

How does the *i-Ready* adaptive Diagnostic work?

Overview

i-Ready Diagnostic is a type of computer adaptive test that matches the difficulty of test questions to the ability of each student. As students answer questions correctly, the test gets more difficult. As students answer questions incorrectly, the test gets easier. In both scenarios, the test adapts to find the precise ability of each student in the quickest, most efficient way possible.

Understanding the *i-Ready Diagnostic*

The Diagnostic starts each student at a difficulty level based on an educated guess that includes their chronological grade level. As students answer questions correctly or incorrectly, the test adjusts up or down, with questions of varying difficulty, until the assessment reaches the level of difficulty that is “just right” for each student.

This means that on the *i-Ready Diagnostic*:

- **No two students will take the same test.** Just as every student has a different ability level, every student will have a different test experience.
- **Students will see material teachers haven’t covered.** This is an intentional part of the design of the adaptive assessment. Students may see above-grade level material and below-grade level material.
- **Every student will receive a challenging test.** The Diagnostic is designed for students to get about 50% of the questions correct and 50% incorrect to help identify their precise abilities on a range of skills.
- **A student’s assessment score is not based on the number of items answered correctly.** A student’s score is determined by making adjustments after each item to determine their proficiency level estimate.

Because students will struggle with some questions, it is important for teachers to prepare their students before they take the Diagnostic. It helps when teachers:

- **Explain to students in an age-appropriate way how the Diagnostic works** and prepare them for questions that are very challenging.
- **Encourage students to try their best and make their best guess if a question seems too difficult.** It is better for a student to guess and move on than to try for too long to get a question right.

Example

Maria is a fourth grade student. After starting her out at an estimated ability level based on her chronological grade, **the test increases in difficulty as she answers items correctly (the green dots) and decreases in difficulty as she answers items incorrectly (the red dots).** As Maria completes the *i-Ready Diagnostic*, the test zeroes in on her actual ability level across a range of domains and sub-domains in reading or mathematics.

