



State Learning Standards & Testing

What are “learning standards”?

The Washington State K–12 Learning Standards define what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Why do we need them?

Rigorous learning standards require students to think critically and creatively about content—rather than memorize it—so they are ready for careers, college, and life after high school.

Which content areas have learning standards?

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- Educational Technology
- Health and Fitness
- Integrated Environment and Sustainability
- World Languages
- English Language Proficiency

How are they developed?

Learning standards are carefully developed by content experts from across the state and nation, with input from educators, parents, and the public.

How often are the learning standards updated?

The standards are updated periodically to ensure they are aligned with the evolving expectations of colleges and the workforce.

Why do we have state tests?

Achievement data for students, schools, districts, and the state help educators improve instruction. Testing scores help them decide which teaching practices and materials best support student understanding of the learning standards. The scores are used to improve instruction. The results identify where students are doing well and where they need additional support in order to meet grade level expectations.

Student scores also give families valuable information about how well their child is doing and where additional help might be needed.

Statewide testing is important because it helps ensure all public school students, no matter where they go to school, receive a quality education.

Are they required?

State and federal laws require students to be tested in:

- **English language arts and math:** Grades 3 through 8 and high school
- **Science:** Grades 5, 8, and 10

To see which tests are required for high school graduation, please visit www.WAtesting.com.

Learn
more!

Learning Standards

bit.ly/StateStandards
or email CoreStandards@k12.wa.us

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TOP 10 FACTS ABOUT WASHINGTON'S K-12 LEARNING STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

Reason #1

The right stuff

Washington's state learning standards in English language arts and math, and the aligned Smarter Balanced assessments, are designed to prepare students for college, work and life.

Reason #6

Ties to higher education

Washington's universities, college and community colleges use high school students' Smarter Balanced test scores for course-level placement.

Reason #2

Real-world skills

The standards and assessments focus on real-world skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and writing. Students are asked to do more than fill in the bubbles on a multiple-choice test. They now have an opportunity to show their work, write and explain their answers as part of the testing process.

Reason #7

Educator resources

Using the Smarter Balanced assessment system, teachers can access resources in a digital library and use periodic, or interim, assessments to help track and support student progress throughout the year.

Reason #3

Connected to classroom

The test matches the skills and content students are learning and practicing in the classroom every day. Each grade level has clear, prioritized goals that describe what students should know and understand by the end of the school year.

Reason #8

Teacher involvement

Washington teachers have been involved every step of the way in developing the Smarter Balanced assessment system, from developing test items, to setting achievement levels, to vetting digital library materials.

Reason #4

Closing gaps

The assessments help identify achievement gaps and allow school districts and the state to place resources where they are needed the most.

Reason #9

Quicker results

In spring 2016, individual student testing scores were available to districts within two to three weeks of students completing their year-end, or summative, tests. That helps teachers improve instruction.

Reason #5

Testing is just one measure

State testing is one of several indicators, in combination with report cards, teacher feedback and classroom work used to create a complete picture of a student's progress in school.

Reason #10

More accessible

The Smarter Balanced tests are designed to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners.