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with Online Practice Tests

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

by Carla Kirkland and Chan Cleveland

for  
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# Praxis® Elementary Education For Dummies® with Online Practice Tests

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# Introduction

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You probably already know that if you hope to become a teacher, you'll have to take and pass an entry exam. The ones you'll most likely take are the Praxis exams. Many colleges and universities require that students who want to complete an undergraduate degree in education take a Praxis Core exam that tests their knowledge of reading, writing, and math. After that, many aspiring teachers have to take another Praxis exam to obtain licensure. "Wait, what? More than one test?" Yes, we're afraid so. It might be a repeat of the Core exam or it might be a subject test—or depending on your goals, more than one subject test.

The *Praxis Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (5017) is indeed a subject test. As the name suggests, this particular test covers a pretty broad span of what you need to know regarding elementary education. Also reviewed in this book is the *Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge* (5018) exam. It restricts its coverage to the content of the main four subject areas that an elementary teacher should have mastered: Reading and Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

The goal of this book is to refresh your existing knowledge or develop new understanding on what you need to know in preparation for the Praxis exams. We don't cover every topic that is tested in detail; instead, we offer an overview of those topics. The overview allows you to review a topic and say to yourself either, "Yep, got it! I can move onto the next topic" or "I don't get it. I'd better focus on math a little more." While you may be required to successfully pass the Praxis Elementary Education test in order to get a teaching license in your state, don't panic! You have your hands on the right book to help you ace this exam.

## About This Book

---

*Praxis Elementary Education For Dummies* breaks down the exam's main objectives into understandable sections. This book is organized into subsections so that you can quickly navigate through subject areas. For example, if you're struggling with math, you can find all those topics grouped together. If science makes you want to pull your hair out, you can get a comprehensive overview in Chapter 6. In addition, this book offers helpful tips and strategies that you can practice so you don't fall for the booby traps others seem to. They say practice makes perfect. This book provides two practice tests and an additional two practice tests can be found online. You may want to practice before you read any of the chapters to discover your strengths and areas that could use improvement. Once you have mastered the material, you can practice again to put your skills to the "test."

# Foolish Assumptions

In writing this book, we've made some assumptions about you. The biggest assumption we've made applies to all readers: You have decided to become a teacher, which is one of the most rewarding professions known to man. Then, we assume you fall into one of the following categories:

- » **You are a first time test-taker:** You want to take and pass the test on your first try.
- » **You are a retester:** You've taken the test before but didn't get the score you needed or wanted. You can still successfully reach the passing score goal. You're actually in a better situation than the first-time test-taker because you possess a detailed report that outlines your strengths and weaknesses. That way you can truly attack the sections that give you the most difficulty.
- » **You are a traditional teacher candidate:** You're currently working on or have recently completed an undergraduate or graduate education degree. You need to pass this test to get licensed.
- » **You are an alternative route teacher candidate:** You already possess a four-year degree and you need to pass this test as one of your first steps toward certification.

If you're in one (or more!) of these categories, good for you. We have written this book to fit your specific needs.

## Icons Used in This Book

Icons are the drawings in the margins of this book, and we use several icons to call out special kinds of information.



EXAMPLE

*Examples* are sample test questions that appear at the ends of sections and that highlight particular ideas that you should be familiar with. We provide an answer and explanation immediately after the question.



REMEMBER

The Remember icon points out something you should keep in mind while you're taking the exam.



TIP

A Tip is a suggestion that usually points out a test-taking strategy or a trick for remembering information for the test.



WARNING

The Warning icon flags traps and tricks that the creators of the Praxis often employ to trip you up when it comes to choosing the correct answer. Pay special heed to these paragraphs.

# Beyond the Book

In addition to the material in the print or e-book you're reading right now, this product also comes with some access-anywhere goodies:

- » **Cheat Sheet:** (<http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/praxiselementaryeducation>): When you're down to the last few days before the test, not only do you have to remember everything you've studied for the test, but you have to remember what to take with you to the testing site. Check out the online Cheat Sheet for a handy list of what to take with you. You'll also find some general tips for succeeding on the Praxis. Review this a week or so before you're scheduled to take the test so you can make sure you're as prepared as you can be.
- » **Online practice and study aids:** In addition to the two complete practice exams contained in this book, your book purchase also comes with a free one-year subscription to two additional practice tests that appear online for you to access whenever and from wherever you want. With all of these practice questions at your disposal, you can take entire timed exams or just practice with a handful of questions at a time.

To gain access to the online practice, all you have to do is register. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Register your book or ebook at [Dummies.com](http://Dummies.com) to get your PIN. Go to [www.dummies.com/go/getaccess](http://www.dummies.com/go/getaccess).
2. Select your product from the dropdown list on that page.
3. Follow the prompts to validate your product, and then check your email for a confirmation message that includes your PIN and instructions for logging in.

If you do not receive this email within two hours, please check your spam folder before contacting us through our Technical Support website at <http://support.wiley.com> or by phone at 877-762-2974.

Now you're ready to go! You can come back to the practice material as often as you want — simply log on with the username and password you created during your initial login. No need to enter the access code a second time.

Your registration is good for one year from the day you activate your PIN.

## Where to Go from Here

You don't need to read this book from front to back. Instead, use it as a reference. Skip around to the sections that you find most useful. If you can't decide, begin with Chapters 1 and 2. They present overviews of the Praxis 5017 and 5018 exams. If you know that math (Chapter 5) is your Achilles heel or that language arts questions (Chapter 4) make your eyes cross, go straight to the corresponding chapter. We also give you an index at the back of the book to help you find specific information. Or, if you like, start by taking one of the tests in Part IV to target the material you need to brush up on.



# 1

## Getting the Ball Rolling

### **IN THIS PART . . .**

Get the details about who takes the Praxis 5017 and 5018, what's on the tests, and how your score is calculated.

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Figure out how to schedule your study time in advance of test day, figure out what to expect on test day, and get some pointers if you're retaking the test.

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Try out some practice questions to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

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Develop a study plan to make your weaknesses your strengths.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

Finding out what's on the Praxis

Seeing how the Praxis is scored

Taking some practice questions

Reviewing the results of your practice

## Chapter 1

# The Praxis Elementary Education: CIA Test (5017)

For decades, teacher candidates have been taking assessments in order to meet certification requirements. You may have taken a Praxis Core exam (or some earlier version) to get into a teaching program at a college or university. Once you completed it, perhaps you thought that was the last you would see of Praxis.

Not so fast! If you want to become a teacher, you are likely to encounter more Praxis exams on your road to certification. Many states use the Praxis Core and/or one or more Praxis subject exams as certification tests to show that you've mastered the skills needed to be a highly competent teacher. Praxis Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (5017) (or Praxis Elementary Education: CIA) is one of these subject exams. Teaching licenses often are directly tied to passing this exam and perhaps other subject tests as well. This chapter gives you an overview of what you need to know about this exam.

According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) this exam is designed for prospective teachers in the elementary grades. It covers the breadth of material a new teacher needs to know while assessing content knowledge, pedagogical principles, and processes. To be successful on this exam, candidates must show mastery of curriculum planning, instructional planning, and assessment planning in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. Luckily, you have this book to help you make the Praxis Elementary Education: CIA exam a milestone rather than a roadblock.



REMEMBER

Also included in this book is the preparation for the Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018). This exam differs from the 5017 designation in that candidates must show mastery of content in four areas: reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. This knowledge is exhibited through questions assessing conceptual understanding, procedural awareness, interpretation, integration, and application.

The items presented on both exams will be aligned to the appropriate state and national standards for that subject area. Examinees should also note that the tests may contain some questions that will not count toward their score. Almost every state in the country uses some form of the Praxis. Contact your state department of education for specific licensure details.



TIP

For details on preparing for the Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge, proceed to Chapter 2. Content review chapters for this test are 4, 5, 6, and 7. The practice test and explanations are Chapters 17 and 18.

## Analyzing the Format of the Test

The newly developed Praxis Elementary Education: CIA exam uses 120 questions to evaluate your curriculum development, instructional, and assessment abilities in five subject-area groups:

- » Reading and language arts
- » Mathematics
- » Science
- » Social studies
- » Art, music, and physical education

To date, all 120 questions are selected-response type questions. However, it doesn't necessarily mean the questions are easy!

### The topics the test covers

According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the 120 questions of the Praxis Elementary Education: CIA exam are divided among five subject-area groups according to the proportions you see in Table 1-1.

**TABLE 1-1** Breakdown of Praxis Elementary Education

Test Subject	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of the Exam
Reading and language arts	37	31%
Mathematics	31	26%
Science	20	16%
Social studies	17	14%
Art, music, and physical education	15	13%



In each of the five subject areas, questions are related to relevant national standards and test your knowledge of how to help students develop an understanding of particular areas of knowledge or how to help them acquire and use key skills.

The questions about each subject are focused on curriculum, instruction, or assessment.

- » **Curriculum:** Curriculum questions require you to show that you understand developmentally appropriate curriculum planning. Specifically, you need to be ready to demonstrate that you can sequence lessons; plan strategies to enhance students' understanding and, inevitably, correct their misunderstandings; and make connections to and from one subject and other subject areas, such as connecting reading and math concepts, or social studies and science.
- » **Instruction:** Instruction questions require you to show that you understand how to design instruction to meet the culturally and academically diverse needs of your students. They also test your ability to select and use developmentally appropriate instructional methods, strategies, and resources that support learning in the major focus areas of each subject.
- » **Assessment:** The assessment questions for every subject area require you to show that you know how to evaluate the effectiveness of your instruction and your students' progress in each subject area. To answer these questions correctly, you need to be ready to show that you can design, use, and interpret a variety of formative and summative assessments. You must be able to recognize the misconceptions students may develop and devise ways to reteach in order to correct those misconceptions.

## Reading and language arts

The topics addressed by questions in the reading and language arts section reflect the state and national standards for language arts. You'll see questions about:

- » **Reading foundational skills:** These questions test your understanding of how to help students develop concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics and word-analysis skills, and fluency.
- » **Reading literature and informational texts:** These questions test your understanding of how to help students comprehend literature and informational texts; ask and answer questions about texts; identify and organize main ideas and details; use text features; identify point of view; distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment; compare texts and different formats; select appropriate texts; and progress toward independent reading.
- » **Writing:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students do research and develop their writing skills in a variety of genres.
- » **Language:** These questions require you to show your knowledge of how to help students understand conventions of English, build their vocabularies, and interpret figurative language.
- » **Speaking and listening:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop active listening skills, oral presentation speaking and listening skills, and skills in using multimedia in presentations.

## Mathematics

The topics addressed in the math section also reflect state and national standards. You'll see questions about:

- » **Numbers and operations:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of and ability to use natural numbers, whole numbers, integers, and rational numbers; proportional relationships; and number theory.
- » **Algebraic thinking:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of and ability to use expressions, equations, and formulas, as well as linear equations and inequalities.
- » **Geometry and measurement:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of one-, two-, and three-dimensional figures; coordinate planes; and measurement.
- » **Data, statistics, and probability:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of and ability to use measures of center, data collection and display, and probability.

## Science

In the science section of the exam, you'll see questions about instructing students in the following topics:

- » **Science concepts, inquiry, and processes:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of science and science disciplines; scientific inquiry; how to plan, conduct, and observe investigations; and how to choose the appropriate tools to gather data, organize and analyze information, communicate results, and come up with reasonable explanations.
- » **Life science:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students learn about the characteristics, life cycles, and environments of organisms.
- » **Earth and space science:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of the interrelationships among Earth and space systems; astronomy; Earth patterns, cycles, and change; geology; hydrology; meteorology; oceanography; and soil science.
- » **Physical science:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of physical and chemical changes, temperature and heat, sound, light, electricity, magnetism, force, motion, energy, and matter.
- » **Health:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their knowledge of healthy living, including growth, nutrition, safety, and well-being, as well their knowledge of communicable and common diseases and substance abuse.

## Social studies

In the social studies section of the exam, you'll see questions about the following topics:

- » **Information processing skills:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of how to locate, analyze, and synthesize social-studies information and how to select and use appropriate materials and equipment.

- » **Geography:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students learn about relationships among human and physical systems, the environment, and society, as well as learn about states, regions, the United States, and the world.
- » **History:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of the interrelationships between the past and the present, causes and effects of historical events, U.S. history, and classical societies.
- » **Government, civics, and economics:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of basic economic concepts; governments' roles in economics, democracy, and politics; and U.S. government.
- » **Anthropology and sociology:** These questions test your knowledge of how to help students develop their understanding of how groups and individuals are affected by conditions and events; how people from different cultures interact with their physical environments and social environments; as well as communication, transportation, and technology.

## Art, music, and physical education

This section of the exam tests your understanding of how to teach three very different subjects:

- » **Art:** These questions test how well you develop students' understanding of elements and principles of art; visual communication and production; and art history, criticism, and aesthetics.
- » **Music:** These questions test your understanding of how to help students develop their understanding of elements of music, such as texture, harmony, melody, and rhythm; their knowledge of music notation and terminology; and their ability to compose music.
- » **Physical education:** These questions test your ability to help students exercise and develop physical fitness, game and sports skills, and body management and locomotor skills, as well as develop their knowledge of safety, social discipline, and healthy lifestyles.

## The types of questions asked

Praxis Elementary Education: CIA is composed entirely of selected-response questions, also known as multiple-choice questions. You don't have to write any essays or even short answers. You've probably been answering multiple-choice questions since you were old enough to wield a No. 2 pencil on your first standardized test. So you may think you know all there is to know about them. But, Praxis puts new twists on a few of these old favorites in two ways: first, by changing the numbers of correct answers, and second, by varying the type of response you need to make. It's not all just clicking the correct ovals.

### Number of correct answers

A huge majority of the questions on the Praxis Elementary Education: CIA exam have a single correct answer. The remainder have more than one correct answer. Occasionally, questions with more than one correct answer specify how many answers you should pick, but far more often, this type of question doesn't tell you how many of the choices are correct. The following sections take a closer look.

#### SINGLE CORRECT RESPONSE

You can think of these as the basic, no-frills model of the multiple-choice question. They have one and only one correct answer. On the Praxis, the question typically includes an instruction to remind you that the question has only one correct answer, such as, "Answer the question by clicking the correct response."



TIP

ETS suggests an effective approach for answering multiple-choice questions that have a single answer. Eliminate any answers you know are incorrect to narrow down the choices before picking a possible answer. Then, try out your preliminary answer by referring back to the question. For example, suppose a question shows a student-generated graph that is supposed to plot the student's answers to several equations. Does it make sense to say that giving the student extra instruction about the horizontal and vertical axes of a graph would address the misunderstanding shown in the student's work sample? If not, eliminate that option and decipher the remaining choices similarly until you find the one that fits.

### MORE THAN ONE CORRECT RESPONSE

This souped-up version of a multiple-choice question has two or more correct answers, instead of just one. A few of these will helpfully tell you the number of correct answers, often emphasized in capital or boldfaced letters. For example, you might find a question like this accompanying an example of a paragraph a student is supposed to peer edit: "Which TWO types of errors can a peer editor find in this paragraph?"



TIP

To get points for answering a question that tells you the number of correct answers, following the instructions is essential. Click the specified number of answers, whether it is two answers, three answers, or some other number.

Most of the time, however, the question does not tell you how many correct responses to choose. One of these may look like a no-frills multiple-choice question at first glance, but then you may notice the instruction, "Click on your choices." How many choices? Well, that's up to you. Maybe the question only has one correct answer. Maybe it has two or three. It's possible that every single option is correct.



TIP

When a question tells you to "Click on your choices" but does not tell you how many choices are correct, you need to examine each answer option individually and decide whether or not it is correct.

### Different types of answers

The vast majority of items on the official Praxis practice test and the actual test itself are the multiple-choice format you're probably most familiar with. You read the question and click on the oval next to the correct answer choice (or choices). However, you may also encounter items that ask you to indicate your choice in some other fashion. Sometimes, the difference may be subtle; you may be asked to click the boxes, rather than the ovals, beside all the correct answers, or you may choose your answer from a drop-down menu of choices. Other times, the task will look quite different from what you see in a standard multiple-choice question. You may be asked to:

- » **Choose an answer by clicking on a part of a graphic.** For example, a question might instruct you to click on a part of a map to indicate where you would direct your students' attention during a lesson on interpreting the scale of a map.
- » **Select a sentence from a passage.** For example, a question may ask you to click on the sentence from a student's opinion paragraph that indicates whether or not the student has supported his opinion with evidence.
- » **Drag answer choices into the correct spots in a table or list.** For example, you might be asked to drag several examples of student writing into a table to show which example indicates that a student needs practice in a particular reading skill.

In the practice tests both in this book and online, you'll find many examples of various multiple-choice questions with varying numbers of answers. Taking all of our practice tests will give you a consistent feel of what you will see on the actual test so that you'll have a chance to refine your own personal strategy for nailing the answers every time.

## How the Test Is Scored

Praxis Elementary Education: CIA is divided into five sections, each focused on a specific subject area (or on a group of subjects) that you're likely to teach: reading and language arts; mathematics; science; social studies; and art, music, and physical education. When you receive your score report, you will see a breakdown of raw points for each section and a total score. The total score is calculated from your raw points and adjusted to a scale that ranges from 100 to 200 points.

### Racking up raw points

Your total score on the exam is based on the number of raw points you earn in each section. The available numbers of raw points are very similar to the percentages of the exam represented by each subject area:

- » **Reading and language arts:** 31 raw points available
- » **Math:** 26 raw points available
- » **Science:** 16 raw points available
- » **Social studies:** 14 raw points available
- » **Art, music, and physical education:** 12 raw points available

Your raw score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly. ETS points out in its preparation materials that your test may contain some questions that do not count toward your score. "Which questions?" you ask. Well, if they told you that, you probably wouldn't bother answering them, would you? Nope, and that's why they don't tell you. You need to try and answer every single question on your exam.



TIP

You don't lose any points for answering a question incorrectly. If you were to answer every single question incorrectly, your raw score would be 0, which is exactly what it would be if you didn't answer any questions at all. That's why you have nothing to lose by guessing if you don't know the answer to a question.

### Making sense of your score

The number that may interest you the most when you get your score report is your final score, which ETS simply calls "your score." Your score determines whether or not you pass the test. No wonder it gets so much attention!

Your score will be a number from 100 to 200. It is calculated by taking your raw points—which are based on the number of questions you answer correctly—and comparing them to the number of questions on the test. This conversion of your raw points to your total score also adapts to the level of rigor of that particular testing edition.

To achieve a total score that is considered passing by most states, you must answer at least 60 percent of the questions correctly. This gives you a benchmark to measure yourself against as you go through the practice tests in this book or online.



TIP

If you fail the Praxis the first time you take it (or if you've already failed it), you can look at your scores for each content category to see where you did well and where you struggled. Use those scores to help you target what to study most before you take the exam again.

Remember, though, that each state that requires passing the exam has its own minimum score. What constitutes a passing score in one state may not be a passing score in another state. Contact your state or local department of education for the minimum passing score.

## Getting a Very Early Taste of 5017

In a moment, this chapter will lead you to some practice questions that will give you a basic idea of what to expect on the Praxis Elementary Education: CIA test. This is an ideal time for you to begin studying actual test material.

Because the practice questions that are coming right up will prepare you for the practice questions later in the book, what you are really about to do is practice for practice. You can use these first sets of practice results to help you determine what you need to focus on in the rest of your preparation. You might realize that you have a firm grasp on math instruction but know very little about science curriculum or perhaps that you need to focus on learning social studies content knowledge. However, no matter what you realize from looking at your practice question results, you should thoroughly study all areas to achieve the best possible real test score.

Although the big test you are preparing for is timed, we do not recommend timing yourself when you try the practice questions in this chapter. You should first learn to do something well before you learn to do it fast.

Because time will not be a factor for these questions, you don't need to worry about timing techniques. Pace yourself and do your best to answer every question. Keep in mind that leaving exam questions blank does not benefit you. On the test you are preparing for, there is no penalty for guessing and getting a wrong answer, aside from not getting the points a right answer would have gotten you.

We also encourage you not to check your answers as you go through these practice questions. Knowing for sure that you missed several questions in a row can be discouraging and tempt you to give up too easily. Perhaps, knowing that you are on a roll at this stage can make you worry about jinxing your winning streak. Plus, when you look up one answer, you can easily see the other ones. That makes the practice less of a practice.

Okay, here are the questions. Good luck!