



Introducing CAST Item Specifications

The California Science Test (CAST) item specifications are a tool used by item writers when developing new test questions. The item writers use these item specifications to:

- Ensure items align with the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS)
- Provide paths for developing multidimensional items

These item specifications identify the assessment targets and relevant Environmental Principles and Concepts that guide the development of assessment items for each of the Performance Expectations (PEs) of the CA NGSS. These documents also provide examples of potential student tasks, possible scientific phenomena, common misconceptions, and additional resources.

Now, these newly released CAST item specifications are available for classroom educators.

Along with the *2016 Science Framework for California Public Schools*, the CAST item specifications are important tools to help educators with the following*:

- **Understanding** the three-dimensional nature of the CAST
- **Anticipating** the types of tasks that students might encounter on the CAST
- **Accessing** resources used by CAST item developers
- **Developing** assessment items for in-class formative and summative assessments

* Neither the CAST nor item specifications are intended to guide instruction.

Where to find them?

Item specifications are written for all PEs assessed on the CAST and can be found on the California Department of Education (CDE) CAST Item Specifications web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/castitemspecs.asp>. The CDE 2016 Science Framework for California Public Schools web page can be found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/sc/cf/cascienceframework2016.asp>.