from preschool through grade 12. Its focus is on five major content areas: Development and Characteristics of Learners, Planning and the Learning Environment, Instruction, Assessment, and Foundations and Professional Responsibilities. The 90 selected-response questions assess the knowledge and understanding of principles and practices related to special education and severe to profound applications. The three constructed-response questions are integrated ones that assess an examinee's knowledge of students with severe to profound disabilities as related to instruction and assessment, learning environment and classroom management, and collaboration. The content of this test is based largely on the Special Educator Professional Preparation Standards created by the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC).

Some of the questions on this test may not count toward your score.

**NOTE:** The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) was published in May 2013 with revisions to the criteria for the diagnosis and classifications of mental disorders. In the interest of fairness, and to allow time for educator preparation programs to integrate such changes into their curricula, Praxis test materials will continue to reference the terminology, criteria, and classifications referred to in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) until further notice.

## Test Specifications

Test specifications in this chapter describe the knowledge and skills measured by the test. Study topics to help you prepare to answer test questions can be found on page 28.

- I. Development and Characteristics of Learners (approximately 14%)**
  - A. Human development and behavior
  - B. Theoretical approaches to student learning and motivation
  - C. Basic characteristics and defining factors for each of the major disability categories
  - D. Impact of disabilities on individuals, families, and society across the life span
  - E. Impact of language, cultural, and gender differences on the identification process
  - F. Co-occurring conditions
  - G. How family systems contribute to the development of individuals with disabilities
  - H. Environmental and societal influences on student development and achievement
- II. Planning and the Learning Environment (approximately 17%)**
  - A. Characteristics of good lesson plans
  - B. Basic elements of effective lesson plans
  - C. Learning objectives that are measurable and appropriately challenging
  - D. Means of providing access to the curriculum
  - E. Organizing the learning environment
  - F. Theory and practice of positive behavior supports
  - G. Theory and practice of effective classroom management
  - H. Design and maintenance of a safe and supportive classroom environment that promotes student achievement
- III. Instruction (approximately 17%)**
  - A. Instructional strategies/techniques that are appropriate, considering students' ages and abilities
  - B. Instructional strategies for ensuring individual academic success in one-to-one, small group, and large group settings
  - C. Instructional strategies that facilitate maintenance and generalization of concepts
  - D. Selection and implementation of research-based interventions for individual students
  - E. Selection and implementation of supplementary and/or functional curriculum
  - F. Options for assistive technology
  - G. Instructional strategies/techniques that support transition goals
  - H. Preventive strategies and intervention strategies for at-risk learners
- IV. Assessment (approximately 14%)**
  - A. Evidence-based assessments that are effective and appropriate
  - B. Defines and uses various assessments
  - C. Interprets assessment results
  - D. Understands and uses the results of assessments
- V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities (approximately 13%)**
  - A. Federal definitions
  - B. Federal requirements for the pre-referral, referral, and identification
  - C. Federal safeguards of the rights of stakeholders
  - D. Components of a legally defensible individualized education program
  - E. Major legislation
  - F. Roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher
  - G. Roles and responsibilities of other professionals who deliver special education services
  - H. Strengths and limitations of various collaborative approaches
  - I. Communication with stakeholders
  - J. Potential bias issues that may impact teaching and interactions with students and their families
- VI. Integrated Constructed Response Questions (25%)**
  - A. Instruction and assessment
  - B. Learning environment and classroom management
  - C. Collaboration

## 2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

*Become comfortable with the types of questions you'll find on the Praxis tests*

The *Praxis* assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don't spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

### Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choice.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of choices.
- **Typing in an entry box.** When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- **Clicking check boxes.** You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- **Clicking parts of a graphic.** In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- **Clicking on sentences.** In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- **Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen.** You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the [Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration](#) on the Praxis web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.

## Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase “which of the following.” Take a look at this example:

**Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?**

- (A) Strawberry
- (B) Cherry
- (C) Vanilla
- (D) Mint

### How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

- 1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given (“which of the following”).
- 2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.
- 3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute “vanilla” for the phrase “which of the following” and turn the question into this statement: “Vanilla is a flavor made from beans.” This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you’re still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

### Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you’ll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

**Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?**

- (A) Literal and inferential
- (B) Concrete and abstract
- (C) Linear and recursive
- (D) Main and subordinate

You’ll notice that this example also contains the phrase “which of the following.” This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a “relationship of ideas” from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: “How are outlines usually organized?” Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).

**QUICK TIP:** Don't be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like "recursive" or "inferential." Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

### Watch out for selected-response questions containing "NOT," "LEAST," and "EXCEPT"

This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

### How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages

When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

### How to approach unfamiliar formats

New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, **read the directions carefully**. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

**QUICK TIP:** Don't make the questions more difficult than they are. Don't read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on *Praxis* tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

## Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- "Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models."
- "We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It's time to put limits on advertising."
- "Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work."

### Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

- 1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.
- 2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.
- 3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.
- 4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.
- 5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

**QUICK TIP:** You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

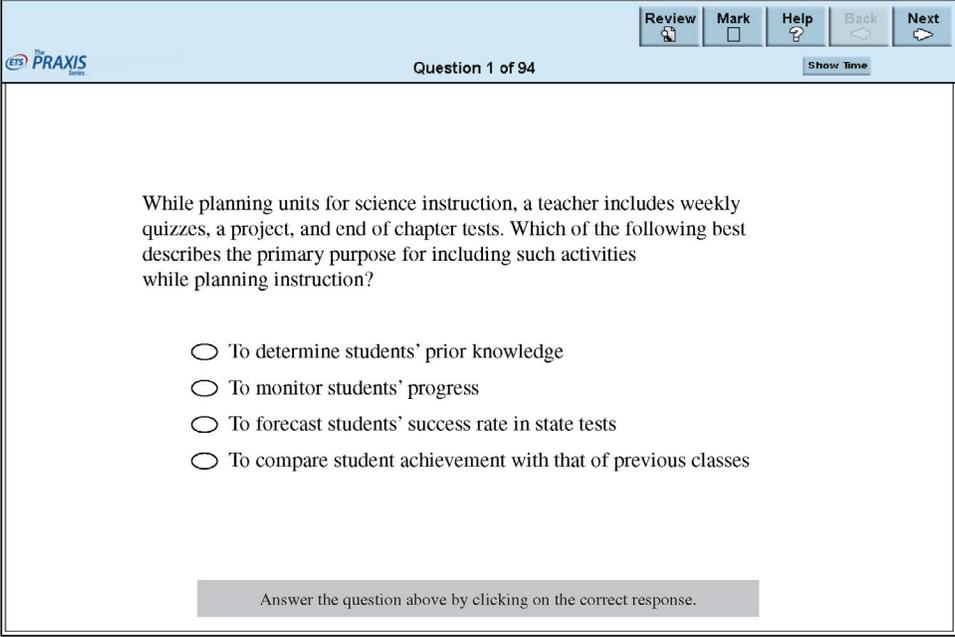
For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 18.

## 3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

*Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers*

### Sample Test Questions

This test is available via computer delivery. To illustrate what a computer-delivered test looks like, the following sample question shows an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this guide, sample questions are provided as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.



The screenshot shows a computer-delivered test interface. At the top right, there are five buttons: "Review" (with a magnifying glass icon), "Mark" (with a square icon), "Help" (with a question mark icon), "Back" (with a left arrow icon), and "Next" (with a right arrow icon). Below these buttons, the text "Question 1 of 94" is centered, and "Show Time" is on the right. The main content area contains the following text: "While planning units for science instruction, a teacher includes weekly quizzes, a project, and end of chapter tests. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose for including such activities while planning instruction?" Below this text are four radio button options: "To determine students' prior knowledge", "To monitor students' progress", "To forecast students' success rate in state tests", and "To compare student achievement with that of previous classes". At the bottom of the question area, a grey box contains the instruction: "Answer the question above by clicking on the correct response."

*The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.*

**Directions:** Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

**Note:** In this test, the following special education terminology will appear:

- Individualized Education Program may be referred to as an IEP
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder may be referred to as ADHD
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act may be referred to as IDEA
- A multidisciplinary team or Child Study Team may be referred to as an IEP team
- A teacher assistant, teacher aide, or paraeducator may be referred to as a paraprofessional
- A biological parent, legal guardian, surrogate, natural, adoptive, or foster parent may be referred to as a parent
- Emotional and behavioral disturbance may be referred to as EBD.
- Autism spectrum disorder may be referred to as ASD and refers to the cluster of impairments or disabilities that children with ASD may have.

1. Which of the following is a required component of any student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
  - (A) Functional behavioral assessment
  - (B) Behavioral intervention plan
  - (C) Daily class schedule
  - (D) Annual goals
  
2. Which of the following would be most useful for orientation and mobility training for students with visual impairments?
  - (A) Verbal descriptions of the learning activity
  - (B) Tactile maps of the school building
  - (C) Slate and stylus for note taking
  - (D) Captioned age-appropriate films
  
3. Which of the following is the best example of differentiating instruction?
  - (A) Exempting half the class from a homework assignment
  - (B) Assigning different students to read certain chapters of a read-aloud book
  - (C) Asking all the boys to make a poster and all the girls to write an essay
  - (D) Allowing students to summarize a chapter with a poem, essay, or cartoon
  
4. Under IDEA, which of the following age-groups are qualified to receive early-intervention services?
  - (A) 0–2 years
  - (B) 3–4 years
  - (C) 5–6 years
  - (D) 7–8 years

5. Which of the following rewards would be most appropriate for fifth-grade students who have demonstrated appropriate classroom behavior?
- (A) Giving them ice cream sandwiches as an afternoon treat
  - (B) Assigning them no homework for an entire week
  - (C) Excusing them from the next chapter test
  - (D) Providing them with extra computer time
6. Bill is a third-grade student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Which of the following would best help him make a transition from classroom lessons to daily specials, such as music or physical education?
- (A) Allowing Bill to be line leader so he can be in front
  - (B) Assigning Bill a seat by the clock so he can keep track of the time
  - (C) Reminding Bill in the morning what the special will be that day
  - (D) Placing a schedule on Bill's desk so he can see when each activity takes place
7. A page-turner device would be most beneficial for a student with which of the following classifications?
- (A) Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - (B) Muscular dystrophy
  - (C) Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
  - (D) Dysgraphia
8. Joshua is a 14-year-old student with severe cognitive and physical disabilities. Joshua's parents want to ensure that he learns self-help skills so that he can be as independent as possible. Which of the following strategies will help Joshua's teacher build good communication with Joshua's parents?
- (A) Involving Joshua's parents in writing the curriculum
  - (B) Allowing Joshua's parents to eat lunch with Joshua every day
  - (C) Asking Joshua's parents to come to the school's open house
  - (D) Sending home a weekly log of Joshua's activities and progress
9. The least restrictive environment (LRE), as defined in IDEA, requires that students with a disability be
- (A) educated with nondisabled peers only for elective courses
  - (B) educated with nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible
  - (C) educated in a special school so that there is no interaction with nondisabled peers
  - (D) educated with the most assistance possible, whether or not it be in the same environment as nondisabled peers

10. Which of the following is an appropriate accommodation to implement during a standardized assessment with a student who has a visual impairment?
- (A) Using a large-print version of the test
  - (B) Using a study carrel
  - (C) Dividing the test into several shorter sections
  - (D) Allowing the student to write directly in the test booklet
11. Kimberly is a first-grade student with spina bifida. Which of the following assistive devices would Kimberly benefit from most?
- (A) Hearing aids
  - (B) A Braille writer
  - (C) A word processor
  - (D) Leg braces
12. Using a student's classwork as a means to evaluate progress and adapt instruction is known as
- (A) curriculum-based assessment
  - (B) standardized achievement testing
  - (C) summative assessment
  - (D) guided practice
13. Martha is a seventh-grade student with cerebral palsy. She reads at a tenth-grade level and composes excellent essays using a personal computer. Which of the following activities would be most beneficial for Martha?
- (A) Allowing her to take classes at the local high school
  - (B) Providing her with enrichment activities which enhance the curriculum
  - (C) Hiring a paraprofessional to work one-on-one with her
  - (D) Allowing her to read books after she has completed her assignments
14. Which of the following would be an important daily-living skill for a high school student with an intellectual disability?
- (A) Knowing the multiplication table
  - (B) Using a microwave oven
  - (C) Identifying the states on a map
  - (D) Stating the main idea of a paragraph
15. Which of the following activities is the best example of a summative assessment?
- (A) An end of chapter test
  - (B) Writing sentences using spelling words
  - (C) Completing a homework assignment
  - (D) Practicing how to write the directions for baking a cake
16. Which of the following would be of most concern to the parents of a third grader with muscular dystrophy?
- (A) Mathematics skills
  - (B) Reading ability
  - (C) Job training
  - (D) Mobility
17. Which of the following is a congenital impairment that refers to a group of inherited diseases characterized by progressive deterioration of the body's muscles?
- (A) Post-traumatic stress disorder
  - (B) Traumatic brain injury
  - (C) Meningitis
  - (D) Muscular dystrophy
18. Which of the following is characteristic of a student who has echolalia?
- (A) The student has no capacity to relate to others and does not speak.
  - (B) The student mimics the speech of others.
  - (C) The student's voice may be either too high or too low.
  - (D) The student displays interruptions in the flow of speaking.

19. Which of the following actions should a teacher take before developing an applied behavior analysis (ABA) plan?
- (A) Defining the target behavior and identifying antecedents and consequences related to the behavior
  - (B) Identifying the hidden curriculum that pertains to the student and discussing how it affects his or her behavior
  - (C) Reading social stories and having the student identify positive and negative behaviors
  - (D) Identifying inappropriate behaviors and providing remediation for social skills
20. Chloe is a 13-year-old girl who exhibits signs of selective mutism. She is personable and talkative at home. At school, Chloe will only speak to her friends at lunch or in passing between classes and will not verbally participate in any class discussions. Which of the following strategies is most likely to support Chloe in class?
- (A) Creating a step-by-step approach with guidance from school professionals, parents, and teachers to build coping skills
  - (B) Waiting for Chloe to speak and to tell the teacher about her fear of speaking
  - (C) Displaying a chart in class and marking it when Chloe speaks
  - (D) Setting up a schedule for Chloe to ask questions in class
21. Which of the following techniques is likely to be most successful in helping learners with intellectual disabilities to retain previously acquired skills?
- (A) Scheduling frequent peer tutoring sessions
  - (B) Acknowledging appropriate behavior regularly
  - (C) Providing periodic review of lessons
  - (D) Allowing longer independent practice periods
22. Justin is a second-grade student who has a classification of intellectual disability. What is an advantage of seating him in a cooperative cluster?
- (A) Justin will be able to participate more in classroom discussions.
  - (B) Justin will be in closer proximity to the teacher.
  - (C) Justin can work with a partner if he has questions.
  - (D) Justin can sit near the window.
23. What are the three components of the social-cognitive theory triangle most often associated with Bandura?
- (A) Parental level of education, family structure, and age
  - (B) Personal happiness, conflicting feelings, and anxiety state
  - (C) Socioeconomic status, level of education, and family size
  - (D) Environment, behavior, and personal perceptions and actions

## Answers to Sample Questions

- The correct answer is (D). According to IDEA, annual goals are required components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). (A) is incorrect because a functional behavioral assessment is not a required component, although it may be included if the student requires one, depending on classification. (B) is incorrect because a behavior intervention plan is a separate document from an IEP. (C) is incorrect because, although a daily class schedule is important, it is not part of the IEP document.
- The correct answer is (B). Tactile maps enable a person who touches the map to learn information about the area being touched, allowing the person to better understand his or her surroundings. (A) is incorrect because a verbal description of a learning activity would not be part of the training. (C) is incorrect because the slate and stylus are used for writing Braille, not for mobility training. (D) is incorrect because captioned films are a teaching accommodation for students who have a hearing impairment, not a visual impairment.
- The correct answer is (D). A component of differentiated instruction is allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of the content in different ways. (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they are not examples of differentiating instruction because they do not allow for choice.
- The correct answer is (A). According to Part C of IDEA, students qualify for early intervention services from birth through two years of age.
- The correct answer is (D). Computer time is often a motivator for students at this age level. (A) is incorrect because many schools do not allow food as a reward. (B) is incorrect because homework is a key part of learning, and although a homework pass for one night might be an appropriate reward, a week without homework is too generous. (C) is incorrect because excusing students from a chapter test is not an appropriate reward.
- The correct answer is (D). A visual transition schedule will help Bill anticipate when activities will happen. (A) is incorrect because Bill has difficulty shifting his attention from one activity to another and being first in line will not help in this area. (B) is incorrect because many third graders cannot tell time and Bill should be focusing on completing his classwork, not watching the clock. (C) is incorrect because a reminder in the morning is insufficient for a student who has difficulty transitioning from one activity to another.
- The correct answer is (B). Muscular dystrophy involves muscle weakness and muscle loss, so a page-turner device is most beneficial. (A) is incorrect because attention deficit disorder is characterized by a lack of focus and impulsive behaviors. (C) is incorrect because the symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) include problems with communication and repetitive patterns of thoughts and behavior. (D) is incorrect because dysgraphia is a writing disorder.
- The correct answer is (D). A log will communicate Joshua's progress and allow his parents to ask questions or comment on his activities. (A) and (B) are incorrect because they will not build communication between the teacher and the parent. (C) is incorrect because, although it is a good start to communication, an open house meeting as a stand-alone activity will not build communication.
- The correct answer is (B). IDEA ensures that students are not unnecessarily removed from the general classroom or isolated from their nondisabled peers. These decisions are made based on a student's ability to function in the school environment. (D) is incorrect because LRE is related to the placement of the student, not how much assistance is needed. (A) and (C) are incorrect because they do not match the definition of least restrictive environment.
- The correct answer is (A). A large-print version of the test will allow the student to take the test independently. (B) is incorrect because a study carrel would be appropriate for a student who has difficulty focusing. (C) is incorrect because it is an accommodation for a student who tires easily. (D) is incorrect because writing in the test booklet will not help the student see the test better.
- The correct answer is (D). Spina bifida is a condition in which the spine does not close completely during development. The most common characteristics of this disorder are physical and mobility difficulties. Because of this, leg braces would be the most appropriate assistive device for Kimberly. (A) is incorrect because hearing aids are for an individual with hearing loss. (B) is incorrect because a Braille writer is an assistive device for an individual with a visual impairment. (C) is incorrect because a word processor is an assistive device for an individual with a learning disability.

12. The correct answer is (A). Curriculum-based assessment is an approach that many teachers use for specific instructional purposes and planning. All student work reflects the curriculum; thus, the assessment is curriculum based. (B) is incorrect because standardized tests compare students' data with those of other students in the same age group. (C) is incorrect because summative assessments are used to determine whether the student is meeting the curriculum requirements. (D) is incorrect because guided practice is a teaching strategy used to provide instruction, not evaluate progress.

13. The correct answer is (B). Students such as Martha who have a disability but who function academically above grade level should be challenged by keeping them in a class with their peers. (A) is incorrect because a seventh grader would be unlikely to succeed in a high school class and the scenario does not indicate that Martha performs at an advanced level in any area other than English. (C) is incorrect because paraprofessionals support students who cannot function independently in a classroom situation. (D) is incorrect because although reading books will keep Martha occupied, used alone it will not enhance her education.

14. The correct answer is (B). Daily living skills enable an individual to complete day-to-day activities for self-care, work, home, and leisure. Being able to heat up food would allow the student a measure of independence. (A), (C), and (D) are incorrect because they are not daily-living skills.

15. The correct answer is (A). Summative assessments are given to test student learning relative to the curriculum, and a chapter test assesses knowledge of the entire chapter. (B) is incorrect because writing sentences using spelling words is an example of an instructional activity, not a summative assessment. (C) is incorrect because homework is used as a follow-up to classroom instruction. (D) is incorrect because practicing a skill is part of instruction, not assessment.

16. The correct answer is (D). Muscular dystrophy is a condition characterized by muscle weakness and degeneration, which would affect the student's mobility. (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they do not address characteristics of the disorder.

17. The correct answer is (D). Muscular dystrophy is a congenital impairment that most likely emerges in the prenatal period. (A) is incorrect because post-traumatic stress disorder most likely emerges postnatally. (B) is incorrect because traumatic brain injury most likely occurs postnatally. (C) is incorrect because meningitis most likely occurs perinatally or postnatally.

18. The correct answer is (B). Mimicking the speech of others is the definition of echolalia. (A) is incorrect because this answer describes a language disorder. (C) is incorrect because this answer describes a student who has a voice disorder. (D) is incorrect because this answer describes a student with a fluency disorder.

19. The correct answer is (A). An ABC (antecedent, behavior, consequence) chart is completed before developing an ABA. (B), (C), and (D) are incorrect because they do not address ABA principles.

20. The correct answer is (A). The student will receive guidance in building coping skills, providing her with confidence to overcome the anxiety that is causing her selective mutism. (B) is incorrect because waiting for a child to speak will make the student more anxious and will not support the student in deciding to speak in class. (C) is incorrect because displaying the student's work in front of the class will make her feel anxious and is unlikely to encourage her to increase her verbalizations. (D) is incorrect because a student in this situation is unlikely to respond to a participation schedule.

21. The correct answer is (C). Once a skill has been mastered, the teacher can best assure its retention by providing additional meaningful learning situations in which the student can recall and use the skill. (A), (B), and (D) are incorrect because they would not support the retention of previously acquired skills.

22. The correct answer is (C). Cooperative clusters allow students to work together to complete a task with the teacher facilitating. (A) is incorrect because just by sitting him in a cooperative cluster will not increase his chances of participating. (B) is incorrect because sitting in a cooperative cluster does not necessarily mean he will be closer to the teacher. (D) is incorrect because sitting near a window is likely to be a distraction for a student with an intellectual disability.

23. The correct answer is (D). Social-cognitive theory focuses on the triad of environment, person, and behavior. (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they do not correctly identify the three components of the social-cognitive theory triangle.

## Sample Constructed-Response Question

*This section presents a sample constructed-response question and sample responses along with the standards used in scoring the responses. When you read these sample responses, keep in mind that they will be less polished than if they would have been developed at home, edited, and carefully presented. The examinee does not know what questions they will be asked and must decide, on the spot, how to respond. The scorers of these questions take these circumstances into account when scoring the responses. Scorers assign scores based on the following scoring guide:*

### Scoring Guide

#### Score of 3

The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the aspects of special education relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Appropriately addresses all parts of the question
- Shows a thorough understanding of any stimulus material presented
- Exhibits a strong knowledge of students, subject matter, pedagogy, and/or facts relevant to the question
- Provides strong explanations that are supported by details

#### Score of 2

The response demonstrates a basic or general understanding of the aspects of special education relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Appropriately addresses all or most parts of the question
- Shows a general understanding of any stimulus material presented
- Exhibits a basic knowledge of students, subject matter, pedagogy, and/or facts relevant to the question
- Provides basic explanations that are somewhat supported by details

#### Score of 1

The response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the aspects of special education relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Appropriately addresses some parts of the question
- Shows a weak understanding of any stimulus material presented
- Exhibits a weak knowledge of students, subject matter, pedagogy, and/or facts relevant to the question
- Provides weak explanations that are not well supported by details

#### Score of 0

The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the aspects of special education relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Fails to address appropriately any parts of the question or simply restates the prompt
- Shows no understanding of any stimulus material presented
- Exhibits no knowledge or has serious misconceptions of students, subject matter, pedagogy, and/or facts relevant to the question

**Directions:** One constructed-response question follows.

CAREFULLY READ AND FOLLOW THE SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE QUESTION.

If the question has more than one part, be sure to answer each part of the question. At a test administration, you will write your answers to three constructed-response questions on the screen.

Susan is a 16-year-old student with severe cognitive and physical disabilities. When Susan entered high school, her parents asked that she be placed in all general education classes with the support of a special education teacher. The high school IEP team concluded that the least restrictive environment for Susan would be a self-contained classroom. Although believing that the inclusion setting was critical to Susan's social development, the parents reluctantly agreed to Susan being placed in a self-contained class for a nine-week trial period. The teacher wants to build communication with the parents to foster a positive educational atmosphere for Susan and help all involved to make good use of the nine-week trial period.

### Task

Describe three methods that the teacher of the self-contained class can use to foster positive communications with the parents. Be sure that your description is detailed enough to make clear your reason for suggesting each method.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

- *The teacher can schedule an appointment with the parents and give them an overview of what the program is about, including class schedules, activities, and materials. The reason for these actions is that if Susan's parents have a clear idea of her educational plan and the strategies in place for supporting her learning, they may be more agreeable to the placement.*
- *The teacher can invite the parents to pay a visit to the classroom where they can observe what is done in class. They can see how Susan is encouraged in her social development and her interactions with her teacher and peers. The reason for this action is that conversations will be more meaningful if the teacher and/or parents can point to specific incidents that occur in the classroom that indicate Susan's social adjustment or lack of adjustment*
- *The teacher can also foster positive communication with the parents by contributing to a daily journal and sending weekly progress reports about Susan. Parents can be invited to respond. There are two reasons supporting this action. With e-mail, instant messaging, and other real-time communication, the teacher and parents can immediately become aware of and address any difficulties that may arise. Also, the parents will likely feel more connected to the classroom if they can both receive and provide frequent feedback.*

### Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

This response earned a score of 3. It answers both aspects of the prompt by providing detailed, clearly explained examples of methods the teacher can use and the reasoning behind selecting the methods. The response indicates a thorough and accurate knowledge of effective methods of communicating with parents. Therefore, it merits a full score of 3.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

- *The teacher should invite Susan's parents to visit the school and classroom so they will become familiar with the program. This is usually effective in involving parents more personally.*
- *The teacher can create a daily "boomerang" book that comes and goes weekly between school and home. This will encourage two-way communication.*
- *The teacher can provide e-mail, phone number, and contact information to the parents. This will provide several avenues for the teacher and parents to be in contact.*

### Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

This response earned a score of 2. It names three appropriate methods for communicating with the student's parents. However, the methods are not fully described, and the connection between the methods and the teacher's reason for selecting them are not made clear. Because the response demonstrates a basic understanding of the knowledge asked for in the prompt, 2 is a fair score.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

- *Send written information home daily.*
- *Use a dialog journal.*
- *Make sure the parents have school telephone number.*

### Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

This response earned a score of 1. It provides three methods for communicating with the student's parents, although the first and second are overlapping. The third example is not a method of communicating with the parents; the teacher has merely provided the parents with standard contact information. None of the examples provides the reasoning behind the action. Because the response demonstrates a limited knowledge of methods for parent communication and addresses only a portion of the prompt, 1 is a fair score.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

- *Inform the parents of the class placement with a registered letter.*
- *When Susan is 18 she can sign her own forms per the law.*
- *Foster positive communication with the parents.*

### Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 0

This response earned a score of 0. It fails to address any parts of the question and simply restates part of the task. Because it demonstrates little or no knowledge of methods for communicating with parents, it cannot earn any score points.

## 4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

*Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient*

Effective *Praxis* test preparation doesn't just happen. You'll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

### 1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It's true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You'll find specific information on the test you're taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit [www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep) for information on other *Praxis* tests.

### 2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The *Praxis* tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you've been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you've studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

### 3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the *Praxis* tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many *Praxis* tests at [www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep). Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

### 4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at [www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers\\_dates](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates).
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.

### 5) Practice explaining the key concepts.

*Praxis* tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you'll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

### 6) Understand how questions will be scored.

Scoring information can be found on page 37.

### 7) Develop a study plan.

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the *Praxis* tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 26 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

## Would a Study Group Work for You?

### Using this guide as part of a study group

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group's study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 26, can help to structure your group's study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group's mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column ("Dates I will study the content"), you can create an overall schedule for your group's study program.
- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 26.
- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it's your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.

- **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone's confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.
- **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.
- **Be as critical as you can.** You're not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.
- **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.
- **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.

## 5. Develop Your Study Plan

### *Develop a personalized study plan and schedule*

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the *Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading* test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the "Learn about Your Test" and "Test Specifications" information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

#### Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

**Praxis Test Name (Test Code):** Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5712)

**Test Date:** 9/15/15

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
<b>Key Ideas and Details</b>						
Close reading	Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/15	7/15/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/15	7/17/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection	3	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/15	7/21/15
<b>Craft, Structure, and Language Skills</b>						
Interpreting tone	Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection	4	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/26/15
Analysis of structure	Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used	3	Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/27/15
Analysis of structure	Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Author's purpose	Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15

(continued on next page)

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Language in different contexts	Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Contextual meaning	Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Figurative Language	Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/15	8/8/15
Vocabulary range	Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/15	8/17/15
<b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b>						
Diverse media and formats	Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection	3	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/15	8/27/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/28/15	8/30/15
Evaluation of arguments	Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/30/15	8/31/15
Comparison of texts	Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/3/15	9/4/15
Comparison of texts	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/5/15	9/6/15

## My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for this content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study this content	Date completed

(continued on next page)



## 6. Review Study Topics

*Detailed study topics with questions for discussion*

### Using the Study Topics That Follow

The Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications test is designed to measure the knowledge and skills necessary for a beginning teacher.

This chapter is intended to help you organize your preparation for the test and to give you a clear indication of the depth and breadth of the knowledge required for success on the test.

Virtually all accredited programs address the topics covered by the test; however, you are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of the topics that follow.

You are likely to find that the topics below are covered by most introductory textbooks. Consult materials and resources, including lecture and laboratory notes, from all your coursework. You should be able to match up specific topics and subtopics with what you have covered in your courses.

Try not to be overwhelmed by the volume and scope of content knowledge in this guide. Although a specific term may not seem familiar as you see it here, you might find you can understand it when applied to a real-life situation. Many of the items on the actual test will provide you with a context to apply to these topics or terms.

### Discussion Areas

Interspersed throughout the study topics are discussion areas, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the classroom or the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion *does not provide answers for the discussion area questions*, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.

## Study Topics

An overview of the areas covered on the test, along with their subareas, follows.

### I. Development and Characteristics of Learners (approximately 14%)

- A. Human development and behavior
- B. Theoretical approaches to student learning and motivation
- C. Basic characteristics and defining factors for each of the major disability categories
- D. Impact of disabilities on individuals, families, and society across the life span
- E. Impact of language, cultural, and gender differences on the identification process
- F. Co-occurring conditions
- G. How family systems contribute to the development of individuals with disabilities
- H. Environmental and societal influences on student development and achievement

#### Discussion areas: Development and Characteristics of Learners

- What does the term developmental disability mean?
- What are the differences between a developmental delay and a developmental disability?
- How is it that individuals with a similar disability can differ in the way they learn?
- Is there only one definition for each of the special disability categories?
- Be able to identify the basic characteristics or explain the factors for each type of disability.
- What is learned helplessness?
- When is special education appropriate for children who speak a language other than English as a first language? When is it not appropriate?
- What conditions and disabilities may coexist within one individual?
- How will this effect the way they receive instruction?

- What are some effective methods of facilitating and maintaining communication with parents?
- Does development end in adulthood? Who makes the determination of when development ends?

### II. Planning and the Learning Environment (approximately 17%)

- A. Characteristics of good lesson plans
- B. Basic elements of effective lesson plans
- C. Learning objectives that are measurable and appropriately challenging
- D. Means of providing access to the curriculum
- E. Organizing the learning environment
- F. Theory and practice of positive behavior supports
- G. Theory and practice of effective classroom management
- H. Design and maintenance of a safe and supportive classroom environment that promotes student achievement

#### Discussion areas: Planning and the Learning Environment

- What are common strategies that teachers can use to help students with various special needs succeed in the general education setting?
- What are the components of a measurable goal?
- What steps could a teacher take to ensure that students in the classroom have a meaningful learning experience?
- What are the characteristics of successful inclusion programs?
- What factors should be considered in structuring the learning environment?
- How will you organize your classroom management and instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners?
- What are some basic assumptions underlying behavioral approaches?
- What kind of behavior management plan would you develop for a specific student?
- How do we support students' emotional growth?

**III. Instruction (approximately 17%)**

- A. Instructional strategies/techniques that are appropriate, considering students' ages and abilities
- B. Instructional strategies for ensuring individual academic success in one-to-one, small group, and large group settings
- C. Instructional strategies that facilitate maintenance and generalization of concepts
- D. Selection and implementation of research-based interventions for individual students
- E. Selection and implementation of supplementary and/or functional curriculum
- F. Options for assistive technology
- G. Instructional strategies/techniques that support transition goals
- H. Preventive strategies and intervention strategies for at-risk learners

**Discussion areas: Instruction**

- How would you arrange a classroom where you and your students can access materials easily, see and hear each other, and engage in active teaching and learning?
- How does a teacher determine how to establish groups for a particular lesson?
- What are the differences between peer/cross-age tutoring and cooperative learning?
- How do you ensure accuracy and adequacy of documentation of the learning process?
- How would you use technology in the classroom to meet the needs of diverse learners?
- Does computer-assisted instruction mean less teacher involvement?
- What strategies are effective for having students move around the classroom without being disruptive?
- How can schools use outside support services to create a supportive learning environment for students with special needs?

**IV. Assessment (approximately 14%)**

- A. Evidence-based assessments that are effective and appropriate
- B. Defines and uses various assessments
- C. Interprets assessment results
- D. Understands and uses the results of assessments

**Discussion areas: Assessment**

- What are the different ways of recording observations?
- Why do teachers construct their own tests?
- What might be included in a portfolio assessment of a student and which skills can be assessed using portfolios?
- When may test practices be considered discriminatory?
- How do teachers use assessment measures as a means for developing appropriate, individualized instruction?
- What types of tests do they use?
- How are they constructed?

## V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities (approximately 13%)

- A. Federal definitions
- B. Federal requirements for the pre-referral, referral, and identification
- C. Federal safeguards of the rights of stakeholders
- D. Components of a legally defensible individualized education program
- E. Major legislation
- F. Roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher
- G. Roles and responsibilities of other professionals who deliver special education services
- H. Strengths and limitations of various collaborative approaches
- I. Communication with stakeholders
- J. Potential bias issues that may impact teaching and interactions with students and their families

### Discussion areas: Foundations and Professional Responsibilities

- What are the provisions for nondiscriminatory testing procedures in IDEA?
- What are some of the major arguments for and against classification?
- With whom can you discuss your students and their needs?
- What agencies can aid in preparing a student for work?
- Who participates on an IEP team?
- Who is accountable for the IEP?
- What types of activities could you use to encourage socialization among your students?
- What resources in your community assist parents of children with special needs?
- What is the relationship between a special education teacher and an instructional assistant or paraprofessional?
- What is the relationship between a special education teacher and a general education teacher?
- What steps can teachers take to make collaboration successful?
- What are effective communication tools a teacher can use with parents?
- How might personal cultural biases affect you as a teacher?
- What can you do to counteract them?

## VI. Integrated Constructed Response Questions (25%)

- A. Instruction and assessment
- B. Learning environment and classroom management
- C. Collaboration

## 7. Review Smart Tips for Success

### *Follow test-taking tips developed by experts*

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the *Praxis* test and make the best use of your time.

#### **Should I guess?**

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don't know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

#### **Can I answer the questions in any order?**

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

#### **Are there trick questions on the test?**

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

#### **Are there answer patterns on the test?**

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

#### **Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?**

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

### **Smart Tips for Taking the Test**

1. **Skip the questions you find extremely difficult.** Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don't know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.
3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as “Which of the following does NOT . . .” is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.
4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.
5. **Don’t worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the *GRE*<sup>®</sup> or other tests. It doesn’t matter on the *Praxis* tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state’s other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use the *Praxis* tests at [http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing\\_scores.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing_scores.pdf) or on the web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.
6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.

## 8. Check on Testing Accommodations

*See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the Praxis test*

### What if English is not my primary language?

*Praxis* tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/register/plne\\_accommodations/](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/plne_accommodations/).

### What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for *Praxis* test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Braille
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities).

**Note:** Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the *Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs* (PDF), which can be found at [http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin\\_supplement\\_test\\_takers\\_with\\_disabilities\\_health\\_needs.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf).

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at [www.ets.org/disabilities](http://www.ets.org/disabilities).

## 9. Do Your Best on Test Day

*Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident*

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it's time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you're sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the *Praxis* test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at [http://www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/policies/calculators](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators))
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can't control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don't let it bother you if the test doesn't start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you've trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you've got.

### What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at [http://www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/policies/calculators](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators))
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the [Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs \(PDF\)](#).

**Note:** All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen *using* such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/bring](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/bring).

### Are You Ready?

Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

- Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?
- Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?
- Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?
- Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?
- Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?
- Have you considered how you will pace your work?
- Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?
- Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?
- Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?
- If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?
- If you are repeating a *Praxis* test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the *Praxis* test, do your best, pass it—and begin your teaching career!

# 10. Understand Your Scores

*Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores*

Of course, passing the *Praxis* test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

## What are the score requirements for my state?

States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states) for the most up-to-date information.

## If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?

The *Praxis* tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires *Praxis* tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## How do I know whether I passed the test?

Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## What your *Praxis* scores mean

You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It's important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

Visit [http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample\\_score\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample_score_report.pdf) to see a sample score report.

To access *Understanding Your Praxis Scores*, a document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand).

## Put your scores in perspective

Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same *Praxis* test or *Praxis* other tests in the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.

## Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the *Praxis* tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your “raw points earned” with the maximum points you could have earned (“raw points available”). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

## Score scale changes

ETS updates *Praxis* tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- *Understanding Your Praxis Scores* (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand)
- *The Praxis Passing Scores* (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand)
- State requirements, found at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states)

# Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the *Praxis* tests.

## What do the *Praxis* tests measure?

The *Praxis* tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need. The tests do not measure an individual's disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

Ranging from Agriculture to World Languages, there are more than 80 *Praxis* tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both.

## Who takes the tests and why?

Some colleges and universities use the *Praxis* Core Academic Skills for Educators tests (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) to evaluate individuals for entry into teacher education programs. The assessments are generally taken early in your college career. Many states also require Core Academic Skills test scores as part of their teacher licensing process.

Individuals entering the teaching profession take the *Praxis* content and pedagogy tests as part of the teacher licensing and certification process required by many states. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require the *Praxis* Subject Assessments tests for professional licensing.

## Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis* tests are currently required for teacher licensure in approximately 40 states and United States territories. These tests are also used by several professional licensing agencies and by several hundred colleges and universities. Teacher candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires *Praxis* testing for licensure. You can find details at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## What is licensure/certification?

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 surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

## Why does my state require the *Praxis* tests?

Your state chose the *Praxis* tests because they 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.

### How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing teachers and teacher educators around the country during every step of the *Praxis* test development process. First, ETS asked them what knowledge and skills a beginning teacher needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of teachers.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by teachers and teacher educators. Following these guidelines, teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and [\*ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness\*](#).\*

When your state adopted the research-based *Praxis* tests, local panels of teachers and teacher educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. During this “validity study,” the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state’s licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the *Praxis* tests your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your teaching career.

### How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

*Praxis* tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

### How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed-response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren’t available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at [www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers\\_dates](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates) for exact score reporting dates.

### Can I access my scores on the web?

All test takers can access their test scores via My *Praxis* Account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into My *Praxis* Account at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis) and click on your score report. If you do not already have a *Praxis* account, you must create one to view your scores.

**Note:** You must create a *Praxis* account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

\*[\*ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness\*](#) (2014, Princeton, N.J.) are consistent with the [\*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing\*](#), industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014, Washington, D.C.).

Your teaching career is worth preparing for, so start today!  
Let the *Praxis*® *Study Companion* guide you.

To search for the *Praxis* test prep resources  
that meet your specific needs, visit:

[www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep)

To purchase official test prep made by the creators  
of the *Praxis* tests, visit the ETS Store:

[www.ets.org/praxis/store](http://www.ets.org/praxis/store)

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