

General WY-TOPP Questions

What is WY-TOPP?

WY-TOPP stands for Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress. It assesses students on the [Wyoming Content and Performance Standards](#) in the content areas of English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science. WY-TOPP are online, computer-adaptive assessments that include end-of-year summative assessments and optional fall and winter interim assessments..

Is the Test Wyoming Specific?

Yes, WY-TOPP is a customized summative and interim assessment system, built for Wyoming, using items aligned to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. Please note that the training/practice tests are not customized for Wyoming.

What is the Summative Assessment?

Summative assessments are end-of-year, standards-based, adaptive assessments which support access and fairness in measuring all students achievement. Students in grades 3-10 take the WY-TOPP summative assessment in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Writing is assessed in grades 5, 7, and 9; science is assessed in grades 4, 8, and 10. Assessment Blueprints outline the content being assessed.

What Are the Interim Assessments?

The optional Interim assessments are similar to the summative assessment in that they are built with similar items, but are shorter and administered during seasonal testing windows (Fall and Winter). In grades 3-10, the interim assessment is adaptive and offers instant reporting on student achievement.

How Does a Computer-Adaptive Assessment Work?

A computer-adaptive test (CAT) is a personalized online assessment that continuously adjusts in difficulty with each question the student answers. If a student answers correctly, the test immediately moves to a harder question; if they answer incorrectly, it moves to an easier one. This continuous back-and-forth cycle runs throughout the test to precisely pinpoint and provide a highly accurate and individualized measure of proficiency.

How Does the Standards-Based Adaptive Algorithm Work? How Does It Assess Kids Above or Below Grade Level?

The assessment item bank includes several items that are identified to assess different levels of understanding for various concepts contained within the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards (WYCPS). This is done on grade, within the grade-level standards. As students complete the test, a real-time feedback loop dynamically selects each question based on their performance on previous items—serving more challenging questions after correct answers and less difficult questions after incorrect ones. Therefore, each student is presented with a set of items that most accurately aligns with their proficiency level based on grade-level content. This continuous cycle runs until key assessment constraints are satisfied, pinpointing each student's overall proficiency level.

What Does the Test Look Like?

Visit wyoassessment.org to experience a training or practice test. The training and practice test are not aligned to Wyoming standards so should be used only to practice different item types and using the various testing tools.

When Are WY-TOPP Results Available?

The results from Interim assessments are available immediately in the assessment reporting platform. Summative assessment results can take up to ten business days to appear in the reporting platform.

Administration Questions

How is the Assessment Delivered?

The WY-TOPP assessments are online. Both paper exams and print-on-demand options are available, provided the specific paper accommodation is documented in the student's IEP.

Test Administration Dates

ASSESSMENT	DATE(S)	GRADE	SUBJECTS	MANDATORY
Fall Interims	Begins on the second Tuesday in September and lasts three weeks.	Gr. 3-10	ELA, Math, & Science	No
Winter Interims	Begins on the second Tuesday in January and lasts three weeks.	Gr. 3-10	ELA, Math, & Science	No
Summatives	A five-week window, ending on the Friday prior to Memorial Day.	Gr. 3-10	ELA & Math: Gr. 3-10 ELA + Writing: Gr. 5, 7, 9 Science: Gr. 4, 8, 10	Yes

What Tools Are Available for the Online Assessments?

A list of tools is available in the Accessibility and Accommodations Guide.

What Type of Accommodation Tools Are Available for the Online Assessments?

- Zoom (enlarge 1x, 2x, etc.).
- Language (Spanish translation and Spanish versions of formula sheets).
- ASL and Closed Captioning.
- Braille (through refreshable Braille displays and Tiger embossers; a paper option is also available).
- For a comprehensive list of available tools, supports and accommodations please see the Accessibility and Accommodations Guide.

Are There Limitations on Using Calculators During the Test?

Hand-held calculators and outside tools are prohibited unless documented in a 504, IEP, or other educational plan as outlined in the Accessibility and Accommodations Guide.

What Type of Braille Assessments Are Available?

Students who need assessments in Braille can take the ELA test in UEB contracted, UEB uncontracted, or EBAE contracted form. On the math test, they can take it in UEB Nemeth, UEB math, or EBAE Nemeth code. The summative assessments can be ordered in paper form and are available online with refreshable Braille or Tiger embosser. Braille availability will continue to be expanded in future years for the interim assessments.

Scoring and Reporting

How Are WY-TOPP Results Used?

- Results from the summative assessment are used by the state to help evaluate school performance. Student scores from the WY-TOPP summative assessment are used as school accountability measures for participation, growth, equity, and achievement. Individual student results are provided to parents, but have no direct effect on student grades.
- Results from the interim assessments are primarily used by school districts to provide an evaluative snapshot of performance. Individual student results are provided to teachers, but have no direct effect on student grades.

Is There an Option to Print Reports for Parents in Spanish?

Yes, simply indicate 'Spanish' in the report printing options.

What Are Scale Scores?

The Scale Score Proficiency-Level Ranges are based on scale and performance-level cut scores determined by standard-setting panels of educators. Cut scores are specific scores selected by educator committees that represent the overall knowledge a student showed based upon their answers to questions on the test. Educators determine the lowest score a student can have and still meet the definition of each performance level – Below-Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.. These definitions are based on the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) and the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. Educators and parents can utilize the information in the tables below, in conjunction with the scale score shown on a student score report, to gain an understanding of how the student performed on the test in relation to the content expected to be taught in their enrolled grade level. Each performance level is represented by a range of scores due to the complex nature of each content area and the varying levels of understanding that can be had by a student in that level. The WY-TOPP cut scores are not vertically scaled, meaning they are not on a common scale, from grade to grade. Careful consideration should be made when making comparisons between scores in different grade levels. Performance levels are a more accurate representation when making these between-grade comparisons.

Scale Score Proficiency-Level Ranges For Grades 3–10 English Language Arts

GRADE	BELOW BASIC	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
3	≤563	564-591	592-627	≥628
4	≤579	580-612	613-648	≥649
5	≤600	601-626	627-667	≥668
6	≤613	614-639	640-688	≥689
7	≤616	617-643	644-691	≥692
8	≤625	626-652	653-707	≥708
9	≤628	629-655	656-708	≥709
10	≤630	631-666	667-712	≥713

Scale Score Proficiency-Level Ranges For Grades 3–10 Mathematics

GRADE	BELOW BASIC	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
3	≤416	417-437	438-460	≥461
4	≤441	442-465	466-490	≥491
5	≤465	466-493	494-532	≥533
6	≤489	490-520	521-559	≥560
7	≤511	512-551	552-587	≥588
8	≤542	543-584	585-626	≥627
9	≤572	573-616	617-671	≤ 672
10	≤602	603-648	649-716	≥717

Scale Score Proficiency-Level Ranges For Grades 4, 8, 10 Science

GRADE	BELOW BASIC	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
4	≤376	377-400	401-424	≥425
8	≤776	777-803	804-828	≥829
10	≤979	980-1000	1001-1027	≥1028

How Were the Cut Scores Determined for ELA?

From July 10–12, 2018, AIR (now CAI) facilitated standard-setting workshops for grades 3–10 in English Language Arts (ELA). The 84-member panel was composed of Wyoming teachers, curriculum specialists, education administrators, and other stakeholders. The members were selected from large and small Wyoming school districts throughout the state, ensuring diverse perspectives throughout the standard-setting process.

The panelists used the Bookmark method, the most common procedure used throughout the country, and for previous Wyoming assessments. Panelists were given a booklet of items ordered by level of difficulty.

During the process, the panelists referenced the Wyoming College and Career-Readiness Standards, the Performance-Level Descriptors (PLDs), and student performance data from the 2018 WY-TOPP Summative Assessment. The panelists bookmarked items representative of minimum performance of Basic, Proficient, and Advanced performance levels. There were multiple rounds of review and resolution during the three-day workshop.

The cut scores are used to determine the four performance levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

How were the WY-TOPP cut scores determined for Mathematics and Science in 2026?

Following an audit of the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards (WYCPS) and the adoption of updated content standards in December 2023, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) updated the assessment blueprints for the spring 2026 administration. In July 2026, WDE convened standards confirmation workshops in Cheyenne, Wyoming, bringing together independent panels of six Wyoming educators per evaluated grade to evaluate whether the existing cut scores accurately distinguished student achievement under the revised blueprints. For Mathematics (Grades 4, 7, 9, and 10), educator panels utilized the standardized Bookmark method. Panelists analyzed Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) defining students who “just barely” qualify for entry into each performance level, then systematically reviewed Ordered-Item Booklets (OIBs) containing test items arranged by difficulty using Item Response Theory. After evaluating items surrounding current score thresholds, panelists cast private votes on cut score defensibility. Based on panel votes and an analysis of cross-grade vertical articulation, WDE adjusted four cut scores: lowering Grade 7 Basic (516 to 512) and Grade 10 Proficient (653 to 649), while raising Grade 9 Advanced (668 to 672) and Grade 10 Advanced (714 to 717). For Science (Grades 4 and 10), panels employed the Assertion-Mapping Procedure (AMP) to account for complex, phenomena-based item clusters. Panelists reviewed range and threshold PLDs alongside Ordered Scoring Assertion Booklets (OSABs) to judge whether student scoring assertions near existing boundaries correctly reflected performance expectations. Panelists voted almost unanimously that current cut score locations were defensible, leading WDE to maintain all existing 2022 Science performance standards without modification.

Was Student Information From Wyoming Students Used to Set Cut Scores?

Yes. Panelists reviewed student performance data from the WY-TOPP ELA and math, or science Summative administration during each round of review in the bookmarking process.

What Role Did Writing Play in How Cut Scores Were Determined?

ELA cut scores were set using the overall scaled score for each test at each grade level. Because writing was assessed in grades 3, 5, 7, and 9, ELA panelists reviewed student responses to writing prompts from the 2018 assessment to determine overall ELA cut scores for those grades. Performance-level cut scores were not set for individual reporting categories; therefore, there is no cut score for writing only.

When Viewing Summative Results, Why Are There Only Three Performance Levels for the Reporting Categories?

The cut scores are used to determine four performance levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. These cut scores were set based on the overall score, not each individual reporting category. Reporting categories are classified into three levels of achievement estimates: Below Standard, At/Near Standard, and Above Standard. Reporting categories have fewer items leading to a larger standard error of measure compared to overall scaled scores.

What Assessments use the Cut Scores Set During the Standard-Setting Workshop?

The WY-TOPP Summative and Interim assessments in grades 3–10 for ELA and math, and grades 4, 8, and 10 for science will use these cut scores. All cut scores will remain in effect until there is a change in the standards or the assessment. For example, the 2023 Wyoming Science Content and Performance Standards were assessed for the first time in Spring 2026; therefore, a standard-setting workshop was held to set the cut scores for the new science test, as outlined earlier in this document.

English Language Arts (ELA) Texts

What is the Difference Between Passages, Texts, and Stimuli?

Stimuli can come in a variety of formats, from written text to audio passages. Stimuli represent any material that students engage with in order to answer questions. On the WY-TOPP assessment, all stimuli are labeled as “passages.” For instance, “Passage 1” might be a text and “Passage 2” might be an audio passage.

What Type of Text Genres May Be Used in the WY-TOPP ELA Assessment?

WY-TOPP includes the full range of genres called for in the Wyoming ELA Content and Performance Standards, including informational texts, literary texts, historical/scientific texts, literary nonfiction texts, etc., with a greater emphasis on content-rich informational texts at the upper grades. Writing items on the ELA WY-TOPP assessment presents students with informational texts that support either an informative or an argumentative/opinion essay.

How Many Texts Will a Student Read for a Given Passage Set in the ELA and Writing Sections of the WY-TOPP Assessment?

The ELA assessment is composed of two sections, with writing embedded directly within the assessment. Students will receive between two and four unique passages across the assessment.

What Does “Text Complexity” Mean?

Text complexity refers to the extent to which a text requires critical reading and higher-order thinking skills. On the WY-TOPP assessment, text complexity is measured using both quantitative readability scores (e.g., Lexile® measures) and qualitative features, such as Levels of Meaning (i.e., Is the theme/main idea subtle or explicitly stated?), Structure (i.e., Does the plot/sequence advance chronologically or are there flashbacks/foreshadowing/shifts?), and Language (i.e., Are there simple, common words or academic, domain-specific vocabulary?).

What Are the Complexities of the Texts Within the ELA and Writing Sections of the WY-TOPP Assessment?

Texts on the WY-TOPP assessment are categorized as “low,” “medium,” and “high” complexity. The WY-TOPP passage pool currently represents a range of text complexities.

Which Qualitative Measures Are Used to Determine Appropriate Text Complexity Within the Assessment?

When evaluating qualitative features, the important categories considered are Levels of Meaning, Structure, and Language.

Which Quantitative Measures Are Used to Determine Appropriate Text Complexity Within the ELA WY-TOPP Assessment?

Lexile® is used as the quantitative measure; however, content experts also make an overall judgment about each passage based on a combination of both qualitative and quantitative features. The table below shows the general Lexile® ranges for each grade.

GRADE	LEXILE	GRADE	LEXILE	GRADE	LEXILE
Third	450 – 900	Sixth	955 – 1200	Ninth	1080 – 1400
Fourth	770 – 1050	Seventh	955 – 1200	Tenth	1080 – 1400
Fifth	770 – 1050	Eighth	955 – 1200	Eleventh	1215 - 1450

How Much Prior Knowledge Should Students Have Before Reading the WY-TOPP ELA Texts?

Prior knowledge is not required for the ELA or writing texts. So that it is fair to all students, part of the passage review includes making sure that no special background knowledge is needed to understand the text.

What is the Approximate Word Count for the ELA WY-TOPP Texts?

We use the following maximum word counts as a general guide.

GRADE	LEXILE	GRADE	LEXILE	GRADE	LEXILE
Third	650	Sixth	950	Ninth	1100
Fourth	750	Seventh	950	Tenth	1100
Fifth	750	Eighth	950	Eleventh	1100

What Are Some Possible Strategies for Preparing Students to Read Similar Texts Found in the ELA Sections of the WY-TOPP Assessment?

It would be helpful to provide students with a variety of texts to read that offer opportunities for deeper analysis and discussion and which provide details/evidence appropriate to support conclusions.