

Oregon Department of Education
Office of Teaching, Learning & Assessment
<https://www.oregon.gov/ode>

How did my child do on assessments?

Introduction:

Welcome to the Oregon Department of Education’s learning session on *How did my child do on assessments?* In this session Aaliyah and Paolo discuss:

- How student scores on statewide assessments are based on standards and sorted into different levels of performance,
- What these different levels of performance mean in terms of meeting grade-level and language proficiency expectations, and
- How these assessment performance data are used by teachers, schools, districts, and the state to help all children be successful.

Aaliyah and Paolo are ready, so let’s get going!

Paolo: Hi Aaliyah! Thanks for making time to meet with me. I really appreciate your willingness to help me understand how my daughter’s doing in school.

Aaliyah: Hi, Paolo! I’m glad you reached out to me when you got Sofia’s Individual Student Report so we could go over her performance. Did you bring the report with you?

Paolo: I did. I know that Sofia’s done pretty well in school this year, but I’m having a hard time understanding what the report means and what it tells us about her learning.

Aaliyah: Let’s talk, and we’ll make sense of things.

Paolo: That sounds great!

Aaliyah: OK, before we look at the report, let’s discuss some background information. The state administers standardized assessments in different content areas at predetermined points during the year to measure the progress students are making around academic standards.

Paolo: “Academic standards” — you mean, the knowledge and skills that students should demonstrate in each grade, right?

Aaliyah: Yes! Statewide summative assessments—given toward the end of each school year in English Language Arts and Math and in Grades 5, 8, and 11 in Science—are criterion-referenced based on academic standards. Scores on these assessments—like on the Individual Report you brought—give us information about each student’s performance. If students perform well enough to meet standards-based expectations, we call that “meeting grade-level proficiency.”

Paolo: So, how do I know whether Sofía met grade-level proficiency—that she learned everything she should have been taught?

Aaliyah: Well, let's look at that Individual Student Report, and I'll show you. See these lines with four different levels mapped out? The diamond shape with the number above it represents your daughter's Performance Level on a particular assessment.

A score in the *Level 3* or *Level 4* range means your daughter is meeting grade-level proficiency. Further down, the report describes what a student at any of the four Performance Levels knows and is able to do.

Paolo: This is making a lot more sense to me, Aaliyah.

Aaliyah: Let's talk about English Language Arts and Math because those statewide assessments are given each year. Here, you see that the report provides information about your daughter's achievement, with both an Overall Score for English Language Arts and Mathematics and then some different sub-scores.

There are four sub-scores in English Language Arts: *Reading, Writing, Listening, and Research*. For Mathematics, the three sub-scores are: *Math Concepts and Procedures, Problem Solving and Modeling & Data Analysis, and Communicating Reasoning*. If you ever see one of the lines without a score, it means she didn't complete enough assessment items for the state to make a claim about her Performance Level in that particular sub-score area.

Paolo: I see that my daughter got a 2654 for her Mathematics Overall Score. Does this mean that she got 2654 Math questions right? That must have taken forever!

Aaliyah: Oh! I can see how you might think that! Fortunately, Sofía did not have to do over 2000 Math problems on the statewide summative assessment! Results on this test are reported in what are called "scale scores."

Scale scores on Oregon's statewide summative assessment will generally be between two- and four-thousand and allow student performance to be compared across school years. Generally speaking, the higher the score, the more likely it is that the student is meeting grade-level proficiency targets.

Paolo: Wow! I see that my daughter scored in the *Level 3* range on all her Mathematics sub-tests and for all of her English Language Arts sub-tests, except in Writing, where she performed all the way up to *Level 4*! So, we should feel pretty great about these results, right?

Aaliyah: Absolutely! Sofía's report suggests that she's meeting grade-level proficiency in both English Language Arts and Mathematics, and that she's doing particularly well in Writing.

Paolo: Go Sofía! She worked really hard this year in all her classes.

Aaliyah: Speaking of other classes, assessment and score reporting works the same way in Science, which, you'll remember is administered in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

Paolo: Ahh...that's nice and consistent for all of us!

Aaliyah, I have another question. How important are these assessment results? Now that I understand how to read this report, what do I do next as a parent?

Aaliyah: Assessment results are definitely important. They indicate areas of strength and areas for improvement. Consider these results together with other information about Sofía's learning, like her performance on standards-based interim assessments she may have taken over the school year, and the ongoing formative feedback she's received from teachers and peers.

All this information gives a well-rounded picture of Sofía's learning, and sets the stage for conversations about how you can work with her teachers to help her be successful in school.

Paolo: Like the conversation we're having right now!

Aaliyah: Precisely! Paolo, you should also know that these statewide summative assessments are used by the state and school districts for other reasons.

Paolo: Really? What else are these results used for?

Aaliyah: Oregon uses statewide summative assessment to guide state policy decisions and help districts plan. For instance, the state might use the data to identify areas where more resources and support are needed. A district might use these results as part of the information they consider when analyzing the effectiveness of their curricula, identifying areas for professional development, or making decisions about where to allocate resources.

Paolo: That all makes sense to me, Aaliyah. I have one more question if you don't mind. We've talked about how my daughter performed on assessments tied to academic standards.

We have friends who recently moved here and English is not their first language. They told us that their son has been assessed for language proficiency based on some other set of standards?

Aaliyah: That's right! A few years ago, Oregon adopted new English Language Proficiency (or, ELP) standards to help students identified as English Language Learners learn and practice the language skills that are necessary for them to be successful in school and later life, sometimes called college and career readiness.

Paolo: That sounds like teachers and schools are using the ELP standards to help students learn English language skills—I bet that helps them in Language Arts, Math, and Science class, too!

Aaliyah: Exactly! The whole point of those ELP standards is to provide a framework for helping Language Learners effectively access what they're being taught across all the content areas!

Paolo: So, Aaliyah, just like assessment based on academic standards, I'm guessing that English Language Learners are also assessed in some way, which is what our friends were referring to.

Aaliyah: Paolo, you're catching on quickly! Very similar to the statewide summative tests we discussed earlier, the state uses the English Language Proficiency Assessment (or ELPA) to assess and monitor English proficiency in the domains of *Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening* and to determine whether students are ready to exit English Language Learner status.

English Language Learners' performance on the ELPA is sorted into different performance levels from *Level 1 Beginning* language proficiency up to *Level 5 Advanced* language proficiency. Once a student performs at Level 4 or higher in all four domains, they are considered for reclassification—or, exiting English Language Learner status.

Paolo: Different performance levels? That's super similar to how performance on English Language Arts, Math, and Science assessments is sorted into different levels!

Aaliyah: Sure is. Just like the other assessments we've talked about, parents can find more information about language proficiency assessment on the Oregon Department of Education's website, including the ELP standards and the descriptions of the knowledge and skills at the different levels of proficiency and the ELPA "scale scores" associated with each. This information helps parents and teachers better understand areas of strength and improvement for children working to attain English language proficiency and better access instruction.

Paolo: Thanks again for taking the time to talk to me! Understanding how my child did on assessments and how that data and information is used by schools and districts and the state is really important.

Aaliyah: My pleasure, Paolo! Remember, we're partners in your daughter's education. We need to work as a team in order to help all of our students be successful.

Conclusion:

This concludes Oregon Department of Education's session on *How did my child do on assessments?* In this session Aaliyah and Paolo discussed how parents can better understand and interpret children's performance on the different statewide assessments used here in Oregon—content area assessments in Language Arts, Math, and Science, and also in English language proficiency. We hope this information will help parents partner with teachers to support children. Please check out the other video learning sessions on assessment-related topics, including the highly-related learning session on *How do I support learning at home?*, as well as ODE's website for more helpful information. Thanks for joining!