**California Alternate Assessment** 

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

# Science Administration Planning Guide

*This guide is intended for use by test site coordinators and test examiners to guide, plan, and schedule California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science testing between September 16, 2025, and the end of each school district’s 2025–26 instructional calendar.*

*This guide does not contain test content.*

**2025–26**

**Grade Five, Form 1** 

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## Introduction

### What is the California Alternate Assessment for Science?

The California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science is a computer-based assessment and a component of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). It is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who have been designated by an individualized education program (IEP) team to use an alternate assessment on statewide summative assessments.

The CAA for Science design philosophy supports the diverse needs of students by ensuring standardization while still allowing flexibility, enabling the greatest range of students to demonstrate their science content knowledge.

### Form Assignments

*Administration Planning Guides* and *Directions for Administration* (*DFAs*) are form-specific.

Each local educational agency (LEA) is assigned **one** of two forms per performance task (PT) for all CAA for Science administration materials. The exception is for the largest LEAs, which receive form assignments at the school level. All grade levels within an LEA will have the same form assignment. For example, if an LEA is assigned to Form 1, the LEA will use Form 1 of the *Administration Planning Guides* and *DFAs* for each grade level tested. Form assignments can be found on the [CAA for Science Form Assignments web page](https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/resources/administration/form-assignments-second-scoring-rsvp/form-assignments--caa-science).

### Purpose and Use of This *Administration Planning Guide*

This guide provides the following:

* Basic information about the CAA for Science administration and test security
* Information about factors to consider when deciding the best time to administer a CAA for Science embedded PT
* The science content being assessed this year
* A blank testing planner to assist in determining when to administer each embedded PT

***Administration Planning Guides* are not intended to guide instruction or to limit what science content is taught in the classroom.**

*Administration Planning Guides* are made available in advance to give teachers and test examiners as much time as possible to plan how best to integrate each of the three embedded PTs into the 2025–26 instructional calendar.

The test examiner tutorial necessary to administer the 2025–26 CAA for Science will be available in August 2025. The CAA for Science embedded PTs will be available for administration beginning September 16, 2025.

### Test Security

This guide contains no test content and is not secure but is intended for use only by site CAASPP coordinators and test examiners for the purposes of planning and scheduling testing. Follow these guidelines to ensure the security of the CAA for Science embedded PTs:

**The downloadable *DFA* and the online embedded PTs, as referenced in this document, contain test content and must be kept secure at all times. *DFAs* should be downloaded only before administering an embedded PT.**

* Access to *DFAs* in the Test Operations Management System is available only to users with the following roles: test examiner, site coordinator, and LEA coordinator.
* *DFAs* will be available beginning September 16, 2025.
* Online content in the Test Delivery System (TDS), the downloadable *DFA*, and the orienting activities outlined in the *DFA* must be kept secure. *DFAs* that were printed for test examiners must be kept in a securely locked room or locked cabinet when not in use.
* After an embedded PT has been administered, its *DFA* must be immediately and securely destroyed.
* Any electronic files on the test examiner’s or site coordinator’s device need to be securely deleted in such a way that the files do not remain in a temporary storage location, such as the Windows Recycle Bin, where they can be restored.
* Once a test examiner starts an embedded PT with a student, it must be completed and submitted in the TDS within **45 calendar days**.
* All PTs must be completed and submitted before the end of the school’s instructional calendar or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first.

### Administering the 2025–26 CAA for Science

The [*Preparing for Administration* (*PFA*)](https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/s/docs/PFA.CAA.Science.Operational.2025-26.pdf) document is located on the CAASPP & ELPAC Website and is available for the 2025–26 test administration. This document should be used to prepare to administer the CAA for Science. There is one *PFA* used for all grade levels and forms. The *PFA* is a nonsecure document that is available for all LEAs on the Moodle Training Site and on the CAASPP & ELPAC Website, where you can review or print it, if desired.

The 2025–26 CAA for Science is composed of three embedded PTs that are administered online to students.

* Each embedded PT is intended to be **administered shortly after the student has received related science instruction**.
* All three embedded PTs must be attempted by the student to complete the administration.
* The embedded PTs can be administered in any order between September 16, 2025, and the end of the instructional calendar or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first.

Each embedded PT assesses three Science Connectors from the same science domain with three corresponding sets of 5 test questions, for a total of 15 test questions on the PT. Each set of questions is prefaced by an orienting activity. An orienting activity is a nonscorable activity that is designed to engage and familiarize a student with a science concept that the student was previously taught. In some cases, the test examiner completes hands-on exercises with the student during testing, and it may be required, beforehand, to prepare some commonly available materials found in the classroom or prepare graphics provided in the *DFA*. **There should not be a need to purchase materials just for testing.**

**The *DFA* will provide test examiners with guidelines on how to individualize the orienting activities and designated items. Please note that all items may be individualized based upon the student’s IEP.**

A blank testing planner is provided at the end of this document (refer to table 10) to aid in scheduling administration of each of the embedded PTs for your student(s) based on when the related content will be taught.

## Assessed Standards

The CAA for Science, which is based on the Science Connectors, measures knowledge, skills, and abilities that are appropriate for this student population. The Science Connectors are derived from the California Next Generation Science Standards performance expectations (PEs). They provide alternate standards and alternate science learning goals to guide science instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The PEs that the assessed Science Connectors are derived from can be found in the [*CAA for Science Blueprint* web document](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/caascienceblueprint.docx).

These Science Connectors are further broken down into assessment targets. The assessment targets are comprised of the focal knowledge, skills, and abilities (FKSAs), which describe what students should know and be able to do in science; at the simplest level, the essential understandings (EUs) are the basic concepts students should know and be able to do in science. This is presented as a continuum in figure 1.



Figure 1. CAA for Science Standards Continuum

Keep this structure in mind as you review the content being assessed this year. Test questions are written to assess the FKSAs and EUs. Each Science Connector has between one and six FKSAs and one EU. The EU will always be assessed, but not all of the FKSAs will be assessed in a single embedded PT; therefore, not all of the FKSAs are provided in this guide. Assessment of Science Connectors with more than one FKSA may occur over multiple years.

The following pages provide the Science Connectors and associated FKSAs and EUs being assessed this year, organized by science domain. The third column of each Connector table contains descriptions of ways in which a student may demonstrate mastery of the FKSA or EU being assessed. These mastery statements describe specific actions the student will take, such as identifying, recognizing, or comparing information in the Science Connector being assessed, and are found in the column labeled *Students Will Be Able To …*. These statements describe ***only those Science Connectors assessed this year****.*

### Earth and Space Sciences Connectors

#### 4-ESS1-1

*Identify patterns of fossils and rock formations that show how the Earth’s surface has changed over time.*

Table 1. 4-ESS1-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify patterns of fossils and rock formations that show how the Earth’s surface has changed over time.
 | * Identify how the Earth’s surface has changed using evidence from fossils
 |
| EU | * Match fossils with a landscape that has changed (e.g., marine fossils in an area previously covered by water).
 | * Recognize that a fossil may have originated in a different type of landscape than where it was found
 |

#### 4-ESS2-2

***Identify patterns of Earth’s features on maps.***

Table 2. 4-ESS2-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify patterns of Earth’s features by using maps.
 | * Identify simple patterns of Earth features on a map including chains of lakes, mountain chains, and volcano chains
* Identify patterns in the location of features including hot deserts, volcanoes, mountain chains, and rivers and identify a description of the location of one of these features
 |
| EU | * Identify different land and water features by using a map.
 | * Identify rivers, lakes, oceans, islands, mountains, and deserts on a map
 |

#### 4-ESS3-2

*Identify and compare human solutions to reduce the impact of a natural Earth process (e.g., earthquake, flood, volcanic activity) on humans.*

Table 3. 4-ESS3-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify a human solution to reduce the impact of a natural Earth process on humans.
 | * Identify human solutions for minimizing the impact of natural hazards
* Identify human solutions that increase the safety of individuals during natural hazard events
 |
| EU | * Recognize that different types of hazards result from natural Earth processes (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions).
 | * Identify natural hazards when shown pictures or videos of natural hazards
 |

### Life Sciences Connectors

#### 3-LS2-1

*Recognize that animals within a group help the group obtain food for survival, defend themselves, and survive changes in their ecosystem.*

Table 4. 3-LS2-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to recognize that animals within a group help the group obtain food for survival. (FKSA 1)
* Ability to recognize that animals within a group help the group defend themselves. (FKSA 2)
 | * Recognize how one animal’s behavior helps the entire group find food
* Recognize how one animal’s behavior helps the entire group protect themselves from other animals
 |
| EU | * Recognize that some animals form groups to survive.
 | * Recognize that animals in a group work together to find food
 |

#### 3-LS3-1

*Based on data through observation, identify similarities in the traits of a parent and the traits of an offspring and variations in similar traits in a grouping of similar organisms.*

Table 5. 3-LS3-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify similarities in the traits of a parent and the traits of an offspring (e.g., tall plants typically have tall offspring).
 | * Identify probable offspring from two parents based on physical traits
* Select a physical trait that is similar between an offspring and its parents
 |
| EU | * Identify variations in similar traits in a grouping of similar organisms (e.g., dogs come in many shapes and sizes, siblings look alike and different).
 | * Identify an animal that has a trait different from that of a sibling
 |

#### 5-LS2-1

*Identify a model that shows the movement of matter (e.g., plant growth, eating, composting) through living things.*

Table 6. 5-LS2-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify a model that shows the movement of matter (e.g., plant growth, eating, composting) through living things.
 | * Identify a plant or an animal that is consumed by an animal in a food chain or food web
* Identify the order in which a plant and an animal should be placed in a food chain
* Identify the direction matter, or energy, flows in a simple pyramid
 |
| EU | * Identify that an animal needs the plant in a food chain or food web and that the food chain or food web has two main parts: producer and consumer.
 | * Identify which animal consumes another in a food chain or food web
 |

### Physical Sciences Connectors

#### 4-PS4-2

*Recognize that an object can be seen when light reflected from its surface enters the eye.*

Table 7. 4-PS4-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to recognize that an object can be seen when light reflected from its surface enters the eye.
 | * Identify the correct path of light that enables a person to see
* Identify that light must enter the eye in order to see
* Identify that light must reflect off an object in order for the object to be seen
* Identify that light must reflect off an object and enter a person’s eye for the person to see the object
* Complete a diagram to create the correct path light must travel in order for an object to be seen
 |
| EU | * Compare the quality of sight before and after dimming a light source.
 | * Identify light as necessary to see
* Identify darkness as a condition that impairs sight
* Identify the resulting views in the presence or absence of light
 |

#### 5-PS1-2

***Recognize through observation that the total weight of matter is conserved by comparing the weight of an object before and after it changes from a liquid to a solid and from a solid to a liquid.***

Table 8. 5-PS1-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to recognize that the total weight of matter is conserved by comparing the weight of an object before and after it changes from a liquid to a solid and from a solid to a liquid (e.g., water in a clear plastic bag that is frozen and defrosted has the same weight).
 | * Identify that the weight is not changed when a substance changes state
* Recognize that conservation of weight can be observed by measuring the weight of the object before and after it changes state
 |
| EU | * Recognize the change in state from liquid to solid or from solid to liquid of the same material.
 | * Identify whether a substance is a liquid or a solid
* Recognize that when a substance changes from one state to another it is still the same substance
 |

#### 5-PS1-3

*Classify through observation materials (e.g., shape, texture, buoyancy, color, magnetism, solubility) by physical properties.*

Table 9. 5-PS1-3, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to classify materials by physical properties.
 | * Classify objects into groups based on a shared property
* Classify objects into groups based on multiple shared properties
 |
| EU | * Match materials with similar physical properties (e.g., color, hardness, response to magnets).
 | * Identify a shared property between two objects
 |

## Testing Planner for Form 1

Use the planner in table 10 to aid in scheduling testing for your student(s) based on when the related content will be taught.

Test Examiner:

School:

Grade:

Table 10. 2025–26 CAA for Science Grade Five Testing Planner

| **Associated Science Connectors** | **Date(s) Related Instructional Content Will Be Taught** | **Scheduled Testing Date(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Earth and Space Sciences:4-ESS1-14-ESS2-24-ESS3-2 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Life Sciences:3-LS2-13-LS3-15-LS2-1 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Physical Sciences:4-PS4-25-PS1-25-PS1-3 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |