

Talking points on CAASPP

How the Online Smarter Balanced Assessments Are Different from Previous California Tests

The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are very different from previous California tests in several ways:

- They are aligned with California's new content standards for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics.
- They reflect the critical thinking and problem solving skills that students will need to be ready for college and the 21st century job market.
- They are taken on a computer and are adaptive, which means that during the test, the questions will become more or less difficult based on how the student performs. If the student answers a question correctly, the next question may be more challenging; if the student answers it incorrectly, the next question may be less difficult.
- They provide many more supports for students who need them, including students learning English and students with disabilities.

New Standards and Tests: Challenging for Schools to Teach and Students to Learn

California is raising the bar for good reason—students need strong math and reading skills to graduate ready for college and a 21st century career.

These new tests are more rigorous than the old, multiple choice exams. Students must now:

- Explain how they solve problems
- Think critically
- Write analytically

How Student Performance is Reported on the Smarter Balanced Assessments

Overall Score and Achievement Level

For each grade level and subject area, students receive a score from 2000 to 3000. The overall score falls into one of four achievement levels:

- **Standard Exceeded:** The student has exceeded the achievement standard and demonstrates advanced progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Met:** The student has met the achievement standard and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Nearly Met:** The student has nearly met the achievement standard and may require further development to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Not Met:** The student has not met the achievement standard and needs significant improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.