



Preparing for the 7-12 ELAR TExES Exam (Field #231)

Presentation Outline

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3. Pedagogical Knowledge You Will Need
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8. The Practice Test
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The Current 7-12 ELAR TExES

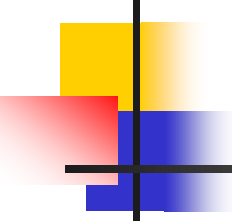
Note: Before you take the state test, you should be aware of certain features and circumstances. The practice test (also called the “representative test”) administered on the SHSU campus is a little different from the state test. You will take the practice test in two parts at two locations. The multiple choice section is administered at the Testing Center on campus, but you will write the essays later at the teacher education changes.

- **Computer Administration.** You will take the state exam entirely on computer at a location and date of your choice, but the multiple choice portion of the practice test is a paper form.
- **Different Multiple-choice Question Formats.** The multiple-choice format includes items for which you simply choose the one correct answer out of the four offered; however, you will see other question formats, such as questions which have more than one correct answer. See the preparation guide for samples of these questions.
- **Two Essays (Constructed-Response Questions).** In addition to a literary comparison and contrast based on theme and literary terms, you will have a second essay examining your grasp of writing assessment and pedagogy. These essays are referred to in the preparation guide as “Constructed-Response Questions.” The two essays together count 35% of your total score.



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 ENGL 4364, ENGL 3374, ENGL 4367, and the literature survey courses, as well as other specialized 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
- Comprehensive, Alternative 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 and 3374 (ELAR Teaching Methods and Teaching Writing and Literature)
- Methods Textbooks (*Bridging English* or Comparable Methods Texts)
- Methods Classes in Secondary Education
- The ELAR Standards for Texas
- The TExES Competencies



Overall Suggestions to Help You Prepare for the TExES

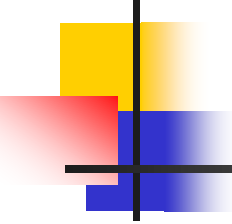
1. Understand that it is a demanding exam.
2. Cultivate certain attitudes about the exam and preparing for it.
3. Regard the TExES Preparation Manual as a key to your success.



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

- Take nothing for granted. (Good grades in your methods course are not enough.)
- The exam is 5 hours long (with multiple choice questions and two essay components).
- 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 and more confident.



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 practice test and the state test.



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

- Note: An updated version of the 7-12 ELAR preparation manual was published in 2018. While the manual remains much the same as before, there are some changes. The links on the English Department Certification page are current, but if you do download your own copy of the manual (which is a good idea), make sure it is the latest version.
- Visit the [TExES Education Certification Examination](#) Program website, where you will find the prep manual and a thorough and useful study tips document
- Go through the manual thoroughly, page by page.
- Become especially familiar with the domains and competencies.
- Construct your strategies for the test questions.
- Take the practice test (in the preparation manual) 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 to be aware of:

- How the exam is constructed
- Strategies for approaching the multiple-choice questions (pages 17-27)
- The writings (constructed-responses) and how they are scored (including the score point descriptions)



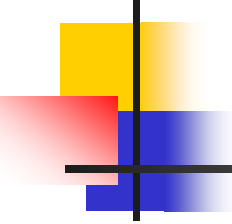
B. Become especially familiar with the domains and competencies.

- Understand the link between the four domains and eleven competencies 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.
- See two documents “Domain Links to Standards and *Bridging English*” and “TExES Competencies Linked to *Bridging English*” linked on the [English Department Certification page](#).



C. Construct your strategies for the test questions.

- Multiple-choice Questions: (1) Understand that you have more time per question than you think and that you should use it. (2) Study the question strategies provided in the preparation manual and decide the ones you will use.
- Constructed Responses: Study “Strategies for the TExES Constructed Responses,” linked on the certification website.



4. Do the multiple-choice practice questions (pages 28-53) when you are ready, not before.

- Do not take the “practice questions” test (in the preparation manual) too early. Take it when you have done some preparation and are fairly close to being ready to the real test.
- Before doing the practice questions, study “Approaches to Answering Multiple-Choice Questions” (pages 17-27)
- Take the practice test, as much as possible, under “testing conditions” (while thinking about how it will be different on a computer)
- After taking the test, study the “Answer Key and Rationales for Multiple-Choice Questions” (pages 28-52).
- 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 and, especially, the types of questions
- 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 processes 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 Essays (Constructed Response)

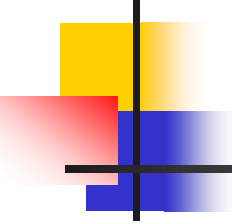
- Study the “Strategies for the TExES Constructed Responses” guide on the English Department certification website.
- Study the preparation manual so that you know exactly what you are expected to produce.
- Understand what holistic scoring is and read how the responses are scored (beginning on page 88 for the literary response and page 101 for the writing assessment and pedagogy response).
- Aim for a 3 or 4 on the literary question and a 5 or 6 on the pedagogy question. The constructed responses represent 35% of your total score on the TExES. Study the sample responses with rationales for both constructed responses. Notice how detailed and expansive are the best responses. Work hard toward producing that level of quality and development.
- Take TIME to write your best essays, using your best analysis, with your best support, and in your best writing.



What You Need to Know about the Practice Test

NOTE: Don't be confused by the term "practice test." There is, first, the "practice questions" test in the preparation guide. Then there is the "practice test" (sometimes referred to as the "representative test") that you will take in the SHSU testing center before you can be cleared to take the actual state test. That latter test is what this section is about.

- You are required to take the practice test before being cleared to take official state TExES test.
- See the English Department Certification Page for state test dates. Schedule your practice test well prior to the date you want to take the state test. (It will take a few weeks just to take the test and get your results). If your score on the practice is not high enough, you will need even more preparation time, under the guidance of Dr. Young, the English Department certification coordinator.
- You will schedule the practice test through the Testing Center. The procedures are posted on the English Department Certification Page. You will take the multiple choice part there and write the essays in the Educator Preparation program office.
- When you get your practice test results, use the results breakdown to begin your final stage of preparation. When you pass, Dr. Young will ask the Educator Prep Program representative (Jean Hubbartt) to clear you to register for the state test. She will notify you by email when you are cleared.
- Prior to registering, you should go onto the TExES/Pearson site and set up a profile. You cannot register for the state test until you have a profile set up.



Self-Assessment Questions. Answer these questions about your preparation before taking either the practice test or state test.

Test Preparation Questions — Answer either “Yes” or “No” in response to each question (Adapted from the TExES Faculty Manual)

- Have you obtained and reviewed the competencies for this test?
- Have you completed all or most of the teacher preparation course work in which the content of this test is taught?
- Have you obtained the Preparation Manual for this test?
- Have you reviewed the sample test questions in the Preparation Manual?
- If you identified any competencies that represent areas of weakness for you, have you gathered and reviewed additional study materials for these competencies?
- Do you know the date and location of the test administration?

Review your responses to the questions above. If you answered “No” in response to any question, you and Dr. Young will be able to identify additional study strategies to help you prepare to take this test.

Preparing for the State Test after having taken the Representative Test

Based upon your domain performance, you and Dr. Young will be able to identify specific content areas on which you may want to focus extra attention when preparing for the test.

Additional Questions (from SHSU English Department Preparation Aids)



- Have you reviewed the materials on the English Department Certification Website?
- Have you reviewed appropriate chapter readings in *Bridging English* (or other study aids)? See the "Domain Links to Standards and *Bridging English*" document (on the English Department Certification site).
- If you have taken the practice test (representative test), have you reviewed your results, and have you had contact with Dr. Young about any further preparation you might need before taking the state test (if you have been cleared) or preparing further (if you have not yet been approved)?



Other Sources of Help

- Besides the free preparation manual, there are several commercial publications available for purchase in preparing for the 7-12 ELAR TExES. I have not reviewed all of them, but the ones that seem to receive the highest reviews are the “Certify Texas” online preparation, a guide published by Cirrus, and a study guide by Jane Thielemann-Downs. This is not an endorsement for any of them. It is based on what I have heard from students who passed. There may be other good ones. You might not need a commercial guide, but it could not hurt, particularly if your practice test results were marginal or, especially, if you did not pass the state test. (If you are going to purchase one of these, it would be good to have it on hand early in your preparation, before you take the practice test.)



Advice for Test Day

- Get plenty of sleep the night before. Don't cram. (You might review the competencies, or perhaps literary terminology in the last days before the test.)
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Arrive early.
- During the test, consciously try to relax as much as you can. Take breaks, or do relaxation routines. 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.



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. Feel free to contact Dr. Young at any time during your preparation. You may reach him by email at young@shsu.edu.

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 this guide or the linked resources as they like. Contact information: young@shsu.edu