



The 2020 Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments: What Parents Need to Know

Every spring, the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across New York State. These annual ELA and math tests for students in grades 3-8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide classroom instruction and help to ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school with the critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills needed for success in college and the modern workplace. The tests also show how schools and districts are progressing with the learning standards and can support professional development for teachers. Below you will find information about the 2020 tests.

Fewer Test Sessions

- Like the 2018 and 2019 tests, the 2020 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests are two sessions each.
- Fewer test sessions will lessen test fatigue for students and better enable them to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Untimed Tests

- Like the 2016 – 2019 tests, the 2020 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests will be untimed.
- In general, this means that as long as students are working productively, they will have as much time as they need to complete each test session, within the confines of the regular school day. A supervised lunch break should be arranged for students during any of the test sessions if necessary.
- Schools and districts have discretion to allow students to read silently or quietly exit the room when they have completed their test while others continue to work.

Test Questions Written and Reviewed by New York State Teachers

- Teachers from across the State serve on committees to write, evaluate and select questions for the tests.
- Hundreds of New York State educators certified in the grade/content were involved in creating and reviewing questions for 2020 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests and selecting the questions for the test forms.

Providing Results for Teachers and Improved Resources for Parents

- Like in previous years, the New York State Education Department plans to have instructional reports returned to teachers by the end of the school year and to release at least 75% of the test questions again.
- The 2020 Score Reports for parents will feature information about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Results can be used to see how schools, districts, and the State overall are progressing with the learning standards. However, State law and Regulations of the Education Commissioner prohibit districts from making promotions or placement decisions for students based solely or primarily on the performance on these tests.

Computer-Based Testing

- Some schools chose to administer the 2020 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests on computers rather than by paper and pencil. The computer-based tests (CBT) will have the same questions as the paper versions. Students in those schools utilizing the CBT option have access to CBT practice tests and their districts must have had prior experience participating in computer-based tests in ELA and Math.
- The long-term plan is for all schools to use CBT for annual State tests. CBT has the potential to further reduce the need for stand-alone field tests and make assessments better instructional tools for students with disabilities.