

California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) Study Guide

English Language Arts

Dear Student,

This book has been written just for you. You will be required to pass the California State High School Exit Exam in order to receive a high school diploma, and we want to make sure you do. Although you will have many opportunities to take the test, wouldn't it be great if you could pass this year?

The people who wrote the test need to find out what you know and are able to do based upon the California Content Standards. As you use this study guide, you will find that we explain the standards in “user friendly” language. We cannot use questions in this study guide that will appear on the actual test you will take, but the State of California has released questions that have appeared on previous CAHSEE tests for students to practice. We hope our explanations and these sample questions will help you succeed on the real test.

What do I need to know?

The English Language Arts part of the test includes 82 multiple choice questions and 2 essays based on standards from 6 language arts strands. This study guide includes a section on each strand where you will be able to practice with sample test questions. The chart below tells you how many questions on the CAHSEE relate to each strand.

ELA Strand	#CAHSEE questions
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Word Analysis Strand

Word Analysis Strand-Introduction

Readers encounter new words almost every time they pick up a book. You probably are wishing for a magic list you can memorize, but there is no such list. None of us can know in advance what words will appear on the test. For that reason, you need to learn strategies for approaching unfamiliar words. You will use these same strategies your whole life.

People with good vocabularies like words. That might sound strange to you, but it's true. They like the sounds of words, the meanings of words, and the stories about words. They like to tear words apart and put them back together again. They hunt for hidden meanings as well as literal meanings. They find similarities in words from other languages. They know the meanings of roots, prefixes, and suffixes. They know how to guess the meaning of words from the context of what they are reading.

Word Analysis Strand –Part 1

The following question, similar to one of the ten that will deal with vocabulary on the test, refers to the passage “On Becoming a Falconer.”

On Becoming a Falconer

Falconry, an ancient sport popular in the days of medieval royalty and jousting tournaments, is still practiced by dedicated enthusiasts around the world. Falconers work with predatory birds ranging from expert fliers, like the peregrine falcon, to less spectacular hawks, such as the red-tail. Regardless of the species, training is the most important part of falconry. But it can be frustrating; so, you must be very patient.

The first step in training your falcon is to establish her trust in you. Initially, the falcon won't allow you near—she will “bate,” or beat her wings wildly, as you approach. But gradually you will coax her to fly to you by offering food. The proud and cautious bird will be reluctant to fly to your hand, but she will want the food there and she will move back and forth on her perch, stamping her feet. Suddenly she will leave her perch. She may land on your hand and bate off right away, frightened by her own bravery at first.

Sooner or later, however, she will return to feed, and that will be her first careful step toward accepting you.

Why do falconers love this sport? To understand falconry, you must understand the special nature of the bond that forms between the falconer and the bird. The falconer treasures the wild behavior and skills of the falcon. The reward in working with a trained falcon is the companionship of a creature that can choose at any time to disappear over the horizon forever. You can join the honored tradition of falconers if you have patience and respect for wild creatures.

What does the phrase “disappear over the horizon” mean in the following sentence?

The reward in working with a trained falcon is the companionship of creatures that can choose at any time to disappear over the horizon forever.

- A. return to the falconer
- B. abandon the falconer
- C. go behind some trees
- D. fly very high

You probably know what “disappear” means or can figure it out. This has one of those “word parts” in it, which makes a word mean the opposite of the main word or root word. So if we know what appear means, then disappear means the opposite. When you look at the list of suggested answers, you can immediately eliminate A, return to the falconer.

You can tell from the rest of the selection that if the falcon disappears forever, it would not be a good thing for the trainer. Most importantly, you get the feeling that the word is used figuratively because the fact that the falcon may disappear over the horizon suggests the reward of the companionship rather than simply losing the bird. The reward in working with a trained falcon is the companionship of creatures that can choose at any time to disappear over the horizon forever.

Context clues can also help you determine the meaning of this phrase. The horizon is the apparent intersection of the earth and sky as seen by an observer — in this case a falconer who trains birds of prey. Imagining how a falcon would seem to disappear when it flew out of the trainer’s sight will help you choose the correct response, **b: abandon the falconer.**

This may seem like a long process for figuring out what a word means but asking questions about words will help you meet the California English Language Arts Standards for Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development. Getting into the habit of using these strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words will increase your vocabulary and help you have a better understanding of what you read.

This standard also demands that you understand denotation and connotation. The *denotative* meaning of a word is its dictionary definition. It describes the relation between the word and the thing it names. The *connotative* meaning of a word refers to the images and feelings that you experience when you read the word.

For example, *house* and *home* have identical denotations, both describing a place of shelter. Their connotations are quite different. *House* commonly makes a reader think of a particular building where people live whereas *home* suggests warmth, comfort, and safety.

When reading informational texts such as your science textbook and the newspaper, it is essential to understand the denotation of key words. In literary texts such as poems and stories, the connotations of words can be as important as their denotations.

Word Analysis Strand-Part 2

The following Edna St. Vincent Millay poem appeared on the 2001 CAHSEE:

The Courage That My Mother Had

The Courage that my mother had
Went with her, and is with her still:
Rock from New England quarried;
Now *granite* in a *granite* hill.

The golden brooch my mother wore
She left behind for me to wear;
I have no thing I treasure more:
Yet it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me
The thing she took into the grave!—
That courage like a rock, which she
Has no more need of, and I have.

You may recall from your science class that *granite* is a common, coarse-grained rock consisting mainly of quartz. This is the word's denotation. To understand the poem, however, you also want to consider the connotations of *granite*. What qualities does granite possess? The poet compares her mother's courage with a rock that is hard and strong. What does this suggest about her mother? Do you know anyone who has courage like a rock?

Practice these strategies every time you read. Soon you will find that learning new words has become a habit.

Reading Comprehension Strand

Reading Comprehension Strand-Introduction

In order to pass the CAHSEE you need to be able to read and understand informational documents such as textbooks, instruction manuals, and articles. You should also be able to figure out the main idea of the information and the most important points about the main idea.

Sometimes it takes more than one reading to figure out these things. You may be surprised to know that even your teachers have to read and reread in order to make the author's ideas clear. Adults have strategies to speed up this process that you can learn. Good readers often go back and look at first paragraphs and last paragraphs, searching for key words, key ideas. Sometimes they go back and look at first lines of paragraphs, hoping to find topic sentences that help.

When you read, you need to figure out the main idea of the whole passage or part of a passage. Several questions will deal with “main idea.” An efficient reader summarizes while reading.

Reading Comprehension Strand-Part 1

Read the text, “How to Choose a Password.”

HOW TO CHOOSE A PASSWORD

Passwords are commonly used today to restrict access to personal possessions or privileged information. Passwords consist of a unique sequence of characters—letters, numbers, and symbols—required to access personal banking information, automated teller machines, secure buildings and businesses, computer networks, certain Web sites, e-mail, and more. Passwords are much like keys. Each password is different, and only the correct one allows the right of entry. It should be something unusual enough that the wrong person could not decipher it just by knowing you.

Before you can choose a password, however, you must know the types of passwords required. First find out if all letters must be lowercase or if upper- and lowercase are both acceptable. Should the password consist of letters or numbers only, or are special characters permissible? What is the minimum and maximum length allowed?

Now you are ready to think of an appropriate password. Your password should be something you can easily remember but something impossible for anyone else to decode or guess. We will discuss poor options first, so you will know what to avoid. Poor choices include names of people, family or fictional characters, common sequences such as QWERTY on the keyboard or 789456123 on the numeric keypad, or any word that appears in a dictionary. Other inappropriate choices include your telephone number or birth date. Do not use your middle name, mother’s maiden name, your street name, or any other familiar name or number in reverse order.

The best way to choose a password that is hard to crack, yet easy to remember, is to select something memorable from your past. It could be the name of your grandparents’ dog when you were 5 (tippy5) or the name of your math teacher in room 118 (118-Thompson). You could form a string of characters using the first letter of each word in a phrase or saying that makes sense to you. For example, your mother might say, “The sun is shining—So am I.” A password derived from this saying might be (TsisSal) or (Tsis Sal).

Once you have created a good password, keep it safe. Do not store it in a computer or leave a handwritten copy where others might see it. You could put the number in your address book in a disguised form. It is not likely that anyone who found Ted Williams, 35 N. Sheldon Ave. in your address book would know it contains your password (TW35NSA).

It is best to have different passwords for each system. If you have used the same password for your bike lock and your access code to the Internet, would you be willing to loan your bike and lock to a schoolmate?

Since unauthorized access to sensitive information could open the door for an unscrupulous individual to access or even tamper with your personal records, as well as those of other people on the system, it is wise to change your passwords frequently. Some authorities suggest changing passwords every three months.

BAD PASSWORDS

782-8978 (phone number)
Butch (nickname)
LittleBoPeep (storybook character)
12-11-86 (birth date)
dejavu (foreign phrase)
leahcim (name spelled backwards)
qqqqqq (repeated letter)
XyzXyzXyz (repeated pattern of letters)

GOOD PASSWORDS

NYTXvincent (best friend in first grade preceded by state of birth and current state of residence)
delygd (first letters of coach's favorite saying "Don't ever let your guard down")
ofcmgr98 (mother's abbreviated job title – Office Manager in 1998)

Now that you have read the essay, see if you can figure out the main idea of each paragraph. When you take the actual test, you might underline the sentence or words in each paragraph that represent the main idea. Let's do these seven paragraphs together.

1. Passwords are like keys that allow the owner to get in.
2. Kinds of passwords required.

3. Types of passwords we should not use.
4. Some good password choices.
5. How to store passwords.
6. Different passwords for each system
7. Why change passwords regularly.

Then we have the charts--a box listing bad passwords and one listing good passwords.

Now you are ready to tackle the test questions.

According to the document, what should you do FIRST before choosing a password?

- A. determine what type of password must be used
- B. think of something memorable from your past
- C. decide where to store the information to keep it safe
- D. change your password about every three months

If you don't remember, go back to the article and scan, looking at first sentences only. Right away in the second paragraph you see "Before you can choose a password, however, you must . . ." and there is the correct answer, A.

The two boxes included at the end of the document illustrate information that is primarily found in which two paragraphs?"

- A. 1 and 2
- B. 3 and 4
- C. 5 and 6
- D. 6 and 7

The chart lists bad passwords and good passwords. Look at the summaries we wrote about each paragraph. Which two paragraphs tell about bad passwords and good passwords? The correct answer is right there in front of you, B.

According to the two boxes at the end of the document, which of these would be the BEST password?

- A. date of a wedding anniversary
- B. your family nickname
- C. the same number, repeated five times
- D. the first letters in the title of your favorite book

The question refers you to the boxes labeled "Bad Passwords" and "Good Passwords." Each of the choices is similar to the passwords in the boxes. "Date of a wedding anniversary" is similar to "birthdate"--a bad password. "Your family nickname" is listed as a bad password. "The same number, repeated five times, is similar to "repeated letters." "The first letters in the title of your favorite book" is similar to "first letters of coach's favorite saying"--a good password and the correct answer D.

Based on information in the two boxes at the end of the document, *lkjlkj* would be a bad choice for a password because it ____

- A. Is someone's initials.
- B. Stands for a favorite saying.
- C. Is a repeated pattern of letters.
- D. Is an abbreviation of a familiar name.

Although *lkj* could be someone's initials and *lkjlkj* could stand for a favorite saying or be an abbreviation of a familiar name, this would be a bad password because it "is a repeated pattern of letters." Therefore the correct response is C.

Which sentence from the document BEST summarizes the author's main point?

- A. It is best to have different passwords for each system.
- B. Before you can choose a password; however, you must know the prerequisites for the password.
- C. Your password should be something you can easily remember but something impossible for anyone else to decode or guess.
- D. Some authorities suggest changing passwords every three months.

If you look back at our paragraph summaries, you can see that the main idea of this piece is to offer you suggestions that will keep your password safe so that no one can enter your system without your permission. Which answer represents that idea? I hope you said C. I don't know about you, but I think I better change my password! I learned so much from reading this selection.

What suggestion does the article provide about writing down passwords?

- A. Write it down often so you don't forget your password.
- B. Disguise your password when you write it down.
- C. Do not let people know your password.
- D. Change your password frequently when you write it down.

In the passage the author tells you not to "store it in a computer or leave a handwritten copy" around. It doesn't make good sense to have a password and then tell it to many others. In the fifth paragraph the author advises the reader to write it down in a "disguised form." The correct answer is B.

Reading Comprehension Strand-Part 1

Read the following article about electric cars.

Electric Cars Deserve a Second Look

The following newspaper article is about electric cars. It is followed by a letter, which responds to the article.

As the world becomes increasingly populated, it is also becoming alarmingly polluted. We deplete more resources, produce more waste, and cause more cumulative environmental strain than ever before.

Fortunately, there are many ways that you can help counter the negative effects that we impose on the environment. One of these is driving an electric car.

This benefits not only the environment, but also individual drivers.

Electric cars produce about 80 percent less pollution than cars with gas-powered motors. In fact, the only reason that electric cars produce any pollution at all is that their electric energy is generated by power plants—electric cars themselves emit no exhaust.

When energy comes from large sources such as power plants, it's easier to regulate and monitor, so there's less waste than if the energy is generated by many smaller sources, such as the gas engines in individual cars.

In addition, electric cars are simply more efficient than gas-powered cars for several reasons. First, electric cars have regenerative braking, which means that when you use the brakes in an electric car, the battery has a chance to recharge. Conversely, when you brake in a gas-powered car, you actually use energy.

Also, during the production of electric cars, more time and energy is spent making the design lighter and more aerodynamic so that there will be less drag from the wind. This allows them to travel farther using less energy than a gas-powered car would use to go the same distance.

In addition to the environmental benefits of driving electric cars, there are also financial and timesaving benefits for the drivers.

For one, they cost less to maintain. The cost of charging an electric car is about 20 percent of the cost of gas, and electric cars require far less maintenance than gas-powered cars. This is due, in part, to the fact that a lot of the things that go wrong with gas-powered cars simply aren't present in electric cars. Electric cars have no cooling system, fan belts, radiators, hoses, or oil—just a battery.

There are fewer moving parts overall, so there are fewer potential problems. Also, electric motors have far greater longevity than combustion motors, so after the body of an electric car gives out, the engine can be reused in another body.

Furthermore, the federal government is encouraging electric car use by giving significant rebates for purchasing electric cars, and some states offer additional rebates.

Electric cars can also save people time. While gas-powered cars require visits to a mechanic every few months, the only routine maintenance required by electric cars is replacing the battery every four years. And California, for example, recently passed a law making it legal for drivers of electric cars to use the carpool lanes any time—even if they are driving alone. This makes your trips much quicker and saves a considerable amount of time, especially in rush-hour traffic.

Overall, there are numerous benefits of driving an electric car. It may take a little getting used to, but in the long run, the use of electric cars can help preserve the environment and give people more time and money to be put to better use.

Understanding the author’s purpose is an essential skill when reading informational text. This question asks you to choose the main purpose of the newspaper article about Electric Cars. You should use the same technique you used before, except this article is longer and the first paragraph is short so you may want to look at the first two and last two paragraphs. Also look at the title.

Good readers often go back and look at first paragraphs and last paragraphs, looking for key words. These are the key words we found.

Electric car
Deserve
Benefits
Environment
Numerous benefits
Preserve the environment

What is the main purpose of Darrow’s article?

- A. To convince readers that their cars are using too much energy**
- B. To show how to improve driving**
- C. To convince people that electric cars are good**
- D. To show how the environment can be saved**

Think about the choices. Is this article trying to convince us that our cars use too much energy? We know that. Does the article tell us how to improve our driving? I don’t think so. Does it give us ways to save the environment? Buying an electric car might help, but is that the purpose of the article? What was the title again? “Electric cars deserve a second look.” The title and our list of key words tell us that the main purpose for writing the article is “to convince people that electric cars are good.” The answer is C.

Literary Response and Analysis Strand

Literacy Response and Analysis-Introduction

California's standards expect you to be able to think and write about your reading in the following ways:

- About the characters, their traits, and their conflicts;
- About relationships between characters;
- About figurative language and symbolism and what they mean;
- About different genres (types) of literature and what they are called;
- About how the piece of literature reflects the culture of its author, the style of its author, and the historical period of its author.

Let's work through some of the questions.

Literary Response and Analysis Strand-Part 1

The first three questions refer to the excerpt from *White Fang*.

White Fang

The following selection is from the book *White Fang*. White Fang is about to make an important decision.

In the fall of the year when the days were shortening and the bite of the frost was coming into the air, White Fang got his chance for liberty. For several days there had been a great hubbub in the village. The summer camp was being dismantled, and the tribe, bag and baggage, was preparing to go off to the fall hunting. White Fang watched it all with eager eyes, and when the tepees began to come down and the canoes were loading at the bank, he understood. Already the canoes were departing, and some had disappeared down the river.

Quite deliberately he determined to stay behind. He waited his opportunity to slink out of the camp to the woods. Here in the running stream where ice was beginning to form, he hid his trail. Then he crawled into the heart of a dense thicket and waited. The time passed by and he slept intermittently for hours. Then he was aroused by Gray Beaver's voice calling him by name. There were other voices. White Fang could hear Gray Beaver's squaw taking part in the search, and Mitsah, who was Gray Beaver's son. White Fang trembled with fear, and though the impulse came to crawl out of his hiding-place, he resisted it. After a time the voices died away, and some time after that he crept out to enjoy the success of his undertaking. Darkness was coming on, and for awhile he played about among the trees, pleasuring his freedom. Then, and quite suddenly, he became aware of loneliness. He sat down to consider, listening to the

silence of the frost and perturbed by it. That nothing moved nor sounded seemed ominous. He felt the lurking of danger, unseen and un-guessed. He was suspicious of the looming bulks of the trees and of the dark shadows that might conceal all manner of perilous things.

Then it was cold. Here was no warm side of a teepee against which to snuggle. The frost was in his feet, and he kept lifting first one forefoot and then the other. He curved his bushy tail around to cover them, and at the same time he saw a vision. There was nothing strange about it. Upon his inward sight was impressed a succession of memory-pictures. He saw the camp again, the tepees, and the blaze of fires. He heard the shrill voices of the women, the gruff basses of the men, and the snarling of the dogs. He was hungry, and he remembered pieces of meat and fish that had been thrown him. Here was no meat, nothing but a threatening and inedible silence.

His bondage had softened him. Irresponsibility had weakened him. He had forgotten how to shift for himself. The night yawned about him. His senses, accustomed to the hum and bustle of the camp, used to the continuous impact of sights and sounds, were now left idle. There was nothing to do, nothing to see nor hear. They strained to catch some interruption of the silence and immobility of nature. They were appalled by inaction and by the feel of something terrible impending.

He gave a great start of fright. A colossal and formless something was rushing across the field of his vision. It was a tree-shadow flung by the moon, from whose face the clouds had been brushed away. Reassured, he whimpered softly; then he suppressed the whimper for fear that it might attract the attention of the lurking dangers.

A tree, contracting in the cool of the night, made a loud noise. It was directly above him. He yelped in his fright. A panic seized him, and he ran madly toward the village. He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man. In his nostrils was the smell of the camp smoke. In his ears the camp sounds and cries were ringing loud. He passed out of the forest and into the moonlit open where were neither shadows nor darkness. But no village greeted his eyes. He had forgotten. The village had gone away.

Reprinted from *White Fang* by Jack London. (Troll Communications).

To answer the following question you need to know the difference between fiction and nonfiction.

This selection is BEST described as —

- A. fiction**
- B. biography**
- C. article**
- D. essay**

Fiction is something made up—a story that didn't really happen. It could happen but it didn't. Novels and short stories are fiction though they may be based upon fact. Fantasy, fairy tales and science fiction are clearly fiction.

If it isn't fiction, it's non-fiction. That means the events described actually happened.

To answer this question, you don't necessarily have to decide whether the story of *White Fang* is true or not because the other three answers are absolutely wrong. A biography is a true story of someone's life. Is *White Fang* the story of someone's life? An article is not a story. An article may have a little story (anecdote) in it to prove a point, but it is not a story. Articles usually don't have characters, plot, or setting. They give information about a subject. Essays are reflections, the writer's thoughts on a certain subject. Essays are written from the author's point of view. Is Jack London a part of this story?

So what is this passage? It's a made-up story. It's fiction and the correct answer is A.

Which of the following BEST describes the relationship between Gray Beaver and White Fang?

- A. Gray beaver is White Fang's owner.**
- B. Gray Beaver is White Fang's brother.**
- C. Gray Beaver and White Fang are members of the same tribe.**
- D. Gray Beaver and White Fang are father and son.**

You have some clues in the story. White Fang "got his chance for liberty." He "slinked" out of camp. He crawled into a thicket. He had food thrown at him. But the best clue is "He curved his bushy **tail** around to cover them . . ." And that is all you need to know. Look at your choices. Three of the choices describe White Fang as a human being. Therefore the correct answer is A.

Which of these sentences from the story BEST illustrates the wild side of White Fang's nature?

- A. "He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man."**
- B. "Upon his inward sight was impressed a succession of memory pictures."**
- C. "Here in the running stream where ice was beginning to form, he hid his trail."**
- D. "Then, and quite suddenly, he became aware of loneliness."**

Does an animal have a “wild side” if he wants the “protection and companionship of man”? Does an animal have a “wild side” if he stores pictures in his memory? Does he have a “wild side” if he becomes aware of being lonely? What do wild animals do? They hide their trails. The correct answer is C.

Literary Response and Analysis Strand-Part 2

The next questions deal with a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay. You may remember reading it in the Word Analysis section of this study guide.

The Courage That My Mother Had

The Courage that my mother had
Went with her, and is with her still:
Rock from New England quarried;
Now granite in a granite hill.

The golden brooch my mother wore
She left behind for me to wear;
I have no thing I treasure more:
Yet it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me
The thing she took into the grave!—
That courage like a rock, which she
Has no more need of, and I have.

Which sentence BEST describes the theme of this poem?

- A. Personal strengths are more important than valuable objects.**
- B. Only a daughter can truly relate to her mother's feelings.**
- C. Having a golden brooch is better than nothing.**
- D. Unlike jewelry, traits such as courage are not valued.**

Poems have themes or main ideas just as stories or non-fiction articles do. What are some key words from the poem? It is short so read it again. This list of words comes from the first and last verses.

Courage
Rock
Granite

We listed *courage* and *rock* twice because they show up in both the first and the last verses. *Courage* also shows up in the title. Now read the question.

Which sentence BEST describes the theme of this poem?

What was her mother's personal strength?
Was this strength important to her daughter?
Does the poet say that only a daughter can relate to a mother's feelings?
If so, where does it say that?
Is the poem about a golden brooch? (Even if you do not know what a brooch is and even if the definition did not appear in the footnote, you should know if this poem is about a brooch.)
Does the author value courage, or as is suggested in D, does the author not value courage?

After answering these questions, you should come to the conclusion that the BEST sentence that describes the theme of the poem is A. Personal strengths (courage) are more important than valuable objects (brooches).

Literary Response and Analysis-Part 3

The next set of questions we will be looking on are based on an informational passage about koalas called "Deadly Leaves."

Deadly Leaves

Koalas, native to the Australian wilds, initially proved difficult to keep alive in zoos. Because koalas eat nothing but the leaves of the eucalyptus tree, zoos provided them with an unlimited supply of eucalyptus leaves. One zoo even planted eucalyptus trees in a special grove to ensure that the koalas had a continual supply of fresh leaves. However, koalas kept in captivity always died within a year of their arrival at the zoo.

Eventually it was discovered that eucalyptus trees that are less than five years old sometimes generate hydrocyanic acid in their leaves. Taking in small quantities of this acid is fatal to the koala. In their natural habitat, the koalas' senses tell them which eucalyptus trees have dangerous leaves, and they simply move on to other trees until they find leaves that are safe to eat. But in captivity, when their keepers unknowingly were giving them leaves contaminated with acid, the koalas were left with only two options: eat the poisonous leaves or starve. Either option was fatal to the trapped koalas.

Fortunately, today's zoos use special tests to distinguish between poisonous eucalyptus leaves and safe ones, and now koalas are eating well and thriving in zoos.

What does the word *contaminated* mean in the following phrase?

But in captivity, when their keepers unknowingly were giving them leaves contaminated with acid, the koalas were left with only two options: eat the poisonous leaves or starve.

- A. Carried with**
- B. Polished with**
- C. Poisoned with**
- D. Grown from**

This is a vocabulary question. Remember that one way to figure out what a word means is to see if there are any clues in the text—in the words, sentences, paragraphs around the word you do not know. When given choices such as the ones here, you can also try out the choices in the sentence. This is another one of those “tricks” that good test-takers use. Let’s try it.

But in captivity, when their keepers unknowingly were giving them leaves contaminated with (carried with, polished with, poisoned with, grown from with) acid, the koalas were left with only two options: eat the poisonous leaves or starve.

Does *carried with acid* make sense? How about *polished with acid*? Would anyone polish a leaf? What about *grown from with acid*? Isn’t there an unnecessary preposition in that phrase? Would someone grow leaves from acid? What’s left? The correct answer is C. poisoned with acid.

What is the purpose of this article?

- A. To inform**
- B. To persuade**
- C. To entertain**
- D. To express opinion**

This is another question about the author’s purpose. Does the passage persuade? Is it an argument? Would someone disagree with this article? Is it to entertain? Did you laugh? Does it express an opinion? Was the author expressing opinion or citing facts? If he was citing facts, then he was informing the reader. Did you learn something about feeding eucalyptus leaves to koalas in captivity? Did you find it interesting? The article “Deadly Leaves” informed you about something. The correct answer is A.

What tone does the author establish in the article?

- A. Critical**
- B. Hopeful**
- C. Straightforward**
- D. Humorous**

What is tone? Tone is the sound of the author’s voice. Did you ever hear your mother say, “Don’t use that tone of voice with me!”? What did she mean? Maybe you were

being disrespectful. Perhaps you were whining. You might have answered, “What tone of voice? I wasn’t using any tone of voice!” meaning that you thought you were being very straightforward.

Sometimes authors use words to show they are angry, different words to show they are excited, still others to show they are concerned. Read “Deadly Leaves” again. Is the author critical of the zoos? Is he hopeful that things will change? Does he tell about the koalas in a humorous way? Or does he tell it “like it is,” straightforward, matter of fact? The correct answer is C.

Literary Response and Analysis-Part 4

The next question is from the document “Staff Responsibilities,” a training manual for new employees at a restaurant.

Staff Responsibilities

Greeter

Your job as restaurant greeter requires that you greet every guest graciously and promptly. Upon greeting our early Sunset diners*, be sure to provide them with the regular dinner menu as well as the special Sunset menu. In addition, every evening the chef posts daily specials on the chalkboard at the entrance. Be sure to remind the customers of those dishes too, although those are not eligible for the early Sunset dinner price. (Diners who are seated after the early Sunset period should not receive the special Sunset menu.)

You will be working with a team of three additional members. The person who sets the table and provides the water and place settings (in some restaurants referred to as the busboy or busgirl). The waiter/waitress who actually takes each order to the exact specification of each diner. And, the cashier who will accept the diners’ payments upon their way out the door after dining. Your job is to ensure that the diners feel welcomed, informed, and served pleasantly in every possible way. For example, if their coats are draped across the back of their chairs, creating a potential floor hazard, please suggest that you would be happy to hang them in the closet at the rear of the restaurant.

Our goal is satisfied, happy customers who will return to visit us again and will recommend our establishment to their friends. Each employee plays an important role in ensuring that our goal is met. If you smile, greet diners pleasantly, seat them as soon as possible, and provide them with the full range of dinner options, you should have every reason to believe that you have done your job well.

When customers have been unhappy in the past with the quality of service by the person who filled your position, it was generally because of one of the following reasons:

- Customers were left standing in the foyer as the entry greeter continued a personal phone call, ignoring them.
 - Customers were not told of their eligibility or ineligibility for the early Sunset dinner.
 - Customers' seating preferences were not honored.
- * Early Sunset definition: a choice from one of five set-price, three-course meals available to diners seated before 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
Note: One of those choices is always vegetarian.

Read this sentence from the selection

Your job as a restaurant greeter requires that you greet each guest graciously and promptly.

According to this sentence, what must greeters do?

- A. Welcome customers warmly as they arrive.**
- B. Quickly list the specials for the customers.**
- C. Ask the customers what they would like to drink.**
- D. Seat customers as soon as possible.**

You have probably noticed by now that with a careful reading of the question, the answer can be obvious. Watch out for these easy ones and get them all correct. That will make up for any difficult ones you might miss. The sentence says, "Your job as a restaurant greeter requires that you greet each guest graciously and promptly." Now look at the answers. Does the sentence say anything about listing the specials for the customers? Does the sentence say anything about asking the customers what they would like to drink? Does the sentence say anything about seating the customers as soon as possible? Does the sentence say anything about welcoming the customers warmly as they arrive? Not in so many words, but if you greet each guest graciously, that means you will welcome them, and if you greet each guest promptly, that means you will do it as soon as they arrive. The answer is A.

Were you tempted to say D, "Seat customers as soon as possible" since the question said "promptly"? I was until I reread carefully and realized that "promptly" modifies "greet," not "seat" which doesn't appear in this question.

If you are looking for good books to help you improve your reading skills, check out the California Reading List at <http://goldmine.cde.ca.gov/statetests/star/readinglist.html>.

Writing Strategies Strand

Writing Strategies Strand-Introduction

If you know some good writing strategies, you can improve your own writing. You can also help your classmates improve their writing when you work in pairs and do peer response.

Writing Strategies Strand-Part 1

One of the questions in the CAHSEE asks you to choose from a group of 4 the MOST effective opening sentence for an essay on Essay Writing.

Essay Writing

(1) To begin an essay, a student should have some knowledge of the topic or be willing to search out information. (2) Then one must focus clearly on the prompt, addressing all its major points, and making sure that the central purpose is evident throughout the entire essay. (3) Interesting and convincing examples with lots of specific details are always helpful. (4) The details must show some kind of clear arrangement— chronological, spatial, or order-of-importance. (5) A student writer will also want to revise a first draft so that any errors in grammar and mechanics can be got rid of. (6) Steps can be taken to edit essays. (7) Relying solely on “SpellCheck” can be risky;
(8) It does not catch the common errors that students make, such as confusing “your” and “you’re.” (9) If students meet all these requirements, then they will have written very effectively.

Which of the following sentences, if inserted before sentence 1, would make the MOST effective opening sentence?

- A. Writing an essay is easy if one uses a computer.**
- B. Good essays are always written in black pen.**
- C. Any student can write a successful essay.**
- D. Teachers sometimes assign difficult essays.**

If you read the essay, you should know what it is about. It's a "how-to" list of things to do in order to write a successful essay. So look at the choices in the question. You can eliminate A and B because nowhere in the essay does the author mention any tools needed to write--not computer, not pen. The writer does mention "SpellCheck" but it's not the focus. Look at D. No where in this essay is the word "teacher" mentioned.

Which is the MOST effective substitution for the underlined part of sentence 5?

- A. And ridding of errors in grammar and mechanics.**
- B. To get rid of errors in grammar and mechanics.**
- C. And getting rid of errors in grammar and mechanics.**
- D. Leave as is.**

This question asks you to find a better way to write a certain line. The words "can be got rid of" are awkward so we don't want to leave it as it is. Look at the other choices. Try them. Say them out loud. (If you are actually taking the test, you won't want to say them

out loud, but you can read them slowly and carefully to see if they make sense. Answers A and C use the "ing" form of the verb, the participle. The conjunction "and" connects two things in grammar that are alike and that have equal value. For example, you can't connect "walk" and "running." "I walk and running down the street." You have to say, "I walk and run down the street." So you cannot connect "revise" and "ridding" or "getting." You could say "revise and get rid of" but that is not one of your choices. And it shouldn't be a choice because they are not of equal value. "Getting rid of errors" is something you do when you revise. The correct answer is B.

Writing Strategies Strand-Part 2

Now read "The Abominable Snowman."

The Abominable Snowman

(1) The Abominable Snowman is a hairy, apelike thing that is said to live in the Himalayan Mountains of Nepal. (2) Natives of this region have believed in the existence of this beast for many centuries. (3) However, since no one has ever found a Yeti (the Nepalese name for the Abominable Snowman), doubts still remain.

(4) Some people who believe in the Yeti point to the discovery of peculiar footprints found above the snowline of the Himalayas. (5) There were footprints left by animals, and some people think that they were very much like human footprints but that they must have been made by animals which were much heavier and larger than humans. (6) Scientists who have studied the footprints, however, agree that they were most likely left by bears. (7) "Bears are quite capable of walking on their two hind legs," says zoologist Hans Miller. (8) "This also explains many supposed Yeti sightings. (9) At a distance, a bear walking in such a way could easily appear to be a creature of human form. (10) In fact, three of the five Yeti sightings last year were determined to be bears. (11) The others remain unexplained." (12) Nonetheless, many people remain convinced that the Yeti is real. (13) "There has to," says Raju, a mountain guide, "be something out there. (14) There have been too many sightings for this all to be the product of overactive imaginations." (15) And, yet, it seems that the world will not be convinced of the existence of the Yeti until it is confirmed by hard evidence, a live specimen, or at least a skeleton. (16) For now, it appears that the Yeti will continue to inhabit the shadowy region between legend and reality.

Has your teacher ever given you a list of words you should try to avoid? Words like "very" and "thing" and "stuff"? I know I try to avoid them in my own writing. So in the

first line of "Snowman" what word might be the best one from the list to use in place of thing?

Which of the following words is the BEST way to express the meaning of the word thing in sentence 1?

- A. Object
- B. Item
- C. Creature
- D. Article

Is the Abominable Snowman an object? Is it an item? Is it a creature? Is it an article? It's a creature. Even if you have never heard of the Abominable Snowman, you can figure out that it is a creature from reading the article. It has footprints. It looks like a human. It moves.

Look at the next question.

Which of the following ideas is supported by details or evidence in the essay?

- A. The world will never believe in the existence of the Yeti.
- B. Yeti sightings cannot be explained by overactive imaginations.
- C. A bear walking on its hind legs can appear to be a Yeti.
- D. All mountain guides believe in the Yeti.

Which of the following ideas is supported by details or evidence in the essay? Sentence 6 says that scientists who have studied the footprints agree that they were most likely left by bears. Sentences 7, 8, 9, and 10 support this: bears walk on their two hind legs, bears walking on two hind legs from a distance could look like a human creature, some sightings have already been proven to be bears. The answer is C.

What is the BEST way to write sentence 13?

- A. "There has to be something out there" says Raju, a mountain guide.
- B. "There has to be something out there, says Raju, a mountain guide."
- C. "There has to, says Raju, a mountain guide, be something out there."
- D. Leave as is.

This question wants to know the BEST way to write a sentence. We should not leave it as it is (D) or choose (C) because the sentence that the guide says is separated in an unnatural way. You can tell that just by listening to it. Or you can know it because "to be" is an infinitive--"to" plus a verb--and an infinitive needs to stay together. The other two choices sound alike but are punctuated differently. The actual words the guide says should be in quotation marks. The answer is A.

Based on the essay, which of the following would be the BEST source of information to demonstrate that the Yeti most likely does NOT exist?

- A. A book of Nepalese legends which contains stories about the Yeti**
- B. A documentary about the Yeti containing interviews with Yeti believers**
- C. A poster which has pictures of all known Himalayan mammals**
- D. A magazine article which demonstrates the falsehood of all supposed Yeti sightings**

If you want to find a source to prove that the Abominable Snowman does NOT exist, you won't find it in Nepalese legends, you won't find proof from people who believe that the Yeti exists, and you won't find it on a poster of pictures of all known Himalayan mammals. The answer is D.

Writing Conventions Strand

Writing Conventions Strand-Introduction

Grammar can be tricky. You have to learn many, many rules and remember them! The California Content Standards expect you to follow the conventions (that mean rules) for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage. So let's see what we can do to help you through this part of the test. Some of the questions will have to do with choosing (and using) the right verb tenses. Others refer to misplaced modifiers.

You are worried already, aren't you? You are wondering, "What's a subordinate clause?" "Do modifiers have a proper place?" "How do I control grammar?" "I never heard of parallel structure." Quit worrying. Maybe you didn't quite get phrases and clauses and maybe you don't remember modifiers, but with a little common sense and a few rules, you can get through this. Trust us!

Writing Conventions Strand-Part 1

The directions for the next group of questions read:

Choose the answer that is the most effective substitute for each underlined part of the sentence. If no substitution is necessary, choose "Leave as is."

When our parents celebrate their silver wedding anniversary later this year, they were married for twenty-five years.

- A. They will have been married for twenty-five years.**
- B. They have been married for twenty-five years.**
- C. They would have been married for twenty-five years.**
- D. Leave as is.**

Remember past tense, present tense, and future tense? Of course, if you really know your tenses you will also remember present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect along with many others. Present tense is happening now; past tense happened in the past. But if something is going to happen, that's "future" and in the future tense, you will find the word "will." (Sometimes the word "shall.") In this sample question, something is going to happen "later this year." That is future. The correct answer is A.

Akia told us about her safari across the plains of East Africa in our geography class.

- A. In our geography class, Akia told us about her safari across the plains of East Africa.
- B. Akia told us about her safari in our geography class across the plains of East Africa.
- C. In our geography class Akia told about her safari across the plains of East Africa to us.
- D. Leave as is.

English teachers love misplaced modifiers because they make us laugh. If you read this sentence exactly the way it is written, Akia’s safari happened in geography class. In which choice is Akia telling about it in geography class? I hope you said A.

“Why should I wear a sweater?” grumbled the boy as his mother reminded him again of the cold weather.

- A. ’Why should I wear a sweater’?
- B. “Why should I wear a sweater”
- C. “Why should I wear a sweater”?
- D. Leave as is.

This one is correct the way it is. Why? The part that is quoted is a question so the question mark goes inside the quotation mark. In A and C, the question mark is outside the quotation mark. In B the writer left out the question mark completely. Leave it as it is.

The Alaskan rivers are clear and sparkling in summer however; they are frozen in winter.

- A. In summer, however they are frozen in winter.
- B. In summer, however, they are frozen in winter.
- C. Summer: however they are frozen in winter.
- D. Leave as is.

This is a run on sentence--two sentences run together without punctuation between them. It would be possible to put in a period and a capital *H* on “however.” That is not one of the choices. You don’t join sentences with commas; you don’t join sentences with colons. I just joined two sentences in my last one. What did I use? A semi-colon. The correct answer is B.

When Tom arrived at school he was carrying all his books with him.

- A. Arrived at school, he
- B. Arrived, at school he
- C. Arrived at school he,
- D. Leave as is.

The rule is that a comma follows a transposed adverbial clause. In order to use that rule, you need to know what transposed means, what a clause is, and the difference between an adverbial clause and other kinds of clauses. But you can do this one without knowing all

that. Read the sentence four times, once for each choice. As you read it, stop for a breath where the comma is. Only one reading will make sense. However, you can learn a little grammar here. The word transposed means that the clause would normally be at the end of the sentence, but the writer decided to put it at the beginning of the sentence. What would happen if you put the clause in the sample answers back at the end of the sentence? B would read like this. “At school he was carrying all his books with him when Tom arrived.” C would read like this. “Was carrying all his books with him when Tom arrived he.” Therefore the correct answer is A.

After, the volcano erupted, the tiny tropical island was quiet and devastated.

- A. After the volcano erupted, the**
- B. After the volcano erupted the**
- C. After the volcano erupts, the**
- D. Leave as is.**

Same rule. Another transposed adverbial clause. Try reading each answer, stopping for a breath at each comma. Try moving the clause to the end of the sentence. Answer C changes a past tense verb to a present tense verb, so it doesn't matter much how it reads, it's not correct. A present tense verb and a past tense verb in the same sentence usually don't work. The correct answer is A.

A dog bit Tom's ankle while riding a bicycle.

- A. Riding a bicycle, a dog bit Tom's ankle.**
- B. While riding a bicycle, a dog bit Tom's ankle.**
- C. While Tom was riding a bicycle, a dog bit his ankle.**
- D. Leave as is.**

When you see a misplaced modifier, you should laugh, or at least grin a little. Written as is, the sentence says that a dog is riding a bicycle. Or maybe the ankle is riding a bicycle. This sentence should clearly say that Tom is riding the bicycle. In Answers A and B, who is riding the bicycle? Who is riding the bicycle in Answer C? With misplaced modifiers, just use a little common sense and have a little laugh at the same time. The correct response is C.

Writing Conventions Strand-Part 2

For the following questions the CASHEE directions read: Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

The musician played Wendy's favorite waltz for her husband and _____.

- A. I**
- B. He**
- C. She**
- D. Her**

The rule is, “Use the objective case for objects of prepositions.” The trick is this. Which one would you use if you took out “her husband and”? (Notice the question mark here is outside the quotation mark because “her husband and” is not a question.) Let’s try it. The musician played Wendy’s favorite waltz for *I*. The musician played Wendy’s favorite waltz for *he*. The musician played Wendy’s favorite waltz for *she*. The musician played Wendy’s favorite waltz for *her*. Bingo! The correct answer is D.

_____ going to be late if they don’t hurry.

- A. They’re
- B. Their
- C. There
- D. They’ll

This sentence needs a subject. **Who** is going to be late? **They** are going to be late. What is the contraction for *they are*? A contraction runs words together and leaves out letters. An apostrophe goes where the letters are left out. **They’re** going to be late. The correct response is A.

When she _____ the award, she blushed and quickly returned to her seat.

- A. Excepted
- B. Accepts
- C. Accepted
- D. Excepts

You need to know two things here. First, do you want past tense or present tense? In the sentence she “blushed” (past tense) and “returned” (past tense). The event is over so use the past tense. That narrows our choices to *excepted* and *accepted*. These two words sound so much alike when you talk. Sometimes you just have to learn and remember. The correct response is C.

_____ is a book written by Harper Lee.

- A. To Kill A Mockingbird
- B. “To Kill a Mockingbird”
- C. To Kill a Mockingbird
- D. “To Kill a Mockingbird”

Here are some straightforward rules to learn and use. Underline book titles. If you are writing on a computer put the book title in Italics and forget the underlining. Put quotation marks around short story titles. Never use both underlining and quotation marks. With those simple rules you should be able to identify the answer correctly: C. This is a rule you can practice every time you write about a book, which should be often.

The frightened pilot’s face was ashen as he gingerly lowered the plane onto the Smiths’ private _____ that time was running out for his ailing friend.

- A. Runway: he knew
- B. Runway, he knew
- C. Runway. He knew
- D. Runway but he knew

Read this one out loud, inserting the missing words. How many sentences do you have? Do you have one complete thought or two complete thoughts? How do you end a sentence? How do you begin a new sentence? You know this, don't you? You'll get this one right. Only one of these answers includes a period and a capital letter. No more hints. The correct answer is C.

Writing Applications Strand

Writing Applications Strand-Introduction

On the CAHSEE, you will be expected to write 2 essays. The questions you will be asked will be chosen from the following types of writing:

- Biographical narratives**
- Responses to literature**
- Expository essays**
- Persuasive essays**
- Business letters**

Writing Applications Strand-Part 1

Biographical narratives: When you write a biographical narrative, you are writing about a real person who is important to you. You will want the reader to know why this person is important to you, why you feel about this person the way you do. One way to do this is to tell stories or anecdotes about this person.

You might want to start by making a chart. The chart should have two columns –one for a list of adjectives that describe the person, that tell why this person is important to you; the other for a list of stories (anecdotes, examples) that demonstrates or explains why. In the chart below the author wants to write about her dad. In the first column she puts the words intelligent, loving, and funny. In the second column she puts a few notes about the stories she wants to tell. When she is ready to write, she can focus on just one of these or two or all three. If the time to write is limited, she will probably just tell the stories about how intelligent he is and how much she respects, admires, and even envies his intelligence.

My Dad	
Intelligent	Story about when he was in elem. School. Able to read and remember, photo mind Knowledgeable about everything

Loving	Would do anything for me and mom Left little notes in crazy places for mom when he went on trips Unable to work when Mom almost died Mom unable to live when he died
Funny and fun-loving	Great story teller Told shaggy dog stories Liked to play games (not sports) The ultimate Dodger fan

In this essay you will want to do these things, all listed in the California Content Standards:

- Tell why this person is important to you and give examples.
- Be specific. Don't just say the person is interesting. Let your reader see him doing something interesting.
- Include sensory details: sights, sounds, and smells.
- Decide how much time to spend on each part of your story so that you are able to include everything you want to say.
- Make sure the reader can see this person. What does he look like? What does he do?

Now you pick someone, make a chart, and write your biographical narrative.

NOTE: No student samples have been released for biographical narrative.

Your essay will be scored using the following scoring guide for Response to Writing Prompt.

**California High School Exit Examination
CAHSEE Scoring Guide
Response to Writing Prompt**

4 The essay

- Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Provides a meaningful thesis, demonstrates a consistent tone and focus, and illustrates a purposeful control of organization.
- Thoughtfully supports the thesis and main ideas with specific details and examples.
- Provides a variety of sentence types and uses precise, descriptive language.
- Demonstrates a clear sense of audience.
- Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors are generally first-draft in nature.)*

3 The essay

- Addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Provides a thesis, demonstrates a consistent tone and focus, and illustrates a control of organization.
- Supports the thesis and main ideas with details and examples.
- Provides a variety of sentence types and uses some descriptive language.
- Demonstrates a general sense of audience.
- May contain some errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

2 The essay

- _ Addresses only parts of the writing task.
- _ May provide a thesis, demonstrates an inconsistent tone and focus and illustrates little, if any, control of organization.
- _ May support the thesis and main ideas with limited, if any, details and/or examples.
- _ Provides few, if any, types of sentence types, and basic, predictable language.
- _ Demonstrates little or no sense of audience.
- _ May contain several errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

1. The essay may be too short to evaluate or

- _ Addresses only one part of the writing task.
- _ May provide a weak, if any, thesis; demonstrates little or no consistency of tone and focus; and illustrates little or no control of organization.
- _ Fails to support ideas with details and/or examples.
- _ May provide no sentence variety and uses limited vocabulary.
- _ May demonstrate no sense of audience.
- _ May contain serious errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

Non-scorable

B = Blank L = Written in a language other than English T = Off-topic I = Illegible/Unintelligible

- Conventions of the English language refer to grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage.

Writing Applications Strand-Part 2

Responses to Literature: Before you can “respond to literature,” you have to read something. The California Content Standards, require that you be able to do these things:

- 1. *Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works.***
What are the main ideas? What is the author saying? Why is what the author is saying important?
- 2. *Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.*** How do you know what the author's ideas are? Can you quote from the text to prove what you say?

3. Demonstrate awareness of the author’s use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created. Did the author use figurative language? Give an example. Did the author use symbolism? How did he use symbolism? Did the author use words that helped you see, smell, taste, hear, or feel the setting or scene? Did the author use words that made you angry or sad or excited or scared?

4. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text. This one sounds complicated, doesn’t it. But don’t worry. The best writers usually say something that make you think, makes you question, makes you wonder. Just go with it. Ask the questions. Try to figure it out. Don’t look for a right answer. There may not be a right answer. It’s all right to talk about and write about the things that confuse you.

Let’s examine a prompt that appeared on the 2002 CAHSEE. First you will need to read the story “The Hiking Trip.”

The Hiking Trip

“I never wanted to come on this stupid old hiking trip anyway!” His voice echoed, shrill and panicked, across the narrow canyon. His father stopped, chest heaving with the effort of the climb, and turned to look at the boy.

“This is hard on you, son, I know. But you’ve got to come through with courage and a level head.”

“But I’m scared! I don’t even want to have courage!” he retorted. He jerked his head the other way and wiped his eyes across his arm.

“If not courage, fine,” his father replied sternly. “Then have enough love for your brother to think this through!” He pulled a bandana from his back pocket and tied it around his neck. Then he gently placed his hand on the boy’s shoulder and continued, more softly this time. “Now, I don’t know if I can make it without stopping every so often. And we just don’t have the time to stop. You’re young, but you’re strong and fast. Do you remember the way back from here to the road, if you had to go alone?”

Jeff flashed back to the agonizing scene of his seventeen-year-old brother at their campsite that morning. He’d been bitten by a snake yesterday during a rough hike through very rocky terrain. By the time they returned to their tents, he was limping badly. Then this morning he couldn’t put on his boots, and the pain seemed to be getting worse. He needed medical attention right away, so leaving him there was their only choice.

“Jeffrey? Jeffrey, could you do it? Could you make it to the road without me if you had to?”

Jeff blinked and looked past his father's eyes to the end of the canyon, several miles away. He nodded slowly as the path and the plan began to take hold in his mind.

"What was the name of that little town we stopped in to get matches, Dad?"

His father smiled and replied, "Flint. After we left Flint, we parked at the side of the road a few miles out of town. When you see which way our car is facing, you'll know that the town is back the other direction." Jeff thought about this and then nodded. They both drank water and then continued scrambling over the rocks.

Nothing was as pretty as it had seemed when they first hiked this way to their campsite. Before, the boulders and rocks had been an interesting challenge. Now, they were obstacles that threatened their footing and their velocity. Overhanging limbs had earlier been natural curiosities in the cliffs. But now they were nature's weapons, slapping and scratching the boy and the man who crashed by and pushed through as quickly as they could.

Stone by stone, they made their way up the canyon. Jeff's father grew smaller and smaller in the distance. "He must be stopping a lot," Jeff thought. He waved to him from a bend in the canyon wall. His father waved back. Jeff turned and made the final ascent up an easier slope toward the road and spotted his father's car. He lurched toward it, half stumbling, and leaned on the hood, breathless.

"Can't stop," he thought. "Mark's in big trouble. Gotta keep going." The fast, loud thudding in his ears was deafening, and as he pulled himself upright, he was surprised as a car sped by, heading toward Flint. "Hey, mister!" he shouted, waving both arms. He began to walk, faster and faster until he was jogging. Then he quickly crossed the highway and broke into a full-speed run, holding his left arm straight out, his thumb up.

His chest was burning with every breath when he suddenly heard several loud honks from behind. He turned as the brakes squealed and saw "Bob's Towing & Repair, Flint" right behind him. "Jump in, boy! What's up?" Jeff explained between gasps as the truck picked up speed. The driver reached for his two-way radio as soon as he heard about Mark. "Better get the helicopter in there," he seemed to be shouting into his hand. But

Jeff wasn't sure about that because everything got fuzzy and then went black and quiet.

Hours later, Jeff opened his eyes to find strange surroundings and his father on a chair nearby.

“You’re a hero, son,” his father said with a smile. “You saved Mark.”

“What happened?” Jeff asked through a wide yawn. “Where are we?”

“This is a motel room in Flint. You made it into town and sent the helicopter into the canyon after Mark. I can’t tell you how happy I was when I saw it overhead.

I’m so proud of you!”

Jeff sat up suddenly. “Where’s Mark? Is he OK?”

“They airlifted him out and got him to the hospital. His leg’s still in bad shape, but he’s going to be just fine in a couple of days. Thanks to you, son.”

Jeff’s worried face relaxed as his father spoke. “How about you, Dad? How did you get out?”

“Well, I finally hiked myself out of that canyon and to the road. I won’t be going back there any time soon. That’s for sure. Anyway, I couldn’t see the car, and as I headed for Flint I got lucky and was able to hitch a ride from a fellow named Bob in a tow truck.”

Jeff laughed out loud. “I guess Bob makes a good living going up and down that road. I hope you gave him a good tip, Dad!”

Writing Task

In the story “The Hiking Trip,” the reader learns about the main character, Jeff. Jeff’s personality and emotions are revealed through the actions and dialog presented in the story.

Write an essay in which you describe the personality and emotions of Jeff, the main character. How do his personal characteristics add to the events in the story? How does the author reveal this information about Jeff in the story? Use details and examples from the story to support your ideas.

Make sure you know exactly what the prompt asks you to do. Does it ask you to summarize the story? No, it doesn't. The prompt asks you to write about Jeff's personality and emotions. How would you describe his personality? What were his emotions? What in the story tells you this? If you make a simple grid, you can organize your thoughts before you begin to write.

Jeff's personality/emotions	Evidence from the story
Courageous	At the beginning, he didn't think he was courageous. Didn't want to be. Went on alone. "You're a hero, son."
Loving	Did it for his brother "Mark's in big trouble. Gotta keep going."
Determined	Kept going "His chest was burning."

With this simple grid, you can focus what you write on Jeff, not on a retelling of the story.

Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you:

- Carefully read the reading passage and the description of the task.
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use specific details and examples from the passage to demonstrate your understanding of the main ideas and the author's purpose.
- Use precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

Essays will be scored using the following scoring guide for Response to Literary / Expository Text:

**California High School Exit Examination
CAHSEE Scoring Guide
Response to Literary/Expository Text**

4 The response —

- _ Demonstrates a thoughtful, comprehensive grasp of the text.
- _ Accurately and coherently provides specific textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- _ Demonstrates a clear understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- _ Provides a variety of sentence types and uses precise, descriptive language.
- _ Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors are generally first-draft in nature.)*

Response to informational passages:

- _ Thoughtfully anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- _ Clearly demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

3 The response —

- _ Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of the text.
- _ Accurately and coherently provides general textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- _ Demonstrates a general understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- _ Provides a variety of sentence types and uses some descriptive language.
- _ May contain some errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors do not interfere with
- _ The reader's understanding of the essay.)*

Response to informational passages:

- _ Anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- _ Demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

2 The response —

- _ Demonstrates a limited grasp of the text.
- _ Provides few, if any, textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- _ Demonstrates limited, or no understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- _ Provides few, if any, types of sentences and uses basic, predictable language.
- _ May contain several errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

Response to informational passages:

- _ May address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations, but in a limited manner.

Response to literary passages:

- _ May demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

1 The response —

- _ Demonstrates little, if any, comprehensive grasp of the text.
- _ May provide no textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- _ May demonstrate no understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- _ May provide no sentence variety and uses limited vocabulary.
- _ May contain serious errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

Response to informational passages:

- _ Does not address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- _ Does not demonstrate awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Non-scorable

B = Blank L = Written in a language other than English T = Off-topic I =

Illegible/Unintelligible

* Conventions of the English language refer to grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage.

Now look at the sample student essay, one that earned a 3 on the CAHSEE.

STUDENT ESSAY

To understand who Jeff is, you have to realize what he has to go through in the story. In the beginning, Jeff is afraid to hike and doesn't want to have the courage to climb the mountain. After Jeff's dad says, "If not courage, fine. Then have enough love for your brother," Jeff realizes that he has to do it to save his brother's life. He becomes determined to find help. He thinks about how badly his brother needs medical attention.

Jeff becomes so determined to get help; he begins to climb faster and faster until he passes up his dad. He says to himself "Can't stop, Mark's in big trouble."

This shows how his love for his brother has substituted for the courage that he did want to have. Do you think that his love for his brother gives him the courage or the will to climb the mountain and get help for Mark?

Hours later after Mark is rescued, Jeff wakes up but doesn't know what had happened. His father tells him that he's a hero and that he saved his brother's life. He had pushed himself to the limits trying to get help for Mark. His love for Mark had given him the will, the determination, and the courage to get over his fear and climb the mountain for help.

COMMENTARY

The writer addressed all parts of the writing task. He described Jeff's personality and emotions, quoted from the text, and showed how his personality and emotions added to the events of the story. (He did forget to mention the name of the story. When you write your response to literature, don't you forget to include the title of the piece!)

What could the writer have done to make this essay even better? This paper did not receive a 4 because of its chronological arrangement; the paper summarizes the story instead of focusing on the main character, Jeff. Although the second and third paragraphs implicitly, indirectly, give evidence of Jeff's character, the scorers felt that this should be more explicit, more direct.

The writer also forgot his audience. In the first sentence, he directs his words to "you." He does it again in the second paragraph. "Do you think that his love for his brother gives him the courage or the will to climb the mountain and get help for Mark?" (I added the question mark because the writer forgot it.) I am writing this study guide to you, so I refer to you in practically every paragraph because I want you to pass the CAHSEE. Who is the audience for this piece on "The Hiking Trip"?

If you would like to read another teacher's comments on this student paper, you can go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee>.

One more tip. Strong beginnings can signify strong papers. Try starting with dialogue or a description, something that grabs the reader right away. Do we really care "who Jeff is" with this beginning?

Writing Applications Strand-Part 3

Expository essays: Exposition is a type of writing that explains, gives information, or clarifies an idea. This is the most common type of writing in school and in life. When

your teacher asks you to write a report or a research paper or a summary, she is asking you to write exposition. Exposition is also used as a part of other types of writing. For example in a story when you set up the plot, the characters and their conflicts, you will be writing exposition. Exposition is most often non-fiction, meaning that it deals with real people, things, events, and places.

According to the California Content Standards, you should know how to do these things:

- Gather evidence in support of your subject
- Use primary (first-hand) sources and secondary sources (newspapers) accurately
- Distinguish between information and the significance of the data.
- Know how to use and include visual aids--charts, maps, graphs, technology.
- Be aware of your audience, anticipating misunderstandings
- Use subject specific terms accurately.

Let's examine a prompt that appeared on the 2001 CAHSEE.

Writing Task

By the time students enter high school, they have learned about many moments in history that have influenced our world today. Think about a moment in history you studied and consider its importance.

Write a composition in which you discuss a moment in history. Share its importance in today's world. Be sure to support the moment with details and examples.

What do the writers of the prompt ask you to do first? They ask you **to think** about a time in history that you have studied, to think about why that time in history was important. Then they ask you to write about that time in history, telling why it is important in today's world, and to support what you say with details and examples. So how many things do you have to do?

An organizational chart might help you organize your thoughts. Divide your paper into three columns. In the first column describe the event or events. (You may want to list two or three to see which one you know the most about. This is not a history test; it is a writing test. However, you should pick a topic that you know something about so that you have something to say. It could be something you have just studied in school or has just happened in current events.) In the second column write some notes about what the world was like before the event. In the third column write how this event has changed the world, why it is still important in today's world. In this column you need to list as many examples to prove the event's importance you can think of. If you can't think of enough examples, you will need to choose another event.! When your chart is complete, you are ready to write.

Again a reminder that the writing is key here. You are not being asked to show what you know about history. If you are hazy about details, admit that in the writing.

Event/description	World before/at time of event	Why important in today's world
Man on moon	Unsuccessful attempts	Americans can do anything they want Americans are great Gave Americans courage Gave Americans respect
Invention of auto	Horse-drawn carriages Rode horseback Walked Took forever to travel People did not travel Uncomfortable Trains didn't go everywhere	People can live farther from their workplace Created an urban/suburban society Highways, maps, freeways, tollroads, high speeds Comfortable Independence

Below is a sample student essay, one that earned a 3 on the CAHSEE. The writer chose man setting foot on the moon as the event. He does not know much about this event.

STUDENT ESSAY

One of the most important days in history so far is the day that man set foot on the moon. This was not only important in U.S. history, but it was important to everywhere else in the world too. This amazing achievement showed Americans that they could do anything they want, if they try hard enough, and it showed other countries how great we really are.

The day that man set foot on the moon was a very exciting day. A lot of people didn't believe that it really happened because it was so amazing. But when everyone realized that it had really happened, it gave him or her the courage to strive for their goals and achieve them.

For years before man stepped on the moon, other countries had been trying to and were unsuccessful. But, America was able to. This made the other countries have so much more respect for us.

When man set foot on the moon, it was honestly one of the most important days in history because of what took place as a result of it.

COMMENTARY

Notice that this writer has written an introduction that makes it clear he is going to write about the moment in history when "man set foot on the moon." His reason is that this "amazing achievement showed Americans they can do anything they want." It also showed other countries what a great country the U.S. is. Consider what this writer might have done to make his introduction more interesting. Perhaps he could have started with a description of that moment when Neil Armstrong "set foot on the moon" and the words he said which have gone down in history.

In the second paragraph he says the day was "exciting" and "amazing." He says that this moment "gave them [Americans] courage to strive for their goals and achieve them."

If you would like to read another teacher's comments on this student paper, you can go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee>.

The writer tells us in the third paragraph that because of this moment, other countries gained respect for America. He concludes, "it was one of the most important days in history."

Let's look back at the checklist for writing:

Use specific details and examples to fully support your ideas. I wonder if this writer took the time to outline or organize ideas. Had he done so, he might have used more examples. Although he addresses all parts of the task, his evidence is weak.

Organize with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction and conclusion are adequate but not strong. He needs to end with a stronger message than "what took place as a result of it."

Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read. This writer does vary his sentence structure, sometimes beginning with phrases, sometimes with clauses. He also varies sentence length.

Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation. He has few mechanical errors.

Expository essays will be scored using the same rubric as biographical narratives.

If you want to practice, write an expository essay to this prompt. Choose a period of history you know well and recall all the things you have learned about writing expository essays.

Writing Applications Strand-Part 4

Persuasive Essays: When you turn the page your text booklet to the writing prompt, it won't be labeled as a persuasive essay, but you will know if you are being asked to write

a persuasive essay by reading the description of the task carefully. Persuasive essays ask you to defend a position or issue you support. An issue is something about which people disagree.

As you prepare to write, you will need to take a stand on the issue the prompt provides. Do you agree or disagree? Decide and then make two columns. In one column, list all the reasons why you support your position, why you believe as you do. Try to come up with at least three. In the other column list all the reasons why an opponent might disagree with you. Try again for at least three. Consider this kind of writing as a debate on paper.

You are almost ready to write. When you write your arguments, you want the two most powerful points to be first and last. Star those arguments. Now you are ready to write.

A good persuasive essay will do these things which are listed in the California Content Standards.

- Have a logical structure. Put your most powerful arguments first and last.
- Appeal to the reader's logic or emotions.
- Tell a personal story or someone else's story or make a comparison. This may be a good way to start.
- Use fact and/ or expert opinions to clarify your position. You want to demonstrate that this is not just your opinion but an opinion that other thoughtful individuals share.
- Address the reader's concerns and arguments. Use your list of counter arguments to help you do this.

In an effective persuasive essay, the writer's opinion is clear. Check that yours is. You might also want to consider using a hook to involve readers immediately--a shocking statement, a meaningful quote, an interesting anecdote, a puzzling question, and a dramatic statistic. Finally, don't forget to include the arguments of those who disagree with you. Explain why those arguments are weaker than your own.

Let's examine a prompt that appeared on the 2002 CAHSEE.

Some students at your school expressed an interest in making the school more attractive by getting rid of the trash on the school grounds. Write a persuasive essay for your school paper in which you convince the readers of the importance of getting rid of the trash and making the school more attractive. Convince your readers through the use of specific reasons and examples.

Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you:

- Read the description of the task carefully.
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- State your position, support it with specific examples, and address the reader’s concerns.
- Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

Below is a sample student essay, one that earned a 3 on the CAHSEE.

STUDENT ESSAY

Nobody would like it if people stopped picking up trash and let our school become filled with trash. It is very important to keep our school clean to provide an appropriate learning environment. If everyone would help out our school would look more attractive.

A clean school campus would offer a nicer and appropriate learning environment. A dirty school makes it harder to concentrate on schoolwork. If trash covered the campus students might be looking out classroom windows for what awaits them after class and wondering why someone is not cleaning it up. A clean school would help the students concentrate so grades might raise not only making the school look better on the outside but academically as well.

No one enjoys being in a dirty environment. Before school, snack, lunch, and after school would be much less enjoyable to both the students and faculty if our campus was dirty. People do not like eating in trash filled lunch areas and so there would be more students leaving school permitted or not for lunch. Basically, students and teachers would not be able to stand being in a dirty environment during school hours.

In conclusion living environments are kept clean and so it is equally important to keep learning environments clean as well. Both the students and faculty spend large portions of their days here so to make school a little better and more attractive our school needs to be kept clean. It would be easy if everyone just did his or her part.

COMMENTARY

When you read the first paragraph of this essay, you know immediately that the author wants everyone to help keep the school environment attractive and in the following paragraphs, he/she gives reasons why: to present an appropriate learning environment; to make the school a more enjoyable place. The writer ends with “It would be easy if everyone just did their part.”

The writer has met the basic demands of persuasive writing. The writer has an introduction, body, and conclusion; the writer has stated his position; the writer has used a variety of sentence structures; the writer has addressed the reader's concerns.

What could the writer have done to make this piece more interesting to the reader? What would you advise? How about beginning with a great description of a dirty campus (or a clean one)? How about some anecdotes, little stories that describe what students who care can do? What about some dialogue between two students about the state of the campus? When a writer adds these kinds of dramatic examples, the writing becomes more powerful.

Why don't you try writing this same essay for practice? Read the prompt again and write a persuasive essay in which you convince your readers of the importance of getting rid of the trash on your school grounds and making your school more attractive.

Persuasive essays will be scored using the following rubric.

**California High School Exit Examination
CAHSEE Scoring Guide
Response to Writing Prompt**

4 The essay

- Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Provides a meaningful thesis, demonstrates a consistent tone and focus, and illustrates a purposeful control of organization.
- Thoughtfully supports the thesis and main ideas with specific details and examples.
- Provides a variety of sentence types and uses precise, descriptive language.
- Demonstrates a clear sense of audience.
- Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors are generally first-draft in nature.)*

A Persuasive Composition:

- States and maintains a position, authoritatively defends that position with precise and relevant evidence and convincingly addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

3 The essay

- Addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Provides a thesis, demonstrates a consistent tone and focus, and illustrates a control of organization.
- Supports the thesis and main ideas with details and examples.
- Provides a variety of sentence types and uses some descriptive language.
- Demonstrates a general sense of audience.

- May contain some errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

A Persuasive Composition:

- _ States and maintains a position, generally defends that position with precise and relevant evidence and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

2 The essay

- _ Addresses only parts of the writing task.
- _ May provide a thesis, demonstrates an inconsistent tone and focus and illustrates little, if any, control of organization.
- _ May support the thesis and main ideas with limited, if any, details and/or examples.
- _ Provides few, if any, types of sentence types, and basic, predictable language.
- _ Demonstrates little or no sense of audience.
- _ May contain several errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

A Persuasive Composition:

- _ Defends a position with little evidence and may address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

1 The essay may be too short to evaluate or

- _ Addresses only one part of the writing task.
- _ May provide a weak, if any, thesis; demonstrates little or no consistency of tone and focus; and illustrates little or no control of organization.
- _ Fails to support ideas with details and/or examples.
- _ May provide no sentence variety and uses limited vocabulary.
- _ May demonstrate no sense of audience.
- _ May contain serious errors in the conventions of the English language. (Errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)*

A Persuasive Composition:

- _ Fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

Non-scorable

B = Blank L = Written in a language other than English T = Off-topic I =

Illegible/Unintelligible

* Conventions of the English language refer to grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage.

Writing Applications Strand-Part 5

Business letters: When writing business letters, your purpose may be to inform, to suggest, to complain, to argue, to persuade, or to commend. This means that a business letter is sometimes an expository piece of writing about buying a product that didn't work. You explain how the product was defective and demand your money back. A business letter might also be a persuasive piece of writing. Students deserve clean school restrooms but your school's restrooms are a mess. You write a letter to the Board of Education to persuade the Board to take action on this problem. A business letter might

be a biographical piece of writing. If you are asked to write a letter of recommendation, you will have to describe the person you are recommending and tell how he or she would be perfect for the job.

According to the California Content Standards, you should be able to do these things.

- Read the prompt carefully. What does the prompt ask you to do? Begin with a salutation, “Dear _____” or “To Whom It May Concern:” Sign your name at the end of your business letter.
- Remember your audience, the person who will be receiving the letter, and use language that person will appreciate and pay attention to. Don’t use teenage slang when addressing the Board of Education.
- Keep the letter short and to the point. Make your central ideas clear.
- Remember that if you want to make a good impression you will need to pay attention to format and spacing as well as spelling and punctuation.

Look at the practice persuasive essay you wrote about picking up trash on the school grounds. Could you turn that essay into a letter? Of course you can. Who would be your audience? The students at your high school, the same audience you had when you wrote for the school newspaper. It shouldn’t take much effort to take those ideas and put them in the form of a business letter. Try it.

Note: No student samples have been released for business letters.

So there you have it. You have finished this study guide that was written just for you. We hope it will help you pass the California High School Exit Exam. If you still have questions, your teachers can help you. Perhaps your parents can help as well. Everyone wants you to succeed. Just remember to read carefully, re-read when you have questions, and use logic and common sense.

Every chance you get, read and write for your own enjoyment. Talk to others about the books you read. Keep a journal. This isn’t only about succeeding on a test or in your English class. This is about enriching your life!

Good luck.

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Appendix A

List of the CAHSEE blueprint English Language Arts Standards

List of Contributors

Principal author: Jane Hancock, co-director, California Writing Project, UCLA.

Editor: Carol Jago, teacher, Santa Monica High School and co-director, California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA.

Advisory panel:

Karen Lopez, teacher, William S. Hart High School, William S. Hart Union School District.

Sidnie Myrick, teacher and associate director of the California Writing Project, UCLA.

Cynthia Oei, teacher, Herbert Hoover High School, Glendale USD.

Tylene Quizon, teacher and ELD Department Chair, EIA-LEP Program Coordinator, Robert A. Millikan High School, Long Beach Unified School District.

Adriana Reyes, teacher, Los Altos High School, Hacienda La Puente School District

Anne Gani Sirota, co-director, California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA.

Joyce Tamanaha-Ho, teacher, Alhambra High School, Alhambra USD.