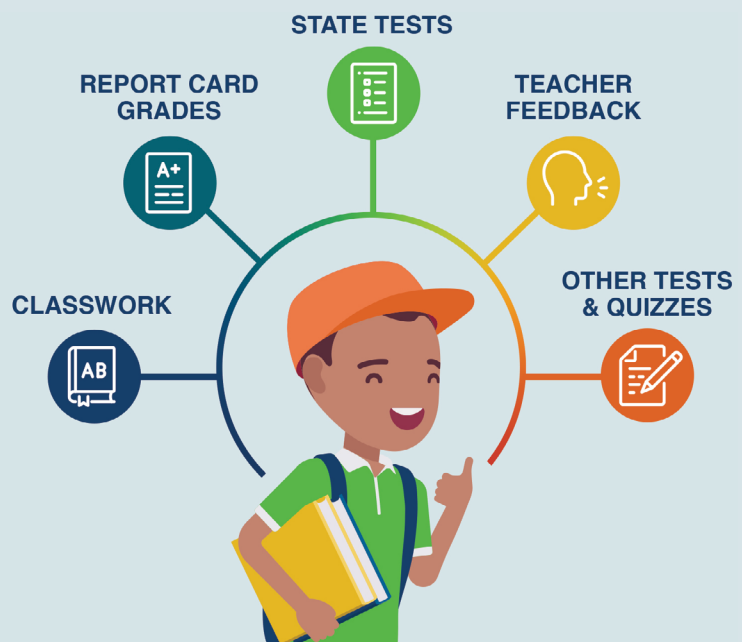




A FAMILY GUIDE TO ANNUAL STATE TESTS IN MARYLAND: One of Many Measures of Student Learning

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 Maryland, students in third through eighth grade take the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) in English language arts and math. Students in fifth and eighth grade also take a test in science and those in eighth grade take an MCAP in social studies. In high school, students take MCAP in English language arts in 10th grade and end-of-course tests in Biology, Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry and American Government.

To earn a diploma, students must earn at least a Level 3 on the Algebra 1, Biology, American Government and English 10 tests. Students can retake a test if they need to, and there are other options for students to demonstrate they have learned the materials in a particular subject, such as bridge projects.

A Focus on Grade Level Skills

Unlike other tests, MCAP 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 every day throughout the year, which are the skills that are most important for students to learn in order to move on to more challenging content.

MCAP is taken online and includes a variety of different types of questions, including multi-step math problems, essays and constructed responses that require students to explain their answers.

Grade 6: Math

Melvin and Roberto played football on two different teams last season.

- Melvin's team won w games.
- Roberto's team won 3 fewer games than Melvin's team.

Create an expression that can be used to represent the number of games Roberto's team won.

Move a number, variable, or symbol into each box.

3	w	-	+	•	÷

Grade 3: ELA

Part A

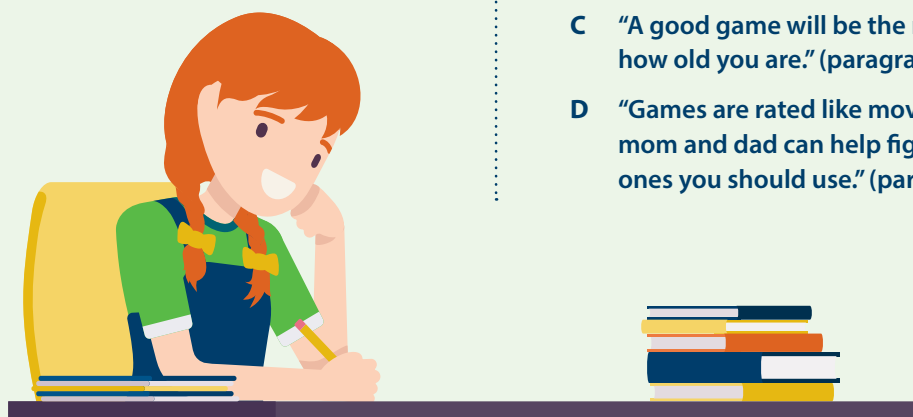
What is the main idea of the passage?

- A Video games are a popular activity for children.
- B Playing video games with your family is fun, and it teaches teamwork.
- C It is important to spend time on other activities, not just on video games.
- D Video-game ratings help parents choose games for their children.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A "Lots of kids love video games." (paragraph 1)
- B "It's hard to get enough active play and exercise if you're always inside playing video games." (paragraph 3)
- C "A good game will be the right one for how old you are." (paragraph 6)
- D "Games are rated like movies, and your mom and dad can help figure out which ones you should use." (paragraph 6)



Useful Information for All

FAMILIES: Understanding Grade Level Performance

The MCAP 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, set goals for each student's areas of improvement and 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 MCAP 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?



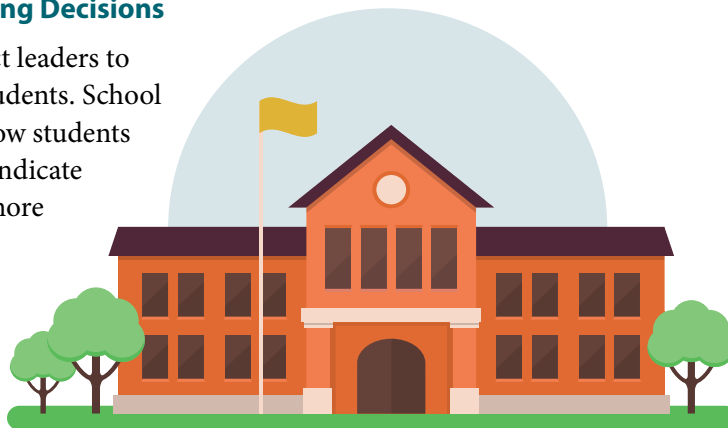
TEACHERS: Informing Instruction

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 MCAP 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 MCAP 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

MCAP results are critical for school and district leaders to make informed decisions about schools and students. School and district level MCAP 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 MCAP scores to understand what strategies and changes are working.



STATE LEADERS: Helping Schools Improve

State leaders use MCAP results to identify schools and districts that need more support and resources. They identify the schools with the lowest performance 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 MarylandPublicSchools.org/About/Pages/DAAIT/index.aspx#:~:text=The%20Every%20Student%20Succeeds%20Act,and%20annual%20English%20language%20proficiency
- To see a practice test, visit Support.MDAssessments.com/practice-tests/
- For ideas on how to support your child's learning at home, visit PTA.org/FamilyGuides
- For more information about the Maryland PTA visit MDPTA.org/

