



New York State Testing Program

Guide to the 2011 Grades 3–8 Testing Program in English Language Arts and Mathematics

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

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Message to Teachers and Administrators



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
Office of Assessment Policy, Development and Administration

November 2010

Dear Colleagues:

The 2010–11 school year marks the sixth administration of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests. Your cooperation during the 2009–10 school year ensured that the administration of these tests ran smoothly and efficiently. On behalf of the Department, I thank you for your efforts and look forward to our continued work together to ensure successful future administrations of this testing program.

At their June 22, 2009 meeting, the Board of Regents directed the New York State Education Department to redesign the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests to cover a broader range of performance indicators. In order to accomplish this, the Department has made changes to the format of the testing program, lengthened the amount of time each test will take, and changed the administration dates.

This updated guide is designed to provide you with further information regarding the NYS Testing Program in the 2010–11 school year, including the changes made based on the Board of Regents' directives. These include changes to the number and types of questions, the percentages of questions assessing each standard, and the format of each test. Schools and districts are encouraged to use this information when reviewing local curricula and in planning their instructional programs.

Please note that the performance indicators to be assessed have not changed. These are still based upon the New York State Learning Standards which are available on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/cores.html>. However, the number of performance indicators that will be assessed on each year's test has been expanded beyond that of prior years.

This guide also contains information for teachers and administrators on the administration and scoring of the operational tests, testing materials needed, and test misadministration. A chart is included that lists the testing times for each grade level; this chart also lists the preparation time for each test book. The guide provides detailed information on testing accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners.

If you are interested in participating in test development and evaluation activities for the Department, please fill out the recruitment form available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/osa/teacher>; we welcome and encourage your participation. The Department is also interested in your comments regarding the materials found in this guide; please send them via e-mail at: emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov.

Thank you for your help and for all the work that you do on behalf of the students in New York State.

Sincerely,

David Abrams
Assistant Commissioner

General Information About the New York State Testing Program

Purpose of the New York State Testing Program

The New York State Testing Program is designed to evaluate the implementation of the State’s Learning Standards at the student, school, district, and State levels. To meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), tests in English language arts and mathematics are administered annually at each grade level in Grades 3–8. The requirement under NCLB to administer standardized statewide tests of demonstrated technical quality at the high school level will be met by continuing the administration of Regents Examinations. All of the State tests serve as important measures of student progress. The Grades 3–8 tests provide information about students’ preparedness for study at the next grade level, while Regents Examinations verify that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for high school graduation.

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests help schools to identify students for whom they need to provide additional academic assistance. However, the Department advises schools that decisions such as promotion or retention should be based on multiple measures of the student’s achievement and not solely on scores from the New York State Testing Program. This is essential to ensure that important decisions are made on the basis of a student’s overall achievement rather than on the student’s performance on a single measure.

State assessments are also designed to help schools measure the effectiveness of their instructional programs and to measure yearly student progress. The assessments are based on the State Learning Standards and the Core Curriculum; the content of the tests should mirror the instruction being provided in the classrooms. Students should not need extensive preparation to do well on the State assessments as long as the curriculum used by the school is aligned with the State’s Learning Standards and the teachers are effectively instructing students in accordance with the curriculum.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

NCLB is a federal education initiative that was passed in 2001. Its purpose is “to close the achievement gap through accountability, research-based instruction, and options for parents, so that no child is left behind.”

Under NCLB, all states that receive federal funding for education are required to test students in Grades 3–8 in reading and mathematics in order to measure yearly progress. High school students must be tested at least once in these subjects. The tests used to measure student progress must be aligned with the State’s Learning Standards.

The information gathered from the results of the tests are used to determine whether schools and districts are making adequate yearly progress toward the achievement goals determined by the State. Schools that meet or exceed the adequate yearly progress goals will be considered for State achievement awards, while schools that fail to meet these goals will be targeted for improvement. Districts are required to develop assistance plans for schools that do not make adequate yearly progress.

More information about NCLB is available at the U.S. Department of Education web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>.

New York State Education Department

With its mission to “raise the knowledge, skill, and opportunity of all the people in New York,” the Department has a distinguished history dating back to 1784, when the Board of Regents was established to oversee Kings College (now Columbia University). Almost a century ago, Governor Theodore Roosevelt proposed the creation of a department with the responsibility for all education in the State.

Today, the Board of Regents and the Department govern education in New York State from pre-kindergarten to graduate school. The Board of Regents and the Department are constitutionally responsible for setting education policies, standards, and rules and are legally required to ensure that these are fully implemented.

More information about the Department is available on its web site at: <http://www.nysed.gov>.

CTB/McGraw-Hill

Since 1998, CTB/McGraw-Hill has collaborated with the Department and with New York State teachers in the development, administration, scoring, and reporting of the New York State Testing Program in English Language Arts and Mathematics for Grades 4 and 8. As the testing program has expanded to include Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, CTB/McGraw-Hill continues to collaborate with the Department and with the teachers of New York State to design and implement a testing program that helps to ensure that New York schools are providing—and New York students are receiving—instruction that will help them meet New York State’s Learning Standards.

How the Tests Are Developed

New York State teachers and administrators serve as members of the test development team, participating in the test development process from the design stage through the review of the finished test questions and scoring rubrics.

The first step in test development is to create new specifications for test questions. Committees composed of New York State general, English language learner, and special education teachers, Department staff, and staff from CTB/McGraw-Hill meet to ensure that the test questions are aligned with the State’s Learning Standards and classroom instruction. Information from these committees also provides guidelines for writing the test questions by selecting standards and performance indicators that are most appropriate for Statewide testing and by identifying formats best suited to assessing those standards and performance indicators under the principles of Universal Design in Assessment. (For the English Language Arts Tests, the committees also review the reading and listening passages to be used in the tests.) These New York-developed specifications are then used, along with the State’s Learning Standards and other materials, to train and guide experienced writers to develop appropriate test questions.

The test questions and rubrics are submitted to CTB/McGraw-Hill for a rigorous editing-and-review cycle and are then reviewed by committees of teachers and administrators from throughout New York and by Department staff. The questions are reviewed from several perspectives, including alignment to the State’s Learning Standards; appropriateness in terms of both grade level and content; clear and concise language; and content-specific issues, such as calculator use for the Grades 7 and 8 Mathematics Tests and appropriateness of genre of literary texts. Based on the recommendations of the review committees, the test questions are accepted, revised, or rejected. A final review with Department officials determines the finished questions that will be selected for field testing.

Multiple field test forms are created from the approved pool of questions. After the questions are field tested on New York State students, range-finding is undertaken to establish guidelines for scoring each question. The State, along with representatives from the Department and from CTB/McGraw-Hill, participate in selecting sample papers that exemplify each score point. These anchor papers form the basis of the scoring guide that will be used in scoring the operational tests. After the questions are field tested, only those proven by data analysis to be valid and reliable measurements of the State’s Learning Standards are selected for inclusion in the final operational test forms. Each year, Field Tests for the English Language Arts Tests and the Mathematics Tests are administered to students in selected schools, including students with disabilities.

The English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests will be administered in May.

Administration of the Operational Tests

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests are composed of two or three books per grade and are administered on two or three consecutive days, depending on the grade level. The Grades 3–8 Mathematics Tests are composed of two books and are administered on two consecutive days.

The table below shows the approximate operational testing times for both content areas at each grade level.

Grade	Book	English Language Arts			Mathematics		
		Test Time (in minutes)	Prep Time (in minutes)	Day Administered	Test Time (in minutes)	Prep Time (in minutes)	Day Administered
3	1	60	10	1	60	10	1
	2	30	15*	2	40	10	2
	3	60	10	3			
4	1	70	10	1	70	10	1
	2	30	15*	2	70	10	2
	3	60	10	3			
5	1	60	10	1	60	10	1
	2	30	15*	2	50	10	2
	3	60	10	3			
6	1	80	10	1	60	10	1
	2	90	25*	2	60	10	2
7	1	80	10	1	70	10	1
	2	90	25*	2	55	10	2
8	1	80	10	1	65	10	1
	2	90	25*	2	70	10	2

* Includes time allotted for reading aloud the listening selection to the students.

The tests are to be administered under standard conditions, and directions are to be followed carefully. The same test administration procedures must be used with all students so that valid inferences can be drawn from the test results.

Complete information about test administration is contained in the *School Administrator’s Manual* and the *Teacher’s Directions*, which are part of the testing materials shipped to the schools each year.

Testing Materials

Before starting the test, the proctor distributes all testing materials to the students and gives them instructions according to the information in the *Teacher’s Directions*. For both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests, each student receives a test book, an answer sheet, and a No. 2 pencil. For the Mathematics Tests, each student in Grades 3–8 must have a ruler for his or her exclusive use during the test. For Grades 5 and 7, each student must also have a protractor for his or her exclusive use during the test. For the short- and extended-response questions in the Grades 7 and 8 Mathematics Tests, students will need a scientific calculator for Book 2 only. (See “Use of Calculators” on page 18.)

Test Books and Answer Sheets

Some test books contain multiple-choice questions only. Students record their answers to these questions on a separate answer sheet. Other test books contain only short- and extended-response questions. For these questions, students record their answers directly in their test books. For the English Language Arts Tests only, test books at some grades contain a combination of multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response questions. For these tests, students record the answers to the multiple-choice questions on an answer sheet, but write their answers to the short- and extended-response questions directly in their test books.

School Administrator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the school administrator to check all testing materials, to distribute the materials to the teachers or test administrators, and to ensure the security of the tests. All secure test materials must be stored in a safe or vault, as designated in the school’s Examination Storage Plan. These materials must be placed in the safe or vault as soon as they are received, and access to the secure test materials must be restricted to ensure that test security is maintained. Secure test materials must remain sealed in their packaging until the dates on which they will be administered.

In addition, to preserve the integrity of the test materials, advise all teachers administering and scoring this test that they are not to discuss test questions or other specific test content with each other, with others online via e-mail or listserv, or through any other electronic means.

The school administrator must ensure that students with disabilities are provided the allowable testing accommodations as indicated on a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan). The school administrator must also make sure that teachers, aides, and assistants receive training to ensure the correct implementation of testing accommodations.

Teacher Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any teacher administering the test to organize the classroom, prepare students for the test, prepare and distribute testing materials, and help to ensure test security. The teacher must understand the test administration process and be familiar with the testing materials. The teacher must also understand what testing accommodations are permitted for English language learners and for students with IEPs or 504 Plans.

Misadministration

Inappropriate administration of a test, or parts of a test, can occur in several ways. Examples of misadministration include the following:

- The student has used unauthorized or inappropriate testing accommodations or tools.
- The student cheats.
- A teacher has altered or revised a student answer.

It is the responsibility of those administering the tests to ensure that students are monitored closely, that students do not start the test before being instructed to do so, and that students with disabilities are provided the allowable testing accommodations or tools indicated in their IEPs or 504 Plans. Immediately notify your principal or school administrator if any part of the test is administered improperly.

Testing Accommodations

Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

In general, students with disabilities must be provided with the testing accommodations specified in their IEPs or 504 Plans when taking these tests. However, testing accommodations that change the constructs, or what a test is measuring, are not permitted on elementary- and intermediate-level State assessments. Testing accommodations that are not permitted on specific sections of the tests are described below.

Accommodations Specific to the English Language Arts Tests

For Reading Sections: Only test directions that are to be read aloud to all students may be read aloud. Because the test measures a student’s reading skills (decoding and comprehension), no other parts of this section may be read aloud. Please note that the test directions are those instructions, usually in bold-faced type, that **precede** a passage or a test question number. They are not to be confused with any part of the actual student task, which follows the test question number.

For Listening Sections: Test directions and all questions (in this part of the test) may be read aloud to students whose IEPs or 504 Plans include the testing accommodation of “test read.” If indicated in a student’s IEP or 504 Plan, the listening selection may be read aloud more than the standard number of times.

For Writing Sections: Because the test measures writing skills, students are **not** allowed to use spell-checking and/or grammar-checking devices during **any part** of the English Language Arts Tests. Students may **not** have requirements for spelling, paragraphing, and/or punctuation waived for any part of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests.

The use of scribes and the use of tape recorders are allowable accommodations for both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests. For the English Language Arts Tests, students using scribes or tape recorders must provide all information for the writing sections of the tests, including spelling of difficult words, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar.

Students may use a word processor (with spell-checking and grammar-checking devices *disabled*) instead of a scribe. Most students have some experience with a computer, and word processing allows students more control over their environment, fosters independence, and is less labor-intensive than using a scribe.

Accommodations Specific to the Mathematics Tests

All parts of the test may be read aloud to the students whose IEPs or 504 Plans include this testing accommodation.

- **Grades 3–6:** Because the test assesses a student’s proficiencies involving calculations, the use of a calculator is **not** allowed.
- **Grades 7–8:** Because the multiple-choice test questions assess a student’s proficiencies involving calculations, the use of a calculator is **not** allowed when answering multiple-choice questions. A calculator is permitted for short- and extended-response questions. (A scientific calculator must be used. A graphing calculator is **not** permitted.)

More detailed information on testing accommodations for students with disabilities can be found on the Department’s web site at:

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm>

English Language Learners

For English language learners, schools may provide the following testing accommodations:

- Time extension
- Separate location
- Third reading of *Listening Selection*
- Bilingual dictionaries and glossaries (direct translations only; no definitions or explanations permitted)
- Simultaneous use of English and alternative language editions (Mathematics Tests only)
- Oral translation for lower-incidence languages (Mathematics Tests only)

More detailed information on accommodations for English language learners can be found on the Department’s web site in the School Administrator’s Manuals for English Language Arts or Mathematics at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/osa/manuals>.

Former English Language Learners

Schools may provide the test accommodations listed above under the heading “English language learners” only to those former English language learners who were identified as English language proficient based on their scores on one of the two most recent administrations of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), either Spring 2009 or Spring 2010. These accommodations may not be provided to former English language learners who were identified English language proficient prior to the 2009 NYSESLAT administration.

For each English language learner or eligible former English language learner as explained above, darken the circles indicating the testing accommodations provided on the multiple choice answer sheet under the heading English language learner accommodations.

Exemption of English Language Learners

For the May 2011 administration, schools are permitted to exempt from the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests English language learners (including those from Puerto Rico) who, on April 1, 2011, will have been attending school in the United States for **the first time for less than one year**.

Recently arrived English language learners may be eligible for one, and only one, exemption from the administration of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. Subject to this limitation, schools may administer the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) in lieu of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Test, for participation purposes only, to recently arrived English language learners who meet the criterion above. All other English language learners must participate in the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests, as well as in the NYSESLAT.

Alternative Language Editions of the Mathematics Tests

The Grades 3–8 Mathematics Tests are available in Chinese (traditional), Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. English language learners may be provided with an oral translation of the Mathematics Tests when a written translation is not available in the student’s first language.

Braille and Large-Type Editions of the Tests

Schools may order braille and large-type editions of both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests. For more information, please contact your principal or school administrator.

For large-type or braille editions of the tests, test administrators should transcribe the students’ answers onto regular test answer sheets and test books, exactly as dictated or recorded by the students.

More detailed information on the New York State Testing Program’s English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests can be found in the School Administrator’s Manuals.

The English Language Arts Tests

Each of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests is made up of two or three books (depending on the grade level). The tests assess standards for listening, reading, and writing.

Listening

For the listening selections of the English Language Arts Tests, students listen to a passage and apply skills and knowledge gained in the classroom to answer comprehension questions. The questions are designed to demonstrate students’ understanding of the passage.

Listening selections may represent a variety of genres. The listening section of each test for Grades 3, 4, and 6 contains literary passages. The listening section of each test for Grades 5, 7, and 8 contains informational passages. Literary passages may include short stories, folk tales, poetry, or other forms of literary writing. Informational passages may include articles, excerpts from biographies or autobiographies, essays, or other forms of informational writing.

The listening passages that appear on the tests are similar to the kinds of materials students read and hear in the classroom. Listening passages are carefully selected for grade-level-appropriate vocabulary and content. Students will not see the questions prior to hearing the listening selection. They should be encouraged to take careful notes during the second reading of the listening selection to assist them in answering the questions that follow. (In Grades 6–8, students may also take notes during the first reading.)

Reading

In the Reading section of the English Language Arts Tests, students read several passages representing a variety of genres. For each passage, students apply the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom by answering reading comprehension questions that demonstrate their understanding of the passages.

Tests at every grade level contain both literary and informational reading passages. Literary passages may include short stories, folk tales, poetry, or other forms of literary writing. Informational passages may include articles, excerpts from biographies or autobiographies, essays, or other forms of informational writing.

The reading passages that appear on the tests are similar to the kinds of materials students read both in the classroom and for homework assignments. Reading passages are carefully selected for grade-level-appropriate vocabulary and content.

Writing

The reading/writing section of the tests will be composed of four short-response questions and one extended-response question. Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge of three types of writing: narrative, persuasive, and informative. Students will write from a variety of prompts and for many different audiences. Student responses will be evaluated on how well the writing addresses the task and demonstrates understanding of the passages.

English Language Arts Test Design

The following charts provide a description of the test design for each grade.

Grade 3

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Total
6–7 passages (literary and informational) 35 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (literary) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions	2 passages (not paired) 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	9–10 passages 43–45 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
60 minutes	30 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	60 minutes	150 minutes

Grade 4

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Total
7–8 passages (literary and informational) 43 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (literary) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions	2 paired passages (literary and informational) 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	10–11 passages 51–53 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
70 minutes	30 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	60 minutes	160 minutes

Grade 5

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Total
6–7 passages (literary and informational) 35 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (informational) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions	2 paired passages 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	9–10 passages 43–45 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
60 minutes	30 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	60 minutes	150 minutes

Grade 6

Book 1	Book 2	Total
6–7 passages (literary and informational) 41 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (literary) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions 2 paired passages (literary and informational) 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	9–10 passages 49–51 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
80 minutes	90 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	170 minutes

Grade 7

Book 1	Book 2	Total
6–7 passages (literary and informational) 41 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (informational) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions 2 paired passages (literary and informational) 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	9–10 passages 46–48 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
80 minutes	90 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	170 minutes

Grade 8

Book 1	Book 2	Total
7–8 passages (literary and informational) 41 multiple-choice questions	1 listening selection (informational) 5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3–5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics) questions 2 paired passages (literary and informational) 4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	10–11 passages 49–51 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question
80 minutes	90 minutes (excluding reading listening selection aloud)	170 minutes

Approximate Percentage of Questions Assessing Each Standard

The following chart shows the approximate percentage of questions assessing each of the three English Language Arts Learning Standards measured by the tests for each grade.

Standard	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
1. Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking for Information and Understanding	33%	36%	43%	36%	39%	39%
2. Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking for Literary Response and Expression	47%	44.5%	36%	44.5%	39%	39%
3. Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking for Critical Analysis and Evaluation	20%	19.5%	21%	19.5%	22%	22%

Note: Writing mechanics is also scored, but it is not mapped to the standards.

Question Formats

The English Language Arts Tests will contain questions with a variety of formats, including multiple choice, short response (2-credit), extended response (Grade 3, 3-credit; Grades 4–8, 4-credit), and graphic organizers.

For multiple-choice questions, students will select the correct response from four answer choices.

For short- and extended-response questions, students will write answers to open-ended questions. The extended responses are scored for writing as well as for reading comprehension.

The editing paragraph and two extended responses will no longer be used to assess writing mechanics. Instead, multiple-choice questions will be included to assess the students’ knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

Scoring

Scores for all of the constructed responses are based on evidence of the following qualities:

- **Meaning**—the extent to which the response exhibits sound understanding, interpretation, and analysis of the task and text
- **Development**—the extent to which ideas are supported through the use of specific, accurate, and relevant evidence from the text

Scores for the extended responses are also based on evidence of the following qualities:

- **Organization**—the extent to which the response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence
- **Language Use**—the extent to which the response exhibits clear and effective use of vocabulary and sentence structure

The short-response and extended-response questions in the Listening and Reading sections of the test are scored individually with holistic rubrics. The short-response rubric allows for the scoring of meaning and development. In addition, the holistic rubric for the extended-response question in Grade 3 in the Reading section allows for the scoring of organization. The holistic rubric for the extended-response questions in Grades 4–8 in the Reading section allows for the scoring of organization as well as for language use.

The Mathematics Tests

Each of the Mathematics Tests in Grades 3–8 is made up of two books and assesses the new Mathematics Learning Standard. A complete description of the Mathematics Learning Standard can be accessed at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/3-8/home.html>.

For all grades, students apply the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom in order to answer three types of questions: multiple choice, short response, and extended response. The first section of each test consists of multiple-choice questions only. The second section consists of short- and extended-response questions.

To assist schools in the curriculum planning process for the May administration, the Department disseminated in July 2009 a memorandum entitled “Grades 3–8 Mathematics Testing Program Guidance, September–April/May–June.” (See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/osa/mathei/2010/3-8math2010.pdf>.) Schools were asked to use this guidance to ensure that the local curriculum sequencing is aligned with the May administration of the Grades 3–8 Mathematics Tests. This document lists all the content performance indicators by grade level and categorizes them as September–April/May–June. To illustrate, any of the May–June content performance indicators in Grade 3 and any of the September–April content performance indicators in Grade 4 could be included on the Grade 4 Mathematics Test.

Mathematics Test Design

The following charts provide a description of the test design for each grade.

Grade 3

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	40	0	0	40	60 minutes
2	0	4	2	6	40 minutes
Total	40	4	2	46	100 minutes

Grade 4

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	45	0	0	45	70 minutes
2	0	8	4	12	70 minutes
Total	45	8	4	57	140 minutes

Grade 5

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	41	0	0	41	60 minutes
2	0	4	4	8	50 minutes
Total	41	4	4	49	110 minutes

Grade 6

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	40	0	0	40	60 minutes
2	0	6	4	10	60 minutes
Total	40	6	4	50	120 minutes

Grade 7

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	45	0	0	45	70 minutes
2	0	4	4	8	55 minutes
Total	45	4	4	53	125 minutes

Grade 8

Book	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Short-Response Questions	Number of Extended-Response Questions	Total Number of Questions	Testing Time
1	42	0	0	42	65 minutes
2	0	8	4	12	70 minutes
Total	42	8	4	54	135 minutes

Approximate Percentage of Questions Assessing Each Content Strand

The following chart shows the approximate percentage of questions assessing each of the five content strands for each grade.

Content Strand	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
1. Number Sense and Operations	48%	45%	39%	37%	30%	11%
2. Algebra	13%	14%	11%	19%	12%	44%
3. Geometry	13%	12%	25%	17%	14%	35%
4. Measurement	13%	17%	14%	11%	14%	10%
5. Probability and Statistics	13%	12%	11%	16%	30%	0%

The questions on the Grades 3–8 Mathematics Tests assess both the content and the process strands of New York State Mathematics Standard 3. Each question may be aligned to one or more content performance indicators and is also aligned to one or more process performance indicators, as appropriate for the concepts embodied in the task. As a result of the alignment to both process and content strands, the tests assess students’ conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and problem-solving abilities, rather than assessing their knowledge of isolated skills and facts.

Question Formats

The Mathematics Tests contain multiple-choice, short-response (2-credit), and extended-response (3-credit) questions.

For multiple-choice questions, students select the correct response from four answer choices.

For short- and extended-response questions, students write an answer to an open-ended question and may be required to show their work. In some cases, they may be required to explain, in words, how they arrived at their responses.

Instructional Considerations: Use of Calculators and Value of Pi

Use of Calculators

For the short-response and extended-response questions in Grades 7 and 8 only (Book 2), students will need a scientific calculator. Graphing calculators are **not** permitted. Students are **not** permitted to use calculators for the multiple-choice questions in Grades 7 and 8 (Book 1) or for any questions on the tests in Grades 3–6. More specific information is available on the Department’s web site at: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/mst/math/documents/guide_calculator_use.html.

Value of Pi

Students should learn that π is an irrational number. For the short-response and extended-response questions in Grades 7 and 8, the π key and the full display of the calculator should be used in computations. The approximate values of π , such as 3.1416, 3.14, or $\frac{22}{7}$, are unacceptable.

Since calculator use is not permitted for the Grade 6 Test, students at that grade should leave their answers in terms of π for greatest accuracy (i.e., students should leave the symbol π in their responses).

Use of Reference Sheets

In the Grades 7 and 8 Tests, Book 2s contain a removable reference sheet that the students can use during testing. These reference sheets include the necessary formulas and reference information students need to assist them in answering certain mathematics questions. They are to be used **only** for short- and extended-response questions. Test books for Grades 3–6 do not have reference sheets; necessary formulas may be embedded in the test questions.

Use of Mathematics Tools

Each student in Grades 3–8 will need to have a ruler for his or her exclusive use during the Mathematics Tests. Each student in Grades 5 and 7 will also need to have a protractor for his or her exclusive use during the test. Students with disabilities may use three-dimensional tools that are comparable to the adapted rulers and protractors used in instruction if this is indicated as a testing accommodation on the student’s IEP or 504 Plan.

Note: Schools are responsible for supplying the appropriate tools for use with the Mathematics Tests. The Department does not provide them.

Scoring the Mathematics Tests

Scores on the Mathematics Tests are based on how well the students can accomplish the following tasks:

- Know and apply facts and definitions.
- Select and apply appropriate procedures.
- Use reasoning in new settings.
- Read and interpret graphs and tables.
- Recognize, interpret, and apply the signs, symbols, and terms used to represent concepts.
- Explain and justify the methods used to solve problems.

Mathematics Scoring Policies

Listed below are the policies to be followed while scoring the Mathematics Tests for all grades.

1. If the question does not specifically direct students to show their work, teachers may **not** score any work that the student shows.
2. If a student does the work in other than a designated “Show your work” area, that work may still be scored. (Additional paper is an allowable accommodation for a student with a disability if indicated on the student’s IEP or 504 Plan.)
3. If the question requires students to show their work, and the student shows appropriate work and clearly identifies a correct answer but fails to write that answer in the answer blank, the student should still receive full credit.
4. If the question requires students to show their work, and the student shows appropriate work and arrives at the correct answer but writes an incorrect answer in the answer blank, the student may **not** receive full credit.
5. If the student provides one legible response (and one response only), teachers should score the response, even if it has been crossed out.

6. If the student has written more than one response but has crossed some out, teachers should score only the response that has **not** been crossed out.
7. Trial-and-error questions are **not** subject to Scoring Policy #6 above, since crossing out is part of the trial-and-error process.
8. If a response shows repeated occurrences of the same conceptual error within a question, the student should **not** be penalized more than once.
9. In questions that provide ruled lines for students to write an explanation of their work, mathematical work shown elsewhere on the page may be considered and scored if, and only if, the student explicitly indicates the work as part of the answer.
10. Responses containing a conceptual error may **not** receive more than fifty percent of the maximum score.
11. In all questions that provide a response space for one numerical answer and require work to be shown, if the correct numerical answer is provided but no work is shown, the score is 1.
12. In all questions that provide response spaces for two numerical answers and require work to be shown for both parts, if one correct numerical answer is provided but no work is shown in either part, the score is 0. If two correct numerical answers are provided but no work is shown in either part, the score is 1.
13. In all 3-credit questions that provide response spaces for two numerical answers and require work to be shown in one part, if two correct numerical answers are provided but no work is shown, the score is 2.
14. For work shown to be considered complete, the final step of the work (bridging the work to the answer) needs to be shown. Exceptions to the rule are:
 - a simple subtraction procedure that results in an answer of 10 or less, involving whole numbers only
 - a simple one-digit to one-digit addition procedure in which the value of 10 or less is added to an existing value, involving whole numbers only
 - the procedure for finding the absolute value of a number
 - the procedure for converting a decimal value to a percent

Content-Specific Scoring Clarifications for Mathematics Tests

1. All necessary signs of operation should be present for work to be considered mathematically complete and correct. If signs of operation in the work shown are missing but it is absolutely clear and apparent in the student’s work which operation is being used, and if all other work required is correct, the student should receive full credit.
2. In questions that require students to provide bar graphs:
 - in Grades 3 and 4 only, touching bars are acceptable
 - in Grades 3 and 4 only, space between bars does **not** need to be uniform
 - in all grades, widths of the bars must be consistent
 - in all grades, bars must be aligned with their labels
 - in all grades, scales must begin at 0, but the 0 does **not** need to be written

3. In Grades 3 and 4 only, if the question asks the student to provide an expression and the student provides an equation, this is an acceptable response.
4. In questions requiring number sentences, the number sentences must be written horizontally.
5. Column subtraction of more than two numbers, while not a preferred procedure, is acceptable, provided that the complete process is shown in the student's work.
6. Column multiplication of more than two numbers is acceptable beginning in Grade 5, provided that any computation that is not shown falls within the 12×12 multiplication table.
7. In pictographs, the student is permitted to use a symbol other than the one in the key, provided that the symbol is used consistently in the pictograph; the student does not need to change the symbol in the key. The student may **not**, however, use multiple symbols within the chart, nor may the student change the value of the symbol in the key.
8. In estimation questions, the estimation must be performed at the beginning of the process; performing exact calculations and then rounding the result of the calculation is **not** acceptable.
9. The trial-and-error policy applies to Grades 7 and 8 only (and is particularly relevant to algebraic questions which require a graphical procedure or in which a variable is to be found). In order for a response to receive full credit, evidence of three trials must be present. A correct answer accompanied by an incomplete trial-and-error procedure can receive only partial credit.

For additional clarification, more information can be found on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/osa/math>.

Sample Questions for English Language Arts Tests

For the 2011 administration, the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will contain questions with a variety of formats, including multiple choice, short response, extended response, and graphic organizers.

Writing mechanics will no longer be assessed through the use of an editing paragraph or by assignment of a writing mechanics score to two extended responses. Instead, there will be multiple-choice questions in Book 2 of each grade. The writing mechanic questions will be stand alone questions; they will not be paired with a passage.

Sample multiple-choice questions for all grades assessing writing mechanics are provided below.

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions Assessing Writing Mechanics

Writing mechanics questions may test any of the skills found in the Core Curriculum including the following:

- 1) the elements of a complete sentence
- 2) subject-verb agreement
- 3) capitalization and punctuation
- 4) combining of sentences
- 5) separation of sentences

The length and complexity of test questions and answer choices will vary with the grade.

GRADE 3

Find the word or words that best complete the sentence.

_____ came from the pillow.

- A Feathers
- B Floating
- C Soft and white
- D All over the bed

GRADE 3

Choose the answer that shows the correct capitalization and punctuation.

- A He has green eyes
- B her hair is long.
- C My eyes are brown.
- D is your hair brown?

GRADE 4

Which sentence best combines the two sentences?

The train sped through the tunnel.

The train sped across the bridge.

- A The train sped through the tunnel and across the bridge.
- B The train sped through and across the tunnel and the bridge.
- C The train that sped through the tunnel sped across the bridge.
- D The train sped through the tunnel and it sped across the bridge.

GRADE 5

Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

In the sunshine, the wings of a butterfly _____ like jewels.

- A glow
- B glows
- C is glowing
- D has glowed

GRADE 6

Which of these is not a complete sentence?

- A Pat hit the ball as hard as she could.
- B No one could catch the ball.
- C Into the outfield while the crowd cheered.
- D Pat kept running until she reached home plate.

GRADE 7

Choose the answer that shows the correct capitalization and punctuation.

- A John Steinbeck’s novel “The Grapes of Wrath” begins in the dust bowl of Oklahoma.
- B Her poem, titled “Autumn Leaves,” won first prize in the poetry contest.
- C These “today’s Life” magazines are full of valuable articles for teenagers.
- D The Open Boat, a short story by Stephen Crane, is based on the author’s experiences.

GRADE 8

Which sentence contains two complete thoughts and should be written as two sentences?

- A Of all the months in the year, July is my favorite.
- B My sister went to a fun camp in the city this summer, I want to go next summer.
- C This summer, we traveled to several different cities to visit family.
- D We tried to go to the beach last weekend, but it was closed because a storm was expected.

Changes in the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Test Design for 2011

In 2011, the ELA Tests in all grades will have more reading passages and more multiple-choice questions in Book 1. There will still be a listening section containing multiple-choice and constructed-response questions, and a paired-passage section containing constructed-response questions. However, each constructed-response question will be scored individually; there will be holistic scoring, but no cluster scoring.

The Grade 3 extended-response question in Book 3 will be written based only on one preceding passage, not two passages as in the other grades. The Grade 3 test books will continue to have separately timed sections to ensure that students work through the entire books. A sample Book 3 consisting of reading passages, short-response questions, and an extended-response question are provided, along with the reading and writing rubric key points, on the following pages.

Sample Grade 3 Constructed-Response Questions (Book 3)

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read carefully all the directions in the test book.
- Plan your time.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before writing your response.

In this test, you will be writing about texts that you will be reading. Your writing will be scored on

- how accurately and completely you answer the questions being asked
- how well you support your responses with examples or details from the texts

Directions

In this part of the test, you are going to read two passages. First, you will read an article called “Helpful Fires” and answer questions 1 and 2 about that article. Then you will read a story called “The Bridge” and answer questions 3, 4, and 5 about that story.

Go On

Helpful Fires

A fire sweeps through a forest. The fire turns the green forest into dry land. This sight might seem sad, but fires can be good for forests.

People used to think all fires were bad. Forest rangers worked hard to stop fires before they started. Then people figured out that forests need fires.

Now people understand that small fires are good. They burn the natural litter of branches and leaves. Large piles of natural litter are dangerous. Too much fuel allows fires to get out of control. Small fires die when the fuel runs out. Burning the natural litter helps keep bigger fires from burning in the future.

That is not the only way fires help forests. Some plants need fires to help spread their seeds. These plants grow seeds in pods. The heat from fires makes the pods open. Then the seeds fall out. These seeds sprout to bring new life to a forest.

Fires also help forests with their ash. The ash from fires is good for the soil. This soil makes food for new plants that feed forest animals.

Today forest rangers sometimes let small fires burn. Rangers even plan fires to help the forests. However, rangers are careful. They know how dangerous fires can be. Even the fires that are planned can grow out of control. Rangers work hard to help the fires help the forests!

Go On

1

Read the chart below. Use details from the article to show **two** ways that fires help forests. One box has been filled in for you.

How Fires Help Forests
They burn the natural litter.

2

According to the article, how do forest rangers act around fires? Why do they act that way? Use details from the article in your answer.

How do forest rangers act around fires? _____

Why do forest rangers act that way? _____

STOP

The Bridge

Jane stared at the stick bridge she was making for school. She had gone to the kitchen to get some string. While she was gone, her dog Skip found the bridge and chewed it in half. Bits of wood covered the carpet like tiny puzzle pieces.

Jane gathered the two end pieces in her hands. She walked down the hall to find her dad. He was in the kitchen.

“Skip broke my bridge!” Jane cried with a shaky voice. “And I don’t have enough sticks to repair it.”

“Hmmm,” replied Dad thoughtfully. “When I have a hole in my shirt, I use another piece of cloth for a patch. Maybe you can find something else to patch your bridge.”

“I’ll try,” Jane answered uncertainly.

Jane had no idea what to use. She decided to start her search in her yard. She stepped outside and looked around. First, she spotted some leaves beneath the oak tree. Jane picked one up, but it broke apart in her hands. Next, Jane found some round stones, but they were too heavy. Her bridge could not hold up the rocks. Then Jane discovered some branches, but the funny sticks curved like giant question marks. She needed something straight.

Jane sighed and went back inside. Her search had made her thirsty. She asked her dad for a drink, and he gave her a glass of water with ice and a straw. Suddenly, Jane smiled. *She knew exactly what to use for her patch!* Bubbling with excitement, Jane hurried to try her plan.

Thirty minutes later, Jane proudly carried her completed bridge into the kitchen. She showed her dad how she had fixed the broken middle. Straws connected the two wooden ends.

“The straws are straight and strong,” Jane explained. “They were easy to tie together with my string.”

“I like it!” Dad said.

Jane grinned. Then she carefully placed her bridge on a high shelf. “My bridge needs a safe spot,” she said, “because Skip likes bridges too!”

Go On

3

Name **one** thing Jane finds outside. Why does she decide **not** to use what she finds? Use details from the story in your answer.

Name **one** thing Jane finds outside. _____

Why does Jane decide **not** to use what she finds? _____

4

How does Jane feel at the **end** of the story? Why does she feel that way? Use details from the story in your answer.

How does Jane feel at the **end** of the story? _____

Why does Jane feel that way?

Go On

5

Think about the story. What is Jane’s problem in the story? How does her dad help her fix her problem? Be sure to use at least **two** details from the story in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to

- tell what Jane’s problem is in the story
- tell how her dad helps her fix her problem
- use at least **two** details from the story in your answer

STOP

Sample Grade 3 Reading and Writing Rubric Key Points (Book 3)

Question 1

Read the chart below. Use details from the article to show **two** ways that fires help forests. One box has been filled in for you.

How Fires Help Forests
They burn the natural litter.

Possible Exemplary Responses:

- They cause seed pods to open so seeds can sprout.
- Their ash is good for the soil.
- They use up fuel to keep bigger fires from burning.
- other relevant text-based response

Question 2

According to the article, how do forest rangers act around fires? Why do they act that way? Use details from the article in your answer.

How do forest rangers act around fires? _____

Why do forest rangers act that way? _____

Possible Exemplary Responses:

How do forest rangers act around fires? / Why do forest rangers act that way?

- They are careful. / They know how dangerous fires can be.
- They are careful. / They know that fires can grow out of control.
- They work hard. / They have to keep good fires working for the forest.
- They sometimes let them burn. / They know that fires can be good for forests.
- other relevant text-based response

Question 3

Name **one** thing Jane finds outside. Why does she decide **not** to use what she finds? Use details from the story in your answer.

Name **one** thing Jane finds outside. _____

Why does Jane decide **not** to use what she finds? _____

Possible Exemplary Responses:

*Name **one** thing Jane finds outside. / Why does Jane decide **not** to use what she finds?*

- a leaf / The leaf breaks apart in her hands.
- round stones / The stones are too heavy OR The bridge will not hold them up.
- some branches / They were curved (like giant question marks) OR They were not straight.
- other relevant text-based response

Question 4

How does Jane feel at the **end** of the story? Why does she feel that way? Use details from the story in your answer.

How does Jane feel at the **end** of the story? _____

Why does Jane feel that way? _____

Possible Exemplary Responses:

*How does Jane feel at the **end** of the story?*

- proud
- happy
- other relevant text-based response

Why does Jane feel that way?

- She has figured out how to fix her bridge.
- Jane has fixed her bridge with straws.
- other relevant text-based response

Question 5

Think about the story. What is Jane’s problem in the story? How does her dad help her fix her problem? Be sure to use at least **two** details from the story in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to

- tell what Jane’s problem is in the story
- tell how her dad helps her fix her problem
- use at least **two** details from the story in your answer

Possible Exemplary Responses:

Jane wants to fix her bridge that Skip broke. Her dad tells her to look for something to patch her bridge. Jane looked at leaves, stones, and sticks to patch her bridge, but they would not work. Jane uses straws to fix her bridge because they are straight and strong.

Possible Details to Include in Answer:

- Jane’s dog Skip chews her stick bridge in half.
- Jane tells her dad that she does not have enough sticks to repair it.
- Jane’s dad tells her that he patches his shirts with another piece of cloth.
- Jane’s dad tells her to find something else to patch her bridge.
- Jane looks in her yard for something to patch her bridge but does not find anything straight.
- Jane’s dad gives her a glass of water with a straw, and suddenly Jane knows exactly what to use for her patch.
- Jane shows her dad how she fixed the broken bridge with straws.
- Jane says that the straws are straight and strong.
- other relevant text-based detail

