



Parent Guide

Star for Grades K-5

What is Star?

In the School District of Philadelphia, we use Star as a tool to measure math and reading skills for all students. Star assessments are short tests that provide teachers with learning data. Students in grades K-5 will spend about 30 minutes each quarter taking Star assessments. The data from Star helps guide the implementation of strategies that will improve student outcomes and help our schools meet the goals set by the Board of Education.

What do teachers do with Star assessments?

Teachers look at the data they get from Star tests to learn what students already know and what they are ready to learn next, to measure academic growth, and to determine which students may need additional support. Teachers can use information from Star to guide instruction for the entire class, for groups of students, and for individual students. Star assessments are research-based and proven to help teachers guide each student on their unique learning path.¹

Which Star assessments will my child take?

Students in grades K-5 will take a combination of computer adaptive tests and curriculum-based measures during the school year. The computer adaptive assessments adjust based on each answer your child provides. This helps teachers get the best information to help your child during a brief testing time. Students in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and 2nd graders who are not able to read on their own will take the Star Early Literacy assessment. 2nd graders who can read on their own and students in Grades 3-5 will take Star Reading and Star Math.

Curriculum-based measures are minute-long tests that will be administered one-on-one. These will be used to measure students' performance of specific skills for both Math and Reading. Students in grades K-5 will take curriculum-based measures for reading. In addition, students in grades K-3 will take curriculum-based measures for math.

What types of questions are on the Star assessments?

Star Early Literacy contains 27 questions designed for students who cannot read independently (the test is read aloud to the student). Among these are some items to assess math skills. Star Reading and Star Math each contain 34 multiple choice questions. Because the Star Early Literacy, Reading, and Math assessments are computer-adaptive tests, the difficulty level of each question

¹ Renaissance. (2020). Research Foundation for Star Adaptive Assessments. <https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R001480701GCFBB9.pdf>.

What do Star scores mean?

Your child will receive a variety of Star scores:

The **scale score** is based on overall performance.

The **percentile ranking** reflects how your child's performance compares to the performance of other students across the country in the same grade.

The **benchmark category** shows you which group your child will be placed in based on their percentile rank.

The **grade equivalence** reflects your child's grade-level performance.

The **student growth percentile** measures how much your child has grown.

The **instructional reading level** shows the grade level at which your child can read to learn.

The **Lexile level** provides your child's teacher with more insight about reading ability and the difficulty of books they can read on their own.

For curriculum-based measures, students will also receive a correct-per-minute score reflecting the number of items they answered correctly.

will change depending on how well a student is performing on the assessment. That is, as students answer more questions correctly, the questions become more difficult, and as students answer fewer questions correctly, the test items become less difficult. The difficulty of questions ranges from the first-grade level through the twelfth-grade level.

The curriculum-based measures are minute-long tests that assess different foundational skills. They will be administered one-on-one and will measure specific skills such as letter recognition, addition, subtraction, and multiplication.

What do Star assessments do for my child?

By pinpointing exactly what your child knows, teachers can personalize your child's instruction to keep them growing academically. In addition, short test times ensure that your child spends more time learning and less time testing.

Does Star affect my child's grade?

This test does not affect students' grades. The results are only used to help teachers meet the needs of all students. This in turn could help your child's grades improve as their individual needs are identified and instruction is adjusted accordingly.

When will my child take their Star assessments?

Schools and teachers will schedule testing times during the following three windows:

- Star Fall (required): September 5, 2023 - October 6, 2023
- Star Winter (required): December 4, 2023 - January 12, 2024
- Star Spring (required): April 1, 2024 - May 24, 2024

How will Star be administered?

Students will take the assessment in school during the three testing windows. The computer adaptive assessments will be taken using technology in school. The curriculum-based measures can be taken using technology, paper, or a combination of both.

How can I set my child up for success on Star assessments?

Make sure students are well rested before going to school on the days that they are taking the Star assessments. Encourage them to do their best work, and remind them that it will help their teacher to better meet their individual learning needs.

Where can I find the results from the test?

Results from the test will be available after each testing window through the Parent Portal. If you need help understanding the results, please contact your student's teacher. If you need help getting into the Parent Portal, look here: <https://www.philasd.org/face/fr/parent-and-family-portal/>.