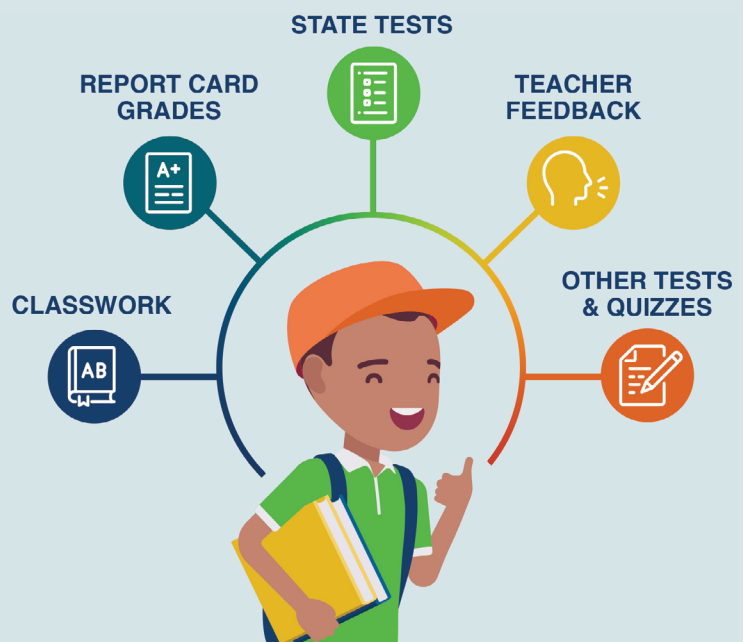




## A FAMILY GUIDE TO ANNUAL STATE TESTS IN ILLINOIS: One of Many Measures of Student Learning

There are many ways to measure academic performance, and annual state tests are only one of them. These tests are not meant to tell the whole story. They are meant to be combined with other measures, including teacher feedback, classwork and projects, and report card grades. Together, these measures can give families a more complete picture of a student's performance so they can better support learning at home and advocate for their child.



### State Assessments 101

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, requires students to take state tests in reading and math every year in third through eighth grade and once in high school. In Illinois, students in third through eighth grade take the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) in English language arts and math. Students in fifth grade also take the Illinois Science Assessment (ISA). In high school, students take the SAT in 11th grade. The SAT is a requirement to earn a diploma, but there is no required score students must achieve.

## A Focus on Grade Level Skills

Unlike other tests, the IAR is focused on grade level material and is aligned to the state standards. The test questions match what students do and learn in the classroom everyday throughout the year, which are the grade level skills that are most important for students to learn in order to move on to more challenging content.

The IAR is taken online. The test includes a variety of different types of questions, including math problems that ask students to explain their reasoning and questions that ask students to analyze text and write well developed essays.

### Grade 6: Math

A company makes yellow and white golf balls. The table shows the company's sale of yellow golf balls for the last 3 years.

Year	Number of Yellow Golf Balls Sold
1	204,132
2	225,624
3	237,108

- The company expects sales of yellow golf balls to continue to increase in year 4.
- The company also expects the ratio of yellow golf ball sales to white golf ball sales in year 4 to be about 1:5.
- The average selling price of a box of 12 yellow or 12 white golf balls is \$23.94.

Estimate the company's total sales, in dollars, of golf balls in year 4. Show all your work. Explain how you determined your estimate.

Enter your estimate, your work, and your explanation in the space provided.

### Grade 3: ELA

#### Part A

What does the phrase his teeth jiggled in paragraph 14 show about Pinkerton?

- A Pinkerton feels pain
- B Pinkerton feels tired.
- C Pinkerton feels excited.
- D Pinkerton feels nervous.



## Useful Information for All

### **FAMILIES:** Understanding Grade Level Performance

The IAR report gives families information on how well their child performed on different sets of skills in each subject. Families can use this information to identify where their child is doing well and where they may need support or practice. This helps families better support learning at home. It can also help them start meaningful conversations with teachers, to set goals for each student's areas of improvement and to identify resources and strategies that can be used at home and in school to help students make progress.

#### **Questions to Ask the Teacher about Your Child's IAR Report:**

- What does this mean about my child's learning?
- Is my child on grade level?
- Where does my child need more support or improvement?
- What short-term learning goals should my child meet to show progress?
- How can I support learning at home?



### **TEACHERS:** Informing Instruction

Students take different types of tests throughout the school year. Some students take benchmark or diagnostic tests, such as MAP Growth or i-Ready. These are taken several times a year and measure mastery of important concepts and skills in reading and math. Students take a test at the beginning of the year to identify their “starting point” and again throughout the year to measure their progress. Benchmark tests help teachers identify and address learning gaps early on so students can stay on track to meet grade level expectations. While IAR is only given at the end of the school year, it is one way of showing how much progress students made from the beginning of the year and how well they met grade level expectations.

While teachers use IAR results to understand each student's unique needs and support them in the areas where they need extra help, they also help teachers to improve their instruction. Teachers can use the results to look for trends in their students' learning to see what skills or concepts students learned and what content they struggled with. This helps teachers identify what they taught effectively and where they need to improve or change their instructional strategies.

### **SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEADERS:** Informing Decisions

IAR results are critical for school and district leaders to make informed decisions about schools and students. School and district level test scores show leaders how students across a school or district are performing and indicate if a certain group of students or schools need more support. This allows them to target additional support or resources to help those schools improve. District leaders can also use IAR scores to understand what strategies and changes are working.



### **STATE LEADERS:** Helping Schools Improve

State leaders use IAR results to identify schools and districts that need more support and resources. They identify the schools making the least amount of progress in the state, as well as schools with certain groups of students that performed much lower on the test than the rest of the students in that school. These schools receive additional funding and resources from the state to support students and teachers. For example, schools may hire more teachers or tutors or they may purchase additional instructional materials and programs, depending on the needs of their students.

#### **Where Can I Go for More Information?**

- For more information, visit [ISBE.net/Pages/Assessment.aspx](https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Assessment.aspx)
- To see a practice test, visit [IL.MyPearsonSupport.com/Practice-Tests/](https://il.mypearsonsupport.com/Practice-Tests/)
- For ideas on how to support your child's learning at home, visit [PTA.org/FamilyGuides](https://pta.org/FamilyGuides)
- For more information about the Illinois PTA visit [IllinoisPTA.org/](https://IllinoisPTA.org/)

