



2.

STANDARDS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

Overview

The Classic Learning Test (CLT) was created in the context of a national movement to renew the foundations of great education. “Classic” here simply means an assessment that reflects tried and true ideas rather than contemporary experiments. CLT is based on a liberal arts education model, which trains students in language arts and mathematics as a path “to make the acquisition of all later studies more simple and effective.”¹ Clark and Jain (2013) write, “Recovering the primacy of both the language arts and the mathematical arts is a pivotal piece of this paradigm. Together they train the student not just in what to think but in how to think.”²

Whereas other standardized tests rely on what is currently popular and recently legislated in American education, the CLT focuses on ideas that matter on a much grander scale. These include perennial questions about human nature and the physical world; lessons from history; and universal mathematical concepts.

Each CLT exam consists of three mandatory sections, Verbal Reasoning, Grammar/Writing, and Quantitative Reasoning, as well as an optional Essay. These are similar to the sections in the SAT and are recognizable to students taking standardized tests. But the content of the test is distinct from other standardized tests in two main ways.

First, instead of the majority of reading passages coming from contemporary sources, the CLT’s two English sections primarily use selections from time-tested authors who have shaped history, literature, and philosophy in foundational ways through the centuries. The CLT thus provides an opportunity for students to interact with important thinkers whose voices have made a profound difference in the world of ideas.

Second, the Quantitative Reasoning section assesses students’ ability to solve problems and to think in a logical and orderly manner. The test balances assessing mathematical reasoning capacity with testing specific mathematical skills and knowledge.

The SAT and ACT are designed around public school standards which change according to educational trends and legislative actions. In contrast, the CLT is based on enduring concepts accessible to students from a variety of educational backgrounds.

¹ Clark, Kevin and Ravi Jain. *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education*. Classical Academic Press, 2013.

² *Ibid.*

Verbal Reasoning Test

The Verbal Reasoning section tests a student’s ability to understand and analyze a text. Students are asked to interact with a variety of texts in different subject areas and are tested on their ability to comprehend the text and synthesize ideas within that text. They must be able to understand concepts such as how different phrases and words are used in context, the author’s purpose in a particular section or in the passage overall, how a text is structured, and what could be reasonably inferred based on the information in the text.

VERBAL REASONING TEST BLUEPRINTS

On the Verbal Reasoning section, questions are broken down into two types: Comprehension and Analysis. Comprehension questions include the subdomains “Passage as a Whole,” “Passage Details,” and “Passage Relationships.” Analysis questions include the subdomains “Textual Analysis” and “Interpretation of Evidence.”

Of the 40 Verbal Reasoning questions, 13 fall under Analysis and 27 fall under Comprehension.

One of the Interpretation of Evidence questions always refers to a figure accompanying the Science passage, which is always the second passage of the four.

SECTION	DOMAIN	SUBDOMAIN
Verbal Reasoning (40 questions)	Comprehension (27 questions)	Passage as a Whole
		Passage Details
		Passage Relationships
	Analysis (13 questions)	Textual Analysis
		Interpretation of Evidence

Two questions per passage in the Verbal Reasoning section test analogies based on the passage, for a total of eight analogy questions per set. The SAT removed analogies in 2005, but the CLT includes them based on the understanding that analogies require a high order of logical reasoning and synthesis. Whereas the SAT’s analogies were unattached to reading passages and were criticized for using difficult vocabulary that made the analogy impossible to understand without knowing the words’ definitions, CLT’s analogies refer to concepts within a passage and use terms students are likely to know already. These analogies require students to be able to connect high-level concepts within a passage and to make connections between ideas and terms in a passage.

VERBAL REASONING TEXT TYPES

Each Verbal Reasoning section consists of four passages: three full passages and one passage composed of two shorter excerpts presented together. They always follow a particular order:

- » Literature
- » Science
- » Philosophy/Religion
- » Historical/Founding Documents (2 shorter excerpts presented together)

Tests are calibrated so that each Verbal Reasoning passage fits narrowly within a word count range of 500-650 words. The total must be between 2,275-2,325, for an average of 2,300 words total.

VERBAL REASONING SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Below is one sample question for each subdomain in the Verbal Reasoning section.

Passage as a Whole

Overall, the passage can be best described as

- A) a subtle exploration of the rivalry between two colleagues.
- B) a whimsical tale of a fantastic beast.
- C) a cogent story about an attempt to seek out novelty.
- D) a meandering account of the sale of a crocodile.

Passage adapted from Fyodor Dostoevsky's "The Crocodile," 1865.

Passage Details

According to the passage, what is a hallmark of Mr. Pecksniff's character?

- A) Suspicion of conventional morality
- B) Affection for eloquent language
- C) Fear of the unknown
- D) Disinterest in the lives of his children

Passage adapted from Charles Dickens' Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit, 1844.

Passage Relationships

medicine : body ::

- A) exercise : spirit
- B) philosophy : soul
- C) politics : philosophy
- D) love : friends

Passage adapted from Plutarch's "On Education" in Moralia, first century AD.

Textual Analysis

In Passage 1, Philosophy indicates she believes Socrates was put to death primarily because

- A) his philosophy was ill-formed and only partial.
- B) he traveled to a distant, violent land filled with barbaric tribes.
- C) his allies, Anaxagoras and Zeno, did not support him.
- D) he lived an upright, ethical life in contrast to those around him.

Passage adapted from The Consolation of Philosophy by Boethius, sixth century AD.

Interpretation of Evidence

Which lines in the passage provide the best evidence in support of the answer to the previous question?

- A) Paragraph 4, Sentence 1 ("And this . . . reality")
- B) Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 ("The great . . . fertilize")
- C) Paragraph 5, Sentence 2 ("But the . . . tendency")
- D) Paragraph 6, Sentence 1 ("Consequently . . . study")

Passage adapted from Christopher Dawson's Religion and the Rise of Western Culture: The Classic Study of Medieval Civilization, 1950.

Grammar/Writing Test

The Grammar/Writing section tests a student’s ability to edit and improve a text. Students are asked to interact with a variety of texts in different subject areas and are tested on their ability to correct errors within that text and to improve its readability and flow. The section assesses students on their ability to use punctuation correctly, to convey points precisely and concisely, to make appropriate transitions, to choose the correct part of speech, to match verb tense, and to make other grammatically well-formed choices.

SECTION	DOMAIN	SUBDOMAIN
Grammar/Writing (40 questions)	Grammar (20 questions)	Agreement
		Punctuation and Sentence Structure
	Writing (20 questions)	Structure
		Style
		Word Choice

GRAMMAR/WRITING TEST BLUEPRINTS

On the Grammar/Writing section, questions are broken down into two types: Grammar and Writing. Grammar questions include the subdomains “Agreement” and “Punctuation and Sentence Structure.” Writing questions include the subdomains “Structure,” “Style,” and “Word Choice.”

Of the 40 Grammar/Writing questions, 20 are on Grammar and 20 are on Writing.

Grammar questions specifically test a student’s ability to correct agreement, punctuation, structure, and other errors. Writing questions test a student’s ability to improve upon a text’s style, flow, and word choice.

GRAMMAR/WRITING TEXT TYPES

Each Grammar/Writing section consists of four passages. They always follow a particular order:

- » Philosophy/Religion
- » Historical Profile
- » Science
- » Modern/Influential Thinker

Tests are calibrated so that each Grammar/Writing passage fits narrowly within a word count range of 460-565 words. The total must be between 2,075-2,125 words, for an average of 2,100 words total.

GRAMMAR/WRITING SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Below is one sample question for each subdomain in the Grammar/Writing section.

Agreement

caring decisions

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) caringly decisions
- C) careful decisions
- D) carefully decisions

Passage adapted from Hilaire Belloc's *The French Revolution, 1911*.

Alighieri, Dante	Dawson, Christopher	Kierkegaard, Søren	Ptolemy
Adams, John	Descartes, René	King, Martin Luther, Jr.	Pushkin, Alexander
Adler, Mortimer	Dickens, Charles	Lewis, C. S.	Rousseau, Jean-Jacques
Angelou, Maya	Dostoevsky, Fyodor	Locke, John	Sartre, Jean-Paul
Arendt, Hannah	Douglass, Frederick	Luther, Martin	Sayers, Dorothy
Aristotle	Du Bois, W. E. B.	Machiavelli, Niccolò	Schaeffer, Francis
Averroes	Edwards, Jonathan	Madison, James	Shakespeare
Avicenna	Einstein, Albert	Marx, Karl	Shaw, George Bernard
Bacon, Francis	Epicurus	Melville, Herman	Smith, Adam
Baldwin, James	Eliot, George	Mendel, Gregor	Sophocles
Beauvoir, Simone de	Eliot, T. S.	Merton, Thomas	St. Augustine of Hippo
Belloc, Hilaire	Fabre, J. Henri	Milton, John	St. Teresa of Ávila
Bentham, Jeremy	Fitzgerald, F. Scott	Montaigne, Michel de	St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
Boethius	Franklin, Benjamin	Montesquieu, Charles	St. Thomas Aquinas
Bonaparte, Napoleon	Galilei, Galileo	Newman, John Henry	St. Thomas More
Boyle, Robert	Hamilton, Alexander	Newton, Isaac	Thucydides
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich	Hegel, Georg	Nietzsche, Friedrich	Tolkien, J. R. R.
Buber, Martin	Wilhelm Friedrich	Novak, Michael	Tolstoy, Leo
Calvin, John	Heidegger, Martin	O'Connor, Flannery	Twain, Mark
Cavendish, Margaret	Hobbes, Thomas	Orwell, George	Undset, Sigrid
Caesar, Julius	Homer	Pascal, Blaise	Virgil
Chesterton, G. K.	Hume, David	Planck, Max	Voltaire, François
Chekhov, Anton	Hughes, Langston	Plato	von Hildebrand, Dietrich
Churchill, Winston	James, Henry	Pope St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła)	Washington, Booker T.
Cicero	James, William	Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger)	Waugh, Evelyn
Copernicus, Nicolaus	Jefferson, Thomas	Pope Leo XIII	Weber, Max
Confucius	Joyce, James	Percy, Walker	Weil, Simone
Cooper, Anna Julia	Kant, Immanuel	Plutarch	Wollstonecraft, Mary
Darwin, Charles	Kepler, Johannes		

Punctuation and Sentence Structure

in the National Government—in the Congress and in the States—to

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) in the National Government; in the Congress; and in the States—to
- C) in the National Government, in the Congress and in the States to
- D) in the National Government, in the Congress, and in the States to

Passage adapted from John F. Kennedy's "Address to the Nation on the State of the U.S. Economy," 1962.

Structure

The author wants to add a sentence to the end of this paragraph. Which option fits best in the passage?

- A) Pell never solved the ancient problems of Diophantos, however.
- B) By 1800, independent projects had listed the primes up to 1 million.
- C) Unfortunately, most of these numbers were incorrect.
- D) Pell would have been able to create two million primes had he a computer.

Passage adapted from Martin H. Weissman's "Why prime numbers still fascinate mathematicians, 2,300 years later," 2018.

Style

Of course, from the hearts of human beings, laws will not eliminate prejudice from them.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Of course, from human beings' hearts, prejudice will not be eliminated by human laws they create.
- C) Of course laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings.
- D) Laws of the hearts of human beings are not eliminated by prejudice, of course.

Passage adapted from Shirley Chisholm's "For the Equal Rights Amendment," 1970.

Word Choice

permeated

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) persisted
- C) persecuted
- D) persevered

Passage adapted from St. Teresa of Ávila's *The Way of Perfection*, 1583.

Author Bank

The CLT draws on sources that have helped shape the course of Western intellectual thought, including authors of diverse backgrounds and philosophies. Whereas the SAT and ACT use primarily passages from recent decades—many of the passages are younger than the students taking the test—the CLT looks to writings by time-honored authors writing from c. 400 B.C. to the present day. As of 2018, two-thirds of CLT Verbal Reasoning and Grammar/Writing passages are drawn from the list of authors on the opposite page. The other one-third of passages are drawn from modern scientific writings, modern influential thinkers, or historical figures. Authors are periodically added to the list.

Quantitative Reasoning Test

The Quantitative Reasoning section tests students' ability to think logically, use and manipulate symbols, and understand shapes. Students are asked to complete a variety of questions of various subtypes in order to assess their logic and reasoning ability across different domains.

SECTION	DOMAIN	SUBDOMAIN
Quantitative Reasoning (40 Questions)	Algebra (10 questions)	Arithmetic and Operations
		Algebraic Expressions and Equations
	Geometry (14 Questions)	Coordinate Geometry
		Properties of Shapes
		Trigonometry
	Mathematical Reasoning (16 Questions)	Logic
		Word Problems

QUANTITATIVE REASONING TEST BLUEPRINTS

On the Quantitative Reasoning section, questions are broken down into three types: Algebra, Geometry, and Mathematical Reasoning. Algebra questions include the subdomains “Arithmetic and Operations” and “Algebraic Expressions and Equations.” Geometry questions include the subdomains “Coordinate Geometry,” “Properties of Shapes,” and “Trigonometry.” Mathematical Reasoning questions include the subdomains “Logic” and “Word Problems.”

Of the 40 Quantitative Reasoning questions, there are 10 Algebra questions, 14 Geometry questions, and 16 Mathematical Reasoning questions, as of 2018. There also are 5 figures in each Quantitative Reasoning section.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Below is one sample question for each subdomain in the Quantitative Reasoning section.

Arithmetic and Operations

100. The expression $2^7 + 2^7$ is equivalent to which of the following?

- A) 2^8
- B) 2^9
- C) 2^{14}
- D) 2^{49}

Algebraic Expressions and Equations

113. What are the x -coordinates of the points of intersection of the parabola $y = x^2 - 7$ and the line $y = x - 1$?

- A) $x = 1$, $x = \sqrt{7}$, and $x = -\sqrt{7}$
- B) $x = 1$ and $x = 3$
- C) $x = -2$ and $x = -3$
- D) $x = -2$ and $x = 3$

Coordinate Geometry

96. Line L is parallel to the line $2y - 3x = 7$. Which of the following is perpendicular to line L ?

- A) $y = \frac{3}{2}x - 7$
- B) $y = -\frac{1}{6}x + 7$
- C) $y = -\frac{2}{3}x + 7$
- D) $y = \frac{3}{2}x - \frac{1}{7}$

Properties of Shapes

89. The perimeter of one face of a cube is 20 cm. What is the surface area of the cube?

- A) 25 cm^2
- B) 50 cm^2
- C) 150 cm^2
- D) 600 cm^2

Trigonometry

110. Which of the following is equivalent to the expression $\frac{\sin x \sec x}{\sin^2 x + \cos^2 x}$?

- A) $\sin x$
- B) $\cos x$
- C) $\tan x$
- D) $\sin x \cos x$

Logic

112. A student has invented the following rule for right triangles:

All right triangles have side lengths in the ratio of 3:4:5.

Which of the following is a counterexample that disproves the above statement?

- A) A triangle with side lengths 2, 3, and 4.
- B) A triangle with side lengths 5, 12, and 13.
- C) A triangle with side lengths 6, 8, and 10.
- D) A triangle with side lengths 7, 7, and 10.

Word Problems

114. At a gift store, candles are sold in packages of 4, chocolates are sold in packages of 10, and thank-you cards are sold in packages of 3. Miranda is putting together gift bags, each of which contains one candle, one chocolate, and one card. What is the smallest number of gift bags she can make such that she doesn't have any items left over?

- A) 20
- B) 30
- C) 60
- D) 120

Calculator Policy

Calculators are not allowed on the CLT, including on the Quantitative Reasoning section. Questions are designed to be solvable without the use or need of a calculator.

The CLT is meant to test students' logical reasoning abilities and their ability to understand and simplify complex topics, rather than testing students' ability to make complicated calculations. This policy also secures test integrity and simplifies the test by avoiding the need to specify and monitor which calculator models are permitted.

Difficulty Levels

Reading passages in the Verbal Reasoning and Grammar/Writing sections are calibrated to fit narrowly within a consistent difficulty level. The test developers use TextEvaluator™, a passage calibration software with grade level ratings, to analyze the difficulty level of each passage and ensure it falls within a range of TE 10-12, with an average of 11.

Difficulty levels of questions are scored on a scale of 1 through 5: each section of the test contains 8 questions at each difficulty level, for a total of 24 questions at each difficulty level. On the Verbal Reasoning and Grammar/Writing section, difficulty levels are distributed evenly throughout each passage. Each passage, for which there are 10 questions, has 2 questions of each difficulty level. On the Quantitative Reasoning section, questions increase in difficulty as they progress.

Level 1 questions are the least difficult, and require straightforward reasoning, basic logic, and a minimal number of steps to answer. Level 5 questions are the most difficult, and require more complex reasoning, high-level thinking, and the ability to synthesize difficult concepts. The breakdown of difficulty levels is perfectly balanced, with 20% of questions falling in each of the five levels.

Optional Essay

In Fall 2018, CLT added an optional unscored essay section, in order to enable students to provide colleges with a sample of their writing ability under a time limit. Students have 30 minutes to answer one prompt. The text of their written response may be included with their test results when students send their scores to colleges. The following are sample essay prompts:

Sample Essay 1: Describe what you believe a community to be. What defines it? How large is it? What are its boundaries, and what determines who is inside and out of it? You can draw on contemporary, historical, or literary examples to support your claims.

Sample Essay 2: The Stoic philosophers were deeply concerned by emotion and its tendency to overwhelm. Can emotion be a good thing? Is it a threat to reason, or can it aid reason? Provide examples from history or literature to support your claims.

Sample Essay 3: Are there any situations in which censorship of works is appropriate? If so, explain in what context and why. If not, explain why not. Use examples to support your claims.

