

Executive Summary

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Overview of the Writing Assessment	4
Reporting NAEP Results	6
8th Grade	8
State Performance	14
Urban District Results	20
12th Grade	36
Technical Notes	50
Appendix Tables	52

What is The Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card™ informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

The writing skills of eighth- and twelfth-graders improved in 2007 compared to earlier assessment years, with gains across many student groups.

Nationally representative samples of more than 165,000 eighth- and twelfth-graders participated in the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment (the assessment was not administered at grade 4 in 2007). Each student responded to 2 out of 17 possible writing tasks intended to measure one of three purposes for writing: narrative, informative, or persuasive.

Results are presented nationally for both eighth- and twelfth-graders, and in participating states and urban districts only for eighth-graders. Comparing the results of the 2007 writing assessment to results from previous years shows the progress eighth- and twelfth-graders are making in improving writing skills.

Scores increase in 2007 for both eighth- and twelfth-graders nationally

Average writing scores were higher in 2007 than in previous assessments in 2002 and 1998. Increases were also seen since 2002 in percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* achievement level but not at or above *Proficient*.

At grade 8 in 2007

- The average writing score was 3 points higher than in 2002 and 6 points higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Basic* level increased from 85 percent in 2002 to 88 percent and was also higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Proficient* level was higher than in 1998 but showed no significant change since 2002.

At grade 12 in 2007

- The average writing score was 5 points higher than in 2002 and 3 points higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Basic* level increased from 74 percent in 2002 to 82 percent and was also higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Proficient* level was higher than in 1998 but showed no significant change since 2002.

Most racial/ethnic groups gain

As shown in the chart below, average writing scores increased since 2002 for White, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander students at both grades. The average score for Hispanic eighth-graders was higher in 2007 than in both previous assessments, while there was no significant change for Hispanic students at grade 12.

Some racial/ethnic and gender gaps are closing

Gains for minority students and male students have contributed to the narrowing of some gaps. At grade 8, the 6-point increase in the average score for Black students from 2002 to 2007 contributed to a smaller gap between White and Black students than in both previous assessments.

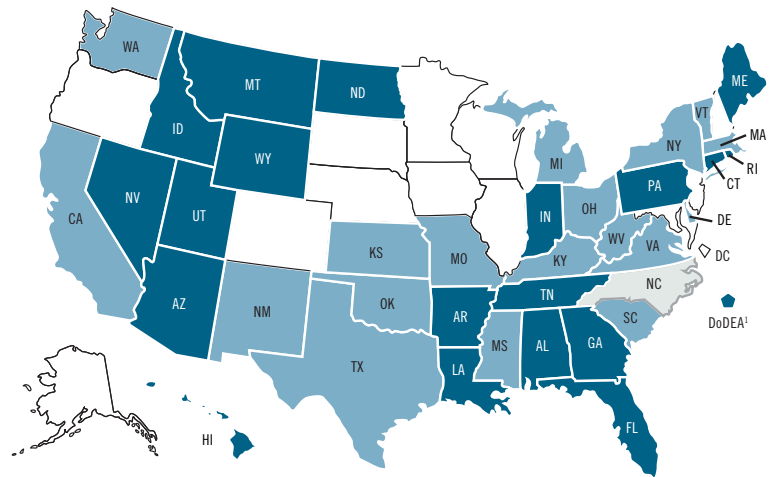
At grade 12, an 8-point increase for male students since 2002 contributed to a narrowing of the male – female gap in comparison to 2002, but there was no significant change in comparison to the gap in 1998.

Student groups	Grade 8		Grade 12	
	Since 1998	Since 2002	Since 1998	Since 2002
Overall	↑	↑	↑	↑
White	↑	↑	↑	↑
Black	↑	↑	↔	↑
Hispanic	↑	↑	↔	↔
Asian/Pacific Islander	↔	↑	↔	↑
American Indian/ Alaska Native	↔	↔	↔	‡
Male	↑	↑	↑	↑
Female	↑	↑	↑	↔
Gaps				
White – Black	↓	↓	↔	↔
White – Hispanic	↔	↔	↔	↔
Female – Male	↔	↔	↔	↓

- ↑ Indicates the score was higher or the gap increased in 2007.
- ↓ Indicates the score was lower or the gap decreased in 2007.
- ↔ Indicates there was no significant change in the score or the gap in 2007.
- ‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

These and other results can be found at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.

Some states gain at grade 8



¹ Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

Of the 39 states and jurisdictions that participated in both 2002 and 2007, average writing scores for eighth-graders in

- 19 states and Department of Defense schools increased,
- 1 state decreased, and
- 18 states showed no significant change.
- Twelve states and the District of Columbia did not participate or did not meet the minimum participation guidelines for reporting.

Urban districts gain

As shown in the chart to the right, eighth-graders in three of the four districts that participated in both the 2002 and 2007 NAEP writing Trial Urban District Assessments (TUDA) improved. When compared to their home states, Atlanta and Los Angeles made greater gains since 2002.

District	Since 2002
Atlanta	↑
Chicago	↑
Houston	↔
Los Angeles	↑

While scores in 9 of the 10 participating urban districts were lower than the average score for eighth-graders in the nation, when comparing results for only lower-income students, scores in six districts were not significantly different from the nation. Lower-income students in Boston and New York City scored higher on average than their peers in large central cities (i.e., cities with populations of 250,000 or more).

Among the 10 districts that participated in 2007, the average writing score for eighth-graders in Charlotte was higher than the score for public school students in large central cities. Also in comparison to large central cities, scores for students in Cleveland and Los Angeles were lower, and scores in the remaining seven districts were not significantly different.