



THE **PRAXIS**
S E R I E S™

Reducing Test Anxiety

- Recognizing Test Anxiety
- How to Cope
- What You Need to Succeed



This special guide provides practical help for people who suffer from test anxiety. Designed specifically for Praxis test takers but useful to anyone who has to take tests, this guide reviews the major causes of test anxiety and offers practical advice for how to counter each one. Recognizing the symptoms of test anxiety is the first critical step, and this book helps you evaluate your own warning signs. From how to organize your study schedule to how to tune out distractions at the test center, these strategies will help you in your efforts to get the score you deserve!

REDUCING TEST *Anxiety*

A Guide for Praxis Test Takers

Introduction

So you want to become a teacher, a school principal, or a paraprofessional. You have discovered that in order to get a license or be hired in your state, you'll have to take a Praxis test (or maybe several tests). You start asking people about the test. One person tells you it's as easy as can be—and anyone who doesn't pass it must be asleep. But another person says it's nearly impossible, and that it covers all sorts of things you've never learned and never will be able to learn by the date of the test. And then, to make matters worse, you buy a test preparation guide at your local bookstore that says you need to spend your time learning how to "beat the test" and "trick the test" if you hope to pass. You're left with the sinking feeling that the test is a mysterious puzzle that only expert test takers can pass successfully.

Under circumstances like these, it's perfectly normal to feel anxious. But there are a few things you should know up front:

Don't believe the rumors you hear about the test

A lot of people will tell you what they think about the test you're planning to take. And some of them might have useful information for you, such as suggestions for what resources to use when you are studying. But others will want to tell you that the test is impossible (to save face if they did not do well themselves) or that the test is ridiculously easy (to appear knowledgeable).

Whether or not you've heard that the test is easy or hard, one thing is certain: The test is too important for you simply to rely on rumors about it. You must learn for yourself what the test covers; then you can decide how well you know the topics covered on the test and thus how much studying and review you will need to do before taking the test. This booklet is designed to dispel some of the myths about Praxis tests and to help you find the correct information you need about your test.

Don't waste time on "beat the test" strategies

There are a number of test-prep books and classes out there that advertise "short-cuts" for studying, such as methods for finding the answers to multiple-choice questions or "secrets" for fooling essay-test scorers into giving you a high score. But the truth is, you can't trick your way to a high score. The best use of your study time is to make sure you know what is covered on the test and to review topics you don't know very well. Spending valuable time during the test trying to uncover the answer through other means will just waste time—and it won't get you to the correct answer. Believe it or not, the question writers always aim to be as clear and as direct as possible, and they don't use tricks to hide the answers from you. So, choose wisely when you look for a study guide for the test. ETS does publish study guides for many of its tests, but whether or not you purchase a study guide from ETS, make sure you choose a guide that gives you reliable information about what the test covers and what the questions look like.

The Three Things You Need To Succeed:

The best way to maximize your performance on your Praxis test is to make sure you do three things: prepare, stay organized, and practice.

Preparation

Your preparation for the test should include learning what the test covers and studying areas you don't know very well. It should also include using strategies for reducing test anxiety as part of your studying.

Organization

Staying organized includes creating a clear, targeted study plan for the weeks leading up to the test and sticking to that study plan.

Practice

Practice includes, well, practicing for the test: The more you are accustomed to sitting for a period of time, answering test questions, and pacing yourself, the more comfortable you will feel when you actually sit down to take the test.

Most of what you'll read in this booklet will sound, on some level, like common sense. But if you are like most people, you know what you should do to combat test anxiety—you just can't seem to actually do those things. So, while you might think, "I've heard it all before," you should still read this booklet carefully. And then you should read it again. (But not all in one sitting—try to return to this book several times over the course of your studying.)

Why? In the first place, you will probably learn things you didn't know about Praxis tests and about test anxiety. And in the second place, keeping the issue of test anxiety in the forefront of your mind is part of tackling that anxiety. Test anxiety isn't something you can take care of the night before the test with a good night's sleep and a nice dinner, or with a nutritious breakfast on the morning of the test day (though that can certainly help). It's something you need to incorporate into the earliest part of your study plan, so that the techniques for dealing with test anxiety have become second nature to you by the time you actually take the test.

How Do You Know Whether You Have Test Anxiety?

Test anxiety can strike you in two places: in your head, and in your body. Here are some signs that may indicate you have it:

Signs of test anxiety in your head

- mental blank-out
- racing thoughts
- difficulty concentrating
- negative thoughts about:
 - past performance
 - consequences of failure
 - how everyone else is doing
- knowing the answers after the test, but not while taking it

Signs of test anxiety in your body

Test anxiety can manifest itself physically, just like other forms of stress and anxiety. Some of the symptoms you may experience are:

- nausea
- cramps
- faintness
- sweating
- headache
- dry mouth
- increased breathing rate
- fast heartbeat
- tense muscles

A tiny amount of anxiety isn't bad—it's actually helpful to be "up" when preparing for and taking a test—but if you are showing some of these symptoms, your level of stress may be too high. It may be at a level that can hurt your preparation and your performance.

How Can You Cope With Test Anxiety?

Causes and cures

You can tame test anxiety by dealing with the causes. There are things you can do before the test, during the test, and after the test.

Let's start with the two main causes for test anxiety. These are things you may have a good reason to be concerned about:

1 CAUSE: You are unfamiliar with the test.

CURE: Learn about the test.

It sounds obvious enough, but a lot of people who have test anxiety deal with it by avoidance. They hope that if they avoid confronting the thing that is worrying them, it will go away. Of course, it doesn't go away, so the first thing you can do to deal with your anxiety is to make sure you know the basic facts about the test.

The Praxis Series™ publishes *Test at a Glance* materials for its tests. The information is available online, free of charge at www.ets.org/praxis or www.ets.org/parapro for the ParaPro Assessment.

The *Test at a Glance* materials contain all of the basic information you need to know about your test, including:

- How many questions are on the test
- What format the questions are in (for example, multiple-choice or constructed-response)
- How much time you have to take the test
- How your answers are scored (for constructed-response tests), including whether you should or should not write in essay format
- What topics are covered on the test
- What some of the questions look like

The first time you read the *Test at a Glance* materials, don't worry about answering the sample questions. Simply browse through them to get a feel for what they look like. Note the length of the questions and the variety of topics they cover. The *Test at a Glance* materials usually contain only a few sample questions. If you are unfamiliar with some of the topics covered in the sample questions, keep in mind that the test will cover a much broader range of topics, including those that are probably more familiar to you. You should also look at any directions from the tests that are reprinted in the *Test at a Glance* materials. Read them carefully to make sure you understand what is being asked.

My notes

2

CAUSE: You feel you haven't mastered the subject being tested.



CURE: Make an organized study schedule and stick to it.

If you look at the topics covered on your test and start to worry that you haven't mastered those topics, first take a deep breath and remember that worrying is not going to do any good. Keep in mind that you are not expected to answer every question correctly to pass the test. Every test taker has a unique educational background and a more thorough knowledge of some topics than others.

If you feel you need to review a few of the topics covered on the test, you will need to create an organized study schedule and stick to it. Stay organized by creating a study plan that outlines what you're going to work on, where you're going to find helpful resources, and when you're going to undertake each step. As you review the topics and improve your mastery of them, you should use the various resources that are available to you: textbooks and notes from your courses, and perhaps knowledgeable people you can talk to, such as professors. Make sure your study schedule sets out manageable tasks for you to accomplish within a reasonable period of time.

Remember that studying means more than just highlighting words in a textbook. For the test, you should have a good understanding of the important terms and concepts. You should be able to define them in your own words and be able to explain why they are important. Look for ideas that are similar and ask yourself whether you can explain the differences.

When you have accomplished each study task you have planned, cross it off your schedule so you experience a sense of accomplishment.

If you feel you are unfamiliar with most or all of the topics covered on the test, you should consider whether you are ready to take the test. If possible, delay your testing date until you have had more time for review. Rushing into taking the test will not help you succeed. You may also need to consider whether you have received enough training in your field for you to succeed on the test. Have you taken the necessary courses? Did you retain most of the knowledge you gained in those courses? If you're not sure whether you are ready to take the test, try to gain advice from an advisor or a professor at your college or university.

Try very hard to stick to your study schedule. If you find you are procrastinating, that can be a sign of negative thoughts, one of the important causes of test anxiety.

My notes

3

CAUSE: You have negative thoughts.

CURE: Counter them with positive thoughts and actions.

Negative thoughts can throw you off your study schedule, and they can also distract you or make you freeze up during the test. Do you ever find yourself troubled with thoughts like these?

- I always do poorly on tests.
- I'm going to flunk this test.
- If I don't pass this test, I'm a failure.
- Everyone else is so much smarter than I am.
- I won't be able to keep my job.

One way to recognize that thoughts are negative is when they're extreme ("I'm so dumb") or in all-or-nothing terms ("If I don't pass, I'm finished").

The time to deal with negative thoughts is now, before the test. Take out a piece of paper and write your negative thoughts in a column. Then, for each one, write a positive thought that argues against it. Here are some examples:

NEGATIVE THOUGHT	POSITIVE THOUGHT
I always do poorly on tests. ... ➤	I've got a better study plan for this test than I ever had before.
If I don't pass this test, I'm a failure. ... ➤	I'm going to pass, but if I don't, I can bounce back.
The test is going to have trick questions. ... ➤	The test is designed to let me show what I know, and I know all the formats of the questions.

Save this list (and add to it when necessary). Whenever you find those negative thoughts coming back, remind yourself of all the positive things you have going for you.

One particular kind of negative thinking that affects more people than you might realize is perfectionism. Do you find yourself procrastinating when you should be studying for the test? It may be because you've set an unrealistic goal for yourself. It may be that you are waiting until the last minute to study so that you can give yourself an excuse for not doing well. (Have you ever done this with homework assignments?) Here are some examples of perfectionist thoughts and the realistic thoughts that argue against them:

PERFECTIONIST THOUGHT	REALISTIC THOUGHT
There's an impossible amount of things to learn for this test! ... ➤	I don't need to know the answer to every question; I just need to pass.
My knowledge of one of the topics is really shaky. ... ➤	I don't need to know everything about every topic. Also, if I start now, I can learn more about the topics in which I know I'm weak.

My notes

4

CAUSE: You believe certain myths about tests.

CURE: Learn the truth about tests.

Studying with friends can be very helpful, but sometimes friends can also be the source of a lot of false information about the tests. Don't pay attention to wild rumors about the test. There are many myths that circulate about tests, but they are just that—*myths*. Here are a few myths you may have heard, and the realities (from the experts at ETS):

MYTH vs. REALITY

MYTH: The first question is always a "trick" question to throw you off.

REALITY: No question is ever written to throw you off. The test makers analyze how people have responded to each question, and if there is ample evidence that a question is confusing, the question is not scored and is removed from future tests.

MYTH: The same answer choice never appears more than three times in a row.

REALITY: There are no rules about answer choices. Simply answer the questions to the best of your ability and don't worry about answer choice patterns.

MYTH: The questions are written to test how well you take standardized tests, not to test what you actually know.

REALITY: Every question is written to test a specific skill or piece of knowledge.

MYTH: Tests are designed so you have to answer each question really quickly, and you're not likely to have time to answer them all.

REALITY: Tests are designed so that most test takers will have enough time to answer every question.

MYTH: Hard questions are worth more points than easy questions.

REALITY: In any one section of a multiple-choice Praxis test, all of the questions count for an equal number of points. Therefore, if you find a question very difficult, you should skip it (save it for later), because the easy questions are worth just as much.

MYTH: Tests are full of biased questions.

REALITY: Test makers do everything they can to ensure that biased questions are kept off tests. Every question is reviewed carefully to ensure that it does not contain biased subject matter, overly specialized language, or something that might be upsetting or distracting. After tests are given, researchers analyze the way different groups of people answered different questions. If they find, for example, that female test takers tend to answer a certain question differently from male test takers, the question is not scored and is removed from future tests.

You have probably heard many other myths about standardized tests, but the important thing to do is find out the reality and ignore the myths. That's because the only person you hurt when you pay attention to myths is *you*. You need to answer each question on the test based on your knowledge of the topic being tested. If you pause to worry about each of the myths instead ("What if this is a trick question?" "What if I want to answer C, but I've already answered C three times?"), you're not going to answer to the best of your ability.

Similarly, many test-prep books on the market imply that there are lots of secrets behind test-question writing and that if you know the secrets, you can answer the questions correctly whether or not you know the topics the questions are asking about. But this too is a *myth*. The question writers create questions to test your knowledge of and skill in important topics—*period*.

Don't waste valuable studying time on learning "tricks" that won't really help you on the test. You should simply make sure you know the kinds of questions covered on the test and practice answering those questions.

My notes

5

CAUSE: Your body shows signs of anxiety.

CURE: Take care of your body, and your mind will benefit.

If you start to see physical signs of test anxiety, you may need to take better care of your body.

- Eat well and exercise. Be especially careful that you don't disrupt your regular eating and exercise schedule to study for the test. Continuing your activities as usual will help you maintain your emotional and physical well-being.
- Studies have shown that lack of sleep can contribute to memory loss and lack of concentration, so get plenty of sleep throughout your studying schedule, and especially the night before the test. Lack of sleep could catch up with you at just the wrong time—when you are taking the test—so always be sure to get enough sleep.
- Continue to socialize with friends and family, and take study breaks regularly. Your emotional health is as important as your physical health for minimizing anxiety, so make sure you take time for some social interaction.
- Surround yourself with positive people who support your studying. Try to avoid friends and acquaintances with negative attitudes, especially negative attitudes about the test itself.

My notes

6

CAUSE: Tension reinforces itself and builds up.

CURE: Practice tension-release exercises.

My notes

When you are feeling anxiety, the tense feelings in your body can build up. You need to learn how to break the cycle of anxiety by teaching your body how to release tension. Like most of the other tips in this booklet, this is not something to work on the night before the test. Practice the following techniques for several weeks or months:

- When you start feeling anxious, take a couple of long, deep breaths and exhale slowly. While you do this, it may help you to close your eyes and imagine a peaceful setting, such as a quiet, tree-lined pond.
- When you feel your body tensing up, focus on a particular group of muscles (e.g., the shoulders or scalp), and first contract them for about 10 seconds and then let them relax. Concentrate on the difference in the feelings and repeat the exercise, trying to get the muscles to relax more each time.

When you've become proficient in these techniques through practice, you'll be able to use them during the test whenever you feel anxiety creeping up on you. They take only a few seconds to do and can make the test session a lot less stressful.

7

CAUSE: You allow the test environment to get on your nerves.



CURE: Tune out distractions.

The testing supervisor will try to make the environment conducive for taking a test. However, the reality is that not all aspects of the environment can be controlled. Another test taker may have a cough or the sniffles, or the room may be crowded, or the temperature may be warmer or cooler than you like. Dress in comfortable clothing and in layers so you are ready for either warm or cool rooms.

You can't control everything that will happen there, but you can help minimize the distractions you might encounter.

- Try to avoid arriving too early or too late. Make sure you know how to get to the test center and how much time it will take you to get there. (Be sure to consider the likely amount of traffic on the day of the test.)
- After you arrive in the testing room, choose a seat away from doors, aisles, and other high-traffic areas.
- Sit by yourself and don't chat with others. Even if you know other people taking the test, nervousness and anxiety can be contagious. By now you should know everything you need to know about the test, so if you learn anything new from your friends at the test site, it's likely to be a myth—and the *worst* time for you to hear a myth is right before the test begins.

You should also arrive with a ready-to-use strategy for dealing with any distractions that may come up. One strategy is mentally repeating a word or phrase (such as "Remain calm") as a tool for focusing your mind. You may have some other strategy that works for you. Whatever strategy you choose, try to use it while you're studying for the test. Not only will it help you feel better, but it will also be second nature by the time you arrive to take the test.

My notes

8

CAUSE: Your mind goes blank or it wanders.



CURE: Stay focused.

My notes

Many people get so nervous when they first open their test book that their minds “go blank” or start to race with unrelated thoughts. To avoid this, arrive at the test with a plan for how you will start the test. When the test supervisor tells you that you can begin, don’t race to answer the first question. Instead, take a minute or so to browse through the test, page by page. Don’t try to read the questions; just look at them one by one. This will help emphasize that there are no surprises awaiting you—just the test you have been preparing for.

After you have browsed through the test, then begin to answer the questions. It often makes sense to start with the first question, but you can start with any question you wish. Remember that you are not expected to answer every question correctly, so go into the test mentally prepared to encounter questions for which you do not know the answer. Also remember that you can skip difficult questions and return to them later if there is time.

If you “go blank” when facing a constructed-response question (one that asks for an essay or a few sentences or diagrams), remember that *action fights anxiety*. Start jotting down *anything* on a piece of scrap paper. Once you start writing, you are more likely to find ideas taking shape in your head. Then you can start to organize your actual response.

For multiple-choice tests, your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly; therefore, skipped and wrong answers will not count against you. Work as rapidly as you can without sacrificing accuracy. Do not spend too much time puzzling over a question that seems too difficult for you. Answer the easier questions first, then return to the harder ones. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Final Words...

Practice, practice, practice

Remember the three things you need to succeed—preparation, organization, and practice? Well, if you have test anxiety, practice is especially important. The more you become accustomed to taking the test, the better control you will have over your anxiety when you take the actual test. Even practicing just sitting and focusing for a long period of time is important.

If there is a Praxis Study Guide and/or practice test available for your test and you choose to purchase it, answer the practice questions in the Study Guide several times. You may want to use the practice questions to identify areas in which you need more studying, but you should also answer the practice questions several times when you don't worry about "content" issues. Instead, your goal should be simply to answer the questions to get used to taking the test. Time yourself, and get accustomed to the amount of concentration you need to stay focused on the test for the duration of the testing period. Discover the level of pacing that works best for you, and take the test until that pacing starts to feel natural.

Make sure that all of your studying and practicing is finished several days before the test. Try to set aside the day before the test for rest and anxiety-free activities, such as exercise or socializing. Don't use that last day for more studying or taking a practice test.

Find a coach

If your level of test anxiety is high—that is, your mental or physical symptoms prevent you from preparing for the test—you should consider finding a coach to help you work through your anxiety. Your coach could be a supportive friend or family member, or it could be someone you find through your school or tutoring center. With your coach, make a list of your fears about the particular test you will take and about your fears of test taking in general. Next to each fear, write down the specific steps you will take to help conquer each fear. For example, if your fear is that you will "freeze up" during the test, some specific steps you might take could include (1) taking the practice test, timed, once a week, and (2) using your relaxation techniques to help you fight tension during the test. You should even consider making a separate "study schedule" for working through your anxieties, so that you work on each fear methodically and regularly.

And remember...

Test anxiety feeds on the unknown; the more you know about the test, and the more you know about your own anxieties and how to conquer them, the less test anxiety can control you.

Good luck!

The Praxis® Study Companion

ParaPro Assessment

1755



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 Series® 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.

How are the *Praxis* tests given?

Praxis tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 28).

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.

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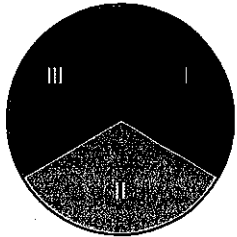
The Praxis® Study Companion guides you through the 10 steps to success

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1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

ParaPro Assessment (1755)

Test at a Glance			
Test Name	ParaPro Assessment		
Test Codes	1755		
Time	2.5 hours		
Number of Questions	90		
Format	Selected-response questions; use of a calculator is not permitted		
Test Delivery	Computer delivered		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Reading	30	33⅓%
	II. Mathematics	30	33⅓%
	III. Writing	30	33⅓%

About This Test

The ParaPro Assessment for prospective and practicing paraprofessionals measures skills and knowledge in reading, mathematics, and writing.

The test consists of 90 selected-response questions across the three subject areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. Approximately two-thirds of the questions in each subject area focus on basic skills and knowledge, and approximately one-third of the questions in each subject area focus on the application of those skills and knowledge in a classroom context.

This test may contain some questions that do not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Reading

A. Reading Skills and Knowledge

Reading Skills and Knowledge questions measure the examinee's ability to understand, interpret, and analyze a wide range of text. Questions are based on reading passages—as well as graphs, charts, and tables—drawn from a variety of subject areas and real-life situations. The questions assess the examinee's ability to:

1. Identify the main idea or primary purpose
2. Identify supporting ideas
3. Identify how a reading selection is organized
4. Determine the meanings of words or phrases in context
5. Draw inferences or implications from directly stated content
6. Determine whether information is presented as fact or opinion
7. Interpret information from tables, diagrams, charts, and graphs

B. Application of Reading Skills and Knowledge to Classroom Instruction

Reading Application questions are typically based on classroom scenarios in which students are involved in reading-related tasks, such as reading assigned passages or working on vocabulary development. Some questions concern *foundations of reading*: the knowledge and skills students need when they are learning the basic features of words and written text. These questions assess the examinee's ability to help students:

1. Sound out words (e.g., recognize long and short vowels, consonant sounds, rhymes)
2. Break down words into parts (e.g., recognize syllables, root words, prefixes, suffixes)
3. Decode words or phrases using context clues
4. Distinguish between synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
5. Alphabetize words

Other questions are concerned with *tools of the reading process*: common strategies used in classrooms before, during, and after reading to aid students' reading skills. These questions assess the examinee's ability to:

1. Help students use prereading strategies, such as skimming or making predictions
2. Ask questions about a reading selection to help students understand the selection
3. Make accurate observations about students' ability to understand and interpret text
4. Help students use a dictionary
5. Interpret written directions

II. Mathematics

A. Mathematics Skills and Knowledge

The Math Skills and Knowledge questions assess the examinee's knowledge of mathematical concepts and ability to apply them to abstract and real-life situations. The test questions do not require knowledge of advanced-level mathematics vocabulary. **Examinees may not use calculators.**

Three categories of math skills are tested:

1. Number Sense and Basic Algebra
 - a. perform basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals
 - b. recognize multiplication as repeated addition and division as repeated subtraction
 - c. recognize and interpret mathematical symbols such as $+$, $<$, $>$, \leq , \geq
 - d. understand the definitions of basic terms such as sum, difference, product, quotient, numerator, and denominator
 - e. recognize the position of numbers in relation to each other (e.g., $\frac{1}{3}$ is between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$)
 - f. recognize equivalent forms of a number (e.g., $2^2 = 4$)

- g. demonstrate knowledge of place value for whole numbers and decimal numbers
- h. compute percentages
- i. demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts of exponents (e.g., $2^2 = 4$, $2^4 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$)
- j. demonstrate knowledge of "order of operations" (parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction)
- k. use mental math to solve problems by estimation
- l. solve word problems
- m. solve one-step, single-variable linear equations (e.g., find x if $x + 4 = 2$)
- n. identify what comes next in a sequence of numbers

2. Geometry and Measurement

- a. represent time and money in more than one way (e.g., 30 minutes = $\frac{1}{2}$ hour; 10:15 = quarter after 10; \$0.50 = 50 cents = half dollar)
- b. convert between units or measures in the same system (e.g., inches to feet; centimeters to meters)
- c. identify basic geometrical shapes (e.g., isosceles triangle, right triangle, polygon)
- d. perform computations related to area, volume, and perimeter for basic shapes
- e. graph data on an xy-coordinate plane

3. Data Analysis

- a. interpret information from tables, charts, and graphs
- b. given a table, chart, or graph with time-related data, interpret trends over time
- c. create basic tables, charts, and graphs
- d. compute the mean, median, and mode

B. Application of Mathematics Skills and Knowledge to Classroom Instruction

The Math Application questions assess the examinee's ability to apply the three categories of math skills listed in Section II (Mathematics) in a classroom setting or in support of classroom instruction. The questions focus on testing the mathematical competencies needed to assist the teacher with instruction.

The test questions do not require knowledge of advanced-level mathematics vocabulary. Examinees may not use calculators.

III. Writing

A. Writing Skills and Knowledge

Writing Skills and Knowledge questions assess the examinee's ability to identify:

1. Basic grammatical errors in standard written English
2. Errors in word usage (e.g., their/they're/there, then/than)
3. Errors in punctuation
4. Parts of a sentence (e.g., subject and verb/predicate)
5. Parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions)
6. Errors in spelling

B. Application of Writing Skills and Knowledge to Classroom Instruction

Writing Application questions are typically based on classroom scenarios in which students are planning, composing, revising, or editing documents written for a variety of purposes. Some questions are concerned with aspects of the writing process—the full range of activities used when composing written documents. These questions assess the examinee's ability to help students:

1. Use prewriting to generate and organize ideas (including freewriting and using outlines)
2. Identify and use appropriate reference materials
3. Draft and revise (including composing or refining a thesis statement, writing focused and organized paragraphs, and writing a conclusion)
4. Edit written documents for clarity, grammar, sentence integrity (run-ons and sentence fragments), word usage, punctuation, spelling

Some questions are concerned with *writing applications*; i.e., the application of writing for different purposes. These questions assess the examinee's ability to help students:

5. Write for different purposes and audiences (including using appropriate language and taking a position for or against something)
6. Recognize and write in different modes and forms (e.g., descriptive essays, persuasive essays, narratives, letters)

2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

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

The *Praxis Series* 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 options.

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

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of options.
- **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 options and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting options from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting options 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 in "Understanding Constructed-Response Questions" on page 10.

3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

Sample Test Questions

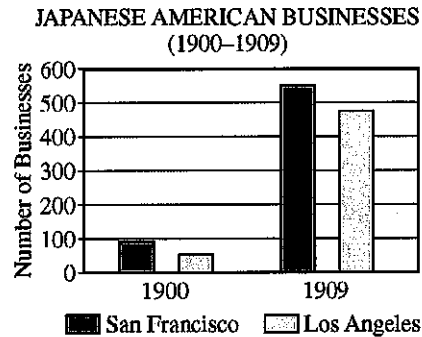
Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Reading

Questions 1–2 are based on the following passage.

Early scientists believed that all dinosaurs, like most reptiles, laid and then immediately abandoned their eggs. The newly hatched young were left to take care of themselves. However, the recent discovery of a group of nests has challenged this belief. The nests, which contained fossilized baby dinosaurs that were not newborn, provided evidence that dinosaur parents actually cared for their young. For some time after birth, the babies would stay at the nest while the parents brought back plant matter for food. The young stayed at home until they were large enough to roam safely on their own.

1. The passage is primarily concerned with
 - (A) contrasting dinosaurs with modern reptiles
 - (B) explaining why dinosaurs became extinct
 - (C) discussing recent findings about dinosaurs' behavior
 - (D) providing new information about what dinosaurs ate
2. The discovery of a group of dinosaur nests challenged the idea that dinosaurs
 - (A) fed their young with plant matter
 - (B) hatched few eggs
 - (C) migrated in search of food
 - (D) deserted their young



3. What conclusion can be drawn from the data presented in the graph above?
 - (A) Japanese American businesses were more successful in California than in other states in 1909.
 - (B) The number of Japanese American businesses in Los Angeles and San Francisco increased greatly from 1900 to 1909.
 - (C) In 1909 there were more Japanese American businesses in Los Angeles than there were in San Francisco.
 - (D) In 1909 most Japanese American businesses in Los Angeles and San Francisco were large companies.

4. American science-fiction writers produce a large number of novels for young people these days, yet few take advantage of the latitude allowed by the genre. Since the 1970s, young-adult science fiction has had little to do with the wonders of science, intergalactic travel, or new worlds in space. Most of the novels are cautionary tales about regimented, conformist societies or about the social order collapsed into barbarism. This change has resulted in science fiction that is, to me as a reader, much less interesting than science fiction used to be.

Which sentence from the passage is most clearly an expression of opinion rather than a statement of fact?

- (A) "American science-fiction . . . the genre."
- (B) "Since the . . . in space."
- (C) "Most of . . . into barbarism."
- (D) "This change . . . to be."

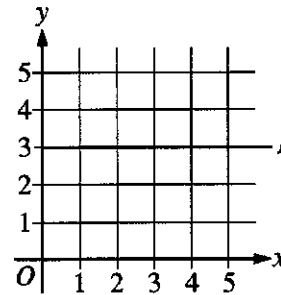
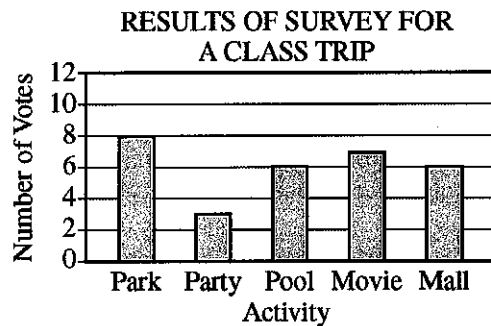
Questions 5–6 are based on the following passage, which students are reading in small groups.

The environment in which people live often determines the kind of technology they use. For instance, ancient Mesopotamia had few plants suitable for making paper. But the area had lots of high-quality clay. People used the clay to store information.

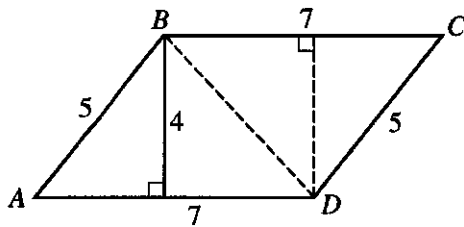
Modern people store information on paper, computer disks, and CDs. Mesopotamians stored their data on clay tablets—pieces of smooth clay small enough to fit into the palm of an adult's hand. When a clay tablet was damp, people could scratch pictures and letters into its surface using a sharpened reed. When dried in the hot sun, the clay hardened, preserving the writing and the information.

5. The teacher wants students to understand why the Mesopotamians wrote on clay. What question could a paraprofessional ask a group of students about the passage that would best help the students understand why the Mesopotamians wrote on clay?
- (A) Why did the Mesopotamians make clay tablets small enough to fit in the hand?
 - (B) What kinds of pictures and letters did the Mesopotamians scratch on clay?
 - (C) Why didn't the Mesopotamians write on paper the way we do today?
 - (D) How did the Mesopotamians learn to read and write?
6. The paraprofessional asks a group of students to describe the main purpose of the second paragraph. Which of the following four responses from the students is most accurate?
- (A) To explain how the Mesopotamians used clay to store information
 - (B) To describe the different ways we store information today
 - (C) To explain why the environment affects the kind of technology people use
 - (D) To show that Mesopotamians made small clay tablets so they could carry them easily

Mathematics



7. In the graph above, how many more votes were received for the park than the mall as an activity for a class trip?
- (A) 1
(B) 2
(C) 6
(D) 14
8. What digit is in the hundredths place of the number 5,123.6487?
- (A) 1
(B) 4
(C) 6
(D) 8
9. 445.76×9.634 is approximately equal to
- (A) 46
(B) 446
(C) 4,460
(D) 44,600
10. Which of the following is NOT a point on line ℓ shown on the graph above?
- (A) (0, 3)
(B) (1, 3)
(C) (3, 0)
(D) (3, 3)
- $5 + 3 \times 8 + 9 = ?$
11. A student wrote the incorrect number sentence above to solve the following problem:
- “Multiply the sum of 5 and 3 and the sum of 8 and 9.”
- To correct the error, the student’s number sentence should be changed to
- (A) $(5+3) \times 8+9 = ?$
(B) $5+3 \times (8+9) = ?$
(C) $(5+3 \times 8)+9 = ?$
(D) $(5+3) \times (8+9) = ?$



12. A paraprofessional is helping a student find the equation for the area of parallelogram $ABCD$ shown above by pointing out to the student that the parallelogram can be divided into two congruent triangles. The area of the parallelogram is then the sum of the areas of the two triangles. Which of the following is the correct expression to use to find the area of parallelogram $ABCD$?

- (A) $\frac{1}{2}(7 \times 4) + \frac{1}{2}(7 \times 4)$
 (B) $\frac{1}{2}(7 \times 5) + \frac{1}{2}(7 \times 5)$
 (C) $(7 \times 5) + (7 \times 4)$
 (D) $(7 \times 4) \times 5$

Writing

Directions for Questions 13–14: In each of the sentences below, four portions are underlined and lettered. Select the underlined portion that contains a grammatical construction, a word use, or an instance of punctuation that would be inappropriate in carefully written English. Note the letter printed beneath the underlined portion you select and select the best answer. **No sentence has more than one error.**

13. The role of technology in the nation's public

A

schools have been increasing steadily

B

C

for more than 20 years.

D

14. Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system,

A

spins very rapidly on it's axis, with the result

B

C

that a day on Jupiter lasts only 9 hours and

D

55 minutes.

15. Because there were no refrigerators on the United States space shuttles, all of the food eaten by the astronauts had to be in a nonperishable form.

In the sentence above, the underlined word is being used as

- (A) a noun
 (B) a verb
 (C) an adjective
 (D) an adverb

16. Which word is NOT spelled correctly?

- (A) compair
 (B) hardware
 (C) repair
 (D) scare

Questions 17–18 are based on the following rough draft written by a student.

How to Teach Your Dog to Sit
by Kiara

(1) First hold a dog biscuit so the dog pays attention. (2) Say "Sit!" (3) When you say it, use a loud and firm voice. (4) Move the hand holding the biscuit over the dog's nose, don't let him grab it. (5) You may have to give a light backwards tug on the dog's leash. (6) When the dog sits down, give him the treat and lots of praise. (7) Repeat this a few times, and he'll probably understand the command.

17. Kiara is writing an introductory sentence that summarizes the main points of the paragraph. What sentence would be the strongest introductory sentence for the paragraph?

- (A) Dogs are naturally very intelligent and obedient.
- (B) Your dog probably likes some dog biscuits better than others.
- (C) It is easy to teach your dog the command "Sit!"
- (D) Nobody likes a dog that can't play catch.

18. Kiara is learning how to use transition words (words that clarify the relationships between ideas). What transition word or words should Kiara use before the word "don't" in sentence 4 in order to clarify the meaning of the sentence?

- (A) but
- (B) because
- (C) for example
- (D) so

Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (C). The passage notes the "recent discovery of a group of nests" and then elaborates on what the discovery reveals about the behavior of dinosaurs toward their young.

2. The correct answer is (D). The belief challenged by the discovery of the group of nests is that dinosaurs "abandoned their eggs" and left their young to provide for themselves.

3. The correct answer is (B). (A) and (D) are incorrect because the graph does not offer information about Japanese American businesses in cities outside of California, nor does it offer information about the size of Japanese American businesses in Los Angeles and San Francisco. (C) is incorrect because the graph indicates that in 1909 there were fewer Japanese American businesses in Los Angeles than in San Francisco.

4. The correct answer is (D). The sentences referred to in (A), (B), and (C) present facts about the number and subject matter of science fiction novels published today. In the last sentence, however, the author shifts to offering a personal opinion about science fiction today: it's not as interesting as it used to be.

5. The correct answer is (C). The question would encourage students to think about why the Mesopotamians did not have paper (they did not have many of the proper plants) and help the students better understand how the resources available to the Mesopotamians helped determine the materials they used for writing.

6. The correct answer is (A). The second paragraph is primarily concerned with describing the processes used by the Mesopotamians to write on clay tablets.

7. According to the graph, 8 votes were received for the park as an activity for a class trip and 6 votes were received for the mall. To determine how many more votes were received for the park than the mall, subtract the number of votes for the mall from the number of votes for the park.

$$8 - 6 = 2$$

Thus, 2 more votes were received for the park than the mall. The correct answer is (B).

8. The hundredths place of 5,123.6487 is 2 digits to the right of the decimal point as shown:

decimal point
↓
5,123.6487
↑
hundredths place

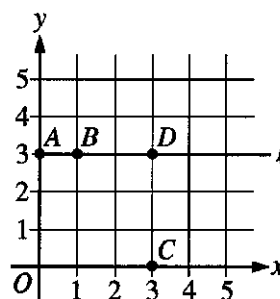
The digit in the hundredths place of the number is 4. The correct answer is (B).

9. To determine the approximate value of 445.76×9.634 , round 445.76 to 446 and round 9.634 to 10. Then, multiply 446 and 10.

$$446 \times 10 = 4,460$$

The approximate value is 4,460. The correct answer is (C).

10. To determine which point is not on the line ℓ , plot the points in (A) through (D) on the graph.



As can be seen on the graph, the point C (3, 0) is not on line ℓ . The correct answer is (C).

11. The student's number sentence

$$5 + 3 \times 8 + 9 = ?$$

is incorrect because, according to the order of operations, multiplication precedes addition; thus, 3 and 8 would be multiplied first, then 5 and then 9 would be added to the product. In order for the sum of 5 and 3 and the sum of 8 and 9 to be calculated before multiplying, parentheses must be placed around $5 + 3$ and $8 + 9$. Thus, the correct number sentence is:

$$(5 + 3) \times (8 + 9) = ?$$

The correct answer is (D).

12. The figure shown is a parallelogram. Parallelogram $ABCD$ can be divided into two congruent triangles, ABD and BCD , as shown by the dotted line. Each triangle has an area of $\frac{1}{2}bh$, where b is the length of the base and h is the height of the triangle. The height of a triangle is the line segment that is perpendicular to the base.

In the figure, the base b of each triangle has length 7 and the height h of each triangle is 4; thus, the area of each triangle is $A = \frac{1}{2}(7 \times 4)$.

The area of parallelogram is the sum of the areas of the two triangles; thus, the area of parallelogram $ABCD$ is $\frac{1}{2}(7 \times 4) + \frac{1}{2}(7 \times 4)$. The correct answer is (A).

13. The error in the sentence occurs at (B). The subject of the verb "have been increasing" is the "role of technology"; because "role" is a singular noun, the verb should also be singular: "has been increasing."

14. The error in the sentence occurs at (C). As presented in (C), the word "it's" is an error in usage. When used in the possessive form (the axis belongs to Jupiter), there is no apostrophe in the word "its." There is an apostrophe in "it's" only when the word is being used as a contraction of "it is."

15. The correct answer is (C). An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun, usually by describing, identifying, or quantifying. Here, "nonperishable" modifies "form" by describing the form of food eaten by the astronauts.

16. The correct answer is (A). The correct spelling is "compare."

17. The correct answer is (C). Kiara's paragraph is concerned with discussing what steps to take when teaching a dog to sit. (A) is too general; (B) concerns a minor element of the paragraph, not its primary focus; and (D) concerns playing catch, which is not discussed in the paragraph at all.

18. The correct answer is (A). The word "but" is used to emphasize the contrast expressed in the sentence: "Move the hand holding the biscuit over the dog's nose, but don't let him grab it."

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. A helpful resource is the [Strategies for Success video](#), which includes tips for preparing and studying, along with tips for reducing test anxiety.

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 in "1. Learn About Your Test" 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 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. 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.
- 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 in "9. Understand Your Scores" on page 31.

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 24 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 24, 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 12.
- **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 "Topics Covered" 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 the Topics Covered section.
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: Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading
Praxis Test Code(s): 5712
Test Date: 9/15/14

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
Core Academic Skills for Educators:						
Main Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of main idea or primary purpose of reading selection	3	Middle school English text book	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/14	7/15/14
Supporting Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of supporting ideas and specific details in reading selection	3	Middle school English text book	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/14	7/17/14
Organization	Identify how reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect and compare/contrast	3	Middle and high school English text book	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/14	7/21/14
Organization	Identify key transition words/phrases in reading selection and how used	4	Middle and high school English text book	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/14	7/26/14
Vocabulary in Context	Identify meanings of words as used in context of reading selection	3	Middle and high school English text book, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/14	7/27/14

(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
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills						
Evaluation	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to arguments in reading selection	5	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/14	8/1/14
Evaluation	Determine role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in author's discussion/argument	5	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/14	8/1/14
Evaluation	Determine if information presented is fact or opinion	4	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/14	8/1/14
Evaluation	Identify relationship among ideas presented in reading selection	2	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/14	8/1/14
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
Inferential Reasoning	Determine logical assumptions on which argument or conclusion is based	2	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/14	8/8/14
Inferential Reasoning	Determine author's attitude toward materials discussed in reading selection	2	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/14	8/17/14
Generalization	Recognize or predict ideas/situations that are extensions of, or similar to, what has been presented in reading selection	2	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/14	8/24/14
Generalization	Draw conclusions from materials presented in reading selection	4	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/14	8/24/14
Generalization	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	3	High school text book, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/14	8/27/14

My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

- 1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in the Learn about Your Test and Topics Covered sections.
- 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: _____

Praxis 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 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*® 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 Series* tests at 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.

7. 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/accommodations/plne.

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.

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.

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

8. 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 a pen or pencil to use on the scratch paper you are given
- 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)
- 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)
- 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.

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!

9. 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 for the most up-to-date information.

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

The Praxis Series 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.

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.

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 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.

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 test or other tests in *The Praxis Series* over 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
- *The Praxis Series Passing Scores* (PDF), found at www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand
- State requirements, found at 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 *Praxis II* tests for professional licensing.

Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis Series* 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.

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 Series* tests?

Your state chose *The Praxis Series* 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 Series* test development process. First, ETS asked them which 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 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 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 (2003, Princeton, NJ) 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 (1999, Washington, DC).