English-Language Arts Study Guide

California High School Exit Examination

Prepared by the
California Department of Education
Sacramento, 2008

CAHSEE Study Guide
English-Language Arts

Publishing Information

CAHSEE Study Guide English-Language Arts

© 2008 California Department of Education.

Permission is granted in advance for reproduction of this document for educational purposes only. The content must remain unchanged and in its entirety as published by the California Department of Education (CDE). To request permission to reproduce the information (text or graphics) contained in this document for resale, submit the specifics of your request in writing to the Copyright Program Office, California Department of Education, CDE Press, 1430 N Street, Suite 3207, Sacramento, CA 95814. Fax: 916-324-9787.

Please note that any privately copyrighted reading passages contained in any CDE materials or on the CDE Web site may not be reproduced in publications for sale or otherwise. To obtain permission and terms of use for privately copyrighted materials, contact the copyright holder.

This printing of the *CAHSEE Study Guide English-Language Arts* contains the following privately copyrighted passages:

"A Day Away," from *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*, by Maya Angelou

"Reflections After the Rain," from *Navajo Voices and Visions Across the Mesa*, by Shonto Begay

"Early Spring," from *Navajo Voices and Visions Across the Mesa*, by Shonto Begay

"Slow Death of a Cave," from *Discover*, by Leslie Vreeland

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

JACK O'CONNELL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

In 1999, California enacted a law requiring that every California public school student pass an examination to receive a high school diploma. The primary purpose of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) is to significantly improve pupil achievement in public high schools and to ensure that pupils who graduate from public high schools can demonstrate grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Since 1999 hundreds of thousands of students have taken and passed the CAHSEE. We realize that many students and their families find the prospect of taking this test stressful. Therefore, we are pleased to be able to provide students and their parents with this *English-Language Arts Study Guide*, which is designed to help students pass the CAHSEE.

The CAHSEE will be administered over two days. On the first day, students will take the English-language arts portion of the test; on the second day, they will take the mathematics portion. All of the questions on the CAHSEE are based on California's academic content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. These standards outline what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of each school year from kindergarten through high school.

The focus of this study guide is the English-language arts part of the exam. It includes questions previously used on the CAHSEE and explains how to determine the correct answers. The guide also gives studying and test-taking tips and answers frequently asked questions. A similar study guide for mathematics is also available.

Passing the CAHSEE is an achievement for students, and we hope you find this guide helpful. If you have questions or would like more information about the CAHSEE, please contact your high school's principal or your school district's testing office. The California Department of Education's CAHSEE Web site at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/ is also an excellent resource.

Good luck with this exam!

Original signed by Jack O'Connell. A hard copy of the signed document is available by contacting the CAHSEE Office at 916-445-9449.

1430 N STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5901 • 916-319-0800 • WWW.CDE.CA.GOV

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

JACK O'CONNELL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

UN MENSAJE A LOS ALUMNOS Y SUS PADRES O GUARDIANES

En 1999, el estado de California pasó una ley que exige que todo alumno de una escuela pública de California apruebe un examen para recibir su diploma de preparatoria o high school. El propósito del examen es el de asegurar que los alumnos que se gradúen de la preparatoria o high school puedan leer y escribir en inglés y puedan usar las matemáticas.

Desde 1999 cientos de miles de estudiantes han tomado y han aprobado el CAHSEE. Nosotros estamos concientes de que el tener que tomar este examen es una fuente de tensión para los alumnos y sus familias. Por eso nos complace proveer a los alumnos y sus padres o guardianes con esta *Guía de Estudio de Inglés o English-Language Arts*, la cual esta diseñada para ayudar a los alumnos a prepararse para pasar el CAHSEE.

El CAHSEE se administra durante dos días. El primer día los alumnos tomarán la sección que se enfoca en los conocimientos de inglés o English-language arts. Durante el segundo día los alumnos tomarán la sección del examen que se enfoca en las matemáticas. Todas las preguntas del CAHSEE están basadas en los estándares estatales del contenido de inglés o English-language arts y de matemáticas. Estos estándares describen lo que se espera que los alumnos sepan y puedan hacer al final de cada año escolar desde el kinder hasta el 12° grado.

Esta guía de estudio se enfoca en la sección del examen que cubre los conocimientos **de inglés o English-language arts**. Incluye preguntas de exámenes previos y provee ayuda para determinar cual es la mejor respuesta; presenta estrategias para estudiar y para responder a preguntas; y responde a las preguntas más frecuentes acerca del examen. Existe una guía similar para la parte del examen que se concentra en matemáticas.

Pasar el CAHSEE es un gran logro para los alumnos y esperamos que esta guía les ayude. Si tiene preguntas o le gustaría obtener más información acerca del examen por favor llame al director de su escuela o a la oficina de evaluación de su distrito escolar. La página de Web del CAHSEE del Departamento de Educación de California también es un recurso excelente. Visítela en: http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/.

¡Buena suerte con este examen!

Original signed by Jack O'Connell. A hard copy of the signed document is available by contacting the CAHSEE Office at 916-445-9449.

NOTE TO READER

We are pleased to present this revised student Study Guide to you. We have made several important changes based on the feedback we received from parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Focus groups from both northern and southern California analyzed the original Student Guides and provided suggestions to make them more useful and accessible to students. The following changes were made to the document:

- We have placed a full practice test in the beginning of the guide with an answer key in the appendix.
- Additional sample test questions have been added to both guides.
- Graphics and page design have been revised to improve readability.
- Mathematics and English-language arts now use consistent strategies to refer to content strands.
- Tabs have been added for easy reference to content strands.
- Explanations to the mathematics practice problems show dual approaches to solve each problem.
- Students are provided with strategies for solving English-language arts questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Educational Testing Service (ETS), as well as the staff and students from San Bernardino High School and San Gorgonio High School in San Bernardino and C.K. McClatchy High School in Sacramento for their participation in our focus groups. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the following CDE staff who provided input to this revised edition:

California Department of Education

Deb V. H. Sigman, Deputy Superintendent
Assessment and Accountability Branch

Janet Chladek, Acting Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Diane Hernandez, Administrator
CAHSEE Office

Tom Herman, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Bonnie Galloway, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Carrie Strong-Thompson, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Much appreciation goes to the educators who contributed to the development of material provided in the original Study Guide.

Principal Author

Jane Hancock, Co-Director
California Writing Project, UCLA

Editor

Carol Jago, Co-Director
California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA
Teacher, Santa Monica High School
Santa Monica High School District

University of California
Office of the President

Elizabeth Stage, Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Harold Asturias, Deputy Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Susan Arnold, Assistant to the Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Advisory Panel

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

Sidnie Myrick, Associate Director
California Writing Project, UCLA

Cynthia Oei, Teacher
Herbert Hoover High School
Glendale Unified School District

Tylene F. Quizon
Robert A. Millikan High School
Long Beach Unified School District

Anne Gani Sirota, Co-Director
California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA

Joyce Tamanaha-Ho, Teacher
Alhambra High School
Alhambra Unified School District

California Department of Education

Geno Flores, Former Deputy Superintendent
Assessment and Accountability Branch

Deb V.H. Sigman, Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Phil Spears, Former Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Lily Roberts, Former Administrator
CAHSEE Office

Janet Chladek, Former Administrator
CAHSEE Office

Terry Emmett, Administrator
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office

Jessica Valdez, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Bruce Little, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Beth Brenneman, Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office

Paul Michelson, Former Consultant
Testing and Reporting Office

Other Contributors

Meg Holmberg, Writing Consultant
EEPS Media

Tim Erickson, Writing Consultant
EEPS Media

Contents

Frequently Asked Questions 1

Preguntas Hechas Frecuentemente 3

Information for Students 7

- Tips for Preparing for the CAHSEE 7
- Tips for Using the Answer Document 7
- Tips for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions 8
- Tips for Answering Reading Passage Questions 9
- Tips for Writing the Essay 9

English-Language Arts Practice Test 11

Overview of the Standards 58

1. Word Analysis 59

2. Reading Comprehension 65

3. Literary Response and Analysis 77

4. Writing Strategies 85

5. Written and Oral English Language Conventions 93

6. Writing Applications 99

- Biographical Essays 101
- Responses to Literature 102
- Exposition 107
- Persuasive Essays 111
- Business Letters 114
- Scoring Guides for Writing Tasks 115

Appendices 119

- Appendix A: Answer Key to the Practice Test 120
- Appendix B: Answer Key to Sample Questions 122

Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions are often asked about the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). If you have a question that is not answered here, call your high school's principal or your school district's testing office. You can find answers to other frequently asked questions on CDE's CAHSEE Web page, http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/.

What does the CAHSEE cover?

The CAHSEE has two parts: English-language arts and mathematics.

The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE tests state content standards through grade ten. The reading section includes vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and analysis of informational and literary texts. The writing section covers writing strategies, applications, and the conventions of standard English (for example, grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

The mathematics part of the CAHSEE tests state content standards in grades six and seven and Algebra I. The exam includes statistics, data analysis and probability, number sense, measurement and geometry, mathematical reasoning, and algebra. Students are also asked to demonstrate a strong foundation in computation and arithmetic, including working with decimals, fractions, and percentages.

What kinds of questions are on the CAHSEE?

Most of the questions on the CAHSEE are multiple choice. However, the English-language arts part of the exam also includes one essay question (writing task). The exam is given only in English, and all students must pass the exam in English to receive a high school diploma. Sample questions from previous administrations of the CAHSEE can be found throughout this Study Guide and on CDE's Web site.

When do students first take the CAHSEE?

Students must take the exam for the first time in the second part of their tenth grade year.

When (and how) do students find out whether they have passed the CAHSEE?

School districts receive student score reports about seven weeks after the date of the exam. One copy is to be mailed to the student's home and another copy is to be kept in the student's permanent record. It is important that parents or guardians keep a copy of the student report for their records. The State of California does *not* keep a copy of the scores. All individual student scores are confidential. Only group scores (for entire schools and districts) are made public. Scores may range from 275 to 450. A passing score is 350 or higher.

What if a student does not pass the first time?

Students who do not pass the exam in the tenth grade will have several opportunities to take it again during their junior and senior years. Once they have passed either part of the exam, they will not be tested again on that part. By state law, students who do not pass a part of the exam must be offered extra

instruction to learn what they need to know in order to pass. It is up to each school and district to decide how to provide this instruction. To find out what type of help is available and when the exam will be given again at your school, contact the principal or a counselor at your high school.

What if a student is a senior and still has not passed the CAHSEE?

Assembly 6 Bill (AB347) states that you are entitled to receive intensive instruction and services for up to two consecutive academic years after completion of grade 12 or until you have passed both parts of the exit examination, whichever comes first. Also, you have the right to file a complaint regarding those services through the Uniform Complaint Procedure as set forth in California Education Code Section 35186.

What if a student has special needs?

If a student has an individualized education program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, it should describe any special arrangements the student is entitled to while taking an exam. Special arrangements for taking the CAHSEE are categorized as either "accommodations" or "modifications." It is important to understand the difference between them because it may affect a student's score on the exam.

An **accommodation** does not alter what the test measures—for example, taking extra breaks during the exam or using a test booklet with large print.

A **modification** fundamentally alters what the exam measures—for example, using a calculator on the mathematics part of the exam or hearing an audio presentation of the questions on the ELA part of the exam.

Students must be permitted to use any accommodations or modifications on the CAHSEE that are specified for testing purposes in their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Students who take the exam using an *accommodation* receive a score just as any other student does. However, students who use a *modification* receive a numeric score followed by the word "MODIFIED." If the student receives a score of 350 or higher, the student may be eligible for a waiver. This is done, in part, by presenting evidence proving that the student has gained the knowledge and skills otherwise needed to pass the CAHSEE.

More information about the procedure for requesting a waiver, including a list of modifications and accommodations, can be accessed on CDE's CAHSEE Web site or by talking with a high school principal.

What if a student is still learning to speak and read in English?

All students must pass the CAHSEE to be eligible for a high school diploma. Students who are English learners are required to take the CAHSEE in grade ten with all students. However, the law says that during their first 24 months in a California school, they are to receive six months of special instruction in reading, writing, and comprehension in English. Additionally, English learners must be permitted to take the CAHSEE with certain test variations if used regularly in the classroom. A student who does not pass the exam in grade ten will have additional opportunities to pass it.

Preguntas Hechas Frecuentemente

A continuación encontrará respuestas a las preguntas más frecuentes sobre el Examen *California High School Exit Examination* o CAHSEE. Si tiene preguntas cuyas respuestas no aparezcan aquí, por favor llame al director de su escuela o a la oficina de evaluación de su distrito escolar. Puede encontrar respuestas a otras preguntas frecuentes en la página de Web del Departamento de Educación de California o *CDE* y del CAHSEE http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/.

¿Qué cubre el CAHSEE?

El CAHSEE tiene dos secciones: inglés y matemáticas.

La sección de inglés del CAHSEE cubre los estándares estatales del contenido abarcando hasta el décimo grado inclusive. La parte correspondiente a la lectura incluye vocabulario, decodificación, comprensión y análisis de textos de información y textos de literatura. En la parte de escritura, el examen cubre estrategias de la escritura, aplicaciones y las reglas del inglés (por ejemplo gramática, ortografía y puntuación).

La parte de matemáticas del CAHSEE cubre los estándares estatales del sexto y séptimo grado y álgebra I. El examen incluye estadística, análisis de datos y probabilidad, teoría de los números, medidas y geometría, razonamiento matemático y álgebra. Se espera que los alumnos demuestren tener destreza en cómputo y aritmética, incluyendo la habilidad de trabajar con decimales, fracciones y porcentajes.

¿Qué clase de preguntas contiene el CAHSEE?

La mayor parte de las preguntas en el CAHSEE son preguntas de selección múltiple. Sin embargo, la sección de inglés también incluye una pregunta en forma de ensayo (*writing task*). El examen se administra en inglés solamente y todos los alumnos deben aprobarlo en inglés para recibir su diploma de preparatoria o *high school*. En esta guía de estudio y en la página de Web del Departamento de Educación de California o *CDE,* hay ejemplos de preguntas que han aparecido en exámenes previos.

¿Cuándo toman los alumnos el CAHSEE por primera vez?

Los alumnos deberán tomar el examen por primera vez en la segunda parte de su décimo grado.

¿Cuándo (y cómo) sabrán los alumnos si aprobaron o no el CAHSEE?

Los distritos escolares reciben los reportes de las calificaciones obtenidas por sus alumnos aproximadamente siete semanas después de haber administrado el examen. Una copia se envía directamente a la casa del alumno y otra copia se archiva con el expediente permanente del alumno. Es importante que los padres o guardianes guarden una copia del reporte

del alumno para sus archivos. El estado de California *no* retiene ninguna copia de los resultados. Los resultados de cada alumno son confidenciales. Se publican solamente resultados de grupos (de escuelas enteras y distritos). Las calificaciones varían entre los 275 a los 450 puntos. Se requiere una calificación de 350 o más para aprobar.

¿Qué pasa si un alumno no aprueba la primera vez?

Los alumnos que no aprueben el examen en el décimo grado tendrán varias oportunidades de tomarlo de nuevo durante el 11º y el 12º grado. Una vez que hayan aprobado una de las dos secciones del examen no tendrán que tomar esa parte de nuevo. La ley estatal exige que los alumnos que no aprueben alguna parte del examen reciban educación adicional que les ayude a aprender lo que necesitan saber para aprobarlo. Cada escuela y cada distrito decidirá cómo proveer esa educación adicional. Para saber que tipo de ayuda hay disponible en la escuela de su hijo o hija y cuando el examen será administrado de nuevo, llame al director o al consejero de la escuela.

¿Qué pasa si un alumno tiene necesidades especiales?

Si un alumno tiene un Programa de Estudios Individualizado o *individualized education program*—también conocido como IEP por sus siglas en inglés o un Plan de Sección 504, estos deberán describir los arreglos especiales a los que el alumno tiene derecho al tomar el examen.

Las dos clases de arreglos especiales para tomar el CAHSEE son "adaptaciones" y "modificaciones". Es importante entender la diferencia entre estas dos clases de arreglos porque pueden afectar la calificación que el alumno obtenga en el examen.

Una **adaptación** no altera lo que el examen evalúa—por ejemplo, tomar descansos adicionales durante el examen o usar un cuadernillo de examen con letras grandes.

Una **modificación** cambia fundamentalmente lo que el examen está evaluando—por ejemplo, usar una calculadora en la parte de matemáticas o escuchar una grabación de las preguntas en la sección de inglés.

Los alumnos tienen derecho a cualquier adaptación o modificación para tomar el CAHSEE que haya sido estipulada en su programa de IEP o plan de Sección 504. Los alumnos que tomen el examen usando una *adaptación* recibirán una calificación como todos los demás. Sin embargo, los alumnos que usen una *modificación* recibirán su calificación numérica seguida de la palabra "MODIFIED" (MODIFICADA). Sin embargo, si el alumno obtiene 350 puntos o menos, el director de la escuela del alumno debe pedir a petición de los padres o guardianes una exención o *waiver* a la junta escolar de su localidad. Este proceso lleva a cabo, en parte, con una presentación para la junta escolar de su localidad, demostrando pruebas que el alumno ha adquirido los conocimientos y las destrezas necesarias que de otra manera sean necesarias para aprobar el CAHSEE.

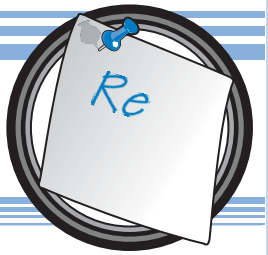
Puede encontrar más información acerca del proceso para pedir esta exención o waiver incluyendo una lista de posibles adaptaciones y modificaciones en la página de Web del Departamento de Educación de California o hablando con el director de su escuela.

¿Qué pasa si un alumno todavía está aprendiendo a hablar y leer inglés?

Todos los alumnos deben pasar el CAHSEE para obtener su diploma de preporatoria o *high school*.

Los alumnos que están aprendiendo inglés o *English learners* tienen que tomar el CAHSEE en el décimo grado como todos los demás. Sin embargo, la ley exige que durante sus primeros 24 meses en una escuela de California deberán recibir seis meses de educación especializada en lectura, escritura y comprensión del inglés. Ademas, estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua tienen que ser permitidos de tomar el CAHSEE con ciertas variaciones del examen si se usan regularmente en el salón de clase. Todo alumno que no apruebe el examen tendrá otras oportunidades para hacerlo.

Information for Students



This Study Guide has been written just for you. To receive a high school diploma, you must pass the CAHSEE, and we want to make sure you do.

The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE consists of 79 multiple-choice questions and one essay writing prompt. This Study Guide includes tips for answering the multiple-choice questions and responding to the writing prompt. Remembering these tips can help you pass the CAHSEE.

Tips for Preparing for the CAHSEE

- ❑ **Apply Yourself in the Classroom.**
  The CAHSEE measures what you are learning and have already been taught in the classroom. More than any other preparation, attending your classes, paying attention in class, and doing your homework will help you pass the CAHSEE.

- ❑ **Get Help!**
  If you have trouble understanding any part of your class work or this Study Guide, get help! Talk to a teacher, a counselor, your parents, your guardian, or students who have already passed the CAHSEE. Many students receive valuable help in study groups with other students.

  Your school district offers special help for students who have not passed the exam. To find out what your school offers, ask your English teacher or principal.

- ❑ **Read for Fun!**
  Reading for pleasure is one of the best ways to prepare. Most researchers agree that students who read for fun also improve their writing, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.

- ❑ **Use this Study Guide**
  Don't wait until the last minute. Find a place where it's easy to concentrate, and set aside some time each week to prepare. Starting early will ensure you have time to get help if you need it.

Tips for Using the Answer Document

- ❑ Use only a #2 pencil. Harder lead will be difficult to erase if you need to. Softer lead can leave smudges, and to the machine that scores the exam, a smudge can look the same as an answer you chose.

- ❑ Mark only one answer to each question. If you change an answer, erase the original answer completely.

- ❑ Be certain you are marking the right question on your answer document, especially if you skip a question you want to answer later.

Tips for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

- ❑ **Relax!**
  You don't have to answer every question correctly to pass the CAHSEE. If you become stressed, take a deep breath, relax, and focus on doing the best you can. You will have chances to retake the exam if you need to.
- ❑ **Take as Much Time as You Need.**
  If you need extra time, you can keep working through the school day. Just tell the person administering the exam that you need more time.
- ❑ **Answer Easy Questions First.**
  If a passage or question gives you trouble, skip it and focus on the ones that you understand. After you have answered the easy questions, return to the questions you skipped.
- ❑ **Make Notes in the Test Booklet (But Not on the Answer Document).**
  Writing a note to yourself can help you think through a question. Also, if you skip a question and return to it, a record of your thinking will often help you understand a test question in a new way. As you read, you can underline, mark up the passage, and take notes in the test booklet.
- ❑ **Eliminate Answers You Know are Wrong.**
  If you are not sure about the answer to a question, cross out any choices you *know* are wrong.
- ❑ **If You Must, Guess.**
  On the CAHSEE, wrong answers do not count against you, so it is to your advantage to answer *every* question. Even if you guess, you have a one-out-of-four chance of answering correctly. If you can eliminate two out of the four choices in any question, you have a 50-50 chance of answering correctly.
- ❑ **Review Your Work!**
  When you finish the last question, go back over the exam to review your thinking and correct any mistakes. If you guessed at a question, change your answer only if you have a good reason; often, your first instinct will be your best. Also, check your answer document for stray marks and erase them as cleanly as you can.

Tips for Answering Reading Passage Questions

Most of the multiple-choice questions follow a reading passage. Good readers and good test takers use these strategies.

- ❑ **Read the Questions Before Reading the Passage. Look for "Key Words."**
  Key words express specific ideas and relationships between ideas. After you find key words in a question, see if you can find the same words in the passage. Underline them and pay special attention to the text around them.

- ❑ **Read the Entire Passage Before Answering the Questions that Follow.**
  Some questions ask about general concepts rather than specific details in a passage. To answer these types of questions, you need to understand the passage as a whole.

- ❑ **Make Connections to Your Own Experience.**
  Some questions ask you to interpret situations and draw conclusions. Making connections to your own knowledge and experiences can help you answer these types of questions. As you read, try to relate the passage to yourself and people you know.

Tips for Writing the Essay

You will be asked to write an essay for the English-language arts part of the CAHSEE. Good writers and good test takers use these strategies.

- ❑ **Read the Writing Prompt Carefully and Note the Key Words.**
  The prompt will give you a topic, an audience, and a purpose for your writing. Before you begin writing, make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.

- ❑ **Plan Before You Write.**
  In your test booklet, make a list, an outline, a cluster, or a grid to help you get organized and stay on topic.

- ❑ **Proofread and Polish.**
  You will have all of the time you need to not only organize your essay but to proofread and revise to clearly express your ideas.