CLT Student Guide

THIRD EDITION

The Official Guide to Preparing for the Classic Learning Test

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Part I | *Understanding the CLT*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

History and Overview

"Will this be on the test?" For students, this critical question determines what they will study, what they will commit to memory, and what they will ultimately leave behind. The same concerns define the landscape of American education.

In that landscape, standardized college admissions tests are gatekeepers to higher education. These tests exert enormous influence over curricula, text selection, and course content for educators at all levels, from kindergarten to high school.

With the number of applications climbing each year, universities and colleges desire objective measurements of applicants' aptitude and college readiness. Until now, many universities have had little choice but to defer to evaluation methods favored by the "big two" standardized tests, the SAT® and ACT®. These tests present value-neutral passages and reward test-takers for internalizing answer-pattern strategies, memorizing facts by rote, and being "taught to the test."

In 2015, however, a diverse group of educators, testing professionals, and entrepreneurs came together to create a better way to assess academic ability: the Classic Learning Test (CLT).

In taking the CLT, examinees are invited to wrestle with works from the greatest minds in the history of Western thought. The test employs important literary, philosophical, and scientific passages drawn from a wide variety of thinkers in the Western tradition, such as St. Augustine, Dante, Sir Isaac Newton, Charlotte Brontë, W. E. B. Du Bois, and many more. These sources and materials are both secular and religious, contemporary and historical. They require students to analyze texts, comprehend great ideas, and engage with issues that affect the world at large.

While not aiming to be partisan, the CLT is far from value-neutral: it challenges test-takers to think critically about our intellectual tradition and to engage with it personally and ethically. Above all, the CLT provides a uniquely accurate and rigorous measure of academic formation, accomplishment, and potential.

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Why the particular focus on Western culture? Because it is the tradition that has most influenced the culture and development of the United States. The CLT's focus on this tradition presents students with ideas, motifs, and issues they will encounter repeatedly in college and beyond. It is not an exclusive designation; those who have contributed to this intellectual tradition are not always themselves from narrowly defined "Western" backgrounds. As such, the CLT includes thinkers from all periods, cultures, classes, identities, and beliefs.

The CLT is built on the idea that the purpose of education is to make us more human, not to shape us into cogs for the economy. Students must grapple with topics and ideas that enable them to search for profound truth, weigh evidence, understand different perspectives, and ultimately build a foundation that will serve them for the rest of their lives. As Frederick Douglass said, "Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free."

At the same time, on a practical level, the CLT is convenient for educators, students, and parents. Students take a shorter exam, either in school or at home with our remote proctoring services. Scores can be delivered directly to colleges by the test-taker at no charge. Furthermore, the demonstrated rigor of the CLT means it not only challenges test-takers, but sets them apart from their peers in college applications.

Our Mission

The CLT is much more than a test; CLT exists to reconnect knowledge and virtue by creating meaningful assessments and connections to seekers of truth, goodness, and beauty.



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As such, we have deep relationships with secondary schools, institutions of higher learning, academics, education policy organizations, philanthropists, and lawmakers that are passionate about the liberal arts, tradition, and virtue.

As you prepare for college, CLT can help you learn about colleges, internship opportunities, scholarships, and organizations that may help you reach your future educational and professional goals.

Many of our partners have been featured on CLT's podcast, Anchored. Anchored is a top-ranked program focused on the important conversations in education today. Our episodes have featured leading thinkers such as Cornel West and Robert P. George discussing the importance of the Classics, Wall Street Journal columnist Meghan Cox Gurdon on the #DisruptTexts movement, leading school choice advocate Corey DeAngelis on the need to fund students instead of systems, and many more.

Another great resource for our students is the CLT Journal. The Journal features brief essays on the authors, books, and ideas of our educational tradition; a new figure from the CLT Author Bank is profiled every Monday, and our "Great Conversation" series on the history of ideas includes lists of suggested reading in every entry. These essays are composed by CLT staff and guest contributors, including both professional scholars and our own top students. Links to both the Anchored podcast and the Journal can be found on our website at ***cltexam.com/media.***

CLT is also collaborating with academics from all over the country on our seminar series, Journey Through the Author Bank. See pages 16-17 on the CLT Author Bank for more information on this series.



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Meet the Board of Academic Advisors

The CLT Board of Academic Advisors is composed of prominent scholars, thought leaders, and visionaries in education.



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In addition to the distinguished list of educators in colleges, universities, and private, homeschool, and charter schools, the board has executive leaders from mission-aligned organizations including Classical Academic Press, The Circe Institute, Classical Conversations, The Society for Classical Learning, Memoria Press, The Association of Classical Christian Schools, The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, The Heritage Foundation, The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, and The National Association of Scholars. Collectively these leading scholars on our Board of Academic Advisors advise and advocate for CLT in order to achieve our mission.



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Overview of CLT Content & Standards

Each CLT exam consists of three sections: Verbal Reasoning, Grammar & Writing, and Quantitative Reasoning. The sections of the CLT measure linguistic and mathematical skills, and will be recognizable to students who have taken other standardized tests. However, the content of the CLT is distinct from other tests in two main ways.

First, instead of the majority of reading passages coming from contemporary sources, the CLT's Verbal Reasoning and Grammar & Writing sections primarily use selections from our Author Bank, an age-appropriate version of what is loosely called "the Western canon." (Further details on the Author Bank can be found in the chapter dedicated to it; see pages 13-17). The CLT thus provides students a chance to interact with important thinkers whose voices have made a profound difference in the world of ideas. The Verbal Reasoning section tests reading comprehension and textual analysis, while the Grammar & Writing section focuses on mechanics, including grammar, syntax, writing conventions, and diction.

Second, the Quantitative Reasoning section assesses students' ability to solve problems and think logically, over and above mechanical application of formulas to find the answer. It is for this reason that calculators are not permitted on the CLT. This is also why, besides arithmetic equations, algebraic equations, geometrical problems, and word problems, the Quantitative Reasoning section includes logic puzzles.

The CLT is built on the idea that the purpose of education is to make us more human, not to shape us into cogs for the economy.

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The CLT can be delivered in school or via remote proctoring.

The CLT is normally administered to students online, either at a user selected private location (typically at home, but sometimes in a suitable room at a public facility such as a library), or at a CLT partner school (for schools that contract with CLT to administer the exam "in-house" to their students). It is proctored remotely when administered privately; CLT staff record and review the tests to ensure exam integrity. In-school CLT administrations are proctored by school staff.

Students receive two hours to complete the CLT: 40 minutes for the Verbal Reasoning section, 35 minutes for the Grammar & Writing section, and 45 minutes for the Quantitative Reasoning section. For in-school administrations, students taking the optional essay will have 30 minutes to complete the essay. If the exam is taking place in a CLT partner school, the proctor is responsible to ensure that students proceed from section to section together. In private administrations of the test, students may move on early if they choose (up to and including submitting the exam early), but still must move on once the timer for that section expires. Students cannot return to a previous section at any point, in either form of administration, and time "saved" on one section cannot be transferred to another.

Any difficulties that arise during an in-school exam will be handled by the proctor. For students who run into problems while testing privately, our live chat support is available to assist them throughout the day; there is no test-time penalty for consulting chat support.

Accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. These may include extended time, extra breaks, use of a calculator, or other policy modifications, as necessitated by the student's disability. Visit ***cltexam.com/testing-accommodations*** to review our parameters and file an accommodations request.

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Benefits of the CLT

- Only takes 2 hours and provides scores and analytics within 8 business days
  (The optional essay adds 30 additional minutes to the testing time, but is only available for in-school administrations of the CLT.)
- Provides teachers and parents with a worthwhile teaching resource
- Assesses both aptitude and achievement
- Delivers more rigorous content than other standardized tests
- Utilizes meaningful and timeless primary sources
- Promotes critical thinking and higher-level analysis

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Part II | *Practice Tests*

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CLT's Philosophy of Test Prep

CLT firmly believes that a quality education rich in reading great books, discussing them, and emphasizing critical thought in all subjects prepares students well for our exams. The CLT suite of assessments is designed to reflect what a student knows and what aptitude they have for future learning, rather than require an intensive test preparation program.

There are aspects of taking standardized tests that are unfamiliar to most students, particularly those who have utilized education methods rich in reading, discussion, and writing. Testing using multiple choice questions and time limits may make students uneasy at first. Practice tests and this Student Guide are designed to help students to become familiar with the type of material they will encounter, to practice eliminating answer choices, and to do all of that within the time allotted. This can equip students to feel confident about their testing so any anxiety is minimized.

Students are all unique and benefit from different approaches; there is no one-size-fits-all methodology of education. What is presented here is meant to be a springboard for ideas of how to use this Student Guide to best meet your needs.

Preparing for the CLT

CLT has provided multiple resources for students to aid them in preparing for the CLT exam. Three of these resources are listed below. Each of these resources will also be referenced in the sample progression of steps to prepare for the CLT.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- **Online Practice Tests in Student Dashboard**
- **Practice Tests in this CLT Student Guide**
- **CLT Content Description with Sample Questions**



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SAMPLE PROGRESSION OF STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THE CLT:

- **Take an online practice test on your Student Dashboard to understand the length, pacing, and content of CLT.**
- **Use one of the Student Guide practice tests over a period of a week.**

  (Important note: While taking the test, be sure to note any questions on which you guessed or were unsure of the answer.)

  - » *Day 1: Complete Section 1*
  - » *Day 2: Complete Section 2*
  - » *Day 3: Complete Section 3*
  - » *Day 4: Score your results and read Answer Explanations*
  - » *Day 5: Re-work any missed questions or any questions where you guessed the answer.*
  - » *Day 6: Look for patterns of types of questions missed between online tests and the Practice Test in the Student Guide.*
- **Read through the CLT Content Description with Sample Questions on the types of questions you missed the most.**
  - » *For example, if you missed 50% of the questions on Passage as a Whole and Plane Geometry, read through those sections and look at the example problems.*
- **As you identify areas where you need to improve, work through any skills that may be missing or forgotten.**
  - » *Review mathematical or grammar concepts with which you are unfamiliar.*
  - » *Read some material from any author on our Author Bank and summarize it, find supporting ideas, and compare those to other texts you have read. It's even better if you can do this with a parent, friend, or someone with whom you can have a robust discussion!*
- **If you are struggling more with answering questions due to the content:**
  - » *Take the second practice test in this CLT Student Guide untimed. Take the time you need to put into practice those skills you have been learning.*
- **If timing is the biggest concern:**
  - » *Take the second practice test in this CLT Student Guide observing all timing constraints.*
- **Score the exam once you have completed it, and work through the same steps of reworking problems and identifying patterns of problem types to improve.**
- **Continue filling in gaps in skills by using outside reading passages, math books, etc.**
- **As time allows, take the third practice test in this Student Guide following the same procedures of checking your answers, reviewing and reworking questions, and looking for patterns of missed questions.**
- **Take a second online practice test (full test) to familiarize yourself with the timing and pacing once again shortly before your scheduled test date.**
- **If you are taking the test via remote proctoring, be sure to use the Test Simulation on your Student Dashboard in place of one of the online practice tests.**

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TEST I



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SECTION I:
VERBAL REASONING

There are 40 questions in this section. You have 40 minutes to complete the section.

Read each passage and carefully answer the corresponding questions.

The final two questions for each passage are analogy-based. Use your understanding of the passage and the relationships demonstrated within it to arrive at your answers.

Answers are based on the evidence given in a passage; no outside knowledge is required.

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Literature

This passage is adapted from George MacDonald's The Elect Lady, first published in 1888.

[1] In a kitchen of moderate size, flagged with slate, with the corner of a white deal table between them, sat two young people evidently different in rank and meeting upon no level of friendship. The young woman held in her hand a paper, which seemed the subject of their conversation. She was about four- or five-and-twenty, well-grown and not ungraceful, with dark hair, dark hazel eyes, and rather large, handsome features, full of intelligence, but a little hard, and not a little regnant. As to her social expression, it was a mingling of the gentlewoman of education, and the farmer's daughter supreme over the household and its share in the labor of production.

[2] As to the young man, it would have required a deeper-seeing eye than falls to the lot of most observers, not to take him for a weaker nature than the young woman, and the deference he showed her as the superior would have enhanced the difficulty of a true judgment. He was tall and thin, but plainly in fine health, had a good forehead, and a clear hazel eye, a firm mouth, a sun-burned complexion, and a habit when perplexed of pinching his upper lip between his finger and thumb, which at the present moment he was unconsciously indulging. He was the son of a small farmer—in what part of Scotland is of little consequence—and his companion for the moment was the daughter of the lord.

[3] "I have glanced over the poem," said the lady, "and it seems to me quite up to the average of what you see in print."

[4] "You will remember, ma'am, that I never suggested—indeed I never thought of such a thing!"

[5] "I do not forget. It was your mother who drew my attention to the verses," she replied.

[6] "The poem was never meant for any eyes but my own—except my brother's."

[7] "What was the good of writing it, if no one was to see it?"

[8] "The writing of it, ma'am," he said. "Please, do not send the verses anywhere."

[9] "I will not, except I find them worthy. You need not be afraid. For my father's sake I will have an eye to your reputation."

[10] "I am obliged to you, ma'am," returned Andrew, but with his curious smile, hard to describe. It had in it a wonderful mixing of sweetness and humor, and a something that seemed to sit miles above his amusement. A heavenly smile it was, knowing too much to be angry. It had in it neither offense nor scorn. In respect of his poetry he was shy like a girl, but he showed no rejection of the patronage forced upon him by the lady.

[11] He rose and stood a moment.

[12] "Well, Andrew, what is it?"

[13] "When will you allow me to call for the verses?"

[14] "In the course of a week or so. By that time I shall have made up my mind. If in doubt, I shall ask my father."

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[15] "I wouldn't like the lord to think I spend my time on poetry."

[16] "You write poetry, Andrew! A man should not do what he would not have known."

[17] "That is true, ma'am; I only feared an erroneous conclusion."

[18] "I will take care of that. My father knows that you are a hard-working young man. There is not one of his farms in better order than yours. Were it otherwise, I should not be so interested in your poetry."

[19] Andrew wished her less interested in it. To have his verses read was like having a finger poked in his eye. He had not known that his mother looked at his papers. But he showed little sign of his annoyance, bade the lady good-morning, and left the kitchen.

This passage has been excerpted and adapted from the original, including minor punctuation changes, spelling changes, and other modifications that have not substantially change content or intent.

1. Which of the following best describes the relationship between the young woman and Andrew?
   A. The young woman is Andrew's betrothed, who is trying to encourage his literary ambitions.
   B. The young woman is the editor of a literary journal and is providing a critique of Andrew's work.
   C. The young woman is Andrew's social superior who has taken upon herself the responsibility of assessing his poetry.
   D. The young woman is Andrew's mother who has secretly shipped his poems to the local lord for a contest.

2. According to the passage, Andrew's attitude towards the young woman is
   A. mannerly.
   B. ingratiating.
   C. demanding.
   D. beseeching.

3. Which lines in the passage provide the best evidence in support of the answer to the previous question?
   A. Paragraph 1, Sentence 3 ("She was … regnant")
   B. Paragraph 1, Sentence 4 ("As to … production")
   C. Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 ("As to … judgment")
   D. Paragraph 2, Sentence 2 ("He was … indulging")

4. According to the passage, for whose enjoyment did Andrew develop the poems?
   A. His mother's
   B. His brother's
   C. His lord's
   D. His publisher's

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5. It can be inferred from the passage that the young woman
   A. desires Andrew's approval before moving forward with her submission of his poems.
   B. hopes to profit by selling Andrew's poems to some larger literary journals in Scotland.
   C. wants to encourage Andrew's literary talents, even if he is uncomfortable with their display.
   D. is scornful of the literary arts but has been forced by her father to promote Andrew's output.

6. According to the passage, Andrew's family oversees
   A. a preeminent literary press known for discovering great poets.
   B. one of the most well-run farms under lordship of the young woman's father.
   C. a run-down Scottish castle that the young woman wishes to purchase on her father's behalf.
   D. a manor house in Scotland that used to belong to a famous poet.

7. As used in Paragraph 17, Sentence 1, the phrase "erroneous conclusion" most closely means
   A. incorrect assumption.
   B. wrongful accusation.
   C. inaccurate summary.
   D. erratic inference.

8. The passage demonstrates conflict in all the following ways EXCEPT
   A. Andrew's expressed concern about what his lord will think.
   B. Andrew's thoughts about the publicizing of his poems.
   C. the young woman's dismissal of Andrew's protests.
   D. Andrew's open defiance of the young woman.

9. creation of art : publication of art ::
   A. commerce : inspiration
   B. proclamation : declaration
   C. internal joy : external judgment
   D. private affairs : public approval

10. Andrew : lord ::
   A. president : people
   B. emperor : king
   C. serf : slave
   D. subject : prince

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