



ASSESSMENT GUIDE

English Language Arts, Mathematics,
Science, and Social Studies

Grade 8



Cecil J. Picard
State Superintendent of Education

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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, information about testing special populations, scoring information, and foundation skills**

Preface

What Are LEAP and GEE?

The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) and Graduation Exit Examination (GEE) assessments are criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The LEAP measures the knowledge and skills contained in the state’s content standards and benchmarks that are clustered by grades K–4 and grades 5–8. The LEAP is administered at grades 4 and 8. The GEE measures the knowledge and skills contained in the state’s content standards and benchmarks that are clustered by grades 9–12. The GEE is administered at grade 10 (ELA and mathematics) and grade 11 (science and social studies). Both LEAP and GEE assess complex thinking skills as well as knowledge and application of information through multiple-choice items and constructed-response items, which require students to provide a written response to a question or series of questions. The LEAP tests are high stakes for students in grades 4 and 8 because they are tied to promotional policy. The GEE tests are high stakes because they require high school students to meet an established achievement level to be eligible to receive a high school diploma. The high-stakes testing policy can be accessed at www.louisianaschools.net under Testing.

Why Have the LEAP and GEE Assessment Guides Been Revised?

The LEAP and GEE assessment guides have been reorganized into three grade-specific versions—grade 4 (LEAP), grade 8 (LEAP), and grades 10 and 11 (GEE)—that each include four content areas. Previous editions of the *Teachers’ Guide to Statewide Assessment* were organized by content and included all grade levels. This reorganization was made in response to requests from many teachers asking that all information for each grade be combined in one guide.

It is important to note that the LEAP and GEE tests have not changed. The content standards and benchmarks that form the basis for the LEAP tests have not changed. Rather, the format and the organization of the guides have been revised, and the text has been edited for conciseness.

The revised LEAP and GEE guides follow the same structure as the guides for grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, grades assessed through the *integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (*iLEAP*). The intent of the revised LEAP and GEE guides is to provide a user-friendly and practical document in a format consistent with that of guides developed for other Louisiana assessments. Additionally, within each guide, each content area is organized in the same general format, with only necessary content-specific changes that provide more clarity.

The sample test items in the former editions (*Teachers' Guide to Statewide Assessment*) have been replaced with items that have appeared on LEAP and GEE assessments. The replacement items have also appeared in the released items documents that the Department of Education produces each year. These items and additional released test items are available at www.louisianaschools.net

What Is the Purpose of the *Assessment Guide*?

Each *Assessment Guide* provides an overview of LEAP at grade 4 or grade 8 or GEE at grades 10 and 11. In addition to providing teachers with a description of the overall design of the LEAP or GEE assessments, each 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 LEAP and GEE test format,
- include these types of formats in their classroom instruction and assessments,
- align their instruction and assessment with the *Louisiana Content Standards*, Benchmarks, Grade-Level Expectations, and the *Comprehensive Curriculum*, and
- provide test accommodations recorded on a student's IEP or IAP.

What Does the *Assessment Guide* Include?

The *Assessment Guide* includes information that all teachers can use to understand the purpose and structure of the LEAP or GEE and how the assessments affect teaching and learning in Louisiana. Each guide contains information about the four core-content areas that are assessed on LEAP or GEE. The guides include information about

- test specifications,
- test content (key concepts),
- sample test items,
- achievement level descriptors, and
- scoring.

Types of Items

Each content-area assessment includes both multiple-choice and constructed-response items. **Multiple-choice (MC) items** assess knowledge, conceptual understanding, and application of skills in each of the four content areas. Multiple-choice items consist of a stem followed by four response options (A, B, C, and D) and are scored correct or incorrect. **Constructed-response (CR) items** require students to compose an answer and generally require higher-order thinking. Constructed-response items include those requiring short answers, scored 0 to 2 points, and extended constructed-response items requiring more in-depth answers, scored 0 to 4 points. The content-area sections of the guide present detailed information about the characteristics of the items.

General LEAP and GEE Test Design

The table on the next page presents the overall design (test components) of the contents and grades assessed. It presents the approximate number of items for each test and the item types, multiple-choice and constructed-response.

LEAP and GEE Test Design

CONTENT AREA	TEST SESSIONS
English Language Arts (Grades 4, 8, and 10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing (in response to prompt) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gr. 4: descriptive or narrative • Gr. 8: narrative or expository • Gr.10: expository or persuasive 2. Reading and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 reading passages: 2 short/2 long • 4 to 6 MC items (1 point each) per passage • 2 CR (short-answer) items (2 points each) per passage • Grades 8 and 10 only: one extended CR item (4 points) 3. Using Information Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One resource packet with 4 to 6 sources • 5 MC items and 2 CR (short-answer) items 4. Proofreading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing a short passage • 8 MC items
Mathematics (Grades 4, 8, and 10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 60 MC items (across 6 strands) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 noncalculator • 30 calculator • Problem-solving context 2. Extended CR items (4 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 4: 3 items • Grades 8 and 10: 4 items
Science (Grades 4, 8, and 11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 40 MC items (across 5 strands) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science as Inquiry • Physical Science • Life Science • Earth and Space Science • Science and the Environment 2. 4 CR (short-answer) items (2 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 per <i>content</i> strand 3. Comprehensive Science Task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 CR (short-answer) items (inquiry strand) • 1 extended CR item (4 points) related to <i>content</i> strand
Social Studies (Grades 4, 8, and 11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50 MC items (across 4 strands) Grade 4 60 MC items (across 4 strands) Grades 8 and 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Civics • Economics • History 2. Extended CR item (4 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 items (1 per strand)

Administration Schedule

The LEAP and GEE tests are administered in March.

The Mathematics and the English Language Arts tests are administered over a two-day period, while the Science and the Social Studies tests are administered in one day. The suggested time for each test session appears in the *Test Administration Manual*.

More detailed information regarding the number of sessions and number of questions for each test or test session is provided in the content-area sections of this guide.

Achievement Level Descriptors

Student performance on LEAP and GEE is reported in terms of achievement level: *Advanced, Mastery, Basic, Approaching Basic, or Unsatisfactory*. Content-specific achievement level descriptors, which are based on general policy definitions, are included in the content sections of the guides. 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.*

Foundation Skills

Five foundation skills serve as the basis upon which the *Louisiana Content Standards* across all grades and all content areas were developed. These skills represent global outcomes for all students. The skills are

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Resource Access and Utilization
- Linking and Generating Knowledge
- Citizenship

Refer to appendix D for descriptions of these skills.

A Word to the General Education Teacher about Test Accommodations

Test accommodations are provided to minimize the effects of a disability and 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. Although some students with disabilities will not need test accommodations, 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 B.

What Additional Resources Are Available?

The Louisiana Department of Education has developed several resources to assist educators as they prepare students for LEAP and GEE. Information about access to these resources can be found on the LDE Web site, www.louisianaschools.net.

- *Bulletin 118: Statewide Assessment Standards and Practices* explains the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program policies of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Content Standards Documents explain the framework for *Louisiana's Content Standards* for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- *Comprehensive Curriculum* is based on Louisiana's Content Standards and organizes Grade-Level Expectations into coherent, time-bound units with sample activities and classroom assessments.

- Practice Assessment/Strengthen Skills (PASS) offers an online practice assessment aligned with LEAP and GEE.
- Released Items Documents provide test items and student responses from previous LEAP and GEE tests.
- Test Administration Manuals include comprehensive information regarding the administration of the LEAP and GEE.

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