Georgia Milestones
Assessment System

End-of-Grade Assessments
Grades 3–8

End-of-Course Assessments
High School

Questions and Answers for Parents

What is the Georgia Milestones Assessment System?

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) is a comprehensive assessment system spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics, while grades 5 and 8 students will also take the EOG Science and Social Studies assessments. High school students will take End-of-Course (EOC) assessments for each of the ten courses in which they are enrolled, as designated by the State Board of Education.

What is the purpose of Georgia Milestones?

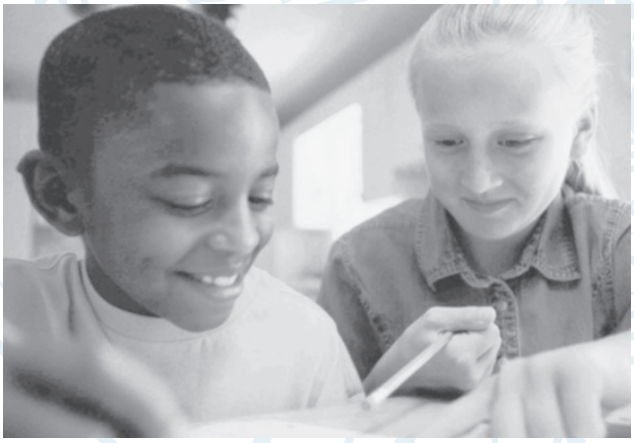
Georgia Milestones is designed to provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in the core content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Importantly, Georgia Milestones is designed to provide students with critical information about their own achievement and their readiness for their next level of learning—be it the next grade, the next course, or the next endeavor (college or career).

What types of questions will a student see on the Georgia Milestones assessments?

Georgia Milestones includes the item types described below:

- open-ended (constructed-response) items in English Language Arts and Mathematics (all grades and courses);
- a writing component (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the English Language Arts assessments;
- nationally norm-referenced items in all content areas and courses to complement the Georgia criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison; and
- multiple-choice items in all content areas and courses.

Georgia Milestones will be transitioned to online testing over time. Online is considered the primary mode of testing, with paper-and-pencil available as backup until the transition is complete.



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Where can I find more information about Georgia Milestones?

Talk with your student's teacher or school principal. They can provide specific information about the dates your student will be taking the assessments this year. Resources to help your student prepare for Georgia Milestones are available on the Georgia Department of Education's website at http://testing.gadoe.org. To see what online testing is like, you and your student may visit the Experience Online Testing Georgia website at http://gaexperienceonline.com. The items on the demonstration tests are general and represent multiple grade levels. They do not assess student achievement.

What can I do to help my student?

Students who are prepared, calm, and rested perform better on tests. Here are some of the many ways to help your student approach Georgia Milestones in a relaxed, positive way:

- Encourage your student to employ good study and test-taking skills. These skills include following directions carefully, avoiding careless errors, and reviewing work.
- Explain the purpose of the tests. The assessments give students an opportunity to show what they have learned in school. They also give teachers information that helps them plan instruction.
- Point out that some items may be more difficult than others.
- Be certain your student gets plenty of sleep and has a healthy breakfast and lunch. Taking tests is hard work for many students and can require a lot of energy.
- Be certain your student is at school on time. Rushing and worrying about being late could affect performance on the tests.
- Remember to ask your student about the testing at the end of each day.

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When do students take the assessments?

Students will take the assessments on days specified by their local school system within designated state testing windows.

The EOC Main Winter administration will occur from late November through early January. The Spring Main administration will occur from late April through early June, with the Summer Main administration taking place in June and July. In addition, Mid-Month administrations are available during designated months of the year for students who require testing at a time other than the Main administrations.

Students in grades 3 through 8 will participate in the EOG assessments from early April through early May. The Retest administration will occur from May through July.

What scores do students receive on Georgia Milestones?

The state-adopted content standards set specific academic benchmarks and expectations for all students in Georgia's public schools. Georgia Milestones measures how well a student has acquired the knowledge and skills outlined in the standards for his or her grade level. Students are not compared to each other but are measured instead on how well they are meeting the standards. Student achievement in each content area is classified into four performance levels. Student test results are provided to parents and schools.

Georgia Milestones includes a limited sample of nationally norm-referenced items to provide a signal of how Georgia students are achieving relative to their peers nationally. Only approved norm-referenced items aligned to Georgia standards will contribute to a student's criterion-referenced achievement level, scale score, and grade conversion score.

In grades 3, 5, and 8, Georgia Milestones results inform promotion/retention decisions in the areas of reading (grades 3, 5, and 8) and mathematics (grades 5 and 8). If needed, students are afforded a retest opportunity in the summer. For high school students, the EOC measures serve as their final exam with the resulting score counting as 20 percent of their final course grade.

Performance on the English Language Arts portion of Georgia Milestones is linked to the Lexile scale, a national reading measure that matches students to appropriately challenging reading materials. An abundance of books and articles are assigned Lexile measures by publishers. All major standardized tests can report student reading scores in Lexiles.

For more information about the Lexile scale, as well as resources to help select literature for your student, visit www.gadoe.org/lexile.aspx on the Georgia Department of Education website.



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Are students with disabilities or students who are English Learners required to take Georgia Milestones?

State rules, federal requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate that all students participate in the state assessment program. All students must be tested in all Georgia Milestones content areas at their respective grade levels or courses.

Specified accommodations are allowed on state assessments for students who require them. Neither an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team nor a parent can request that a student be exempted from the assessment program. However, if an IEP team determines regular state testing is inappropriate for a student, even with accommodations, the student may participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA).

While Georgia Milestones' primary mode of testing is online, paper-and-pencil tests will be available for students who require that mode of testing (e.g., Braille).

Students with limited English proficiency who enrolled in a U.S. school for the first time may receive a one-year deferment from assessment in EOG content areas other than Mathematics and Science. Deferments are not permitted for EOC assessments.

Georgia Department of Education

Assessment and Accountability
1554 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Tel (404) 656-2668
Toll-Free (800) 634-4106
Fax (404) 656-5976
http://testing.gadoe.org

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