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More About NAEP Writing

The NAEP writing assessment presents a broad view of how well America's students are writing--one of the most important skills that young people can acquire and develop throughout their lives. Reflecting current practice and recognizing the impact of communication technologies on the way students compose their writing, NAEP administered the first computer-based assessment in writing in 2011 at grades 8 and 12.

On this page, learn more about:

- [The NAEP writing framework](#)
- [Assessment question formats](#)
- [Number of students who took the assessment](#)
- [Permitted accommodations](#)
- [Assessment sample and weighting](#)
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The NAEP writing framework

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knowledge and skills to be assessed in each subject. Frameworks incorporate ideas and input from subject area experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others. In 2011, the Governing Board introduced a new Writing Framework (3.11 MB) that recognizes the significant role that computers play in the writing process.

The assessment exercises and scoring criteria were developed by a committee of writing and measurement experts to capture the goals of the framework. The Writing Development Committee was instrumental in developing new material for the 2011 assessment, guided by the framework.

The writing prompts used in the assessment focused on the following three purposes for writing:

- to persuade,
- to explain, and
- to convey.

Learn more about what the writing assessment measures.

Assessment question formats

All of the writing questions are classified as extended constructed-response. Each student responded to 2 out of 22 possible writing tasks. In the scoring of student answers, it was recognized that these were essentially first drafts, not polished pieces of writing. Student responses could receive any of six ratings, from "Effective" to "Little or No Skill."

NAEP also gives questionnaires to students, teachers, and schools that are part of the NAEP sample. Responses to these questionnaires provide contextual information, such as how teachers teach writing, what kinds of writing students experience in class, and what educational resources are available at schools.

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Number of students who took the assessment

The 2011 writing assessment results are based on nationally representative samples of 24,100 eighth-graders from 950 schools, and 28,100 twelfth-graders from 1,220 schools. The sample design for the first computer-based writing assessment was not intended to report results for individual states or large urban districts.

NAEP does not, and is not designed to, report on the performance of individual students. Instead, it assesses various demographic groups within the student population from representative national and state samples. For example, NAEP reports results for male and female students, Black and White students, and students in different regions of the country. Student samples are selected using a complex sampling design.

Permitted accommodations

Since 1998, accommodations for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) are permitted as part of the writing assessment.

Some of the testing accommodations that are provided to SD/ELL students in NAEP paper-and-pencil assessments are part of the universal design of the computer-based assessment, which seeks to make the assessment available to all students. For example, the font size adjustment feature available to all students taking the computer-based assessment is comparable to the large-print assessment book accommodation in the paper-and-pencil assessment, and the digital text-to-speech component takes the place of the read-aloud accommodation for paper-and-pencil

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- See additional information about the percentages of students with disabilities and English language learners identified, excluded, and assessed.
- See the types of accommodations permitted for SD and ELL students at the national level.

Assessment sample and weighting

The schools and students participating in NAEP assessments are selected to be representative of all schools nationally. The results from the assessed students are combined to provide accurate estimates of the overall performance of students in public, private, and other types of schools (i.e., Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense schools) in the nation. Read more about NAEP sampling.

Because each school that participated in the assessment and each student assessed represents a portion of the population of interest, the results are weighted to account for the disproportionate representation of the selected sample. This includes oversampling of schools with high concentrations of students from certain racial/ethnic groups and lower sampling rates of students who attend very small schools.

Additional resources

For more information about NAEP, the nation's largest ongoing assessment of what students know and can do in various subjects, read the NAEP Overview.

View the NAEP 2011 Writing Report Card.

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