



PARENT TOOLKIT: A Guide to MAP Assessments

About MAP

The online Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment is a computerized adaptive test created by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), a non-profit organization committed to helping school districts throughout the nation improve learning for all students. NWEA partners with more than 2,500 school districts representing more than three million students. As a result of NWEA tests, educators can make informed decisions to promote your child's academic growth.

This Parent Toolkit was created by NWEA as a resource and guide for parents. It includes Frequently Asked Questions, Tips for Parents, a list of websites for parents and kids, and information on Lexile—a tool for measuring text difficulty. NWEA hopes that you find this toolkit helpful and invites you to have conversations with Amana's personnel about the MAP assessment.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the MAP assessment?

The Measure of Academic Progress is a computerized adaptive test. When taking a MAP test, the difficulty of each question is based on how well a student answers all the previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. In an optimal test, a student answers approximately half the items correctly and half incorrectly. The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level.

What subjects does MAP assess?

The MAP assessment is available in a Primary Grades version of Reading and Math, as well as Primary Skills checklists, and in regular Elementary and Middle School assessments in Mathematics, Reading, Language Usage, and Science. Also, Survey tests are available for new-student placement.

When will students be tested and how often?

Amana is given the option of testing up to four times per year. Currently, we are planning to offer the full Reading and Math tests in August and January, Science tests in October and March (in grades 3-5 only), Kindergarten screening tests in August during the first week of school, and Primary Skills Checklist tests as often as needed monthly to gauge student progress on specific phonics and number skills.

How long does it take to complete a test?

Although the tests are not timed, it usually takes students about one hour to complete each test. The testing schedule allows for one test per day only, to prevent testing burnout.

Do all students in the same grade take the same test?

No. MAP assessments are designed to target a student's academic performance in mathematics, reading, language arts, and science. These tests are tailored to an individual's current achievement level. This gives each student a fair opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do. The computer adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test.

What is the goal of MAP testing?

MAP assessments are used to measure your student's progress or growth in school. You may have a chart in your home on which you mark your child's height at certain times, such as on his or her birthday. This is a growth chart, which shows how much he or she has grown from one year to the next. MAP assessments do a similar thing, except they measure your student's growth academically from one semester and year to the next. The scale used to measure your

child's progress is called the RIT scale (Rasch unit). The RIT scale is an equal-interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart your child's growth in knowledge from year to year. Parent reports include the child's data from past testing sessions to show growth and progress.

How do teachers use the test scores?

Amana Academy has created the MAP testing calendar with the idea that MAP assessments will provide teachers with the information they need to impact instruction directly. Unlike the CRCT, which is given in April as a year-end test, the MAP test results are returned to teachers almost immediately and will be used for the upcoming semester to group students more effectively, to identify what teachers need to review, and to indicate what the next lessons and units will cover. Parent reports are generated to keep you updated, and conference dates are scheduled to synchronize with the receipt of results in the first and second semesters so that parents and teachers may discuss the child's progress.

How do parents help prepare their child for testing?

- Communicate with your child's teacher as often as necessary to discuss his or her progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities to help prepare for tests and improve your child's understanding of schoolwork.
- Organize and monitor your child's time at home to ensure active, physical play and a minimum of sedentary TV and computer game time.
- Provide a quiet, consistent place for studying at home.
- Especially during testing times, ensure your child is well-rested and has a healthy breakfast. A healthy body is a prerequisite for a healthy, active mind.

How do parents help their child with reading and writing?

- Provide many varieties of reading materials for your child at home, from children's magazines to fiction and non-fiction titles. Research shows that reading aloud to your child, even after the child can read on his/her own, is the most important activity that parents can do to increase their child's chance of reading success. Give gifts of books or bookstore gift cards, and open a library account in the child's name.
- Talk to your child and encourage him or her to engage in conversation during family activities. Limit the amount of time children are present physically, but connected to earphones or playing with hand-held computer games, and thus not participating in discussion.
- Give a journal or diary as a gift. Have your child create a scrapbook of photos with child-written captions for every vacation.
- Help your child write letters and emails to family and friends. Offer assistance with correct grammar usage and content.
- Have a "word of the week" defined every Monday. Encourage your child to use the new word throughout the week. Play word games like Scrabble, Boggle, Spill & Spell, Balderdash, and Outburst, and do crossword puzzles together.
- Plan a special snack or meal and have your child write the menu.
- After finishing a chapter in a book or a magazine article, have your child explain his or her favorite event.
- Holistic activities like free reading, discussions, games, word play, and purposeful writing tasks have greater long-term benefits than working on more limited tasks in workbooks.

How do parents help their child with math?

- Spend time with kids on simple board games, puzzles, and activities that encourage better attitudes and stronger math skills. Amana's Everyday Math (elementary school) and Connected Math (middle school) programs offer parent guides to using math in daily activities and easy-to-conduct math games.
- Encourage children to solve problems. Provide assistance, but let them figure it out themselves. Problem solving is a life skill.
- Ensure that children know their math facts. Practicing age-appropriate addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts with games, quizzes, songs, and timed races make this rote but necessary learning fun. Children are less able to use higher levels of reasoning in solving problems when their thinking is limited by a lack of quick recall of math facts.

- The kitchen is filled with tasty opportunities to teach fractional measurements, such as doubling and dividing cookie recipes.
- Point out ways that people use math every day to pay bills, balance their checkbooks, figure out their net earnings, make change, give tips at restaurants, and count items in collections. Involve older children in projects that incorporate geometric and algebraic concepts such as planting a garden, building a bookshelf, or figuring how long it will take to drive to your family vacation destination.
- Children should learn to read and interpret charts and graphs such as those found in daily newspapers. Collecting and analyzing data will help your child draw conclusions and become discriminating readers of numerical information.

Web Sites for Kids and Parents

Math:

www.aaamath.com	Math practice and activities
www.coolmath.com	Interactive math games
www.funbrain.com	Great site for kids
www.aplusmath.com	A+ Math
http://mathforum.org/dr.math/	Ask Dr. Math
www.gomath.com	Online math help
www.mathleague.com/help/help.htm	Math League help topics
www.edhelper.com	Help for all subjects

Reading and Language Arts:

www.funbrain.com	Language arts games and more
www.m-w.com/game	Merriam Webster word game of the day
www.vocabulary.com	Vocabulary activities
www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/words	Vocabulary builders
http://helponenglish.homestead.com	English help
www.writesite.org	Interactive language arts and journalism
www.lexile.com	Lexile framework info and reading suggestions
www.kidsreads.com	Book reviews, games, authors, and more

Lexile:

A Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty that is linked to the reading RIT score on the MAP test. Lexile is reported on an equal interval scale, like the RIT scale. 10L is at the low end of the scale and 1700L is at the high end. Books for beginning readers are listed as BR on the scale. The Lexile range is included on individual student progress reports. It allows educators and parents to find books, periodicals, and other reading material that is appropriately challenging for each student.

Students are considered to be at an appropriate independent level when they can comprehend approximately 95% of the material they read. This ensures that students are not frustrated, and are stimulating their fluency (speed and accuracy) as well as comprehending the content of the reading.

A Lexile measures syntactic complexity—the number of words per sentence. We know that longer sentences are more complex and require more short-term memory to process. A Lexile also measures semantic difficulty—a measure of vocabulary. This measure looks at the frequency of words in a text compared to a body of over 400 million words. This is the largest repository of text in the world and is quickly approaching 500 million words.

The Lexile database currently holds over 30,000 books. You can access the Lexile web site at www.lexile.com. You can search titles (both Spanish and English) at the web site free of charge. The regular search feature allows you to search by title, author, ISBN, subject, or Lexile range. By using detailed search on the same page, you can also search by theme, interest, or content area. Other features of the web site include frequently asked questions, the Lexile Times Newsletter, a parent link, and a reading calendar. Check it out!

It is very important for parents to keep in mind that Lexile does not evaluate genre, theme, content, or interest. Even though a student might be able to read books at a certain Lexile, the content or theme of the text may not be appropriate for that particular student because of his or her age or developmental level.

Some Examples of Lexiles and Books:

Green Eggs and Ham	30L	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	940L
Amelia Bedelia	140L	Hatchet	1020L
Clifford the Big Red Dog	220L	Pride and Prejudice	1100L
Bony-Legs	370L	The Adventures of Robin Hood	1270L
Curious George	400L	Little Women	1300L
Sarah, Plain and Tall	560 L	Profiles in Courage	1410L
Charlotte’s Web	680L	The Good Earth	1530L
Jurassic Park	710L	The Principles of Scientific Management	1670L
The Fellowship of the Ring	860L	Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy	1720L

Commonly Used Terms:

District Average: The average RIT score for all students in the same district in the same grade who were tested at the same time as the student. In the case of Amana Academy scores, the district includes ONLY Amana students, since Fulton County does not currently use the MAP assessment.

Lexile: A Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty. This unit is linked to the reading RIT score. By determining the level of text difficulty students can comprehend, Lexiles can be used to determine student reading ability.

MAP: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are a series of computerized adaptive tests that measure a student’s general knowledge in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science. Our MAP tests are aligned with Georgia Performance Standards, the Amana curriculum.

Norm Group Average: The average score observed for students in the norm group. The most recent norm group average was established in the 2005 testing season nationally.

Percentile Range: Percentiles are used to compare one student’s performance to that of the norm group. Percentile means the student scored as well or better than that percent of students taking the test in his/her grade. There is about a 68% chance that a student’s percentile ranking would fall within this range if the student tested again relatively soon.

Percentile Rank: The percentile rank is a normative statistic that indicates how well a student performed in comparison to the students in the norm group. The most recent norm sample was a group of over 2.3 million students from across the United States, tested in 2005. A student’s percentile rank indicates that the student scored as well as, or better than, the percent of students in the norm group. In other words, a student with a percentile rank of 72 scored as well as, or better than 72% of the students in the norm group.

RIT: Tests developed by NWEA use a scale called RIT to measure student achievement and growth. RIT stands for Rasch Unit, which is a measurement scale developed to simplify the interpretation of test scores. The RIT score relates directly to the curriculum scale in each subject area. It is an equal-interval scale, like feet and inches, so scores can be added together to calculate accurate class or school averages. RIT scores range from about 140-300. Students typically start at the 140 to 190 level in third grade and progress to the 240 to 300 level by high school. RIT scores make it possible to follow a student’s educational growth from year to year.

Standards: Standards are statements, developed by states or districts, of what students should know and be able to do, related to specific academic areas. Amana Academy, like all public schools in the state of Georgia, employ the Georgia Performance Standards in all academic subjects. To see the standards for your child’s grade level, go to www.georgiastandards.org and follow the links to the grade level and/or subject area you are interested in reviewing.