

Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)

www.isbe.net/assessment/isa.htm

Frequently- Asked Questions

Updated 03/23/2016

1. Is ISA required to be administered during the current school year?

Answer: Yes. The federal government requires public schools to assess students in science.

2. Who must test?

Answer: In a public school district, ISA will be administered to students enrolled in grade 5 and grade 8 at their respective grade level. The high school assessment for students enrolled in grades 9-12 will be course-based and correspond to the content of Biology I.

- ~~3. Specifically, which high school students must test?~~

~~**Answer:** As indicated in ISBE's Student Information System (SIS), high school students enrolled in one of the following four science courses must test:~~

- ~~• 03051A000 Biology~~
- ~~• 03052A000 Biology—Advanced Studies~~
- ~~• 03056A000 AP Biology~~
- ~~• 03057A000 IB Biology~~

4. Can the ISA high school science courses be adjusted like they can be for PARCC high school tests for ELA/L and mathematics (i.e., may more courses be mapped and may some courses be removed)?

Answer: Not at this time.

5. When will ISA be administered?

Answer: The test window is expected to be open throughout May 2016. That said, we hope to open the window in April 2016 to give schools added flexibility.

6. In what format will ISA be administered?

Answer: ISA will be administered in an online format only.

7. How will the test be administered?

Answer: ISA will use an open-source technology known as TAO.

8. On what standards is ISA based?

Answer: ISA is based on the Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The State Board adopted these standards in 2014. See <http://www.isbe.net/nils/science/default.htm> for more details.

9. How do the Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the NGSS and adopted in 2014 by ISBE, relate to the Illinois Learning Standards in Science adopted in 1997?

Answer: The Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the NGSS, replaced the previous science standards that were adopted in 1997. The NGSS are the most comprehensive science standards that Illinois has ever had. They are more rigorous and detailed as they integrate the content of science with the practices of science. However, there are many similarities between the two sets of standards. For example, the Engineering Standard aligns well to the 1997 Illinois Learning Standard 11B, Technological Design. If students are designing and building models, plus testing and retesting those models, they are meeting the Engineering Standard found in the NGSS.

Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)

www.isbe.net/assessment/isa.htm

Frequently- Asked Questions

Updated 03/23/2016

10. How was the ISA developed?

Answer: The Illinois State Board of Education entered an item-sharing agreement with the Office of the State Superintendent in the District of Columbia and is working in partnership with D.C. to build the ISA. This partnership allows Illinois to utilize the existing work of D.C., which administered a science exam based on the Next Generation Science Standards in 2015, and leverage both entities' resources to develop a high-quality test.

11. Specifically, which high school students must test?

Answer: As indicated in ISBE's Student Information System (SIS), high school students enrolled in one of the following four science courses must test unless they have received a full year credit from a previous school year for at least one of the following courses:

- 03051A000 Biology
- 03052A000 Biology—Advanced Studies
- 03056A000 AP Biology
- 03057A000 IB Biology

12. How much time is allotted for ISA?

Answer: Students must complete the test in one day. The table below shows the estimated time of testing, but is not a time limit. Districts have flexibility to allow students to continue testing during the session if they are actively engaged with the assessment.

Test	Number of Items	Before/After Time (in minutes)	Estimated Test Time (in minutes)	Total Time (in minutes)
Grade 5	18	15	38	53
Grade 8	23	15	40	55
High School	21	15	32	47

The times above are estimates based on operational testing in Washington D.C. ISBE does NOT impose a time limit other than the session cannot span over two days. Districts have the flexibility to continue testing if students are still working during the session.

13. What are the technology requirements?

Answer: iPads are NOT supported. The rest of the technical requirements can be found at: [<http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/isa/2016/ADS-specs.pdf>].

14. What types of items will appear on the ISA?

Answer: Each test (5, 8, high school) will begin with reading passages, called scenarios, and will be followed by a series of test items. Some items will be open-ended, some will be multiple-choice and some will be multiple-select (more than one correct response). Other items will involve drop down selections. Each test will also include stand-alone, multiple-choice items that do not follow a scenario.

15. What NGSS science content is covered in each test?

Answer: Grades 5 and 8 will have items aligned to Physical Science (PS), Life Science (LS),

Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)

www.isbe.net/assessment/isa.htm

Frequently- Asked Questions

Updated 03/23/2016

Earth/Space Science (ESS) and Engineering (ETS). The high school test is aligned to Life Science (LS) with a small portion covering Engineering (ETS).

16. Are there sample items available?

Answer: Washington, D.C. has sample items online at <http://osse.dc.gov/node/1111507>. However, these items do not reflect the test construction mentioned above.

17. Are calculators allowed on the ISA?

Answer: Calculators will be allowed, although they will not be needed to complete the ISA.