

State Testing 2009

What You Need to Know

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Every spring, the state tests all students in grades 3-8 and 10 to make sure their learning is on track. The results from this testing are important to us all.



During state testing, most students take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). That will **not** change in 2009. All students will still need to take the WASL in the spring. Families should continue to encourage their children to do their best on the state test this year.

The WASL will be replaced in 2010 by two new tests: the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in grades 3-8 and the High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE). Those tests are in development and will be unveiled in spring 2010. If students pass one or more sections of the high school WASL this year, they will not be required to take the new HSPE in the same content area(s).

The change to new state tests **does not** affect testing during spring 2009. The only change in the testing calendar for spring 2009 is that ninth graders will **no longer** be allowed to take the WASL due to budget constraints.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's learning, please contact your child's teacher or school. To learn more about the state's testing system, please visit www.waslinf.com.

Who Gets Tested and When?

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires yearly testing of students in grades 3-8 and 10 in reading and math. Washington also tests students in writing (grades 4, 7 and 10) and science (grades 5, 8 and 10). Students must pass the reading and writing high school WASL, a state-approved alternative or an assessment for students in special education to be eligible to graduate. High school students also must meet math standards or earn two math credits after 10th grade to be eligible to graduate.

Grade	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9th grade testing is no longer available due to budget cuts.	✓		
Math	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Necessary only if student has not met WASL graduation requirement.		
Writing		✓			✓	✓				
Science			✓			✓				

** 11th and 12th graders who take the WASL take the same test as 10th graders

State Testing and Reporting Timeline

March 16-19:	Reading and Writing high school WASL
April 13-14 & 20-21:	Math high school WASL; Science HS WASL
April 13- May 1:	WASL testing window for grades 3-8
By June 10:	Release of statewide high school WASL results
By June 13:	WASL Score Reports sent to families for grades 10, 11 and 12
June 8-26:	Registration period for August High School WASL
August 10-13:	August High School WASL testing
Early Sept.:	WASL results released for all students
By end of Sept.:	All WASL reports sent home

What Does a WASL Score Mean?

Students receive a score for each WASL test taken. Scores are based on how an individual student performed, so you won't find percentiles often provided by other standardized tests. Scores fall into one of four levels:

- Level 4 Exceeds State Standards:** Represents advanced mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.
- Level 3 Meets State Standards:** Represents mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge. Student knows and can analyze information and can apply knowledge and skills to real-world situations.
- Level 2 Below State Standard:** Represents some mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.
- Level 1 Well-Below State Standard:** Represents little to no mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.

Sample WASL Questions

The questions below came from actual WASL tests given in 2008. To review more questions like these, along with scored, unidentified student responses, visit www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/testquestions.aspx or www.k12.wa.us/teacherresourcetool/default.aspx.

4th Grade Reading

The following question is based on the poem "Young Night Thought" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

What does the speaker mean when she says, "I see the people marching by, As plain as day, before my eye" in lines 3 and 4 of the poem?

- A. The people are very easy for the speaker to see.
- B. The people are very difficult for the speaker to see.
- C. The people are moving too quickly for the speaker to see.

7th Grade Math

The following question involves using order of operations to evaluate an expression.

Four students are asked to solve the following problem:

$$3 + 5 \times 4 - 2 \times (7 - 2)$$

Rochelle says the answer is 13.
Mary says the answer is 65.
Preston says the answer is 80.
Toby says the answer is 150.

Tell which student is correct. Clearly explain or show how you found your answer.

8th Grade Science

Students are given a description of an investigation and asked to analyze the investigation, draw conclusions and plan a new investigation.

Sharon knew that water was necessary for seeds to germinate and develop roots. She wondered how water affects seed roots, so she did the following investigation.

Question: How does the volume of water given to bean seeds affect the direction of root growth?

Hypothesis (prediction): Bean seeds given 3 milliliter (mL) or more of water daily will develop roots that grow straight down because that will be enough water for the seed to perform its life functions.

Materials: clear plastic container; soil; bean seeds; toothpicks; water; graduated cylinder

High School Writing

High school writing includes two prompts: expository and persuasive. Below is an example of a persuasive prompt.

To ensure that students have more time to focus on their schoolwork, the school board is considering a proposal that students be allowed to have a job only on weekends. Take a position on this proposal. In a multiple-paragraph letter, **PERSUADE** the school board to support your position.

Keep it All in Perspective

Students and parents can feel pressured by state testing, but the test should not be the center of attention. Core skills and knowledge matter most.

- **Encourage your child to do his/her best.** If your child's score report shows help is needed in certain areas, that is not a bad a thing. Schools know how to target help.
- **Think about your child's test day routine.** Unless you sense your child needs a different routine during testing (e.g., more sleep or more physical activity), follow whatever routine already helps him/her be successful in school.
- **Talk with your child about the testing experience.** Some students find it helpful to talk about the tests. If your child says s/he struggled with any parts of the test, talk to your child's teacher to find out if s/he has the same issues in the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I get my child's test back?

No. You will get a score report for your child, but not the test itself. WASL test questions are used for several years, so we need to keep the tests secure.

Can I view my child's test?

Yes. Parents can request to review their child's test booklet(s), starting Sept. 1, 2009. For more information: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StudentRecordRequest.aspx>.

Can I appeal my child's score?

It depends. Only the scores from an assessment used to meet the high school graduation requirement may be appealed. Scores for grades 3-8 may not be appealed. For more information: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/Appeals.aspx>.



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

On the Web:

www.wasinfo.com