



CASAS Essay Test Form 900W, 901W, and 902W

Test Administration Directions

February 2023

What Is the CASAS Essay Test?

Effective writing is a valuable skill for all adults whether it is for a persuasive cover letter for a job application, an informative email describing a customer support issue, an opinion statement shared in a blog or online forum, or a well-organized request for information from a school, business, or other provider.

The CASAS Essay Test is an online assessment that gives students a writing prompt on a current topic. Students then compose a multi-paragraph essay using a basic word processor. The Essay Test assesses how well students can compose their thoughts using proper English grammar and sentence construction. Students describe their position regarding a current event or common situation and support their thoughts with examples, anecdotes, or additional information.

The essays will be automatically scored on their organization, word choice, development of ideas, responses to the writing prompt, spelling, and standard grammatical form. The test allows a wide range of acceptable responses and there are no wrong answers if students can support their opinions. Scratch paper is allowed, and a spell checker is included inside the word processor.

The CASAS Essay Test is intended for all ABE/ASE students NRS level 2 and above and for ESL students at NRS Reading Level 4 and above. It is not appropriate for low-level ESL students.

There are three different essay prompts, saved as separate test forms, 900W, 901W, and 902W. They are of equal difficulty and do not serve as pretests or post-tests.

This assessment cannot be used for recording Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) as part of a pre- and post-test combination for NRS reporting purposes. However, it can serve as a class placement tool, as a practice test for HSE students preparing for the GED or HiSET test, or for other purposes determined by local agencies.

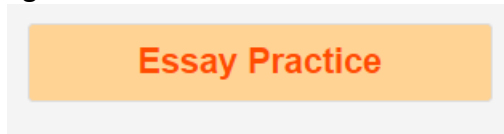
The CASAS Essay Test is composed of secure test prompts that are the property of CASAS. Agencies and test takers may not alter the test prompts, questions, or answer options in any way.

How to Prepare Students to Take the CASAS Essay Test

1. Students should be encouraged to use the CASAS “Sampler” Essay practice tool prior to taking the Essay Test. The **Sampler** is a simple application that runs inside most Windows browsers. Ideally, students should run the Sampler on the same computer that they will use for the Essay Test, but that is not required. The Sampler can be accessed from a browser here.

<https://casasportal.org/eTests>

2. Click the orange box to begin:



3. The Sampler provides a stress-free environment to become familiar with the word processor. This will reduce test anxiety. Teachers can use the Sampler as part of their instruction prior to having their students take the Essay Test. The Sampler will not score the practice essay. When the students are done practicing, simply click the blue arrow in the bottom right corner to exit.

ID: 123456	Name: [REDACTED]	Form: PR1W	Time Remaining: 00:10:00
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Healthy eating habits are important but often not followed. Why is this? What can be done about it?

[+ -]

[+ -] Directions [→]

4. Offer these suggestions to your students:

- Note the timer at the top of the screen is counting down.
- Click the + and – keys to adjust the size of the font.
- Click the “Directions” button to see the essay test instructions.
- Type a few short sentences which include a typo.
- Practice correcting the typo using the spellchecker (right-click or Shift-F10).
- Try using cut and paste (^c and ^v).
- When you are done, click the **blue arrow** in the lower-right corner to end the practice session.



Confirmation

Are you sure you are finished?

CASAS eTests Online
Personal Score Report
Practice is ended.
Use the arrow at bottom right to return to the test menu.

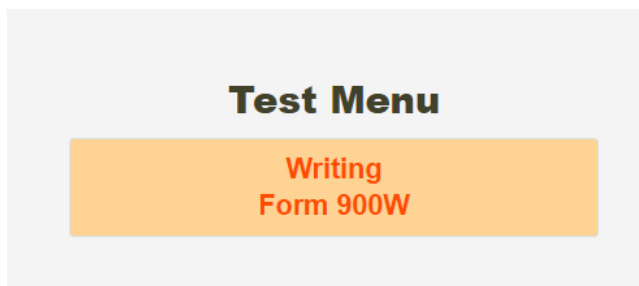
Modality	Test Form	Test Date
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5. Proctors should review these directions in advance and contact CASAS with any questions. CASAS strongly recommends conducting a trial run in the testing environment, including the **Sampler**, prior to testing. Please follow these Test Administration Directions for all Essay Test sessions.
6. There is a supplemental document, “**CASAS Writing Assessment Advisory Notes**” for teachers and proctors who are interested in more in-depth, detailed information about the Essay Test and Language Test, and ways to maximize scoring in an online essay test environment using a word processor.

<https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/research-and-evaluation/field-testing-opportunities>

How to Administer the CASAS Essay Test

1. Each student should receive scratch paper and a pen.
2. Read aloud these *Recommended Test Directions* to your students:
 - *You will see a writing prompt about a current topic, and you will create a short essay about that subject. There are no wrong answers, so feel free to write in your own voice and use examples.*
 - *You'll have up to 60 minutes to complete your essay. You will see a timer in the top right corner of your screen. If you finish early, raise your hand to notify your proctor.*
 - *Be sure to thoroughly answer the entire writing prompt. Avoid using humor or sarcasm.*
 - *No breaks are allowed.*
 - *When you are done with your essay, click the blue arrow at the bottom of the screen. Your Score Report will appear on the screen, along with suggestions for improvement. Your teacher can print this for you.*
 - *Any questions?*
3. Students will enter their **Student ID**.
 - a. Optionally, some students may be presented with a demographic data collection screen before the Essay Test begins. Allow 5-10 minutes.
4. When the students are ready to start the test, tell them to click the orange box containing the Essay Test form. This is an example:



5. Next, the student will see these onscreen instructions. **Read these instructions aloud to the students.** The 60-minute timer will begin when the student clicks the **blue arrow** at the bottom.

Instructions:

- You have 1 hour to complete your essay. Your time starts when you click the blue arrow.
- You should write your essay without help from others.
- You may use spell check.
- You may not use a dictionary or grammar checker.
- You may use scratch paper to write an outline or draft.

Writing Your Essay:

- Write an essay about the assigned topic.
- Write at least 1 or 2 paragraphs.
- Clearly state your opinion and support it with specific details and examples.
- Organize your essay using effective transitions between ideas and paragraphs.
- Use a variety of word choices and different expressions.
- Demonstrate proper use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.


To begin writing, click the blue arrow → at the bottom of the screen. When you are finished writing, read your essay again and fix any errors that you see. Then click the blue arrow → to submit your essay.

6. Please follow CASAS eTests proctoring guidelines for the duration of the test. No breaks are allowed.
7. The software will automatically save students' work every 30 seconds. They may notice a slight flash on their screen – this is normal and lets them know it is working properly.

After Completing the CASAS Essay Test

1. After the student completes the essay and confirms that they are ready to end the testing session, a **Personal Score Report for Essay** displays on their testing station screen with a score between 1 to 4. There are suggestions for improvement displayed in a box at the bottom of the report. This report can be printed and is saved in TOPSpro Enterprise.
2. Students who finish the Essay Test do not need to wait until others are finished. They should raise their hand to notify the proctor.
3. If a student receives a score of a “ * “ that indicates that the essay was lacking enough content to be sufficiently scored or had certain mistakes. See “**CASAS Writing Assessment Advisory Notes**” for more details.
4. Go to the student’s testing station and have the student **Log Out** of CASAS eTests.
5. Collect scratch paper and destroy.
6. Do not discuss test results with students who finish early. Proctors should instead focus on the students who are still testing.
7. Essay scores for individual students (or groups of students) may be exported from:
 - a. CASAS eTests: Click **Test Results** menu.
 - b. TOPSpro Enterprise: From the **Records → Tests** list of records. Be sure to clear any filters and select the correct testing site. The essay forms are 900W, 901W, and 902W.
 - c. TOPSpro Enterprise: From the **Reports → CASAS eTests → Test Administrations** report you can see a list of attempted tests. You can filter by date and click **Tests** in the left Navigation panel.
 - d. TOPSpro Enterprise: Run the **Personal Score Report** under **Reports → CASAS eTests** to review a copy of the report(s).

e. This is a sample Essay Test **Personal Score Report**:



09/23/2022
16:13:08

Personal Score Report

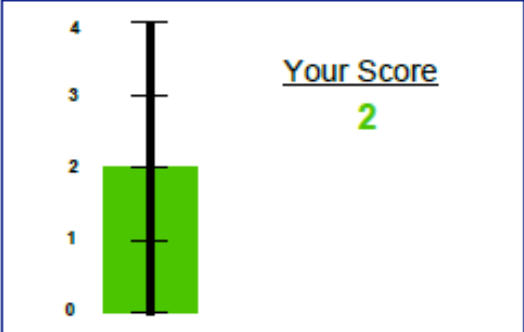
by Site

Page 1 of 4
PSR3

JJ Fera - 234567

Agency: 0000-PRODUCTION-REVIEW-ITEMS	Class: N/A
Site: 000-PRODUCTION	Teacher: N/A

Modality	Test Form	Test Date	Score
Writing	902W	09/21/2022	2



Your Score
2

Becoming a better writer

What to Work On:

Main Idea	When you write, make sure your main idea is clearly stated in the beginning. Focus on your main idea throughout the entire essay. Make sure that you include enough details and examples to support your main idea. Also, explain everything in your essay clearly so that the reader is not confused about what you mean. Extra information will help the reader understand what you are writing about.
Organization	Keep working on putting your sentences together in an organized way, so that your ideas are easy to follow. Using transition words will help to smoothly connect your ideas to each other.
Word Choice	Try to reduce the number of word-choice errors in your writing. Make sure that you are using words correctly, so the meaning is always clear. Also, use a variety of words and sentence structures in your writing. Avoid repetition where possible.
Grammar & Mechanics	Try to use more complex sentence structure throughout your essay. Also, continue to check your sentences carefully and fix any errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Fixing these errors will help the reader understand what you are saying.

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CASAS Essay Test Holistic Scoring Rubric

Score	Holistic Score Description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis or main idea is clearly stated and developed with relevant details and examples. • Ideas are well-organized and well-developed with effective transitions. • Word choice demonstrates variety and richness of expression. • May have few minor errors in grammar and mechanics, with variety and some complexity of sentence structure.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis or main idea shows some support and relevant detail, although some ideas may not be well-stated and may require minimal inference. Generally cohesive with some effective transitions. • Few word-choice errors and some variety and richness of expression. • Some minor errors in grammar and mechanics generally do not interfere with the reader’s understanding. Some variety in sentence structure.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains a thesis or main idea with little support and may be unfocused or unclear. • Many ideas may not be well-stated. Requires inference in most cases. A basic organizational structure is evident with some sequencing of ideas. • There may be some errors in word choice with some variety of expression. • May contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics that may interfere with the reader’s understanding. Sentence structure may be simple.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal response to task – or writing lacks a thesis or main idea and may require a substantial degree of inference. • Cohesion is limited but contains some related sentences. • Word choice errors may require the reader to infer meaning. • Serious errors in grammar or mechanics that may interfere with the reader’s understanding.

*	<p>Essays can receive a score of * for distinct reasons. These reasons are because the essay is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• too short• mostly copying the question• not developing ideas enough• repeating the same information• not about the topic in the prompt• written with too many unknown words• written with violent or inappropriate language• written with too many grammar and syntax problems
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Suggestions for Improvement Based on Essay Score

Score of 1:



Becoming a Better Writer

Suggestions for Improvement:

Main Idea	When you write, make sure that your main idea is easy to understand. Throughout your essay, only write about your main idea. Also, make sure that your ideas are clear, and everything is explained well. You should also write details and examples in your essay. The details and examples help support your main idea. They also help the reader understand what you are writing about.
Organization	Be sure to use connecting words between sentences. Organize your sentences and ideas so it is easy for the reader to follow what you wrote.
Word Choice	Make sure that you are choosing words that express your ideas clearly.
Grammar & Mechanics	Remember to use correct spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Keep working on writing sentences and fixing any grammar errors.

Score of 2:

Becoming a Better Writer

Suggestions for Improvement:

Main Idea	When you write, make sure your main idea is clearly stated in the beginning. Focus on your main idea throughout the entire essay. Make sure that you include enough details and examples to support your main idea. Also, explain everything in your essay clearly so that the reader is not confused about what you mean. Extra information will help the reader understand what you are writing about.
Organization	Keep working on putting your sentences together in an organized way, so that your ideas are easy to follow. Using transition words will help to smoothly connect your ideas to each other.
Word Choice	Try to reduce the number of word-choice errors in your writing. Make sure that you are using words correctly, so the meaning is always clear. Also, use a variety of words and sentence structures in your writing. Avoid repetition where possible.
Grammar & Mechanics	Try to use more complex sentence structure throughout your essay. Also, continue to check your sentences carefully and fix any errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Fixing these errors will help the reader understand what you are saying.

Score of 3:

<u>Becoming a Better Writer</u>	
Suggestions for Improvement:	
Main Idea	Continue to work on making your main idea very clear throughout your entire essay. Someone reading your essay should be able to understand the main idea of your essay early on and see that you only write about information related to your main idea. Check that you present a range of strong details and examples that support your main idea. All of the additional information in your essay should be relevant and help to clearly illustrate exactly what you mean.
Organization	Arrange the sentences that support your main idea, so they are easy for the reader to follow. Transition words should be effective and easily guide the reader from one piece of information to the next. Use paragraphs as well as an introduction and conclusion to help express your ideas.
Word Choice	Keep expanding your word choice and using a variety of different expressions in your writing. Avoid repeating the same words and expressions throughout your essay.
Grammar & Mechanics	Check your grammar and fix any errors in your writing. Use complex sentences as well as a variety of sentence types where possible. Remember to use correct spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

Score of 4:

You got the highest score. Great job!

- Your essay was coherent and had a clear main idea throughout the entire essay.
- You supported your ideas with specific details and examples that were relevant to the main idea.
- You organized your essay with effective transitions, which helped make your essay easy to understand.
- You used a variety of different expressions and vocabulary suitable to the topic.
- You demonstrated proper use of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Keep up the good work!

2. There are several reasons an essay could be scored with a “*”.

The **Personal Score Report** will show the precise reason returned by the autoscorer with the following sentence.

Please also consult the “**CASAS Writing Assessment Advisory Notes**” for other suggestions for achieving best possible scores during an online essay test.

Your essay could not be scored accurately because _____.

Description	PSR Language
Essay is too short to grade.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay is too short to score.
Essay is off topic.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay is not on topic.
Essay is repetitious.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay repeats too much of the same information.
Essay has inadequate development.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay does not develop ideas.
Essay contains too many unknown words.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay has too many unknown words.
Essay contains major syntax problems.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay has major syntax problems.
Essay contains unnecessary violent language.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay has too much violent language.
Essay substantially copied the question.	Your essay could not be scored accurately because the essay mostly copied the question.