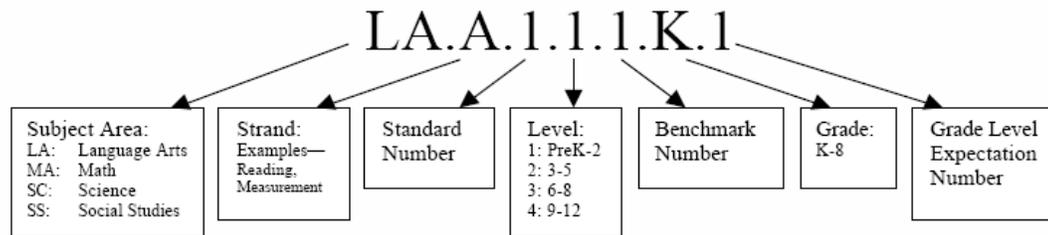




Content Focus Reports for the FCAT

What is content focus?

Content focus is a term that defines the specific content measured by each FCAT test item. Sunshine State Standards (SSS) benchmarks are often very broad statements of knowledge or skills. The SSS benchmarks the FCAT currently assesses are organized as follows:



While not currently assessed on the FCAT, the new SSS benchmarks are organized as follows:

LA.	1.	1.	1.	1
Subject	Grade	Strand	Standard	Benchmark

As test items are developed for the FCAT, the Department of Education and committees of educators identify more specific statements, or phrases, to categorize the content addressed in each item measuring the SSS benchmark.

Example

SSS Benchmark LA.A.2.4.1: “determines the main idea and identifies relevant details, methods of development, and their effectiveness in a variety of types of written materials.”

Specific content foci assessed for LA.A.2.4.1: methods of development, main idea/essential message, and details and facts.

What information is included in the Content Focus Reports?

The Content Focus Reports provide additional information about each reporting category (also called cluster or strand) for FCAT Reading and Mathematics at Grades 3 through 10, FCAT Science at Grades 5, 8, and 11, and FCAT Writing at Grades 4, 8, and 10. For example, within the Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics category “Measurement” there are several content foci, including area, capacity, circumference, arc lengths, rate, rate/distance/time, indirect measurement, Pythagorean theorem, and rated measures. For each test’s reporting categories, the reports provide the number of points for items in each category and the content foci for these items. The following table represents content foci for the Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics category “Measurement” from the 2007 administration:

Benchmark	Content Focus	Number of Points Possible
Cluster 2: Measurement		
B141	Area	1
B141	Capacity*	2
B141	Circumference	1
B142	Arc lengths	1
B142	Rate	1
B142	Rate/distance/time	1
B241	Indirect measurement	1
B241	Pythagorean theorem	1
B242	Rated measures	1
Reporting Cluster Point Total		10
<i>* Includes Performance Task Item</i>		

How does the Department use content focus information?

Department staff and the FCAT development contractor keep a record of the content focus information to ensure that, across the years, items are developed and used that measure the breadth of content in each SSS benchmark.

How can districts and schools use these reports?

These reports provide supplemental information on the strengths and weaknesses of instructional programs. The information may be used along with other feedback, such as classroom-level results on reporting categories.

The District Report of Schools and the School Report of Students provide the number of points possible and the mean points earned for each reporting category. The mean points earned can be further analyzed by considering these Content Focus Reports.

Example

A school finds that the mean points earned in FCAT Reading reporting category 2, “Main Idea, Plot, and Purpose” by their Grade 10 students is less than the mean points earned by the district and by the state. The teachers and administrators look on the Content Focus Report for FCAT Reading and determine that of the 20 points possible in this category, 9 of the points were attributed to LA.A.2.4.1 under the content focus of “Details and Facts” and that there was a performance task on this content. This information, when included with other indicators such as classroom assessments, might indicate a need to strengthen instruction in this area.

How should use of Content Focus Reports be limited?

Content Focus Reports should not be used to make decisions about instruction at the individual student level. A number of the reporting categories have too few items to report reliable, or meaningful, scores at the student level. For example, the Grade 3 FCAT Reading reporting category of Reference and Research may have as few as two test items. Therefore, while well-intended,

providing remedial instruction in this category may not be justified and may be an inefficient use of instructional time. In all cases, content focus data should not be used as sole indicators to determine remedial needs of students.

When interpreting content focus data, the following precautions and information should also be considered:

- With the exception of FCAT Mathematics, the number of items within the reporting category may vary from one year to another. Consequently, users should not compare performance data such as mean percent correct.
- The number of items within the reporting category will vary by grade level. Consequently, users should not compare cluster performance data across grade levels.
- The difficulty of the items measuring each SSS benchmark will vary from one year to the next. Consequently, users should not compare cluster performance data across years.
- The analysis is based on state-level data that is not intended to provide specific classroom, school, or district interpretations.
- Due to a limited number of items, as discussed above, scale score values cannot accurately be determined using Content Focus Reports for a number of reasons. FCAT test scores are generated from students' performance on the entirety of the test using Item Response Theory and pattern scoring. Chapter 10 of the [FCAT Handbook—A Resource for Educators](#) includes more details on this method of scoring.