M-Step™

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress

3

A companion guide to the grade 3 Parent Report

M-STEP Parent Report Guide

MICHIGAN Department of Education

August 2025

Thank you for partnering with your school to provide a positive education for your student. As parents and educators working together, we will ensure our children receive an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life.

Michigan's Academic Standards (www.michigan.gov/academicstandards) set clear and consistent educational expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level. A student who follows these standards is ready to succeed in college and the workplace by the time they graduate from high school.

The Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress assessment (M-STEP) is one way to measure student progress in grade 3 based on the academic standards in English language arts and in mathematics. Results from M-STEP are just one source of information about your child's learning progress. Local tests, classroom work, and report cards can add more insight into how well your child is learning. To learn more, visit the M-STEP web page (www.michigan.gov/mstep).

As you review your child's results, remember these assessments are a snapshot of your student's progress. Something as simple as a student not feeling well on the day of the assessment could affect their performance. This is why your child's school and teachers use a number of tools and strategies—such as projects, classroom activities, and assessments—to identify learning and achievement levels.

We all share the responsibility of helping every child be successful. At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and helping your child meet them. If your child needs extra support or wants to learn more, work with their teacher to identify resources and opportunities that are appropriate for them. Talk with your child's teacher regularly about how your child is doing and how you can support their learning at home. Building a connection between home and school will greatly improve the impact of your child's learning.

Together as partners, we can ensure success for every child.

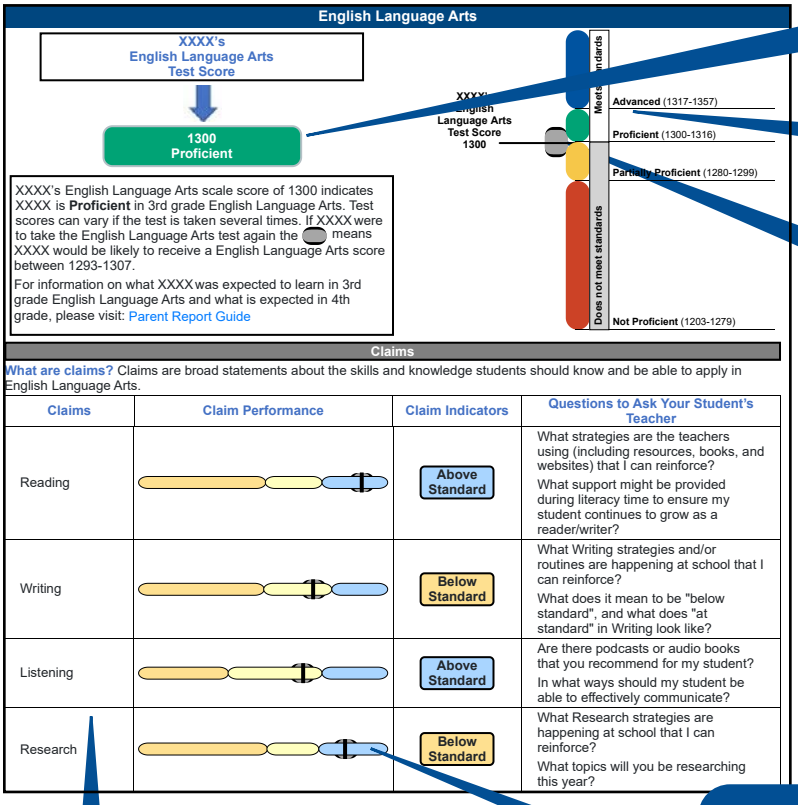
How to Read Your Child's Score Report

Michigan schools assess the progress of third grade students on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, or M-STEP. The M-STEP measures what students know and are able to do in relation to Michigan's academic standards. Students in grade 3 take M-STEP tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

M-STEP results are released in late summer to provide parents and teachers with valuable information on where students are doing well and where they might need additional support. Scores also can support instruction by helping educators better align curriculum and instruction to state standards.

Score Report Components

M-STEP results: grade 3 English Language Arts example



Student Overall Performance Level and Scale Score

Students receive a numerical scale score and, based on that score, are assigned one of four performance levels: Not Proficient, Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced. This section of the report provides your student's numerical score and performance level.

Confidence Interval

Test scores can vary if the test is taken several times; this bar shows the range of scores your child would be likely to receive if they took the test another time.

Claims

Assessments in ELA and mathematics include sub-categories, called claims, which relate directly to Michigan's learning standards for those subjects. This section describes the claims that were assessed.

Claim Performance Indicators

The report shows at a glance whether your student's score on this claim shows above standard, at or near standard, or below standard. The bar chart indicates the range of possible performance within each claim. The black vertical lines indicate your student's performance.

Content Areas on the M-STEP

When you review your child's score report, you will see an overall score as well as other information on how your child is progressing in each content area. The test results, which are aligned to Michigan's Academic Standards, tell you, your child, and your child's teachers how well your student is mastering the standards.

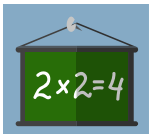
English Language Arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) M-STEP is organized into four areas, or claims:

Reading	Students can read, understand, and analyze a variety of texts, including stories and nonfiction. This includes identifying main ideas and details, comparing passages, and using content clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students can also draw conclusions and make inferences.
Listening	Students can understand, evaluate, and respond to information they hear after listening to passages.
Writing	Students can develop a well organized written response for a variety of purposes and audiences. Their writing must include appropriate detail and evidence to support their main idea, as well as the use of grade-appropriate spelling and grammar.
Research/Inquiry	Students respond to questions using evidence from multiple passages to support their main idea. This involves being able to identify important information in a text that supports their writing.

Mathematics

The mathematics M-STEP is organized into three areas, or claims:

 **Concepts & Procedures**	Students can understand and use strategies correctly and explain why certain strategies work the way they do.
Problem Solving: Modeling and Data Analysis	Students can use problem-solving strategies and skills to solve real-world mathematics problems. Students can also identify important information in a word problem and determine how to use it to solve the problem.
Communicating Reasoning	Students can explain their thinking and draw conclusions when solving a problem.

What Your Child Learned in GRADE 3

English Language Arts

- Reading closely to identify main ideas and supporting details in a story.
- Describing the logical connection between certain sentences and paragraphs in stories (Example: first, second, third; cause and effect).
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic.
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details.
- Writing stories that establish a situation and include details and clear sequences of events that describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters.
- Independently conducting short research projects that build knowledge about various topics.
- Asking and answering questions about information heard from a speaker or while participating in classroom discussions; offering appropriate elaboration and detail that builds on what others have said.
- Reading stories and poems aloud fluently without pausing to figure out what each word means.
- Distinguishing the literal and nonliteral meanings of words, such as "something's fishy" and "cold shoulder."
- Spelling correctly and consulting dictionaries to clarify meanings of words.

Mathematics

- Engaging in activities that involve finding an unknown product (multiplication) and finding an unknown factor (division) to develop an understanding of multiplication and division of whole numbers.
- Knowing the single-digit multiplication and division facts up to 100.
- Developing strategies for solving multiplication and division problems with whole numbers up to 100.
- Developing an understanding of fractions, especially unit fractions (fractions with a numerator or top number of 1); using fractions to represent numbers equal to, less than, and greater than 1, especially on a number line.
- Describing, analyzing, and comparing the angles and number of sides of two-dimensional shapes.
- Understanding the concept of the area of a shape and relating area to multiplication by finding the number of same size units required to cover the shape without gaps or overlaps.

What Your Child Will Learn in GRADE 4

English Language Arts

- Describing the basic elements of stories, such as characters, events, and settings, by focusing on specific details in the text.
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles; understanding the main and supporting ideas; comparing and contrasting information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points.
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures.
- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples.
- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the internet.
- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support certain points.
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details.
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling.
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (synonyms) and to their opposites (antonyms).

Mathematics

- Adding and subtracting whole numbers within 1,000,000 quickly and accurately.
- Developing an understanding of and building fluency with multi-digit multiplication and division (example: 36 × 15 = 30 × 15 + 6 × 15; 20 × 15 + 10 × 15 + 6 × 15 = 36 × 15).
- Solving multi-step problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and explaining why the answer makes sense.
- Adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominator (example: 5/8 = 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8).
- Extending the understanding of fractions by comparing the size of two fractions with different numerators (top numbers) and different denominators (bottom numbers).
- Developing an understanding of equivalent fractions by using pictures, number lines, and fraction models (example: 1/2 is the same as 3/6 and the same as 5/10).

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