Module 1: CLAS-E Reading Overview

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 Reading for all ESOL students whose goal is to improve their reading skills. This includes ESOL students enrolled in workplace education programs, distance learning programs, and Spanish HSE classes.

CLAS-E Reading 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 Reading scale scores.

CLAS-E Level	CLAS-E Reading Scale Scores	NRS EFL	SPL
Level 1	250 – 392	1. Beginning ESL Literacy	0 – 1
Level 1 / Level 2	393 – 436	2. Low Beginning ESL	2
Level 2 / Level 3	437 – 476	3. High Beginning ESL	3
Level 3	477 – 508	4. Low Intermediate ESL	4
Level 4	509 – 557	5. High Intermediate ESL	5
Level 4	558 and above	6. 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. The different forms can be used for alternating forms for pre-testing and post-testing.

Overview of Steps in Administering the CLAS-E Reading

Below is an overview of the steps involved in administering the CLAS-E Reading 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 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?
- How many people are in your family?

Step 2: Administer the Locator Test (Part 1) to help determine the appropriate CLAS-E Reading 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 Reading 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 Reading 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.

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 CLAS-E Reading level selected for the learner.

Each level of the CLAS-E Reading has 25 multiple-choice items. The items are similar to those in the Locator Test, focusing on contexts that are familiar to adult learners. The reading passages for levels 1 and 2 are shorter and some items include pictures. In turn, the passages for levels 3 and 4 are longer and no pictures are used. Learners should be given exactly 25 minutes to complete the CLAS-E Reading test, regardless of level.

Sample CLAS-E Reading items for level 1:

Read the item and choose the correct answer.

1 **What does the picture show?**
- ● fork
- ○ spoon
- ○ knife

Read the advertisement. Then do Numbers 2 through 4.

JAY'S CLOTHING SUPERSTORE

We have clothes for boys, girls, men, and women.

Choose from our large selection.

| (1) | sweaters | skirts |
| pants | jackets | dresses |

There is something for everyone!

20% Off
All pants and jackets
Good until 9/21

1234 Lemon St., Kenville
Open Monday – Saturday 10–6

2 **What belongs on line 1?**
- ● shirts
- ○ chairs
- ○ dishes

3 **Which of these is 20% off?**
- ○ dresses
- ● jackets
- ○ sweaters

4 **Which do you see in this advertisement?**
- ○ a bill
- ○ a receipt
- ● a coupon

Sample CLAS-E Reading items for level 3:

Read the passage. Then do Numbers 5 through 9.

Mount Saint Helens
Journal Entry: Saturday, August 19

We finished our two-week tour of the Cascade Mountain Range today with a trip to Mount Saint Helens. It is a volcano that erupted in 1980. When it erupted, it sent a cloud of ash over 75,000 feet high into the air in less than fifteen minutes. The eruption caused problems to the air and land throughout the state of Washington. The ash cloud eventually circled the world. Our group expected to see a lot of damage to the environment. Instead, we were amazed to find nature rebuilding itself. Of course, many trees still lay on the ground like matchsticks, but there was also a lot of new plant growth. We hiked several hours until we got to Johnston Ridge. Our view of the volcano's crater left us speechless. Finally, we hiked back down the mountain and drove to Seattle where we enjoyed a delicious farewell dinner.

5 **What is the correct way to write 75,000?**
- ○ seventy-five hundred
- ● seventy-five thousand
- ○ seven thousand five hundred
- ○ seven hundred fifty thousand

6 **In the phrase, "left us speechless," the word speechless means**
- ○ speaking quietly
- ○ forgetting to speak
- ● not able to speak
- ○ not speaking much

Step 4: Score the assessment.

After administering the CLAS-E Reading, trained test administrators should score learners' answers using an Answer Key and Scoring Table. The first step is to determine the number of items answered correctly—the number correct (N/C) score. Then, the next step is to find the corresponding scale score (SS) using the test publisher's Forms A&B Scoring Tables book.

Step 5: Apply the retesting guidelines.

The fifth step is to apply the TABE CLAS-E Reading Retesting Guidelines to decide whether retesting using a different level is needed, or if the test score is a reasonably accurate reflection of the learner's abilities. A decision chart that is part of the guidelines specifies what action should be taken depending on the test level a student took and the student's scale score. If retesting is recommended, Steps 3 and 4 should be repeated with the new recommended level. **The Retesting Guidelines are only used for first-time test takers.**

Administering the CLAS-E Reading on subsequent occasions (post-test) only involves two steps:

Step 1: Administer the same CLAS-E Reading level that the learner took as the pre-test, alternating the test form as appropriate.

For example, a student who was pre-tested with the Level 1 Form A assessment should be post-tested with the Level 2 Form B assessment. In the case of programs that administer an optional mid-year assessment, it is permissible to pre-test with Form A, use Form B for the mid-year assessment, and post-test with Form A.

In general, learners should be post-tested after 65 hours of instruction, or after 40 hours for programs in correctional institutions. However, ACLS understands that there is a variety of reasons some learners may be post-tested sooner. Therefore, programs (including correctional institutions) can test at fewer hours when the justifications for those exceptions are realistic and within reason (see the ACLS Assessment Policies Manual for more information).

Step 2: Score the assessment.