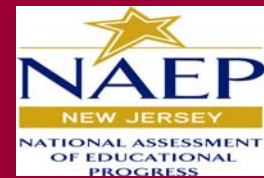


New Jersey's Writing Assessments



The factors below are the ways in which the state assessment program has helped to promote the teaching and learning of writing in the New Jersey public schools.

- **For more than two decades, New Jersey has assessed students' ability to write standard English as a component of its Language Arts Literacy (LAL) assessment. Students at:**
 - Grade 9 -- (1985-1986 - 1992-1993): Were assessed as a part of the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT 9).
 - Grade 8 -- (1991 - present): Have been assessed as part of the Grade 8 Early Warning Test that was initially replaced with the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment in 1999, and again with the New Jersey Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (NJ ASK 8) in 2008.
 - Grade 11 -- (1993 - present): Have been assessed as a part of High School Proficiency Test (HSPT 11) that was replaced with the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA 11) in 2001.
 - Grades 4 -- (1997 - present): Have been assessed as a part of the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment that was replaced with the NJ ASK 4 in 2002.
 - Grade 3 -- (2003 - present): Are assessed as a part of the NJ ASK 3.
 - Grades 5, 6, and 7 -- (2006 - present): Are assessed as a part of an Interim NJ ASK 5-7 that will be replaced with the NJ ASK 5-7 in 2008.
- **New Jersey's Language Arts Literacy tests include reading and writing components**
 - Since the adoption of the first iteration of the Core Curriculum Content Standards in 1996, New Jersey has emphasized the interdependence of reading and writing and the role each plays in informing and enriching the other.
 - To that end, the state promotes the use of authentic literature of all genres in instruction and assessment since these materials serve as models of good writing that students draw on when they develop their own ideas.
- **The New Jersey and NAEP writing assessments have similar features**
 - Students taking the New Jersey statewide assessments write original text in two (narrative and persuasive) of the three (informative) modes assessed by NAEP.
 - As with the NAEP, eighth-grade students respond to two prompts. They create a "rough" draft product that is scored holistically using a criterion-based rubric.
- **New Jersey disseminates a *Guide to Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring: A Writing Handbook***
 - The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) annually disseminates a comprehensive handbook. This document includes the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric that focuses on four features: content/organization, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics.
 - These writing handbooks include examples of released narrative and persuasive writing prompts and student anchor papers.
- **The New Jersey Department of Education provides training to the districts**
 - NJDOE staff from various offices (i.e., State Assessments, Academic Standards, Language Arts Literacy Initiatives, and Early Education, etc.) provide training and technical assistance to districts and schools on the writing process and best practices for teaching writing.
 - The department posts information on the writing process and examples of released writing prompts on its website.
- **The New Jersey districts and schools undertake efforts to improve student writing**
 - Over the past two decades, district and school staff members have sought to improve student writing in response to the department's LAL assessment of writing.
 - Schools seek to identify students who need help with writing skills, and provide additional assistance and support to these students during the regular school day and/or by establishing after school programs funded by grants or local school budgets.