



The Nation's Report Card: Reading and Mathematics Achievement Levels

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or The Nation's Report Card, measures reading and math performance of students across the nation, in 53 states and jurisdictions, and in 26 urban school districts for grades 4 and 8. The NAEP reading and math assessments are administered every two years, except during COVID, when students took NAEP in 2019 and in 2022.

The reading assessments measure students' knowledge and skills in literary and informational reading. The math assessments test knowledge and skills associated with number properties and operations, measurement; geometry; data analysis, statistics and probability; and algebra.

NAEP Achievement Levels

- Students performing at the **NAEP Basic** level have partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for performance at the **NAEP Proficient** level.
- Students performing at the **NAEP Proficient** level have demonstrated competency over challenging material, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills.¹
- Students performing at the **NAEP Advanced** level have shown superior performance.

1. *NAEP Proficient* does not signify being on grade level, like state assessments, which often align to state grade-level expectations, and NAEP achievement levels generally are distinct from those used on state assessments.

Examples of skills and knowledge most students performing at each achievement level demonstrate in reading and math are listed below.

For a full set of expected skills and knowledge at each level, [please visit this link](#).

GRADE 4

READING

NAEP Basic

- Sequence or categorize events from a literary text.
- Determine the relevant meaning of familiar words using context from a section of an informational text.



NAEP Proficient

- Describe the impact of a character's actions or explain how characters influence one another.
- Provide an opinion using relevant information from the text.



NAEP Advanced

- Determine the meaning of nonliteral phrases.
- Distinguish the theme of a text.

MATH

NAEP Basic

- Locate whole numbers on a number line.
- Identify lines of symmetry.



NAEP Proficient

- Add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers, fractions, and decimals in single and multi-step problems.
- Apply basic properties of operations to solve problems.



NAEP Advanced

- Understand and be able to use inverse operations² and simple ratios.³
- Compare and order whole numbers, fractions, and decimals to hundredths.

GRADE 8

READING

NAEP Basic

- Identify basic literary elements such as the order of events, character traits, and main idea.
- Determine the main idea of an informational text drawing on explicit features from the text.



NAEP Proficient

- Make inferences and draw conclusions about literary elements such as character interactions and plot features.
- Identify one or both sides of an argument in an informational text.



NAEP Advanced

- Interpret descriptive or figurative language and how those impact the meaning of the text.
- Use text evidence from multiple sources to substantiate claims made by an author.

MATH

NAEP Basic

- Simplify expressions involving integers.
- Find a missing angle in a triangle given two angles.



NAEP Proficient

- Apply strategies to solve Pythagorean Theorem⁴ problems.
- Solve problems involving capacity, area, and weight.



NAEP Advanced

- Solve problems involving area, including composing and decomposing complex figures.
- Analyze and critique graphical displays to justify appropriateness and solve problems.

2. **Inverse Operations:** Inverse operations are two operations that are opposite of one another. For example, the inverse operation of $a + b$ is $a - b$.

3. **Ratio:** A ratio is a comparison of two or more values where their sizes are provided in relation to each other, written in the form $a:b$, where for every a units of one value there are b units of the other value.

4. **Pythagorean Theorem:** A relationship between the lengths of the sides of a right triangle (i.e., a triangle with one interior angle equal to 90 degree) represented using the equation $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$, where a and b are the lengths of the sides creating the right angle and c length of the longest side (i.e., the hypotenuse).