

STAAR: The Next Generation

Beginning in spring 2012, students will start a new voyage with the launch of the next testing program called the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness or STAAR™.

What is STAAR?

STAAR is a more rigorous standardized testing program that will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for elementary, middle, and high school students. The new STAAR program will emphasize “readiness” standards, which are the knowledge and skills that are considered most important for success in the grade or subject that follows and for college and career.

What tests must you take in high school?

Students first entering ninth grade in the 2011–2012 school year will notice the biggest difference in the new testing program. Under the TAKS program, students were required to take two tests in the ninth grade and four tests in both the 10th and 11th grade. In order to graduate, students were required to pass four exit-level tests given at 11th grade. With the new STAAR program, the exit-level tests will be replaced with 12 end-of-course (EOC) assessments, which students will take as they complete the corresponding course.

The 12 EOC assessments are:

- English I, English II, English III
- Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- World Geography, World History, and U.S. History

If a student is enrolled in grade 8 or below and is taking a course for which there is a STAAR EOC assessment, that student will be required to take the applicable STAAR EOC test. For example, an eighth grade student enrolled in Algebra I will take the STAAR Algebra I EOC, as well as the grade 8 reading, science, and social studies assessments. Local school district policy will determine whether this student will also take the STAAR grade 8 mathematics assessment.



How is STAAR different from TAKS?

The new end-of-course assessments will only assess the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for a given course, unlike the high school TAKS tests that cover material from multiple courses.

The questions on the new STAAR will be deeper and more complex than TAKS.

- In reading, greater emphasis will be given to critical analysis rather than to literal understanding.
- In writing, students will be required to write two essays instead of one, and the English EOC assessments will be administered over two days.
- In science and math, the number of open-ended (griddable) questions will increase to allow students to derive an answer independently.

In addition, a student's score on the STAAR EOC assessment will count 15 percent towards the student's final grade in that course. Each of the 12 end-of-course assessments will be available in paper format and online. Also, for the first time since the state began its standardized testing program, there will be a four-hour time limit to complete the test unless the student obtains a special exception.

What do you need to graduate?

To graduate, a student must have a yet-to-be-determined cumulative score on all of the EOC assessments taken in each content area: English, math, science, and social studies. Besides meeting the cumulative score requirement in each of four core content areas, students on the Recommended High School Program, which is the standard graduation plan, must pass the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments. The passing standards will be set in February 2012.

The STAAR graduation requirements apply to students first entering the ninth grade in fall 2011. All other current high school students will graduate on the TAKS program.

Will students who receive special education services take the STAAR?

The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student who receives special education services will determine the appropriate test.

What happens if you pass the course but fail the test?

If a student passes the course, but does not earn the required minimum score on the EOC assessment, the student may retake the test. The student is not required to

retake a course as a condition of retaking the test for that course.

The school is required to provide accelerated instruction to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on any EOC assessment.

Phase-Out Plan for TAKS and Phase-In of STAAR EOC Assessments

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Grade 9				
Grade 10				
Grade 11				
Grade 12				

Where can I find more information about the new testing program?



The latest information about STAAR can be found at:

www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/

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State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

A Guide to the High School Testing Program

