

Overview

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.

CASAS has developed two complementary Writing Assessments for adult education students: The **Language Test** and the **Essay Test**. They are delivered via the CASAS eTests online application framework. These tests evaluate two aspects of writing skills: the mechanics of the English language and the flow of thoughts in written form. Both tests give robust results about student ability and can be administered individually or as a pair.

The **Language Test** is a multiple-choice test that can screen students quickly, assist in placement, guide instruction, and evaluate progress.

The **Essay Test** assesses how well students can compose their thoughts using proper English grammar and sentence construction. They describe their position regarding a current event or common situation and support their thoughts with examples, anecdotes, or additional information.

1. *What are the benefits to Adult Education programs?*
 - a. Helps HSE candidates prepare for their GED/HiSET exams
 - b. Supports students transitioning into employment and postsecondary education where writing skills are required
 - c. Saves teachers time by eliminating manual scoring of essays
 - d. Scores essays using a nationally approved set of guidelines

2. *Which student populations are served?*
 - a. ABE: Level 2 and above (based on a CASAS Reading GOALS score)
 - b. ESL: High Intermediate and Advanced levels

3. *What four English language skills does the **Language Test** evaluate?*
 - a. Nouns, pronouns
 - b. Verbs, adverbs, adjectives
 - c. Phrases, clauses, sentences
 - d. Punctuation

4. *How is the **Language Test** administered?*
 - a. For the pilot, ONE multiple-choice test with 20 questions.
 - b. 20 minutes
 - c. The results will be presented in the form of a report (see below)

5. *What composition skills does the **Essay Test** evaluate?*
 - a. Organization
 - b. Word choice
 - c. Development of ideas
 - d. Response to the writing prompt
 - e. Standard English grammar (a spell checker is included for the student).
 - f. Example: *“Healthy eating habits are important but often not followed. Why is this? What can be done about it?”*

6. *How are the **Essay Tests** administered?*
 - a. The student is given a topic to write about, and they type their responses within CASAS eTests.
 - b. 60 minutes
 - c. One of three essay prompts – can be teacher-selected or randomly assigned
 - d. The essays are **auto-scored** using the same top-tier software algorithm successfully used by the CASAS NEDP’s nationally recognized diploma program for the past three years.
 - e. The results are available immediately to the agency and the student.

7. *What are the new reports?*
 - a. **Personal Score Report for Language**
 - i. Includes raw score, CCR Language Level, and statistics for each of the four evaluation criteria (see #3 above)
 - ii. CASAS will use student scores to build a new CASAS “Language Scale” (future)

 - b. **Personal Score Report for Essay**
 - i. Scored on a scale of 1-4
 - ii. Includes specific suggestions for a student’s improvement

8. *Testing requirements?*
 - a. Your agency must be currently running CASAS eTests (not available on paper)

9. *Are these assessments NRS-approved?*
 - a. Not currently.

10. *Will a WTU/TEU be charged to agencies?*
 - a. Beginning in February 2023, one WTU will be charged to all agencies per Essay Test administered.

For more information, please contact casas@casas.org Thank you!