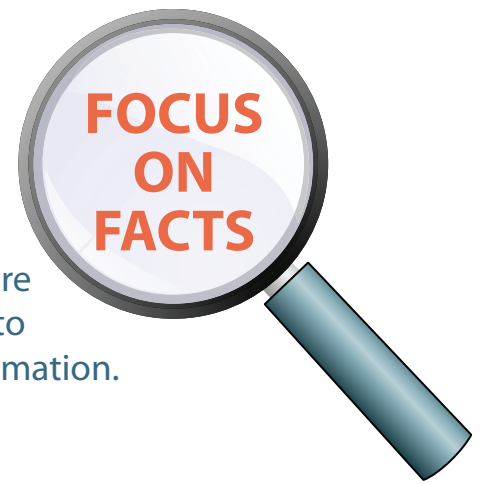


Smarter Balanced



Washington uses the Smarter Balanced tests to assess math and English language arts in grades 3–8 and high school. These tests are designed to assess what skills students have and what they need to work on. Unfortunately, testing opponents are spreading misinformation. It's important to focus on facts.

MYTH: The Smarter Balanced tests in grades 3–8 don't matter.

FACT: These new tests offer educators a fair and equitable measure of student progress. If students don't test, we won't see gaps between groups of students. And students who need help the most may not get it.

Myth: The 11th-grade Smarter Balanced tests are meaningless.

FACT: Washington's colleges and universities have agreed to accept a student's 11th-grade score as an early indicator of college readiness. Upon acceptance, students may enter a college-entry-level course in English or math in a community or technical college, and almost all four-year colleges in Washington, with no remediation. This will save students the need for placement tests, and save families the cost students taking remedial courses.

Myth: These tests are neither valid nor reliable.

FACT: Tests alone aren't "valid" or "invalid." Validity refers to the conclusions we draw from test results. Careful test construction and appropriate administration of a test improve the validity of our interpretations of the test's scores. Smarter Balanced tests have been constructed with the utmost care, following well-established standards. In fact, Washington has had more than 500 teachers participate in the development and review of test items, and one-third of our students further assisted with the test development by participating in the field test last year.

Myth: Technological malfunctions are creating "testing chaos" in schools.

FACT: We've had computer-based tests in our state since 2009. While we expect some technological issues with the new Smarter Balanced tests, the platform has been widely field tested, and is more stable and reliable than what we've had in past years.

Myth: These tests are not "culturally or linguistically appropriate" for English language learners.

FACT: Thousands of testing items underwent a bias and sensitivity review. They were also field tested and reviewed for performance by subgroups. The assessment system includes video accommodations for American Sign Language and embedded supports, such as glossaries translated into 10 languages and 600,000 audio files. The assessments have also been fully translated into Spanish.

Myth: Washington residents are against testing.

FACT: A May 2014 statewide poll of 900 Washington voters and parents showed 69 percent agree that "tests are a part of life and provide a critical annual academic checkup to make sure student learning is on track."

More information

- [Smarter Balanced](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodations Fact Sheet](#)
- [Top 10 Reasons Washington Is Switching to Smarter Balanced](#)
- [Hot Topic: Common Core and Smarter Balanced](#)