

FOUR STEPS TO IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTING CASAS **ESSAY & LANGUAGE** TESTS

Janice Fera

CASAS National Program & Technology Specialist

jfera@casas.org

Copy of the presentation:

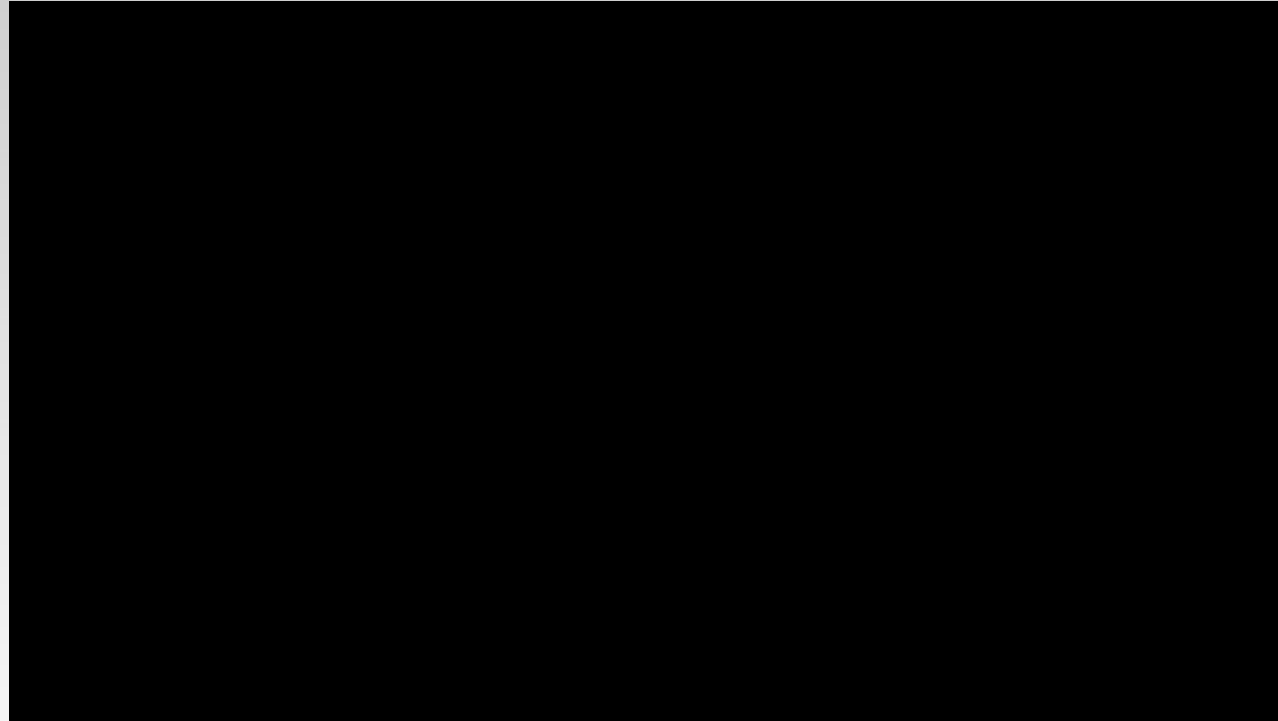
tinyurl.com/casas-essay



QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTENDEES

- (1) What's your role in Adult Ed?
 - Teachers? Administrators? Counselors? Data Analysts?
- (2) Do you currently (or previously) offer writing classes at your agency?
 - If so, which student groups do you serve? (ELL, ABE, HSE/HSD)

THE **NEW** “ESSAY TEST”



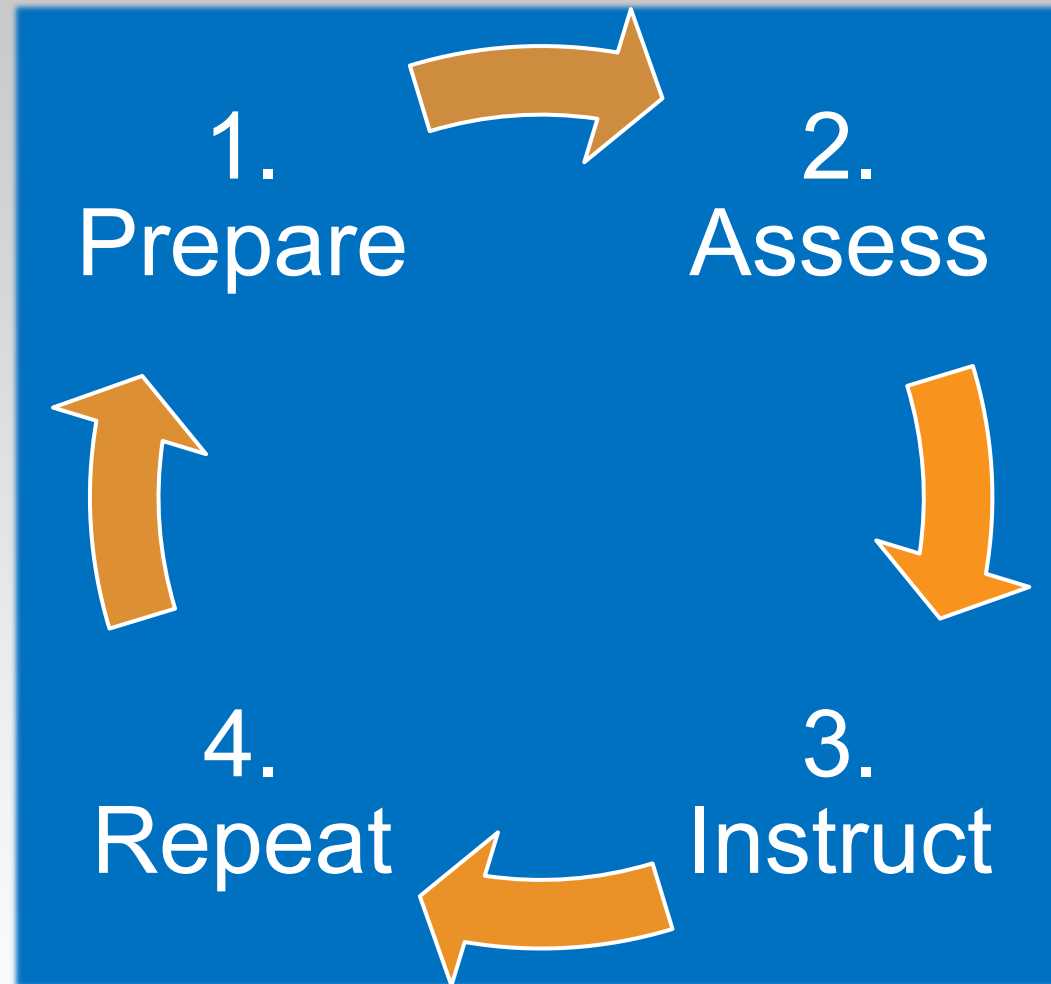
[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/MVVYQREGT-0](https://youtu.be/MVVYQREGT-0)

ARE WRITING SKILLS IMPORTANT?

- ✓ Helps HSE candidates prepare for the GED/HiSET exams
- ✓ Supports students transitioning into employment and secondary education where writing skills are required

How else could your students benefit from better writing skills TODAY?

FOUR STEPS: IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS



PREPARE PROCTORS & TEACHERS:



TEST
ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTIONS



NEW: ESSAY TEST
ADVISORY NOTES



COMING SOON:
WRITING WORKSHOP
(SUMMER INSTITUTE 2023)

PREPARE STUDENTS: CASAS “ETESTS SAMPLER”

CASAS eTests Sampler	
Sample Test Items	
Life and Work Reading	
Reading GOALS Level A	
Reading GOALS Level B	
Reading GOALS Level C	
Reading GOALS Level D	
Math GOALS	
Life and Work Listening 980 Level A	
Life and Work Listening 980 Level B	
Life and Work Listening 980 Level C	
Essay	

[HTTPS://CASASPORTAL.ORG/ETESTS](https://casasportal.org/etests)

INSIDE THE “SAMPLER”:

ID:	Name:	Time Remaining: 00:10:00
-----	-------	-----------------------------

Healthy eating habits are important but often not followed. Why is this? What can be done about it?

Maintaining a varied diet is important, but also expensive. It's hard to find time to shop and cook using fresh ingredeints.

00:10:00

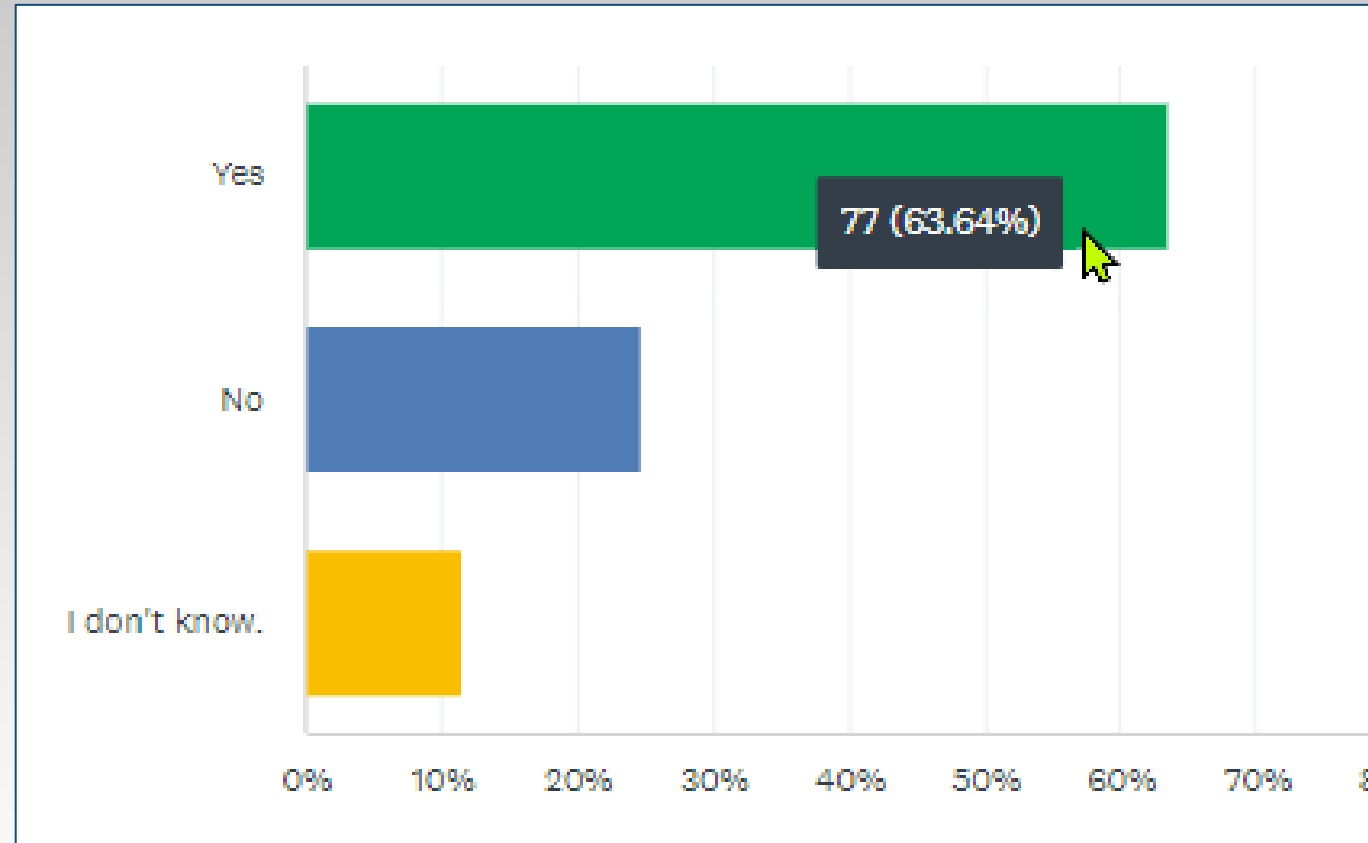
Directions

→

MORE STUDENT PREPARATION TIPS:

HOW ARE YOUR KEYBOARDING SKILLS?

- Over 120 students surveyed thought better **typing skills** would have helped them with their essay test.



2. THE WRITING ASSESSMENTS



Essay Test



Language Test

[HTTPS://WWW.CASAS.ORG/PRODUCT-OVERVIEWS/RESEARCH-AND-EVALUATION/FIELD-TESTING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/research-and-evaluation/field-testing-opportunities)

SAMPLE LANGUAGE TEST QUESTION

1. THE CHEF _____ THE MEALS AT THE RESTAURANT.

A. COOK

B. COOKS

C. HAVE COOKED

SAMPLE LANGUAGE QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

2. THE CLASS _____ HE SIGNED UP FOR
BEGINS IN THE SPRING.

A. WHO

B. THAT

C. WHOSE

ADMINISTER THE ESSAY & LANGUAGE TESTS

eTests Online - Janice Fake Agency

06-Feb-23 8:59:36 AM

Janice Fera (jfera@casas.org)

Logout

Testing Sessions

(4 records)

Refresh

Filter by: Status

☐ Save table filters

filter

filter

filter

filter

filter

Edit	View	Start	Tests	Delete	Copy	Site	Lab Name	Template Name	Session Name	Start Date
Edit	View	Start	Tests	Delete	Copy	50		Essay Test -- Form 900W (Exercise)	Essay Test - Form 900W	07/01/2022
Edit	View	Start	Tests	Delete	Copy	50		Essay Test -- Form 901W (Employment)	Essay Test - Form 901W	07/01/2022
Edit	View	Start	Tests	Delete	Copy	50		Essay Test -- Form 902W (Advertising)	Essay Test - Form 902W	07/01/2022
Edit	View	Start	Tests	Delete	Copy	50		Language Test Initial Research Study	Language Field Test - DO NOT EDIT	07/01/2022

ESSAY PERSONAL SCORE REPORT (PSR)

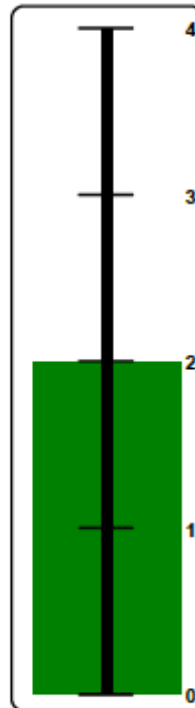
CASAS eTests Online

Personal Score Report

Janice Fera

123456

Modality	Test Form	Test Date	Score
Writing	900W	01/19/2023	2



Your score:

2

PERSONAL SCORE REPORT (PSR), PAGE 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.

TOPSPRO ENTERPRISE:

REPORTS → CASAS ETESTS → PERSONAL SCORE REPORT

DEFINITIONS:

- ✓ **Grammar** is the structure of written or spoken language. It refers to the parts of speech and how they combine to form sentences.
- ✓ **Mechanics** refers to the rules of the written language, such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling.



PSR FOR LANGUAGE



01/25/2023
00:39:23

Personal Score Report

by Site

Page 1 of 2
PSR3

Agency:		Class:	N/A
Site		Teacher	N/A

Modality	Test Form	Test Date	Total	Correct	CCR Language Level
Language	FT-US-LA-001	10/07/2022	20	3	C

Language Content Area	Total Items	Number correct	Percent correct
Nouns and Pronouns	4	0	0%
Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives	7	2	29%
Phrases, Clauses and Sentences	4	0	0%
Punctuation	5	1	20%

[HTTPS://WWW.CASAS.ORG/PRODUCT-OVERVIEWS/RESEARCH-AND-EVALUATION/FIELD-TESTING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/research-and-evaluation/field-testing-opportunities)

3. INSTRUCT – HOW TO TEACH WRITING?

WHAT'S YOUR METHODOLOGY?

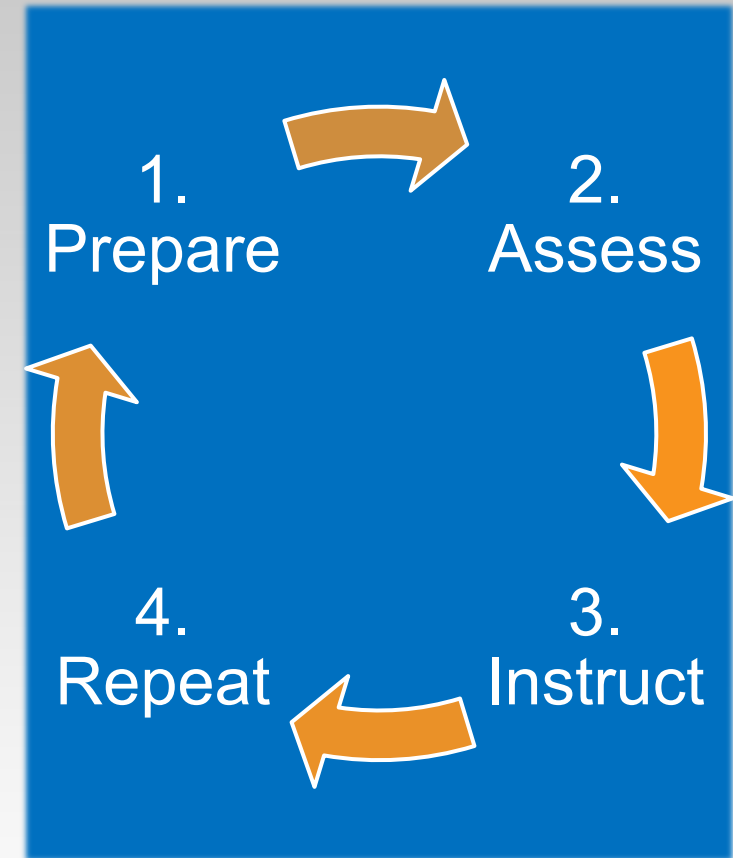
- Student populations:
 - ABE: Level 2 and above
(based on CASAS Reading GOALS score)
 - ESL: High Intermediate and Advanced levels
- Create an outline?
- List of key words?
- Compose using the keyboard – or on paper first?
- How to use their time effectively?

3. INSTRUCTION – WRITING SKILLS (CONT'D)

- QuickSearch Online -- “Inference” and “Conclusion”
- Competencies and Content Standards, Competencies #7.2.4
- Reading Content Standards #4.4
<https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/curriculum-management-instruction/quicksearch-online>
- “Writing Workshop: Introductory Paragraph”,
Andrew Keiler, South Bay Adult School
- “Ideas for Teaching Writing Skills”, CASAS Summer Institute 2023

4. REPEAT THE PROCESS

- Cyclical nature of composition
 - Writing, editing, re-writing
- Re-taking a test to see how your score has improved.



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

“[Essay Test] ... has been an invaluable tool in assessing the writing abilities of our students, and it enables us to do writing intervention that just wasn't possible before.”

Andrew Keiler, South Bay Adult School, Redondo Beach, CA

HOW TO GET STARTED?

- Download the training materials on casas.org
- Schedule an internal meeting with your teachers and counselors to map out your plan.
- Contact techsupport@casas.org to make an appointment to have Essay and Language Test installed into your eTests environment

QUESTIONS?

HOW DOES “AUTOSCORING” WORK?

- Artificial intelligence algorithms
- The software is “pre-trained” on the prompts
 - **Hundreds** of hours dissecting example essays
- Scoring rubric is provided

HOW LENIENT IS THE AUTOSCORER?

- Top scorers write 3-5 very good paragraphs with minimal errors
- Points earned for good flow, choice of words, well-supported position
- Points deducted for failing to address the entire prompt, spelling and grammar mistakes

REFERENCES

- “TALE Handbook”, TESOL
 - https://taleproject.eu/pluginfile.php/2129/mod_page/content/12/TALE%20Handbook%20-%20colour.pdf (p.60+)
- “ESL Writing with Collaborative Tasks to Build Student Confidence”,
 - Lunch with LARAEC, Feb. 9, 2023,
 - Kristi Reyes, MiraCosta College Noncredit ESL, OTAN Subject Matter Expert, kreyes@otan.us

OTAN

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network

Follow Us



[/OTAN](#)



[/company/otan_2](#)

Like Us



[/OTANServesAdultEducation](#)

Subscribe



[/OTANServesAdultEducation](#)



Training

News

Teach with
Technology

Digests

TDLS

Online
Resources

OTAN.US
916-228-2580