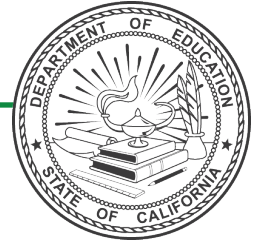# California Alternate Assessment

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

Science
Preparing for Administration

2025–26
All Grades

CAASPP

CAA for Science Administration Notes

Notes to California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) coordinators and California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science test examiners:

- This document *Preparing for Administration* (*PFA*), should be used to prepare for the administration of the test prior to the first day of testing. The *Directions for Administration* (*DFA*) contains the information that is used at the time of test administration. The *DFA* can be found within the Test Operations Management System (TOMS) (secure logon required) and accessed through the CAASPP & ELPAC Website.

- Local educational agency (LEA) CAASPP coordinators must electronically sign the *Test Security Agreement* and the *Test Security Affidavit* (found within TOMS) prior to accessing the test materials.

- Test examiners and anyone handling test and training materials must sign the *Test Security Affidavit* prior to accessing the test materials or administering the test. Users with roles that do not require access to TOMS must complete the *Test Security Affidavit for Non-TOMS Users*.

- All test materials must be kept secure and securely destroyed when testing is complete, as directed by the LEA CAASPP coordinator.

- Only a trained test examiner may administer the CAA for Science.

- The test examiner should be the educator who is the most familiar with the individual needs of the student as well as the student's individually preferred communication modes.

- Students must not be exposed to the test questions (items) or content before the actual testing.

For questions regarding the CAA for Science or other CAASPP assessments:

- All users are encouraged to use the Get Answers web page to look up answers to commonly asked questions.

- Parents/Guardians should contact their child's teacher.

- Test examiners and other school personnel should contact their LEA CAASPP coordinator.

- LEA CAASPP coordinators should contact their LEA Success Agent, preferably by email. Refer to the Success Agent Lookup web page to look up the name and contact information for the LEA's assigned representative or the California Outreach web page for all support options.

- For more information on all aspects of the CAAs, including test security, item types, and guidelines, refer to the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* on the CAASPP and ELPAC Manuals Library web page.

Table of Contents

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Preparing for Administration

What's New

Starting with the 2025–26 test administration, the CAA for Science will require test examiners to administer three embedded performance tasks (PTs) instead of four embedded PTs. Each embedded PT will now have 15 test items instead of 10 test items.

Additionally, starting with the 2025–26 test administration, the CAA for Science will no longer have the brief set of survey questions about student responsiveness previously found at the end of each PT.

Everything else about the test administration will remain the same as it has been in previous test administrations. Test examiners should continue to use the *Administration Planning Guides (APGs)* to inform which Science Connectors will be assessed in the test administration and to plan when during the school year to administer each PT.

Helpful Links

- Practice and Training Tests web page
- California Alternate Assessments web page
- Accessibility Resources web page

Preparing for Administration (cont.)

Resources Listed in the *PFA*

This *PFA* contains hyperlinks to resources essential for test administration. The following table includes the URLs for the embedded links in this *PFA*.

Table 1. Resources Listed in this Document

Resources	URL
Accessibility Resources	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/resources/preparation/accessibility-resources/
APGs	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/assessments/caaspp/caa/caa-for-science-administration-planning-guides/
CAASPP and ELPAC Manuals Library	https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/
CAASPP & ELPAC Website	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/
CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual	https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/caaspp-otam/
California Alternate Assessments	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/assessments/caaspp/caa
California Outreach	https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/contact/
Get Answers	https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/contact/get-answers/
PFA	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/s/docs/PFA.CAA.Science.Operational.2025-26.pdf
Practice and Training Tests	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/resources/preparation/practice-and-training-tests
Response Options for Alternate Assessments	https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/s/docs/CAASPP-ELPAC--Response-Options-for-Alternate-Assessments.pdf
Success Agent Lookup	https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/contact/lea-success-agents/
TOMS	https://mytoms.ets.org/

Orienting Activities

The orienting activities prepare the student for the actual test items. Each orienting activity introduces concepts covered in the subsequent set of five test items of the embedded PT.

Preparing for Administration (cont.)

Alternative Text for a Student with Visual Impairments ALT

Within the *DFA* is boxed and *italicized* text preceded by the ALT symbol that provides the alternative text for a student with visual impairments. The alternative text in these boxes should be used to describe images for a student who is not able to fully access the images or videos used in the assessment. **Only a student who has been identified as having a visual impairment should be read the alternative text.**

The alternative text is intended to be a supplement to the administration script for students with visual impairments and should not be used in place of the administration script. Where the administration script prompts a test examiner to "**POINT TO**" an image, the test examiner would instead read the alternative text to the student with a visual impairment. The alternative text can be repeated based on a student's need or request. The alternative text should be read exactly as it is written in the *DFA*, without clarification or rephrasing.

Optional Individualization IND

Like other standardized assessments, the CAA for Science should be administered to each student in a consistent manner according to the directions provided, with variations only as specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP). To maximize engagement for all students, the CAA for Science sometimes offers additional options for individualization in specific orienting activities and test items. The *DFA* provides test examiners with guidelines on how to individualize.

In preparation for administering a PT to a student, access the *DFA* to review the listed options for individualization and then decide whether individualization is appropriate. If so, gather the alternative materials **before** you start testing with the student. A student should carry out activities to the greatest extent possible, but if the student is unable to do so, the test examiner may manipulate the materials to conduct the activity. A summary of all materials that may be needed for an embedded PT can be found in appendix A of the *DFA* for the test form.

Preparing for Administration (cont.)

Student Responses

The CAAs are designed for one-on-one administration between a student and a test examiner who is familiar with the student. Like other standardized assessments, the CAA for Science should be administered to each student in a consistent manner according to the directions provided, with variations only as specified in each student's IEP. When able, a student should enter responses directly into the testing device. A test examiner may prompt the student to scroll in order to access all test content in the item. In some cases, the test examiner may select the responses indicated by the student by means that include, but are not limited to, gesture, eye gaze, or an alternative communicative device. In all cases, responses must come from the student and not from the test examiner. **Hand-over-hand or other physical prompting by the test examiner is *not* permitted on any CAA.**

Student Engagement and PT Completion

Establishing and maintaining student engagement is important to the successful administration of the CAA for Science. The test examiner may pause testing if the student is no longer engaged, is not actively participating, or is showing signs of behavioral or functional concerns related to the test. Testing may resume at a later time as appropriate for the student.

A student should be administered as much content of each PT as possible. A test examiner should take the time necessary to elicit the student's best performance on each test item. A student should use the mode(s) of communication used in daily instruction.

Take advantage of options for individualization if offered in the *DFA*, and remember that a test examiner can always use accommodations and resources to best meet a student's individual needs, as documented in the student's IEP. Please note that all test items may be individualized based upon the student's IEP.

If a student does not regain productivity and engagement, even after allowing breaks over multiple days, a test examiner may end the student's test. To end the test early, advance through the remaining test items and then submit the test.

Preparing for Administration (cont.)

Selecting the "Mark as No Response" Option*

Ultimately, the professional judgment of a test examiner who is familiar with the student will ensure each student gets the best possible opportunity to demonstrate what the student knows and can do. For cases where the student is presented with a test item and does not provide a response, a "Mark as No Response" option is available for each test item and is found in the context menu (≡) in the upper-right corner of the screen. A test examiner will then select the [**Mark as No Response**] option (refer to Figure 1) and proceed to the next test item. Please remember that a test examiner should use this option only if they have presented the test item (that is, read the test item) to the student and the student did not provide a response, despite the test examiner's best efforts to elicit a response. More information on response options is available on page 6 and in the *Response Options for Alternate Assessments* web document.

Figure 1. "Mark as No Response" Option
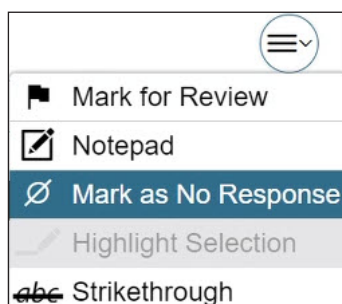
* The "Mark as No Response" option is not available on the CAAs for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics.*

Preparing for Administration (cont.)

Test Examiner Decision Matrix

Table 2. Test Examiner Decision Matrix

Question Presented to Student?	Student Response	Test Examiner Evaluation	Testing Scenario
Yes	Student engages with the question.	Test examiner determines that the student is able to continue the assessment.	Enter response and continue to the next question.
Yes	Student does not engage with the question.	Test examiner determines that the student needs a break but may reengage with the question later.	**Pause** and **Resume** later.
Yes	Student does not engage with the question.	Test examiner determines that the student is not going to engage with the question.	**Mark as No Response**. Select "Mark for Review" to flag the question and return to the question later.
No	Student does not provide a response because the student was not presented the question.	Test examiner determines that the student is not going to engage with the question.	**Skip** the question. Determine whether the student will reengage in any further questions. If not, **Skip** to the end of the test and submit. (Use this option as a last resort.)