



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Understanding the STAAR

The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing program has replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing program as of spring 2012. These assessments are required by federal law under the No Child Left Behind Act. These assessments are a measure of student performance, teacher performance and school performance.

Assessments like the STAAR can show the strength and weakness for a student, possible areas for remedial instruction, areas where teachers need to focus more instruction and school's progress in moving all children reach proficiency in their core subjects. An objective of the No Child Left Behind Act is for all schools to have 100% of students performing proficiently by 2014.

Students in Texas in public schools or who are publicly funded in private schools are required to take the STAAR starting in 3rd grade. The STAAR is administered in Mathematics and Reading yearly in grades 3-8; Writing is tested for students in grades 4 and 7 and Science is tested for students in grades 5 and 8. Lastly, students will take the STAAR in Social Studies in grade 8.

In high school, students will take STAAR End of Course (EOC) assessments for Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history and US history. These tests will help students show that they are achieving to post-secondary readiness standards.

The STAAR assessments are more rigorous than the previous TAKS assessments. The STAAR End of Course (EOC) assessments given in high school are now a graduation requirement starting with students entering 9th grade in 2011-2012.

The STAAR assessments are aligned to the state curriculum, referred to as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which provides a framework for learning objectives across the subject areas. By holding students accountable to these standards, academic proficiency in all subjects is achievable.

Format of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

For students taking the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests in Reading and Mathematics in grades 3-8, they will be taking a multiple-choice and short answer, open-ended (griddable) style examination. Students will not be taking this test online during these grade levels. These tests allow students four hours to complete them, and where student require testing accommodations per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) those will be provided.

For students in grades 4 and 7 who take the STAAR Assessment in Writing, they will be required to draft an essay response. Students taking the Science Assessment in grades 5 and 8 have a multiple-choice, open-ended and griddable item format test.

The STAAR End of Course Examinations (EOCs) are offered both online and in a paper-and-pencil format. Individual schools and districts will be making decisions about online or paper-based test administrations. A major difference between the STAAR End of Course (EOCs) Exams and the TAKS exam is that the STAAR tests only what has been taught during the course for which it is designed rather than the TAKS which covered a wider array of material.

STAAR End of Course (EOC) assessments are given in Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history and US history. The tests are multiple-choice, open ended, and essay format for the Writing Assessment.

Students receive scores on a scale and on a proficiency level. Each test will have its own scale based on the number of questions; the scaled score will show how well the student did on all the questions and will pinpoint areas of instructional need. The scale scores translate to proficiency levels, of which there are three: Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance, Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance, and Level III: Advanced Academic Performance. Results will also show the cut scores which is the number of the scale score where one level of achievement shifts to the next level.

Taking the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) are developed to test students in the areas laid out as critical for students to gain proficiency in to master subject matter. The framework is called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and covers all subject areas students will participate in. For the main core subjects in which they will be assessed, the content areas break down in such a way that a student may recognize which areas they need to increase their efforts.

In Reading, students are expected to become proficient in the following areas: reading across the genres (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, mass media), understanding literary texts, and understanding informational texts. In Writing, students need to master the processes of composition, revision and editing. In Social Studies, students will need to gain knowledge and interpretive skills in history, geography and culture, government and citizenship, and economic, science, technology and society.

In Mathematics, the field of study is somewhat broader. Students need to be proficient in numerical operations and reasoning, patterns and algebraic relationships, geometry and spatial reasoning, measurement, probability and statistics, and mathematical processes and tools. In the Sciences, students need to gain knowledge in matter and energy, force, motion and energy, earth and space, organisms and environments, and investigation and reasoning.

Assessment results will show students, parents, teachers and administrators in which areas they need to most focus, how prepared students are for post-secondary pursuits and the level to which they are achieving.

Get Your Child Ready for STAAR State Testing

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