

Community Adult Learning Program



Digital Tools and Test-Taking Strategies for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC)

Facilitator Guide

Date Prepared: August 6, 2025
Prepared by: Odette Lloyd, CALP Lead

Updated Date: October 14, 2025
Updated by: Odette Lloyd, CALP Lead

Funded by **TELUS Friendly Future Foundation**



www.norquestadultlearning.ca

Background:

The online exams for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) were designed to include a number of digital tools test-takers will need to use to complete the exams, as well as a variety of online “universal supports” (accessibility features and tools that are embedded in the [CAEC digital platform](#)).

Outcomes:

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

- Understand what the CAEC is (and is not), how it is similar to and different from the GED®
- Gain hands on experience using the tools and accessibility features in the CAEC online testing platform (Vretta)
- Practice the digital skills required to answer a variety of types of questions on a digital testing platform
- Gain insight on how to prepare for exam day and manage test anxiety

Duration:

- 1.5 – 3 hours (depending on number and needs of participants)

Delivery:

- Best suited for in-person delivery; room set up should include a large display or screen, and each participant should have access to a computer/laptop
- For online delivery, participants should have one device that is able to join the virtual meeting and see the presentation and demonstrations, AND each participant should have access to a separate computer or laptop so they can actively participate in the practice elements of the session
- Ideally, the facilitator will encourage hands on learning and exploration of the live CAEC practice test site, but you may wish to use the attached screenshots as backup in the event of Internet issues

Preparation

1. Customize content to anticipated participants as appropriate
2. Print or email handouts, links, QR codes and any other materials for activities

Topic, Activity, Suggested timing	What to say and do	Materials and resources
Intro & Land Acknowledgment Warmup / Icebreaker 10 minutes		
Objectives (information) 5 minutes	Review outcomes, and learner expectations – i.e. “What do you hope to walk away with at the end of this session?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what CAEC is (and is NOT) • Explore digital skills and tasks needed for online test-taking • Get familiar with the Vretta online testing platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to find and use the online tools and accessibility features • Preparing for exam day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making a study plan ○ Practicing digital skills ○ Managing test anxiety 	
Overview of CAEC and testing formats	The CAEC is for adults who do not have a high school diploma and are seeking access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment prospects 	

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(information, Q and A) 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">education pathwaystraining opportunitiesincrease potential “points” for immigration purposes <p>What CAEC is NOT: CAEC is not the same as a Grade 12 Diploma, it is considered an “equivalency”</p> <p>Some post-secondary or training programs will recognize the CAEC to meet certain entrance requirements, but others will not.</p> <p>For those planning to pursue post-secondary, they may wish to pursue placement testing or Academic Upgrading if necessary, or in some cases to explore open entry pathways for mature students.</p> <p>The CAEC was developed by Alberta Education, adopted as a replacement for the GED® in 2024.</p> <p>It is mainly delivered online, at certified testing sites.</p>																									
	<table><tr><th>Subject and parts</th><th>Number of questions</th><th>Time</th></tr><tr><td>Reading</td><td>50 questions</td><td>75 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Writing</td><td>1 persuasive writing task</td><td>75 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Math</td><td>42 questions</td><td>120 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Part I: No calculator</td><td>12 questions</td><td>30 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Part II: Calculator</td><td>30 questions</td><td>90 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Science</td><td>35 questions</td><td>90 minutes</td></tr><tr><td>Social Studies</td><td>40 questions</td><td>90 minutes</td></tr></table>	Subject and parts	Number of questions	Time	Reading	50 questions	75 minutes	Writing	1 persuasive writing task	75 minutes	Math	42 questions	120 minutes	Part I: No calculator	12 questions	30 minutes	Part II: Calculator	30 questions	90 minutes	Science	35 questions	90 minutes	Social Studies	40 questions	90 minutes	
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Digital Skills and Tasks for Online	Digital skills you will use in most online testing platforms include:	https://alphaplus.ca/resources/preparin																								

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Exams (information) 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading text on a screen • Typing • Recognizing links and other “clickable” items • Using a mouse or touchpad • Logging in with a password • Understanding the menus and buttons to navigate the test • Using your mouse or touchpad to “drag and drop” • Selecting and deselecting items from a list using checkboxes and buttons • Selecting items from a drop-down • Filling out forms • Submitting completed forms or tests 	g-learners-for-the-caec/
Poll: Your Digital Confidence (activity) 5 minutes	<p>Create an online poll and invite participants to complete it using their phone or their computer.</p> <p>Sample poll question:</p> <p>I feel confident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typing • Using a mouse • Creating and logging in to an online account • Finding and using website menus • Using icons and other symbols to navigate a website <p>Debrief poll results with the group.</p>	Mentimeter, Teams Poll, etc.

Topic, Activity, Suggested timing	What to say and do	Materials and resources
General strategies for navigating websites and testing platforms 10 minutes	Cues and clues for navigating digital devices and websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look around the edges • Windows and “panes” • Visual language and written language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use your mouse to hover • Read, Read, Read Review Important vocabulary	Tech Talk Handout
Explore the CAEC tools (Demonstration and practice) 30 minutes	Navigation - Menus, arrows, scroll bars, tool bar, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter should share live screen, to demonstrate the features and tools in real time • Encourage participants to follow along on their own device 	https://caec.vretta.com/#/en/test-auth/shared-test-version/906/2652
	Common tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split screen (Hide/Show) • Typing and text formatting Exam-specific tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calculator ○ Ruler ○ Protractor Accessibility tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen • Zoom in / out • Line reader • Background colour 	

Topic, Activity, Suggested timing	What to say and do	Materials and resources
CAEC test tasks (practice) 30 minutes	Practice types of digital tasks Using the Science practice test, review the following Q1 – Multiple select (select and deselect multiple options) Q2 – Drag and drop Q3 – Single select Q13 – Select an image Q18 – Drop down Q23 – Using the protractor Q24 – Using the ruler Q27 – Type a number Q35 – Drag and drop an image	https://caec.vretta.com/#/en/test-auth/shared-test-version/907/4115
Preparing for an online test, assessment, or exam 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a study plan so you feel confident with the content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a schedule ○ Set goals ○ Plan rewards for yourself • Practice using the digital tools provided on the test platform • Practice using analogue tools and strategies (i.e. pencil and paper) • Visit the testing location ahead of time, so you know what to expect on the day of your test(s) • Ask for support or accommodations if you need them 	https://libraryresources.senecapolytechnic.ca/assignmentplanner/
Managing Test Anxiety – Before, During and After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat well, get enough rest, exercise – REPEAT • Listen to yourself and identify your “thinking traps” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fortune-telling, All-or-nothing thinking, Filtering, Catastrophizing • Challenge your thinking traps 	https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/test-anxiety#how

Topic, Activity, Suggested timing	What to say and do	Materials and resources
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BREATHE • Practice other grounding techniques • Reward yourself 	
On the Day 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good sleep the night before, eat well • Plan to arrive early • Remember: CAEC testing centres want you to succeed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Test sites have flexibility to help make your testing experience as low stress as possible ○ Ask for what you need 	
Free tools and games to improve your digital skills 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.typing.com/ • https://www.freotypinggame.net/play.asp • http://mnl.mclinc.org/wp-content/uploads/ComputerLab/Mouserercise2.0/#1 • https://mouse-practice.com/ 	
Study materials and strategies for CAEC 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NorQuest College CAEC Readiness Microcredentials (instructor led, with in person tutoring support available through most CALPs) https://www.norquest.ca/programs-and-courses/programs/caec-readiness/ • Workbooks for Math and Reading Comprehension and Writing https://albertaroutes.norquest.ca/lit-resources/ • Community Literacy of Ontario CAEC Alignment Project (subject study guides included) https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/all-resources/caec-alignment-project 	

Annotated References:

1. **AlphaPlus. *Preparing Learners for the CAEC*.** AlphaPlus, <https://alphaplus.ca/resources/preparing-learners-for-the-caec/>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Offers practical strategies for facilitators supporting adult learners preparing for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC). Emphasizes accessible teaching approaches and learner-focused planning.

2. **Community Learning Network (CLN). *Navigation Strategies: Cues & Clues*.** CLN, <https://calp.ca/learning-resources/teaching-digital/navigation/cues-clues>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.
Adapted from: Literacy for Life Foundation. *Tech Talk Student Manual*. [unpublished] www.litforlife.com

Designed to help guide learners through digital platforms using structured cues and navigation strategies. Though not yet live, this resource is expected to boost digital literacy skills in adult education.

3. **Findley, Jennifer. *Online Testing Strategies: Prepare Your Students to Take Online Assessments*.** Jennifer Findley, <https://jenniferfindley.com/online-testing-strategies/>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Shares practical methods to support learners transitioning to online testing environments. Includes tips for building confidence and improving outcomes in digital assessments.

4. **Gilbert, Mark, and Karen Gilbert. *Test Anxiety Workbook*.** Here to Help, <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/test-anxiety>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

A supportive resource addressing test anxiety among learners. Community instructors can use it to promote emotional well-being and help learners build coping strategies for exam stress.

5. **Government of Alberta. *Canadian Adult Education Credential*.** Alberta.ca, <https://www.alberta.ca/canadian-adult-education-credential>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Explains the structure and benefits of the CAEC.

6. **Khan Academy. *Learning Hacks Conclusion*.** Khan Academy, <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/learn-to-learn/x141050afa14cfed3:learn-to-learn/x141050afa14cfed3:learning-hacks-conclusion/a/l2l-learning-hacks-conclusion>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Highlights simple, research-backed strategies that improve memory, motivation, and learning habits. Useful for instructors looking to teach metacognitive skills and foster deeper learning.

7. **NorQuest College. *Test Taking Strategies*.** NorQuest Library Guides, <https://libguides.norquest.ca/testtaking/home>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Offers a range of exam preparation tips tailored to adult learners. Instructors can integrate these strategies into lessons or share them as independent resources to support test success.

8. **Seneca Polytechnic. *Assignment Planner*.** Seneca Libraries, <https://libraryresources.senecapolytechnic.ca/assignmentplanner/>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

An interactive tool for managing assignments and deadlines. Community-based instructors can encourage learners to use it for developing organizational and time management skills and to build a study plan based on when they want to write their exams.

9. **Vretta. *Shared Test Version – CAEC*.** Vretta, <https://caec.vretta.com/#/en/test-auth/shared-test-version/906/2652>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Allows learners to explore the format of the CAEC exam. Instructors can use it to ease test anxiety and provide practice opportunities for the digital skills required, and to get a sense of the content and difficulty levels of the exams.

10. **Vretta Inc. *Accessibility Statement*.** Vretta, <https://www.vretta.com/accessibility-statement/>. Accessed 6 Aug. 2025.

Describes the organization's commitment to accessible design.