CSET®

California
Subject
Examinations for
Teachers®

TEST GUIDE

General Information About the CSET® Program

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Program Overview

The California Subject Examinations for Teachers® (CSET®) program has been developed by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) for prospective teachers who choose to or are required to meet requirements for certification by taking subject examinations. The CTC contracted Evaluation Systems to assist in the development, administration, and scoring of the CSET. The CSET program includes examinations designed to help candidates meet the basic skills requirement, the subject matter competence requirement for the Multiple Subject or Single Subject Teaching Credential or the Education Specialist Instruction Credential, the educational technology requirement, and the competence requirement for effective teaching of English learners (for a bilingual authorization).

For more information about certification requirements and the examinations of the CSET, see "Tests Used Towards Certification" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com**.

About the tests. The examinations of the CSET are criterion referenced. A criterion-referenced test is designed to measure an examinee's knowledge and skills in relation to an established standard rather than in relation to the performance of other examinees.

Each test in the program is designed to measure a specific set of knowledge and/or skills. For CSET: Multiple Subjects and CSET: Single Subjects, examination content is based on a set of content specifications reflecting the subject areas taught. For CSET: Writing Skills, examination content is based on the basic writing skills determined to be important for the job of an educator. For CSET: Preliminary Educational Technology, examination content is based on a set of subject matter requirements that specify the abilities needed to use computers in an educational setting. For CSET: World Languages Subtests IV and V (used toward the Bilingual Authorization), examination content is based on a set of subject matter requirements that specify the knowledge, skills, and abilities considered important for teaching English learners in their primary language. The sets of knowledge and/or skills for all examinations of the CSET were defined in conjunction with committees of California educators and approved by the CTC.

Test materials matched to these sets of knowledge and/or skills were developed using, in part, textbooks, California Common Core State Standards, California curriculum frameworks, California K–12 Student Academic Content Standards, teacher education curricula, and CTC program standards. The materials were developed through consultation with and approved by committees of California educators, teacher educators, and other content and assessment specialists. The examinations of the CSET are aligned with the most current California K–12 Student Academic Content Standards.

Description of the tests. The CSET program includes the following categories of examinations. See "Tests" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for a complete listing of tests. See the "Prepare" section of the website for links to examination-specific information.

Examination Type	Examination Description
CSET: Multiple Subjects	CSET: Multiple Subjects consists of three separate subtests, each of which is composed of both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions.
CSET: Preliminary Educational Technology	CSET: Preliminary Educational Technology consists of two subtests, each of which is composed of both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions.
CSET: Writing Skills	CSET: Writing Skills is a single test that can only be used in combination with CSET: Multiple Subjects to satisfy the basic skills requirement. It consists of two constructed-response questions.
CSET: Single Subjects	The CSET: Single Subjects, including the CSET: World Languages (used toward the Single Subject Teaching Credential), each consist of up to four separate subtests. Most subtests contain both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. In some cases, different numbers or combinations of subtests within an examination may be required for different teaching credentials or authorizations.
CSET: World Languages (used toward the Bilingual Authorization)	The CSET: World Languages (used toward the Bilingual Authorization) include a subtest that assesses the methodology of bilingual education, subtests that assess bilingual cultural knowledge, and subtests that assess language and communication skills. (The subtests assessing language and communication skills for the Bilingual Authorization are the same subtests that assess language and communication skills that can be used toward the Single Subject Teaching Credential.) Some subtests contain both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions, while other subtests contain only multiple-choice questions or only constructed-response questions.

All subtests may include some questions that will not count toward an examinee's score. These questions are placed on the test in order to collect information about how they will perform under actual testing conditions.

Preparing to Take the CSET: Before the Test

The following suggestions are offered to examinees as one possible way to prepare for the CSET.

Study the content of the examination. The first step in preparing for an examination of the CSET is to identify the information that the examination will cover. For CSET: Multiple Subjects, CSET: Preliminary Educational Technology, CSET: Single Subjects, and CSET: World Languages (used toward the Bilingual Authorization), the California Educator Credentialing Examinations website, **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com**, provides the full list of subject matter requirements that are the basis of each examination. The subject matter requirements for each examination can be downloaded from the "Prepare" section for that examination. For CSET: Writing Skills, review the performance characteristics found in the "Scoring Information" section of the test guide. (See "Tests" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for links to examination-specific information.)

First, read through the entire set of subject matter requirements in your selected subject area(s) or the CSET: Writing Skills performance characteristics to obtain an overall picture of the material that will be covered on the examination.

Focus your studies. After obtaining a broad overview of the covered content, read each element of the subject matter requirements carefully to get a more specific idea of the knowledge that will be required for the examination. When you have become familiar with the subject matter requirements, make a list of the areas about which you feel you know the least. Use this information to set priorities for your study and preparation time.

In planning your study time, focus on those subject matter requirements with which you are less familiar. You should schedule sufficient time to review the content of all subject matter requirements, both the familiar and the less familiar ones, but the focus of your preparation time and the priority in your studying should be placed on those requirements about which you are least confident.

If an examination includes multiple subtests, you may decide, based on this focusing exercise, that you will register for and attempt during the test session only some subtests, leaving one or more subtests for another time. This will permit you to expend preparation time where you judge it will do the most good and to address at a later time the area(s) of the subject matter requirements in which you need more concentrated study or additional coursework.

Identify resources. After you have identified the areas of the subject matter requirements on which you will focus your time, consider the resources you may use in studying the content of those areas. The most appropriate resources may well be your college textbooks. You may also wish to consult your class notes and other papers, textbooks currently used in California public elementary and secondary schools, and publications from local, state, and national professional organizations.

With the exception of CSET: Writing Skills, the online preparation materials for each examination contains an annotated list of resources recommended for that examination by California educators. (See "Tests" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for links to examination-specific information.) You are encouraged to use these lists in preparing for the examination(s) that you plan to take.

Develop your study techniques. Develop a sound study plan and schedule if you have not already done so. There are many books available on study skills, and you may wish to consult one. Some people find it helpful to study with others who will be taking the examination. If you are comfortable with this approach, consider forming or joining a study group.

Review the sample questions. For each examination currently offered, sample multiple-choice and constructed-response questions are provided. Read each sample question and try to answer it. Write your answers on a plain sheet of paper for later review.

Next, check your answers to the multiple-choice questions against the answer key and your response(s) to the constructed-response question(s) against the sample responses provided. To assess the quality of your response(s) to the constructed-response question(s), you may need to ask a mentor, advisor, or teacher to help by evaluating your response(s) against the scoring guidelines provided.

Overview of CSET Questions

CSET subtests may include multiple-choice and/or constructed-response questions. (See "Tests" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for links to examination-specific information.) With the exception of CSET: Writing Skills questions, which measure basic writing skills, questions are designed to assess subject matter knowledge as described in the subject matter requirements. Questions on all examinations of the CSET are intended to be straightforward, not tricky attempts to elicit a wrong answer.

Multiple-choice questions. The typical multiple-choice question will present a question or an incomplete statement that may be answered or completed correctly by only one of four possible responses, labeled A, B, C, and D. The examinee's task typically will be to identify the *one best answer* to the question. Multiple-choice questions may be preceded by additional material to which they pertain, such as a passage of text, a drawing, a chart, a table, or a similar stimulus.

To answer each question, examinees will often have to use more than recall of factual information; they may be asked to think critically about the question or the material presented, analyze it, apply it, consider it carefully, compare it with other knowledge they have, or make a judgment about it.

Constructed-response questions. For the constructed-response questions, examinees will generally be presented with an introductory paragraph, situation, quotation, excerpt, drawing, map, or other resource, followed by a specific assignment relating to that introductory material. For example, examinees may be asked to discuss, describe, analyze, explain, interpret, correct, transform, or evaluate the introductory material or to compare it with another resource presented at the same time.

More specific information about the type of questions that are likely to appear on each examination of the CSET is presented in the online preparation materials for that examination. (See "Tests" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for links to examination-specific information.)

Scoring. Responses to the multiple-choice questions are scored electronically. Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.

Responses to constructed-response questions are scored by qualified California educators using focused holistic scoring. Using this method, scorers judge the overall effectiveness of each response while focusing on a set of performance characteristics that have been identified as important. Each response is assigned a score based on an approved scoring scale. Score scales for each examination can be found in the test guide for that examination. (See "Prepare" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com** for links to examination-specific information.)

An examinee's performance on a test is evaluated against a standard determined by the CTC based on professional judgments and recommendations of California educators. Passing scores are established after the first test administration of each examination of the CSET.

Preparing to Take the CSET: The Day of the Test

The following are strategies that you may consider using to prepare to take the CSET. For more information about CSET test administrations, refer to "Day of the Test" at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com**.

Physical preparations. Leave plenty of time to get to the test session without anxiety. Arrive on time so that you are as relaxed as possible and ready to begin the examination when instructed to do so.

Dress comfortably, wearing layers of clothing that can be removed or added as the temperature in the testing room changes. It is best to wear soft-soled shoes so that you will not disturb other examinees when you leave your seat.

Be sure to bring your government-issued identification and other materials, as described on the "Day of the Test" page at **www.ctcexams.nesinc.com.**

Note that eating and drinking will not be permitted in the testing room, and any break time you take will be deducted from your testing time.

Follow directions. At the beginning of the session and throughout the test, follow all directions carefully, including the oral directions provided by test administrators, any directions presented on audiotape or videotape, and any written directions. The test will contain general directions for the examination as a whole and specific directions for individual questions and groups of questions. If you do not understand something about the directions, raise your hand and ask a test administrator.

One subtest at a time. The test session is designed to give sufficient time for completion of the subtest(s) for which you registered. You will be free to allocate your time within the test session to address the different types of test questions (multiple-choice and written constructed-response questions) within each subtest, except for tests with recorded components. The CSET: Physical Education Subtests I and III (each of which contains a videotaped component), CSET: Music Subtest I (which contains a listening component), CSET: American Sign Language Subtests I, II, and III (each of which contains timed videotaped components) and CSET World Languages (subtests with a listening and speaking component) are administered with the recorded component(s) at the beginning of the test session.

Pace yourself. Since the allocation of available time to each subtest is your own responsibility, pacing yourself is very important. Before the test session, you should have a plan regarding how much time you will devote to each of the subtests for which you are registered; in general, try to stick to your plan and finish each subtest within the planned time. At the end of the test session, no further responses may be submitted and you will be required to return all test materials.

It is usually a good idea to avoid spending a great deal of time on a question that you cannot answer right away; it is generally better to skip it and move on. Flag that question so that you can return to it later.

You may find that you need less time than is allotted in the test session to complete the subtests for which you have registered, but you should be prepared to stay for the entire test session. It is wise not to make any other commitments for this time period that may cause you to rush or to leave without answering all questions.

Read carefully. Read the directions and the questions carefully. Read all response options for multiple-choice questions. Remember that the multiple-choice questions typically call for the *best answer*. Do not choose the first response option that seems reasonable; read and evaluate all choices to find the best answer. This does not mean that you should read meanings into the questions. They are intended to be straightforward, not tricky. It is often the case that your first choice, based on your knowledge and a thorough reading of the question and all options, is in fact the best answer.

Read the questions closely so that you understand what they ask. Do not skim the questions in an effort to save time; you may misread key words and select the wrong answer. For example, if a question calls for an approximate answer and you skip over that detail, you could waste time performing a long computation.

Similarly, read all parts of the assignment accompanying constructed-response questions. These questions often involve more than one task (e.g., *summarizing* and *evaluating* an argument); be sure that you address **all tasks** before considering your response complete.

Guess wisely. As you read through the response options for the multiple-choice questions, try to find the best answer. If you cannot quickly determine the best answer, try to eliminate as many of the options as possible. Then guess among the remaining answer choices. Your score on the multiple-choice section of each subtest will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly. A blank answer and an incorrect answer are scored exactly the same; therefore, it is better to guess than not to respond at all.

Check accuracy. Take some time to check the accuracy of your answers to the multiple-choice questions and the quality and completeness of your responses to the constructed-response questions. Return to questions that gave you difficulty and verify your work on them.