

Program Overview

Since 1989, the Texas Higher Education Assessment® (THEA®) has provided Texas students and institutions of higher education with a flexible, fair, and accurate testing and score-reporting system. Its purpose is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshman-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges or universities.

The THEA Test was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, under Senate Bill 286, Texas Education Code, Section 51.3062: Texas Success Initiative, for use by Texas institutions of higher education as an assessment instrument to evaluate incoming students. It provides the diagnostic data required by this legislation; its content is the same as that of the former TASP Test.

The THEA Test is the only assessment developed specifically to evaluate the readiness of students for college-level coursework in Texas. It was developed by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson through a rigorous review and approval process supported by skilled and experienced Texas educators. All THEA Test questions have been reviewed by committees of Texas educators to ensure content accuracy and to prevent potential bias.

The THEA Test is offered in the following testing formats:

- The **THEA Quick Test** is offered by many colleges, universities, and high schools on a schedule determined by the institution. Consult with your advisor to determine whether the THEA Quick Test is an option for you. For a list of available test sites and their contact information, select "Test Sites" under the "Registering for Quick Test" tab on the THEA Web site. An official score report for all sections will be mailed to you within one week after your answer document is received. Once you have taken the THEA Quick Test, you must wait 30 days before retaking it. See "Obtaining Your Test Results" under the THEA Quick Test tab for more information.
- The **THEA Internet-Based Test (IBT)** assesses the same reading, mathematics, and writing skills as the THEA Quick Test, but it is taken on computer instead of on paper. It is offered at several designated institutions. If you are a student at one of these institutions, you may be eligible to take the THEA IBT. Clarify your eligibility prior to registering for the IBT. See "About IBT" on the THEA Web site for more information.

Test Description

The THEA Test consists of three sections: Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. Refer to the table below for descriptions of these sections. Each section of the THEA Test is designed to measure a student's academic skill against an established standard of competence. A student's score on each section of the test is based on his or her performance in relation to the skills being tested. Scores are not related to how well other students have performed on the same section.

Section	Description
Reading	Consists of approximately 40 multiple-choice questions matched to about seven reading selections of 300 to 750 words each. The reading selections represent a variety of subject areas and are similar to reading materials (e.g., textbooks, manuals) that students are likely to encounter during their first year of college. Students will be asked to answer several multiple-choice questions about each reading selection.
Mathematics	Consists of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions covering four general areas: fundamental mathematics, algebra, geometry, and problem solving. The test questions focus on a student's ability to perform mathematical operations and solve problems. Appropriate formulas will be provided to help students perform some of the calculations required by the test questions. Note that for the THEA Quick Test you may use a four-function (+, -, ×, ÷) nonprogrammable calculator (with square root [√] and percent [%] keys). If you take the THEA Internet-Based Test, an on-screen calculator will be available for your use during the Mathematics Section.
Writing	

Section	Description
	<p>Contains two subsections: a writing sample subsection requiring students to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in writing on a given topic and a multiple-choice subsection including approximately 40 questions assessing students' ability to recognize various elements of effective writing.</p> <p>Students are asked to prepare a multiple-paragraph writing sample of about 300–600 words on an assigned topic. Students' writing samples are scored on the basis of how effectively they communicate a whole message to a specified audience for a stated purpose. Students will be assessed on their ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas, rather than on the position they express.</p>

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THEA Test Skill Descriptions

The purpose of the test is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshman-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges or universities. The skills listed below are eligible to be assessed by the THEA Test. Each skill is accompanied by a brief description of how the skill may be measured on the test.

THEA Reading Section

General Description

The Reading Section of the THEA Test consists of approximately 40 multiple-choice questions matched to about seven reading selections of 300 to 750 words each. The selections represent a variety of subject areas and are similar to reading materials (e.g., textbooks, manuals) that students are likely to encounter during their first year of college. Students will be asked to answer several multiple-choice questions about each reading selection.

Skill Descriptions

The Reading Section of the THEA Test is based on the skills listed below. Each skill is accompanied by a description of the content that may be included on the test.

Skill: Determine the meaning of words and phrases.

Includes using the context of a passage to determine the meaning of words with multiple meanings, unfamiliar and uncommon words and phrases, and figurative expressions.

Skill: Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.

Includes identifying explicit and implicit main ideas and recognizing ideas that support, illustrate, or elaborate the main idea of a passage.

Skill: Identify a writer's purpose, point of view, and intended meaning.

Includes recognizing a writer's expressed or implied purpose for writing; evaluating the appropriateness of written material for a specific purpose or audience; recognizing the likely effect on an audience of a writer's choice of words; and using the content, word choice, and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinion or point of view.

Skill: Analyze the relationship among ideas in written material.

Includes identifying sequence of events or steps, identifying cause-effect relationships, analyzing relationships between ideas in opposition, identifying solutions to problems, and drawing conclusions inductively and deductively from information stated or implied in a passage.

Skill: Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.

Includes evaluating the stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of a writer's argument depends; judging the relevance or importance of facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer's argument; evaluating the logic of a writer's argument; evaluating the validity of analogies; distinguishing between fact and opinion; and assessing the credibility or objectivity of a writer or source of written material.

Skill: Apply study skills to reading assignments.

Includes organizing and summarizing information for study purposes; following written instructions or directions; and interpreting information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

THEA Mathematics Section

General Description

The Mathematics Section of the THEA Test consists of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions covering four general areas: fundamental mathematics, algebra, geometry, and problem solving. The test questions focus on a student's ability to perform mathematical operations and solve problems. Appropriate formulas will be provided to help students perform some of the calculations required by the test questions.

You will have access to an on-screen calculator during the Mathematics Section of the THEA IBT. See "The Test Session" for more information.

Skill Descriptions

The Mathematics Section of the THEA Test is based on the skills listed below. Each skill is accompanied by a description of the content that may be included on the test.

FUNDAMENTAL MATHEMATICS

Skill: Solve word problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, and units of measurement.

Includes solving word problems involving integers, fractions, decimals (including percents), ratios and proportions, and units of measurement and conversions (including scientific notation).

Skill: Solve problems involving data interpretation and analysis.

Includes interpreting information from line graphs, bar graphs, pictographs, and pie charts; interpreting data from tables; recognizing appropriate graphic representations of various data; analyzing and interpreting data using measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode); and analyzing and interpreting data using the concept of variability.

ALGEBRA

Skill: Graph numbers or number relationships.

Includes identifying the graph of a given equation or a given inequality, finding the slope and/or intercepts of a given line, finding the equation of a line, and recognizing and interpreting information from the graph of a function (including direct and inverse variation).

Skill: Solve one- and two-variable equations.

Includes finding the value of the unknown in a given one-variable equation, expressing one variable in terms of a second variable in two-variable equations, and solving systems of two equations in two variables (including graphical solutions).

Skill: Solve word problems involving one and two variables.

Includes identifying the algebraic equivalent of a stated relationship and solving word problems involving one and two unknowns.

Skill: Understand operations with algebraic expressions and functional notation.

Includes factoring quadratics and polynomials; performing operations on and simplifying polynomial expressions, rational expressions, and radical expressions; and applying principles of functions and functional notation.

Skill: Solve problems involving quadratic equations.

Includes graphing quadratic functions and quadratic inequalities; solving quadratic equations using factoring, completing the square, or the quadratic formula; and solving problems involving quadratic models.

GEOMETRY**Skill: Solve problems involving geometric figures.**

Includes solving problems involving two-dimensional geometric figures (e.g., perimeter and area problems) and three-dimensional geometric figures (e.g., volume and surface area problems) and solving problems using the Pythagorean theorem.

Skill: Solve problems involving geometric concepts.

Includes solving problems using principles of similarity, congruence, parallelism, and perpendicularity.

PROBLEM SOLVING**Skill: Apply reasoning skills.**

Includes drawing conclusions using inductive and deductive reasoning.

Skill: Solve applied problems involving a combination of mathematical skills.

Includes applying combinations of mathematical skills to solve problems and to solve a series of related problems.

THEA Writing Section

General Description

The Writing Section of the THEA Test consists of two subsections: a writing sample subsection and a multiple-choice subsection. The writing sample subsection requires students to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in writing on a given topic. The multiple-choice subsection includes approximately 40 questions assessing students' ability to recognize various elements of effective writing. You are scored first on the writing sample subsection. If your score on the writing sample subsection is neither a clear pass nor a clear fail, the multiple-choice subsection contributes to your passing status. See "How to Read Your Score Report" for a description of how the writing sample subsection is scored.

Description: Writing Sample Subsection

The writing sample subsection of the THEA Test consists of one writing assignment. Students are asked to prepare a MULTIPLE-PARAGRAPH writing sample of about 300–600 words on an assigned topic. Students' writing samples are scored on the basis of how effectively they communicate a whole message to a specified audience for a stated purpose. Students will be assessed on their ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas, rather than on the position they express. The following characteristics may be considered in scoring the writing samples:

- **APPROPRIATENESS**—the extent to which the student addresses the topic and uses language and style appropriate to the given audience, purpose, and occasion.
- **UNITY AND FOCUS**—the clarity with which the student states and maintains a main idea or point of view.
- **DEVELOPMENT**—the amount, depth, and specificity of supporting detail the student provides.
- **ORGANIZATION**—the clarity of the student's writing and the logical sequence of the student's ideas.
- **SENTENCE STRUCTURE**—the effectiveness of the student's sentence structure and the extent to which the student's writing is free of errors in sentence structure.

- **USAGE**—the extent to which the student's writing is free of errors in usage and shows care and precision in word choice.
- **MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS**—the student's ability to spell common words and to use the conventions of capitalization and punctuation.

Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Skill Descriptions: Multiple-Choice Subsection

The multiple-choice subsection of the Writing Section of the test is based on the skills listed below. Each skill is accompanied by a description of the content that may be included on the test.

Please note that the term *standard* as it appears below refers to language use that conforms to the conventions of edited American English.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

Skill: Recognize purpose and audience.

Includes recognizing writing that is appropriate for a given purpose and recognizing writing that is appropriate for a given audience and occasion.

Skill: Recognize unity, focus, and development in writing.

Includes recognizing unnecessary shifts in point of view or distracting details that impair the development of the main idea in a piece of writing, recognizing revisions that improve the unity and focus of a piece of writing, and recognizing examples of well-developed writing.

Skill: Recognize effective organization in writing.

Includes recognizing methods of paragraph organization and the appropriate use of transitional words or phrases to convey text structure and reorganizing sentences to improve cohesion and the effective sequence of ideas.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE, USAGE, AND MECHANICS

Skill: Recognize effective sentences.

Includes recognizing ineffective repetition and inefficiency in sentence construction; identifying sentence fragments and run-on sentences; identifying standard subject-verb agreement; identifying standard placement of modifiers, parallel structure, and use of negatives in sentence formation; and recognizing imprecise and inappropriate word choice.

Skill: Recognize edited American English usage.

Includes recognizing the standard use of verb forms and pronouns; recognizing the standard formation and use of adverbs, adjectives, comparatives, superlatives, and plural and possessive forms of nouns; and recognizing standard punctuation.

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When to Take the THEA Test

Students Entering a Texas Public College or University

Students entering a Texas public college or university may need to take the THEA Test before enrolling in any college-level coursework. For information about whether you are exempt from testing, contact either the testing office or the advising office at the Texas college or university you currently attend or plan to attend.

Dual Credit/Concurrent Enrollment Students

Texas high school students planning to enroll in college courses that count for both high school and college credit under their school's dual credit or concurrent enrollment program are required to meet the program's eligibility requirements. These requirements may include passing the THEA Test. Consult with your high school academic advisor to determine whether you need to take the THEA Test as part of the requirements for entry into a dual credit or concurrent enrollment program.

Students Seeking Admission to an Educator Preparation Program

All students seeking admission to a state-approved Texas educator preparation program or alternative certification program are required to demonstrate college-level skills in reading, oral and written communication, critical thinking, and mathematics.

All educator preparation students should contact their educator preparation programs directly to determine admission requirements.

Educators Revalidating Their Teaching Certificates

House Bill 72, passed by the Texas Legislature in 1984, mandated that all persons issued valid Texas teaching certificates prior to February 1, 1986, must pass the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT) to continue their certification. In lieu of the TECAT, which was discontinued in June 2000, an educator may now take the Reading and Writing sections of the THEA Test or a state-approved teacher certification examination to revalidate his or her teaching certificate.

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What Is the THEA IBT and Who Is Eligible to Take It?

The THEA Internet-Based Test

The THEA Test consists of three sections: Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. Each section of the THEA Test is designed to measure a student's academic skill against an established standard of competence. A student's score on each section of the test is based on his or her performance in relation to the skills being tested. Scores are not related to how well other students have performed on the same section.

The THEA Internet-Based Test (IBT) assesses the same reading, mathematics, and writing skills as the THEA Quick Test, but it is taken on computer instead of on paper. It is offered at several designated institutions. If you are a student at one of these institutions, you may be eligible to take the THEA IBT.

Prior to beginning the registration process, **you must contact the institution where you would like to test to confirm your eligibility.**

Who Is Eligible to Take the Test?

The THEA IBT is available at certain institutions designated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). If you are a student at one of these institutions, you may be eligible to take the THEA IBT for one or more of the following reasons: as part of the THECB's various Developmental or Intensive programs; in order to satisfy the Texas Success Initiative; and/or for another purpose as authorized by THECB.

Prior to beginning the registration process, you must contact the institution where you would like to test to confirm your eligibility. If you take the THEA IBT and are not eligible, your scores will not be accessible to your institution and you will not receive a credit or refund of any kind.

For a list of institutions where you may test, see "Test Sites."

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Taking and Passing the IBT

To pass the THEA IBT, you must pass all three sections (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing). You may take one, two, or three sections at a given test session. Once you pass a section of the test, you do not have to take that section again unless directed to retake it by your institution.

For consistency, test scores are reported using the same scale, in a range from 100 to 300. The minimum score needed to pass the Reading and Mathematics sections is 230. For the Writing Section, the minimum passing score is 220.

Retaking the THEA IBT

If you do not pass one or more sections of the THEA IBT, you may retake it. However, you must wait at least 14 days before retaking the test. You may reregister to take the test before 14 days have elapsed, but you may not take the actual test until after the 14-day waiting period has elapsed, or on the 15th day.

If you are retaking only one or two sections, you will have the entire testing session to complete whichever section(s) you have not previously passed.

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Internet-Based Testing

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why was THEA selected as the testing instrument for Developmental and Intensive programs?

The decision to select THEA as the primary placement test instrument for students enrolled in Developmental and Intensive programs was based upon two primary factors. 1) EPIC research indicates that THEA most closely aligns with the Career and College Readiness Standards in comparison to other tests. 2) Using the same pre-and post-remediation assessment instruments allows consistent tracking of changes or growth due to developmental education courses.

Does THEA Internet-Based Test (IBT) have to be used for all institutional placement testing activities?

No. The agreement between the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) stipulates that THEA IBT must be used only for participants of various Developmental and Intensive programs. Participating institutions may use THEA IBT for other placement testing activities, but this is not mandatory.

What methods of payment are available to the student?

Students may pay for the THEA IBT by credit or debit card. This may be done either in advance of the test session from a remote location, or at the test center. A confirmation e-mail is sent to the student upon receipt of payment. The student can also access the order information through the "Order History" link in his or her account.

Institutions may also elect to provide or sell authorization codes to students who do not possess a credit card. Institutions may purchase authorization codes directly from Evaluation Systems.

Can the institution charge additional administration fees to defray test center costs?

Some institutions charge an additional test administration fee in addition to the actual test fee. The level of this fee is set at the institution's discretion and must be collected by the institution directly; it cannot be collected through the THEA IBT system.

What is the THEA IBT refund policy?

Refunds will generally not be granted as testing can take place at any time; normally a test can simply be rescheduled at a later date. However, exceptions will be handled on an individual basis by Evaluation Systems' customer service center. A few examples of when a refund may be granted are:

- Relocation
- Military Deployment
- Severe illness/hospitalization

Will THEA IBT be offered as three separate tests instead of one test consisting of three sections?

Offering THEA as separate Reading, Math, and Writing sections is closely tied to testing time. Evaluation Systems will conduct a testing time analysis once sufficient data for the Internet-based test has been collected and will conduct a feasibility analysis for offering three separate tests.

What is the THEA IBT retest policy?

The THEA IBT retest policy is 14 days. The retest policy is intended to permit examinees sufficient time to prepare and review the test material prior to their next test attempt.

What type of identification is required from examinees?

Two pieces of identification are required, in the name in which the examinee has registered, one bearing a photograph, and an additional, non-photo ID. The identification requirements associated with the THEA IBT are standard to the paper and computer versions of the test. Examples of acceptable forms of photo and non-photo identification are provided on the THEA Web site, www.thea.nesinc.com.

How can examinees take the THEA IBT?

The THEA IBT is available at certain institutions designated by the THECB. Students attending one of these institutions may be eligible to take the THEA IBT for one or more of the following reasons: as part of a Developmental or Intensive program; in order to satisfy the Texas Success Initiative; and/or for another purpose as authorized by THECB.

Once the student has had eligibility confirmed by the institution, the student may contact the institution's test center to make an appointment for testing.

What's the implementation process for THEA IBT on my campus?

Implementation of the THEA IBT requires prior approval from the THECB. The Evaluation Systems group of Pearson will work with campus staff to ensure that testing is done in an appropriate, test-secure environment. Evaluation Systems also offers training to test center proctors and test administrators on how to administer the THEA IBT. THEA Faculty Manuals provide faculty and administrators at Texas educational institutions with key information about the THEA Test, including a description of the test, the list of skills tested, worksheets for comparing THEA skills to course content, an explanation of how the test is scored, and sample examinee and institution score reports.

Where can I find more information about THEA IBT?

For a comprehensive list of reference materials and more detailed information, please visit the THEA Web site at www.thea.nesinc.com.

THEA TEST PREPARATION

Preparation Materials for Internet-Based Testing



THEA Interactive Practice Test

The online THEA Practice Test includes test questions, a writing sample prompt, and directions similar to what you'll see on the day of the test. It provides immediate feedback on your performance and can be a valuable aid for determining your readiness to take the THEA Test. Feedback includes detailed explanations for each correct response to the multiple-choice questions, plus an analysis of your writing sample.

\$19.95

[Purchase Now](#)



THEA Online Study Guide

An interactive online study guide is available to help you prepare for the THEA IBT. You may purchase a study guide that focuses on one section of the THEA, or a guide to help you prepare for all three sections of the THEA.

\$8.00 for Reading, Mathematics, or Writing
\$20.00 for all three fields

[Purchase Now](#)

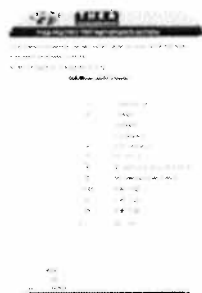
Preparation Materials for the THEA Quick Test



THEA Test Preparation Quick Reference Guide


This guide, available in PDF format, describes the THEA Test, explains how to develop an effective study plan, and provides general test-taking strategies, sample test items, and a complete list of THEA test skills.

Quick Reference Guide 

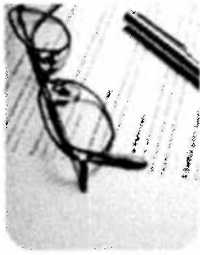


THEA Practice Test

This practice test contains sample test questions and an answer key indicating the correct response for each question. The key also contains a Skill Evaluation Chart that you can use after completing the test to help you decide which skills are your strengths and which skills may require extra work.

Practice Test 





The Official THEA® Test Study Guide

The study guide, available for purchase using the order form on this Web site or at college bookstores and other retailers, contains a detailed instructional chapter on each of the skills eligible for testing. Each chapter includes numerous examples and exercises. A full-length practice test is included, complete with an answer key and detailed answer explanations. Each section of the study guide (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing) has a list of resources and strategies for studying.

\$20.00

Purchase Now

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