

# THE STATE ASSESSMENTS

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**What Parents Need to Know**



## **Test Content**

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**The annual Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests:**

- Focus on the New York State learning standards, which guide classroom instruction in ELA and math;**
  - Measure important real-world skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and writing; and**
  - Require students to explain their answers and describe and defend their reasoning.**
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## Test Results

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Your child's test results...

- serve as an 'academic checkup' to make sure your child is on track for the next grade level;
- measure progress over time so you can see your child's year-to-year performance; and
- provide a deeper level of information by pinpointing what skills your child has mastered and what skills your child is still developing.

This information is included in the redesigned **Score Reports** for parents. The updated reports are **easier to understand** and provide **more information about what students should know** and be able to do at each grade level.

## **Test Facts**

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- The federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 requires that students in grades 3-8 are tested once a year in ELA and math.
  - State law and regulations of the Commissioner of Education prohibit school districts from making promotion or placement decisions based solely or primarily on student performance on the tests.
  - Scores are not used to evaluate teachers.
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## Test Changes

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- ❑ Over the past few years, the State Education Department has made several changes to the annual Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests in response to concerns from parents and educators.
  - ❑ Last year, the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests were reduced from three test sessions per subject to only two sessions per subject this year. That change remains in effect this year, meaning each subject will have two days of testing instead of three.
  - ❑ The 2019 tests will continue to be untimed so students who need additional time to work can have it, within the confines of the regular school day.
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## **Test Changes – Fewer Testing Sessions**

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- The 2019 Grades 3–8 ELA and Math Tests will again be two test sessions per subject to rather than three sessions as in 2013-2017.
  - This means each subject will have two days of testing instead of three.
  - With fewer test sessions, each test will have substantially fewer questions than in recent years, lessening test fatigue for students and better enabling them to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.
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## **Test Changes – No Time Limits**

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- The 2019 tests will again be untimed**, as they have been for the past several years.
- Students who are still working on their exams will be allowed to continue to work, within the confines of the regular school day.
- Schools and districts have discretion to allow students to read silently or quietly exit the room when they have completed their test while others continue to work.

## Test Changes – Greater Teacher Involvement

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- ❑ The 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests were **constructed and thoroughly reviewed by New York State educators** to ensure they measure what students are learning in their classrooms.
- ❑ Educators from across the State came to Albany several times this past summer and fall to review and select all passages and questions on the 2019 tests.
- ❑ This year, most of the test questions on the assessments will have been written by New York State teachers specifically for the annual New York State tests.



## **Test Changes – Earlier Release Dates**

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- ☐ Test questions and instructional reports will be released on or around June 1.**
- ☐ An earlier release date for the instructional reports gives teachers more time to use the information before the end of the school year.**
- ☐ The State Education Department will release **75-percent of test questions from the 2019 exams**, as it did last year. You can view the 2018 questions ([www.engageny.org/3-8](http://www.engageny.org/3-8)) at EngageNY.**

## What's next for the 3-8 tests? **Computer-Based Testing**

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- ❑ Computer-based tests are tests administered on a computer, tablet, or Chromebook. In other words, **students take the test on a computer** instead of using a pencil and paper.
- ❑ Computer-based testing (CBT) has the **potential to make the assessments stronger instructional tools and will make it possible to get test results back sooner.**
- ❑ This spring, some districts chose to participate in CBT for the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests. The computer tests and the paper tests are the same tests.
- ❑ The State is helping **districts transition to CBT** and plans to have additional districts utilize CBT for the annual assessments next year.

## What's next?

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- ❑ In September 2017, the Board of Regents voted to adopt the Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- ❑ The new standards will be implemented over the next few years giving teachers and students ample time to feel comfortable with the revised content.
- ❑ Professional development on the new standards is now underway and will continue.
- ❑ The annual ELA and Math Tests will not measure the new standards until the 2020-2021 school year.