Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS)
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What grades are tested for the WCAS?
A: Grade 5, Grade 8, Grade 11

Q: What learning standards are assessed by the WCAS?

The WCAS assesses all three dimensions of the learning standards (Science and Engineering Practices, Disciplinary Core Ideas, Crosscutting Concepts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards Assessed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5 band of NGSS</td>
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<td>Grade 8</td>
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<td>Middle school band of NGSS</td>
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<td>Grade 11</td>
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<td>High school band of NGSS</td>
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Q: What are the test windows for this spring?
A: Please visit the Testing Timelines/Calendar webpage for information on Test Windows

Q: How much time is needed for the tests?
A: The WCAS were designed to take approximately as long as the former Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and Biology End-of-Course (EOC) tests. This information is for scheduling purposes only, as the tests are not timed.
   • Grade 5: 90 minutes
   • Grade 8: 105 minutes
   • Grade 11: 120 minutes

Q: Does the WCAS have to be completed in one session?
A: The WCAS may be given in multiple sessions like the Smarter Balanced ELA and Math assessments. One to three sessions are recommended.

Q: Are there practice questions available?
A: WCAS Training Tests are available for grades 5, 8, and 11 level. The training tests include a small sample of standalone items and item clusters and are intended to help students understand the functionality of the testing system.

The WCAS Training Tests are available on the Washington State Testing Portal. Additional training test resources include the Online Training Test Support document and a recording of the “How to Work with the WCAS Training Tests” webinar.
Q: **How can I find out what is on the WCAS?**
A: The Test Design and Item Specifications documents are available and are posted on the [science assessment webpage](http://example.com). The documents describe how the clusters (stimulus and item sets) and standalone items for the WCAS are developed. They include a technical description of the assessment that ensures the assessment will measure the science standards in a reliable manner every year. The documents also contain information for each performance expectation (PE) of the science learning standards and provide examples of how the PEs could be assessed on the WCAS.

The Test Design and Item Specifications documents are “living drafts” that are updated annually based on educator feedback. A modifications log that provides information on annual updates is included with the documents.

Q: **What science test do high school students take this spring?**
A: Students in grade 11 only are required to take the WCAS this spring. [House Bill 1599](http://example.com) removed the high school science assessment graduation requirement, however students are still required to take the WCAS in grade 11 for state and federal accountability purposes.

Please visit OSPI’s [Graduation Requirements HB 1599](http://example.com) page for more information.

Q: **Are WCAS student test scores available 3 weeks after testing like Smarter Balanced scores are?**
A: No, WCAS scores are not available that quickly. The WCAS is not an adaptive test, so it takes longer to finalize student scores. Scores from the spring WCAS will be available in the Online Reporting System (ORS) in late August.

Q: **What formative assessment resources are available that can help me and my students measure progress toward learning the Washington State 2013 K-12 Science Learning Standards (NGSS) as assessed on the WCAS?**
A: The [STEM Teaching Tools website](http://example.com) has tools that can help teach science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and is currently focused on supporting the teaching of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Each tool is focused on a specific issue and leverages the best knowledge from research and practice.

Recommended tools:
- **Prompts for Integrating Crosscutting Concepts Into Assessment and Instruction**
- **Integrating Science Practices Into Assessment Tasks**
- **Equity Assessment Instruction Practices:**
  - How can formative assessment support culturally responsive argumentation in a classroom community?
- **Assessment Practices:**
  - How can assessments be designed to engage students in the range of science and engineering practices?
- **Steps to Designing a Three Dimensional Assessment**
Q: How is the WCAS developed?
A: Items used operationally on a state assessment have been through an iterative review process that involves numerous work groups. For each work group, experienced science educators are chosen to represent statewide demographics.

More information on test development and design can be found in the Test Design and Item Specifications documents which are posted on the science assessment webpage.

Q: How can I get involved in science assessment development?
A: Science educators throughout Washington are encouraged to sign up for science assessment updates as well as apply to participate in work groups such as Item Cluster Writing, Content Review, Range Finding, and Content Review with Data. Please consider applying for one or more annual science assessment work groups.

Visit the Professional Development Opportunities webpage for more information.

Please sign up to receive email/text updates from the science assessment team: Go to the Subscribe page for GovDelivery.