



State Learning Standards & Testing

What are “learning standards”?

The Washington State K–12 Learning Standards define what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Why do we need them?

Rigorous learning standards require students to think critically and creatively about content—rather than memorize it—so they are ready for careers, college, and life after high school.

Which content areas have learning standards?

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- Educational Technology
- Health and Fitness
- Integrated Environment and Sustainability
- World Languages
- English Language Proficiency

How are they developed?

Learning standards are carefully developed by content experts from across the state and nation, with input from educators, parents, and the public.

How often are the learning standards updated?

The standards are updated periodically to ensure they are aligned with the evolving expectations of colleges and the workforce.

Why do we have state tests?

Achievement data for students, schools, districts, and the state help districts and schools decide which teaching practices and curricula best support student understanding of the learning standards.

They also give families valuable information about how well their child is doing and where additional help might be needed.

Statewide testing is important because it helps ensure all public school students, no matter where they go to school, receive a quality education.

Are they required?

State and federal laws require students to be tested in:

- **English language arts and math:** Grades 3 through 8 and high school
- **Science:** Grades 5, 8, and 10

To see which tests are required for high school graduation, please visit www.WAtesting.com.

Learn
more!

Learning Standards

bit.ly/StateStandards
or email CoreStandards@k12.wa.us

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Smarter Balanced



REASONS WHY WASHINGTON MADE THE SWITCH TO
NEW ASSESSMENTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & MATH

Reason
#1

The right standards

Washington's state learning standards in English language arts and math (*Common Core*) are designed to prepare students for career, college, and life.

Reason
#6

Less expensive

Compared to our most recent years of testing, we're saving about \$6 million per year by switching to the Smarter Balanced system.

Reason
#2

Teacher resources

Teachers can access resources in the Digital Library and use periodic, or interim, assessments to help track and support student progress throughout the year.

Reason
#7

Teacher involvement

From developing test items, to setting achievement levels, to vetting Digital Library materials, Washington teachers have been involved every step of the way.

Reason
#3

Expertise and collaboration

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium takes advantage of each member state's technical and practical expertise to ensure a representative blend of ideas.

Reason
#8

Higher expectations

Proficiency rates will be lower at first than what we're used to. That doesn't mean students have "failed." As students adjust to the college- and career-ready standards, results will improve.

Reason
#4

Quicker results

Individual scores are available to schools and districts within a few weeks of students completing year-end, or summative, tests.

Reason
#9

Computer adaptive

These tests present an individually tailored set of questions to each student and can quickly identify which skills and concepts students have mastered.

Reason
#5

More accessible

These tests are designed to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners.

Reason
#10

Ties to higher education

Most of Washington's universities, colleges, and community colleges will use high school students' Smarter Balanced scores for course-level placement.