

## TABE FAQ

Below you will find questions and answers about the TABE. As your own questions arise, please review this FAQ for answers. If you don't find your answer here, please contact Patrick Lilja at [plilja@englishatlarge.org](mailto:plilja@englishatlarge.org) or call 781-395-2374.

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### 1. What is the TABE and why is English At Large administering it?

The TABE is a new requirement of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). All adult basic education (ABE) programs are required to administer this assessment to eligible learners to measure literacy gains. The letters TABE CLAS-E stand for the Test of Adult Basic Education, Complete Language Assessment System - English. Part 1 of the TABE consists of 20 multiple choice questions which measure an understanding of English Grammar. Part 2 of the TABE consists of a series of writing tasks (sentences to describe pictures, informal notes, short essays). It takes about one hour to complete both parts of the TABE.

### 2. Who has to take the TABE?

Existing and new high-intermediate to advanced ESOL learners are eligible to take the TABE. Lower-level learners are *not* eligible to take the TABE. Instead, they should take the BEST Plus speaking assessment.

### 3. Does the TABE replace the English At Large intake assessment process?

No. The TABE is a separate requirement that English At Large administers in addition to the current intake assessment.

### 4. How and when will the TABE be administered?

The TABE is administered to English At Large learners in groups at locations throughout our 20-town service area. Learners receive a copy of the schedule, and they can choose a date and location that is convenient to them.

## **5. How often is TABE be administered?**

After their initial TABE assessment, eligible learners are required to take the TABE once every fiscal year and once upon exiting the program. Multiple assessment dates/times are available throughout the year.

Learners must take the TABE as soon as possible after they receive a tutor. They must then take the TABE in the following May/June, if their initial administration is not a May/June administration. Once the learner gets on the May/June administration schedule, they take the TABE annually every May/June.

## **6. Who will administer and score the TABE?**

Individuals who participate in training offered by SABES are certified to administer and score the TABE using the TABE rubric. These individuals include English At Large staff and some tutors. Because the administration occurs in groups, it is *not* a requirement that each tutor administer his/her learner's assessment, and tutors *may not* score their own learner's assessments.

## **7. What if a learner does not improve his/her score from TABE to TABE? Are there negative repercussions for the learner or the tutor?**

No. There are no negative repercussions for either the learner or the tutor. It is important to emphasize this fact to the learners, and to emphasize that this is not a test they can fail.

## **8. What if my learner refuses to take the TABE?**

Unless we have an initial standardized assessment score, an annual updated score, and an exit score in the system, English At Large cannot count your tutoring hours as part of our reporting to the DESE, which negatively impacts our ability to obtain funding. If your learner refuses to take the TABE, he or she must stop their formal tutoring relationship with English At Large and be exited from our program. If this occurs, volunteers will be asked to become a tutor for a new learner from our waiting list.

## **9. Will tutors receive their learner's scores?**

Yes. English At Large will communicate your learner's scores to you as well as the rubric used to score them. You can use that rubric to understand the scores.

## 10. Can tutors show the scores to the learners?

Yes. But because the scores mean little on their own, they should be shown only in the context of a discussion that about how those scores align with the scoring rubric and what the learner can learn from the rubric about his/her writing strengths and areas for development.

## 11. Can a tutor accompany a learner to the TABE administration?

No. Tutors are not allowed in the room during the administration.

## 12. How can tutors reduce anxiety and prepare our learners to be successful with the TABE?

Learners who write on a regular basis and are familiar with writing in response to a prompt will be most comfortable and successful during the assessment. If you do not already include writing in your tutoring sessions, you may want to be including it. Specific ideas include the following:

- Have your learner write on a given subject. For example, if you have discussed television, you could offer the prompt, “Please write the good things and bad things about television.”
- Encourage your learner to provide details and examples to support his or her opinions.
- Set a time limit for the writing. Start small. For example, tell them they have 10 minutes to write.
- Review their writing. Praise their strengths, and identify specifically what they have done well. Discuss areas for development. Ask the learner what he/she thinks they need help with.
- Work on the writing process with your learner. Help them through the basic steps of prewriting, creating a rough draft, peer editing, revising, editing, and creating a final draft.

### You may also want to emphasize the following about the assessment itself:

- They cannot fail.
- There are no repercussions if they have trouble with it.
- It presents a unique opportunity to understand how to improve their writing, which will ultimately increase their independence.

**13. How can tutors use the TABE scores within our lessons?**

You can match the scores with the rubric to understand your learner's strengths and where they have room to develop further. You can then use the rubric as a tool to focus further writing efforts.

**14. The TABE does not reflect my learner's strengths in speaking and listening. How can it fully assess his/her literacy level?**

While it is true that the TABE focuses on writing ability and does not offer a comprehensive view of literacy ability, no standardized assessment is ever 100% accurate or completely comprehensive. The TABE is one tool, and if incorporated into your lesson planning, it can be a useful tool to encourage and guide further writing development.

**14. My learner has a disability. Will that be accommodated during the administration?**

If your learner has a disability, please contact Macy DeLong by email at [mdelong@englishatlarge.org](mailto:mdelong@englishatlarge.org) or by phone at 781-395-2374 to make special accommodations.