

## National Assessment of Educational Progress An Overview of NAEP



## What is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the United States know and can do in various subjects. Since 1969, NAEP has provided a common measure of student achievement across the country. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card and are available for the nation, states, and in some cases, urban districts. NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), located within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

### How is NAEP different from state assessments?

NAEP serves a different role than state assessments. States have their own unique assessments which are designed to provide individual student data about achievement on different content standards. NCES administers the same NAEP assessment in every state. This provides a common measure of achievement that allows for comparisons of achievement to the nation and among states and participating urban districts. NAEP does not report results for individual students.

Unlike state assessments, students, teachers, and principals who participate in NAEP are also asked to complete contextual questionnaires. This information provides a better understanding of students' educational experiences and factors that may be related to their learning. To learn more about these questionnaires, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/bgquest.aspx>.



- The NCES NAEP website provides more extensive information about the assessment: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>
- NAEP Tools on the Web provide quick and easy access to NAEP assessment data, previously administered NAEP questions, performance comparisons, and more: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/naeptools.asp>
- Full copies of all reports are available on The Nation's Report Card website: <http://nationsreportcard.gov>

## What subjects does NAEP assess?

Main NAEP assessments are conducted in a range of subjects with fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students across the country. Mathematics and reading are assessed every two years, and science and writing are assessed every four years. Other subjects are assessed periodically, including the arts, civics, economics, geography, technology and engineering literacy, and U.S. history.

Long-term trend NAEP measures student performance in mathematics and reading, and is designed to ensure comparability across the years. The long-term trend assessment makes it possible to chart educational progress since the early 1970s. The assessment is given to 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds every four years.

NAEP special studies, such as the High School Transcript Study, are conducted periodically in addition to main and long-term trend assessments. The National Assessment Governing Board, which sets NAEP policy, determines the assessment schedule and what content should be measured. To download a detailed PDF version of the assessment schedule, please visit <http://www.nagb.org/newsroom/assessment-schedule.htm>.

## What can schools and students expect when participating in NAEP?

- ▶ NAEP is administered to students during regular school hours. Students spend between 90 and 120 minutes taking the assessment.
- ▶ Each student is assessed in one subject area and is asked to provide contextual information, such as the amount of reading they do, the types of classes they take, and their experiences with technology.
- ▶ Accommodations are provided for students with disabilities and/or English language learners.
- ▶ Student results are confidential. All materials are brought to and taken from the school by NAEP representatives on assessment day.

## Why is student participation important?

The participation of all selected students enables NAEP to obtain an accurate picture of how students are performing in the United States. Since NAEP is not designed to report results for individual schools or students, it is not necessary for every student in every school to take the assessment. Instead, NCES uses a sampling procedure to ensure that NAEP participants are representative of the geographical, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of schools and students across the country. Each participating student represents hundreds of other students. Their participation is vital for valid information on student achievement to be collected and shared. Teachers, principals, parents, policymakers, and researchers all use NAEP results to assess student progress and develop ways to improve education across the country.



## How is NAEP using technology to measure and report the skills of a new generation of students?

As computers and digital tools play an increasingly important role in today's classroom, NAEP is advancing with technology-based assessments. The goal is to be paperless by the end of the decade. Through the following innovative assessments, NAEP is collecting new types of data that provide depth in our understanding of what students know and can do, including how they engage with technology to approach problem solving.

- ▶ **TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING LITERACY (TEL) ASSESSMENT:** TEL is a new frontier for NAEP and large-scale assessment. It is a computer-based, cross-curricular assessment that challenges students to perform interactive tasks and engage in solving problems within realistic scenarios. TEL gauges how well students understand and apply technology and engineering principles to real-life situations. To learn more about TEL, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tel>.
- ▶ **WRITING ASSESSMENT:** The writing assessment is administered on a computer and asks students to respond to writing prompts delivered in multimedia formats, including short videos and audio. In addition to writing scores, assessment results provide information about the extent to which students engaged in certain actions on the computer as they responded to these tasks, such as thesaurus tool usage. Results and contextual information are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing>.
- ▶ **SCIENCE INTERACTIVE COMPUTER TASKS (ICTs):** The NAEP science assessment includes ICTs that challenge students to solve scientific problems and perform experiments, often by simulation. ICTs provide students more opportunities than a paper-and-pencil assessment to demonstrate skills involved in doing science, without many of the logistical constraints associated with a natural or laboratory setting. The full library of released ICTs from the 2009 assessment is available at [http://nationsreportcard.gov/science\\_2009/ict\\_tasks.asp](http://nationsreportcard.gov/science_2009/ict_tasks.asp).

**After each assessment, some NAEP questions are released to the general public along with data on how students performed on each question. The following are examples of NAEP questions and actual correct responses from students.**

#### 4th Grade Reading

For the following question, students read a passage from the story “Tough as Daisy,” which is about a young girl who has moved to a new school and must prove she is a good enough wrestler to be on the team.

At the beginning of the story, when some of the boys point and laugh at Daisy, she thinks, “We’ll see about that.” What does this tell you about Daisy?

*What this tells me about Daisy is she is confident and strong. She never gives up. She never thinks she is bad at anything.*

#### 8th Grade Science

This multiple-choice question measures students’ performance in the Earth and space sciences content area.

These funnels were filled with equal volumes of pebbles, fine sand, and coarse sand, as shown in the diagram below. The same amount of water was poured into each funnel.



Which correctly lists the order in which the water passed through the funnels, from fastest to slowest?

- Ⓐ Pebbles, fine sand, coarse sand      Ⓒ Fine sand, coarse sand, pebbles  
 Ⓑ Pebbles, coarse sand, fine sand      Ⓓ Coarse sand, pebbles, fine sand

#### 12th Grade Mathematics

The following is a short constructed-response question from the algebra content area.

If  $f(x) = x^2 + x$  and  $g(x) = 2x + 7$ , what is an expression for  $f(g(x))$ ?

$$f(2x+7) = (2x+7)^2 + (2x+7)$$



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