



GUIDE to EQAO Assessments in Elementary School

Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics

Primary Division (Grades 1–3)

Junior Division (Grades 4–6)

Ontario students write province-wide assessments of their reading, writing and math skills at key stages in their education:

Grade 3 reading, writing and math, assessed at the end of the primary division

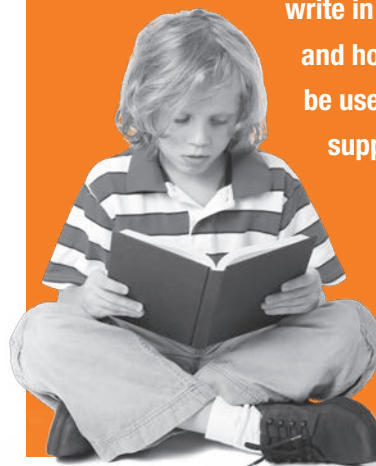
Grade 6 reading, writing and math, assessed at the end of the junior division

Grade 9 math, assessed in the first year of secondary school

Grade 10 literacy, assessed as a graduation requirement

The assessments are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an independent agency of the Ministry of Education.

This brochure will help you understand the two EQAO assessments Ontario students write in elementary school and how the results can be used to evaluate and support learning.



What is on the EQAO assessments?

- The primary-division assessment evaluates the reading, writing and math skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 3.
- The junior-division assessment evaluates the reading, writing and math skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 6.
- The assessments measure whether students can
 - understand what they read in different kinds of texts;
 - express their thoughts in writing using appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation and
 - use appropriate math skills to solve problems.
- There are four language sections and two math sections in each assessment.
- Each question on every EQAO assessment is based on the learning expectations set out in *The Ontario Curriculum*, which is what students are learning in classrooms every day.

Do all students have to take the EQAO assessments?

The provincial assessments are part of Ontario's education program. All students who attend publicly funded schools and who follow *The Ontario Curriculum* are required to write them.

Students with special education needs are permitted some accommodations that are consistent with their regular classroom assessment practices. Special provisions may also be permitted for English language learners. If a student does not have the ability to participate in part or all of the assessment—even with accommodations—the principal may exempt him or her in consultation with school staff and the parents or guardians.

When do the assessments take place?

The assessments are written during a two-week period, typically in late May and early June. Students are given one hour to complete each section of the assessments. Each school determines its own assessment dates and times during the assessment period.

Do students have to study for the assessments?

No. Since EQAO assessments are based entirely on *The Ontario Curriculum*, they should not require special preparation. Students can use the examples of the assessment materials released at www.eqao.com to become familiar with the format of the provincial assessments and the types of questions that will be asked.

Students should understand that the assessments are an opportunity to show what they know. Their report card grades will not be affected no matter how they perform.

When and how are EQAO results released?

Results are available in September of the next school year. Students will receive EQAO's Individual Student Report directly from their school.

Schools and school boards receive detailed reports about their students' achievement to help inform their improvement planning. Overall school- and board-level results are available to the public on EQAO's Web site.



How are EQAO results reported?

The results of EQAO's assessments in elementary school are reported according to the province's four achievement levels. These are the same levels teachers use in the classroom and on report cards to report student achievement. The provincial standard is Level 3, which corresponds to achievement in the B- to B+ range. Students meeting or exceeding the standard (i.e., achieving Level 3 or 4) on the assessments have demonstrated most or all of the reading, writing and math knowledge and skills expected at the current stage of their education.

Do EQAO results count toward students' grades?

Results on the provincial assessments in elementary school do not count toward students' grades. They provide additional information to consider alongside report card grades to help gauge student learning and determine what additional support may be needed.

Why are EQAO assessment results important?

The results of EQAO assessments are important, objective indicators of whether or not students are developing strong literacy and numeracy skills at key stages of their education. Research has shown that students who don't meet the provincial standard on EQAO assessments in elementary school are at higher risk of not being able to read, write or do math well in high school. Educators and parents need to pay attention to these warning signs and provide more support to these students. EQAO results can inform improvement planning by helping to identify areas of learning that may need more attention.

EQAO results are also important because they are the only publicly available evidence of achievement that is comparable for all students across the province.

How should EQAO assessment results be used?

EQAO assessment results should be reviewed alongside students' daily classroom work and other assessment information to gauge student learning and determine where more support may be needed. For students who don't meet the provincial standard, it is particularly important for teachers and parents to discuss how to work together to close learning gaps and improve student achievement.

Why does Ontario conduct province-wide assessments?

Ontario conducts provincial assessments in order to

- inform the improvement of instructional programs and strategies to help all children succeed and
- strengthen the accountability of the public education system.

Visit www.eqao.com for more information.

Education Quality and
Accountability Office



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