



COMMUNICATIONS AND MATH EMPLOYMENT READINESS ASSESSMENT

CAMERA is a series of standardized tests that provide placement and diagnostic information about a person's abilities to manage workplace communications and numeracy tasks. The assessments incorporate authentic workplace documents, input from employers, and Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) Essential Skills Profiles to give an accurate snapshot of skills.

CAMERA tasks are selected from a wide variety of occupations and job sectors; the skills people are asked to demonstrate are not occupationally specific but, rather, highlight the underlying Essential Skills required for success on the job. CAMERA comprises tasks that assess four skill domains: reading text, document use, numeracy and writing.

The **CAMERA tests** are a critical part of the **CAMERA System**, a set of cohesive resources that can be used to support skills upgrading. This booklet begins with an overview of the **CAMERA System** and follows with detailed information about the **CAMERA tests**.

CAMERA System Highlights

- includes assessment tools and skills development resources
- highlights skills required for success in entry-level work
- utilizes Essential Skills Profiles and employer input
- addresses reading, writing, document use and numeracy
- contains high-quality, easy-to-use materials, priced for accessibility

What is the CAMERA System?

The Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment (CAMERA) System is an integrated assessment and curriculum system for people interested in developing the skills they need at work. It includes three components: CAMERA tests, curriculum guidelines called Signposts, and the *workwrite* series of workbooks. Together these components provide a continuum of resources for assessors, instructors and learners.

Developed by PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs, the CAMERA System employs real-life workplace documents and tasks to test and develop reading, document use, writing and numeracy skills.

Drawn from ESDC's Essential Skills research, the documents and tasks together represent common activities in a wide variety of entry-level occupations and diverse employment settings.

Essential Skills

- 1 Reading Text
- 2 Document Use
- 3 Numeracy
- 4 Writing
- 5 Oral Communication
- 6 Working with Others
- 7 Thinking Skills
- 8 Computer Use
- 9 Continuous Learning

CAMERA System in Use

Ann teaches upgrading. Learners are placed in her class after writing the CAMERA Placement Test, so she is confident that they should be working with tasks at Essential Skills level 2 (ES 2). Ann selects the content to cover by reviewing the curriculum guidelines in Signposts. She either develops her own learning activities using the instructional ideas in Signposts, or she selects existing activities from workwrite. Every week or two Ann administers sample assessment activities to monitor skills development.

At fixed points during the program, the assessor pulls learners from Ann's class in order to administer the CAMERA Stage 2 diagnostic test. The assessor uses the test results to determine whether the students should continue to work on tasks at ES 2 or whether they are ready to take on the challenge of more difficult tasks. After the assessment and debriefing with the assessor, the learner returns to class, where Ann uses the results to select appropriate signposts to cover.

Why was the CAMERA System developed?

The CAMERA System was created to help educational programs meet the needs of people strengthening literacy and numeracy skills for work. CAMERA tests were developed to provide information to both learners and practitioners on the skills learners have and those they need to work on. Signposts and *workwrite* complement the tests and were developed for instructors to identify learning content, provide practice opportunities and monitor skills acquisition.

In keeping with the principles of good assessment practise, the CAMERA System as a whole:

- Provides opportunities for frequent assessment;
- Connects test content to instructional content;
- Reflects learners' goals in assessment content;
- Provides opportunities for learners' success;
- Provides opportunities for learner feedback and participation; and
- Uses a variety of assessment approaches.¹

CAMERA System Goals

- **promote Essential Skills development within a workforce context**
- **identify skills gaps for programming purposes**
- **determine promotion readiness in settings with multiple class levels**
- **ensure that upgrading reflects workplace demands**

¹Adapted from R.J. Dietel, J.L. Herman and R.A. Knuth, "What Does Research Say About Assessment?" (Oak Brook, Illinois: North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL), 1991).

What does the CAMERA System include?

The three components of the CAMERA System are intended to work together.

CAMERA tests: a series of seven standardized assessments

Trained assessors can administer a CAMERA Placement test to identify a person's needs and the Stage tests at set intervals to give learners an opportunity to demonstrate skills and see progress

Test features:

- provides realistic workplace tasks
- captures gains at Essential Skills levels 1 to 3
- created as progressive model
- gives results in concrete, easy to understand language
- designed for low-skilled learners
- validated through extensive pilot and field testing

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Signposts: curriculum guidelines

Program developers and instructors use Signposts to identify what to teach and to monitor learning along specific Essential Skills

Signposts features:

- describes skills workers use on the job
- includes instructional ideas
- provides sample informal assessments for classroom use
- designed for low-skilled learners
- synthesized from over 800 Essential Skills examples

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workwrite: a series of workbooks

Learners complete activities in *workwrite* to develop and practice the Essential Skills they will need at work

workwrite features:

- provides hundreds of workplace-specific Essential Skills activities
- includes instructor notes, lesson plans, discussion questions and answers
- designed for low-skilled learners
- can be photocopied for classroom use

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Who are CAMERA tests appropriate for?

The tests have been validated for use where

- people receive programming with a workforce orientation
- people are able to follow oral and written instructions as presented to complete the tasks
- tests are administered using practices set out in administration guidelines
- tests are administered in their original form and sequence

Test results cannot be interpreted reliably when test materials or administration procedures are altered in any way.

What are the seven CAMERA tests?

The CAMERA test series includes seven standardized assessments. Each test has an intended audience and purpose:

	Placement	Stage 1 Form A & Form B	Stage 2 Form A & Form B	Stage 3 Form A & Form B
Who?	People at all levels of proficiency	Learners with lower-level literacy skills	Learners with mid-range literacy skills	Learners with higher-level literacy skills
When?	Upon entry into an educational or employment program	At set intervals during programming		
Why?	To evaluate skills	To confirm placement decision; obtain diagnostic information to plan learning; determine promotion readiness		

There are two forms of each of CAMERA Stages 1, 2 and 3: form A and form B. Both forms evaluate the same skills using similar tasks. The two forms can be used interchangeably to monitor skill development. Alternating between the forms will reduce the likelihood that a practice effect skews results.

What do CAMERA tests look like?

Each test in the CAMERA series is designed so that people are faced with a series of appropriately challenging tasks that allow them to demonstrate reading, writing, document use and numeracy skills. Each CAMERA test includes 5 to 12 tasks; most tasks include a workplace-style document and multiple questions.

Documents are organized into a reusable Test Book; Response Books contain space for learners to record answers. All tasks, while designed for assessment purposes, have an authentic feel – important for introducing people to real workplace tasks.

Following are samples that represent CAMERA tasks.

Sample A

Stage 1

SKILL: WRITING

At the lowest level, learners are asked to write a short note. They listen to the following prompt in order to decide what to write. Although the assessor is present to read the prompt to the learner, additional support is not provided.

Assessor Instructions:

Present the Response Sheet to the learner. Say:

While on break you notice that a cellphone was left behind in the lunchroom. Write a note to put on the bulletin board to inform your co-workers and to tell them to come see you if the cellphone is theirs.

Sample B

Stage 2

SKILL: DOCUMENT USE

By this stage learners can read comfortably at the sentence level. Learners read a prompt in order to complete this form independently. Assessors are present while learners work but do not provide assistance.



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Date: _____ Priority: 1 2

Client Information

Name: _____	
Address: _____	Intersection: _____
Home Tel: _____	Cell: _____

Nature of Problem

<input type="checkbox"/> No heat	<input type="checkbox"/> No A/C
<input type="checkbox"/> High wintertime electric bill	<input type="checkbox"/> High summertime electric bill
<input type="checkbox"/> Bad smell when running	<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual noises when running
<input type="checkbox"/> Unit won't shut off	<input type="checkbox"/> Water leak
<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot light goes off	<input type="checkbox"/> Thermostat won't maintain temp.

Other: _____

Call received by: _____

Priority 1: No heat/AC Priority 2: All other

Sample C

Stage 2

SKILL: WRITING

As with tasks that test other skill domains, learners at higher levels of proficiency read prompts on their own to determine what to include in lengthier writing samples. The Response Sheet provided for a task such as this would include formatting typical of a workplace memo.

You work as the head security guard in a large manufacturing facility. Recently, more and more of the after-hours visitors are surprised, and in some cases upset, when asked to sign in.

Write a memo to distribute to the departments in the building. Be sure to:

- inform them of what has been happening;
- describe the consequences for the company; and
- tell them what they can do to avoid this occurring in future.

Follow standard business memo format. You may write a draft on scrap paper and use the Response Sheet provided for the final version.

Sample D

Stage 2

SKILL: NUMERACY, DOCUMENT USE

Many numeracy tasks in the workplace require some degree of document use as well. This task requires learners to complete a reservation contract by performing a series of calculations. Learners decide which calculations are required in this context.



**GROUP RESERVATION
CONTRACT**

Date: _____ Customer Service Rep: _____

GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

Marjorie Melton	Tel: (613) 228-5200, ext 242
Travel Plus Tours	Cell: (613) 226-6254
4206 Dewson Avenue	e-mail: mmelton@travelplus.com
Wentworth, ON K6G 4V7	

Description	Rate	Cost
continental breakfast for 56 adults	\$6 per person	
26 nights in Star Standard rooms	\$97.55 per night	
12 nights in Deluxe Star rooms	\$126.15 per night	
SUBTOT AL		
booking discount A132 (-10%)		
service fee, including all applicable taxes (+18%)		
TOTAL		

TERMS/CONDITIONS:

- Changes to reservations can be made up to 45 days prior to arrival at no charge.
- Changes made within 45 days prior to arrival will be subject to a penalty.
- Check-in time is no earlier than 3:00 pm July 15, 2008.
- Check-out time is no later than 12:00 pm July 17, 2008.

I have read and agree to the terms listed above:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample E

Stage 3

SKILL: READING

At the higher levels, learners read longer texts with more complex vocabulary. In the corresponding Response Book, they answer questions requiring the ability to apply information they have read.

Ridgeview

POLICY NUMBER: T17-06

SUBJECT: External Training

SCOPE: All Full-time Employees

PURPOSE
This policy sets out the position of Ridgeview Seniors' Residence on external training.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1 Responsibility

1.1 The department manager is responsible for managing staff training.

1.2 Employees should identify potential training opportunities for themselves. Once identified, employees must complete an External Training Authorization form to provide to the department manager for approval.

2 Authorization

2.1 The department manager will authorize the payment of registration fees for staff to attend training in advance. Ridgeview's contribution, at the discretion of the department manager, is:

- 100% if the training is directly related to the Residence's operations
- 50% if the training has limited relevance

2.2 An External Training Authorization form must be approved by the department manager, prior to enrolment.

3 Training Expenses

3.1 For short-term training (seminars, workshops, etc.) Ridgeview will pay the registration fee directly to the training institution upon receipt of the approved External Training Authorization form.

3.2 For long-term training, whether credit or non-credit courses, Ridgeview will reimburse the employee 50% of their registration fee upon receipt of the approved External Training Authorization form. The remaining 50% will be reimbursed once the finance department receives written notification from the department manager that the employee has successfully completed the course.

3.3 Ridgeview may choose to reimburse employees for travel expenses if the training is directly related to the Residence's operations and if the department budget allows.

How are CAMERA tests administered?

CAMERA tests are standardized, which means they must be administered according to set procedures. When these procedures are followed, assessors can be confident that test results are a fair and accurate reflection of an individual's skills. However, only trained assessors can administer the tests.

Trained assessors receive a Guide that includes an Administration Reference Sheet for each test. It lists the materials assessors need while administering, the supports available to test takers, and the estimated completion time for the assessment. It also provides a script that outlines how the test should be introduced and invigilated. For people with very limited literacy skills, questions are presented orally by the assessor; people who are able to read comfortably at the sentence level can record answers independently.

How are CAMERA tests scored?

Trained assessors are able to score CAMERA tests. Consequently, test takers can receive results from their assessors very soon after writing the tests. A comprehensive Guide is provided to trained assessors. The guide gives detailed scoring notes and exemplars. The Guide, along with practice opportunities during training, ensures scoring procedures and test results are valid and reliable.

What do CAMERA test results show?

The results on each test are displayed both visually and numerically. Numeric scores are presented in three ways, each intended for a different purpose. First, results show the extent to which the individual is able to demonstrate competency in each of the four skill domains: reading text, document use, numeracy and writing. This diagnostic information can inform programming decisions about which skills need to be developed. Second, in cases where tests include questions at different levels of complexity, results show the extent to which skills have been demonstrated at these different levels. Finally, an overall score is provided on each test. Assessors use this score to inform decisions about placement and promotion readiness.

Results from CAMERA tests may support any one of the following conclusions:

- A person is proficient at the skill level assessed; or
- A person is proficient in particular skill areas assessed; or
- A person is not yet proficient in any of the skill areas assessed

CAMERA is designed to provide information that will help instructors prepare an effective workforce literacy program. At the same time, CAMERA also provides results that can be shared with learners so they can monitor their own progress. Summary sheets can be provided to learners during debriefing, shared with instructors and offered to intermediaries.

PTP Compass is a Social Enterprise and a division of **PTP – Pathway to Possibilities** Adult Learning and Employment Programs, a not for profit organization in Toronto, Canada that helps people learn new skills, find new opportunities and build futures.

PTP Compass provides flexible training options, resources and other supports to enhance the capacity of service providers to deliver effective workforce oriented literacy programming.

How do I get more information?

For additional information about the CAMERA System please visit www.ptpcompass.ca.

or email us at
compass@ptp.ca

or call us at
(416) 510-3266

