

## **Module 1: CLAS-E Writing Overview**

*In this module, you will learn the nuts and bolts of the CLAS-E Writing, including an overview of the steps you should follow to administer the assessment.*

TABE CLAS-E (Complete Language Assessment System–English) is a suite of assessments designed for adult learners in ESOL programs. The full CLAS-E assessment includes four sections: Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking. However, Massachusetts uses only the Reading and Writing sections, which are referred to as the CLAS-E Reading and CLAS-E Writing.

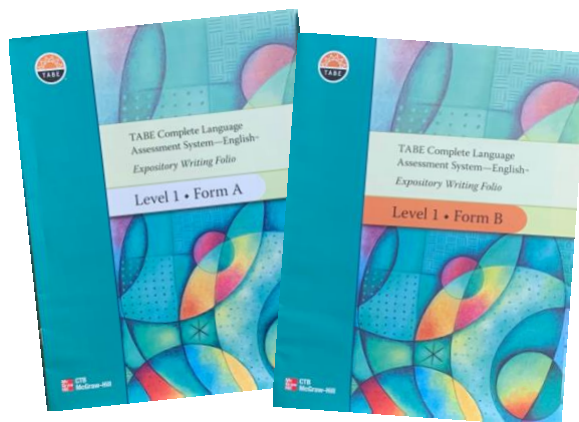
The state’s assessment policy requires programs to use the CLAS-E Writing for all ESOL students whose goal is to improve their writing skills. This includes ESOL students enrolled in workplace education programs, distance learning programs, and Spanish HSE classes.

### **CLAS-E Writing Levels and Forms**

The CLAS-E has four levels. The table below shows the correspondence among National Reporting System Educational Functioning Levels (NRS EFL), Student Performance Levels (SPL), CLAS-E levels, and CLAS-E Writing scale scores.

<b>CLAS-E Level</b>	<b>CLAS-E Writing Scale Scores</b>	<b>NRS EFL</b>	<b>SPL</b>
Level 1	200-396	Beginning ESL	0 – 1
Level 1 / Level 2	397-445	Low Beginning ESL	2
Level 2 / Level 3	446-488	High Beginning ESL	3
Level 3	489-520	Low Intermediate ESL	4
Level 4	521-555	High Intermediate ESL	5
Level 4	556-612	Advanced ESL	6

There are two test forms for each CLAS-E level: Form A and Form B. The forms assess the same knowledge and skills, but use different questions. For the CLAS-E Writing, there is a unique test book and Expository Writing Folio for each level and form combination. The different forms can be used for alternating test materials between pre-testing and post-testing.



## Overview of Steps in Administering the CLAS-E Writing

Below is an overview of the steps involved in administering the CLAS-E Writing to a learner taking the test for the first time. These steps are explained in further detail in Modules 2 through 5.

**Step 1:** Administer the Locator Interview (Written Interview - Part B).

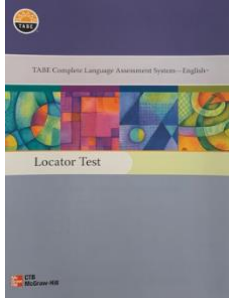
The image shows a page from the 'Locator Test Answer Booklet'. At the top, there is a header with the TABE logo and the text 'Locator Test Answer Booklet'. Below this, there is a table with columns for 'Name', 'Date', 'Time', and 'Score'. The main body of the page contains a list of eight numbered questions, each followed by a horizontal line for the answer. The questions are: 1. How old are you?, 2. Where do you live?, 3. How long have you lived there?, 4. How many people live in your house?, 5. How many children do you have?, 6. How do you go to school?, 7. How many times do you go to school each week?, and 8. How do you go to work? At the bottom, there is a small footer with the text 'Copyright © by TABE, Inc. All rights reserved. This booklet is available for free at www.tabe.org. Page 1'.

The Locator Interview (Written Interview - Part B) consists of 8 questions that learners read to themselves and answer in writing. It is used to check if learners have the minimum reading and writing skills to take the Locator Test. Test administrators score the Locator Interview using a simple rubric.

*Sample Locator Interview questions:*

- Can you ride a bicycle?
- What do you like about this city?

**Step 2:** Administer the Locator Test (Part 1) to help determine the appropriate CLAS-E Writing level for a learner. This only applies to learners who score 10 or above on the Locator Interview. Learners who score 9 or below on the Locator Interview should skip the Locator Test and take the CLAS-E Writing level 1 test.



The Locator Test (Part 1) consists of 15 multiple-choice items and takes 15 minutes. After scoring students' answers using an answer key, test administrators can find the recommended test level using a chart that matches all possible scores on the Locator Test to one of the CLAS-E Writing levels. However, the final decision of which level to administer rests with test administrators, who should consider Locator Test results along with any other relevant information about learners, such as information from intake or previous classroom performance.

*What do Locator Test items look like?*

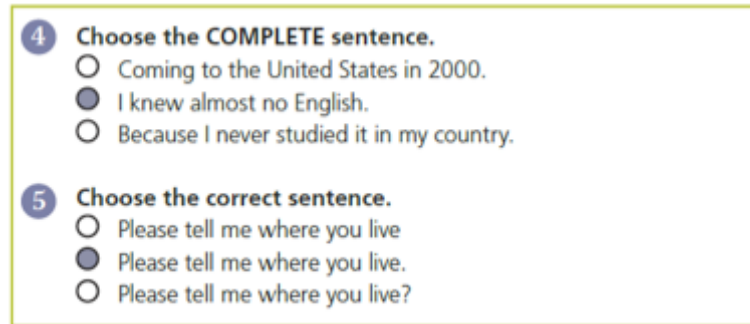
Some items on the Locator Test involve reading a passage related to familiar contexts, then answering questions about the passage. Other items do not rely on passages, such as fill-in-the-blank items based on a single sentence and items that prompt test takers to choose which sentence in a set is correct. All items follow the multiple-choice format.

**Step 3:** Administer the multiple-choice portion of the CLAS-E Writing Test level selected for the learner.

The CLAS-E Writing has two components: a multiple-choice portion and an expository writing portion. Start by administering the multiple-choice questions, using the student test book and Adapted CLAS-E Writing Answer Sheet. This portion of the test consists of questions designed to assess sentence formation skills, knowledge of grammar and

mechanics, and English language quantitative literacy (e.g., knowing that 10:15 is the same as “a quarter past ten”). Learners should be given exactly 20 minutes to complete the multiple-choice portion, regardless of level.

Sample multiple-choice questions:



**Step 4:** Administer the expository writing portion of the CLAS-E Writing Test level selected for the learner.


After administering the multiple-choice portion, administer the expository writing portion of the test using the Expository Writing Folio. This portion consists of five constructed response items to assess three broad types of writing: Write to Describe (items 1-2), Write to Accomplish Tasks (items 3-4), and Extended Writing (item 5). Learners across all levels complete tasks related to those types of writing, but they vary in complexity as shown in Table 1. Learners have exactly 27 minutes to finish the expository writing portion of the CLAS-E Writing test.

Description of items by level:

Item(s)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
1-2	Write one sentence about each picture.	Write two sentences about each picture.	Write two sentences about each picture.	Write two sentences about each picture.
3-4	Transfer 4 pieces of unordered personal information into correct order.	Place 8 unordered elements in the correct order in a letter.	Write a brief letter that appropriately addresses a detailed prompt.	Write a brief letter that appropriately addresses a detailed prompt.
5	Write 3 sentences based on a sequence of pictures, using key word prompts.	Write 4 sentences based on a sequence of pictures, using key word prompts.	Write one or more paragraphs about a specific topic.	Write at least two paragraphs about a specific topic.

Sample expository writing items:

3 Write two sentences about the picture.



1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5:** Score the multiple-choice questions of the CLAS-E Writing Test.

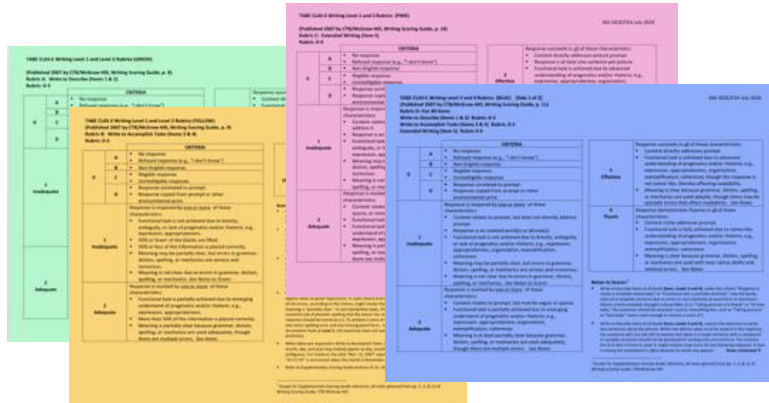
After administering the CLAS-E Writing, test administrators should score learners' answers to the multiple-choice questions using an Answer Key. The number of items answered correctly—the number correct (N/C) score—is the Multiple Choice Subtotal that should be recorded on each learner's Answer Sheet.

Answer Key excerpt (blurred for test security reasons):



**Step 6:** Score the expository writing portion using holistic rubrics.

Rubrics:



**Step 7:** Combine the scores on the multiple-choice and expository writing portions to obtain a total score.

Answer sheet with area to combine scores:

Expository Writing Folio Scores		
Item	Final Item Score	Condition Code (if score = 0)
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
<b>SUBTOTAL</b> _____		
<b>Multiple Choice</b> _____ + <b>Expository Writing</b> _____ = <b>Total Raw Score</b> _____		<b>SCALE SCORE</b> _____

To find Scale Score, see Scoring Tables Book pp. 12-27 for Form A, pp. 28-43 for Form B

Reader 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reader 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 8:** Convert the total score to a scaled score using a Scoring Table.

Sample Scoring Table:

Raw Score (RS) (Writing Total)	Scale Score (SS)	Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)	Functioning Level	
			NRS	SPL
0	200	98		
1	200	98		
2	200	98		
3	200	98		
4	200	98		
5	200	98		
6	204	94		
7	240	63		
8	263	50		
9	281	43		
10	297	38	1	0–1
11	310	35		
12	322	33		
13	333	31		
14	343	30		
15	352	29		
16	362	27		

**Step 9:** Apply the Retesting Guidelines and retest individual learners as needed.

Retesting Guidelines chart:

CLAS-E Level 1		
If your student's scale score is 470 or below, <b>DO NOT RETEST</b>	If your student's scale score is 471 or above, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 2</b>	
CLAS-E Level 2		
If your student's scale score is 371 or below, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 1</b>	If your student's scale score is between 372 and 513, <b>DO NOT RETEST</b>	If your student's scale score is 514 or above, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 3</b>
CLAS-E Level 3		
If your student's scale score is 420 or below, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 2</b>	If your student's scale score is between 421 and 545, <b>DO NOT RETEST</b>	If your student's scale score is 546 or above, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 4</b>
CLAS-E Level 4		
If your student's scale score is 495 or below, <b>RETEST with LEVEL 3</b>	If your student's scale score is 496 or above, <b>DO NOT RETEST</b>	

Steps 1 through 5 are covered in this online training. To be able to complete the remaining steps, test administrators must attend a follow-up, in-person training that focuses on scoring the expository writing portion of the test. Teachers may score their own students' multiple choice answers, but not their own students' expository writing answers—even after completing the in-person training.

Note: Administering the CLAS-E Writing on subsequent occasions (post-test) does not require using the Locator Interview (Part B), the Locator Test (Part 1), or the Retesting Guidelines.