

EQAO TESTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Guide for Parents

Education Quality and
Accountability Office



Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics,
Primary Division (Grades 1–3) and Junior Division
(Grades 4–6)

This brochure will help you understand the two EQAO tests Ontario students write in elementary school and how you can use the results to support your child.

Students across Ontario write province-wide assessments of their reading, writing and math skills at key stages in their elementary and secondary school education:

Grade 3 | Literacy and math tested at the end of the primary division

Grade 6 | Literacy and math tested at the end of the junior division

Grade 9 | Math tested in the first year of secondary school

Grade 10 | Literacy tested as a graduation requirement

The tests are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an arm's-length agency of the Ministry of Education.

About the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1–3) and Junior Division (Grades 4–6)

- The primary-division assessment tests the reading, writing and mathematics skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 3.
- The junior-division assessment tests the reading, writing and mathematics skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 6.
- The testing takes place during a two-week period in late May and early June. Each school determines its exact testing dates during this period.

These are the first two assessments in Ontario's province-wide testing program. They provide important information about your child's achievement in relation to the provincial standard.

Does my child have to take the EQAO tests?

All students who attend publicly funded schools in Ontario and who follow *The Ontario Curriculum* are expected to participate in EQAO's provincial assessments. These tests are part of the province's educational program.

For students with special education needs, some accommodations that are consistent with regular classroom assessment practices are permitted. Special provisions may also be permitted for English language learners. If a student is unable to participate in part or all of the test—even with accommodations—the principal may exempt him or her in consultation with school staff and the parents or guardians.

What is on the EQAO tests?

Each question on EQAO tests is based on the learning expectations set out in *The Ontario Curriculum*, which is what children are taught in classrooms across Ontario every day.



Does my child have to study for the tests?

Since EQAO tests are based entirely on *The Ontario Curriculum*, which is the source of all classroom instruction, the tests should not require special preparation. EQAO's elementary tests measure students' ability to

- make sense of what they read in different kinds of texts;
- express their thoughts in writing using appropriate grammar; spelling and punctuation and
- use appropriate math skills to solve problems.

These fundamental literacy and math skills can and should be taught throughout the school year and reinforced in all subjects.

How can I support my child in writing the tests?

The best way to support your child in writing the tests is by supporting his or her success at school throughout the year. You can use the test materials released at www.eqao.com to help your child become familiar with the format of the provincial tests and the types of questions asked.

When and how are EQAO results released?

Results are released in September of the next school year. Your child will receive EQAO's Individual Student Report, or ISR, directly from his or her school.

How are EQAO results reported?

EQAO results are reported according to the province's four achievement levels. These are the same levels teachers use in the classroom and on report cards to evaluate your child's progress. The provincial standard is Level 3, which corresponds to a B– to B+.

Do EQAO results count toward my child's grades?

Results on the provincial tests do not count toward students' grades. They provide additional information that should be considered alongside report card grades to help you assess and support your child's learning.

What do EQAO results tell me about my child?

EQAO test results are an important indicator of your child's achievement in relation to the provincial standard. Students meeting or exceeding the standard (Levels 3 and 4) on the tests have demonstrated most or all of the required reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills expected at the current stage of their education.

EQAO data show that meeting the provincial standard in early grades is a strong predictor of literacy and math achievement in secondary school. If your child does not meet the standard in Grade 3 or Grade 6, more attention may be needed to help your child be successful.

However, no single test can offer a complete picture of what your child has learned. The best way to assess your child's full range of skills and knowledge is to consider EQAO test results alongside other achievement information, such as report card grades and classroom assessment results.

How do I make the best use of the results?

The most important thing to do with your child's EQAO results is to discuss them with his or her teacher in the context of your child's overall progress.

You may want to discuss

- whether there are patterns between the EQAO results and your child's current classroom work;
- which skills may need more attention and
- how you can work together to ensure your child can reach his or her full potential.

Why does Ontario conduct province-wide tests?

Ontario's province-wide tests provide an objective and reliable measure of how well students are learning the reading, writing and math skills defined in *The Ontario Curriculum*. The tests help to

- track each child's achievement from elementary to secondary school;
- identify trends in student learning at the school, board and provincial levels;

- pinpoint curriculum areas that need attention and
- strengthen the accountability of the public education system.

Why do we need EQAO tests in addition to classroom tests?

EQAO tests and classroom tests have different goals and provide different kinds of information.

Classroom tests

- measure how well students have learned specific information;
- provide quick results teachers can use to modify teaching strategies;
- may have subjective components, based on the teacher's knowledge of each student, and
- provide results that may not be comparable across the school, board or province.

EQAO tests

- measure students' cumulative knowledge and skills in relation to a provincial standard;
- are given at key stages of students' education;
- are administered, scored and reported on in a consistent and objective manner and
- provide results that are comparable across the school, board and province from year to year.

Considering EQAO test results alongside classroom test results makes the picture of each student's learning more complete.

Visit www.eqao.com for more information.

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