



ASSESSMENT GUIDE

English Language Arts and Math

Grade 9



Cecil J. Picard
State Superintendent of Education

June 2005

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The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education holds the test security policy to be of utmost importance and deems any violation of test security to be serious.

Any individual who knowingly engages in any activity during testing that results in invalidation of scores derived from the [test] shall forfeit the test results but will be allowed to retake the test at the next test administration.

The State Superintendent of Education may disallow test results that may have been achieved in a manner that is in violation of test security.

In cases in which test results are not accepted because of a breach of test security or action by the Louisiana Department of Education, any programmatic, evaluative, or graduation criteria dependent upon the data shall be deemed not to have been met, but individuals will be allowed to retake the test at the next test administration.

Any teachers or other school personnel who breach test security or allow breaches in test security shall be disciplined in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 17:416 et seq., R.S. 17:441 et seq., R.S. 17.81.6 et seq., policy and regulations adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and any and all laws that may be enacted by the Louisiana Legislature.

¹Excerpts from *Bulletin 118*, chapter 3, February 2005.

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This *Assessment Guide* may be distributed in its entirety to all teachers. However, schools may choose to provide the specific content chapters to teachers who are responsible for each content area.

Note: All teachers should be provided with the following sections of the *Assessment Guide*:

- Preface
- Appendices A, B, C, and D, which include a glossary, frequently asked questions, information about testing special populations, scoring information, Writer's Checklists, and Math Reference Sheets.

Preface

What Is the Purpose of the *Assessment Guide*?

The *iLEAP Assessment Guide* provides an overview of Louisiana assessments administered through the *integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (*iLEAP*). In addition to providing teachers with a description of the overall design of the *iLEAP* tests, this guide presents sample test items to aid teachers in aligning their instruction with the statewide assessments.

Teachers should:

- use this guide to become familiar with the *iLEAP* test format,
- include these types of formats in their classroom instruction and assessments,
- align their instruction and assessment with the Louisiana curriculum frameworks and Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs), and
- use appropriate test accommodations.

Questions or requests for additional information regarding this *Assessment Guide* should be addressed to the Division of Student Standards and Assessments, Louisiana Department of Education at 225-342-3393 or toll free at 1-877-453-2721.

Why Have the *iLEAP*?

In January 2003, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) approved the use of augmented norm-referenced tests, referred to as *iLEAP*, at grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. The *iLEAP* tests are being introduced in response to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB is the federal act that requires states to administer tests in reading and mathematics yearly in grades 3 through 8 and once in grades 10 through 12. Beginning in 2007–2008, NCLB also requires tests in science: once in grades 3 through 5, once in grades 6 through 9, and once in grades 10 through 12.

In accordance with NCLB timelines, the *iLEAP* tests will be implemented in spring 2006. The current standards-based tests will remain in place. These include the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), administered at grades 4 and 8, and the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE), administered at grades 10 and 11.

How Does *i*LEAP Fit with Louisiana’s Current Assessment Program?

The current Louisiana state assessment program uses two types of assessments: norm-referenced tests (NRTs) and criterion-referenced tests (CRTs).

Some of the NCLB requirements are met through Louisiana’s CRTs in English language arts and mathematics at grades 4, 8, and 10 and in science at grades 4, 8, and 11. (In addition, Louisiana requires that students test in social studies at grades 4, 8, and 11.) These tests compose the LEAP and GEE assessments and measure students’ knowledge of standards by grade span: kindergarten through 4, 5 through 8, and 9 through 12. They report student performance by achievement level.

Louisiana’s assessment program also includes, by state law, NRTs at grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. From 1998 through spring 2005, Louisiana has administered The Iowa Tests®, published by Riverside Publishing Company. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) were administered at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) at grade 9. The Iowa Tests, which are normed on a national sample of students, provide comparative data for evaluating Louisiana students’ performance with the performance of their counterparts nationwide.

NCLB requires that state assessments be aligned to state content standards. In addition, NCLB requires that states express student results in terms of the state’s performance standards, that is, Louisiana’s achievement levels. The *i*LEAP assessments have been developed to align to the Louisiana content standards, benchmarks, and GLEs. The *i*LEAP is referred to as an *integrated* LEAP because Louisiana chose to combine a norm-referenced test and a criterion-referenced test. The *i*LEAP replaces the current NRTs with a survey battery (short form) of The Iowa Tests in English language arts and mathematics at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. At grade 9, the NRT component of *i*LEAP includes the core battery of the Iowa Tests, with the exception of Math Computation. The NRT is augmented with a CRT component that measures state standards **not** measured on The Iowa Tests.

The *i*LEAP also includes Science and Social Studies tests at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. The *i*LEAP Science and Social studies tests are entirely criterion-referenced, aligned with state content standards and GLEs. The Louisiana Department of Education elected to use CRTs for science and social studies to have the best measure of what students are learning in classrooms in these content areas.

Most of the items on the NRT form for a given grade align with the GLEs for that grade. For example, items on the grade 3 NRT survey battery align with the grade 3 GLEs. However, some items may align with GLEs at a lower grade or at a higher grade. In addition, there may be a few items on an NRT form that do not align with the GLEs at any grade because the NRT is developed for nationwide use.

For reporting purposes, scores are reported in two forms: NRT reports, such as percentile rank, and CRT achievement level. The NRT reports include all items on the NRT form. The CRT achievement level score includes the CRT items and only those items on the NRT survey battery or on the NRT core battery that align with GLEs at or below the grade level assessed.

Table 1 shows the tests that make up the *iLEAP* at grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. Note that science and social studies are not assessed at grade 9 because grade 9 students have an option of taking various courses in these disciplines.

Table 1: Tests and Grade Levels for *iLEAP*

Grade	English Language Arts (ELA)	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
3	Augmented NRT	Augmented NRT	CRT	CRT
5	Augmented NRT	Augmented NRT	CRT	CRT
6	Augmented NRT	Augmented NRT	CRT	CRT
7	Augmented NRT	Augmented NRT	CRT	CRT
9	Augmented NRT	Augmented NRT	Not assessed	Not assessed

Through the *iLEAP*, students are able to demonstrate what they understand about the subjects as well as their mastery of the GLEs. Educators can determine how students are progressing in relation to the content standards from year to year.

What Does the *Assessment Guide* Include?

The *Assessment Guide* includes information that all teachers can use to understand the purpose and structure of the *iLEAP* and how it affects teaching and learning in Louisiana. Separate guides are available for each of the *iLEAP* grade levels: 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. The guides include information about:

- test design (format and test blueprints),
- test content (key concepts),
- sample test items, and
- scoring.

General *i*LEAP Test Design

The *i*LEAP includes multiple-choice and constructed-response items, depending on the content being assessed. Table 2 presents the overall design (test components) of the *i*LEAP for each of the content areas and grades assessed. It presents the approximate number of items for each test and the item types, indicated by multiple-choice (MC) and constructed-response (CR).

Table 2: Overall Design of the *i*LEAP

	English Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
Grades Assessed	3, 5, 6, 7, 9	3, 5, 6, 7, 9	3, 5, 6, 7	3, 5, 6, 7
Test Components and Item Types	NRT: Survey Battery (MC) grades 3, 5, 6, 7 Core Battery (MC) grade 9 CRT: Using Information Resources (MC) Writing Prompt (CR)	NRT: Survey Battery (MC) grades 3, 5, 6, 7 Core Battery (MC) grade 9 CRT: (MC and CR)	CRT: MC	CRT: MC
Number of Items	NRT: varies by grade from approx. 70 to 140 CRT: 8 MC and 1 CR	NRT: varies by grade from approx. 25 to 40 CRT: varies by grade from approx. 20 to 30 MC and 2 CR	Varies by grade from approx. 40 to 48 MC	Varies by grade from approx. 30 to 40 MC

The **NRT** components for the Math and English Language Arts tests shall be administered as **timed** assessments using national standardized procedures. The **CRT** components for all four content areas are **untimed**; however, suggested testing times are provided.

Characteristics of Questions

The *i*LEAP tests are mostly multiple-choice, but there are some constructed-response items in Math and English Language Arts that require written responses.

Multiple-choice items assess knowledge, conceptual understanding, and application of skills in each of the four content areas. Most multiple-choice items consist of an interrogatory stem followed by four response options (A, B, C, D) and are scored correct or incorrect. Some of the NRT multiple-choice items in the Math and English Language Arts tests have five response options (A, B, C, D, E); these are also scored correct or incorrect.

Constructed-response items occur only in the Math and English Language Arts tests. These items require students to construct a response, that is, compose an answer, and generally require higher-order thinking.

On the English Language Arts test, students respond to one constructed-response item requiring them to write a composition about a specific topic in response to a writing prompt. The composition is scored on an 8-point model based on Louisiana’s writing rubric for the dimensions of Composing and Style/Audience Awareness (dimensions 1 and 2).

On the Math test, the constructed-response items may require students to demonstrate their grasp of a concept, their analysis of information, their evaluation of a principle, or their application of a skill. Students may also be asked to construct or interpret a chart or graph, map, timeline, or other graphic. The grade 3 items are scored on a 0 to 2 point scale; mathematics items in the other grades are scored on a 0 to 4 point scale.

Administration Schedule

The *i*LEAP tests are administered in March, during the same week the LEAP and GEE tests are administered. Tables showing the number of parts and number of questions for each test or test part are provided in the content-area sections of this guide.

The English Language Arts test shall be administered over a two-day period, while the Math, Science, and Social Studies tests each shall be administered in one day. An overview of the content areas and testing times for *i*LEAP are shown in the following tables. Note that the NRTs are timed; suggested times are provided for the CRTs to assist in planning.

Table 3: Overview of the NRT Components of the *i*LEAP

Norm-Referenced Tests	Testing Time
ELA: Reading and Language	60 minutes (grades 3, 5, 6, 7) 95 minutes (grade 9)
Math	25 minutes (grades 3, 5, 6, 7) 40 minutes (grade 9)

Table 4: Overview of the CRT Components of the iLEAP

Criterion-Referenced Tests	Suggested Testing Time
ELA: Writing	45 minutes (grade 3) 60 minutes (grades 5, 6, 7) 90 minutes (grade 9)
ELA: Using Information Resources	40 minutes (grades 3, 5, 6, 7, 9)
Math: Part 1 CRT	60 minutes (grades 3, 5, 9) 75 minutes (grades 6, 7)
Math: Part 2 CRT	20 minutes (grade 3) 30 minutes (grades 5, 6, 7, 9)
Science	60 minutes (grades 3, 5, 6, 7)
Social Studies	45 minutes (grade 3) 60 minutes (grades 5, 6, 7)

Achievement Level Descriptors

Student performance on the CRT components of iLEAP is reported in terms of achievement level: *Advanced*, *Mastery*, *Basic*, *Approaching Basic*, or *Unsatisfactory*. In addition, norm-referenced scores are reported for Math and English Language Arts.

To determine the expectations for students performing at each achievement level, grade-level committees of educators, mostly teachers, convened to review draft Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) that were developed for iLEAP. The existing LEAP/GEE ALDs guided the development of those for iLEAP. The committees used a group-consensus procedure to review the draft descriptors and GLEs and to make recommendations for wording that would most appropriately describe expectations for each achievement level and grade. The recommendations of this group resulted in the draft ALDs that served as a basis for test item development. Upon completion of standard setting for iLEAP in 2006, a final version of iLEAP ALDs will be posted on the Department Web site, www.louisianaschools.net.

Louisiana’s general policy definitions for the five achievement levels are provided below.

Advanced: *A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.*

Mastery: *A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.*

Basic: *A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.*

Approaching Basic: *A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.*

Unsatisfactory: *A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.*

A Word to the General Education Teacher about Test Accommodations

Test accommodations are provided to minimize the effects of a disability to ensure that a student can demonstrate the degree of achievement he or she actually possesses. An *accommodation* is a change in the setting of the test administration, the timing, scheduling, presentation format, and/or method of response to the assessment. Not all students with disabilities will need test accommodations, but many will need them to provide a valid and accurate measure of their abilities. The goal in using accommodations is to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity in assessment, not to give students with disabilities an unfair advantage over other students or to subvert or invalidate the purpose of the tests. The accommodation should allow the test score to reflect a student's proficiency in the area tested without the interference of his or her disability.

Test accommodations should not be different from or in addition to the accommodations provided in the classroom during instruction and assessment and as indicated on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan (IAP). Testing and instructional accommodations must be based on each student's needs as documented in the student's IEP or IAP. If an accommodation approved for use during a state assessment is not provided during general instruction or classroom assessment, it becomes inappropriate to provide that accommodation during a state assessment. For example, if the student does not have tests read aloud during classroom assessments, then *Tests Read Aloud* would not be an appropriate accommodation for state assessments.

Since accommodations used during state assessments must be an ongoing part of classroom instruction and assessment, it is crucial that general educators be knowledgeable about accommodations, use them routinely in the classroom, and be prepared to implement the use of approved accommodations during state assessments.

For a list of approved test accommodations that may be used for students with disabilities and suggestions for implementing accommodations during assessment, see appendix C.

What Additional iLEAP Resources Are Available?

The Louisiana Department of Education has developed several resources to assist educators as they prepare students for iLEAP. Table 5 provides an overview of some of the resources currently available. Some are available on the LDE Web site, www.louisianaschools.net.

Table 5: Additional iLEAP Resources

- Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) Handbooks
- Comprehensive Curriculum
- *Introduction to iLEAP* PowerPoint presentation
- iLEAP video on DVD and VHS
- Frequently Asked Questions about iLEAP (Appendix B)
- Practice Assessment/Strengthen Skills (PASS)
- Released Items for grades 4, 8, 10, and 11