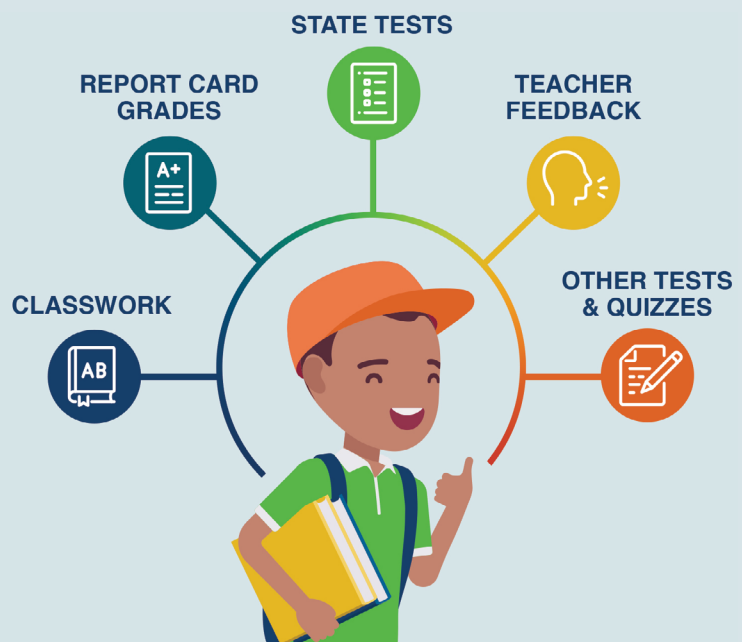




A FAMILY GUIDE TO ANNUAL STATE TESTS IN NEW JERSEY: One of Many Measures of Student Learning

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 New Jersey, students in third through eighth grade take the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) in English language arts and math. In sixth and ninth grade, students also take the NJSLA in science. High school students take the NJSLA in Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and Geometry, and in English in ninth through 11th grade. Students in 12th grade also take NJSLA in science.

To earn a diploma, students must achieve a score in Level 4 or 5 on the English 10 and Algebra 1 tests. Students can retake the test if they need to and there are other options for students to demonstrate their learning, such as submitting a student portfolio or meeting a certain score on alternative assessments.

A Focus on Grade Level Skills

Unlike other tests, the NJSLA 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 NJSLA test is taken online. The test includes a variety of different types of questions, including traditional multiple choice, as well as questions that ask students to analyze text, develop equations 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

Read paragraph 14 from the story.

Maybe the cola was warm, or maybe it had been jostled too much, because when Dad opened it, that bottle erupted like Mount Vesuvius. Cola overflowed like lava. Dad dropped the bottle. It rolled across the tent floor spewing its contents, and we ended up perched on our sleeping bags like castaways adrift in a cola sea.

What does **that bottle erupted like Mount Vesuvius** mean as used in the paragraph?

- A The cola bottle was open and floating in the water.
- B The cola was bubbling and spilling out.
- C The cola bottle was moving around.
- D The cola was hot.

Part A

Which detail from paragraph supports the answer to part A?

- A "...the cola was warm..."
- B "...jostled too much..."
- C "...overflowed like lava..."
- D "...perched on our sleeping bags..."



Useful Information for All

FAMILIES: Understanding Grade Level Performance

The NJSLA 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 NJSLA 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?



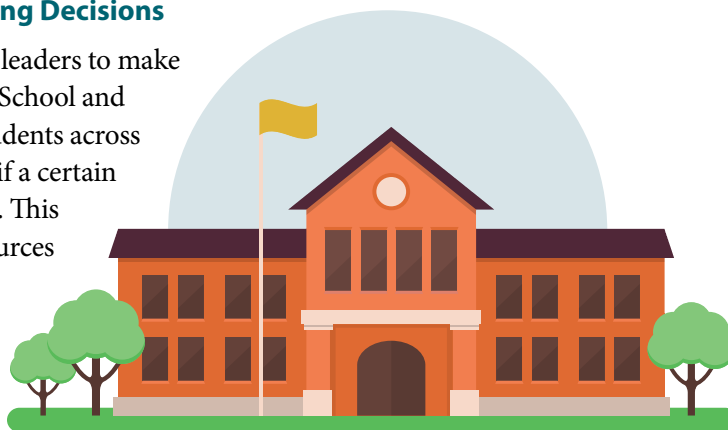
TEACHERS: Informing Instruction

Students take different types of tests throughout the school year. Some students take benchmark or diagnostic tests, such as MAP Growth, i-Ready or Start Strong. These are taken at the beginning of the year to identify each student's "starting point" and some, like MAP Growth and i-Ready, can be taken again throughout the year to measure progress. These tests help teachers identify and address learning gaps early on so students can stay on track to meet grade level expectations. While the NJSLA 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 NJSLA 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

NJSLA results are critical for school and district leaders to make informed decisions about schools and students. School and district level NJSLA 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 NJSLA scores to understand what strategies and changes are showing better outcomes for students.



STATE LEADERS: Helping Schools Improve

State leaders use NJSLA 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 NJ.gov/Education/Assessment/
- To see a practice test, visit NJ.MyPearsonSupport.com/Practice-Tests/
- For ideas on how to support your child's learning at home, visit PTA.org/FamilyGuides
- For more information about the New Jersey PTA visit NJPTA.org/

