

2013 New York State Test FAQs

Grades 3–8

What tests for Grades 3–8 are changing and why?

The 2013 New York Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments are changing to more directly align with the latest instructional shifts and the relative “weighting” (i.e., prioritization) of Common Core Learning Standards by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The most recent ELA and Math test guidance issued by NYSED was dated November 20, 2012. All New York State assessments held in April 2013 are expected to reflect these changes. We note the changes to these tests below.

What are the changes for ELA/Literacy?

Some of the important changes to the 2013 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts assessments include:

- Speaking and Listening will no longer be assessed.
- All text passages will be authentic and worthwhile to read.
- Some text passages may express opinions with which the reader may disagree.
- Text passages may be longer and more rigorous than on past tests.
- All grade levels will now be split into four sessions (called “books” by NYSED) administered across three days.
- Grades 3 and 4 tests will have fewer items and a shorter maximum testing time to complete than in previous years.
- Grades 5–8 will observe the same time limit as currently, but have more passages and items than in 2012.
- Informational passages will be much more heavily represented in Grades 6–8 than they were in 2012. (Specifically, informational texts will account for about 65% of tested matter. Literary texts will account for about 35% of tested matter.)
- New CCLS rubrics will be used for scoring short and extended response questions.

| Grade | Total Items Tested | | | Multiple Choice Items | | | Open-Ended Items | | | Total # of Passages | | | # of Literary Passages | | # of Informational Passages | |
|-------|--------------------|------|----------|-----------------------|------|----------|------------------|------|----------|---------------------|------|----------|------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| 3 | 62 | 47 | -15 | 53 | 37 | -16 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 12 | 11 | -1 | 8 | 4-7 | 4 | 4-7 |
| 4 | 66 | 47 | -19 | 57 | 37 | -20 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 11 | -2 | 6 | 4-7 | 7 | 4-7 |
| 5 | 66 | 73 | 7 | 57 | 63 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 14 | 1 | 8 | 5-9 | 5 | 5-9 |
| 6 | 66 | 73 | 7 | 57 | 63 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 4-7 | 7 | 7-10 |
| 7 | 66 | 73 | 7 | 57 | 63 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 14 | 1 | 9 | 4-7 | 4 | 7-10 |
| 8 | 66 | 73 | 7 | 57 | 63 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 3-8 | 7 | 6-11 |



What are the changes for Mathematics?

Important changes to the 2013 Grades 3–8 Mathematics assessments include:

- Mathematics questions may assess multiple standards simultaneously.
- Grades 3 and 4 tests will have a shorter maximum testing time to complete than in the previous years. For Grade 3, all sessions estimate 50 minutes time on task, with 70 minutes allotted for completion. For Grade 4, the first two sessions estimate 50 minutes time on task, with 70 minutes allotted for completion. The third session estimates 70 minutes time on task, with 90 minutes allotted for completion.
- For Grades 5–8, the 2013 test will provide students with math reference sheets showing grade-appropriate formulas; they will no longer be provided formulas and conversions at point of use.
- Prior to 2013, only Grades 7 and 8 could use calculators. Beginning in 2013, Grade 6 can also use calculators. All three of these grades can only use calculators for Books 2 and 3.
- The new blueprint categorizes standards by clusters (groups of related standards), labeling them as Major clusters, Supporting clusters, and Additional clusters. For the third grade test, for example, Major clusters will account for 70–80% of test points; Supporting will account for 10–20% of test points; and Additional will account for 5–10% of test points.
- As was true in the past with the New York Performance Indicators, NYSED has assigned each CCLS to the September–April or May–June instructional period. Each grade’s math assessments will cover that grade’s September–April CCLS as well as May–June content from the previous grade. For example, fourth grade students will also be responsible for third grade May–June Common Core Learning Standards.
- New CCLS rubrics will be used for scoring short and extended response questions.

| Grade | Total Items Tested | | | Multiple Choice Items | | | Open-Ended Items | | |
|-------|--------------------|------|----------|-----------------------|------|----------|------------------|------|----------|
| | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | Increase | 2012 | 2013 | Increase |
| 3 | 65 | 69 | 4 | 58 | 61 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| 4 | 71 | 72 | 1 | 62 | 62 | 0 | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| 5 | 68 | 72 | 4 | 60 | 62 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 2 |
| 6 | 69 | 78 | 9 | 60 | 68 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| 7 | 71 | 78 | 7 | 62 | 68 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| 8 | 71 | 78 | 7 | 62 | 68 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 |

What form will the test questions take?

As in the 2012 tests, questions will include multiple choice, short constructed response, and extended constructed response.

Has New York State provided any test sample questions?

Yes, in June 2012, the New York State Education Department provided 12 sample questions for each grade level and subject in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/common-core-sample-questions>. These questions are designed to emphasize the “level of complexity” of the New York test. Please remember that the sample questions have not undergone the same extensive review, vetting, and piloting that occurs with actual questions used on the state assessments.

NYSED recommends that educators use the test sample items to prepare their classrooms in the following ways:

Passages:

- Use them to help guide your own text choices for instructional materials and expose students to similarly complex, diverse texts.
- **Don't** expect antiquated, public domain texts to be on future state assessments.

ELA Questions:

- Interpret the way standards are conceptualized in each question.
- Consider the instructional changes that will need to occur in your classroom.
- Analyze the reading comprehension, argumentation, and marshaling of evidence called for in the constructed response questions.
- Pay attention to the text-based distractors in each multiple-choice question.
- **Don't** limit the amount of writing your students do in the classroom.
- **Don't** assume that the lined space provided for constructed response indicates the amount of writing students should provide to respond to the question.
- **Don't** assume that the sample questions represent a mini-version of future state assessments.

Math Questions:

- Interpret the way the standards are conceptualized in each question.
- Note the multiple ways the standard is assessed throughout the sample questions.
- Take note of numbers (e.g., fractions instead of whole numbers) used in the samples.
- Pay attention to the strong distractors in each multiple-choice question.
- **Don't** consider these questions to be the only way the standard will be assessed.
- **Don't** assume that the sample questions represent a mini-version of future state assessments.

(Source: <http://engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-common-core-sample-questions>)

Student Instruction and Practice

Provide rigorous instruction on the new CCLS using a proven-effective gradual-release approach that builds student confidence. Prepare students for more complex assessment items with full-length practice tests and interim assessments that mirror the item types, format, and rigor of the new 2013 New York State Test.

Teacher Resource Book and Online Teacher Toolbox

Support teachers with strong professional development, including step-by-step lesson plans and best-practice tips to learn the new approaches to teaching the CCLS. Plus, the Teacher Toolbox gives teachers invaluable, easy-to-use resources to differentiate instruction and reteach prerequisite skills students may not have mastered in earlier grade levels.

What to look for when choosing your New York CCLS instruction and test practice

- ✓ Does it include brand-new, not-repurposed content?
- ✓ Does it include the most rigorous instruction and practice to prepare students 100% for the 2013 state test?
- ✓ Does it include the latest updates that match NYSED's November 20 test guidance?
- ✓ Does it provide test practice that exactly mirrors the item types, rigor, and format of the ELA and Math tests?
- ✓ Does it provide instruction and practice on every tested CCLS and prerequisite skills?
- ✓ For ELA, does it provide complex, authentic text from a wide variety of genres?
- ✓ For Math, does it emphasize conceptual understanding while also building procedural fluency?
- ✓ Does it include interim assessments to monitor student progress along the way?
- ✓ Does it include instruction that targets individual student weaknesses?
- ✓ Do the assessments provide a clear indication of how your students would perform if they took the NY State Test today?

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