

MAP Growth Test Q&A for Students and Families

The MAP Growth tests assess academic proficiency in reading and mathematics for our students in grades 3-8 and high school students in first-year algebra courses. Bellingham has been using MAP tests since 2005. MAP comes to us from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), a not-for-profit organization based out of Portland. More information about MAP can be accessed from their website at www.nwea.org/parent-toolkit.

How does this assessment work?

MAP tests are given individually on the computer. Each test is made up of about fifty questions measuring our state learning standards in math or reading. Teachers can assess an entire class at one time. To see a practice test, go to <https://practice.mapnwea.org> and use “grow” for both the username and password.

How long does it take to complete a test?

Although the tests are not timed, it usually takes most students a little less than an hour to complete a test.

Do all students in the same grade take the same test?

No. MAP is a computer-adaptive test. When students start testing with MAP, they begin with questions at their grade level. During the test, the computer adjusts the difficulty of the questions. When the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. When the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. This process tailors the test to the student’s current level of understanding.

My child does well in school but said this test was too hard. Are the questions right for my child’s grade level?

If students were only asked questions to which they knew the answers, we would learn what they *can* do – but not *what more* they can do. Likewise, if students were given a test in which they knew very few answers, we would only learn what they *cannot* do. With on-grade level tests, some students may know all the correct answers on the test or none of the correct answers. With an adaptive MAP test, students see questions they can answer correctly and some they cannot. This process creates a score that estimates a student’s achievement level regardless of grade level. We can then compare that score to typical achievement for their grade level as well as typical growth over time.

When will my child be tested and how often?

We schedule a MAP administration twice a year. Assessing a student in the fall and then later in year gives us a way to look at student growth over time. This makes it easier for students to set their own goals and track their progress.

What is the MAP assessment used for?

Screening – MAP can be used to identify which students may be starting the year not yet ready for grade-level work and which may be starting out ready for advanced work.

Progress – Test data from tens of thousands of students tells us how much growth is typical by students on MAP assessments over time. This perspective allows teachers and students to set appropriate goals and track student progress in the knowledge and skills that MAP measures.

Strengths and challenges – MAP data also indicates where students’ strengths are within that content area or where help may be needed. Teachers use this information to assist in guiding instruction in the classroom.

MAP is aligned to the same learning standards as our state’s Smarter Balanced tests. Bellingham Public Schools and many other districts use the relationship between MAP performance and the state tests to set grade level expectations.

The MAP scores in this table are used to estimate progress toward meeting state standards, as measured by our state tests given each spring.

MAP to Smarter Balanced Proficiency

Grade	Fall		Winter		Spring	
	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading
3	187	189	195	196	200	199
4	200	199	207	205	211	207
5	212	203	218	208	222	210
6	217	211	222	214	225	216
7	224	215	228	218	231	219
8	232	219	235	222	237	223