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Guide Content

The California Alternate Assessment English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Test Scoring Guides provide details about the items, student response types, correct responses, and related scoring considerations for the California Alternate Assessment Practice Test items. The items selected for the Practice Test are designed to reflect

- a broad coverage of claims and targets that closely mirror the summative blueprint.
- a range of student response types.
- a breadth of difficulty levels across the items, ranging from easier to more difficult items.

It is important to note that all student response types are not fully represented on every practice test, but a distribution can be observed across all the practice tests. The items presented are reflective of refinements and adjustments to language based on pilot test results and expert recommendations from both content and accessibility perspectives.

Within this guide, each item is presented with the following information:

- Grade: Grade level for the item
- Category: a broad content area that contains related targets and standards (i.e., Writing)
- Core Content Connector (Connector): Alternative achievement standard linked to a Common Core State Standard (CCSS)
- Tier: Level that identifies the complexity of an item. Tier levels are 1, 2, and 3.
- Static presentation of the item: static presentation of item from test administration system
- Static presentation of student response field(s): static presentation of response field from test administration system
- Answer key or exemplar: expected student response or example response from score point value
- Rubric and applicable score points for each item: score point representations for student responses

The following items are representative of the kinds of items that students can expect to experience when taking California Alternate ELA Assessment.
Grade Eight Practice Test Items

Read the passage and answer questions 1-3.

Vocabulary Preview

Carrizo Plain

Burrowing owl
There is a beautiful place in California called Carrizo Plain. Tall mountains rise up behind rolling green grasslands.

Carrizo Plain is a safe place for many endangered animals. Burrowing owls are found in the Carrizo Plain grasslands. The San Joaquin (san wo-\textit{keen}) kit fox can also be found at Carrizo Plain.
Visitors appreciate the beautiful wildflowers. They also can enjoy a horseback ride through the plains and even participate in a guided tour of the area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Production and Distribution of Writing (Informative/Explanatory)</td>
<td>8.WI.01 Produce a clear coherent permanent product that is appropriate to the specific task (e.g., topic), purpose (e.g., to inform), and audience (e.g., reader).</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Which words tell us about Carrizo Plain? Pick two answers.**

- Tall mountains
- Long beaches
- Green grasslands

**Key:** tall mountains, green grasslands

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student chooses the two correct responses.

(1 point) The student chooses one of the correct responses, but not both.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>8.RI.k2 Determine how the information in each section contributes to the whole or to the development of ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Which animals can be found at Carrizo Plain? Pick two answers.**

**Key:** See exemplar.

**Exemplar:**

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student chooses the two correct responses.

(1 point) The student chooses one of the correct responses, but not both.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>8.RI.j1 Use two or more pieces of evidence to support inferences, conclusions, or summaries of text.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is there a lot of natural beauty to see at Carrizo Plain?**

![A] Yes  
![B] No

**Key:** A  
**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
Read the passage and answer questions 4-6.

Vocabulary Preview

Jogging

Stretching

Jogging Safety

It is important to follow some simple safety rules when jogging. Here are a few rules.
1. Drink plenty of water.

2. Wear shoes that fit well. Shoes that fit well can help keep you from getting foot pain and blisters.

3. Stretch your leg muscles before and after jogging. Stretching can help you avoid getting hurt.
What can wearing shoes that fit well help you avoid? Pick two answers.

- blisters
- toothaches
- foot pain

**Key:** blisters, foot pain

**Rubric:**
(2 points) The student chooses the two correct responses.
(1 point) The student chooses one of the correct responses, but not both.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>8.RI.k4 Identify an argument or claim that the author makes.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is this sentence true?**

- **A**
- **B**

**Key:** B

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Research to Build and Present Knowledge (Argument)</td>
<td>8.WP.j1 Gather relevant information (e.g., highlight in text, quote or paraphrase from text or discussion) from print and or digital sources.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where can we learn more about jogging? Pick two answers.**

- a video
- a book
- a Web site

**Key:** a book, a Web site

**Rubric:**
(2 points) The student chooses the two correct responses.
(1 point) The student chooses one of the correct responses, but not both.
### The Science Project

Jaime is at home. He is working on a science project at the kitchen table. He has a lightbulb, some books, and a few other things.

Suddenly, Jaime’s dog jumps up to the table.

The lightbulb rolls off of the table and breaks. Jaime is so upset!

After a while, Jaime calms down. He starts over on his project. But this time, he puts the dog outside before he starts. Soon, he is finished with his project.

---

**Key:** C

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>8.RI.k4 Identify an argument or claim that the author makes.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

**Water**

People need water to stay healthy and clean.

Animals need water for drinking.

Plants need water to grow. All living things need water to stay alive.

**What is true about water?**

- Cars drive fast.
- All living things need it.
- Trees lose leaves.

**Key:** B

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
Read the passage and answer questions 9-11.

Vocabulary Preview

Service dog

Obedience training

Graduation
A Special Guest

Cheryl’s family is raising a puppy that belongs to the Service Dog School. The school wants the puppy, named Taffy, to have a job helping others. Taffy is a temporary guest at Cheryl’s house. She will live there for just a year.

Over the next year, the family teaches Taffy basic commands and makes sure she behaves well around people and animals in different places. Taffy also goes to obedience training classes.

Obedience training
At 14 months old, Taffy is ready to return to the school for service dog training. Cheryl sees how Taffy will help her new owner.

Service dog training

After her graduation, Taffy will make it possible for her new owner to leave home and be independent! Cheryl is very proud of Taffy.
Taffy is a *temporary* guest at Cheryl's house. She will live there for just a year.

**What does “temporary” mean?**

- alternate
- brief
- pleasant

**Key:** brief

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student selects the correct answer on the first attempt.

(1 point) The student selects the correct answer on the second attempt.
### Item 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>8.RL.i2 Use two or more pieces of evidence to support inferences, conclusions, or summaries of text.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Key:
They teach her basic commands. They take her to obedience classes.

#### Rubric:
(2 points) The student chooses the correct response for both targets.
(1 point) The student chooses the correct response for one of the two targets, but not both.

---

**Cheryl’s family prepares Taffy for service dog training.**

**How do we know this is true? Pick two answers.**

- They show her how to play ball.
- They teach her basic commands.
- They take her to obedience classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>8.RL.j2 Analyze the development of the theme or central idea over the course of the text including its relationship to the characters, setting and plot.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cheryl learns that –**

A. dogs can communicate by barking.
B. puppies have a lot of energy.
C. dogs can help people.

**Key:** C  
**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
Read the passage and answer questions 12-14.

**Vocabulary Preview**

Lucas

Supermarket

Lucas Goes Shopping

Mom needs some groceries before she can make dinner. She gives Lucas a list of specific items so that he knows exactly what to buy. Lucas rides his bike to the supermarket.
While at the supermarket, Lucas becomes very thirsty. He wants to open a bottle of water and drink it immediately. But, Lucas knows he should be patient and pay for it first.

Once Lucas gathers all the items on Mom’s list, he stands in line to pay. There are several people in front of him.

Lucas grabs a magazine to read while he is in line. He finally reaches the cashier and pays for the items.

Then, Lucas opens the bottle of water. He takes a big gulp and smiles.
### Grade Eight Practice Test Items

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<tr>
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<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>8.RWL.g1 Use context as a clue to the meaning of a grade-appropriate word or phrase.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part A**

Mom needs some groceries before she can make dinner. She gives Lucas a list of **specific** items so that he knows exactly what to buy.

What does "specific" mean?

- quick
- healthy
- particular

**Part B**

Which words help us understand the meaning of the word “specific”? Pick **two** answers.

- [ ] list
- [ ] exactly
- [ ] buy

**Part A**

**Key:** C

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.

**Part B**

**Key:** list, exactly

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the two correct responses.
## Part A

**Lucas buys groceries at the supermarket for his mom.**

**Which word describes Lucas?**

**A** funny  

**B** helpful

## Part B

**How do we know this?**

**A** He gathers items needed for dinner.

**B** He reads a magazine while in line.

### Part A

**Key:** B  
**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.

### Part B

**Key:** A  
**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>8.RL.j2 Analyze the development of the theme or central idea over the course of the text including its relationship to the characters, setting and plot.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is a lesson in the story?**

A. Be friendly to others.

B. Learn to be patient.

C. Try new activities.

**Key:** B  
**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
Read the passage and answer questions 15-17.

Vocabulary Preview

Springwood

President
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Springwood

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the 32nd President of the United States. He had a home in New York state called Springwood.
Today, Springwood is a national park that attracts many visitors. Visitors enjoy seeing the places at Springwood that were important to President Roosevelt.

Visitors can see the Presidential Library and Museum at Springwood.

Visitors can also see the rose garden at Springwood. President Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor are buried next to each other in the rose garden.
## Item 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>8.RI.k2 Determine how the information in each section contributes to the whole or to the development of ideas.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:** Presidential Library, rose garden  

**Rubric:**  
(2 points) The student chooses the correct response for both targets.  
(1 point) The student chooses the correct response for one of the two targets, but not both.
## Item 16

**Grade:** 8  
**Category:** Informational  
**Connector:** 8.RI.1.4 Identify an argument or claim that the author makes.  
**Tier:** 2

### What fact does the writer include?

- **A**  
  Presidents have cute dogs as pets.

- **B**  
  Most people enjoy going to museums.

- **C**  
  The Roosevelts are buried at Springwood.

### Key:

**C**

### Rubric:

(1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Connector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Research to Build and Present Knowledge (Argument)</td>
<td>8.WP.j1 Gather relevant information (e.g., highlight in text, quote or paraphrase from text or discussion) from print and or digital sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where can we learn more about Springwood? Pick two answers.**

- a Web site
- a book
- a video

**Key:** a book, a video

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student chooses the correct response for both targets.

(1 point) The student chooses the correct response for one of the two targets, but not both.
**Sunscreens**

There is no sound in this video.

Sunscreen has ingredients that block harmful rays from the Sun. There are also ingredients that absorb heat energy.

Sunscreen helps keep your skin from aging. It can also keep your skin from burning. Apply sunscreen when you are out in the Sun.
Sunscreen helps keep skin safe.

How do we know this is true?

A

It stops knee pain.

B

It keeps skin from burning.

C

It heals broken bones.

Key: B
Rubric: (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
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<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Production and Distribution of Writing (Informative/Explanatory)</td>
<td>8.WI.01 Produce a clear coherent permanent product that is appropriate to the specific task (e.g., topic), purpose (e.g., to inform), and audience (e.g., reader).</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recycling Paper Items**

Paper items like newspapers, old notes from class, torn wrapping paper, and junk mail can all be recycled. Recycled paper items are used to make new paper and many other products like egg cartons, game boards, and gift boxes.

**What are some examples of paper products that can be recycled? Write two examples from the information that we read.**

- A See the rubric in the DFA.
- B See the rubric in the DFA.
- C See the rubric in the DFA.

**Key:** The student writes two examples of paper products that can be recycled from the passage.

**Exemplar:** newspapers, old notes, torn wrapping paper, junk mail

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student writes two examples of paper products that can be recycled from the passage.

(1 point) The student writes one example of a paper product that can be recycled from the passage.
Item | Grade | Category | Connector | Tier
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
20 | 8 | Informational | 8.RI.4 Identify an argument or claim that the author makes. | 3

**Puzzle Building**

Jigsaw puzzles have entertained children and adults for hundreds of years. Along with entertainment, puzzle building can offer many health benefits. It is believed that puzzle building exercises many parts of a person’s brain to communicate, which gives a full-brain workout. Building a jigsaw puzzle may help improve memory and develop problem-solving skills. It can also be relaxing.

As pieces are matched and a puzzle is near completion, a chemical called dopamine is released in the brain. This makes a person feel good.

**What does the writer think about puzzle building?**

- There are too many pieces.
- New friendships are often made.
- There can be many health benefits.

**Key:** C

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
Read the passage and answer question 21.

Paragraph 1

Buying a house can cost you a lot of money. Buy a tiny house instead. Tiny houses are very small. A tiny house will cost you much less money to buy than an average-sized house. Tiny houses are a great way for you to save lots of money and only keep things in your tiny house that you really need.

Paragraph 2

Be prepared to spend more money when you buy a tiny house. You will have to buy land for your house and pay for frequent repairs. A tiny house is also too small. There is not enough space. For example, a closet in a tiny house is smaller than a closet in an average-sized house. Also, a tiny house kitchen has fewer cabinets to store dishes and food.

You always have to think about where your belongings will fit in your tiny house.
Part A

The writer of Paragraph 1 thinks that buying a tiny house will—

A save you money.
B make you unhappy.

Part B

The writer of Paragraph 2 thinks that a tiny house has—

A too little space.
B a beautiful yard.
Part A
Key: A
Rubric: (1 point) The student selects the correct response.

Part B
Key: A
Rubric: (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
### Item 22

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Connector</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>8.RWL.i1 Use general academic and domain specific words and phrases accurately.</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

**exceptional:** better than average; superior

**Which sentence uses “exceptional” as it is used in this dictionary meaning?**

- **A**
  
  Kim is an exceptional athlete who has won many awards.

- **B**
  
  Snow in the summer is exceptional weather for Ben.

- **C**
  
  Marie makes an exceptional decision to sing on stage.

**Key:** A

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the correct response.
<table>
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<th>Tier</th>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Production and Distribution of Writing</td>
<td>8.WI.o1 Produce a clear coherent permanent product that is appropriate to the specific task (e.g., topic), purpose (e.g., to inform), and audience (e.g., reader).</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Which words complete the poster?**

**Got Talent?**

Do you _love_ to sing, dance, or act?

Do you have a talent that you want to show to other students? If so, . . .

Sign up now to participate in the McCallen Middle School Talent Show!

The talent show will be _exciting_ for all.

**Key:** love, exciting

**Exemplar:**

Do you _love_ to sing, dance, or act?

Do you have a talent that you want to show to other students? If so, . . .

Sign up now to participate in the McCallen Middle School Talent Show!

The talent show will be _exciting_ for all.

**Rubric:**

(2 points) The student chooses the correct response for both targets.

(1 point) The student chooses the correct response for one of the two targets, but not both.
The Brooklyn Bridge is a very important part of New York City. It spans the East River. The bridge connects Brooklyn and Manhattan Island. It offers a safe and scenic way for people to travel. Thousands of people cross the Brooklyn Bridge daily by car, on foot, or on bicycles. The Brooklyn Bridge continues to be a reliable method for people crossing the East River.

Reasoms the Brooklyn Bridge is a very important part of New York City:

- It is safe.
- It is reliable.

Which reasons could be added to the list supporting what the writer thinks about traveling across the Brooklyn Bridge? Pick two answers.

- It is challenging.
- It is lengthy.
- It is safe.
- It is reliable.

**Key:** It is safe. It is reliable.

**Rubric:** (1 point) The student selects the two correct responses.