



The Nation's Report Card[™] and State Assessments

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as The Nation's Report Card[™], is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in a variety of subject areas such as reading, mathematics, science, history, civics, and the arts.

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all states must participate in NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8 every other year. States must also assess students in grades 3-8 in reading/language arts and mathematics each year using their own assessments and content standards. The state assessments serve as the basis for the states' accountability systems. The results of NAEP are not connected to measuring annual yearly progress (AYP) for the states, but by using a common scale of achievement, they provide a secondary indicator for state progress and allow for valid comparisons to be made across states and the nation. NAEP and state assessments serve different purposes and are used together to inform education policy.

	The Nation's Report Card (NAEP)	State Assessments
<i>Purposes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures student performance nationally and reports changes over time Provides results for the nation, states, and some urban districts Allows comparisons between states and to the nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure school and district AYP under NCLB based on state content standards to improve curriculum and instruction Provide state, district, school, and individual student data
<i>Frameworks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by the independent National Assessment Governing Board Not aligned to any particular content standards Includes involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders, including state education experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by each state based on state content standards Includes involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders
<i>Achievement Levels (also referred to as "Performance Standards")</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governing Board sets the NAEP achievement levels - <i>Basic, Proficient, and Advanced</i> <i>Proficient</i> indicates "competency over challenging subject matter" Does not refer to "at grade" performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set and defined by each state Based on each state's standards Used in reporting "proficiency" to the U.S. Department of Education Basis for AYP decisions Indicates "at grade" performance

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<i>About the Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes multiple-choice, short constructed response, and extended constructed response questions • Allows many (but not necessarily all) of the accommodations offered by states for students with disabilities and English language learners • Administered by NAEP field staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of assessment formats, such as multiple-choice, constructed response, performance events, portfolios, alternative assessments, and computer-based assessments • Assess students with disabilities and English language learners according to states' policies for inclusion and accommodation • Administered by school and district personnel
<i>Assessment Participation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative sample of students in grades 4 and 8 from each state participate in the reading and mathematics assessments every other year as required by NCLB • National and some state samples of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders periodically participate in assessment of other subject areas such as science, U.S. history, and civics, as well as special studies • Participation in NAEP is voluntary for students; however, some states require school and/or student participation in all NAEP assessments and special studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and mathematics assessments administered annually to all students in grades 3–8 and once at grades 9–12 • Science assessments administered once during grades 3–5, once during grades 6–8, and once during grades 9–12 by 2007–08 • May also administer other assessments, such as history and civics • Alternative and modified assessments may be administered to students with significant cognitive impairments • Participation is required for all schools and students
<i>Data Uses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by the President, Congress, and state leaders to set education policy • Used to make comparisons between states and to the nation • States neither sanctioned nor rewarded based on the results • Makes trend comparisons over time • Does not report performance for individual schools or students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by governors, state legislatures, state leaders, and state educators for setting education policy, examining school, group, and individual student performance • Used to measure AYP under NCLB • Used to make local decisions about curriculum and instruction • May also be used for promotion/retention decisions and/or graduation requirements • May be used to inform state accreditation decisions

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>