

# ABOUT CALIFORNIA TEACHER TESTS 2011-12

## CBEST and CSET

By NCLB and state law, holders of California teaching credentials must show basic skills and subject-area knowledge. To this end, candidates may (and many must) take the **California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST)** and the **California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET)**.

CBEST and CSET share these attributes: subtests or sections may be taken just one or two at a time; each subtest or section is passed as a whole, not by its domains or question types; for each section or subtest, the score of record is the highest score to date; each test session allows no *scheduled* breaks. Most CSETs are still paper-based (PBT), but CBEST has a computer-based version (CBT), and CSET-MS and CSET-Writing are now offered *only* by computer.

Credential programs expect official passing scores by the regular application **deadline**: for Fall admission to CSU, test before **March**; for Spring admission, by or before **October**.

**CBEST** (<http://www.cbest.nesinc.com>) tests basic skills in three sections: **reading comprehension** (critical analysis, evaluation, & comprehension of passages and research skills) and basic **math** (estimation, measurement, simple statistics, computation & problem solving, and numerical & graphic relationships), each with 50 multiple choice questions, and **writing** (two required formal essays, typically one on a set topic (usually persuasive) and the other a more open-ended personal narrative; structure, spelling, and punctuation *do* count).

Total testing time is **four hours**; you get all sections each time you test but need not take all. The fee is **\$41.00** (add **\$60** for the computer-based CBEST-CBT). Not all paper-based sites are available for all dates. For other options for the basic-skills requirement, see <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl667.pdf>.

**CSET** (<http://www.cset.nesinc.com>) exams test subject-area knowledge. Most CSETs (but not all) comprise three subtests with both multiple choice and constructed response questions. Most subtests (but not all) can be paid for and taken one by one. Most questions, even on CBTs, can be taken in any order—check the Test Selections link for restrictions. Most constructed responses (but not all) are just one to two pages.

- **CSET single subject** exams are still PBT and are now given in the morning, including subtests with audio or video components (Languages Other Than English (LOTE), fine arts, PE). Not all subjects are tested in all areas: see [http://www.cset.nesinc.com/CS13\\_testsselection.asp](http://www.cset.nesinc.com/CS13_testsselection.asp). Total testing time: **5 hours**.

- **CSET-Multiple Subjects** (CSET-MS, now solely CBT, tests reading, language and literature & history (Subtest I); science & math (Subtest II); PE, human development, & visual and performing arts (Subtest III). Total testing time: for either CSET-MS I or II, 3 hours; for III, **2¼ hours**; for all three subtests, **5 hours**.

- **CSET: Writing**, now a CBT but only for CSET-MS takers, requires two essays—it's CBEST's essay section. CBEST may still better serve certain test takers: see Results below. Total testing time: **90 minutes**.

**Fees** for PBTs total \$198 to take each subtest in an area once. Fees for CBTs are generally higher.

- \$66 per subtest for a three-subtest CSET-PBT: Agriculture, Business, Health Science, Home Economics, both Math, Music, PE, all Science, Social Science, and LOTE ASL, Cantonese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese
- \$49 per English Subtest I or II (each is multiple choice)
- \$50 per English Subtest III (two essays) or IV (four constructed responses)
- \$99 per subtest for a one- or two-subtest CSET: Art, Industrial & Technology Education, Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, Filipino, Hmong, Khmer (Hebrew, Italian, and Portuguese require an additional non-CSET exam)
- \$96 for one subtest for CSET-MS CBT, or \$238 for all three
- \$62 for CSET-Writing (which tests skills for CSET-MS, not subject matter)

**Register** for both CBESTs at <http://www.cbest.nesinc.com>; for all CSETs, at <http://www.cset.nesinc.com>. CBTs also require a separate appointment at a testing center through PearsonVUE; links are on the tests' Web pages.

For **alternative testing**—learning or other disability (need an inhaler?) or Sunday testing—apply by the regular registration deadline for PBTs or well in advance for CBTs; instructions and forms are online. You'll need a doctor's or clergy person's verification of your need and your requested alternative.

These tests can be **retaken**—CBTs, every 45 days. Before paying to retake PBTs, **wait for your scores**: the late-registration fee is **waived** when you reregister promptly but a just-in-case repeat registration fee may not be refunded.

### Other tests

The **US Constitution test** (or tests) is waived for undergrad US history/civics courses. Ask at your credential program or county office of education.

**CTEL** (California Teacher of English Learners, [www.ctel.nesinc.com](http://www.ctel.nesinc.com)) is waived for the cultural, linguistic, & academic diversity coursework that credential programs require.

**RICA** ([www.rica.nesinc.com](http://www.rica.nesinc.com)) tests reading instruction competence for K-6. Take it **after** methods courses.

**TPA** ([www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA.html](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA.html)), Teaching Performance Assessments, are like final s for credentialing: you plan & teach lessons and reflect on teaching them.

**MIAE** (the brand-new Mathematics Instruction Authorization Examination, [www.cset.nesinc.com](http://www.cset.nesinc.com)), is optional for K-6 educators to teach math.

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**Results** for CBT multiple-choice sections or subtests appear at the end of the test session; other unofficial scores appear online, and official score reports are mailed. Don't destroy the official report: it contains diagnostics that can help the retaker (and those who help the retaker), and you'll need a photocopy for your credential application. CSET's diagnostics lurk on side 2 of the official report (which goes only to you, the taker).

**CBEST** requires at least **37** points per section (on a scale from 20 to 80) and a total of 123 points to pass. That score is **good for life**, so take the CBEST *early*. CBEST-CBT sections can be retaken after 45 days; you may combine scores from CBEST-CBT and CBEST-PBT (though not from CSET-Writing).

For all **CSET** subtests, the scoring scale runs from 100 to 300; a score of **220** or more is reported simply as "passed". If you don't file for a preliminary credential **within five years** of passing a CSET subject matter subtest, you'll need to retake it.

CSET-Writing has no "minimal pass" option. Thus CBEST may be a wiser choice for CSET-MS takers whose main fear is essay writing.

**Preparation** starts with the Test Guide link on the left of each CBEST or CSET Web page for test structure, scoring information, subject matter requirements (**SMRs**), and sample questions with explanations. Don't ignore the General Information documents. CBEST and CSET-MS also have full **practice tests** to download for free as self-scoring Java applets or as huge pdf texts.

To learn about the tests, private/group tutoring, and workshops in San Diego County or elsewhere, ask Linnea Lagerquist (see bottom of page). Schools of education have offices, as at SDSU (619-594-6320, <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/ceac/home.htm>) and CSU San Marcos (760-750-4277, [coescc@csusm.edu](mailto:coescc@csusm.edu)), that can direct you to other prep courses through their extended-studies or community-learning programs. Fees vary.

**Preparation guides** are in most bookstores. Look for ones that don't irritate you; for CBEST, look for an explanation of stanines. Prep materials packaged for **CSET single subjects** should be compared with the SMRs. Undergrad coursework taken seriously is the best prep, though a mix of undergrad textbooks, AP preparation materials, and diligent digging around the Internet can serve well.

To prepare for the CBEST Essay Writing section or for CSET-Writing, start writing! Better yet, write essays for evaluation by a skilled writer who is gentle but truthful and familiar with CBEST writing standards.

### CBEST and CSET Test Dates and Deadlines through July 2012

Updates are at <http://www.cbest.nesinc.com> or <http://www.cset.nesinc.com>.

<i>Paper-based CBEST test date</i>	<i>Registration/ withdrawal deadline</i>	<i>Late registration deadline (\$18 fee) Add/change deadline (no fee)</i>	<i>Emergency registration deadline (\$35 late fee)</i>	<i>CBEST paper-based scores reported</i>	<i>Other notes</i>
Aug. 6, 2011	July 8, 2011	July 26, 2011	Aug. 2, 2011	Aug. 22, 2011	CBEST-CBT is given by appointment daily. <b>CBEST-CBT official scores appear two weeks after testing.</b>
Oct. 1, 2011	Sept. 2, 2011	Sept. 20, 2011	Sept. 27, 2011	Oct. 17, 2011	
Dec. 3, 2011	Nov. 4, 2011	Nov. 22, 2011	Nov. 29, 2011	Dec. 19, 2011	
Feb. 4, 2012	Jan. 6, 2012	Jan. 24, 2012	Jan. 31, 2012	Feb. 21, 2012	
Apr. 14, 2012	Mar. 16, 2012	Apr. 3, 2012	Apr. 10, 2012	Apr. 30, 2012	
June 9, 2012	May 11, 2012	May 29, 2012	June 5, 2012	June 25, 2012	

For CBEST-CBT dates before August 6, 2011, see [http://www.cbest.nesinc.com/CA15\\_testdates\\_cbt.asp](http://www.cbest.nesinc.com/CA15_testdates_cbt.asp).

<i>CSET test date</i>	<i>Registration deadline</i>	<i>Add/change/withdrawal deadline (no fee)</i>	<i>Late registration deadline (\$18 late fee)<sup>§</sup></i>	<i>Emergency registration deadline (\$35 late fee)<sup>§</sup></i>	<i>CSET-MS scores online/reports mailed</i>	<i>CSET-SS scores online/reports mailed</i>
July 9, 2011 <sup>%</sup>	June 10, 2011		June 28, 2011	July 5, 2011	Aug. 1, 2011	Aug. 8, 2011
<b>Starting Sept. 6, 2011, CSET-MS and CSET-Writing are available ONLY as computer-based tests.</b>						
Sept. 10, 2011	Aug. 12, 2011	The late-registration deadline for the <b>earlier</b> of the test dates being changed	Aug. 30, 2011	Sept. 6, 2011	Score reports will appear within four weeks of testing for CSET-MS and within two weeks for CSET-Writing	Oct. 11, 2011
Nov. 5, 2011 <sup>%£</sup>	Oct. 7, 2011		Oct. 25, 2011	Nov. 1, 2011		Dec. 5, 2011
Jan. 7, 2012	Dec. 9, 2011		Dec. 27, 2011	Jan. 3, 2012		Feb. 6, 2012
Mar. 10, 2012	Feb. 10, 2012		Feb. 28, 2012	Mar. 6, 2012		Apr. 9, 2012
May 5, 2012 <sup>£</sup>	Apr. 6, 2012		April 24, 2012	May 1, 2012		June 4, 2012
July 14, 2012 <sup>%</sup>	June 15, 2012		July 3, 2012	July 10, 2012		Aug. 13, 2012

CSETs in English, Math, Science, Social Science and LOTE: Spanish are given on all CSET dates.

<sup>§</sup>No late or emergency registration for CSET-SS Art Subtest II or Music Subtest II, which have audio or video components.

<sup>£</sup>LOTEs other than Cantonese, French, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish are tested in November and May **only**.

<sup>%</sup>On these dates there are **no exams** in Art, Agriculture, Business, French, Health Science, Home Economics, Industrial & Technology Education, Music, PE, or certain LOTEs; exams in these areas are offered in September, January, March and May **only**. To be sure your test is offered on a given test date, check [http://www.cset.nesinc.com/CS13\\_testselection.asp](http://www.cset.nesinc.com/CS13_testselection.asp).