

EQAO TESTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

A Guide for Parents and Students

Education Quality and
Accountability Office



- Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics
- Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)

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

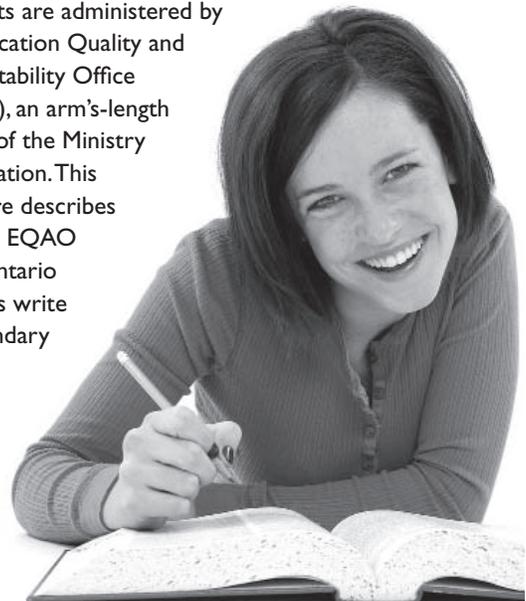
Grade 3 | Literacy and math tested at the end of the primary division

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. This brochure describes the two EQAO tests Ontario students write in secondary school.



About the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

- This test measures the math skills students are expected to have learned in Grade 9.
- Students who are working toward their Grade 9 academic or applied math credit take this test.
- Different versions of the test are administered in the academic and the applied math courses.
- Students in first-semester math courses take the test in January; students in second-semester or full-year math courses take the test in June.

About the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)

- This test measures whether students are meeting the minimum standard for literacy (reading and writing) across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9.
- Students take this test in Grade 10.
- Successful completion of the OSSLT is a requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).
- There are supports for students who do not pass the OSSLT, including an opportunity to rewrite the test or to take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.

These are the final two tests in Ontario's province-wide testing program. They provide important information to help you track student progress over time and identify where attention may still be needed.

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

- 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;
- 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

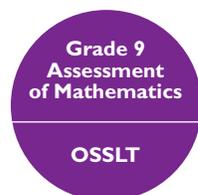
- measure students' cumulative knowledge and skills in relation to a provincial standard;
- are given at key stages of students' education;
- are administered, scored and reported on in a consistent and objective manner and
- provide results that are comparable across the school, board and province from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

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

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 students are learning in classrooms every day.

Do students have to take the EQAO tests?



All students working toward their academic or applied Grade 9 math credit are expected to take this test.

All students working toward an OSSD must take the OSSLT.

For students with special education needs, some accommodations that are consistent with regular classroom assessment practices are permitted on the provincial tests. Special provisions may also be permitted for English language learners.

Do students have to study for the tests?

Since the content of EQAO's tests is based entirely on *The Ontario Curriculum*, the tests should not require special preparation. Students are simply asked to demonstrate the curriculum-based knowledge and skills they have developed through their regular classroom work. They can prepare as they would for any other secondary school test.

You can use the test materials released on EQAO's Web site, www.eqao.com, to become familiar with the format of the provincial tests and the types of questions asked.

When and how are results released?

Grade 9
Assessment
of Mathematics

Results are released in September of the next school year.

OSSLT

Results are released in June of the same school year.

Each student will receive EQAO's individual student report directly from his or her school.

Do EQAO results count toward students' grades?

Grade 9
Assessment
of Mathematics

At the school's or board's discretion, teachers may mark some or all of this test and count it toward students' grades.

OSSLT

The results do not count toward students' grades, but successful completion is a requirement for the OSSD.

How are EQAO results reported?

Grade 9
Assessment
of Mathematics

Achievement is reported according to the province's four achievement levels. The provincial standard is Level 3, which corresponds to a 70 to 79 percent.

OSSLT

The OSSLT is a minimum-competency test. Achievement on this test is therefore reported as "successful" or "unsuccessful."

What do EQAO results tell us?

EQAO results provide a snapshot of student achievement in relation to the provincial standard.

Grade 9
Assessment
of Mathematics

Students meeting or exceeding the provincial standard (Levels 3 and 4) have demonstrated most or all of the knowledge and skills expected at this stage of their education.

OSSLT

Students who are successful have demonstrated the minimum level of literacy that is expected by the end of Grade 9.

No single test can offer a complete picture of what each student has learned. The best way to assess the full range of a student's skills and knowledge is to consider EQAO test results alongside other achievement information, such as progress reports and report cards.

What should we do with the results?

The most important thing to do with EQAO results is to discuss them with the student's teachers in the context of the student's overall progress. Tracking EQAO results over time can help confirm whether learning supports have been successful and whether further interventions are needed.

You may want to discuss

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

Visit www.eqao.com for more information.

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