Student Background Questionnaire

General Directions for Grade 8

In the next two sections, you will be asked questions about yourself and your education. The choices for some questions will be written across the page as shown. Fill in the oval for the best answer.

Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often do you watch movies on TV?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You should have filled in the oval below the answer that best tells how often you watch movies on TV.

The choices for some questions will be written down the page as shown. Now read Example 2 and indicate your answer.

Example 2

2. Which event would you prefer to attend?
   - ☐ basketball game
   - ☐ car show
   - ☐ concert
   - ☐ play

Make your answer mark clear and dark in the oval. If you make a mistake or want to change your answer, be sure to completely erase any unwanted marks.

Do not go past the STOP sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

If you finish before time is called, go back and check your work on that section only. Use your time carefully. Do as much as you can in each section.
Student Background Questionnaire

In this section, please tell us about yourself and your family. The section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet.

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Fill in one or more ovals.
   - ☐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino.
   - ☐ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano.
   - ☐ Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American.
   - ☐ Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American.
   - ☐ Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background.

2. Which of the following best describes you? Fill in one or more ovals.
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Black or African American
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
   - ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
For the rest of the questions in this section, fill in only one oval for each question.

3. Does your family get a newspaper at least four times a week?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ I don’t know.

4. Does your family get any magazines regularly?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ I don’t know.

5. About how many books are there in your home?
   ☐ Few (0–10)
   ☐ Enough to fill one shelf (11–25)
   ☐ Enough to fill one bookcase (26–100)
   ☐ Enough to fill several bookcases (more than 100)

6. Is there a computer at home that you use?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

7. Is there an encyclopedia in your home? It could be a set of books, or it could be on the computer.
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ I don’t know.

8. About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?
   ☐ 5 or fewer
   ☐ 6–10
   ☐ 11–15
   ☐ 16–20
   ☐ More than 20

9. How often do you talk about things you have studied in school with someone in your family?
   ☐ Never or hardly ever
   ☐ Once every few weeks
   ☐ About once a week
   ☐ Two or three times a week
   ☐ Every day
10. How many days were you absent from school in the last month?
   - None
   - 1 or 2 days
   - 3 or 4 days
   - 5 to 10 days
   - More than 10 days

11. How far in school did your mother go?
   - She did not finish high school.
   - She graduated from high school.
   - She had some education after high school.
   - She graduated from college.
   - I don't know.

12. How far in school did your father go?
   - He did not finish high school.
   - He graduated from high school.
   - He had some education after high school.
   - He graduated from college.
   - I don't know.

13. How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?
   - Never
   - Once in a while
   - About half of the time
   - All or most of the time
Student Background Questionnaire

Civics—Grade 8

This section has 9 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

1. How often do you study social studies in school?
   ☐ Never or hardly ever
   ☐ Once or twice a month
   ☐ Once or twice a week
   ☐ Almost every day

2. During this school year, have you studied any of the following topics? Fill in one oval on each line.

   a. The United States Constitution
   b. Congress
   c. The President and the cabinet
   d. How laws are made
   e. The court system
   f. Political parties, elections, and voting
   g. State and local government
   h. Other countries’ governments
   i. International organizations [such as the United Nations]

   Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know ☐
3. Do you do any of the following when you study social studies? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Read from your textbook</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Memorize material you have read</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Read extra material not in your textbook (such as newspapers, magazines, maps, charts, or cartoons)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Fill out worksheets</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Write reports</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Discuss current events</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Watch television shows, videos, or filmstrips in class</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Discuss television shows, videos, or filmstrips</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Take part in debates or panel discussions</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Take part in role-playing, mock trials, or dramas</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Write a letter to give your opinion or help solve a community problem</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Have visits from people in your community to learn about important events and ideas</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments that involved social studies?

- □ Never
- □ Once or twice this year
- □ Once or twice a month
- □ At least once a week
5. How often do you use computers at school for social studies?
   - Never or hardly ever
   - Once every few weeks
   - About once a week
   - Two or three times a week
   - Every day

8. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   - Not as hard as on other tests
   - About as hard as on other tests
   - Harder than on other tests
   - Much harder than on other tests

6. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.
   - Not at all
   - Small extent
   - Moderate extent
   - Large extent

9. How important was it to you to do well on this test?
   - Not very important
   - Somewhat important
   - Important
   - Very important

7. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   - Easier than other tests
   - About as hard as other tests
   - Harder than other tests
   - Much harder than other tests
Student Background Questionnaire

U.S. History—Grade 8

This section has 10 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

1. Did you take a United States history course in the following grades? Fill in one oval on each line.

   |   |   |
---|---|---|
A. 6th grade | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]
B. 7th grade | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]

2. Are you taking a United States history course now?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

3. Since the beginning of middle school or junior high school, how much have you studied the following periods of United States history? Fill in one oval on each line.

   |   |   |   |
---|---|---|---|
A. The period before 1815: beginnings through the Revolution (e.g., colonization, settlement, revolution) | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]
B. The period between 1815 and 1865: the new nation through the Civil War (e.g., expansion, reform, crisis of the Union) | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]
C. The period between 1865 and 1945: the development of modern America (e.g., Reconstruction, industrial growth, United States role in world affairs, the Great Depression, the First and Second World Wars, immigration) | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]
D. The period between 1945 and the present: contemporary America (e.g., civil rights movement, women’s rights movement, Korean and Vietnam wars, environmental movement) | [ ] | [ ] | [ ]
4. When you study history or social studies in school, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>About every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Read material from a textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Read extra material not in the regular textbook (e.g., biographies or historical stories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Use letters, diaries, or essays written by historical people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Discuss the material studied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Write short answers (a paragraph or less) to questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Write a report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Work on a group project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Give a report on the topic being studied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Watch movies, videos, or filmstrips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Take a test or quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Go on field trips or have outside speakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Schoolwork in the library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments for history or social studies?

☐ Never
☐ Once or twice this year
☐ Once or twice a month
☐ At least once a week

6. How often do you use computers at school for history or social studies?

☐ Never or hardly ever
☐ Once every few weeks
☐ About once a week
☐ Two or three times a week
☐ Every day

7. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about history or social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.

☐ Not at all
☐ Small extent
☐ Moderate extent
☐ Large extent

8. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

☐ Easier than other tests
☐ About as hard as other tests
☐ Harder than other tests
☐ Much harder than other tests

9. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

☐ Not as hard as on other tests
☐ About as hard as on other tests
☐ Harder than on other tests
☐ Much harder than on other tests

10. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

☐ Not very important
☐ Somewhat important
☐ Important
☐ Very important
Student Background Questionnaire

Mathematics—Grade 8

This section has 12 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

1. What math class are you taking this year?
   - Geometry
   - Algebra II
   - Algebra I (one-year course)
   - First year of a two-year Algebra I course
   - Second year of a two-year Algebra I course
   - Introduction to algebra or pre-algebra
   - Basic or general eighth-grade math
   - Integrated or sequential math
   - Other math class

2. What math class do you expect to take next year?
   - Geometry
   - Algebra II
   - Algebra I (one-year course)
   - First year of a two-year Algebra I course
   - Second year of a two-year Algebra I course
   - Introduction to algebra or pre-algebra
   - Basic or general math
   - Integrated or sequential math
   - Business or consumer math
   - Other math class
   - I don’t know
3. This year in school, I am in the math course that is right for me.
   A Strongly disagree
   B Disagree
   C Undecided
   D Agree
   E Strongly agree

4. How often do you use a computer for math at school?
   A Never or hardly ever
   B Once every few weeks
   C About once a week
   D Two or three times a week
   E Every day or almost every day

5. On a typical day, how much time do you spend doing work for math class on a computer? Include work you do in class and for homework.
   A None
   B Half an hour or less
   C About 1 hour
   D About 2 hours
   E More than 2 hours
6. When you are doing math for school or homework, how often do you use these different types of computer programs? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Once every few weeks</th>
<th>About once a week</th>
<th>Two or three times a week</th>
<th>Every day or almost every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A spreadsheet program for math class assignments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A program to practice or drill on math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. A program that presents new math lessons with problems to solve</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The Internet to learn things for math class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. A calculator program on the computer to solve or check problems for math class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. A graphing program on the computer to make charts or graphs for math class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. A statistical program to calculate patterns such as correlations or cross tabulations</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. A word processing program to write papers for math class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. A drawing program to work with geometric shapes for math class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. How often do you use these different types of calculators in your math class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Calculator</th>
<th>Never use</th>
<th>Sometimes, but not often</th>
<th>Usually use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Basic four-function (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Scientific (not graphing)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Graphing</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. When you take a math test or quiz, how often do you use a calculator?

☐ Never
☐ Sometimes
☐ Always

9. How much do you agree with each of the following statements? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I like math.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I am good at math.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I understand most of what goes on in math class.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   ⊙ Easier than other tests
   ⊙ About as hard as other tests
   ⊙ Harder than other tests
   ⊙ Much harder than other tests

11. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   ⊙ Not as hard as on other tests
   ⊙ About as hard as on other tests
   ⊙ Harder than on other tests
   ⊙ Much harder than on other tests

12. How important was it to you to do well on this test?
   ⊙ Not very important
   ⊙ Somewhat important
   ⊙ Important
   ⊙ Very important
Student Background Questionnaire

Reading—Grade 8

This section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

1. Please indicate how much you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about reading and writing. Fill in one oval on each line.

   Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree

   a. When I read books, I learn a lot.

   b. Reading is one of my favorite activities.

   c. Writing things like stories or letters is one of my favorite activities.

   d. Writing helps me share my ideas.

2. How often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

   Never or hardly ever | Once or twice a month | Once or twice a week | Almost every day

   a. Read for fun on your own time

   b. Talk with your friends or family about something you have read

   c. Write e-mails to your friends or family
3. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of fiction? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Comic books or joke books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fiction books or stories (books or stories about imagined events)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Plays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Poems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of non-fiction? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Biographies or autobiographies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Books about science (for example, nature, animals, astronomy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Books about technology (for example, machines, computers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Books about other countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Books about history</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other non-fiction books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of articles or stories? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles or stories in a newspaper</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles or stories in a magazine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles or stories on the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Now think about reading and writing you do for school. For your English class this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have a class discussion about something that the whole class has read</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work in pairs or small groups to talk about something that you have read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in a journal about something that you have read for English class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. For your **English** class so far this year, how many times have you done each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>2 or 3 times</th>
<th>4 or 5 times</th>
<th>6 or more times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Written a report or paper about something that you have read (for example, a book report)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Made a presentation to the class about something that you have read</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Done a project about something that you have read (for example, written a play, created a web site)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Think about the classes that you are taking this year. How often do you read something that is **NOT** a textbook for each of the following classes? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
<th>I don't take this class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. English class (for example, plays, fiction books)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Science class (for example, science magazines, biographies of scientists)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Social studies or history class (for example, books about people who lived a long time ago, real letters written a long time ago)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Math class (for example, math word-games)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. For school this year, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading?

- □ Never
- □ Once or twice this year
- □ Once or twice a month
- □ At least once a week

10. When you have reading assignments in school, how often does your teacher do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ask you to explain or support your understanding of what you have read</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ask you to discuss different interpretations of what you have read</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- □ Easier than other tests
- □ About as hard as other tests
- □ Harder than other tests
- □ Much harder than other tests
12. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

☐ Not as hard as on other tests

☐ About as hard as on other tests

☐ Harder than on other tests

☐ Much harder than on other tests

13. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

☐ Not very important

☐ Somewhat important

☐ Important

☐ Very important
Student Background Questionnaire

Writing—Grade 8

This section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

1. Please indicate how much you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about reading and writing. Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a. When I read books, I learn a lot.
   b. Reading is one of my favorite activities.
   c. Writing things like stories or letters is one of my favorite activities.
   d. Writing helps me share my ideas.

2. How often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a. Read for fun on your own time
   b. Talk with your friends or family about something you have read
   c. Write e-mails to your friends or family
3. How often do you write each of the following **for school** this year? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Thoughts or observations in a log or journal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b.</strong> A simple summary of something you have read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c.</strong> A report about something that you have studied or researched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d.</strong> An essay in which you analyze or interpret something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e.</strong> A letter or essay in which you try to convince or persuade others to believe or do something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>f.</strong> A story (such as a story about a personal or imagined experience)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>g.</strong> Business writing (such as a resume or letter to a company)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. When you write a paper or report **for school** this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Brainstorm with other students to decide what to write about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Organize your paper before you write (for example, make an outline, draw a chart)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Make changes to your paper to fix mistakes and improve your paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Work with other students in pairs or small groups to discuss and improve your paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. When you write a paper or report **for school** this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Use a computer from the beginning to write the paper or report (for example, use a computer to write the first draft)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Use a computer to make changes to the paper or report (for example, spell-check, cut and paste)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Look for information on the Internet to include in the paper or report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Think about the classes that you are taking this year. How often do you write something that is **at least a paragraph in length** for each of the following classes? Include things you write such as journal writing, reports, investigations, and essays. Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Never or hardly ever</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. English class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Science class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Social studies or history class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Math class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. For school this year, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once or twice this year
- ☐ Once or twice a month
- ☐ At least once a week

8. When you write, how often does your teacher talk to you about what you are writing?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Always
9. When you write, how often does your teacher ask you to write more than one draft of a paper?

☐ Never

☐ Sometimes

☐ Always

10. When your teacher grades your writing, how important is each of the following? Fill in one oval on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Your spelling, punctuation, and grammar</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The way your paper is organized</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The quality and creativity of your ideas</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The length of your paper</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   ○ Easier than other tests
   ○ About as hard as other tests
   ○ Harder than other tests
   ○ Much harder than other tests

12. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?
   ○ Not as hard as on other tests
   ○ About as hard as on other tests
   ○ Harder than on other tests
   ○ Much harder than on other tests

13. How important was it to you to do well on this test?
   ○ Not very important
   ○ Somewhat important
   ○ Important
   ○ Very important
The **NAEP Questions Tool** provides educators, researchers, parents, and students with access to released questions from NAEP assessments in nearly all subject areas, dating from 1990.

The questions are presented as
- examples of what NAEP asks students in grades 4, 8, and 12;
- examples of questions that probe students’ knowledge of specific content areas; and
- a way to examine student performance on a specific question by race/ethnicity, gender, and other student groupings across the nation and, for mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

NAEP has released over 1,000 questions from past assessments to the public, and will continue to release more after each assessment.

**How to Access**

The direct URL to NAEP Questions is [http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls) or click **NAEP Questions** on the Nation’s Report Card home page.

**How do I search for specific questions?**

1. First, click on **Search Options** on the first screen.

   ![Search Options](image)
   
   ... to begin using the NAEP Questions Tool.

2. Next, select your question search option and click on **Search** or **Continue**. Note that there are several ways to search for questions.
3. Questions that match your search criteria will be listed on the next screen. You can then click on any question to view it.

Some NAEP questions are given to students at more than one grade level. These cross-grade questions are referred to as, for example, 4(8) or 8(4), where the first number refers to the focal grade—the grade level/assessment from which the question and related material was drawn—and the second number (the number in parentheses) refers to the other grade level in which the question was also given.

**Three Ways to Search for Questions**

There are three ways to search for questions:

- quick search,
- advanced search, or
- search by block.

**Quick Search**

Select a subject and grade by using the pull-down menus.

You must choose a subject but, if you do not choose a grade, you will view questions from all grades. When you have chosen a subject or subject and grade, click on **Search**.
Advanced Search

Within a subject, you can search for questions by grade, content classification, question type, difficulty, and other subject-specific variables using Advanced Search. First, you must choose a subject and click on Continue.

Next, select your advanced search criteria. Note that options will differ depending on the subjects you choose.

Question difficulty is determined as follows: for multiple-choice and dichotomously scored (right-wrong) items, easy questions are those with scores greater than 60 percent, medium questions are those with scores greater than or equal to 40 percent and less than 60 percent, and hard questions are those with scores less than 40 percent. For constructed-response questions, separate weights are assigned to each score category.

When you are finished, click on Search.

Search by Block

If you have a specific “block” of questions you want to view (a “block” refers to the group of questions administered to students in a test booklet), you may use this search feature.
How do I print a question or group of questions?

The NAEP Questions Tool allows users to customize and print NAEP questions. After selecting and saving questions in the Print Folder, you can change the question order, delete questions and decide what information you wish to print along with the questions (e.g., scoring guides, content classifications).

Selecting Questions

Select questions to be added to the print document by clicking on the check boxes in the In Folder column on the Search Results screen. A red check mark appears on each selected check box.

Note: As the check boxes are marked, the number of items in the Print Folder is NOT updated. To update the displayed information, click on To Print Folder to the Print Folder icon.

Adding All Questions to the Print Folder

Clicking on the Add All Questions link on the Search Results page automatically adds all the displayed questions to the Print Folder.

Removing All Questions from the Print Folder

Clicking on the Remove All Questions link on the Search Results page automatically removes all selected questions from the Print Folder.
**Printing Individual Questions Directly**

Questions are displayed as links on the **Search Options** page. Clicking on a specified question (link) displays the entire question. Clicking on the **Printable Version** link takes you to a screen that has only the question and does not include the NAEP Questions Tool interface. From this page you can print using the browser’s print icon.

**Adding/Removing Individual Questions to/from the Print Document**

You can add or remove questions you are viewing by clicking on the **Add Question/Remove Question** icon on the upper right of the screen. As you add or remove questions, the number of questions in your print folder will be automatically updated.

---

**Printing from the Print Folder**

The selected questions are put into the **Print Folder** as one document. Clicking on the **Print Folder** link or icon brings you to a page where you have a number of options for formatting your print document. In the Print Options area, you can select items to include with your questions in the print document (for example, scoring guides/keys, performance data or content classification information). Questions are automatically selected on this page. Once you’ve selected what you would like to be included in your document, you can click **Assemble Document**. Note: In the print document, underlined text represents text that has been substituted for items that were originally part of a set. For the exact wording of items that were given to students, please refer to the text as represented with the tool itself.
**Editing the Print Document**

The order in which questions appear can be rearranged in the **Edit** section, so that easy, medium, and hard questions are arranged in an appropriate order. For instance, a teacher might want the easier questions to appear first, followed by medium, then harder questions. A question is rearranged by selecting one question then using either the **Move Up** or **Move Down** arrows to the right to move it accordingly. The change can either be retained by clicking on **Save** or be rejected by clicking on **Restore**. You can also preview a question by clicking on the **View Question** button. A question can be deleted from your document by clicking on **Delete Question**.

![Print Folder](image)

Clicking on **Assemble Document** creates a printable file. From here, you can print using the browser’s print icon or save to disk. You may also use copy/paste to import part or all of the print document into any HTML-aware editor.

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What information can I get about each question?

When you select a question to view, a screen similar to the one below will be displayed.

Information related to a selected question is available by clicking the tabs at the top of the screen. This information includes:

**Question** - Shows the printable version of the question. When the screen first displays, the question will display. Click on this tab to redisplay the question after another choice has been selected.

**Performance Data** - Shows information about how students scored on the question.

**Content Classification** - Shows information about how the question relates to the subject area framework. This includes a description of the content domain—what is being assessed—and the cognitive skills within that domain.

**Scoring Guide/Key** - Shows the scoring guide or rubric for constructed-response questions and the correct answer for multiple-choice questions.

**Student Responses** - Shows actual student responses to the question for each score level.

**More Data** - Displays additional data for each item, including how subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, parents’ highest level of education, type of school, region of the country, type of location, Title I participation, National School Lunch Program and achievement level) performed on this question. Provides a link to the NAEP Data Tool, where you can search for more specific national and state NAEP data.
**Question** - When the screen first appears, the question will be displayed and the **Question** tab will be highlighted. When you are viewing related information other than the question itself, click on this tab to re-display the question.

*Links within the question* - The question and related graphics or text passages may not fit on the screen area without scrolling. To help you view the different parts of the question, we have added several links above the question on the right side of the screen.

The names of the links may change depending on the type of question and the subject area.

Note that the questions have been formatted to display on the screen and may not be presented in the same way as they were to the student. You can view the questions as they were presented to the student by printing a block of questions in its PDF form.

---

**Performance Data** - Shows information about how students scored on the question.

*For Multiple-Choice Questions* - Shows the percentage of students who answered the question incorrectly or correctly, or who omitted the item.

---

**1998 National Performance Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted Item</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
For Constructed-Response Questions - Shows the percentage of students who scored at each score level, or who omitted the question or were off-task.

### 1998 National Performance Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extensive</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted Item</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Task</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The scoring criteria will vary depending on the subject and type of question. Click on Scoring Guide/Key to see a description of the score levels used for each question.

---

**Content Classification** - Shows information about how the question relates to the subject area framework. This includes a description of the content domain—what is being assessed—and the cognitive skills within that domain.

Use the links on the upper right of the Content Classification screen to move between the sections of the screen. Note that the name of the links will vary depending on subject and question type.

For a more extensive description of the subject area you have chosen, click on Subject Info at the top of the screen next to the subject name.
**Scoring Guide/Key** - Shows information about how the question was scored.

*For Multiple-Choice Questions* - Shows the “key” or correct answer for the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. In the poem &quot;Finding a Lucky Number,&quot; Gary Soto contrasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) dogs and squirrels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) present youth and future aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Indian summer and the coming of winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) eating candy and a healthy diet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For Constructed-Response Questions* - Shows the scoring guide used to determine the score for the student’s answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score &amp; Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Full Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These responses support an opinion with a clear explanation the poem. They summarize or articulate information from the the title. Or, they indicate that the title is a bad one and offer a plausible interpretation of the poem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Partial or Surface Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These responses support an opinion with a vague explanation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the scoring criteria will vary depending on the subject and type of question.
**Student Responses** - Shows actual student responses to the question for each score level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable - Student Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Describe the appearance of a female blue crab that is carrying egg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The egg mass sometimes looks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a orange-brown sponge and co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to 1 million eggs and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has pinchers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the scroll bar to move between the sections of the screen. Note that student responses are available only for constructed-response questions.

In some subjects, you will find a **Scorer’s Commentary** button after the student responses. Each subject offers a different model for the scorer’s commentary—some provide one for every response, others for both responses. The scorer’s commentary gives you additional information on why the response received the score that it did and often refers back to the scoring guide.
**More Data** - Shows information about how subgroups of students performed on the question. This information enables you to see comparisons between the subgroups. From this screen you can also link to the NAEP Data Tool (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Performance</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>209 1.5</td>
<td>58% 1.4</td>
<td>243 1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>250 1.2</td>
<td>40% 1.1</td>
<td>282 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>225 0.6</td>
<td>63% 1.5</td>
<td>225 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>225 1.2</td>
<td>58% 1.5</td>
<td>225 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Basic</td>
<td>207 2.5</td>
<td>58% 1.8</td>
<td>240 2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>207 2.5</td>
<td>59% 1.7</td>
<td>240 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>211 1.4</td>
<td>59% 1.7</td>
<td>246 2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information about the performance of the following subgroups is included on the More Data screen:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Parents’ Highest Level of Education
- Type of School
- Region of the Country
- Type of Location
- Title I Participation
- National School Lunch Program
- Achievement Level
Where can I find more information about the subjects NAEP assesses?

You can find information about each subject by clicking on Subject Info at the top of the screen next to the subject name.

This leads you to more detailed information about NAEP procedures, including a description of frameworks, assessment instruments, scoring, school and student samples for that subject, NAEP reports, and interpreting NAEP results.

You can find even more information about each subject by choosing a subject on the NAEP home page.

**Additional Help**

For more help with features on the NAEP website, click **Help** in the banner.

For additional help, write to us via **Contact Us**, or e-mail **Sherran.Osborne@ed.gov**.
PROJECT MISSION. NAEP is administered by the U.S. Department of Education to report on the achievement of American students in key academic subjects. For more information about the NAEP program, visit the NAEP web site at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard or call 202–502–7420.

PARTICIPATION. States and districts that receive Title I funds are required to participate in biennial NAEP reading and mathematics assessments at grades 4 and 8. Teacher and student participation is always voluntary. Contact your school’s NAEP coordinator for more information.

NAEP CONTENT. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) develops frameworks detailing what students reasonably might be expected to know and do for each subject assessed by NAEP. For additional information on framework development, see the NAGB web site at http://nagb.org.

SAMPLE NAEP QUESTIONS. For each assessment, some of the test questions, along with performance data, are made available to the public to provide concrete samples of NAEP contents and results. For every assessment, NAEP distributes to participating schools sample questions booklets that provide more detailed information about the assessment design and questions. Released questions and student performance data may be viewed on and downloaded from the NCES web site at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls.

SECURE NAEP QUESTIONS. On written request, adults may review NAEP questions and instruments still in use. These arrangements must be made in advance, and persons reviewing the assessment may not remove the booklets from the room, copy them, or take notes. Contact your school’s NAEP coordinator for more information.

NAEP REPORTS. NAEP publications can be searched and downloaded from the NAEP web site at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. For prompt field staff support on these or other matters, call the NAEP Help Desk at 800–283–6237.

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