

# CAEL Data Report of 2023-2024 Test Takers

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**CAEL**<sup>®</sup>

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## 1 Description of the Test

### 1.1 General Description

The Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Test is a standardized assessment designed to measure the English language proficiency of students planning to study at Canadian post-secondary institutions. This test is administered by Paragon Testing Enterprises Inc, a Prometric company.

The CAEL Test provides an authentic representation of language use in a Canadian academic context. Similar to a university or college classroom in Canada, test takers are required to read articles, listen to lectures, respond to questions, and write a short essay using information derived from both listening and reading materials. Over 180 academic institutions in Canada accept CAEL scores as proof of an applicant's English language proficiency. A number of professional associations also recognize CAEL as evidence of English language proficiency required for membership.

CAEL is fully computer-delivered and is available through two methods of administration – CAEL at a Test Centre, and CAEL Online. CAEL Online maintains the same test format, content, and reporting scale as the version administered at Paragon's test centres. The CAEL Test is offered at test centres in more than 40 locations worldwide, with test dates available each month. CAEL Online can be taken securely from home and is overseen by a secure online proctoring solution.

Paragon is committed to upholding the highest standards in educational measurement. Each component of the CAEL Test is developed in accordance with specified guidelines, and test results are closely monitored to ensure they are accurate, informative, and reliable. Paragon collaborates with test centres and online proctoring services to ensure that the CAEL Test is administered fairly, securely, and is accessible to all individuals who wish to take the exam.

### 1.2 Test Format

CAEL assesses test-takers' English language proficiency in an academic context through five different test units. These units include various tasks. To incorporate the integrated nature of academic language skills, some of these tasks will require test takers to use information from reading and listening sections to respond to questions in speaking or writing. Table 1 provides a detailed description of the format and content for each test unit.

**Table 1: Format and Content of the CAEL**

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Component	Duration (Minutes)	Item Description	Number of Items
<b>Speaking</b>	7-10 minutes	Two speaking tasks, each based on a short question	3
		One speaking task based on a graph/diagram/chart	
<b>Integrated Reading</b>	25-35 minutes	One or two short reading passages with comprehension questions	38
		One or two long reading passages with comprehension questions	
<b>Integrated Listening</b>	35-50 minutes	One speaking question, answered using material from a long reading passage	15 - 26
		One or two short listening passages with comprehension questions	
		One or two long listening passages with comprehension questions	
<b>Academic Unit A</b>	60-70 minutes	One speaking question, answered using material from a long listening passage	23 - 31
		One long reading passage with comprehension questions	
		One long listening passage on the same topic, with comprehension questions	
<b>Academic Unit B</b>	40-45 minutes	One writing question requiring an extended response, using material from both the long reading passage and the long listening passage	23 - 31
		One long reading passage with comprehension questions	
		One long listening passage on the same topic, with comprehension questions	
		One writing question requiring a short response, using material from the long	

**Table 1: Format and Content of the CAEL Test**

	reading passage or the long listening passage
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\*Unscored Items: Each test contains unscored items used for test development. These unscored items can be found anywhere within each test and will have the same format as the scored items.

1.3 Scoring and Reporting of Results

Each CAEL test taker receives a score report showing their performance on the Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking components, and an Overall score that is the unweighted average of the four component scores.

The multiple-choice items are scored by computer. Each correct answer contributes proportionately to the final score, and there are no points deducted for wrong answers. The Speaking and Writing components are evaluated by at least four certified raters using a scale established by Paragon.

CAEL scores are reported on a 9-band scale from 10 to 90 with descriptors explaining each band level. The overall score is calculated as an average of the four component scores and rounding to the nearest band level. Table 2 presents descriptions of test taker proficiency at each band level.

**Table 2: Proposed Interpretation of Overall Band Scores**

Table 2: Overall Performance Band Score Descriptors for CAEL	
CAEL BAND	DESCRIPTOR
10-20	Low Beginner: Communicates with limited ability
30	High Beginner: Expresses basic ideas about familiar topics in routine settings
40	Intermediate: Demonstrates some ability to comprehend and articulate complex ideas and arguments typical of academic or professional settings
50	High Intermediate: Exhibits some competence in academic or professional settings; communication may break down in places
60	Advanced: Displays competence in academic or professional settings

**Table 2: Overall Performance Band Score Descriptors for CAEL**

<b>70</b>	Adept: Uses generally accurate language in most settings; some limitations in flexibility are evident
<b>80-90</b>	Expert: Demonstrates a high level of competence, accuracy, and effectiveness in academic/professional settings

For a more detailed review of CAEL score interpretation, please see Appendix A: CAEL Reporting Scale.

## 1.4 Interpreting CAEL Results

CAEL has been designed to assess the English language ability of test takers in academic contexts. Table 2 (previous section) describes the interpretation of each band score.

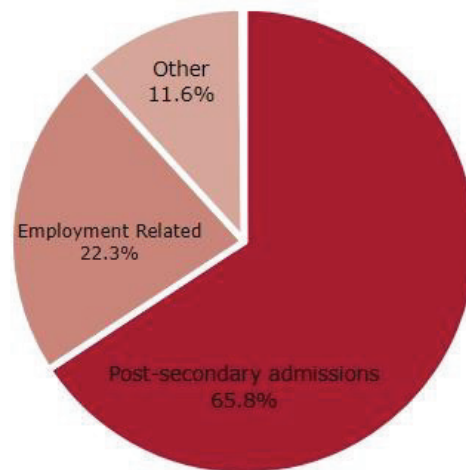
When interpreting a CAEL score report, it is important to remember that CAEL estimates test taker's true proficiency by approximating the kinds of tasks that they may encounter in the course of their study or academic work. There are, inevitably, small mismatches between the tasks test takers completed as part of the test and the tasks that they need to perform in a specific context. Also, temporary factors unrelated to test taker's true proficiencies, such as fatigue, anxiety, or illness, may affect their CAEL results.

It is also important to remember that test performance reflects only one aspect that impacts how well the candidate will perform in an academic context. Communicative language ability consists of both knowledge of language and knowledge of the world. In an academic context, the ability to function effectively involves not only knowledge of English but also knowledge of the context, subject matter expertise, and the ability to integrate information from multiple sources.

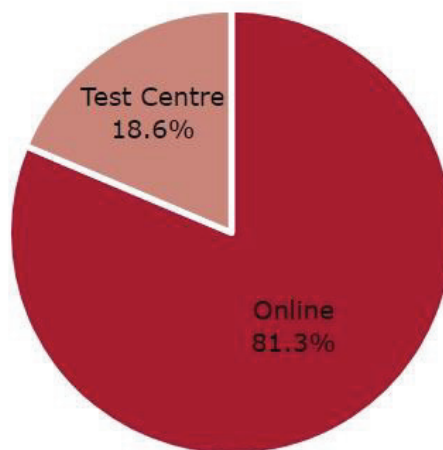
## 2 Test-Taking Population

This section presents an overview of the CAEL test taker population in 2024 in terms of test purpose, mode of administration, and demographic information.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of test takers by test purpose. The majority of CAEL test takers registered with the intent to use their test scores as proof of English language proficiency for either employment or post-secondary applications.



**Figure 1: Distribution of CAEL Test Takers by Purpose**



**Figure 2: Online vs Test Centre Population**

Figure 2 shows the proportions of test takers by the two modes of administration. A larger number of test takers opted to take CAEL online through live remote proctoring.

Table 3 shows the distribution of test takers by age. The three largest age groups are those between 20 and 35, representing 52.75% of all test takers in 2023-2024.

**Table 3: Distribution of CAEL Test Takers by Age**

Age Group	% of Total Test Population
< 20	10.60
20-25	18.43
26-30	18.21
31-35	16.11
36-40	13.43
41-45	11.18
46-50	7.26
51-55	2.25
> 55	2.54

**3. Test Statistics**

**3.1 Score Distributions**

This section presents a summary of the score distributions of each CAEL component and overall band levels. Table 4 presents the mean score and standard deviation for each component of CAEL. Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of test takers at each band level.

**Table 4: CAEL Component and Overall Test Scores**

Component	Mean	Standard Deviation
Listening	66.06	17.57
Speaking	63.98	12.11
Reading	63.51	20.11
Writing	63.04	12.86
Overall	65.51	13.66

**Table 5: Distribution of CAEL Test Takers by Band Score (%)**

Band	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
10	1.45	2.32	1.45	0.00	0.07

Band	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
20	1.09	1.89	0.07	0.22	1.23
30	1.74	2.76	1.09	2.47	1.16
40	6.39	13.64	3.48	3.77	4.35
50	16.55	10.89	10.45	13.35	12.84
60	15.38	18.58	43.69	28.16	25.11
70	22.21	17.05	24.17	37.88	29.39
80	21.04	15.02	12.34	11.39	21.48
90	14.15	17.85	3.27	2.76	4.35

For most universities that accept CAEL as proof of English language proficiency, the minimum required score is an Overall 60. As Table 5 indicates, 80.33% of test takers achieve an Overall score of 60 or above, thus meeting the requirements for most university admissions.

### 3.2 Test Score by Subgroups

**Table 6. Average CAEL Scores by Test Purpose**

Test Purpose	Listening		Reading		Writing		Speaking		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Study permit application	73.33	11.55	53.33	25.17	63.33	5.77	63.33	5.77	63.33	15.28
Post-secondary admission	66.84	17.85	64.18	20.19	63.97	13.29	64.21	12.59	66.16	13.92
Professional designation	65.75	16.31	64.17	18.86	61.19	10.83	64.21	10.09	65.16	12.09
Other	61.28	17.19	58.11	20.88	60.07	12.54	62.09	12.08	61.82	13.90



**Table 7. Average CAEL Scores by the Top 8 Declared Nationalities**

Country	Listening		Reading		Writing		Speaking		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Canada	66.86	17.35	63.85	20.03	63.89	13.11	66.86	12.58	66.86	13.88
India	68.25	15.58	65.05	17.33	63.88	11.20	64.27	10.18	66.65	10.91
China	64.79	19.77	66.49	21.44	63.83	14.30	57.45	10.77	64.26	14.85
Mexico	63.92	18.34	63.33	20.66	61.37	8.72	63.33	10.71	63.53	12.46
Brazil	67.87	17.19	69.79	19.28	62.34	12.20	64.89	10.19	66.81	12.87
Iran	63.70	17.43	62.17	21.90	60.22	14.06	62.61	10.42	63.91	14.53
Ukraine	60.00	21.43	55.56	24.91	59.33	18.88	59.11	14.43	60.22	18.40
Colombia	63.89	12.02	63.33	16.90	60.28	7.74	61.39	8.67	63.61	9.61

**Table 8. CAEL Scores by the Top 8 Declared First Languages**

Language	Listening		Reading		Writing		Speaking		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
English	70.11	18.20	66.35	19.63	65.91	14.87	70.39	14.85	69.67	14.90
Spanish	65.60	16.91	64.40	18.85	62.20	9.63	64.29	9.88	65.12	12.19
Arabic	60.73	18.29	55.04	22.67	58.29	13.10	60.73	11.61	60.24	14.79
Panjabi	67.85	14.73	66.07	16.00	64.30	9.23	64.67	9.74	67.20	9.98
Chinese	64.89	20.24	66.11	21.50	63.67	14.57	57.11	11.14	64.33	14.92
Farsi	62.42	17.81	62.27	21.32	62.58	16.11	61.82	10.66	64.24	14.26
Hindi	66.00	16.94	60.92	17.11	62.77	12.06	64.62	12.13	64.62	11.19
Portuguese	68.71	16.84	70.32	18.37	62.74	11.48	65.65	9.17	67.58	12.24

## 4 Academic Relevance and Test Preparation

The CAEL Test is an excellent tool for identifying students who possess the necessary English skills for academic success. It authentically represents language use in a Canadian academic environment.

Paragon offers various test preparation materials, both free and paid, to help test takers get ready for the exam. For more information about test registration and preparation, visit the CAEL website at [www.cael.ca](http://www.cael.ca).

## Appendix

### CAEL Reporting Scale

Band Score	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
<b>80-90</b> <b>Expert</b>	Comprehends lectures as well as an experienced academic listener.	Reads academic texts with ease demonstrating comprehension equal to that of experienced academic readers.	Writes with authority and style demonstrating mastery of appropriate, concise and persuasive academic writing.	Speaks with authority on a variety of topics. Demonstrates flexibility, controls nuance and speaks with spontaneity and comprehensibility.	Demonstrates a high level of competence, accuracy, and effectiveness in academic/professional settings.
<b>70</b> <b>Adept</b>	Understands lectures with apparent ease.	Reads and comprehends academic texts with ease. Can interpret information with flexibility.	Readily responds to the demands of the topic and presents information clearly and logically.	Speaks with ease presenting information clearly and logically.	Uses generally accurate language in most settings; some limitations in flexibility are evident.
<b>60</b> <b>Advanced</b>	Understands information regarding both main ideas and supporting details. May lack some flexibility and miss some information.	Reads and comprehends academic texts with ease. Can interpret information with flexibility.	Can develop a thesis using a range of support and uses language that is generally accurate.	Speaks fluently, flexibly and with a degree of ease. Compensates strategically for limitations but communicates most required information clearly.	Displays competence in academic or professional settings.

Band Score	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
<b>50 High Intermediate</b>	Processes most of the lecture for general ideas but may miss or misinterpret details. Overall understanding is still somewhat restricted.	Understands main ideas but may misinterpret information. Can identify some relevant details but reads slowly and with greater effort than most academic readers.	Addresses the topic to a degree but with limited clarity and cohesiveness.	Speaks with some fluency and flexibility but speaks unevenly; at times there is a natural easy quality to the response but at other times the response breaks down.	Exhibits some competence in academic or professional settings; communication may break down in places.
<b>40 Intermediate</b>	Identifies the meaning of some unfamiliar terms but overall understanding is restricted and uneven.	Understands main ideas but is restricted by limited vocabulary and a lack of familiarity with textual conventions.	Makes links among ideas and addresses the topic but writing lacks clarity and cohesiveness.	Can speak with some fluency but without flexibility and with noticeable effort.	Demonstrates some ability to comprehend and articulate complex ideas and arguments typical of academic or professional settings.
<b>30 High Beginner</b>	Makes sense of some sections of lectures by guessing but overall understanding is limited.	Understands some of the main ideas but is unable to identify specific, relevant ideas; reads with limited accuracy and fluency.	Writes something related to the topic but writing is not predictable and language is restricted.	Can speak but with false starts, hesitations and some mispronounced words. Provides studied and careful responses.	Expresses basic ideas about familiar topics in routine settings.
<b>10-20 Low Beginner</b>	Takes some meaning from individual words but overall understanding is sketchy and random.	Understands the main idea at times but misses almost all supporting detail.	Uses words randomly but language is very restricted and/or ungrammatical.	Communicates some information but mispronounces many words and speaks with great difficulty and many long pauses.	Communicates with limited ability.