NAEP
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

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Measure Up

Winter 2007-08

Assessment news for elementary school teachers

Facts About NAEP 2008

- From January 7 to March 14, 2008, over 13,000 nine-year-olds will take the NAEP long-term trend assessment in reading or mathematics.
- From January 28 to March 7, 2008, over 28,000 fourth-graders will take the NAEP field tests in reading, mathematics or science, to help prepare for the 2009 assessments.
- Over 800 elementary schools have been selected to participate in NAEP 2008.
- Over 600 NAEP staff will administer NAEP 2008 to students.

2007 Reading and Mathematics Results Released

On September 25, the results of the NAEP 2007 Reading and Mathematics assessments were released.

In reading, fourth-graders nationwide:

- Scored higher in 2007 than in all the previous assessment years.
- Had an average reading score that was up 2 points since 2005 and 4 points compared to the first assessment 15 years ago.
- Had higher percentages of students performing at or above *Basic* and *Proficient* achievement levels than in previous years.
- Had higher scores for most racial/ethnic groups than in previous years.
- Had a narrower gap between the White and Black scores than in all previous years.

Source: Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Donahue, P. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007* (NCES 2007-496). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

In mathematics, fourth-graders nationwide:

- Scored higher in 2007 than in all previous assessment years.
- Had an average mathematics score that was up 2 points since 2005 and 27 points compared to the first assessment in 1990.
- Had higher percentages of students performing at or above *Basic, Proficient,* and *Advanced* achievement levels than in previous years.
- Had higher scores for most racial/ethnic groups than in previous years.

Source: Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Dion, G. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2007* (NCES 2007-494). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Released NAEP Items and Scoring Guides: Valuable Classroom Resources for Instruction

Released NAEP items can be a valuable instructional tool for teachers. After each assessment, NAEP makes public some of the questions; more than 2,000 questions are available at the NAEP Questions Center **(http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls).**

For instance, NAEP writing questions can help students learn to evaluate their own writing. In order to self-assess effectively, students need to recognize the qualities of good writing. Students need specific instruction on evaluating writing using a rubric and they need exemplars of good written work.

Once students become adept at evaluating writing according to a rubric, they can learn to evaluate and improve their own writing.

Each NAEP writing question comes with a scoring guide, samples of student writing for each score, and scorer's commentary to explain why each sample of student writing was scored as it was.

There are a variety of ways in which teachers can use the materials. Teachers can:

- Use the scoring guide and samples of student writing to have students evaluate the samples using the rubric.
- Ask students to respond to the writing prompt and, after instruction in evaluating the NAEP student writing samples, ask students to evaluate their own writing.
- Examine the national and state student performance data for individual writing questions.

A sample grade 4 writing question, sample student responses, scoring guide and scorer's commentary are provided below.

Source: Foy, J. (2007). *NAEP Assessment Toolbox for Teachers: Easy-to-Use Classroom Activities Using Questions and Data from the National Assessment for Educational Progress.* Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Anchorage, Alaska.

Sample grade 4 writing question

Describe what lunchtime is like for you on a school day. Be sure to tell about your lunchtime so that someone who has never had lunch with you on a school day can understand where you have lunch and what lunchtime is like.

Sample student responses

Excellent:

At lunchtime, I usually eat cold lunch. My mother packs me a sandwich, a drink, fruit, and a treat. When I get in the lunchroom I find an empty table and sit there, and eat my lunch. My friends come and sit down with me. I open my lunch and start to eat. First I eat my sandwich, then I open my drink, then eat my fruit and last but not least my treat. After that I sit quietly until I'm dismissed. When I am I go into the bathroom and clean my teeth because I have braces.

When I am done with that I go outside and put my lunchbox away and go find my friends; We usually play four square or play on the play ground. If we are not on the playground or on the four square ground we are on the field playing tag, kickball, or soccer. I really like to play soccer and my friends do too.

Scorer's commentary

"Excellent" responses provided very clear and well-developed descriptions of lunchtime. The response above presents an extensive description of lunch with well-chosen details and clear transitions across the response. Word choices are effective and sentence structure is varied.

Lunchtime in my school is very noisy, because everybody talks. The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders at [school name] have to eat lunch at the same time. We all sit at tables that are set up in the gym, across half of the basketball court. We eat lunch every day from 11:45am through 12:00pm. At lunch, everyone eats and talks to their friends until the lunch-moms dismiss them so they can go to recess. When everybody has cleared out of the lunch room, the janitors and lunch moms wipe off the table just in time for the 7th and 8th graders to come into the room for lunch. After lunch and recess I go back to my 4th grade classroom, which is in the basement. I like lunch time a lot—it's my favorite time of the day.

Scorer's commentary

"Skillful" responses often provided clearly organized sequences of actions about lunchtime. The response above does this with

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Scoring Guide Excerpts

Excellent
- Develops ideas well and uses specific, relevant details across the response.
- Sustains varied sentence structure and exhibits specific word choices.

Skillful
- Develops ideas with some specific, relevant details.
- Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and exhibits some specific word choices.

Sufficient
- Clear but sparsely developed; may have few details.
- Generally has simple sentences and simple word choice; may exhibit uneven control over sentence boundaries.

Uneven

May be characterized by one or more of the following:
- Provides limited or incomplete information; may be list-like or have the quality of an outline.
- Exhibits uneven control over sentence boundaries and may have some inaccurate word choices.

Insufficient

May be characterized by one or more of the following:
- Provides little information and makes little attempt at development.
- Exhibits little control over sentence boundaries and sentence formation; word choice is inaccurate in much of the response.

Unsatisfactory

May be characterized by one or more of the following:
- Attempts a response, but may only paraphrase the prompt or be extremely brief.
- Exhibits no control over sentence °formation; word choice is inaccurate across the response.

- *To use released items in the classroom, teachers should visit **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard** and select "Sample Questions."*
- *From there, teachers can select Questions Tool followed by the subject. A series of questions will appear and teachers can review the questions, sample student responses, and performance data for students nationwide.*

Sample student responses - *Continued from previous page*

some nicely chosen specific details, such as the reference to the lunch moms wiping off the tables. There is some sentence variety as well. However, the response lacks the development of an "Excellent" response.

Sufficient:

My lunchtime is loud. Almost everbody in the lunchroom is making noise. We have very good food and nice cooks. We have 35 minutes to eat lunch. My lunch room is big and has a lot of tables. We have milk and a sald bar for the teachers. That is what my lunchroom is about.

Scorer's commentary

"Sufficient" responses were clear but lacked detail and sentence variety. The response above provides a clear sequence of generally related information conveyed with simple sentences and word choices.

Insufficient:

We have lunch at 1:00 pm here it's really noisey you can't think. We have lunch in the gym.

Scorer's commentary

"Insufficient" responses attempted a response, but provided only a fragment or beginning of a response. Some "Insufficient" responses were very disorganized, while others were difficult to understand due to errors in grammar, spelling, or sentence structure. This response exhibits little control over sentence boundaries.

What is the Nation's Report Card?

The Nation's Report Card informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

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View NAEP data for a particular state or contact your NAEP State Coordinator	The National Center for Education Statistics at **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states**
Access specific results for a grade level, subject, jurisdiction, and/or student groups	The NAEP Data Explorer at **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde**
Find information regarding the types of questions used on NAEP assessments or to view subject-specific questions	The NAEP Questions Tool at **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls**
Download a Sample Questions Booklet that contains sample test questions for the upcoming and previous assessments	The National Center for Education Statistics at **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/booklets.asp**
Learn more about how policy is drafted for each NAEP assessment	The National Assessment Governing Board at **http://www.nagb.org**
Offer a comment or suggestion on NAEP	The National Center for Education Statistics mailbox at **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/contactus.asp**

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