



TEHAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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PARAEDUCATOR PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PRETEST

Testing for the Tehama County ParaEducator Proficiency Assessment is a service provided by the Tehama County Department of Education (TCDE) for school districts in Tehama County.

About the Tehama County ParaEducator Proficiency Assessment. . .

If you are seeking employment in a school district as a paraeducator (teacher's aide, instructional assistant, etc.), pursuant to Education Codes 45330, you must either possess an A.A. degree or higher, have two years of college (48 units), or pass an assessment of your knowledge and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics as appropriate to the responsibilities of the position.

In Tehama County, in order to meet the assessment requirement, TCDE administers the ParaEducator Proficiency Assessment.

The test is administered at TCDE, 1135 Lincoln Street, Red Bluff, and is given at 9:00 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. on scheduled test days (available on website). Each session is limited to 25 participants and is approximately 2 1/2 hours long. The cost for the test is \$5.00, which is payable at the testing session.

The test is comprised of four sections: Math, English Language Arts, Ability to Assist in the Classroom, and a Writing Exercise. All sections of the test must be passed in order to receive verification of achievement. The cost to re-take the test is \$5.00, which is payable at the testing session.

Individuals taking the test are not allowed to use calculators, dictionaries, cell phones, or any other type of aides.

If a "reasonable accommodation" is necessary, the Human Resources Department needs to be notified before the day of the test.

For more information or to sign up for the test, call TCDE at 527-5811. Please specify which session date and time you would like to attend.

What affects test results?

- Knowledge
- Test anxiety
- Test-taking skills

KNOWLEDGE

Review what subject areas will be covered in the examination process and then STUDY!

TEST ANXIETY

- Test anxiety can cause loss of appetite, disruptions in sleep, stomach problems, fidgeting, and even a sense of panic.
- Relax by breathing deeply.
- Be PREPARED! This will help you think positive thoughts:
 - I know I will do well on this test.
 - I am well qualified for this job.
 - Tests give me a chance to show how well qualified I am.

TEST TAKING SKILLS

If you haven't been to the testing site, visit the location before the day of the test. Be on time. Follow test instructions—complete paperwork correctly, write legibly, know how to turn in paperwork, and what to do if you don't understand. Eliminate distractions—wear comfortable layered clothing and take practice tests to learn to block out noises and other distractions. Get a good night's sleep.

10 TIPS TO IMPROVE TEST PERFORMANCE

1. Read Directions Carefully

- Read directions carefully, and follow them.
- Don't skip the instructions, assuming you already know how to answer the questions.

2. Budget Your Time Wisely

- See how long the test is and how much time you have to complete it; then budget your time accordingly.
- Don't spend too much time on any one question; if you can't answer a question; skip it and come back to it later.
- Since every question is worth just one point, whether it is easy or difficult, it doesn't make sense for you to waste time with the difficult questions before you have racked up as many points as possible on the easy and medium questions.

3. Read each question completely

- Read each question completely and work through any examples.
- Read both the question and all of the choices before answering a question.
- Work at a good pace, but don't rush.
- Avoid making careless mistakes on easy questions because you didn't really read the questions or because you misread an answer choice.

4. Answer Easy Questions First

- On easy questions, go ahead and choose the answer.
- Remember that easy questions have easy answers.
- On easy questions usually the most straightforward answer is correct.
- Go back after answering the easy questions to answer the difficult ones so that your time will be well spent.

5. Eliminate Obvious Wrong Answers

- This will give you a better chance of choosing the correct response. Using the process of elimination to get rid of incorrect answer choices will raise your score by raising your odds.

6. Look for Key Words

- Common key words are ALWAYS, NEVER, BECAUSE, INSTEAD OF, LEAST, MOST, WORST, FIRST, LAST.
- Read and answer negatively stated items CAREFULLY.

7. Check Other Questions for Clues

- Sometimes test writers inadvertently leave in questions that give clues to other questions; how many times have you thought, while taking a test, "Didn't I just answer that?"

8. Don't Read Too Much Into a Question

- Chances are the test writer is not thinking as deeply as you think and is not out to trick you.
- Tests are supposed to be related to the job in question; if you are qualified to compete for the test, you probably understand the question.

9. Mark Your Answer Sheet Properly

- Fill in the proper space (line and alternative choice); pay particular attention to this advice if you skip a question or a section of questions.
- Fill in the proper space completely.
- Don't go outside the lines if the sheet is machine scored.
- After every few questions, check to see whether the questions number on your answer sheet corresponds with the question you're answering in your question booklet. This will prevent you from making the mistake of being "one off" at the end of the section, when you have to shift misplaced answers with no time left.

10. When in Doubt, Guess

- Never leave a question blank, always guess on a problem, especially if you can eliminate at least 2 answer choices.
- Don't make random guesses.
- Don't guess a letter (a, b, c, d, e) because it hasn't occurred in a while.
- Don't be afraid to guess a letter because it seems to appear often.
- Focus on the content of the test, not the frequency of the answer letters.

Multiple Choice Tests

A multiple choice test item always has a "stem". This is either an incomplete statement or a question followed by a correct, or best answer with three or more incorrect answers.

- This could be the answer.
- This could be an incorrect answer.
- This could be an incorrect answer.
- This could be an incorrect answer, too.

For this question knowing the meaning of prefixes will help eliminate all wrong choices.

1. FOREMOST most nearly means
 - a. many
 - b. last
 - c. middle
 - d. first

Think of other words that have the prefix fore, such as: forehead, foresee, forefront, foresight, foremost, etc. The prefix fore means before in time or situated in front so you would be able to eliminate all but "d" which is correct.

2. If you accidentally splash a harmful chemical onto your skin, which one of the following should you do first?
 - a. Apply soothing lotion.
 - b. Contact a nurse or doctor.
 - c. Report it to your supervisor.
 - d. Wash the area with water.

The key word in this question is "*first*". Although you may apply a soothing lotion, contact a nurse or doctor, and report it to your supervisor, you should wash the area with water *first*. The correct answer is "d".

Attached are sample spelling, capitalization, and punctuation questions.

If you are having a difficult time with a word problem, look for a simpler approach-the problem may be difficult but the math is usually easy. Use scratch paper to figure your work. On many difficult questions, the obvious answer is wrong-do not guess unless you have worked the problem out on scratch paper. If there is time, do the problem twice.

Attached are sample math computation and math application questions.

Reading Comprehension Tests

These tests are like open book tests, all of the correct answers can be found directly in the passage. You need to know where and how to look for them.

- Requires focus and concentration.
- Careful searching is important.
- You need to quickly read the main ideas of each paragraph, and the main idea and tone of the entire passage.
- The correct answer will be the only choice that repeats information from the passage or is directly supported by information in the passage - simply look it up in the passage.
- Incorrect answers may sound good, but they will never be supported in the text.
- Most reading comprehension questions will require you to go back to the passage and reread something, so don't worry about memorizing details the first time through.
- Make sure to read through all of the answers even if you find one that seems correct.
- Avoid not mentioned, but sounds good answers. Sometimes an incorrect answer is one that is logical or true, but is actually never mentioned or supported in the passage.
- Answers are always either paraphrases of information found directly in the passage or logical conclusions drawn from pieces of information found in the passage.
- It can't be correct unless it is mentioned in, or supported by, the passage.
- *Be aware of answers that seem correct, but are not!*
- Sometimes an answer choice uses a word or phrase taken directly from the passage but distorts the author's intended meaning, making the answer incorrect.
- Many of the answers use words from the text, but will still be wrong.
- Don't pick an answer just because it sounds familiar.
- Every incorrect answer choice is incorrect for a reason.
- There is always a word or phrase in a wrong answer that makes it wrong.
- Use process of elimination to get rid of bad answer choices that can't be correct.
- No matter how difficult the reading passage, you should be able to eliminate some of the wrong answers.

Sample Reading Comprehension Activity

Read the passage and answer the following five questions.

If you are superstitious, you are not unlike myriads of humans who have lived before and who are living today. One group of ancient people who believed in luck were the Aztecs.

The Aztec year was 360 days divided into eighteen months of twenty days each. This left five days remaining and they were considered to be unlucky. During that time the Aztecs would smash their old gods and let the sacred fires of the temples burn out. Even furniture and goods were destroyed. On the night of the fifth day the priests prepared to give sacrifices to the gods. As the forked tongues of the fires licked at the darkening sky of the fifth day, messengers hurried about the country to announce that the gods of evil had been finally satisfied and that happier times would return with the rising sun. Once the sun came out it was considered to be a lucky time again.

Today, with the exception of Friday the thirteenth, our calendar does not contain days that are considered to be particularly unlucky. Still there are many who believe that luck places an important roll in determining their destiny. If you shy away from walking under a ladder, throw salt over your shoulder when the shaker spills, or never open an umbrella in the house, you are at least partially showing that what has been identified as luck or unlucky affect you.

So concerned are some people about the simple number thirteen, that many hotels do not even have a thirteenth floor.

Whatever your personal opinion about things lucky or unlucky, one thing is certain – what an individual person perceives as luck influences his behavior.

Questions:

- The principal idea of this article concerns
 - ancient people.
 - the Aztecs.
 - people and luck.
 - Friday the 13th
- The unlucky days of the Aztecs were
 - the first five days of the year
 - during the spring of the year.
 - the last five days of winter.
 - five days that belonged to no month
- During the unlucky days of the Aztecs, the article said
 - they destroyed furniture and goods.
 - they sang.
 - they dressed in special costumes.
 - they stayed indoors.
- The Aztec year was divided into
 - 360 days.
 - 365 days.
 - 370 days.
 - 160 days.
- The word perceive means to feel
 - discouraged.
 - perturbed.
 - a certain way.
 - unhappy.
- From the article you might infer
 - superstition is universal.
 - most people are not universal.
 - superstition is found mostly among children.
 - superstition is found mostly among Aborigines.

Writing Assessment Study Information

Part of your test will include writing an essay. You will have 40 minutes to do so. Your essay will be scored according to the attached rubric. It will be scored as a whole. Scorers will pay close attention to how well you support your ideas with specific details.

A well-written essay begins with an introduction paragraph. The paragraph states the main idea of the essay. For example, if asked to write about a favorite season, an introductory paragraph might be:

Spring is my favorite season. I love the smell and sight of the blooming flowers. The longer days are a delight. The extra hour of sunshine is a welcome addition after the short days of winter. Baseball starting up again is another reason that I enjoy spring so much.

Middle paragraphs develop the ideas outlined in the opening paragraph. When reading the middle of an essay, the reader should really come to understand the writer's reasoning, point of view, or opinion. The writer provides lots of details and elaborates on ideas. For example:

My son counts down the days until the start of Little League practice! That's the day that he considers to be the first day so spring. If it's baseball - it's spring in our house! The same is true of his day. As soon as spring training begins and coverage of baseball starts, the energy level and conversation increases. It's no wonder that I enjoy the season so much when it brings such happiness. And me, I love to go to the games. To sit outside at the end of a long day and be one of the "bleacher moms" is great fun. I find it to be relaxing and enjoyable.

The essay ends with a strong conclusion that wraps it all up and ties it all together. Often, writers refer back to their opening, or to the assigned topic when concluding their essay. For example:

The baseball games, the extra hour of sunlight, the fragrant of beautiful flowers . . . what's not to love about spring? It is simply my favorite time of year.

In your essay be sure to:

- State your topic clearly.
- Give reasons and details to support your topic.
- Elaborate on your reasons.
- Organize your ideas well and present them clearly.

Remember:

- Think and Plan
- Organize
- Write
 - Introduction
 - Supporting details
 - Conclusion
- Re-read and make any necessary corrections
- Submit

Self Help

Libraries contain many books on career exploration, specific skill development, and test taking. Use student workbooks to practice taking multiple choice written tests in the areas of math, grammar, punctuation, spelling, reading, comprehension, etc. Workbooks are available in most bookstores.

MATH COMPUTATION

DIRECTIONS: Write these problems in columns and compute

1. $4786 + 53 + 982 + 4 =$ _____

2. $\$2.43 + \$.05 + \$346.97 =$ _____

3. $800 - 279 =$ _____

4. $\$900.40 - \$176.89 =$ _____

DIRECTIONS: Compute the following problems

5.
$$\begin{array}{r} 763 \\ \times 87 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

6.
$$\begin{array}{r} .473 \\ \times .13 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$7. \overline{38) 348}$$

DIRECTIONS: Compute this problem. Round off the answer to the nearest hundredth place.

$$8. .04 \overline{) 2.477}$$

DIRECTIONS: Compute the following problems. Reduce fractions as necessary

$$9. \begin{array}{r} 5/6 \\ 1/4 \\ + \underline{1/2} \end{array}$$

$$10. \begin{array}{r} 13 \\ - \underline{3/4} \end{array}$$

$$11. 1 \frac{7}{8} \times \frac{4}{5} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$12. 2 \frac{1}{3} \div 1 \frac{1}{6} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

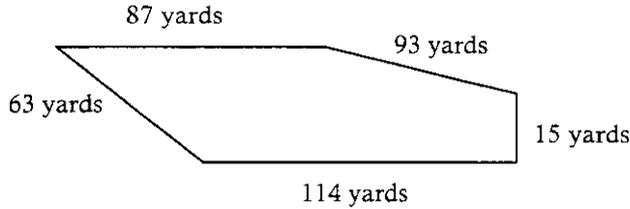
$$13. 50\% \text{ of } 92 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$14. 35\% \text{ of } 80 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

15. MATH APPLICATION

DIRECTIONS: Read and compute each of the following problems.

1. Mary was asked to run the perimeter of the following field. How far did she run?



2. Joe paid \$3 46 for a baseball, \$12.56 for a bat and \$16.98 for a mitt. If the sales tax was 6%, what was the amount of sales tax Joe had to pay?

ANSWER _____

3. The girls' basketball team scored the following points for the five home games:

35, 29, 49, 53, 34

Find the average of the basketball scores.

ANSWER _____

4. Bill bought some dog food for \$12.14, a dog collar for \$8.98, and a dog toy for \$2.40. These products were on sale for 30% off the regular price. With the 30% discount, what was the price of the products?

ANSWER _____

5. Find the current balance of the following check register.

<i>Check No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Checks issued to or Description of Deposit</i>	<i>Amount of Check</i>	<i>Amount of Deposit</i>	<i>Balance:</i> 248.61
1783	1/21	A – Z Rental	17.86		
1784	1/29	The Corner Market	73.41		
1785	1/31	Ralph's Shoes	9.86		
	1/31			425.00	
1786	1/31	Joe's Used Cars	275.00		

ANSWER _____

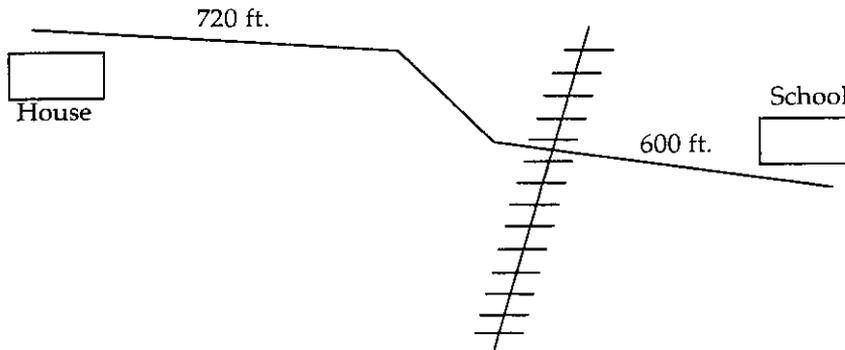
6. Susan was paid \$4.40 per hour on her job. She worked 40 hours during that week. How much did she make for the week?

ANSWER _____

7. Susan receives time and a half for overtime. Using the information from Problem 6, compute Susan's salary including 6 hours of overtime.

ANSWER _____

8. Pete walks to school every day. He wants to know how many miles he walks during the week. Using the map below, how many times does he have to walk the distance between his house and the school to equal one mile, or 5,280 feet?



ANSWER _____

WORK SPACE

WRITING

SPELLING

DIRECTIONS: This part of the test consists of finding mistakes in spelling. Many of the exercises have a spelling mistake. Some do not have a mistake at all. Look for the spelling mistakes in the list of words. Write the letter in the blank. If there are no mistakes write the letter e in the blank.

SAMPLE ITEMS:

- 1) a. Harness
b. norish
c. varnish
d. reckon
e. (no mistakes)

- 2) a. primary
b. leopard
c. easily
d. bycicle
e. (no mistakes)

Put your answers here:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Specific skills to be tested are the following common spelling errors:

1. l, el, le substitutions
2. y, ey, l substitutions
3. vowel substitutions
4. omitted letters
5. r, er, or substitutions
6. interchanged letters
7. double letter
8. t, ed, substitutions
9. omitted vowels

CAPITALIZATION

DIRECTIONS: This part of the test consists of finding a mistake in capitalization. Some exercises do not have mistakes at all. Write the same letter as the line containing the mistake in the blank. If there is no mistake, write the letter d in the blank.

SAMPLE ITEMS:

1)

- a. When she saw the snow, Ellen
- b. said, "I can hardly believe
- c. we are in the south."
- d. (no mistakes)

2)

- a. My uncle Charles will
- b. be flying in on
- c. the Pan-American flight.
- d. (no mistakes)

Put your answers here:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Specific skills to be tested are:

1. Names of buildings, parks, schools, etc.
2. Words indicating family relationship, when used specifically and without a possessive pronoun.
3. Over-capitalization
4. Names of countries and continents, definite geographic portions of a country.
5. Names of streets and avenues, etc.
6. Names of specific organizations.

PUNCTUATION

DIRECTIONS: This is a test on punctuation. Many of the exercises contain a mistake in punctuation. Write the same letter as the line containing the mistake in the blank.

SAMPLE ITEMS:

1)

- a. The lady ordered milk bread
- b. and eggs. We assured
- c. her of delivery.
- d. (no mistakes)

2)

- a. Dear Mary
- b. I would like
- c. to see you at noon.
- d. (no mistakes)

Put your answers here:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Specific skills to be tested are:

1. Use of a comma to separate words in a series.
2. Use of a period at the end of a sentence.
3. Use of a question mark.
4. Use of the apostrophe in contractions.
5. Use of a comma to separate names of a city and state.
6. Use of a comma at the end of a complimentary close of a letter.
7. Use of a comma in a compound sentence to set off independent clauses joined by such conjunctions as "and" and "but" if a change of subject takes place.

ANSWER KEY

Reading Comprehension

1. c
2. d
3. a
4. a
5. c
6. a

Math Application

1. 372 yards
2. \$1.98
3. 40
4. \$16.46
5. \$297.48
6. \$176.00
7. \$215.60
8. 4

Math Computation

1. 5,825
2. \$349.45
3. 521
4. \$723.51
5. 66,381
6. .06149
7. 9 r 6
8. 61.93
9. $1\frac{7}{12}$
10. $12\frac{1}{4}$
11. $1\frac{1}{2}$
12. 2
13. 46
14. 28

Spelling

1. b
2. d

Capitalization

1. c
2. a

Punctuation

1. a
2. a

ParaEducator Proficiency Assessment PreTest

The following websites are listed to assist with studying for the ParaEducator Proficiency Assessment PreTest:

Basicmath.com

<http://basicmath.com/>

Choose Pre-Algebra Math Practice or go to www.ixl.com/math

Algebrahelp.com

<http://algebrahelp.com/>

CAHSEE (California High School Exit Examination)

www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/resources.asp

Look under Released Test Questions. Then choose Mathematics or English-Language Arts.