



The Nation's Report Card: Reading and Mathematics



To improve student achievement, we first need to know where we are. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—also known as The Nation's Report Card—has informed the public about what American students know and can do for 50 years.

NAEP, the only nationally representative assessment of elementary and secondary education in the United States, provides rich data on student performance and on the contexts in which students learn. Results in reading and mathematics for grades 4 and 8 are provided for students across the nation, for states and jurisdictions, and for 27 select urban districts. The mathematics and reading assessments are administered on tablets from January to March every two years.

Design of the NAEP Mathematics and Reading Assessments

The National Assessment Governing Board, the nonpartisan organization that sets policy for NAEP, engaged K-12 and postsecondary educators, researchers, assessment specialists, and members of the public to establish the NAEP Reading and Mathematics frameworks. These frameworks provide a blueprint for assessing skills and knowledge in reading and in mathematics.

The reading assessment tests students on literary and informational texts. The questions measure students' ability to locate and recall, integrate and interpret, and critique and evaluate. The mathematics assessment addresses five content areas: number properties and operations; measurement; geometry; data analysis, statistics, and probability; and algebra. The assessments also include questions about students' home and school experiences, which provide context for understanding their performance.



How Performance is Reported

NAEP reports performance using both average scale scores and percentages of students performing at or above three achievement levels: *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced*.

NAEP Basic

Denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for performance at the *NAEP Proficient* level.

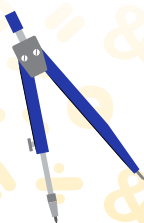
NAEP Proficient

Represents solid academic performance for each NAEP assessment. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

NAEP Advanced

Signifies superior performance beyond *NAEP Proficient*.

NAEP Proficient is defined differently from other uses of the term. This variation in terminology is often a source of confusion when it comes to understanding the NAEP achievement levels. For example, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act refers to student “proficiency.” State assessment systems may use the terms “proficient” and “proficiency,” but state definitions of proficient vary widely. It is important to note that *NAEP Proficient* represents the NAEP program’s goal for what all students should know.



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