

## 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 3 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. 20-30 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. 60-75 minutes
  - c. One of three prompts are 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 non-California agencies?*
  - a. No.

Please consider joining our group of agencies piloting these assessments. Send an email with contact information to [jfera@casas.org](mailto:jfera@casas.org) and indicate which test(s) your school would be interested in learning more about. Thank you!