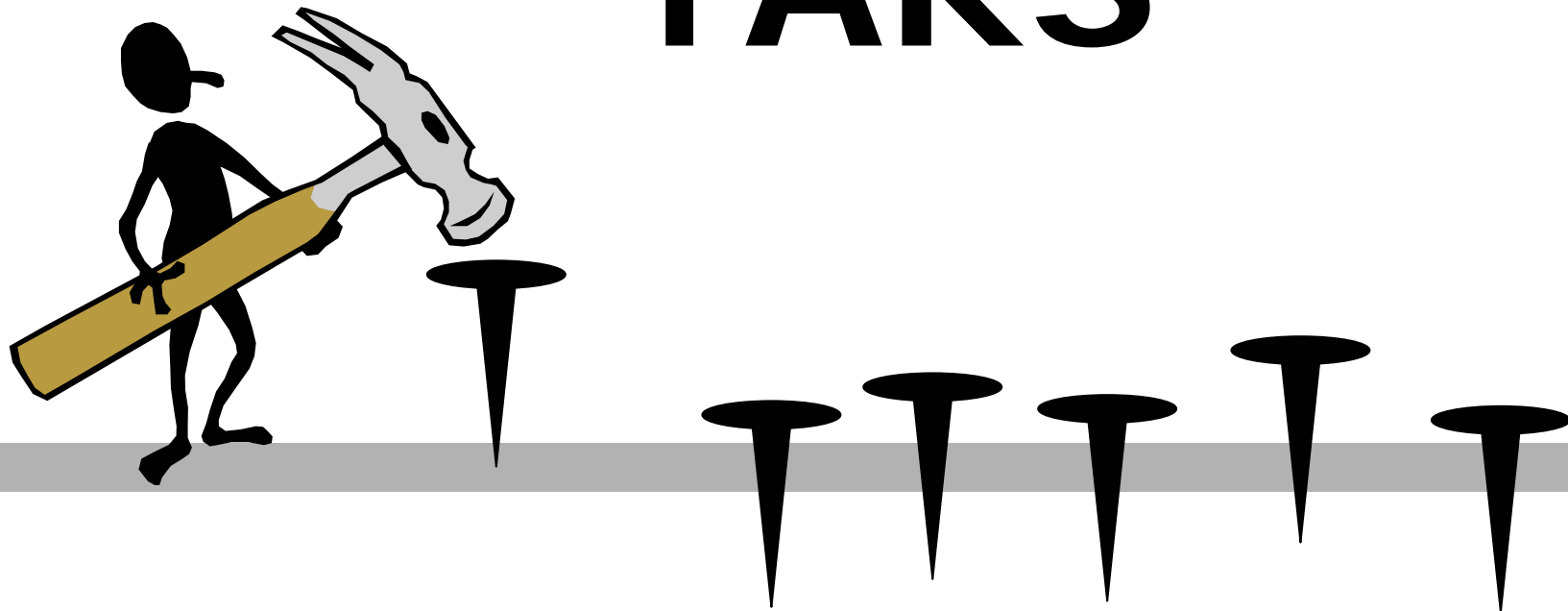


# Nailing Down the TAKS



## A Handbook for Parents

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District

2009-2010 Edition



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# What is the TAKS?

## **Q What is the TAKS?**

**A** The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, known as the TAKS, is a yearly testing program required of most public school students in Texas. Its purpose is to measure students' mastery of the state curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Results from the statewide tests are used to make sure that districts, campuses, and educators are held accountable for the academic performance of their students.

## **Q Where does the TAKS come from?**

**A** The accountability system for Texas public schools was born in 1980. Conducting statewide student assessments became a standard operating procedure. The program began that year with the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS), which was followed by the Texas Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) in 1985. Five years later, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) came on the scene. Currently, Texas uses an exam called the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), first given in Spring, 2003.

Development of the TAKS program included extensive public scrutiny and input from Texas teachers, administrators, parents, members of the business community, professional education organizations, faculty and staff at Texas colleges and universities, as well as national content-area experts. Valuing broad-based input, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) collected thousands of surveys throughout its multiple-draft writing process to ensure that TAKS would assess the parts of the TEKS curriculum deemed most critical to students' academic learning and progress. Taking steps to involve as many stakeholders as possible, TEA demonstrated its belief that the development of the TAKS program was a responsibility to be shared if the assessment is to be an equitable and accurate measure of learning for all Texas public school students.

The ongoing, thorough test-development process used for the TAKS program includes educator review and revision of all proposed test items before field-testing and a second educator review of data and items after field-testing. TEA relies on educator input to develop items that are appropriate for each grade level and that are valid measures of the objectives and TEKS that the items are designed to assess.

# How does the TAKS measure students' learning?

## **Q What kinds of things will students need to know for TAKS?**

**A** The state curriculum, which is called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), defines what students should know and be able to do. In Texas, a teacher's daily lessons, units, projects, and regular tests should be largely based on the TEKS. The TAKS assessment is aligned with the TEKS curriculum. This alignment allows TAKS to serve as a form of measurement for determining how well students have learned the TEKS in the core subject-areas during the course of the year. For additional details about the state TEKS curriculum, visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>.

## **Q How does the TAKS mirror the TEKS?**

**A** Just as the TEKS curriculum is vertically aligned—becoming more rigorous as students move from grade to grade—the TAKS tests also increase in complexity from year to year in ways that are both appropriate and logical for students' development of knowledge and skills.

## **Q How does the TAKS/TEKS connection help provide “quality assurance” for the instructional program?**

**A** All across Texas, teachers are expected to deliver the official curriculum and to address the needs of all students. The list of knowledge and skills is the same, no matter whether the student lives in posh Highland Park or in rural Snook, TX. Performance expectations are the same, no matter whether the student is African American, Hispanic, White, or economically disadvantaged (groups for which TEA tracks data).

Teachers, knowing that all students enrolled in a course will be evaluated with the identical assessment instrument (that is, the students will all take the same TAKS test), are motivated to stay focused on the portions of the TEKS curriculum that are considered to be critical for student learning. Having a uniform “yardstick” of measurement ensures that high-quality instruction will occur not only from district to district within the state, but also from school to school within each district.

## **Q Which students will be learning the TEKS?**

**A** In general, all students will be learning the TEKS. CFISD's districtwide standards (based on the TEKS) are targeted to the on-grade-level student, with the understanding that teachers will make adjustments to address the needs of students served in programs such as HORIZONS, Bilingual/ESL, or special education.

# What does the state law require?

## **Q Are school districts required to administer TAKS?**

**A** Yes. Senate Bill 103, passed in 1999, called for a new statewide assessment system in Texas. Development of a TAKS-driven system of campus and district accountability ratings followed. Low ratings will trigger monitoring and investigations by TEA. Another reason that Texas mandates administration of TAKS relates to meeting “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind* program, another avenue for holding districts and campuses accountable for student achievement. Schools with ongoing problems risk cutbacks to federal funding.

## **Q Are there any students *not* required to take TAKS?**

**A** Yes. Students *not* taking TAKS include the following.

- those who are younger than third grade
- students who have already passed the exit-level tests required for graduation
- recent, unschooled immigrants who meet exemption criteria

Note that the law allows some students in special education who meet eligibility criteria to be tested with alternate *forms* of TAKS, but almost all students in these grades participate in some version of TAKS. A student’s Admission-Review-Dismissal (ARD) committee decides which test is most appropriate for the individual. See page 13 for information about TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS-M, and TAKS-Alt.

In addition, certain students who have limited English proficiency have the option for linguistically accommodated testing (LAT). Each student’s language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) selects the most appropriate test. See page 14 for information about LAT.

## **Q Does TAKS affect promotion standards?**

**A** Although some districts have local policies more stringent than state mandates, CFISD adheres to TAKS requirements as outlined by Texas laws, so only students at grades 5 and 8 might be “held back” because of failing TAKS. The same law that established TAKS includes a component called the Student Success Initiative. (See next page.)

## **Q Are TAKS tests being phased out at the high school level?**

**A** Eventually. Legislation passed in the summer of 2007 calls for the state to establish a system of end-of-course (EOC) exams that students must pass to earn a diploma. Students who are in 9<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2011-2012 school year will be the first ones affected by this change.

# What is the Student Success Initiative?

## **Q What is the Student Success Initiative?**

**A** Following the 1997 establishment of the Texas Reading Initiative, another Texas law enacted in 1999 created the Student Success Initiative. The SSI's goal is to support on-grade-level academic achievement for every student. Accomplishing this goal depends greatly on schools, parents, and community members working in partnership to meet individual student needs.

In specified grade levels, students may advance to the next grade level only by one of two paths:

- The student passes the designated TAKS test(s).
- The student—after failing a TAKS test(s) three times—undergoes review by a grade placement committee, which decides unanimously that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

## **Q When do the components of the Student Success Initiative become incorporated into the testing program?**

**A** TAKS-driven promotion and graduation requirements include the following.

- Students taking the exit-level TAKS (11<sup>th</sup> grade) must pass all four tests—English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies—as part of their graduation requirements. Students who fail any of the four parts will receive targeted support, accelerated instruction, and additional opportunities for testing. See page 5 for additional details.
- Fifth-grade students must pass both the Reading and Math tests to be promoted to sixth grade. Students who do not pass the initial Reading test in early March (or are absent) may try again in late April, and those who still have not passed may test again in early July. For Math, the three administrations occur in early April, mid-May, and early July.
- Students in 8th grade must pass Reading and Math TAKS to be promoted to 9th grade.

## **Q Where can I find online information about the Student Success Initiative?**

**A** Visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/> to view the Texas Education Agency's Web site regarding this topic. Note that as of Fall, 2009, the TAKS passing requirement for grade 3 is no longer a component of SSI.

# What do I need to know about exit-level TAKS?

## **Q Does TAKS affect graduation requirements?**

**A** Yes. Each student must, by law, pass the exit-level TAKS tests—in addition to the credits earned for required coursework—to get a high school diploma. TAKS exams are given to 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students in four subject areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The tests are separate—if, for example, a student fails only one of the four subjects, then only that one subject has to be made up. See details in this online brochure from the Texas Education Agency: [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3286&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3286&menu_id=793).

## **Q Why is it best for students to pass the exit-level tests on the first attempt?**

**A** Since students first take the exit-level TAKS tests during their junior year, the four subjects line up best with the courses that 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students across Texas have in their schedules or that they have completed.

- English Language Arts—requires levels of reading and writing performance expected of students who have successfully completed English I and English II and who are in the midst of English III coursework.
- Mathematics—assesses skills learned in Algebra I and Geometry, along with some probability and statistics knowledge that must be recalled from 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math.
- Science—includes concepts and skills that are components of Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IP&C) and Biology.
- Social Studies—focuses on U.S. History (mostly from the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade course, but with some Revolutionary-era content recalled from the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade course) but also covers information from World Geography and World History courses.

Students who fail portions of TAKS in 11<sup>th</sup> grade must work very hard to keep current on the knowledge and skills so they can retake the test(s) in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Reviews, tutoring, and targeted programs can help students catch up and pass TAKS the next time they try. They must keep trying until they pass, or they will not graduate!

Altogether, students will have four opportunities while still enrolled in high school to retake any remaining exit-level TAKS test(s) they need to meet graduation requirements.

## What do I need to know about exit-level TAKS?, *cont'd*

**Q** What happens if seniors, at the end of May, have earned all the credits needed for their diplomas, but they still have not passed all four TAKS tests required for graduation?

**A** In such a situation, students will not be awarded their diplomas at the graduation ceremony with the rest of their classmates. Although they will be allowed to participate in the cap-and-gown exercises, they will receive only a “certificate of completion” stating that they satisfactorily completed all credit requirements as prescribed. (For purposes of getting into college or getting a job, this certificate is not the same as a diploma—or even a GED.)

Even though students are already out of school, it’s not too late for them to try TAKS again! Be sure to keep their contact information (mailing address and phone number) current with the high school counselor, who will provide updates regarding upcoming testing opportunities. You can also check the dates online at this address, because everyone in Texas takes the tests at the same time: [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3635&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3635&menu_id=793).

After the student takes a test, results will arrive in the mail. As the student passes each test, he or she should bring the notification (called the “Confidential Student Report”) to the high school registrar, who is authorized to incorporate that document into the student’s school records. If that report, showing a passing score, is the final TAKS test documentation needed, then the registrar can issue an official diploma.

**Q** Is there any advantage to earning really high scores on exit-level TAKS tests?

**A** Yes, there can be—meeting the THECB standard. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves tests (such as THEA, ASSET, COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER) in English language arts and math that provide diagnostic data, as required by Senate Bill 286, Texas Education Code, Section 51.3062: Texas Success Initiative. Many colleges and universities have drafted policies allowing students with excellent TAKS scores to be exempt from these tests—saving time, fees, and unnecessary “developmental” coursework. See details about college-readiness testing at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/facts/cd/Page8.htm>.

Institutions of higher learning may recognize that recent TAKS scores of 2200 in ELA and math, along with a writing essay score of “3” or better, merit an exemption from the additional testing. Some colleges, junior colleges, or community colleges—often citing reasons of “placement” rather than admission—may require a test (and its fees), no matter what level of academic excellence a student was able to demonstrate on TAKS. *Each institution is different—be sure to check with an academic advisor to review policies regarding any exemptions that may be offered (or not) by a school under consideration.*

# What is “Commended Performance”?

## **Q What does “Commended Performance” mean?**

- A** The term “Commended Performance” refers both to an individual student achievement and a campus honor.
- A student can earn “Commended Performance” on one or more TAKS tests if he or she earns high enough score(s).
  - A campus can be awarded Gold Performance Acknowledgment(s)—bestowed separately for each subject—if 30% or more of its students reach “Commended Performance” status.

## **Q What must a student do to achieve “Commended Performance” status on a TAKS test?**

- A** A student earns “Commended Performance” by making a 2400 scale score. This accomplishment indicates performance at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and shows thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills at the grade level tested.

## **Q Besides the numeric measurement, how does “Commended Performance” differ from “Met Standard”?**

- A** The differences in knowledge and skill shown by students on the tests are described as “Performance Level Descriptors,” which can be found at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3222&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3222&menu_id=793). The tables include explanations of student performance for “Did Not Meet Standard” as well.

## **Q How do I know if my student earned “Commended Performance”?**

- A** Look on the student’s score report, and find a column on the right-hand side headed “Commended Performance.” The word “yes” or “no” will indicate whether your student achieved this distinction. Note that this information is separate for each test—reading, math, etc. (Your student may achieve “Commended Performance” in one area but not in another.)

Although privacy laws require confidentiality of individual students’ achievement—thereby eliminating a school event that would identify students who attained “Commended” vs. those who did not—CFISD encourages parents of students earning “Commended Performance” to find ways to celebrate this worthy accomplishment with friends and family.

## **Q How do I know whether my school earned “Commended Performance”?**

- A** Information regarding Gold Performance Acknowledgments (which includes campus Commended Performance) is released by TEA in October, when the 2-page Accountability Data Table will be augmented to include GPAs on the third and following pages. Find your school here: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2009/index.html> .

# How do parents find out TAKS results?

**Q** Once my student has taken these tests, how do I find out how he or she has done?

**A** Typically, parents will receive notification of student results at the end of the school year, once the entire testing program is completed. In CFISD, results are distributed in different ways at different campuses.

- included as part of the report-card packet
- sent home with the student
- mailed to the home address

**Q** Are there special procedures for grades 5 and 8?

**A** Yes. Since these students fall under SSI requirements (see p. 4 for details), parents will receive results about 3-4 weeks after the student takes a TAKS test. For students who do not pass, parents may be asked to come to school for a conference to discuss a plan for helping the student improve.

**Q** How are the results reported?

**A** The information that parents receive is called the “Confidential Student Report,” which includes—for each subject tested—the following items.

- objectives that were tested (like the ones on pages 20-31 of this booklet)
- how many questions were asked and how many the student answered correctly (for each objective and a total)
- the student’s vertical scale score (how the student performed in relation to the passing standard and the commended standard), which can be compared across years in the same subject
- a Texas Projection Measure (TPM), which estimates whether the student is likely to pass TAKS tests at the next high-stakes grade
- a “yes” or “no” under a column labeled “Met Standard” (another term for “passed”)
- a Lexile measure, indicating reading level (see more information on page 9 of this booklet)
- a Quantile measure, indicating level of math proficiency (see more information on page 10 of this booklet)

See examples at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3294&menu\\_id3=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3294&menu_id3=793).

As parents review the Confidential Student Report, finding a “no” under the “Met Standard” column or discovering that certain objectives have low numbers of items correct may warrant a contact with the school counselor to ensure that the student’s schedule contains classes or activities to provide targeted instruction to address the skills he or she lacks.

# Why is Lexile measure important?

## **Q What is a Lexile measure?**

**A** The “Lexile Framework for Reading” is a developmental scale that allows educators to quantify levels of reading comprehension. The scale ranges from below 200L for beginning readers and text to above 1700L for advanced readers and text. Your child’s Lexile measure is linked to your child’s TAKS reading or English language arts score and is one indicator of your child’s reading ability.

## **Q What’s the purpose of using a Lexile measure?**

**A** When your child reads a text that is at the appropriate level, he or she is “targeted.” What this means is that the text is not so difficult that it is frustrating, but it is difficult enough to promote reading progress. “Targeted” readers should be able to understand about 75% of what they read on their own.

## **Q How can I use Lexile measures to improve my student’s reading level?**

**A** Once you know your child’s Lexile measure, you can search the Lexile Book Database to find books that are at or near his or her reading level. This database contains tens of thousands of fiction and nonfiction titles with Lexile measures. You can search by title or author, Lexile range, or keywords. You may search the Lexile Book Database online at [www.Lexile.com](http://www.Lexile.com) to determine what books may be appropriate for your child. You can also find books within your child’s Lexile reading range at your local library or bookstore.

## **Q What is the relationship between the Lexile measure and the TAKS reading/ELA score?**

**A** Correlations for the 2009-10 TAKS tests are shown on the raw-score conversion tables, which can be found at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3270&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3270&menu_id=793).

Choose a specific test to see a table showing the following three columns.

- raw score (number of test items answered correctly)
- scale score (adjusted from year to year to equalize any variations in the test’s difficulty level)
- Lexile measure (reading level)

# Why is Quantile measure important?

## **Q What is a Quantile measure?**

**A** The “Quantile Framework for Mathematics” is a scientific approach to measuring a student’s mathematical achievement in relation to the difficulty level of specific concepts and skills. For students in K-12, the framework’s Quantile range is from EM (for “Emerging Mathematician”) to above 1400Q. A Quantile measure does not specifically translate to a grade level. Within any classroom, students will have a range of mathematical abilities.

## **Q What’s the purpose of using a Quantile measure?**

**A** Quantiles help the teacher identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses in mathematics, provide instruction at the right difficulty level, and monitor growth during the school year. When your child is introduced to a mathematical skill that is at the appropriate level, he or she is “targeted.” What this means is that the skill is not so difficult that your child is discouraged, but it is challenging enough to help your child improve his or her mathematics ability.

## **Q How can I use Quantile measures to advance my student’s mathematical development?**

**A** By selecting Texas in the QTaxon database at <http://www.quantiles.com/Search/Default.aspx>, you can see a chart that displays the QTaxon ID, the Quantile measure, a description of the skill, the TEKS strand, and the TEKS number. Comparing the Quantile measure with the TEKS expectation will show whether the student is performing at an appropriate level.

## **Q What is the relationship between the Quantile measure and the TAKS math score?**

**A** Correlations for the 2009 TAKS tests are shown on the raw-score conversion tables, which can be found at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3270&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3270&menu_id=793).

Choose a specific test to see a table showing the following three columns.

- raw score (number of test items answered correctly)
- scale score (adjusted from year to year to equalize any variations in the test’s difficulty level)
- Quantile measure (level of mathematics proficiency)

# Who takes which TAKS tests?

3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Exit-level)
Reading (English or Spanish)	Reading (English or Spanish)	Reading** (English or Spanish)	Reading (English or Spanish)	Reading	Reading***	Reading	English/ Language Arts	English/ Language Arts*
—	Writing (English or Spanish)	—	—	Writing	—	—	—	—
Math (English or Spanish)	Math (English or Spanish)	Math** (English or Spanish)	Math (English or Spanish)	Math	Math***	Math	Math	Math*
—	—	Science (English or Spanish)	—	—	Science	—	Science	Science*
—	—	—	—	—	Social Studies	—	Social Studies	Social Studies*

\* 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students must pass these tests as part of their graduation requirements.

\*\* 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students must pass both of these tests in order to advance to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

\*\*\* 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students must pass these tests in order to advance to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

# When are the TAKS tests administered?

During this school year, CFISD students will participate in multiple rounds of testing related to the state assessment program.

## **Curriculum-based Assessments (Elementary Benchmarks; Secondary Formative Assessments)**

**Purpose:** CFISD curriculum coordinators, working with groups of our teachers, construct tests having questions, formatting, and procedures that are similar to those on the TAKS. Students gain confidence as they become familiar with the situation, learn what to expect, and see that the test covers things that they're already doing in class. Because students' performance on these tests is a good prediction of their future achievement, schools receive detailed score reports clarifying which students will need extra help with certain skills. The district's Achievement Monitoring System (AMS) provides a database of these results and ensures the reliability and validity of the assessments.

**Timing:** Students take benchmarks/SFAs throughout the year, and tests are scored quickly so that any struggling students can be scheduled for reteaching.

## **TAKS Field Tests**

**Purpose:** TEA is continually building its bank of questions to be used for future versions of the TAKS test. New test questions are "tried out" during the field-testing process to ensure that they are fair and effective. Hoping to get valid data for its research, TEA selects sample campuses from across the state, and those schools are required by law to participate. A school may be assigned to field-test only certain subjects or grade-levels. Some campuses will not be required to participate in field testing at all.

**Timing:** Field testing schedules vary from year to year. A campus chosen to participate in field testing will notify parents regarding their student's involvement.

## **Actual TAKS Tests**

**Purpose:** The TAKS measures the TEKS—that is, students take the TAKS to measure their level of expertise in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, which is the state-mandated curriculum in Texas.

**Timing:** Students will take the TAKS tests as described below.

- Tests having student-composed responses require several weeks for grading. Given in early March, these exams include English Language Arts (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>), Writing (4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>), and Reading (9<sup>th</sup> only).
- Tests comprising the Student Success Initiative (see page 4) will occur in early April so that campuses can receive scores and provide accelerated instruction for any students who failed, giving these students a second chance to pass the test(s) before school is out.
- The majority of tests are administered during April and May. See a detailed testing calendar at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3635&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3635&menu_id=793), or find a simplified calendar on page 4 of CFISD's publication *The Answers: A Parent Handbook*.

# How does TAKS testing address special needs?

## Q Do students receiving special education services take regular TAKS?

A As the law requires, a student's Admission-Review-Dismissal (ARD) committee will decide which testing situation is appropriate for measuring the progress of that individual. Options include the following.

- **TAKS-Accommodated** [known as "TAKS-(A)"] is available for third grade through exit-level for students receiving Special Education services who receive instruction in the TEKS, with accommodations. This assessment is given to students for whom regular TAKS without accommodations is deemed inappropriate.
- **TAKS-Modified** [known as "TAKS-M"] has the same on-grade-level content as regular TAKS but has been modified to provide increased accessibility for students with disabilities. Modifications include reading guidance, simplified vocabulary, simplified sentences, or fewer steps. Format-wise, this test differs from regular TAKS in that it has a larger font size, more white space, fewer questions per page, and fewer answer choices. TAKS-M has been designed to fulfill *No Child Left Behind* requirements.
- **TAKS-Alternate** [known as "TAKS-Alt"] is for the small percentage of students—those having significant cognitive disabilities—for whom the other assessments are not valid. Each of these students, who will be assigned this option by the ARD committee, will demonstrate progress by completing activities customized individually for him or her.

## Q Is there TAKS help for students with dyslexia?

A TEA specifies assessment accommodations for students in grades 3-8 who meet state-prescribed dyslexia requirements. On TAKS reading, these students may be allowed to use a "bundle" of the following three accommodations.

- proctor reads aloud all proper nouns associated with each passage before student begins individual reading
- proctor reads aloud all questions and answer choices to students
- extended two-day testing

## Q How will TAKS testing accommodate students' physical limitations?

A Students who are visually impaired may receive Braille editions of the tests. Students who are unable to hold a pencil to "bubble in" the answers may work with a qualified test administrator to transcribe responses. TEA has determined which of these accommodations is "allowable," and each student's ARD committee will decide what is appropriate for him or her. Learn additional details about TAKS accommodations by reviewing pages 18-31 (PDF pages 24-37) of this document: [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/accommodations/AccommManual\\_2009\\_10.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/accommodations/AccommManual_2009_10.pdf).

# What about students who don't speak English?

In the state's data-collection process that tallies the primary language used by each student, we know that over 100 different languages and dialects are routinely spoken at home in Cypress-Fairbanks.

## **Q What does the law require?**

**A** Section 39.027 (e) of the Texas Education Code requires TEA to develop an assessment system that evaluates the academic progress—including reading proficiency in English—of limited English proficient (LEP) students. In addition, Section 39.023 (m) requires TEA to develop procedures for language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) to follow so that exempted LEP students take TAKS at the earliest practical date.

## **Q Is the regular TAKS test translated into other languages?**

**A** The only non-English TAKS are the Spanish translations available for grades 3-5. The student's LPAC will choose Spanish vs. English, test by test, depending on the language that the student uses most often in class. Since TAKS testing doesn't begin until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and since the district's goal is that students transition to an English-dominant program by that age (if not earlier), only a very small percentage of CFISD TAKS-takers use the Spanish version.

## **Q Are LEP students exempt from testing?**

**A** *No Child Left Behind* establishes requirements for LEP students' participation in state testing to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To fulfill these requirements, TEA implemented alternative assessment processes for immigrants who are LEP-exempt from TAKS tests and enrolled in grades 3–8 or 10, the grades used for AYP. This alternative is referred to as linguistically accommodated testing, or LAT. The LAT process is designed to help students better understand the language used on the tests. Proctors receive detailed training to ensure that accommodations are implemented according to strict procedures.

- **LAT Reading**—This test applies to immigrant students in their second or third school year of enrollment in U.S. schools. Examples of allowable accommodations include measures such as having a two-day testing period, letting students use specified kinds of dictionaries, and permitting students to request that the administrator read certain things aloud.
- **LAT Math**—Even recent immigrants must take this test. Allowable accommodations include linguistic simplification, oral translation, reading assistance, bilingual dictionary, bilingual glossary, and (for grades 3-5) access to both the English and Spanish versions of TAKS to use in a side-by-side approach.
- **LAT Science**—This test will be administered to immigrant students in grades 5, 8, and 10. Allowable accommodations include linguistic simplification, oral translation, reading assistance, bilingual dictionary, and bilingual glossary.

# What does the TAKS look like?

## Q What is the TAKS test like?

A The TAKS is broad in scope, more rigorous than any state test that Texas has implemented before, and administered to more students. TAKS is based strictly on objectives and student expectations outlined in the state curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This curriculum framework, implemented by the State of Texas in 1998, clearly defines concepts in all subject areas that students should know and be able to apply. The TAKS attempts to ask questions in authentic ways; that is, questions will reflect the ways that teachers naturally and routinely ask questions in the classroom. TAKS has been developed to reflect good instructional practice.

## Q How is the TAKS test organized?

A TAKS is divided into test objectives. The TAKS uses objectives that are broad, “umbrella statements” rather than the numerous, specific objectives found in the TEKS curriculum. This organizational method of grouping ideas allows TAKS objectives to remain identical across grade levels, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>.

## Q How will students indicate their answers—now and in the future?

A The TAKS test will require students to respond in several different ways.

- For **multiple choice**, students will read a list of possible answers, choose the best one, and “bubble in” the corresponding letter on the answer sheet. This procedure is simplified for third-grade students—instead of managing a separate test booklet and answer sheet, they write directly in their test booklets, “bubbling in” the oval right next to the chosen answer.
- For **“griddable”** math items, possible answers are not listed; instead, for this open-ended format, students will work out the problem, and then they will record the numeric solution on the answer sheet as individual digits.
- For **short answer**, students will compose a brief response.
- For the **composition** on the writing tests, students will follow the writing process to the polished, final-draft stage.

With the current pencil-and-paper system, students indicate their answers in the ways described above. TEA’s future plans include implementation of an online system for TAKS testing. Making this transition will likely require that students learn some different test-taking strategies. For example, methods such as underlining, circling, or highlighting may be accomplished in a different way. Read more about TEA’s plans for online testing at [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/techdigest/2008/chapter\\_02.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/techdigest/2008/chapter_02.pdf).

## Q What kinds of questions will be asked?

A Examples are shown on the following pages.

# Example Test Items

These TAKS questions have been taken from sample tests written for various grade levels and subject matter. Answers are provided at the end of this section.

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## Example 1: 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade Reading

[The following paragraph is the second in a nine-paragraph story. Eight additional questions are asked about the story.]

- 2 This unusual place was not originally a zoo. At first it was called the Forked River Animal Care Center. The workers there took care of lost or unwanted cats and dogs. Today the center is part of the zoo, but now many other kinds of animals are helped there, too.

In paragraph 2, which words help the reader know what originally means?

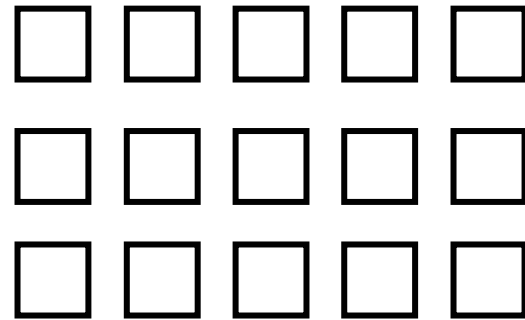
- unusual place
- at first
- took care of
- lost or unwanted

This question measures Reading Objective 1: Basic Understanding.

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## Example 2: 4th-grade Math

Ben arranged some tiles in the pattern shown below.



Which number sentence best represents Ben's pattern?

- A**  $5 + 5 = 10$
- B**  $3 + 5 = 8$
- C**  $3 \times 4 = 12$
- D**  $3 \times 5 = 15$

This question measures Math Objective 1: Numbers, Operations, and Quantitative Reasoning.

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**Example 3:**  
**5th-grade Science**

A student places a sugar cube in a beaker of water. What change will occur?

- A** The sugar cube will not change.
- B** More water will be formed.
- C** The sugar cube will become smaller.
- D** The water will form crystals.

This question measures Science Objective 3: Physical Sciences.

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**Example 4:**  
**6th-grade Reading**

[The following paragraph is the third in a seven-paragraph passage. Nine additional questions are asked about the selection.]

- 3 We demanded that the captain turn back. The situation seemed close to violence. Captain Hudson reminded us of the punishment for mutiny and ordered us back to work. I expected to be arrested—or worse—thrown overboard. Still, I stood by my shipmates. It was too cold to sail those seas. To my surprise the captain suggested that we sail west for the New World and search instead for a northwest passage to the Orient. He promised that this new destination would take us to warmer seas. We felt fortunate not to have been punished, and since we did not want to sail back to Holland as failures, we agreed.

Paragraph 3 is important to the story because it

- A** describes the crew's confrontation with the captain and explains how the conflict was resolved.
- B** contrasts the warm climate in the New World with the cold climate of northern Europe.
- C** describes the failure that the members of the crew would have felt if they had returned without finding the northeast passage.
- D** discusses the likelihood of there being a northwest passage to the Orient through the New World.

This question measures Reading Objective 2: Applying Knowledge of Literary Elements.

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**Example 5:**  
**7th-grade Writing****▪ Composition**

Sample prompt: Write a composition about why it is important to appreciate what you have.

**▪ Revising and Editing**

[The following sentence is the tenth of a 16-sentence passage that includes many instances of errors and poor writing. Students must apply rules of grammar, usage, etc., to correct the various faults.]

- 10 Visitors to the lodge are often quite surprised who expect a glass elevator to take them to their rooms.

Which of the following is the BEST way to rewrite the ideas in sentence 10?

- A** Visitors to the lodge expect a glass elevator to take them to their rooms, they are often quite surprised.
- B** Visitors to the lodge who expect a glass elevator to take them to their rooms are often quite surprised.
- C** They are often quite surprised, visitors to the lodge who expect a glass elevator to take them to their rooms.
- D** Visitors to the lodge are often quite surprised. Who expect a glass elevator to take them to their rooms.

This questions measures Writing Objective 5: Standard Usage and Appropriate Word Choice.

---

**Example 6:**  
**8th-grade Social Studies**

Use the information in the box and your knowledge of social studies to answer the following question.

- Missouri Compromise (1820)
- Compromise of 1850
- Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

The goal of the compromises listed above was to

- A** return fugitive slaves to their owners.
- B** establish standards for achieving statehood.
- C** maintain a balance between free and slave states.
- D** end slavery in U.S. territories.

This question measures Social Studies Objective 1: Issues and Events in U.S. History.

---

**Example 7:**  
**9th-grade Math**

What is the numerical solution to the statement “15 less than twice a number is equal to five”?

- A**  $n = 5$
- B**  $n = 10$
- C**  $n = 20$
- D**  $n = 25$

This question measures Math Objective 4: Linear Equations and Inequalities.

---

**Example 8:****10th-grade Social Studies**

During the 1700s the textile industry became one of the first to use steam-powered machinery. This technological innovation increased production and led to

- A** greater profits and a demand for more workers.
- B** an end to the use of child labor.
- C** a safer work environment and shorter workdays.
- D** a decrease in demand for raw materials.

This question measures Social Studies Objective 2: Geographic Influences on History.

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**Example 9:****11th-grade English Language Arts**

[The following paragraph is the first of an 87-paragraph story.]

- 1      Anyway, Mrs. Tibbetts comes into the room for second period, so we all see she's still in school. This is the spring she's pregnant, and there are some people making some bets about when she's due. The smart money says she'll make it to Easter, and after that we'll have a sub teaching us. Not that we're too particular about who's up there at the front of the room, not in this class.

From the tone of the first paragraph of the story, the reader can tell that Gene

- A** thinks Mrs. Tibbetts will have her baby before Easter.
- B** doesn't have a positive attitude about school.
- C** is concerned about who the substitute teacher will be.
- D** will not attend the poetry reading.

This question measures English Language Arts Objective 3: Analysis and Critical Evaluation.

## Answers to Example Questions

- |                  |      |      |
|------------------|------|------|
| 1. second bubble | 4. A | 7. B |
| 2. D             | 5. B | 8. A |
| 3. C             | 6. C | 9. B |

# What must students know and be able to do?

## Reading, Grades 3-8

Selections may be narratives, expository pieces, or mixed pieces, which combine two types of writing. Paired pieces may be used beginning at Grade 4.

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level					
		3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
1	<b>Basic Understanding</b> Understand the reading selections. Parts of developing a basic understanding include figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries.	15	15	13	13	12	12
2	<b>Applying Knowledge of Literary Elements</b> Understand the parts of a story—the events that happen, the setting (when and where the story takes place), the characters, and the main problem.	7	8	8	8	10	10
3	<b>Using Strategies to Analyze</b> Use different strategies to develop an understanding of the reading selections. Go beyond the basic, literal meaning of the reading by doing the following: know the different purposes for reading (reading for entertainment, reading for information), recognize the unique characteristics of different types of selections (how an article is different from a story), and use graphic organizers (charts, graphs, outlines, pictures). Reading may be a single selection or a pair of selections designed to be read together.	6	7	8	8	10	10
4	<b>Applying Critical-thinking Skills</b> Know how to use critical-thinking skills to develop an in-depth understanding of the reading selections. Students who can draw their own conclusions, make reasonable predictions about what they read, develop their own ideas, and use the text to support those ideas are likely to have a deep and complete understanding of a selection.	8	10	13	13	16	16
<b>Total number of questions on reading test</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>

# Reading, Grade 9

On this test, "Short Answer" sections are rated according to the following scale.

1 out of 3 = partially sufficient

2 out of 3 = sufficient

3 out of 3 = exemplary

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective
1	<b>Basic Understanding</b> Understand the reading selections. Parts of developing a basic understanding include figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries.	9
2	<b>Literary Elements and Techniques</b> Understand the literary elements that are found in all stories—plot, conflict, character development, setting, and theme. Understand how an author combines these elements to create an effective story. Recognize the literary devices or tools an author uses to guide the reader's understanding of a story's characters, events, theme, and overall meaning. Know literary devices, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism.	12
	<b>Short Answer: Literary Selection</b>	3
3	<b>Analysis and Critical Evaluation</b> Develop a deep understanding about the reading selections and visual representations. Draw reasonable conclusions, use the text to support those conclusions, make meaningful connections between important ideas and themes, and understand the techniques an author has used to develop a text.	12
	<b>Short Answer: Expository Selection</b>	3
	<b>Short Answer: Connecting Selections</b>	3
<b>Total number of questions on reading test</b>		<b>42</b>

# English Language Arts, Grades 10 & 11

On this test, "Short Answer" sections are rated according to the following scale.

- 1 out of 3 = partially sufficient
- 2 out of 3 = sufficient
- 3 out of 3 = exemplary

Compositions are rated according to the following scale:

- 1 = ineffective
- 2 = somewhat effective
- 3 = generally effective
- 4 = highly effective

To pass the composition portion of the ELA test, students must earn a score of 2 or better.

Objectives			Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level	
			10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Reading Objectives	1	<b>Basic Understanding</b> Understand the reading selections. Parts of developing a basic understanding include figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries.	8	8
	2	<b>Literary Elements and Techniques</b> Understand the literary elements that are found in all stories—plot, conflict, character development, setting, and theme. Understand how an author combines these elements to create an effective story. Recognize the literary devices or tools an author uses to guide the reader’s understanding of a story’s characters, events, theme, and overall meaning. Know literary devices, such as flashback, foreshadowing, symbolism, and allusion.	8	8
		<b>Short Answer: Literary Selection</b>	3	3
	3	<b>Analysis and Critical Evaluation</b> Develop a deep understanding about the reading selections and visual representations. Draw reasonable conclusions, use the text to support those conclusions, make meaningful connections between important ideas and themes, and understand the techniques an author has used to develop a text.	12	12
		<b>Short Answer: Expository Selection</b>	3	3
		<b>Short Answer: Connecting Selections</b>	3	3

Objectives			Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level	
			10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Writing Objective	6	<p><b>Revising and Editing</b>            Improve and correct passages created to resemble student writing. Improve the organization and development of ideas, the clarity and effectiveness of word choice. Correct and improve sentences. Correct errors in grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.</p>	20	20
<b>Total number of multiple choice questions on English language arts test</b>			57	57
Written Composition Objectives	4 & 5	<p><b>Objective 4</b>            Write an effective composition on a specific topic. Stay focused on the topic, organize sentences and ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow, make the ideas interesting, and develop the ideas in detail.</p> <p><b>Objective 5</b>            Write as correctly and clearly as possible. Focus on communicating well on paper. Follow the rules of correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.</p>		

# Writing, Grades 4 & 7

On this test, a student's composition is rated according to the following scale.

- 1 = ineffective
- 2 = somewhat effective
- 3 = generally effective
- 4 = highly effective

Objectives			Questions per Objective, by Grade Level	
			4 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
Written Composition	1	<b>Objective 1</b> Write an effective composition on a specific topic. Stay focused on the topic, organize sentences and ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow, make the ideas interesting, and develop the ideas in detail.		
	2	<b>Objective 2</b> Write as correctly and clearly as possible. Focus on communicating well on paper. Follow the rules of correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.		
Multiple Choice	3	<b>Appropriate Organization of Ideas</b> Improve the organization and development of ideas in a piece of writing.	4	6
	4	<b>Correct and Effective Sentence Structure</b> Correct errors in sentence structure and make sentences more effective.	8	10
	5	<b>Standard Usage and Appropriate Word Choice</b> Correct grammar errors and use words that help the writer communicate clearly and effectively.	8	12
	6	<b>Proofreading for Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling</b> Correctly capitalize words, punctuate sentences, and spell words.	8	12
<b>Total number of multiple choice questions on writing test</b>			<b>28</b>	<b>40</b>

# Math, Grades 3-8

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level					
		3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
1	<b>Numbers, Operations, and Quantitative Reasoning</b> Understand numbers, operations (adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing), and quantitative reasoning (knowing when an answer makes sense).	10	11	11	10	10	10
2	<b>Patterns, Relationships, and Algebraic Reasoning</b> Understand patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning—understand the use of symbols to represent real-world situations.	6	7	7	9	10	10
3	<b>Geometry and Spatial Reasoning</b> Understand geometry and spatial reasoning—understand the location or position of an object and the amount of space it occupies in the real world.	6	6	7	7	7	7
4	<b>Concepts and Uses of Measurement</b> Understand the use of appropriate measurement. Know how to apply measurement concepts.	6	6	7	5	5	5
5	<b>Probability and Statistics</b> Understand probability (the chance that an event will occur) and statistics (the collection, organization, and interpretation of data).	4	4	4	6	7	8
6	<b>Mathematical Processes and Tools</b> Understand problem-solving strategies and tools, such as formulas, rulers, pictures, graphs, and tables.	8	8	8	9	9	10
<b>Total number of questions on math test</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>

# Math, Grades 9-11

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level		
		9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
1	<p><b>Foundations for Functional Relationships</b> Understand functions represented by pairs of numbers, where the value of one number depends on the value of the other number. Draw conclusions from functional relationships.</p>	5	5	5
2	<p><b>Properties and Attributes of Functions</b> Understand the similarities and differences between linear and quadratic functions. Solve algebraic equations.</p>	5	5	5
3	<p><b>Linear Functions</b> Understand that a linear function is an equation that can be represented by a line on a graph. Know how the slope (rate of change) affects that line.</p>	5	5	5
4	<p><b>Linear Equations and Inequalities</b> Organize problems into equations and inequalities in order to find solutions to problems. Know when using two related equations is the best way to find a solution.</p>	5	5	5
5	<p><b>Quadratic and Other Nonlinear Functions</b> Understand a quadratic function as it looks on a graph. Understand how the shape of the parabola on the graph changes as the equation changes. Simplify algebraic expressions by correctly using exponents. 11<sup>th</sup> grade: Solve real-life problems involving quadratic equations.</p>	4	5	5
6	<p><b>Geometric Relationships and Spatial Reasoning</b> 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades: Locate ordered pairs of rational numbers on a coordinate plane. Use transformations, such as reflections, translations, and dilations, to identify similar geometric shapes. 11<sup>th</sup> grade: Understand how geometric concepts and properties can be used to solve everyday problems. Solve problems using a variety of representations, including geometric patterns, properties of transformations (such as reflections, rotations, translations, and dilations), and right-triangle patterns.</p>	4	5	7

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level		
		9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
7	<p><b>Two- and Three-dimensional Representations of Geometric Relationships and Shapes</b>            Understand how geometric concepts and properties can be used to solve everyday problems. Understand how solid, three-dimensional figures look from different perspectives.            Additional for 11<sup>th</sup> grade: Use slope to determine geometric relationships, such as parallel or perpendicular lines. Use rational numbers to determine the location of points on a coordinate grid.</p>	4	5	7
8	<p><b>Concepts and Uses of Measurement and Similarity</b>            9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades: Find the surface area and volume of solid figures. Find missing measurements in similar shapes by using proportions. Determine the effect on perimeter, area, and volume when any measurement is changed. (For example, if the sides of a square are doubled, the area is four times the original area.)            11<sup>th</sup> grade: Find the area of polygons, circles, and parts of circles as well as the surface area and volume of solid figures. Use transformations and ratios to identify similar geometric shapes. Determine the effect on perimeter, area, and volume when any measurement is changed.</p>	6	7	7
9	<p><b>Percents, Proportional Relationships, Probability, and Statistics</b>            Understand percents, probability, measures of central tendency, graphs, and misuses of graphical information.</p>	5	5	5
10	<p><b>Mathematical Processes and Tools</b>            Understand problem-solving strategies and tools, such as calculators, formulas, rulers, pictures, graphs, and tables.</p>	9	9	9
<b>Total number of questions on math test</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>60</b>

# Science, Grade 5

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective
1	<b>The Nature of Science</b> Understand experimental designs, the collection and organization of data, and safety issues. Analyze scientific information from various sources.	13
2	<b>Life Sciences</b> Understand living things, such as plants and animals. Know how organisms meet their needs and interact with other organisms.	9
3	<b>Physical Sciences</b> Understand the structure and properties of matter. Know that forces cause matter to undergo changes.	9
4	<b>Earth Sciences</b> Understand the forces that are continually changing Earth's physical features. Know that Earth is part of larger systems involving the sun, moon, and other planets in the solar system.	9
<b>Total number of questions on science test</b>		40

# Science, Grade 8

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective
1	<b>The Nature of Science</b> Understand experimental designs, safety issues, and methods for collecting and organizing data. Analyze scientific information from various sources.	14
2	<b>Living Systems and the Environment</b> Understand living things, such as plants and animals. Know how organisms meet their needs and interact within ecosystems.	12
3	<b>Structures and Properties of Matter</b> Understand what matter is composed of and what happens as matter changes.	6
4	<b>Motion, Forces, and Energy</b> Understand how motion, forces, and energy are related and how these relationships explain everyday phenomena.	6
5	<b>Earth and Space Systems</b> Understand that forces are continually changing Earth's physical features. Know that the Earth is part of larger systems involving the sun, moon, other planets, and the universe.	12
<b>Total number of questions on science test</b>		50

# Science, Grades 10 & 11

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level	
		10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
1	<b>The Nature of Science</b> Understand experimental designs, safety issues, and methods for collecting and organizing data. Analyze scientific information from various sources.	17	17
2	<b>The Organization of Living Systems</b> Understand how living systems are organized, from the molecular level to cell structures to organisms to ecosystems.	11	8
3	<b>The Interdependence of Organisms and the Environment</b> Understand how all living things depend on their environment and other organisms for survival.	11	8
4	<b>The Structures and Properties of Matter</b> Understand basic chemistry (what matter is composed of and what happens as matter changes).	8	11
5	<b>Motion, Forces, and Energy</b> Understand basic physics (how motion, forces, and energy are related and how these relationships help explain many of the everyday phenomena people experience).	8	11
<b>Total number of questions on science test</b>		55	55

# Social Studies, Grades 8, 10, & 11

Objectives		Test Questions per Objective, by Grade Level		
		8 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
1	<p><b>Issues and Events in U.S. History</b>            Understand major issues and events in U.S. history, such as the fight for independence during the American Revolution.            8<sup>th</sup> grade: Understand the challenges faced by the early U.S. government, such as westward expansion and the Civil War.            11<sup>th</sup> grade: Understand the role of the United States in World War I and World War II.</p>	13	7	13
2	<p><b>Geographic Influences on History</b>            Understand how geographic factors have influenced historical issues and events.            8<sup>th</sup>-grade example: the settlement of colonial America            10<sup>th</sup>-grade example: patterns of settlement in different parts of the world            11<sup>th</sup>-grade example: the construction of the Panama Canal            Read maps, charts, and graphs.</p>	6	12	9
3	<p><b>Economic and Social Influences on History</b>            Understand economic and social influences on historical issues and events.            8<sup>th</sup>-grade examples: the spread of slavery and the Industrial Revolution            10<sup>th</sup>-grade examples: World War I and World War II            11<sup>th</sup>-grade examples: the causes of the Great Depression and the impact of various reform movements on American society            Students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade must also understand the characteristics of different economic systems throughout the world.</p>	9	7	13
4	<p><b>Political Influences on History</b>            Understand political influences on historical issues and events, such as the development of representative government in colonial America and the fundamental principles of the <u>U.S. Constitution</u> and the <u>Bill of Rights</u>.</p>	12	12	9
5	<p><b>Critical-thinking Skills</b>            Students must be able to show the ability to use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information. Students must also know how to interpret written and visual sources of historical information.</p>	8	12	11
<b>Total number of questions on social studies test</b>		48	50	55

# Where is further information available?

For additional information about the state testing and accountability program, visit the Web site of the Texas Education Agency at this address: [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us).

The Student Assessment Division of TEA has an "A to Z Directory," a helpful navigation tool for the various tests and programs. Visit it at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3320&menu\\_id=793](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3320&menu_id=793).

For more details about Lexile measures, see [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/lexile/lexile\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/lexile/lexile_brochure.pdf).

For additional information about Quantiles, see <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/lexile-quantile/QuantileBrochure.pdf>.

Find "A Guide to the TAKS Vertical Scale Used in Texas" at [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/vertical\\_scale/Vertical\\_Scale\\_Blackline\\_Master.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/vertical_scale/Vertical_Scale_Blackline_Master.pdf)

Find "A Guide to the Texas Projection Measure" at [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/growth\\_proposal/030509\\_TPM\\_Blackline\\_Master.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/growth_proposal/030509_TPM_Blackline_Master.pdf)

Visit the Web site of the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School district at this address: [www.cfisd.net](http://www.cfisd.net).

School counselors can provide more details about the TAKS test and about promotion and graduation requirements.

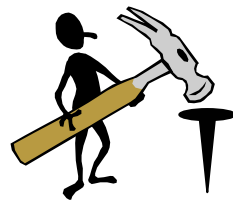
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# **Nailing Down the TAKS: A Handbook for Parents**

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