



Understanding the PSSA 2018



McCall Elementary Parent Workshop 2018
Presenter: Liz Walls-Asto

Which schools participate?

All school districts and charter schools participate in the assessment. Nonpublic and private schools may participate on a voluntary basis.



Which students take the assessments?

Except for a very few students who meet specific criteria for participation in an alternate assessment, all students are included in the assessments as outlined below:

ELA & Mathematics—Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Science—Grades 4 and 8

Who decided what the assessments should measure?

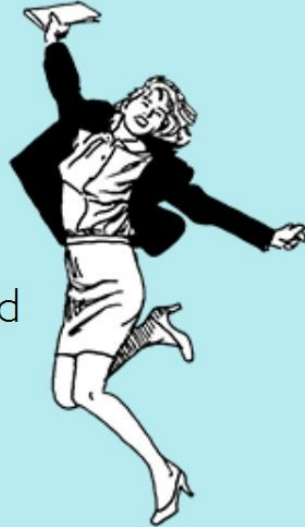
Groups of educators from all levels of education in Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge and skills upon which the assessments are based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. They also reviewed, edited, and approved the test items.



Who administers the assessments?

Each school chooses the person(s) who will administer the assessments. In most cases, these are teachers in the students' building.

"I love spending 4 hours covering my anchor charts, bulletin boards, and word walls with faded butcher paper before our state test" said no teacher ever.



someecards
user card

How are the results reported?

Two copies of the individual student report for all assessments will be sent to all schools and districts that participate for distribution to parents, teachers, school counselors, and/or principals. The state will not receive any report with individual names included. School-level reports will be used for curricular and planning purposes. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of PSSA testing for each school. The state will also release school-by-school assessment data.

May parents see the assessments?

Yes, under one circumstance. School entities are required to have policies to ensure that parents or guardians have the right to review a state assessment in the school entity during convenient hours for parents or guardians at least two weeks prior to their administration to determine whether a state assessment conflicts with their religious belief. This is the only reason allowable under regulation.

Confidentiality agreements must be signed, and no copies of the assessments or notes about assessment items will be permitted to leave the school. If after reviewing the test, parents or guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious belief and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the right of the parents or guardians will not be denied upon written request to the applicable school district Superintendent, charter school Chief Executive Officer, or AVTS Director. Parents or guardians should contact their child's school to make arrangements to review the test.

Opting Out

In PA, a student may opt out of testing for any reason. The parent or guardian simply writes a note stating they do not want their child to take the test. A reason does not need to be stated. However, each student that opts out will count against the school's participation score for testing, which may affect the school's overall rating.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT (Grades 3 through 8)



How long does the ELA assessment take and what does it include?

The entire English Language Arts assessment takes approximately three hours to complete. The test has three sections and each is taken on a different day. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions. This year the ELA assessment is scheduled around the first week of April. If a student is absent, they will be given time to make up the test.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to multiple-choice, evidence-based selected-response, and constructed-response questions. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from four options. Evidence-based selected response questions have two parts, and students select one or more answers for each part. Constructed response questions may include short-answer (grade 3), and/or text-dependent analysis (grades 4 through 8). This year there is NO mode specific writing prompt this year. This is in response to the movement to shorten the test championed by Gov. Wolfe. Short-answer questions require students to compose a brief response to support their answer. For the text dependent analysis question, students analyze a text and use evidence from the reading passage to compose an essay

How are written responses to constructed response items scored?

The written responses for English Language Arts are scored by evaluators trained in applying an ELA-specific scoring guideline. For short-answer questions, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process. Responses to text-dependent analysis questions are scored based on both content and writing skills.

What is assessed in English Language Arts?

The English Language Arts assessment addresses six major reporting categories as well as two text types. Students respond to standalone multiple-choice items assessing language.

Additionally, students read a number of passages from literature and informational genres and respond to questions about these passages that indicate both comprehension and reading skills and the students' analysis and interpretation of different types of texts.

PSSA ELA Test Design

Standard Operational ELA High-Level Test Plan per Form from 2018 Onward

Grade	Selected Response								Constructed Response				Total Core Items	Total Core Points (Raw)	Total Core Points (Weighted)
	Passage-Based Multiple Choice (MC)			Stand Alone MC			Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)		Passage-Based Short-Answer (SA)		Text Dependent Analysis (TDA)				
	Core	Psychometric Use*	Embedded FT	Core	Psychometric Use*	FT	Core	Embedded FT	Core	Embedded FT	Core**	Embedded FT			
3	20 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	4	2	2	1	0	0	33 SR 2 CR	45	45
4	23 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	38 SR 1 CR	51	63
5	23 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	38 SR 1 CR	51	63
6	23 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	38 SR 1 CR	51	63
7	23 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	38 SR 1 CR	51	63
8	23 (4 pass.)	12 (2 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	9	1	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	38 SR 1 CR	51	63

* Psychometric Use is generally for equating purposes. Not all equating items will be unique on all forms. [Passage-based is estimated as 2 total passages for 12 unique MC items across all forms.]

**Weighted (G4-8: TDA x 4)

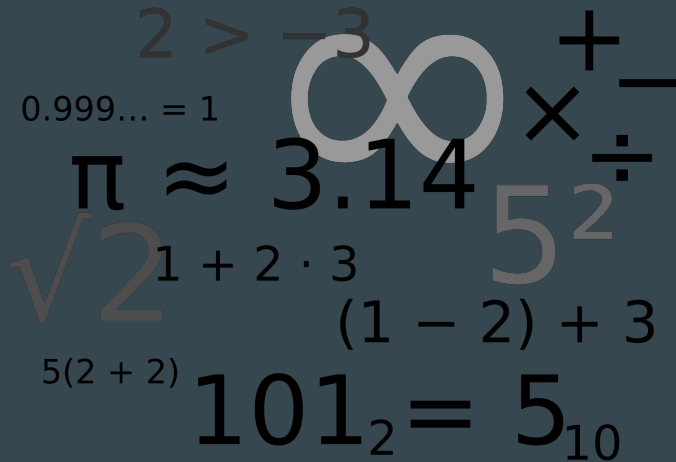
SAMPLE TESTS

VIEW- Sample 3rd Grade item and responses

VIEW- Sample 6th Grade item and responses

Any released items can be found with a quick Google Search for
“PSSA Released Items”

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (Grades 3 through 8)



A collage of mathematical symbols and formulas including infinity, pi, square root, and various arithmetic operations.

$$2 > -3$$
$$0.999... = 1$$
$$\pi \approx 3.14$$
$$\sqrt{2}$$
$$5^2$$
$$1 + 2 \cdot 3$$
$$(1 - 2) + 3$$
$$5(2 + 2)$$
$$101_2 = 5_{10}$$

How long does the Math assessment take and what does it include?

The entire Math assessment takes approximately three hours to complete. The test has two sections and each is taken on a different day. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions. This year the Math assessment is scheduled around the second week of April. If a student is absent, they will be given time to make up the test.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to two types of questions: multiple choice and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options, while open-ended questions require students to compose their responses.

Open-ended questions generally require students to provide detail in support of their answers (such as showing or describing the steps performed to complete a calculation).

Math Test Item Specifics

- Rulers and protractors will be provided where needed. Students must use the rulers and protractors provided for the PSSA.
- Rulers will be used in grade 3 only and will be scaled to the $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and millimeter. Students will be required to measure to the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and centimeter.
- Protractors will be used only for the grade 4 PSSA.

Math Test Item Specifics

- Grade 3

- Cannot use calculators

- Answers marked in test booklet

- Grade 4 and up:

- Calculators **are** permitted on all but the beginning few items

How are written responses to open-ended items scored?

The written responses for mathematics open ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a mathematics-specific scoring guideline. In mathematics, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

Examples of Language used in Math Open Ended Items

- Show or explain all your work
- Show all your work. Explain why you did each step
- Explain why [something is true or false]
- Describe how [doing something affects something else; to find something, etc.]

Students should read all items carefully, especially the open-ended items, and answer **exactly** what is being asked

What is assessed in Mathematics?

The mathematics assessment addresses five major reporting categories across four clusters. The reporting categories assessed and the proportion of questions in each reporting category vary by grade level. As a part of the assessment of Cluster A, Numbers and Operations, students in grades 4 through 8 respond to a set of questions without a calculator. Constructed response items may require the students to show all of their work (e.g., calculations, graphs, drawings) and/or to explain in writing how they solved the problems.

5 Reporting Categories per Grade

A. Numbers and Operations

- Base 10- Grades 3-5
- Fractions- Grades 3-5
- Number System- Grades 6-8
- Ratios and Proportions- Grades 6-7

B. Algebraic Concepts

- Operations and Algebraic Thinking- 3-5
- Expressions and Equations 6-8
- Functions- 6-8

C. Geometry- Grades 3-8

D. Data Analysis and Probability

- Measurement and Data- 3-5
- Statistics and Probability- 6-8

Math PSSA Test Outline

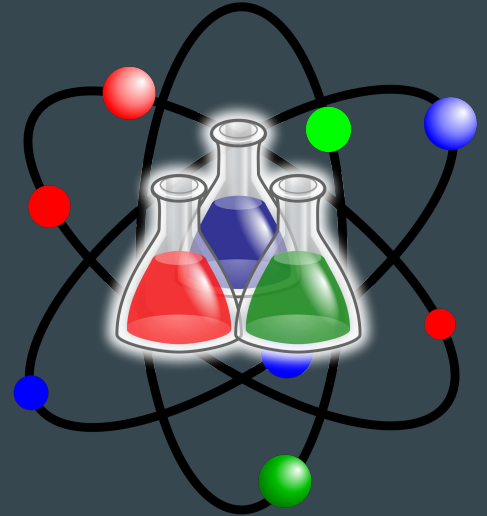
2017 -2018

Grades	Sections	MC Core	Open Ended	Time in Minutes
3-8	2	48	3	156

View Sample Open Ended Items

- Grade 3 Open Ended Item
- Grade 6 Open Ended Item

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT (Grades 4 and 8)



How long does the Science assessment take and what does it include?

The entire science assessment takes approximately two to three hours to complete. The test has two sections and each is taken on a different day. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions. This year the Science assessment is scheduled in the beginning of May. If a student is absent, they will be given time to make up the test.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to two types of questions: multiple choice and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options, while open-ended questions require students to compose their responses. At grade 8, the science assessment also includes science scenarios.

What is a science scenario?

A science scenario contains text, graphics, charts, and/or tables and uses these elements to describe the results of a class project, an experiment, or other similar research. Students use the information found in a science scenario to answer multiple-choice questions.

How are written responses to open-ended items scored?

The written responses for science open-ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a science specific scoring guideline. In science, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

What is assessed in science?

The science assessment addresses the four major reporting categories: The Nature of Science, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth and Space Sciences. The proportion of items in each reporting category varies by grade level.

Science Test Design Grade 4

Science Grade 4

SECTION	MULTIPLE CHOICE	OPEN ENDED	ESTIMATED TIME
1	23	3	38
2	23	3	38
TOTAL	46	6	76

Science Test Design Grade 8

Science 8th Grade

SECTION	MULTIPLE CHOICE	OPEN ENDED	ESTIMATED MINUTES
1	24	3	45
2	24	3	45
TOTAL	48	6	90

Cell Phone Policy

Electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPads, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA

If a student is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams, you will be contacted by the school. Students that ignore this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search other functions of the electronic device. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff and, because the Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted.

Links

- PSSA RELEASED ITEMS

<http://www.education.pa.gov/k-12/assessment%20and%20accountability/pssa/pages/assessment-anchors.aspx>

- PSSA ASSESSMENT ANCHORS AND ELIGIBLE CONTENT

<http://www.education.pa.gov/k-12/assessment%20and%20accountability/pssa/pages/assessment-anchors.aspx>