

Why is this the first time I am hearing about NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is usually referred to as "NAEP" during the preparation for and administration of the assessment. Once the results have been processed and compiled into the results that are presented to the public, it is known as The Nation's Report Card. Because of this different terminology, many people who have never been involved in the assessment may never have heard of NAEP, even if they have heard of the Nation's Report Card.

Does NAEP replace the state tests that my child takes every year?

No. Most state tests measure student performance using the state's own curriculum standards (i.e., what the state considers important for its students to know). State tests enable the comparison of results over time within the state, but because state tests are created according to each state's individual curriculum standards, they do not allow comparisons of results with other states or the nation.

Why doesn't NAEP test in every grade?

NAEP tests a small sample of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the main assessments, and at ages 9, 13, or 17 for the long-term trend assessments. These specific three grades and ages represent critical junctures in academic achievement. Limiting the assessment to three ages provides valuable data while limiting the testing burden on schools.

Does my child have to take NAEP?

No. Unlike your state's assessment, which is mandatory for students, NAEP is voluntary. However, your child was selected as a representative for hundreds of students within your state. If all selected students participate, NAEP provides a very accurate measurement of your state's overall composition and achievement. Please note however, that in some states, all state testing, including NAEP, is mandatory.

Will taking NAEP affect my child's grade?

No. NAEP does not calculate scores for individual students, so neither the government nor your child's school or teacher will ever know how your child performed on NAEP.

Will I get to see the results of my child's test?

No. There are no individual student results. However, if you would like to explore the results for students in various subjects, check out the wide variety of NAEP data tools—including State Profiles—that allow you to view the NAEP results from many different angles.

How long does the assessment take?

Students spend up to 90 minutes participating in the administration of most NAEP assessments. This includes setting up, taking the assessment (up to 60 minutes), and getting back to instructional activities. Some specialized assessments, such as hands-on science tasks or computer-based assessments, may require up to 120 minutes from beginning to end.

There is no penalty for not completing the assessment in the time permitted. A student may stop taking the assessment or omit questions at any point.

Will my child's teacher spend class time helping students get for NAEP?

No. Special preparation for NAEP is not necessary or expected. The material in the assessment was carefully designed to encompass those topics that should already be a part of the general curriculum for grades 4, 8, and 12. Since many states have linked their content standards to NAEP, some teachers may use materials from NAEP to support instruction of their state curriculum.

May my child with disabilities participate in NAEP if her IEP doesn't specifically address NAEP?

The decision to include students with disabilities in NAEP assessments is made by school personnel, who decide whether students can meaningfully be assessed with or without accommodations based on information in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Generally, children who are included in the state or local testing program are included in NAEP, if they are selected. Students with special needs use the same accommodations in NAEP assessments that they use in their usual classroom testing, with very few exceptions.

Will my child be able to take NAEP if English is not my child's first language?

Probably. NAEP needs to be as inclusive as possible. The decision to include English language learners in NAEP is made by school personnel, who decide whether students can meaningfully be assessed with or without accommodations. Generally, if your child is able to participate in state and local tests, he or she will be able to take NAEP.

May my child take NAEP if he or she was not selected?

No. Through a careful process, NAEP selects the smallest number of students possible that are needed to represent your state and the nation fairly and accurately. This procedure minimizes the expenditure of time and effort by participants and administrators, while still allowing NAEP to obtain an accurate and useful measure of student performance. Only in the rare case of a small school with a small enrollment of a selected grade and the sum of the selected and the unselected are equal to or smaller than the estimated sample size, can a take all situation be requested.