

Common Core & Georgia Milestone Assessment System

Teachers and principals talk a lot about assessments that are used to measure students' academic achievement. New summative assessments will address longstanding concerns that parents, educators, and employers have had about current state assessments - namely that they measure students' ability to memorize facts, rather than their critical thinking and knowledge application skills.

On the Georgia Milestone Assessment...

Students will not only be required to answer the question, but also how they arrived at the answer. They will have to provide evidence that supports their answer.

Additional Resources:

www.pta.org/parentsguide
www.georgiastandards.org
www.gadoe.org

Expectations...

English Language Arts [CCGPS]

– will require close analytical reading to construct meaning, make inferences, draw conclusions, compare and contrast ideas, themes, etc., as well as synthesize ideas and concepts across multiple texts
– will require students to develop informative/explanatory responses or narratives, produce opinions/arguments – citing evidence from text(s) and using standard language conventions, etc.

Mathematics [CCGPS]

– will require demonstration of conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, problem solving, modeling, and mathematical reasoning

Science [GPS]

– will require understanding of the core concepts, ideas, and practices of science to explain scientific phenomena
– with content and Characteristics of Science/Nature of Science standards serving as co-requisites

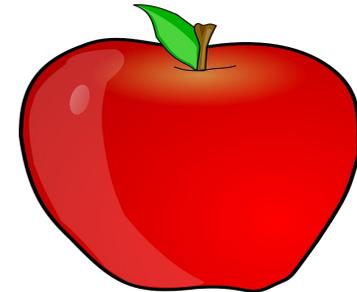
Social Studies [GPS]

– will require understanding of the past and its influence on the present and future – including the interconnectedness of history, culture, geography, economics, and government/civics

Item Types

- Selected-Response (multiple-choice) – all content areas – evidence-based selected response in ELA
- Constructed-Response – ELA and mathematics
- Extended-Response – ELA and mathematics

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO COMMON CORE & GEORGIA MILESTONES ASSESSMENT SYSTEM



All information contained in this brochure was provided courtesy of the Georgia Department of Education. For further information, visit www.gadoe.org

Common Core

In 2010, Georgia adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics and incorporated them into the existing Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Georgia's new state-mandated set of standards is called the College and Career Ready Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). CCGPS provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in language arts and mathematics as they progress through grades K-12.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Georgia will be rolling out new assessments aligned to the CCGPS. The new assessment (the Georgia Milestone Assessment System) will be used to gauge how well students are mastering the standards and, ultimately, how ready students are to succeed in college and careers.

What are the college and career ready standards?

Georgia's new standards in language arts and mathematics are designed to enhance and improve student learning by providing greater clarity and rigor than previous standards. They are more relevant to the real world, giving young people the knowledge and skills they need for college and career success. They are also robust, ensuring a future U.S. workforce that can compete in the global economy.

The new standards emphasize fewer topics and stress conceptual and critical thinking as well as fundamental skills. The CCGPS build knowledge from grade to grade, enabling students to master important concepts before moving on to others. The standards are not a curriculum. Decisions about curriculum, tools, materials, and textbooks are left to local districts and schools that know their students best. Common Core standards were developed through a state-led initiative, spearheaded by governors and school superintendents, in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, college faculty, parents, and education experts.

Georgia's New Test -

**Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS)
Why give state tests in the first place?**

State tests are given to measure how well students have learned content based on academic standards. Results from these tests are used to determine where students may need help or accelerated learning opportunities, as well as for school and district accountability.

Guiding principles stipulate that GMAS:

- be sufficiently rigorous to ensure Georgia students are well positioned to compete with other students across the United States and internationally;
- be intentionally designed across grade levels to send a clear signal of student progress/growth and preparedness for the next level, be it the next grade level, course, or college or career;
- be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or limited English proficiency, at all achievement levels;
- support and inform educator effectiveness initiatives, ensuring items and forms are appropriately sensitive to quality instructional practices; and
- accelerate the transition to online administration, allowing – over time – for the inclusion of innovative technology-enhanced items.

The Georgia Milestones EOG will be designed to:

- provide a valid measure of student achievement of the state content standards;
- provide a clear signal of the student's preparedness for the next educational level;
- allow for detection of the progress made by each student over the course of the academic year;
- be suitable for use in promotion and retention decisions at grades 3 (reading), 5 (reading and mathematics) and 8 (reading and mathematics)
- support and inform educator effectiveness measures, and inform state and federal accountability at the school, district, and state levels.

What is different about the new assessment?

Students will be asked not only what the answer is to a question, but why - i.e. how they know or what evidence supports their answer. Open-ended items (also known as constructed AND extended-response) ask students to provide both short answer and extended types of responses. Multiple-choice questions will still be included. Reading and writing will be combined with the English/Language Arts test.

Features of the new test include:

- inclusion of constructed-response items in ELA and mathematics, in addition to selected-response items
- inclusion of a writing component (in response to text) at every grade level and course within the ELA assessment;
- inclusion of norm-referenced items in every grade and content area to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison; and
- transition to online administration over time, with online administration considered the primary mode of administration and paper-pencil back-up until transition is completed.

Student Scores: What parents can expect:

This is a new assessment. Therefore, it is not possible to directly compare the scores on the new test with your student's scores from previous years. The new assessments measure deeper knowledge and skills deemed particularly important for students' futures, including problem-solving, writing, and critical thinking. Because the standards are more rigorous, student achievement scores may initially be lower. A dip should not necessarily be interpreted as a decline in student learning or educator performance. Educators expect the short-term decline to improve as teachers and students become more familiar with the standards and better equipped to meet the challenges they present.