

Creating and Administering C-Tests

A C-Test is an unusual type of language test. It's an adaptation of the more common cloze test that is often used. It is a global language test because it relies on the student using context to figure out the missing second half of words. It operates under "the rule of two." This means the second half of every second word starting with the second sentence is deleted. Like all language tests, it should be level appropriate and test for the language taught in a class. The topics should either be general English or related to content studied in the class, and the structures should also be level-appropriate. We use this test as a check on the general language ability of the student and its results should be taken into consideration in decisions on passing, but they should not exclusively be used to make a decision on level completion.

C-Test directions

Here are the program guidelines for creating a C-Test.

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 15-30 words | 30-50 words | 60-80 words | 80-100 words | 100-120 words | 120+ words |

Test Construction Directions

Topics should move from concrete to abstract.

Grammar should be consistent with what is focused on in that level

Starting with the second sentence, delete the second half of every other word. The first and final sentences should have no deletions.

Leave adequate room for students to write. Lines should be the length of two letters followed by two spaces.

Example of Directions to Students and Layout of the Test

Fill in the letters. When you are done, read over the story and make sure the words make sense. Also, keep in mind that sometimes the word you need appears in the story in a different place. Your words must be spelled correctly to get credit.

INSERT TEST

*Total words*_____

*Words you have written correctly*_____

*Your percentage score*_____

Other Notes

It's a good idea to practice this format before you administer the actual test. (Some teachers create a short morning note every day which follows this format.) Also, you should review strategies with your students.

- This is a test of context. Try and understand the whole story. Start by reading the title, the first and the last sentences to build your context of the topic. If you cannot figure out a word, skip it, and come back to it.
- Look for the easy words, the connecting words and the common verbs: to, by, in, of, for and is, are, was, were, has, have, and had.
- Use grammar clues. For example, regular past tense verbs end in "ed."
- Remember that basic sentence structure is subject-verb-object.
- Use all the blanks and don't fill in extra letters. If you miss one letter, you miss the whole word.
- Look for repeated words in the passage.
- Read over the passage out loud to see how it sounds. Sometimes your ear can catch what your eye cannot.

Rules for Evaluating Answers

- The student answer has to be the exact word and spelled correctly.
- If the student doesn't have the exact word, s/he doesn't get the point for that word.
- In some cases, if the student's substitute perfectly replaces the intended word, the teacher has the discretion to give a point for that word.
- Points are given by word, not by letter. If there are 116 words that are incomplete, then the score is a percentage of that number. For example, if a student writes 94 words correctly, his score is 94/116 or 81%.
- In order to pass, a student should score around 80% or better. Remember that it is a test of global language ability.