



**California  
Subject  
Examinations for  
Teachers®**

**TEST GUIDE**

**ENGLISH  
SUBTEST IV**

**Sample Questions and Responses  
and Scoring Information**

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## Sample Test Questions for CSET: English Subtest IV

Below is a set of constructed-response questions that are similar to the questions you will see on Subtest IV of CSET: English. You are encouraged to respond to the questions without looking at the responses provided in the next section. Record your responses on a sheet of paper and compare them with the provided responses.

1. **Complete the exercise that follows.**

The interaction between a speaker and an audience creates interest during an oral presentation. An alert speaker adapts to various audience responses during the speech. Write a response in which you:

- identify one type of audience response that might occur during a speech or oral presentation; and
- describe one strategy the speaker could use in adapting to that audience response while sustaining the speech or oral presentation.

In your response, be sure to address both of the tasks described above.

**2. Complete the exercise that follows.**

Discriminating readers, viewers, and listeners routinely evaluate the reliability and credibility of news stories in the media. Write a response in which you:

- briefly describe a characteristic of reliable and credible news reporting (e.g., objectivity, balance, thoroughness); and
- describe a strategy that readers, viewers, and listeners can use to determine whether a news story demonstrates this characteristic.

3. **Complete the exercise that follows.**

A director is staging a modern farce. The comedy depends on fast, clear-cut physical reactions, quick repartee, a relentless tempo, and seamless transitions from one scene to the next. Halfway through the rehearsal process, the actors are having trouble maintaining the rapid pace that many of the scenes require. To address this difficulty, the director considers the following three rehearsal strategies:

- a "speed-through" of the text (actors deliver lines at twice the normal speed with no movement, pauses, or inflection);
- a "speed-through" of the blocking (actors rehearse stage movement and physical business at twice the normal speed, without speaking their lines); and
- a "cue" game (actors must toss a ball to another actor on each "beat" of the text without dropping lines or changing blocking).

Select *one* of the rehearsal strategies described above, and write a response in which you:

- describe how this rehearsal strategy is likely to help the actors find an effective overall pace; and
- explain why this rehearsal strategy is likely to enhance the comedy of the play.

In your response, be sure to address both of the tasks described above.

4. **Read the opening paragraph below from a preliminary draft of a short story; then complete the exercise that follows.**

<sup>1</sup>Though technically a teenager, Caleb was still a child, a child who liked home, who liked sleeping in his own bed, who rarely even spent the night at a friend's house. <sup>2</sup>Yet tomorrow he would get on an airplane with twelve other kids and fly, free as a bird, to the ends of the earth. <sup>3</sup>Eight weeks in Japan—it was the chance of a lifetime, and Caleb had been proud as a peacock when he was accepted for the exchange program. <sup>4</sup>But that was then, and this was now, and right now the empty suitcase on his bed was gaping like the open mouth of a shark. <sup>5</sup>Warily he circled the bed, but he just didn't have the heart to throw any of his belongings into the shark's mouth. <sup>6</sup>Caleb's mother appeared in the doorway. <sup>7</sup>"What *are* you doing?" she demanded. <sup>8</sup>Caleb explained that he was packing. <sup>9</sup>"But it's almost ten o'clock, and you haven't packed a thing!" she said. <sup>10</sup>Caleb told her not to worry, explaining that he had everything under control. <sup>11</sup>But deep down inside he knew it wasn't true. <sup>12</sup>He had never felt so out of control in his life.

Using your knowledge of creative writing, write a response in which you:

- describe one type of revision you would make to improve the draft excerpt shown above; and
- explain why this type of revision would enhance the literary quality of the short story.



# Examples of Responses to Sample Constructed-Response Questions for CSET: English Subtest IV

## Communications: Speech, Media, and Creative Performance

### Question #1 (Score Point 3 Response)

One type of audience response that might occur during a speech or presentation is heckling by a hostile member of the audience. The primary strategy the speaker should use is remaining calm and reasonable. For example, you might first just acknowledge the heckling with a slight pause, and then go on. If the heckling continues, you must answer in some way. Tell the heckler you will respond to questions or arguments after you have presented your points. Try using humor to defuse tensions. Appeal to reason, fairness, and good manners. Be scrupulously polite; set the tone. To the extent that the heckler is unreasonable and rowdy, and the speaker remains calm and patient, the crowd is likely to feel increased respect for the speaker. Asking to have the heckler removed would be a last resort if continuing with the speech is otherwise impossible.

**Question #1 (Score Point 2 Response)**

During a speech, the speaker might realize that the audience already knows a lot about the topic. You could notice this from people's body language and from comments and questions they have. The best thing for the speaker to do in this case is to turn the topic over to the audience. Since they already know so much, they probably would get more out of having a discussion among themselves than in listening to your speech.

**Question #1 (Score Point 1 Response)**

One type of audience response that might happen to a speaker is that the audience is not paying attention. This might be in a classroom or somewhere else. Maybe the subject is boring or they want to be somewhere else. The speaker needs to be more interesting. Get the audience involved! If you have a wireless mike you can get off the stage and go down and ask people questions, or invite them up on stage to respond to you. Make some jokes. Or try taking a break; let people go get some water or stretch.

**Question #2 (Score Point 3 Response)**

It is important to identify credible news organizations that rely on the accurate and thorough presentation of facts and not on "personalities" or sensationalism. That distinction becomes increasingly vital when news and entertainment are increasingly merging into "infotainment."

To determine a news story's credibility and reliability, one must consider:

- whether the reporter is being objective, rather than speculative or biased;
- whether the sources for a story are valid, rather than unreliable, PR-based, or themselves biased; and
- whether the news organization for which the reporter works is generally reliable.

Bias may take the form of personal prejudice, political leaning, or something as egregious as racist or sexist inclinations, and must be carefully listened for. Balance is essential to avoiding bias. For example, in the matter of the Bush/Gore election controversy, the reporter should present views from both the Bush and Gore camps, as well as the opinions of voters who took part in the election, legal experts, and so on.

One may evaluate a news organization by comparison with others in their coverage of the same story. Which is clearest, most complete, and most informative?

**Question #2 (Score Point 2 Response)**

Credible news reporting depends on thorough, accurate, and unbiased collection and reporting of facts. Several sources should be used for any news story, both to confirm the accuracy of facts and to guard against bias.

Assessing the reliability of a particular news story is not easy. The main question to consider is what sources are cited. It is also helpful to compare several different reports of the same event from different news organizations.

**Question #2 (Score Point 1 Response)**

One way to tell if a story is done in a credible way is listen to see if the facts are straight. The important questions a journalist must ask are who, what, when, where, and why?

Also, the journalist must say what happened, with as much detail and information as possible.

Thirdly, the reporter must say when the event occurred. Time can be important in determining the facts of an accident and who was at fault.

Next, the reporter must accurately report the location of the event, and interpret why the events happened in the way that they did.

It is important that a viewer checks to see if the names are right and are spelled correctly. A viewer can tell if a witness's remarks have been edited on camera.

*continued on next page*

**Question #2 (Score Point 1 Response) *continued***

Finally, a viewer can tell that a story is credible by its thoroughness, i.e., is it true that after watching a broadcast news story or reading something in the paper, are there still unanswered questions?

**Question #3 (Score Point 3 Response)**

A speed-through rehearsal of text, in which actors rattle off their lines very quickly, but don't move about on stage or make any effort to say the lines expressively, can be a very effective technique for speeding up the ultimate pace of a play. It helps the actors to deliver their lines without thinking, and to become so familiar with them they come automatically. It forces actors to speak very clearly, even with exaggerated clarity, which requires placing the consonants far forward in the mouth -- a good technique for stage delivery. It also makes the lines silly, even sillier than they already were, partly because the inflection is missing. For a farce, this is all very useful. Some of the speed can be retained even after movement and inflection are added back in. The lines will come more quickly, all stumbling and blanking out on lines should disappear, and people should be enunciating better. Different line deliveries may have suggested themselves. And some of the sense of silliness should remain, which will help with the comedy. The funnier the script seems to the actors, the better they will be able to make it funny for the audience.

**Question #3 (Score Point 2 Response)**

A speed-through of the blocking of the play would give the actors an opportunity to focus only on physical movement and physical expression, without the distraction of speaking lines. Because the movement is speeded up, it would require extra focus and concentration. This should help the actors become used to their movements and pacing in regular rehearsals.

Speeded up movement would also be comical, like an old silent movie. Some of this funny feeling would also be likely to remain with the actors in regular rehearsals.

**Question #3 (Score Point 1 Response)**

Cue games provide actors a much needed relief from the drudgery of rehearsal. Many times the actors in a comedy need a break from the work of establishing a rapid pace just by using the lines of the play and the blocking provided by a director. The cue game gives that relief because it frees actors from having to think. Also, the ball takes the place of other kinds of transactions in the play and is also a fun way of being sure actors connect with each other. When all else fails, use a basketball to let actors have some fun in rehearsal. They will thank you for it.

**Question #4 (Score Point 3 Response)**

One obvious revision to this paragraph would be to remove the clichés and replace them with fresher, more interesting language. Phrases such as "free as a bird," "to the ends of the earth," "the chance of a lifetime," and "proud as a peacock," are not only over-familiar, but are piled on top of each other. They suggest either that the writer is lazy, or that Caleb himself thinks in these terms, which doesn't give the reader much information about his personality. By contrast, the simile comparing the suitcase to a shark's mouth is striking and evocative of Caleb's fear. If all the stale language could be this original, the paragraph would be much stronger.

**Question #4 (Score Point 2 Response)**

Addition of dialogue between Caleb and his mother would strengthen this draft of a short story. Toward the end of the paragraph, Caleb's mother appears and asks him what he is doing, and the narrator summarizes Caleb's responses. It would be better to have Caleb speak for himself.

**Question #4 (Score Point 1 Response)**

One thing that needs improvement is the words that the author uses. This story is for young people so it needs to be clearer. When the author uses words like "warily" and "into the shark's mouth," what does he mean? It seems silly to compare a suitcase to a shark -- it's confusing. And also the person says "to the ends of the earth" when really the kid is just going to Japan. The writer needs to be more upfront and make the story sound more like a real story. It will be enhanced and everyone will know why Caleb feels out of control.

## Scoring Information for CSET: English Subtest IV

There are four constructed-response questions in Subtest IV of CSET: English. Each of these constructed-response questions is designed so that a response can be completed within a short amount of time—approximately 10–15 minutes. Responses to the constructed-response questions are scored by qualified California educators using focused holistic scoring. Scorers will judge the overall effectiveness of your responses while focusing on the performance characteristics that have been identified as important for this subtest (see below). Each response will be assigned a score based on an approved scoring scale (see page 15).

Your performance on the subtest will be evaluated against a standard determined by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing based on professional judgments and recommendations of California educators.

### Performance Characteristics for CSET: English Subtest IV

The following performance characteristics will guide the scoring of responses to the constructed-response questions on CSET: English Subtest IV.

<b>PURPOSE</b>	The extent to which the response addresses the constructed-response assignment's charge in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements.
<b>SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE</b>	The application of accurate subject matter knowledge as described in the relevant CSET subject matter requirements.
<b>SUPPORT</b>	The appropriateness and quality of the supporting evidence in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements.

## Scoring Scale for CSET: English Subtest IV

Scores will be assigned to each response to the constructed-response questions on CSET: English Subtest IV according to the following scoring scale.

SCORE POINT	SCORE POINT DESCRIPTION
<b>3</b>	<p>The "3" response reflects a command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is fully achieved.</li> <li>• There is an accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• There is appropriate and specific relevant supporting evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p>The "2" response reflects a general command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is largely achieved.</li> <li>• There is a largely accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• There is acceptable relevant supporting evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p>The "1" response reflects a limited or no command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is only partially or not achieved.</li> <li>• There is limited or no application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• There is little or no relevant supporting evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>U</b>	<p>The "U" (Unscorable) is assigned to a response that is unrelated to the assignment, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or does not contain a sufficient amount of original work to score.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p>The "B" (Blank) is assigned to a response that is blank.</p>