

# **Preparation for the Praxis in Speech-Language Pathology**

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# Preface

Congratulations! You have selected the most comprehensive and in-depth resource for preparing for the Speech-Language Pathology Praxis. *Preparation for the Praxis in Speech-Language Pathology* is so much more than the conventional review manual as its focus is on you, the test taker, rather than the test content. This volume provides mental preparation in everyday language, speaking directly to the reader to break the mystique surrounding the Praxis and develop usable skills for optimizing performance.

Inside you will discover discussion on studying for the Praxis, misconceptions and facts, cognitive abilities, reasoning skills, reading comprehension, mental preparation, test-taking strategy, time utilization, and guessing strategies. Each instructional chapter presents enlightening information accompanied by demonstrative examples to give the reader valuable practice with Praxis-type questions, plus real frequently asked questions gathered from students' queries over many years. Also included are stimulating personal exercises to assess your level of preparedness such as study habits, test anxiety, reading speed, and reading comprehension.

Assess your academic knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses using the 19 coursework quizzes from both undergraduate prerequisites and graduate courses. A full Coursework Study Guide lists what to study in each Praxis content area and demonstrates through actual Praxis questions, listed in the references as "Sources," how concrete knowledge must be applied for clinical decisions, as well as the use of relevant reasoning skills.

To complete the experience, a full-length timed Praxis Practice Test allows you to hone the acquired skills gained through the instructional chapters and gain valuable practice. Detailed explanations to correct, as well as incorrect, answers teach you to think like the item-writer and reason as the writer intended.

Whether you are a verdant student or a seasoned professional returning to the field, you will find this amazing resource essential as you prepare for the Speech-Language Pathology Praxis.



## Study Habits

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**B**efore you sit down to study for an exam as important as the Praxis, you should consider your study habits, as well as what is required to successfully complete the exam. Begin with the following study habits exercise. Record your answers on a separate sheet, tally your results according to the key presented, and note the interpretation of your score.

### Study Habits Questionnaire

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1. How would you describe your usual study habits in relation to your testing success?
  - A. I don't have to study much to get good grades
  - B. The more I study, the better my grades
  - C. If I don't study, my grades suffer
  - D. Even when I study more, my grades are just about the same
2. How often do you feel that you have studied, but the exam focused on other information?
  - A. Never
  - B. Rarely
  - C. Sometimes
  - D. Often
3. How often do you misjudge what is to be included on an exam? That is, do you ever avoid studying some material and take a chance that it will not be on the exam, but it does appear on the exam?
  - A. Never
  - B. Rarely
  - C. Sometimes
  - D. Often

4. How often do you find that you have studied as much as or more than your peers, but your grades are not as high?
  - A. Never
  - B. Rarely
  - C. Sometimes
  - D. Often
5. On what kind of question do you perform best?
  - A. Multiple Choice
  - B. Fill-In/True-False
  - C. Matching
  - D. Essay
6. On what kind of question do you perform worst?
  - A. There is no difference
  - B. Essay
  - C. True-False/Matching/Fill-In
  - D. Multiple Choice
7. When you guess on a question, how often are you correct?
  - A. Often
  - B. Sometimes
  - C. Rarely
  - D. Never
8. How often do you observe that you have misinterpreted a question?
  - A. Never
  - B. Rarely
  - C. Sometimes
  - D. Often
9. How often do you feel that you know more than your exam scores reflect?
  - A. Never
  - B. Rarely
  - C. Sometimes
  - D. Often
10. Are your scores on standardized tests consistent with your academic grades?
  - A. Standardized test scores are higher than grades
  - B. Grades and standardized test scores are consistent



- C. Standardized test scores are somewhat lower than grades
- D. Standardized test scores are definitely lower than grades

**A = 4**

**B = 3**

**C = 2**

**D = 1**

**26–30 Points: Excellent**

Your study habits are conducive to good performance. You probably learn very well in class; thus, extensive study time may not be required. Your intuitive skills for predicting what will be on the exam are also quite good. You are probably a good test taker regardless of the type of question.

**21–25 Points: Above Average**

Your study skills are adequate. You probably perform well despite a few qualities that are less than optimal. Note the consistency of your responses; e.g., whether they lie in amount of study time, types of questions, or judgment of the content of the exam. With this knowledge you can improve the quality of your study experience.

**16–20 Points: Average**

You often selected “C” as your answer. Although you may know the course content, you are an average to below-average test taker. Be acutely aware that effective studying is a matter of *process* as well content and time. Practicing the types of questions that will appear on the Praxis is the most effective study process. In addition, it is helpful to know and understand as much about the Praxis as possible. Read all information about the Praxis presented in the bulletin that is available on the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website. In addition, you must tailor your studying not only to the specific content areas of the exam, but also to your individual strengths and weaknesses, whether in the subject areas, amount of time, study procedures, or the types of questions. If you are usually wrong when you guess, you must improve your intuitive ability. Your study should be designed to compensate for your personal weaknesses.

**Less than 20 Points: Below Average**

You are at high risk for poor performance on the Praxis. Bear in mind that you may know the course information well, but for some reason your test performance is not good, or that you may need to review the course information. Read all information about the Praxis presented on the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website. In addition, you must tailor your studying not only to the specific content areas of the exam, but also to your individual strengths and weaknesses, whether in the subject areas, amount of time, study procedures, or the types of questions. If you are usually wrong when you guess on an exam, you must improve your intuitive ability. Your studying should be designed to compensate for your personal weaknesses. If you are not adept at taking multiple-choice tests, perhaps the reason relates to your decision-making ability.

Often the presence of more than one plausible response creates confusion. To lessen this confusion, use your internal powers of concentration, reasoning, and confidence. These powers can be perfected with extensive practice with Praxis-type questions.

## What to Study

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Effective studying is more a matter of process than of content or volume. Yet some review of coursework will be necessary. Review of coursework is especially recommended if you completed your academic study more than 1 year prior to taking the Praxis. While many Praxis questions require verbatim recall of information, most questions are presented as clinical scenarios for which a broad understanding of each course is necessary.

It is important to note, however, that performance is enhanced more by intuitive skills of *clinical judgment*, *critical thinking*, *test-taking strategy*, *timing*, and *effective guessing*. In some cases, good test takers—i.e., those who are able to utilize these five skills—sometimes perform well even without course knowledge. However, for most examinees it is a wise choice to practice the requisite skills, as well as to have knowledge of the field.

Many individuals presume they should study their weakest areas or the most difficult courses. These strategies are **not** recommended in preparation for the Praxis for two reasons. First, there may be no more than five or six questions from any specific course area. Therefore, it is conceivable to pass the Praxis even if you have not taken some courses.

Second, questions from courses that are sometimes most difficult (e.g., anatomy) are not presented for specific recall of information. Instead, a question may examine your knowledge of anatomy in the context of a clinical example. Thus, it is necessary to know anatomy as it relates to specific disorders, as in the following sample question.

Which of the following is the most significant contributor to impairment in the speech of persons with an unrepaired cleft palate?

- A. Irregular vocal fold function
- B. Hearing loss from otitis media
- C. Velopharyngeal insufficiency
- D. Persistent faulty articulatory patterns

(C) The most common speech impairment of persons with cleft palate is hypernasality. Velopharyngeal insufficiency is the main factor contributing to hypernasality, therefore the correct answer is (C). (A) is incorrect because vocal fold function is not associated with cleft palate. (B) is incorrect because otitis media is not always present with cleft palate. (D) is incorrect because faulty articulatory patterns are subject to compensatory strategies.

Some required courses, such as statistics, are not examined directly. Hence, they should be reviewed broadly, but not emphasized for extended study.

In addition, the Praxis will contain questions in knowledge of areas in which you may not have had a specific course. The list below contains areas that are included and strongly recommended for emphasis as you review.

- Multicultural Issues
- Speech Science
- Language Development
- Ethics/Professional Issues
- Phonetics
- Linguistics
- Counseling

## How to Study

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- Become familiar with all the content areas of the exam. You may need to study some areas more than others. However, you should determine how much time to devote to each area based on the number of questions, as well as your estimation of the difficulty of the content areas and the amount of knowledge you have in each area.
- **GET ORGANIZED!** Begin to study at least 2 or 3 months prior to the exam date. Plan a schedule of which areas you will study each week. Adopt a regular and realistic study routine. Set aside a block of hours per week for study.

