



# California Subject Examinations for Teachers®

## TEST GUIDE

### ENGLISH SUBTEST III

### Sample Questions and Responses and Scoring Information

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CS-TG-QR107X-05

## Sample Test Questions for CSET: English Subtest III

Below is a set of constructed-response questions that are similar to the questions you will see on Subtest III of CSET: English. You are encouraged to respond to the questions without looking at the responses provided in the next section. Record your responses on a sheet of paper and compare them with the provided responses.

For each constructed-response assignment in this section, you are to prepare a written response of approximately, but not limited to, 800–1000 words on the assigned topic.

Read each assignment carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize what you plan to write.

Your responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

**PURPOSE:** the extent to which the response addresses the constructed-response assignment's charge in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements

**SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE:** the application of accurate subject matter knowledge as described in the relevant CSET subject matter requirements

**SUPPORT:** the appropriateness and quality of the supporting evidence in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements

**DEPTH AND BREADTH OF UNDERSTANDING:** the degree to which the response demonstrates understanding of the relevant CSET subject matter requirements

The assignments are intended to assess subject matter knowledge and skills, not writing ability. Your responses, however, must be communicated clearly enough to permit a valid judgment of your knowledge and skills. Your responses should be written for an audience of educators in the field.

Your responses should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. You may not use any reference materials during the testing session. Remember to review your work and make any changes you think will improve your responses.

1. Read the two selections below; then complete the exercise that follows.

**Selection I: "Self-Dependence" (1852), a poem by Matthew Arnold**

1 Weary of myself, and sick of asking  
2 What I am, and what I ought to be,  
3 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me  
4 Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

5 And a look of passionate desire  
6 O'er the sea and to the stars I send:  
7 "Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,  
8 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

9 "Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,  
10 On my heart your mighty charm renew;  
11 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
12 Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

13 From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
14 Over the lit sea's unquiet way,  
15 In the rustling night air came the answer:  
16 "Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

17 "Unaffrighted by the silence round them,  
18 Undistracted by the sights they see,  
19 These demand not that the things without them  
20 Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

21 "And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
22 And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;  
23 For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
24 All the fever of some differing soul.<sup>1</sup>

25 "Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
26 In what state God's other works may be,  
27 In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
28 These attain the mighty life you see."

29 O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,  
30 A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:  
31 "Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,  
32 Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

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<sup>1</sup>**nor . . . soul:** The sea and the stars do not jealously wish for the feverish activities of natural elements different from themselves.

**Selection II: Excerpt from *Invisible Man* (1947), a novel by Ralph Ellison**

<sup>1</sup>Let me be honest with you—a feat which, by the way, I find of the utmost difficulty. <sup>2</sup>When one is invisible he finds such problems as good and evil, honesty and dishonesty, of such shifting shapes that he confuses one with the other, depending upon who happens to be looking through him at the time. <sup>3</sup>Well, now I've been trying to look through myself, and there's a risk in it. <sup>4</sup>I was never more hated than when I tried to be honest. <sup>5</sup>Or when, even as just now I've tried to articulate exactly what I felt to be the truth. <sup>6</sup>No one was satisfied—not even I. <sup>7</sup>On the other hand, I've never been more loved and appreciated than when I tried to "justify" and affirm someone's mistaken beliefs; or when I've tried to give my friends the incorrect, absurd answers they wished to hear. <sup>8</sup>In my presence they could talk and agree with themselves, the world was nailed down, and they loved it. <sup>9</sup>They received a feeling of security. <sup>10</sup>But here was the rub: Too often, in order to justify *them*, I had to take myself by the throat and choke myself until my eyes bulged and my tongue hung out and wagged like the door of an empty house in a high wind. <sup>11</sup>Oh, yes, it made them happy and it made me sick. <sup>12</sup>So I became ill of affirmation, of saying "yes" against the nay-saying of my stomach—not to mention my brain.

<sup>13</sup>There is, by the way, an area in which a man's feelings are more rational than his mind, and it is precisely in that area that his will is pulled in several directions at the same time. <sup>14</sup>You might sneer at this, but I know now. <sup>15</sup>I was pulled this way and that for longer than I can remember. <sup>16</sup>And my problem was that I always tried to go in everyone's way but my own. <sup>17</sup>So after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others I finally rebelled. <sup>18</sup>I am an *invisible* man.

Write a critical essay in which you analyze the two selections, supporting your conclusions with specific evidence from the texts. Assume that you are writing for an educated audience knowledgeable about literary criticism. In your essay:

- identify a significant theme that the two texts share;
- compare and contrast the two writers' perspectives on the theme you have identified;
- examine how the two writers use literary techniques, including genre features, literary elements, and rhetorical devices, to express their perspectives on this theme; and
- draw a conclusion that explains how the literary techniques you have identified affect the ideas conveyed in the texts.

2. **Read the passage below from "Can't You Hear the Whistle Blowing?", an article by Lance Morrow published in *Time* magazine in August 2002; then complete the exercise that follows.**

1 The answer to the nation's transportation problems clearly lies neither in an expansion of aviation nor in putting more cars on additional highways. My choice would be the oldest mode of the three: rail. It is not a sentimental or nostalgic choice. The aviation industry, like the vast infrastructure for cars, is dangerously overbuilt. In recent years aviation has sucked regional boosters into ill-conceived drives for more airports and more flights, even short ones—all at immense expense.

2 Airplanes are indispensable for long trips over oceans, over a continent or half a continent. But air travel makes no sense over short distances. In any case, the evolution of cell phones and e-mail and the Internet and videoconferencing means that people need to travel less on business, not more. When ideas and images fly so magically, then our clumsy, inconvenient bodies need not do so—or not so much.

3 Would it be possible for the U.S., with its great distances, to divide and organize itself for rail? To reinvent its railroads in order to make them fast, efficient and attractive in regional systems, aiming for a European scale and speed and coherence in each region? (For example: Sacramento-San Francisco-Los Angeles-San Diego; Chicago-Milwaukee-Detroit-Cincinnati-Cleveland-Minneapolis; Boston-New York-Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington; and so on.) Yes.

4 Critics of expanding the American rail system make three key arguments: 1) Amtrak is hopeless; 2) building a viable rail system—upgrading old roadbeds and laying new track, clearing new right of way, buying new equipment—could cost as much as \$100 billion; and 3) it would be irresponsible for government to pour so much money into a service that the market has shown it will not support. People don't ride the trains as it is, the critics say; that's why the railroads are dying.

5 It is true that Amtrak has been badly run, but let new regional rail systems be set up on their own and forget Amtrak. Comparisons have been loaded to denigrate trains in favor of cars and air travel. It is true the rehabilitation of the nation's railroads would cost billions. But the arithmetic on costs and energy efficiency argues, in the long term, in favor of boldly creative, high-speed regional rail systems that would take the environmental and traffic pressures off highways and airports.

6 Trains are two to eight times as fuel efficient as planes. As things stand, passenger trains receive only 4% as much in federal subsidies as the \$13 billion given annually to the airline industry. Highways receive \$33 billion in federal funds. Both airlines and highways have dedicated sources of federal funding: gasoline and ticket taxes. Rail systems should receive equivalent sources of income.

7 A halfhearted, partly realized plan will only validate the criticisms and doom the new railroads. What is needed is leadership of the kind that Charles de Gaulle demonstrated in backing France's immensely successful high-speed rail, and vision on the scale of President Eisenhower's push for the interstate highway system. The 21st century paradox is that it is not railroads that are old-fashioned and retrograde but rather those essentially inefficient flying machines.

Write a critical essay in which you analyze the passage. Assume that you are writing for an educated audience, and support your conclusions with evidence from the text. In your essay:

- summarize, in your own words, the author's main argument in this passage;
- evaluate the author's reasoning;
- describe the author's methods of persuasion and use of rhetorical devices;
- identify the audience for which the author is most likely writing; and
- describe the extent to which the passage is likely to be effective in persuading this audience, and explain why.

## Acknowledgments

### Question Number

1. **Selection I:** Arnold, Matthew. "Self-Dependence." As appears in G. Armour Craig, Frank M. Rice, and Edward J. Gordon (Eds.), (1979) *English Literature* (p. 597). Lexington, MA: Ginn and Co.  
**Selection II:** Epilogue from INVISIBLE MAN by Ralph Ellison, copyright © 1947, 1948, 1952 by Ralph Ellison. Copyright renewed 1975, 1976, 1980 by Ralph Ellison. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved.
2. "Can't You Hear the Whistle Blowing?" TIME 8/26/02. © 2002 TIME Inc. reprinted by permission.

## Examples of Strong Responses to Sample Constructed-Response Questions for CSET: English Subtest III

### Composition and Rhetoric; Reading Literature and Informational Texts

#### Question #1 (Score Point 4 Response)

Matthew Arnold's poem "Self-Dependence" and the excerpt from Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* both explore the importance of being true to oneself. The speaker in "Self-Dependence" and the narrator of *Invisible Man* discover that looking to others to define one's identity and affirm one's self-worth is self-defeating, even self-destructive.

Arnold's poem focuses on a solitary speaker who is experiencing an identity crisis. Having become "sick of asking/What I am, and what I ought to be" (Lines 1–2), the speaker appeals to the stars and the sea to "compose" him (Line 8). Here "compose" can be interpreted as meaning both "to calm" and "to create." Indeed, the speaker seems to be asking the stars and sea to compose him as a musician would compose a piece of music. The speaker's request betrays a childish belief that gazing at the stars will result in fulfillment of a wish.

Arnold uses personification to emphasize the speaker's childlike perspective. When the unnamed, "air-born" voice responds to the speaker's expressed wish, the personification is extended. The voice explains that the stars and sea differ from the speaker in that they do not seek "love, amusement, sympathy" from others or wish they could be like others (Lines 19–20). Instead, they are "self-poised," joyfully doing what they alone are meant to do (Line 23). At the poem's conclusion, the speaker internalizes this external voice, turning his focus inward ("A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear") and finally understanding that it is best to "[r]esolve to be thyself; and know that he,/Who finds himself, loses his misery!" (Lines 31–32).

Like the speaker in "Self-Dependence," the narrator of *Invisible Man* is experiencing an identity crisis. But unlike the speaker in the poem, the novel's narrator has not spent his life seeking his self-identity. Rather, he has concealed his true self from others. In exchange for trying to "affirm someone's mistaken beliefs" and giving "the incorrect, absurd answers they wished to hear," the narrator has received love and appreciation (Sentence 7). But the cost of others' approval has been self-effacement and self-hatred. The narrator of *Invisible Man* understands what it means to lose himself and find misery. Trying to be someone other than himself has been like committing gradual suicide, and the narrator has effectively disappeared. Rather than seeking to recover his former self, the narrator embraces his new self: "an *invisible man*."

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**Question #1 (Score Point 4 Response) *continued***

In addition to exploring a similar theme, Arnold and Ellison use similar literary techniques: first-person point of view, powerful language, and vivid imagery. Arnold begins "Self-Dependence" with a tone of discontent and longing that builds to an assured, hopeful tone. Although "Self-Dependence" explores a typical human desire that most readers can relate to, Arnold creates distance between the speaker and reader through the use of poetic language such as "O'er," "Ye who," "O," and "like thine" (Lines 6, 7, 29, 30) while couching hard truths in romantic imagery such as "star-sown vault of heaven," "moon-silvered roll" (Lines 13, 22). He punctuates the poem with exclamations and onrushing rhythms that convey the speaker's desperation while distancing him from the reader: "Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea" (Line 4); "Ah, once more ... ye stars, ye waters ... Still, still let me ..." (Lines 9, 11). The poem's irregular rhyme scheme contributes to a sense of disquiet; however, the final stanza soothes the reader with an AABB rhyme scheme.

In the excerpt from *Invisible Man*, Ellison uses the first-person point of view to create an intimate tone and a heightened sense of immediacy. At the beginning of each paragraph, the narrator addresses the reader directly and bluntly ("Let me be honest with you," "You might sneer at this, but I know now"), demanding attention in spite of his invisibility. The declarations "I was never more hated" (Sentence 4) and "I've never been more loved and appreciated" (Sentence 7) emphasize the paradox at the core of the narrator's existence. Ellison's brutal imagery at the end of the first paragraph ("I had to take myself by the throat and choke myself. ...") presents a stark contrast to Arnold's romantic imagery and reveals the truly devastating cost of not remaining true to oneself.

**Question #2 (Score Point 4 Response)**

This article, "Can't You Hear the Whistle Blowing?" by Lance Morrow, was written for the readership of Time magazine—that is, a reasonably educated, though non-expert, audience of American adults who are interested in being informed about current events and social issues.

Morrow argues that to improve American transportation, money and government support should be invested in rail travel, rather than in airlines. He envisions regional systems that would be more efficient for mid-distance travel than airplanes, both in cost and energy. This would require government vision and planning, such as de Gaulle provided for high-speed rail in France, and Eisenhower provided in the U.S. for the interstate highway system.

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**Question #2 (Score Point 4 Response) *continued***

Morrow writes with an appealing clarity. Both his sentences and paragraphs are concise, without being choppy. Where he does use a one-word sentence, at the end of paragraph 3, it is after posing a series of questions anyone skeptical of rail development might ask; he then answers simply, "Yes." It's crisp and self-assured.

He continues to follow this challenge-and-rebuttal form in the next two paragraphs, acknowledging the unpopularity of Amtrak, and the expense of revamping the nation's rail system, but then answering these points. He also sets up a rhythm with parallel sentences that begin, "It is true ..." "But ..." "It is true ..." "But ..." This is a very persuasive rhetorical device, giving the content of the argument more power. Not only is the rhythm persuasive, but so is the essential reasonableness of squarely meeting the objections.

Yet Morrow does not have an argumentative tone; he uses a friendly, informal diction. Though he begins authoritatively: "The answer ... clearly ..." he undercuts this with a more modest "My choice would be ...," and winningly concedes that his advocacy of rail may be seen as sentimental or nostalgic (he has to distinguish himself from mere train buffs). This is followed by a concession to the irreplaceable usefulness of planes for long-distance or intercontinental travel.

Grace of rhetoric, however, cannot redeem a faulty argument. Morrow's logic is for the most part good. He states his view, notes possible objections, then defends rail travel on the grounds of speed, efficiency, ultimate cost, and environmental effects. He points out the disparities between the levels of government funding for airlines, highways, and rail (rail is dramatically underfunded by comparison). He also holds up the example of France's high-speed rail system, which travelers to Europe cannot help but admire. There are a few points he elides. He doesn't really address the advantages of rail over automobile travel or the problems inherent in automobile travel that beg for solution. He doesn't begin to consider the problems of right-of-way where former railbeds have been given over to bike paths and other uses. Nor does he really tackle the American prejudice against trains in favor of autonomous cars. However, he was writing for Time magazine, where articles are not meant to exhaust a subject, but to open it.

## Scoring Information for CSET: English Subtest III

There are two constructed-response questions in Subtest III of CSET: English. Each of these constructed-response questions is designed so that a response can be completed within approximately 45–60 minutes. Responses to the constructed-response questions are scored by qualified California educators using focused holistic scoring. Scorers will judge the overall effectiveness of your responses while focusing on the performance characteristics that have been identified as important for this subtest (see below). Each response will be assigned a score based on an approved scoring scale (see page 11).

Passing status is determined on the basis of total subtest performance. You do not pass individual subtest assignments.

Your performance on the subtest will be evaluated against a standard determined by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing based on professional judgments and recommendations of California educators.

### Performance Characteristics for CSET: English Subtest III

The following performance characteristics will guide the scoring of responses to the constructed-response questions on CSET: English Subtest III.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>PURPOSE</b>                            | The extent to which the response addresses the constructed-response assignment's charge in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements. |
| <b>SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE</b>           | The application of accurate subject matter knowledge as described in the relevant CSET subject matter requirements.                               |
| <b>SUPPORT</b>                            | The appropriateness and quality of the supporting evidence in relation to relevant CSET subject matter requirements.                              |
| <b>DEPTH AND BREADTH OF UNDERSTANDING</b> | The degree to which the response demonstrates understanding of the relevant CSET subject matter requirements.                                     |

## Scoring Scale for CSET: English Subtest III

Scores will be assigned to each response to the constructed-response questions on CSET: English Subtest III according to the following scoring scale.

| SCORE POINT | SCORE POINT DESCRIPTION  |
|-------------|--|
| 4           | <p><b>The "4" response reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is fully achieved.</li> <li>• There is a substantial and accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is sound; there are high-quality, relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects a comprehensive understanding of the assignment.</li> </ul> |
| 3           | <p><b>The "3" response reflects a general command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is largely achieved.</li> <li>• There is a largely accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is adequate; there are some acceptable, relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects an adequate understanding of the assignment.</li> </ul>      |
| 2           | <p><b>The "2" response reflects a limited command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is partially achieved.</li> <li>• There is limited accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is limited; there are few relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects a limited understanding of the assignment.</li> </ul>                      |
| 1           | <p><b>The "1" response reflects little or no command of the relevant knowledge and skills as defined in the subject matter requirements for CSET: English.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is not achieved.</li> <li>• There is little or no accurate application of relevant subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is weak; there are no or few relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects little or no understanding of the assignment.</li> </ul>              |
| U           | <p><b>The "U" (Unscorable) is assigned to a response that is unrelated to the assignment, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or does not contain a sufficient amount of original work to score.</b></p>  |
| B           | <p><b>The "B" (Blank) is assigned to a response that is blank.</b></p>   |