



FAQs: Participating in NAEP

How is NAEP different from other tests?

Throughout their schooling students in all states take many tests. However, states differ in their education plans and standards. If we want to compare how well our education system is serving our nation's students, we need a single set of tests and standards that apply across the country. NAEP is the only test that can give an accurate representation of education in the United States, because it is the only test that is given in the same way, asks the same questions, and is graded on the same scale across the nation.

How are students and schools selected?

NAEP is designed to measure the academic performance of the nation's students at grades 4, 8, and 12. Instead of testing every student, NAEP selects a sample that accurately represents the characteristics of the students in the nation, along multiple dimensions including ethnicity, school size, economic background, gender, and more. When a school is selected for the NAEP assessment, it is because it is "statistically representative" of a state's schools. Similarly, if a student is selected to participate in NAEP, that student was chosen at random to represent the nation's students.

Read technical information about the differences in the sample selection for state and national assessments in [NAEP Assessment Sample Design](#).

Is participation voluntary?

Federal law specifies that NAEP is voluntary for every student, school, school district, and state. However, federal law also requires all states that receive [Title I](#) funds to participate in NAEP reading and mathematics assessments at fourth and eighth grades. Similarly, school districts that receive Title I funds and are selected for the NAEP sample are also required to participate in NAEP reading and mathematics assessments at fourth and eighth grades.

How does NAEP include students with disabilities and English language learners?

The decision to include specific SD or ELL students in NAEP is made by school personnel, who decide whether students can meaningfully be assessed with or without accommodations. Generally, if a student is able to participate in state and local tests, he or she will be able to take NAEP, if they are selected. Accommodations will be provided as necessary for these students. SD and ELL students use the same accommodations in NAEP that they use in their usual classroom testing. Common accommodations for students with disabilities are:

- large-print books
- extended time
- small-group or one-on-one testing
- oral reading directions
- use of an aide for transcribing responses

One of the most common accommodation for ELL students is extended time to answer assessment questions.

What are students and schools asked to do before and during the assessment?

During assessments, NAEP makes participation easy for schools and students by providing:

- field staff who bring all necessary materials to the school, and
- a NAEP coordinator who supplies administrative assistance.

School administrators and teachers merely complete demographic questionnaires about their schools. Students have 90 minutes or 120 minutes to complete paper or computer-based assessments respectively.

What kinds of questions will be asked?

The questions students will be asked depends on the subject they are assigned. NAEP randomly assigns different subject assessments to each student in the classroom.

Each assessment has a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended answer questions, although some subjects have more specialized formats. See [videos](#) of tutorials that students will complete prior to completing these assessments.

[Booklets](#) containing sample test questions and all survey questions are available. In addition, more than two thousand released NAEP questions are online in the [NAEP Questions Tool](#). You can also [test yourself](#) against questions from past NAEP assessments.

Where do I find the results?

The [Nation's Report Card](#) is a website developed especially to display the results of each assessment in a clear format and interactive manner. NAEP has also developed a number of different [publications](#) and [web-based tools](#) that provide direct access to assessment results at the national, state, and district level .

Are individual student results reported?

The assessment questions and NAEP data are kept strictly confidential. Students do not receive individual scores, and reports for individual schools are not prepared. Students' names are not on any NAEP materials that leave the schools.

NAEP reports results for the nation, states, and selected urban districts. Federal law specifies severe penalties for anyone revealing the identity of the children taking NAEP. In the long history of the NAEP assessment, that security has never been broken.

How is my state or district performing?

Use the [State Profiles tool](#) to find key data about your state and see tables and maps that compare the results of states/jurisdictions.

Results for districts that participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment are available in the [District Profiles tool](#).

What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions that we haven't answered here, [please email us and let us know](#). We'll do our best to get you an answer quickly.

Also, if you have thoughts or suggestions about how you think NAEP should change, or what you think NAEP assessments should look like in 10 years, [please email us](#). We'd love to hear your ideas.

