

NLU Learning Support Quick Guide to Preparing for the ILTS Content-Area Tests

In addition to the below strategies, we recommend viewing NLU's short General Test Taking Tips video at: <https://youtu.be/Js6VAQTN1K8>

About the ILTS Content-Area Tests

The ILTS Content-Area Tests are required for licensure as a teacher in the State of Illinois. The content area tests are numbered and ordered across different educational age ranges (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, and Secondary) as well as for individual subjects at the higher education levels.

To prepare for the tests, guides and practice tests are available from [the ILTS website](#), and the [Mometrix eLibrary](#) available for free with your NLU student account.

Using the ILTS Website

The ILTS website is publicly available to anyone and includes study guides, individual test design information, and sample multiple-choice questions. However, full-length practice tests from ILTS are only available for purchase.

****Test prep materials for the new Learning Behavior Specialist I test (290) are available now:***
http://www.il.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/IL290_PrepMaterials.html

Using the Mometrix eLibrary

NLU students have access to the Mometrix eLibrary through the regular NLU portal. The Mometrix eLibrary:

- Contains these types of preparation materials:
 - **Flashcards** (typically separated into 5-10 different segments of 50-100 cards each).
 - **Study Guide** (these are usually 100-200 pages; many also include an additional Practice Exam with answer key).
 - **Practice Tests** (usually two sample tests with answer and explanation keys; * indicates test prep materials that include practice exams).
- For these exams:
 - ILTS Early Childhood Education (206)*
 - ILTS Elementary Education (305)*
 - ILTS English Language Arts (207)*
 - **ILTS Learning Behavior Specialist I (155)****

- ILTS Mathematics (208)*
- ILTS Middle Grades Language Arts (201)
- ILTS Middle Grades Mathematics (202)*
- ILTS Middle Grades Science (203)
- ILTS Middle Grades Social Science (204)
- ILTS Principal as Instructional Leader (195-196)
- ILTS Science: Biology (239)
- ILTS Science: Physics (243)
- ILTS Social Science: History (246)
- **ILTS Special Education General Curriculum (163)****
- ILTS Superintendent (225)
- ILTS World Languages: Spanish (260)

**** Note: Exams 155 and 163 will be phased out in June 2023 and replaced by ILTS Learning Behavior Specialist (290).**

Content-Area Test Multiple Choice Strategies

The ILTS Content-Area tests are mainly multiple-choice, and because they are timed tests, we want to ensure that we are practicing how to quickly and efficiently make choices. This section will go over some strategies you can apply as you are taking your test(s):

- **Skip Ahead**
 - Skip over questions that you are having difficulty answering and return to them later. You may find a similar question or problem that is easier to answer or remember how to work out the earlier problem as you go through other types of questions.
- **Identify Key Words**
 - **Terms and Concepts:** Make sure to spend your study time reviewing terms and concepts that are central to the test and your field of teaching so that they are familiar to you on the test day.
 - **Key Words:** After reading the question, identify key words—what are the main ideas presented in the question? What is a key concept to know in order to answer the question?
 - **Unfamiliar Words:** If you are unsure about the meaning of a word on the test, try to use root word and prefix/suffix clues to figure it out
- **Rewording Questions**
 - **Simplify the language** for particularly long questions. Paraphrasing longer questions in your own words can help you keep focused on what the question is asking. Does the reworded question make one choice more obvious?
 - **Double Negatives:** If the question contains a double-negative, consider switching it into a positive form to help with focus.

- **Make Sure You Answer the Question Being Asked**
 - More than one answer may be factual, but that does not mean it answers the question being asked.
 - Once you make your answer choice, go back and re-read to ensure you didn't misread the question and that your choice answers the question asked.
- **Process of Elimination**
 - **Limit Your Choices:** Mentally cross out the most unlikely answers first. This helps you limit your choices and is an appropriate technique for most multiple-choice questions.
 - **Compare Fewer Options:** Then, you can compare the remaining options: Is there any information in the answer that might be incorrect? Is one of the answers more specific to the question than the other?
- **Practical Application**
 - For questions that present a scenario and ask "what should the teacher do" in a certain situation, you may want to consider what you would actually do first before reading the multiple-choice options. Then, as you review the options, you can try to determine the one that best fits your original plan.
- **New Information**
 - A correct multiple-choice answer will not usually include new information that was not presented in the question; if you see that further information is included that was not part of the topic being asked in the question, then that choice is most likely incorrect.
- **Questions with Reading Passages or Visual Aids**
 - Try to skip ahead and read the question(s) that follow the question first. Knowing what you are answering first can help you to identify what information to focus on when you go back and fully read or review the chart/graph/image.
- **Creating Visual Aids**
 - If you have scratch paper to work with, you can draw visual aids to help you think about the question in a different way. This can be particularly helpful for math and logic problems.

Math-Specific Test-Taking Tips

- **Practice Wisely**
 - **Identify the Why:** As you do practice tests/exams, practice giving a reason why the solution was made. This can help build your confidence to trust your answers on the test day.
 - Explore different types of questions and make sure that you are spending enough time with the different types of math topics that may be on your test.

- **Show Your Work**
 - Write out your work for each problem and draw a box or circle around your answers.
 - Try to solve the problem on your own first and ignore the multiple-choice answers. If your answer does not match up with one of the multiple-choice options, redo the problem.
- **Plug in Answers**
 - For some problems, you can plug in each multiple-choice answer into the function to see if the solution works.