

Introduction

Getting Started

As you know, teaching is a rewarding and challenging profession. One way you will show that you are ready for your teaching license is to pass your state’s required Praxis II: Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) test. The way you will show that you are ready for your teaching career is to use this book to thoroughly prepare for your teaching licensure test. Successful teachers, like you, do their homework, so let’s get started.

Format of the Test

Each of the PLT tests is designed to measure your knowledge of a broad range of teaching-related topics. Your knowledge of these topics is usually developed in undergraduate or teacher-certification teaching methods courses, as well as in educational psychology, human development, classroom management, and foundations of education courses. No matter which of the PLT tests you take, you will answer a total of 36 questions—12 short-answer questions (known as “constructed response” questions on the PLT) and 24 multiple-choice questions. There are four different PLT tests, broken down by grade (see the following table).

<i>PLT Test</i>	<i>Test Registration Code</i>
Early Childhood	0521
Grades K–6	0522
Grades 5–9	0523
Grades 7–12	0524

The constructed-response questions are short-answer questions that relate to four teaching situations (also called case histories) in order to provide real-life teaching context for your responses. For a preview of a case history/constructed-response question, turn to Chapter 5.

Each multiple-choice question includes a teaching situation, a question, and then four answer choices. For a preview of the multiple-choice questions, turn to the Chapter 6.

You will have a total of 2 hours to complete the PLT test. The constructed-response questions that accompany each case history will require more time. You’ll want to plan 25 minutes for each constructed-response question in order to read each case history and to write your short-answer responses. The multiple-choice questions should require less time; plan for a total of 20 minutes to answer all 24 multiple-choice questions. There is no penalty for guessing, so be sure to answer every question.

<i>Question Type</i>	<i>Total Number of Questions</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Pacing Suggestions</i>
Constructed response	12 short-answer questions	4 case histories, each followed by 3 constructed-response questions	25 minutes per case history/ 3 constructed-response questions
Multiple choice	24 multiple-choice questions	2 sections, each with 12 multiple-choice questions	10 minutes per section

On the test, you will first be presented with a case history and three short-answer constructed responses. Then you'll read another case history and provide three short-answer constructed responses. Next, you'll answer 12 standalone multiple-choice questions that do not relate to one another or to any of the case histories. Then the pattern of test questions repeats—case history, three short-answer constructed responses, case history, three short-answer constructed responses, and finally 12 standalone multiple-choice questions.

Content of the Test

Now that you have a general idea of the format and pacing of the test, let's take a closer look at the content of the PLT test. The broad topics "Students as Learners" and "Instruction and Assessment" make up approximately 66 percent of the test. Clearly, this is where you'll want to spend the majority of your study time. In addition, the PLT test assesses your understanding of "Communication Techniques" and "Teacher Professionalism" in approximately 33 percent of the test questions, so these topics also deserve your review time.

	<i>Students as Learners</i>	<i>Instruction and Assessment</i>	<i>Communication Techniques</i>	<i>Teacher Professionalism</i>
<i>Percentage of Your Score</i>	33%	33%	11%	22%
	Student development and learning processes	Instructional strategies	Effective verbal and nonverbal communication	Reflective practitioners
	Diverse learners	Planning strategies	Cultural and gender differences	The larger school community
	Motivation and learning environment	Assessment strategies	Stimulating discussion	

Frequently Asked Questions

You've already started on the path to success by orienting yourself to the format of the questions, planning to pace yourself, and becoming familiar with the content covered on this test, but most likely you still have several questions about your licensure test.

Q. How do I register for the PLT?

A. Contact the Educational Testing Service (ETS) on the Web at www.ets.org/praxis or by phone at 800-772-9476. My students and I have found that registering online is easiest.

Q. How do I know which PLT test to take?

A. Contact the department of education for the state for which you seek teacher licensure. I recommend that you use your favorite Internet search engine to locate your state department of education's teaching certification office.

Q. What score do I need to earn my teaching license?

A. Each state department of education sets its passing score. Contact your state's department of education for this answer.

Q. Do all states require the PLT for teacher licensure?

A. No, but several do. Some states have created their own licensure tests. Some states use other Praxis II tests. Again, contact the state department of education for specifics. States that require the PLT will accept your PLT scores no matter where you took the test provided that you meet the state's passing score requirement and that you did not take the test too long ago (usually five or more years ago).

Q. How long does it take to get my scores back?

A. ETS usually mails your scores to you in four to six weeks.

Q. Are any accommodations available to test-takers?

A. Yes. Test-takers with disabilities and those whose primary language is not English may apply for test-taking accommodations. More information is available at www.ets.org/praxis or in the Praxis series registration booklet.

Q. What do I need on the day of the test?

A. You need:

1. Photo identification with your name, photograph, and signature
2. Second alternative identification with your name, photograph, and signature—just to be safe!
3. Admission ticket, printout of your online registration, letter of authorization, mailgram, or telegram showing your test registration
4. Several #2 pencils and an eraser
5. Two blue or black pens for constructed response questions
6. A watch without calculator functions (optional, but advised)
7. To wear layered clothing (optional, but you can't control the temperature of the testing room!)

Q. What's the best way to prepare for the Principles of Learning and Teaching tests?

A. Doing just what you're doing! Become familiar with the format, types of questions, and content of the test. After you're familiar with what will be on the test, it's best to complete several PLT practice tests, self-correct, and study the questions/content you get incorrect.

Suggestions for Using This Study Guide

CliffsTestPrep Praxis II: Principles of Learning and Teaching offers various levels of support to make your test preparation efforts successful.

Part I: Diagnostic Preview Tests

This section provides an introductory experience with the constructed-response and multiple-choice formats of the PLT. You can select your specific PLT test version (Early Childhood, Grades K–6, Grades 5–9, or Grades 7–12), complete the sample questions, and self-correct to determine areas you know and areas you need to study. Each item on the preview test has a detailed explanation that leads you to another section of this guide to help you gain deeper knowledge of the content covered in each test item.

For additional practice, you may also want to complete all the other preview tests in this section. While the teaching situations presented are grade specific (e.g., the Early Childhood test offers case histories about a first-grade classroom), the content of any PLT test follows a consistent pattern. In other words, each one tests your knowledge of the four content categories—Students as Learners, Instructional Strategies, Communication Techniques, and Teacher Professionalism—so completing the diagnostic preview tests from other grade levels still pays off!

Part II: Preparing for the Format of the PLT

This section provides specific strategies for answering each of the two question types on the PLT—constructed response and multiple choice.

Part III: Preparing for the Content of the PLT

As you know, the PLT tests have four categories of content: Students as Learners, Instructional Strategies, Communication Techniques, and Teacher Professionalism. In this section, detailed content outlines have been prepared to save you time

(no need to scour all those methods and educational psychology text books!) and offer a concise overview of the key theories and practices used in teaching today. Each Diagnostic Preview Test question from Part I of this book is linked to a chapter in this section to provide the information you need to learn to be more successful on the actual test.

Part IV: Full-Length Practice Tests

This section offers you the opportunity to apply all you've learned. Complete the two practice tests for your grade level, self-correct, and then study the detailed explanations. You can even practice your pacing—remember, you have 2 hours for each practice test. If you'd like, you can make the most of your studying by completing any of the other six full-length practice tests to give yourself additional practice.

Part V: Closing Thoughts

This brief section includes a few final test preparation tips and resources to help you perform well on the PLT test.