

Preparing for the 8-12 ELAR TExES Exam (Field #131)

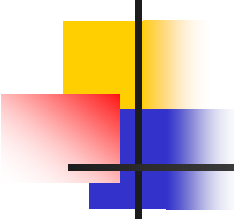
Presentation Outline

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English Discipline Knowledge You Will Need for the TExES

- Basic Literary and Rhetorical Terminology
- Major Literary Movements, Classifications, and Genres
- Basic knowledge of the History and Development of the English Language



Primary Sources for English Discipline Knowledge

- Background provided in your English classes (especially ENG 3373, ENG 3380, ENG 3375, ENG 3376, ENG 4367, and the Literature Survey Courses)
- Your own reading, study, and reflection.
- Standard Literary Handbooks or Online Resources (For all study aids, see the links on the [Certification web page.](#))



Pedagogical Knowledge You Will Need for the TExES

- Student-Centered, Interactive Approaches to ELA
- Principles of Integrating the Language Arts
- Contemporary Approaches to Teaching Writing
- Contemporary Approaches to Teaching Literature
- Contemporary Methods of Assessment
- Reading Theory as Applied to the ELAR Classroom
- Oral Language in the Classroom
- Uses of Media and Promoting Media Literacy



Sources of Pedagogical Knowledge and Review

- English 4364 (ELAR Teaching Methods)
- Methods Textbooks (*Bridging English* or Comparable Texts)
- Methods Classes in Secondary Education
- The [ELAR Standards](#) for Texas
- The TExES Competencies



Overall Suggestions to Help You Prepare for the TExES

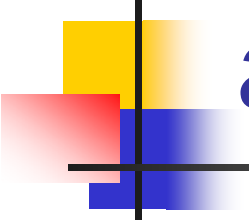
1. Understand that it is a tough exam.
2. Cultivate certain attitudes about the exam and preparing for it.
3. Regard the TExES Preparation Manual as a key to your success.



1. Understand that the 8-12 ELAR TExES is a tough exam.

- Take nothing for granted. (Good grades and attending the review are not enough.)
- The exam is 4-5 hours long (with both an objective and an essay section).
- Very few questions are simple recall.
- The high stakes of the exam will create tension for you.

Coming to grips with these factors will make you better prepared emotionally.



2. Cultivate certain attitudes about the exam.

- Believe in your background and your preparation (Our passing rates are high.)
- Consider the structure of the exam (the type of questions/assessment, the time you have, and the physical circumstances of the exam itself).
- Relax (at least as much as you can) as you prepare and when you take the pre-test and the actual test.



3. Regard the TExES Preparation Manual as a key to your success.

- Visit the [ETS TExES Certification website](#), where you will find the prep manual and a thorough and useful study tips document
- Go through the manual thoroughly.
- Become especially familiar with the domains and competencies.
- Construct your strategies for the test questions.
- Take the practice test when you are ready, not before.



A. Go through the manual thoroughly, cover to cover.

The more you know about the exam, the better prepared you will be. Here are some features that it will help you to know:

- How the exam is constructed
- Strategies for approaching the multiple-choice questions (pages 19-25)
- How the essay is scored (including the score point descriptions)



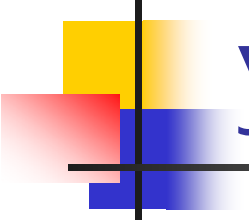
B. Become especially familiar with the domains and competencies.

- Understand the link between them and the ELAR Standards for Texas.
- Use the competencies as a test of your English content and pedagogical knowledge.
- Become aware of the link between the competencies and the multiple-choice questions. (Each question is connected specifically to a competency. Each domain is a specific percentage of the overall exam.)



C. Construct your strategies for the test questions.

- Multiple-choice questions: Understand that you have more time per question than you think and that you should use it.
- Multiple-choice questions: Study the question strategies provided in the preparation manual and decide the ones you will use.
- Essay: Study “Strategies for the TExES Essay,” linked on the certification website.



4. Take the practice test when you are ready, not before.

- Do not take the practice test too early.
- The best time to take the practice test is when you think you are 75% ready for the actual test. (When you take the pre-test may help in your decision.)
- Take the practice test, as much as possible, under “testing conditions.”
- Decide if you are going to write the essay in the preparation manual or when you do the pre-test.
- If your results are alarming, seek advice from the English certification program coordinator.



Preparing for the Multiple-Choice Section of the TExES

- Make yourself aware of the details of the multiple-choice section—number of questions, etc.
- Pay CAREFUL attention to the sample questions in the manual. Notice the type of questions, how they are posed, and the analysis of the answers—correct and incorrect. Plant these process in your thinking about the exam and how you will approach it.
- Be aware that you will have ample time (more than you think) to read, consider, re-read, and answer the questions. **YOU NEED TO TAKE THAT TIME!!**



Preparing for the Essay (Constructed Response)

- Study the "[Strategies for the TExES Essay](#)" handout on the certification website.
- Study the preparation manual so that you know exactly what you are expected to produce.
- Understand what holistic scoring is and read the score point descriptions (on page 72 of the manual).
- Shoot for a "4" and don't even think of settling for less than a "3."
- Take TIME to write your best essay, using your best analysis, with your best support, and in your best writing.



What You Need to Know about the Pre-Test

- You are required to take the pre-test before being cleared to take TExES.
- In our program, the pre-test is used mostly as a diagnostic to help you prepare for the actual test, but you need to score well on it.
- Treat the pre-test as a real, live test. It is.
- When you get your pre-test results, use them to begin your final stage of preparation.
- Dates for pre-tests will appear on the Certification website and will be announced through the mailing list. (If you want on the mailing list, contact [Gene Young](#).)



Advice for Test Day

- Get plenty of sleep the night before. Don't cram. (You might review the competencies, or perhaps literary terminology.)
- Wear comfortable clothing, take plenty of sharp pencils, and arrive early.
- During the test, consciously try to relax as much as you can. Remember that this is not a heavily time-based test. You don't have unlimited time, but you have time to read, think, and re-read.
- See "Reducing Test Anxiety," on the ETS site.



Final Advice

- The hard work of preparation for the TExES is up to you, but you are not in this alone. The English Department [certification website](#) has resources and links to further resources that will help you in your preparation.

Prepared by Dr. Gene Young, Professor of English, for use by students in the Secondary English Language Arts and Reading Program, Sam Houston State University. Any other individuals may feel free to use it as they like. Contact information: Young@shsu.edu Phone: 936-294-1426