

# CHAPTER 17: TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS (TAAS) EXIT LEVEL

## Overview

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), first administered in 1990, was last administered to students enrolled in Grades 3–8 in the spring of 2002. Spring 2002 also marked the final administration of the Grade 10 exit level TAAS to a full cohort of students enrolled in Grade 10. As of spring 2003, all eligible Grade 10 students are required to take the TAKS tests.

In 2003 commissioner’s rules were adopted to clarify whether students should pass Grade 10 exit level TAAS or Grade 11 exit level TAKS to fulfill graduation testing requirements. Students who were in Grade 9 or higher on January 1, 2001, must pass the exit level TAAS tests given in reading, mathematics, and writing. Accelerated students who were in Grade 8 on January 1, 2001, and graduated by September 1, 2004, also have TAAS as a graduation testing requirement. Students who were in Grade 8 or lower on January 1, 2001, and who will graduate after September 1, 2004, are required to pass the exit level TAKS in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in order to meet graduation testing requirements.

Students for whom TAAS is the graduation requirement who have yet to pass all three sections of the assessment were able to retake all or portions of the exit level TAAS test during the 2003–2004 school year. The test was also available for newly enrolled students for whom TAAS is the graduation requirement. There were four administrations of exit level TAAS during the 2003–2004 school year: October 2003, February 2004, April 2004 (given to graduating seniors only), and July 2004. A total of 70,317 TAAS tests were administered during this period.

TAAS tests will continue to be made available on a quarterly basis for those students who have not met graduation testing requirements. Students who are no longer enrolled in high school but still wish to continue to test may test as out-of-school examinees. See Chapter 6: Test Administration Procedures, for more information.

## TAAS Test Development

The TAAS test development process is outlined in detail in the 2001–2002 Technical Digest, which is available on the Student Assessment Division website. Because the TAAS tests administered during 2003–2004 were built using previously field-tested items from the TAAS item bank, no field testing or educator reviews took place during the 2003–2004 school year.

TAAS performance standards, performance results, and raw score conversion tables can be found on the Student Assessment Division website.

# TAAS Exit Level: Written Composition Scoring

All TAAS written compositions were scored at the Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM) scoring center. For each scoring session, TEA and senior PEM staff selected validity papers (see “Validity System” in Chapter 16) and monitored training and scoring.

## Readers

For the spring 2004 exit level TAAS retest, only those readers who had worked successfully on past exit level projects were invited to score this assessment. A total of 25 readers and scoring supervisors completed the scoring.

## Guides

The written composition scoring guides contained a total of 16 student responses: four annotated anchor responses representing each score point in order, from 1 to 4.

## Split Sets

Each split set contained four “close call” papers that defined the “line” between two score points. There was one split set for the 1/2 line, one for the 2/3 line, and one for the 3/4 line.

## Training Sets

Training Sets A, B, and C each contained 10 randomly mixed responses representing score points 1–4. Training Set D contained 15 randomly mixed responses representing score points 1–4.

## Qualifying Sets

Each of the three qualifying sets contained 20 randomly mixed responses representing score points 1–4.

These training materials included 133 responses. Following is a breakout by score point:

### Exit Level (Spring)

29—1s
38—2s
38—3s
+28—4s
<hr/>
133

## Exit Level Score Verification

Since the spring 1992 exit level scoring session, TEA’s contractors have used a score-verification procedure to further evaluate all responses that received a 1 during the holistic scoring process. A special team of readers is trained exclusively on the 1/2 line by using the 1s

and 2s from the holistic guide and split set, along with 10-paper sets that make up the rest of the 1s and 2s from the holistic sets and qualifying rounds. Additional responses found in the live papers (approved by the scoring director, the coordinator of the analytic readers and 1/2 score verification specialists, and TEA staff) are selected to round out the training sets. If any response scored by a member of the specialist team is thought to be higher than a 1, it is read by the specialist coordinator. If the coordinator agrees, the response is then read by the scoring director. If the scoring director also agrees, the score is changed; if he or she disagrees, the response is read by the project monitor, who makes the final decision unless it involves an issue that should be brought to the attention of TEA. In such cases the response is sent to TEA for a final scoring decision.

**Validity Packets**

For the 2003–2004 exit level retest administrations, time constraints required some procedural modifications. In place of validity packets, TEA and senior PEM staff identified validity papers that were used in roomwide ongoing training exercises. At least one such exercise was given each week of the project.

**Score Reliability and Validity Information**

Through the years PEM has reported on the reliability and validity of the TAAS essay scoring process. Reliability has been expressed in terms of reader agreement and correlation between first and second readings. Validity has been assessed via validity packets composed of responses selected by TEA officials.

The chart below summarizes reader agreement rates (reliability) and results of the use of validity packets for the TAAS Exit Level. Reader agreement rate is expressed in terms of absolute agreement (Reader 1’s score equals Reader 2’s score). Validity is expressed in terms of perfect agreement between the score assigned by a given reader and the “true” score assigned by TEA.

**Table 20. Summary of Reader Agreement (Reliability)**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Agreement Rate (%) After 2 Readings</b>	<b>Number of Third Readings</b>	<b>Agreement Rate (%) After 3 Readings</b>
15,085	75	3,831	98.4

Roomwide Ongoing Training Results: 78.6% agreement on TEA-approved validity papers.

