



A Parent's Guide to MAP

This guide was created as a resource to help your family better understand MAP and your child's results.

1. What is MAP?

You may be familiar with paper and pencil tests where all students are asked the same questions and spend a fixed amount of time taking the test. Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®), created by Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™), is different. MAP is a computer adaptive test, which means every student gets a unique set of test questions based on responses to previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions get harder. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions get easier. By the end of the test, most students will answer about half the questions correctly.

2. What does MAP measure?

MAP results are provided as a numerical RIT score. This score is used to measure a student's achievement level at different times of the school year and compute growth. Think of this like marking height on a growth chart. You can tell how tall your child is at various points in time and how much they have grown between one time and another.

3. What is a RIT score?

After each MAP test, students receive a RIT score. Think of the score as a student's height. The score reflects the student's academic knowledge, skills, and abilities like inches reflect height.

The RIT (**Rasch Unit**) scale is a stable, equal-interval scale, like feet and inches. Equal-interval means that a change of 10 RIT points indicates the same thing regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom, or middle of the scale, and a RIT score has the same meaning regardless of grade level or age of the student. Scores over time can be compared to tell how much growth a student has made, similar to measuring height with a ruler.

You can find out more about the RIT scale [here](#).

4. How do schools and teachers use MAP scores?

NWEA provides many different reports to help schools and teachers use MAP information. Schools, grade levels, and classes can be monitored to see how students are growing.

Teachers can see the progress of individual students and of their class as a whole. Students with similar MAP scores are generally ready for instruction in similar skills and topics. MAP also provides data around the typical growth for students who are in the same grade, subject, and have the same starting achievement level. This data is often used to help students set goals and understand what they need to learn to achieve their goals.

5. Can MAP tell me if my child is working at grade level?

Just as a doctor has a chart showing the most common heights of people at certain ages, NWEA has put together charts showing the median RIT scores for students at various grade levels. NWEA researchers examined the scores of millions of students to find the average scores for students in various grades. You can see a chart of these scores in the [Comparative Data to Inform Instructional Decisions](#) PDF. Please note that MAP scores are just one data point that teachers use to determine how a student is performing. Please discuss any questions that you have about your child's performance with your child's teacher.

6. What subjects are available with MAP?

There are MAP tests for grades 2 – 12 in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science.

There are also Primary Grades tests for grades K – 2 in reading and mathematics. With these child-friendly tests for young learners, students wear headphones since many questions include audio to assist those who are still learning to read. The tests for grades K – 2 may also be referred to as MAP for Primary Grades (MPG).

7. How long is a MAP test?

Tests are not timed, and students may take as much time as they need to complete them. Most students take less than an hour to complete a MAP test. MPG tests typically last a shorter time.

8. How often will my child take MAP tests?

Most schools give MAP tests to students at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Some schools have students take MAP tests at other times throughout the year.

9. Is MAP a standardized test? How is it different from “high-stakes” or state tests?

Most state or high-stakes tests are called summative tests. They measure what students already know, based on what is expected at their grade level, and are typically given at the end of the school year as a way to measure grade-level proficiency.

MAP tests are interim tests. This means they may be given periodically during the year. MAP is based on the same standards as the summative tests so they measure similar content. Teachers receive immediate results with MAP that show what students know and what they are ready to learn. The results can be used to help personalize lessons at the appropriate level for the students.

10. What type of questions are on MAP tests? Are there sample tests?

The MAP tests include multiple choice, drag and drop, and other types of questions. You can access some [short sample tests](#) to get an idea of what MAP questions look like.

11. Are MAP tests accessible?

Yes, NWEA is committed to making our tests accessible for all students. Download our [Accessibility and Accommodations FAQ](#) for more details.

12. What information will I receive from my child’s school?

Most schools will provide your child’s Student Progress Report. This report contains information and scores from your child’s most recent and past MAP tests. A simplified sample report with definitions and explanations is included in this document to help you better understand the report. Please contact your child’s school or teacher directly for any additional information.

13. How do I learn more about my child's test results?

Contact your child's school or teacher with any specific questions you may have about your child's test results.

Due to privacy laws regarding student information (specifically stemming from the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA), NWEA is unable to discuss any student information, test results, or school assessment programs directly with parents, guardians, or other family members.

14. How can I help my child prepare for MAP tests?

Your child's teacher will help with any pre-test instructions to explain the test to the students. Just like any school day, make sure your child is well-rested and fed with a well-rounded diet. Encourage them to do their best.

15. What does NWEA do with my child's information? Is it secure?

NWEA uses technological and operational measures to ensure security and privacy. A few of these include: regular security audits and monitoring, technological controls, physical access controls, and privacy training for employees.

NWEA does not use your child's personally identifiable information (PII) for any purpose other than to provide services to your child's school. Combined information that has been stripped of PII, and therefore is not traceable to any student, is used for research and development so we can continuously improve our products and accelerate learning for all students.

We do not sell PII. Data sharing (if any) is completely at the control of the educational institutions that purchase our products.



Founded by educators nearly 40 years ago, NWEA is a global not-for-profit educational services organization known for our flagship interim assessment, MAP. More than 7,800 partners in US schools, school districts, education agencies, and international schools trust us to offer pre-kindergarten through grade 12 assessments that accurately measure student growth and learning needs, professional development that fosters educators' ability to accelerate student learning, and research that supports assessment validity and data interpretation. To better inform instruction and maximize every learner's academic growth, educators currently use NWEA assessments with nearly eight million students.

Quick Reference

This Quick Reference sample report is meant to help you understand the Student Progress Report for your child. The Student Progress Report you receive will contain your child's NWEA MAP test results.

The MAP tests determine your child's instructional level and measure academic growth throughout the school years in which your child was tested. NWEA researchers analyze test data from millions of students and determine how students MAP scores typically change over time based on the subject, grade, and their starting achievement level. The report uses this information to show you how your child is doing compared to other students in the same grade in your child's school district and across the United States.

Your child's MAP results are provided as a numerical RIT score. Your child's report may contain multiple charts reflecting the various test subject areas. Because school districts can make several choices when they print this report, your report may look different; for example, you may see a bar chart instead of a line graph. This will not change the meaning of the data on the report.

If you have questions about this report, please contact your child's school or teacher.

