

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The primary purpose of this guide is to help candidates prepare effectively for the Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments® (AEPA®) by becoming familiar with the test structure, format, and content. Faculty and program administrators at educator preparation institutions may also find this information useful as they help candidates prepare for the tests.

KEY FEATURES OF THIS GUIDE

- ◆ *Information About How to Prepare for the Tests*
- ◆ *List of Test Objectives*
- ◆ *Practice Questions and Answer Key*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For specific test information and general AEPA program information, visit the AEPA website at www.aepa.nesinc.com.

NOTE: THIS GENERAL INFORMATION PORTION OF THE STUDY GUIDE HAS BEEN UPDATED AND NOW INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TESTS 1-1

Study the Test Objectives
Focus Your Studies
Identify Resources
Develop Study Techniques
Answer the Practice Questions
Sample Test Directions

QUESTION FORMATS AND STRATEGIES 1-3

Selected-Response Question Formats
Written Performance Assignment Formats
*Sample Written Performance Assignment for a Hypothetical
Social Studies Subject Knowledge Test*
Sample Written Performance Assignment Response: Score Point 4
Evaluation of the Sample Written Performance Assignment Response

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ON THE DAY OF THE TEST..... 1-10

*Preparing to Go
At the Test Site*

Readers should be advised that this study guide, including many of the excerpts used herein, is protected by federal copyright law.

Copyright © 2016 Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s). All rights reserved.
Evaluation Systems, Pearson, P.O. Box 226, Amherst, MA.01004

AEPA, Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments, and the AEPA logo are trademarks of the Arizona Department of Education and Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).

Pearson and its logo are trademarks, in the U.S. and/or other countries, of Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).



PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AEPA® AND TEST PREPARATION

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TESTS

Study the Test Objectives

Read through the entire set of test objectives to get an overall picture of what content the test will cover.

The test objectives are the *only* source of test content information. They are included with the practice questions and as a PDF on the AEPA website.

The content a test covers is organized into two or more *subareas*. Within each subarea, the content is defined by a set of *objectives*. Each objective consists of:

1. the *objective statement*, which broadly defines the subject matter an entry-level educator needs to know; and
2. the *descriptive statement*, which provides examples of the types of knowledge and skills the objective covers.

Review the subareas. A list of subareas appears at the beginning of the test objectives. In general, subareas with greater numbers of objectives will receive more emphasis on the test.

Review each objective and its descriptive statements carefully. As you do this, ask yourself how strong your knowledge is on that content. You may want to print the objectives and note next to each objective/descriptive statement how prepared you are on that content—for example:

- ✓—adequate knowledge and preparation
- X—partial knowledge and preparation; or
- ?—little or no knowledge and preparation.

You can use this review to set study priorities.

Focus Your Studies

Schedule enough time to review the content of each test objective. Keep in mind that you may improve your total test score by improving your performance in any subarea, so plan time to review content of more familiar objectives, too.

Identify Resources

Consider what resources you may use to study each test objective, such as:

- your textbooks, class notes and assignments;
- textbooks currently in use in Arizona public elementary and secondary schools; and
- publications from local, state, and national professional organizations.

You may also want to ask for ideas from your advisor or other students who have taken courses that address your needs.

Develop Study Techniques

- Make a realistic study plan and schedule. It should allow enough time for you to really learn what you need to know.
- Review a book or reliable website on study skills. You may also find suggestions and/or ideas from your institution's academic assistance office or library.
- Consider studying with others who will be taking the test.

Answer the Practice Questions

First, review the sample test directions in this guide. Then try to answer the practice questions. If possible, do this in a room that is relatively quiet but where others are moving around, such as a room in a college library. As you answer the questions, time yourself to get an idea of how long it will take you to complete the actual test.

After you answer the questions:

- Review your selected-response answers against the answer key at the end. For any questions you answered incorrectly, take time to understand why the correct answer is correct. Ask your advisor or instructor for help or guidance, if needed.
- Review the sample response, if your test has written performance assignments. Compare the response to the scoring scale to identify aspects of the response that demonstrate particular scoring criteria. Then compare your response to the sample response and to the scoring scale, to see where you could improve it. You may want to ask your advisor or an instructor to review your response and offer feedback.

Note: The practice questions in this guide:

- are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included in the AEPA tests;
- represent the various types of questions you may expect to see on an actual test; but,
- are *not* designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of strength or weakness, or to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

Sample Test Directions

Below are sample general test directions for AEPA subject knowledge tests that include a written performance assignment.

DIRECTIONS

This test contains two sections: (1) a multiple-choice section and (2) a performance assignment section. You may complete the sections in the order you choose. The directions for the performance assignment section appear before that section.

Each question in the first section is a multiple-choice question with four answer choices. Read each question and answer choice carefully and choose the ONE best answer.

You should answer all questions. Even if you are unsure of an answer, it is better to guess than not to answer a question at all. You will NOT be penalized for guessing.

You have 210 minutes (three and a half hours) to complete this test. You may work on and complete the multiple-choice question section and the performance assignment section in any order that you choose. Be sure to allocate your time carefully so that you are able to complete both sections within the time allotted.

You may NOT use any type of calculator or reference materials during the testing session.

QUESTION FORMATS AND STRATEGIES

Here you will find:

- descriptions and examples of question formats commonly used in the AEPA; and
- suggested approaches for responding that you may want to try when you answer the practice questions—keep in mind that these are suggestions, and are not intended to replace approaches with which you are already comfortable and that work for you.

In many cases, you will be expected to do more than show that you know facts. You may be asked to think critically about information (e.g., by analyzing or applying it, comparing it with other knowledge, or making a judgment about it).

Selected-Response-Question Formats

Each test includes a section of selected-response questions. When you are ready to answer a question, you must choose one of four response options labeled A, B, C, and D.

You may see two types of selected-response questions. Not every test will include both formats discussed in this section, but you should be prepared to answer both types.

Single questions. A problem is presented as a direct question or incomplete statement, and the four response options appear below.

Example:

Which of the following was a major factor in the decision of the U.S. government to take a less active role in national economic matters than did most western European governments during the late nineteenth century?

- A. the domination of the U.S. government by southern and western agricultural interests
- B. the weak organization of the two major political parties in the United States
- C. the strength of political traditions such as the separation of powers and federalism in the United States
- D. the relatively small turnout for most national elections in the United States

Suggested approach

Read the question carefully and critically. As you read, think about what the question is asking and about the situation it is describing: *In the late nineteenth century, federal policymakers in the United States were influenced to a large degree by an adherence to a traditional view of the role of the federal government, including the separation of powers and federalism. Thus, the U.S. government chose not to become deeply involved in economic matters.*

Now look at the response options. Through your analysis of the situation, you should be able to eliminate the incorrect response options and see that option C is correct.

Questions with stimulus material. Some questions are preceded by stimulus material that relates to the question. Examples include maps, charts, tables, graphs, reading passages, and descriptions of classroom situations. In some cases, only one question is related to the stimulus. In other cases, two or more questions are related to a single stimulus. Each stimulus is preceded by a direction line indicating how many questions are related to it.

Example:

Read the information below; then answer the two questions that follow.

Mr. Rivera's fourth-grade class has started a health unit that emphasizes the obligations of individuals and societies to protect the environment. In this unit, the class has been discussing their town's landfill crisis. One day the students return from lunch commenting on the amount of waste they saw in the cafeteria that day and noting that all the garbage generated by the school is contributing to the landfill problem. One student, Kahlil, remarks, "If they'd feed us stuff we like better, maybe there'd be less to throw out." Other students join in, talking about how wasteful it is to serve food that nobody likes and wondering what might be done about the waste.

Once the class settles down, the teacher remarks that the students have made some very interesting observations and poses the following questions to the class:

- Is the amount of food you saw wasted today typical?
- Kahlil has suggested that if the school served lunches that students like, there would be less waste. Do you agree or disagree with Kahlil's suggestion, and why?
- What kinds of information could you collect to support your opinions?

1. Mr. Rivera's rephrasing of Kahlil's hypothesis is likely to be most useful for:

- A. providing a framework for subsequent student discussion.
- B. encouraging student recall of related information.
- C. checking students' understanding of Kahlil's original statement.
- D. providing students with clues about the answer to the preceding question.

2. The primary role Mr. Rivera has taken in the instructional process so far has been to:

- A. encourage students to generate questions about issues that are meaningful to them.
- B. prompt students to assess their own understanding of instructional content.
- C. facilitate students' use of higher-order thinking in a real-world context.
- D. provide students with information that can serve as a basis for future learning.

Suggested approaches

First, read the stimulus. Note how the information is presented: *The information in the stimulus is a description of a classroom situation.*

Now you are prepared to address the questions. Both of the questions will probably require looking back at the stimulus to determine the correct response. Question 1 asks you to determine the reasoning that is most likely behind one of the teacher's actions in this situation: *Mr. Rivera rephrases Kahlil's hypothesis in such a way as to promote and focus further discussion of the subject.* Therefore, A is the correct response.

Question 2 asks you to determine the instructional role Mr. Rivera is taking in this situation: *Mr. Rivera uses ideas and opinions expressed by the students to generate questions that encourage the use of higher-order thinking skills in a context outside of the students' academic work.* Therefore, C is the correct response.

Written Performance Assignment Formats

For tests that include one or more written performance assignments, you will be provided with a written stimulus to which you must respond as indicated in the assignment directions. You will be presented with an issue that is designed to engage your thinking and a task to accomplish in writing (e.g., to analyze an argument, to compare and contrast ideas, to propose a solution). You will be expected to:

- reflect on the issue and the task;
- organize your thoughts;
- develop reasoned support for your opinions and statements using specific, accurate information; and
- transform your thinking into clear written expression intended for a generally educated audience.

Sample Written Performance Assignment for a Hypothetical Social Studies Subject Knowledge Test

Read the information below; then complete the exercise that follows.

The U.S. Constitution creates a government of checks and balances in which legislative, executive, and judicial authority reside in separate branches of the government.

Using your knowledge of the U.S. government, write an essay discussing this system of checks and balances. In your essay:

- discuss the primary goals of the framers of the Constitution in creating a government with a system of checks and balances;
- identify the powers that are given to each of the three branches of the government under the Constitution; and
- describe how these powers enable each branch of the government to check the activities of each of the other two branches.

After reading the assignment directions and stimulus, carefully consider what information to include in your response. You may wish to write a brief outline of your response, and may do so using the erasable sheets that will be provided at the test center and collected after you finish the test. When you are ready to respond to a written performance assignment, you must type it in the on-screen response box in order for it to be scored.

Written performance assignment scoring. Typically, each response will be scored by two or more qualified educators during scoring sessions held after each test administration. Scorers with relevant professional backgrounds are oriented to standardized scoring procedures before the scoring session, and are carefully monitored during the scoring sessions to ensure all assignments are scored according to the standardized procedures.

Written performance assignments for the AEPA are scored using scales that indicate the criteria by which the performance assignment will be scored and describe varying levels of performance. These scales were approved by committees of Arizona educators who reviewed both the performance assignments and scoring scales. The scoring scale for each test field that has a written performance assignment is included in the practice-questions section.

Scores are based on demonstrated ability to prepare an organized, accurate response to the assignment and to instructions regarding content, purpose, and/or audience. Scorers will form an overall impression of the quality of the response based on your ability to:

- develop and present logical, reasoned arguments;
- apply appropriate content knowledge; and
- write a well-organized, effective essay in response to the assignment.

A response is designated unscorable if it is blank, unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, not of sufficient length to score, or merely a repetition of the assignment.

The following sample written performance assignment and response are for a hypothetical subject knowledge test, which uses a 4-point scoring scale.

Sample Written Performance Assignment for a Hypothetical Social Studies Subject Knowledge Test

Read the information below; then complete the exercise that follows.

The U.S. Constitution creates a government of checks and balances in which legislative, executive, and judicial authority reside in separate branches of the government.

Using your knowledge of the U.S. government, write an essay discussing this system of checks and balances. In your essay:

- discuss the primary goals of the framers of the Constitution in creating a government with a system of checks and balances;
- identify the powers that are given to each of the three branches of the government under the Constitution; and
- describe how these powers enable each branch of the government to check the activities of each of the other two branches.

Sample Written Performance Assignment Response: Score Point 4

The framers of the Constitution, having rejected England's imperialist monarchy in the Revolutionary War, understood well the dangers of a single, supreme governmental authority. Influenced spiritually by Deism and intellectually by the Enlightenment, the founders created a system of government unique not only in the 18th century, but also in the history of the world. Through their concept of "federalism," the framers provided for a check and balance between the central government and the states by designating certain powers to the former and reserving others to the latter. Within the central government, the founders designed a system of checks and balances among three distinct branches of government. This model assures that no single branch of the government ever possesses enough power to overwhelm the other two.

The founders wanted to prevent a monarchy from ever taking root in the United States. This meant that no single individual, particularly one claiming a "divine right" to govern (as did King George), could ever gain control. Therefore, the framers needed to create a strong form of government that would allow for the rule of law to protect individual rights while also keeping the church and state separated. Perhaps ironically, Deism provided a model both for religion and for governing. Deists believed that God was a distant force that set the "clockwork" of the Universe in motion in accordance with natural laws and then stepped back to let it operate. They also believed that God gave people reason to discover these laws and act accordingly. This concept of the creation gave the founders a picture of a "leader" who was both powerful and restrained and who recognized that a system in motion could take care of itself. The Enlightenment's philosophy, which acknowledged the rights of the "common man," provided a complementary justification for assuming that the system (in this case, the people) not only could—but should—pull it off, at least as long as they were informed.

As set forth by the Constitution, the three distinct branches of U.S. government are the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. The executive branch, personified by the President, has the power to appoint and to nominate judges, cabinet members, and ambassadors. The President also is the commander-in-chief of armed forces, conducts foreign relations, negotiates treaties, vetoes legislation, and proposes the federal budget. The legislative branch (the two houses of Congress) has the power to declare war, reject the President's nominees, control appropriations, and approve treaties. The judicial branch, principally the Supreme Court, interprets and can declare unconstitutional Presidential and Congressional actions and legislation. Depending on one's location in this triangle, these responsibilities may seem like meddling. All three branches, for example, have debated who has the right to go to war. Nevertheless, the division of these duties is the weight that balances the scales of power.

The checks that prevent any one branch from taking absolute control include the following: to control the judiciary, the executive branch may pardon federal offenders; to check the legislative branch, it can control patronage and veto laws. The legislative branch can check the President by overriding vetoes and impeaching the President. It can also impeach judges and approve or disapprove judicial appointments. The judicial branch has the power to declare laws created by the legislative branch and acts performed by the chief executive as unconstitutional.

These checks and balances guarantee that the three branches of government both support and monitor one another—something that, to the framers of the Constitution, represented a new and necessary way to allow the people to rule themselves without falling victim to an all powerful individual.

Evaluation of the Sample Written Performance Assignment Response

This response gives strong evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the system of checks and balances described in the U.S. Constitution. The candidate clearly addresses the purpose of the assignment, discussing in depth the history of the development of the system of checks and balances, the details of how the system is structured, and the ways in which the system helps achieve the framers' intended goal of avoiding the development of a monarchy in the U.S. government.

The candidate uses many details to enhance and support the discussion of the assigned topic. This supporting evidence is substantial, accurate, and relevant to the candidate's discussion of the subject. In addition, both the general ideas and the supporting details offered by the candidate reflect a high degree of understanding of the system of checks and balances.

The candidate's discussion of the system of checks and balances is clearly organized and well-reasoned. Overall, the candidate develops the discussion very well and demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the topic.

In summary, the candidate's response to this performance assignment reflects a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ON THE DAY OF THE TEST

Preparing to Go

Leave plenty of time to get to the test site. You should plan to arrive at the test center 30 minutes before your test is scheduled to begin.

Dress comfortably. Wear layers so you can adjust to the test site temperature, which may vary and may not be within the control of the test administrators.

At the Test Site

Follow directions. Follow all directions carefully. This includes any oral directions from the test administrators and any directions presented as part of your test.

Pay close attention to the computer-based testing tutorial presented on-screen before taking the actual test. You can also preview this through the Prepare page on the AEPA website.

Pace yourself. The test is designed to allow enough time for you to complete the test. You can spend as much time on any section of the test as you need. If your test includes written performance assignments, remember to leave enough time to complete those.

Do not spend a great deal of time on a question that you cannot answer right away. Flag it for review (explained in the tutorial) and move on.

You may find you need less than the full testing time allotted, but be ready to stay the entire time. Do not make any other commitments that may cause you to rush or leave without answering all of the questions.

Read carefully. Read all directions, questions, and response options carefully.

- Remember that the selected-response questions call for the "best answer," so do not just choose the first response option that seems reasonable. Read and evaluate all choices, then determine the best answer.
- Do not skim questions. You may misread key words and select the wrong answer. For example: If a math question calls for an approximate answer and you miss that detail, you could waste time on a long computation.
- Read the questions, but don't read meanings *into* them. The questions are designed to be straightforward, not tricky.

Guess wisely. If you cannot quickly determine the best answer to a selected-response question, try to eliminate as many options as you can. Then guess among the remaining choices. Your score on each test is based on the number of questions you answered correctly. There is no penalty for incorrect answers, so it is better to guess than not answer at all.

Make good use of any remaining time at the end.

For selected-response questions:

- Answer any questions that you flagged to go back to.
- Check all your answers to make sure you selected your intended answer choice.

If your test has written-performance assignments:

- Check that you adequately responded to each part.
- Proof your response for clarity and completeness.