

About Your Study Plan

This Study Plan details the materials and resources available to candidates in pursuit of a Special Education endorsement. We encourage you to use your American Board resource modules to target your learning needs and goals. Hyperlinked resources are integrated content for the Special Education endorsement certification. Please make sure that you visit the relevant pages to access all of the resources.

Your commitment to great teaching begins here. The effort you put in will not only help you pass the test but will also prepare you to become an informed and successful teacher.

Special Education Exam Snapshot

American Board is committed to providing you with the resources that will prepare you for the classroom. We will provide you with study resources to prepare you for the exam.

It is your job to commit to preparing and to maintain focus while studying. Think of the snapshot below as an overview for what you need to know. For more detail in each topic, review the exam standards. The American Board exams are based on this blueprint, so consider the Special Education Study Plan as a syllabus detailing your study needs.



The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, they must be felt with the heart.

- Helen Keller

Special Education Exam Snapshot

Time Allowed	240 minutes for multiple-choice	Exam Summary	Content Domains	Approximate Percentage of Examination
Format	Multiple Choice		Professional Skills and Background Knowledge	22%
# of Questions	125 multiple-choice questions		Understanding the Special Needs Student	23%
On-Screen Exhibits	None		General Special Education Practices	37%
Passing Score	Proficient: 278 Distinguished: 312		Language Development Strategies	18%
(The number of questions answered correctly is converted to a scaled score ranging from 0 to 500. Writing component scores range from 0 to 6.)				

About This Exam

The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence believes that highly skilled special education teachers should possess a comprehensive body of knowledge that is research-based and promotes student achievement. The special education exam is designed for candidates who intend to teach in any K-12 special education program. The topics assessed include the basic principles and foundations of special education, language development, assessment, and instructional delivery.

“The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men who are capable of doing new things.”

- Jean Piaget

The Study Plan:

Your study plan includes direction on how to use American Board’s resources. We also include recommended resources to aid in your mastery. Use the hyperlinks and recommended resources below to guide your studies and notetaking.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that guarantees a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) and appropriate services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for children from birth through the age of 21 who meet eligibility requirements. Each state is required to develop processes and systems to identify and provide educational and other related services to these individuals. State certification exams will contain items related to your state’s unique special education programs and systems. Be sure to visit your state’s Department of Special Education website to familiarize yourself with special education policies, procedures, and acronyms. Investigate how individuals are referred for services, key components of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and meeting requirements, discipline for exceptional students, state testing requirements and accommodations, and multi-tiered systems of support. Although IDEA provides clear guidance and requirements for states, each state will ultimately set their own policies. Be aware of this as you progress through American Board’s Special Education course.

American Board Domain 1:
Professional Skills and Background Knowledge

American Board Standards	Resources and Recommended Texts	Core Content Terms
Topic 1: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations	☐ United States Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights ☐ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ☐ Iris Center ☐ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ☐ Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services ☐ Brown v. Board of Education ☐ Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley ☐ Honig v. Doe ☐ Endrew F. v. Douglas County ☐ Winkelman v. Parma City School District ☐ Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia Recommended Text ☐ Teaching in Today’s Inclusive Classroom: A Universal Design for Learning Approach (3rd ed.)	☐ Individual Education Plan (IEP) ☐ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ☐ Section 504 ☐ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ☐ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ☐ Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

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Your Notes:

American Board Domain 1:
Professional Skills and Background Knowledge

American Board Standards	Resources and Recommended Texts	Core Content Terms
Topic 2: Professional and Ethical Practice	☐ IDEA Website ☐ Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) ☐ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ☐ Professional Learning and Ethical Practice Standard 9 Recommended Text ☐ Teaching in Today's Inclusive Classroom: A Universal Design for Learning Approach (3rd ed.) ☐ High-leverage Practices in Special Education	
Topic 3: Professional Communication and Collaboration	Recommended Text ☐ Teaching in Today's Inclusive Classroom: A Universal Design for Learning Approach(3rd ed.) ☐ High-leverage Practices in Special Education	

Your Notes:

Note: The resources recommended outside of the American Board program are often freely accessible online or can be found in your library. To ease your search we have hyperlinked them.