

The California Science Test (CAST)

The California Science Test, or CAST, is part of the statewide assessment system called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress or CAASPP.

The CAASPP System is designed to give information to teachers, students, and their families about what students know and are able to do. It also indicates whether students are on track to be ready for success in college or career when they graduate from high school.



CAST

WHAT

California has adopted science standards called the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS). These standards tell us what students should know and be able to do in science. The CA NGSS are designed to help students understand how science works in the natural world. They also outline the knowledge and skills needed for success in college or career.

The CAST is aligned with the CA NGSS. The CAST assesses the student's ability to think critically and solve problems.

This assessment uses questions that bring together science content, practices, and concepts. It also covers all three science domains: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth and Space Sciences.

WHO

All students in grades 5 and 8, and once in high school.

WHEN

Each school selects its own testing window. Testing can begin as early as January and continue through the last day of school. You will receive additional information from your school about the specific dates and times of testing.

HOW

The CAST is a computer-based test that has many different types of questions that allow students to interact with the test content in exciting ways. For example, your child might be asked to write a short response, collect data, and analyze data from an experiment or other resources. Testing should take approximately two hours to complete.

WHY

The CAST measures what students know and can do while fostering science education at *every* grade level.

Do students with disabilities take the CAST?

Yes, unless the student's individualized education program designates an alternate assessment.

What resources are available for students?

All students have access to a variety of tools; for example, in grades 5, 8, and high school, students have access to a calculator, and in grade 8 and high school, students have access to reference sheets of formulas and constants and a periodic table.

Students with disabilities have additional supports, such as American Sign Language videos or braille. All of the accessibility resources help students gain fair access to the test and do not affect the students' scores in any way.

How can I help my child prepare for the test?

You are an important part of your child's education. Some things you can do to help your child are:

- Discuss the test with your child and make sure they are not scared or anxious.
- Tell your child that you and their teacher have high expectations and that you are both there to help them every step of the way.
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before testing.



The CAST is aligned to the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS), which can be found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/ngssstandards.asp>. To better understand the CAST, view the CAST Informational Video at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/castinfovideo.asp>.

Sample questions, as well as links to practice tests and resources, are available on the Starting Smarter web page at <https://ca.startingsmarter.org>.

Additional Information

More information about the CAST can be found on the California Department of Education CAST web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caasppscience.asp>.

For more information about your child's scores, contact your child's teacher and/or the school office.

