

MCA Assessment Information

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) The Reading, Mathematics and Science MCA are administered online, with paper accommodated test materials available only for eligible students. Students take the applicable assessments based on their grade during the spring testing windows, and the scores are used for final reports and accountability.

To meet state legislative requirements, the online grades 3-8 Reading and Mathematics MCA include off-grade items to provide additional information about student achievement. Only on-grade items are used for accountability calculations; additional information about how off-grade items are used in the calculation of the progress score is in Chapter 10. Any off-grade items will be no more than two grade levels above or below a student's grade. The only exceptions are for grades 3 and 8. For grade 3, students may see on-grade items or above grade items; there are no below grade items. For grade 8, students may see on-grade items or below grade items; there are no above grade items. The grades 3-8 and 10 Reading MCA assessments are aligned to current Minnesota Academic Standards.

The grades 3-8 and 10 Reading MCA are adaptive assessments. For reading, this means that the test adjusts to each student's skills at the passage level. In other words, a student's responses on a set of items associated with a passage or passages determine the next group of passages and items a student will receive. Adaptive testing provides a more precise measure of students' skills and knowledge. The Reading MCA assessments contain multiple-choice items along with technology-enhanced items where students manipulate reading content, such as demonstrating a sequence of actions or events, making connections between a cause and its effect, and choosing supporting details of a main idea. The grades 3-8 and 11 Mathematics MCA assessments are aligned to current Minnesota Academic Standards.

The grades 3-8 and 11 Mathematics MCA are adaptive assessments. For mathematics, this means that the test adjusts to the individual student's skills at each item. Every time a student answers a question, her or his response determines the next question the student must answer. Adaptive testing provides a more precise measure of students' skills and knowledge. The Mathematics MCA contain multiple-choice items along with technology-enhanced items where students select one or more points on a graph, drag and drop a graphic from one location to another, enter numbers for an answer, or manipulate a graph. Students have access to an online calculator when allowed and, in

grades 5-8 and 11, can use online formula sheets that are accessible on every item. All mathematics items are designed to be accessible to English learners.

The grades 5, 8, and high school Science MCA assessments are aligned to current Minnesota Academic Standards. · The Science MCA contains multiple-choice items along with technology-enhanced items where students create a graph or data table, select a hot spot, type in numbers, or drag images or words into designated response areas. The Science MCA also incorporates simulations. Simulations are scenarios that have one or more scenes that require students to manipulate variables and then use the results of that simulated situation to answer items. · Students in grades 9-12 are required to take the Science MCA (or Science MTAS) once in high school. The high school Science MCA covers the grades 9-12 Minnesota Academic Standards in Life Science (Strand 4) and the Nature of Science and Engineering (Strand 1) in the context of life science. Districts determine when high school students will participate based on when they have received instruction on all Strand 4 and Strand 1 standards related to life science during the school year. Students who transfer into a new district and have already completed their life science coursework in the previous district will not take the high school assessment in the new district, even if the student did not take the Science MCA previously. However, students who are re-taking their life science/biology course must take the Science MCA again, even if they took it previously.