

SAMPLE

2019 Annual Assessment Talking Points

Why Test?

- All students must be prepared for success in college and careers.
- Whether they want to go to college or straight into the workplace, students need to be able to think critically and solve complex problems. With these tools, students have more choices about their futures and can make the most of their opportunities.
- The annual assessments are only one of several indicators of student performance. However, they provide objective information about how students are progressing toward the higher level skills and knowledge required to be successful after high school. Parents have a right to this information.
- Tests objectively inform parents and teachers about their students' progress compared to other students across the state.
 - Annual assessments are also used to help ensure that traditionally underserved students—students receiving special education or ESL services, students from low-income communities, or students of color—are not overlooked.
- The annual ELA and math tests for students in grades 3-8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

Test Changes

- In response to concerns from parents and educators, the State Education Department has made changes to the annual Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments over the past several years. However, this year's exams remain unchanged from last year's.
- Last year, the assessments were reduced from three test sessions per subject to only two sessions per subject. That change remains in effect this year, meaning each subject will have two days of testing instead of three. With fewer test sessions, each test will have 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.
- The 2019 assessments will continue to be untimed. This basically means that students will have as much time as they need on the test during the confines of the regular school day, as long as they are working productively. Students who do finish may be permitted to leave the testing room if others are still working.
- This year, most of the test questions on the assessments are written by New York State teachers specifically for the annual New York State tests.

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- In all, hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests and selecting the questions for the test forms.
- As in previous years, the State Education Department plans to return the instructional reports based on the 2018 assessment results to schools on or around June 1.
- The State Education Department also plans to release 75-percent of the questions from this year's tests. [The 2018 test questions are online at EngageNY](http://www.engageny.org/3-8). (www.engageny.org/3-8)
- The 2019 Score Reports for Parents will feature the redesigned format and easy-to-understand language that was introduced in 2016. The updated reports are clearer and provide more information about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Like last year, some districts will administer the 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests on the computer. 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.
- The computer-based test will have the same questions as the paper version but students will take the test on a computer or tablet. The State Education Department plans to have additional districts utilize CBT next year. The long-term plan is to have all districts using CBT for annual state tests.

Moving Forward

- In 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.
- The annual ELA and Math Tests will not measure the new standards until the 2020-2021 school year. Professional development on the new standards will happen between now and then.