

PREPARING FOR THE CSAP

Students can be taught skills and strategies that directly address the standards and better prepare them for taking the CSAP. The more both general and special education teachers know about the state assessments, the easier it becomes for them to incorporate instruction that aligns with both the content and the format of the tests. Consider using the following information to help prepare your students to access and respond to items on the test.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

CSAP Student Performance Report

- Describes the student's achievement in terms of performance levels and content area standards
- Provides a general summary of the skills and knowledge the student has demonstrated

Available at the Building Level

CSAP Content Standards Roster

- Presents information on the total test and content standards for each student
- Provides a picture of how individual students or the whole group is performing on specific standards at a glance

Available at the Building Level

Assessment Frameworks

- Provide a list of the knowledge and skills that will be assessed by the different grade level CSAPs
- Although all Colorado Model Content Standards are taught, the frameworks specify the Standards and benchmarks that can be assessed through a large-scale assessment such as CSAP.

Available on the CDE website:

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/asframeworksindex.htm

Performance Level Descriptors

- Describe the skills students are required to demonstrate on CSAP items to reach minimum scores established for each proficiency level

Available on the CDE website:

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/asprof_toc.htm

Item Maps

- Lists specific skills assessed in each item
- Show range of order of difficulty and scale location for each performance level
- Identify the standard each item addresses
- Identify items that have been released

Available on the CDE website:

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/asitemmap_index.htm

Released Items

- Provide actual released item passages used in the different grade level and content area CSAPs
- Demonstrate multiple choice and constructed response format used
- Provide scoring rubrics used to determine student performance
- Show actual scored student responses

**Available from the
Assessment Unit**

**Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-6664**

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Review results of previous years CSAP Content Standard Roster with current class membership to determine areas of concern.
- Using findings compare assessment frameworks and item maps with the content curriculum to determine if there are any gaps or differences in what students are expected to know and what they are being taught.
- Develop classroom assessments using the same or similar type of thinking format as the released items.
- Explain and practice answering multiple choice and short constructed responses.
- Provide students with example responses, discuss how each is scored and why.
- Review the importance of completing all sections of the assessment with students.
- Incorporate the use of graphic organizers into daily lessons. Instruct students on the use and discuss the benefits of using the organizer to construct written responses.
- Provide students with practice in oral and written comprehension questions at all levels (literal, interpretive, applied).
- Teach students to select the most relevant information from questions and reading passages.
- Practice reading directions and glossary terms to students and encourage them to request a repeat of the information if needed.
- Review math and scientific symbols and terms.
- Instruct students on how to estimate best responses and provide them with opportunities to practice on classroom assessments.
- Incorporate accommodations required by the student into daily instruction.

PREPARING FOR THE...

READING CSAP

- Teach and have students practice finding and underlining relevant information within questions and reading passages in pencil and erasing after completing response when needed.
- Review strategies to help students gain more information from what they read, such as identifying context to determine the key words in reading passages.
- Teach students how to count paragraphs.
- Encourage students to read into a tape recorder and play back.
- Practice ordering events in a story with students.
- Review alike/different and compare/contrast and have students apply to characters in fiction pieces.
- Teach students to identify and use factual information in reading materials to support ideas.
- Review various types of reference materials and have students practice selecting most appropriate materials for specific purposes.
- Review and practice using table of contents, index and glossary in reference books.

WRITING CSAP

- Have students practice identifying examples from reading passages that illustrate how an author relates information.
- Review and practice the difference between "explain" and "summarize".
- Teach students to use graphic organizer programs, such as Inspiration®, when responding to writing prompts. Once the student has used the program over time, practice using the structure without the program.
- Practice new vocabulary words with students on a regular basis and encourage him/her to use in speech and writing.
- Encourage students to elaborate one word responses such as yes/no, true/false and/or fact/fiction/opinion with rationale for answers.
- Provide samples of different writing formats, such as directions, a persuasive speech, and a figurative story. Have students identify similar and different elements in each and then practice writing a format in their own words.
- Encourage students to practice using figurative language during classroom discussion, conversation and writing.

MATHEMATICS CSAP

- Instruct elementary and middle school students who use a calculator in daily instruction on alternative computational techniques, such as mental arithmetic and using manipulatives.
- Review the concepts of a number and corresponding numeral with students and make sure that they understand or can demonstrate the value of each.
- Provides students with an array of problems. Ask which strategy he/she would use to solve the problem and to explain why.
- Review and practice techniques for estimating.
- Practice orally presenting word problems to students asking him/her to relate back relevant information to solve the problem.
- Request students to solve a problem then write out or verbalize steps he/she performed to solve the problem.
- Provide students with tools, such as cubes, cut out tanagrams, etc. Provide problems for students to respond to using the tools.

SCIENCE CSAP

- Explain probable and reasonable cause and effect to students and provide hands on experiments for students to test assumptions.
- Request students to explain in writing or verbally why he/she has selected a response to a question.
- Provide students with a set of data. Practice having students make conclusions based upon the information provided.
- Read short passages explaining scientific investigation to students and practice having him/her identify relevant data.
- Provide students with written or oral explanations of scientific occurrences. Ask students to explain the reason why the specific outcome occurred.
- Practice reading and explaining meaning of information on graphs, charts and data tables.