

Study Guide for the *Music: Content Knowledge Test*



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Study Guide for the *Music: Content Knowledge* Test



Music Content Knowledge Audio Files

The audio files that are part of this test will be on a CD-ROM at the testing center. In this study guide, however, those audio files were downloaded when you purchased this eBook, even though some portions of the study guide generically refer to the audio files as being on a CD-ROM.

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Chapter 1

Background Information on *The Praxis Series*[™]
Assessments



What Are *The Praxis Series*™ Subject Assessments?

The Praxis Series™ Subject Assessments are designed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to assess your knowledge of the subject area you plan to teach, and they are a part of the licensing procedure in many states. This study guide covers an assessment that tests your knowledge of the actual content you hope to be licensed to teach. Your state has adopted *The Praxis Series* tests because it wants to be certain that you have achieved a specified level of mastery of your subject area before it grants you a license to teach in a classroom.

The Praxis Series tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that the test covered in this study guide is used in more than one state. The advantage of taking *Praxis* tests is that if you want to teach in another state that uses *The Praxis Series* tests, you can transfer your scores to that state. Passing scores are set by states, however, so if you are planning to apply for licensure in another state, you may find that passing scores are different. You can find passing scores for all states that use *The Praxis Series* tests online at www.ets.org/praxis or on the website of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

What Is Licensure?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license has demonstrated a certain level of competence. The overriding concept behind licensure is expressed in the commonly used phrase that the person holding the license *will do no harm*. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the person holding the license can be trusted to educate children competently and professionally.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Test takers for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation: some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because it assesses your entire body of knowledge or skill for the field you want to enter, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort. Studying thoroughly is highly recommended.

Why Does My State Require *The Praxis Series* Assessments?

Your state chose *The Praxis Series* Assessments because the tests assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain” of the test—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in each subject area in each state. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature, ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers. You can find out the passing score required for *The Praxis Series* Assessments in your state by looking in the pamphlet *Understanding Your Praxis Scores*, which is free from ETS (www.ets.org/praxis). If you look through this pamphlet, you will see that not all states use the same test modules, and even when they do, the passing scores can differ from state to state.

What Kinds of Tests Are *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments?

Two kinds of tests comprise *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments: multiple choice (for which you select your answer from a list of choices) and constructed response (for which you write a response of your own). Multiple-choice tests can survey a wider domain because they can ask more questions in a limited period of time. Constructed-response tests have far fewer questions, but the questions require you to demonstrate the depth of your knowledge in the area covered.

What Do the Tests Measure?

The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are tests of content knowledge. They measure your understanding of the subject area you want to teach. The multiple-choice tests measure a broad range of knowledge across your content area. The constructed-response tests measure your ability to explain in depth a few essential topics in your subject area. The content-specific pedagogy tests, most of which are constructed response, measure your understanding of how to teach certain fundamental concepts in your field. The tests do not measure your actual teaching ability, however. They measure your knowledge of the subject and of how to teach it. The teachers in your field who help us design and write these tests, and the states that require these tests, do so in the belief that knowledge of a subject area is the first requirement for licensing. Your teaching ability is a skill that is measured in other ways: Observation, videotaped teaching, or portfolios are typically used by states to measure teaching ability. Teaching combines many complex skills, only some of which can be measured by a single test. *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments are designed to measure how thoroughly you understand the material in the subject areas in which you want to be licensed to teach.

How Were These Tests Developed?

ETS began the development of *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments with a survey. For each subject, teachers around the country in various teaching situations were asked to judge which knowledge and skills a beginning teacher in that subject needs to possess. Professors in schools of education who prepare teachers were asked the same questions. These responses were ranked in order of importance and sent out to hundreds of teachers for review. All of the responses to these surveys (called “job analysis surveys”) were analyzed to summarize the judgments of these professionals. From their consensus, we developed the specifications for the multiple-choice and constructed-response tests. For each subject area, a committee of practicing teachers and teacher educators wrote these specifications (guidelines). The specifications were reviewed and eventually approved by teachers. From the test specifications, groups of teachers and professional test developers created test questions.

When your state adopted *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments, local panels of practicing teachers and teacher educators in each subject area met to examine the tests question by question and evaluate each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. This process is known as a “validity study.” A test is considered “valid” for a job if it measures what people must know and be able to do on that job. For the test to be adopted in your state, teachers in your state must judge that it is valid.

These teachers and teacher educators also performed a “standard-setting study”; that is, they went through the tests question by question and decided, through a rigorous process, how many questions a beginning teacher should be able to answer correctly. From this study emerged a recommended passing score. The final passing score was approved by your state’s Department of Education.

CHAPTER 1

In other words, throughout the development process, practitioners in the teaching field—teachers and teacher educators—have determined what the tests would contain. The practitioners in your state determined which tests would be used for licensure in your subject area and helped decide what score would be needed to achieve licensure. This is how professional licensure works in most fields: those who are already licensed oversee the licensing of new practitioners. When you pass *The Praxis Series* Subject Assessments, you and the practitioners in your state can be assured that you have the knowledge required to begin practicing your profession.

Chapter 2

Introduction to the *Music: Content Knowledge* Test and
Suggestions for Using this Study Guide



Introduction to the *Music: Content Knowledge* Test

The *Music: Content Knowledge* test assesses beginning teachers' understanding of the essential content of undergraduate music and music education courses. Educational Testing Service (ETS) has selected the content of this test using resources such as the National Standards for Education in the Arts and the NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework. ETS also refers to current practices as specified by national music educator institutions and organizations such as MENC: The National Association for Music Education. In developing assessment material for this test, ETS works in collaboration with teacher educators, higher education content specialists, and accomplished practicing teachers to keep the test updated and representative of current standards.

There are currently three different *Praxis* Music tests:

- *Music: Content Knowledge* (0113)
- *Music: Concepts and Processes* (0111)
- *Music: Analysis* (0112)

This study guide covers the *Music: Content Knowledge* test (0113). It consists of 120 multiple-choice questions. The first 30 questions are paced by a CD that contains the musical excerpts for these questions. You must complete these questions in approximately 35 minutes, which is how long the CD plays. You then have approximately 80 minutes to answer the remaining 90 questions. Thus, a total of two hours is available for completing the test.

The questions cover four major areas, in the following proportions:

Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Questions
Music History and Literature Category total: Section 1 (listening): Section 2:	 17 8 9	 14%
Theory and Composition Category total: Section 1 (listening): Section 2:	 19 9 10	 16%
Performance Category total: Section 1 (listening): Section 2:	 28 13 15	 23%
Pedagogy, Professional Issues, and Technology Category total: Section 1 (listening): Section 2:	 56 N/A 56	 47%

How to Use This Study Guide

Q. Why should you use this study guide?

This test is different from a final exam or other tests you may have taken for other courses because it is comprehensive—that is, it covers material you may have learned in several courses during your entire undergraduate program. It requires you to synthesize information you have learned from many sources and to understand the subject as a whole.

Therefore, you should review and prepare for it, rather than merely becoming familiar with the question formats. A thorough review of the material covered on the test will significantly increase your likelihood of success. Moreover, studying for your licensing exam is a great opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of musical and pedagogical knowledge and methods before you begin to teach or to reflect on previous teaching experience. As you prepare to take the test, it may be particularly helpful for you to think about how you would apply the study topics and sample exercises to the clinical experience you obtained during your teacher preparation program. Your student teaching experience will be especially relevant to your thinking about the materials in the study guide.

Q. How can you best use the “Study Topics” chapter of this study guide?

First, assess your current knowledge and use that assessment to complete your preparation and review for the test.

- **Become familiar with the test content.** Learn what will be tested, as covered in chapter 3.
- **Assess how well you know the content in each area.** After you learn what topics the test contains, you should assess your knowledge in each area. How well do you know the material? In which areas do you need to learn more before you take the test? It is quite likely that you will need to brush up on most or all of the areas.
- **Develop a study plan.** Assess what you need to study and create a realistic plan for studying. You can develop your study plan in any way that works best for you. A “Study Plan” form is included in appendix A at the end of the book as a possible way to structure your planning. Remember that you will need to allow time to find books, CDs, and other materials, time to read and listen to the materials and take notes, and time to apply your learning to the practice questions.
- **Identify study materials.** Most of the material covered by the test is contained in standard textbooks in the field. If you no longer own the texts you used in your undergraduate course work, you may want to borrow some from friends or from a library. Use standard textbooks and other reliable, professionally prepared materials. Don’t rely heavily on information provided by friends or from searching the World Wide Web. Neither of these sources is as uniformly reliable as textbooks.
- **Work through your study plan.** You may want to work alone, or you may find it more helpful to work with a group or with a mentor. Work through the topics and questions provided in chapter 3. Rather than memorizing definitions from books, be able to define and discuss the topics in your own words and understand the relationships between diverse topics and concepts. If you are working with a group or mentor, you can also try informal quizzes and questioning techniques.
- **Proceed to the practice questions.** Once you have completed your review, you are ready to benefit from the “Practice Questions” portion of this guide.

Q. What's the best way to use the chapter on multiple-choice questions?

Read chapter 4. This chapter will sharpen your skills in reading and answering multiple-choice questions. For you to succeed on multiple-choice questions, you must focus carefully on the question, avoid reading things into the question, pay attention to details, and sift patiently through the answer choices.

Q. What's the best way to use the practice test?

- **Answer the practice multiple-choice questions.** Work on the practice multiple-choice questions in chapter 5, then use chapter 6 to mark the questions you answered correctly and the ones you missed. In chapter 6 also look over the explanations of the questions you missed and see whether you understand them.
- **Decide whether you need more review.** After you have looked at your results, decide whether there are area topics to brush up on before taking the actual test. Go back to your textbooks and reference materials to see whether the topics are covered there. You may also want to go over your questions with a friend or teacher who is familiar with the subjects.
- **Assess your readiness.** Do you feel confident about your level of understanding in each of the topics? If not, where do you need more work? If you feel ready, complete the checklist in chapter 7 to double-check that you've thought through the details. If you need more information about registration or the testing situation itself, use the resources in appendix B, "For More Information."