

# NAEP 2026

## Facts for Teachers

### What is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an integral measure of academic progress across the nation and over time. It is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in various subjects, such as civics, mathematics, reading, science, and U.S. history. The program also provides valuable insights into students' educational experiences and opportunities to learn in and outside of the classroom. Elected officials, policymakers, and educators use NAEP results to develop ways to improve education.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences.

### What NAEP assessments will be administered in 2026?

The 2026 program will include

- assessments in mathematics and reading at grades 4 and 8;
- assessments in civics and U.S. history at grade 8;
- pilot testing in mathematics and reading at grades 4, 8, and 12, to help improve future NAEP assessments; and
- survey questionnaires for participating students, teachers, and principals to provide a better understanding of factors that may be related to students' learning<sup>1</sup>.

The assessments will be administered between January 26 and March 20, 2026.

National, state, and select urban district results will be released for the mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4 and 8. National results will be released for the civics and U.S. history assessments at grade 8. Results from the pilot testing will not be released but will be used to inform future assessments.



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**"As a teacher, my constant focus is to help students make progress in the classroom. NAEP helps with this mission by creating a common measure of student achievement across the country."**

— Iris Garcia, Teacher, Biscayne Elementary Community School, Miami Beach, Florida

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### What can teachers and students expect?

Participating students will complete

- assessment items in civics, mathematics, reading, or U.S. history; and, if applicable,
- survey questionnaires that provide valuable information about their educational experiences and opportunities to learn both in and outside of the classroom.

Students are given approximately 2 hours to complete the assessments unless accommodations are provided. This includes transition time, directions, and completion of survey questionnaires. A broad range of accommodations are provided for students with disabilities and English learners.

Teachers do not need to prepare their students to take the assessment, but should encourage students to do their best.

### Who will administer NAEP? What do schools need to provide on the day of the assessment?

NAEP representatives will administer the NAEP assessment and provide significant support to schools on assessment day. Schools will need to provide space for students to take the assessment, desks or tables, and an adequate number of electrical outlets in the assessment location.

- In schools where the assessment will be administered using school devices, school and/or district staff who have experience with the devices and technology used by the school may be required to be available during the testing session(s).
- In schools where the assessment will be administered using NAEP devices, NAEP representatives will bring all necessary materials and equipment to assess the students.

<sup>1</sup> There is no teacher questionnaire at grade 12. There are no teacher or school questionnaires at grade 8 for pilot assessments.

## How are schools and students selected for NAEP?

Schools were selected as part of a carefully designed sampling process that ensures NAEP-selected schools and students are representative of your district, state, and the nation.

## How is NAEP different from our state assessment?

NAEP serves a different role than state assessments. While states have their own unique assessments with different content standards, the same NAEP assessment is administered in every state, providing a common measure of student achievement.

## NAEP and Teachers

### HOW ARE TEACHERS ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN NAEP?

Schools and students selected to participate in NAEP represent schools and students across the country. Teachers make an important contribution by encouraging their students to participate and to give their best effort; this helps ensure that NAEP results provide the most accurate measure possible of student achievement across the country. To learn more about NAEP and view FAQs for teachers, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/educators/>.

### WHY ARE STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PRINCIPALS ASKED TO COMPLETE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES?

In addition to subject-area questions, students participating in NAEP are asked to complete a survey questionnaire. Results from the questionnaire help put student achievement results into context, allow for meaningful comparison between student groups, and offer important insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers to better understand students' educational experiences in the United States.

Teachers of students participating in NAEP are also asked to complete a survey questionnaire. The NAEP teacher survey questionnaire gathers information on teacher training and instructional practices. The questionnaire will be delivered via an online format, but teachers can request a paper-and-pencil version. There is no teacher questionnaire for grade 12 assessments or for grade 8 pilot assessments.

Principals or school administrators of students participating in NAEP are asked to complete a survey questionnaire that provides information about school policies and characteristics. The questionnaire will also be delivered via an online format, but a paper-and-pencil version is available upon request. There is no school questionnaire for grade 8 pilot assessments.

To learn more about NAEP survey questionnaires and view student, teacher, and school questionnaires from previous years, visit [https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/survey\\_questionnaires.aspx](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/survey_questionnaires.aspx).



### HOW CAN TEACHERS USE NAEP RESOURCES AND DATA TO HELP STUDENTS?

You can use the NAEP Questions Tool (<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nqt>) to view released NAEP items and create customized assessments for your classroom. You can compare your students' performance with their peers in your state and across the nation. Teachers, students, and parents can access information and also compare results for various demographic groups. Most released items include a scoring guide, sample student responses, and performance data.

The NAEP Data Explorer (<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore>) is a powerful tool that allows you to examine the relationships between student performance and factors like instructional practices, school resources, and more.

### HOW DO THE NAEP ONLINE DASHBOARDS HELP TEACHERS EXPLORE NAEP RESULTS AND MORE?

The Achievement Gaps Dashboard lets users explore achievement gaps that reveal significant differences in assessment scores between two groups of students (e.g., male and female students or White and Black students). You can also examine the latest national results in all the NAEP subjects and students' educational experiences by school type with the new Public, Private, and Charter Schools Dashboard.

View the Achievement Gaps Dashboard at [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/achievement\\_gaps.aspx](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/achievement_gaps.aspx).

The Public, Private, and Charter Schools Dashboard is available at [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/schools\\_dashboard.aspx](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/schools_dashboard.aspx).

### HOW LONG HAS NAEP BEEN AROUND?

NAEP was first administered in 1969 to measure student achievement nationally. In 1990, NAEP was administered at the state level for the first time. The NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program, which measures student achievement in some of the nation's large urban districts, began in 2002. The program has come to be recognized as the gold standard of large-scale assessments due to its high technical quality and rigorous design and methodology.

NAEP Results

The results of NAEP are released as The Nation’s Report Card. Depending on the assessment, NAEP results are available for the nation, states, and select urban districts that participate in TUDA. Results are also available for different student groups based on factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, school location, and more. NAEP is not designed to collect or report results for individual students, classrooms, or schools. Within a school, just some of the student population participates, and student responses are combined with those from other participating students to produce the results.

You can access data from previous assessments at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata> and explore the most recent results at <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>.

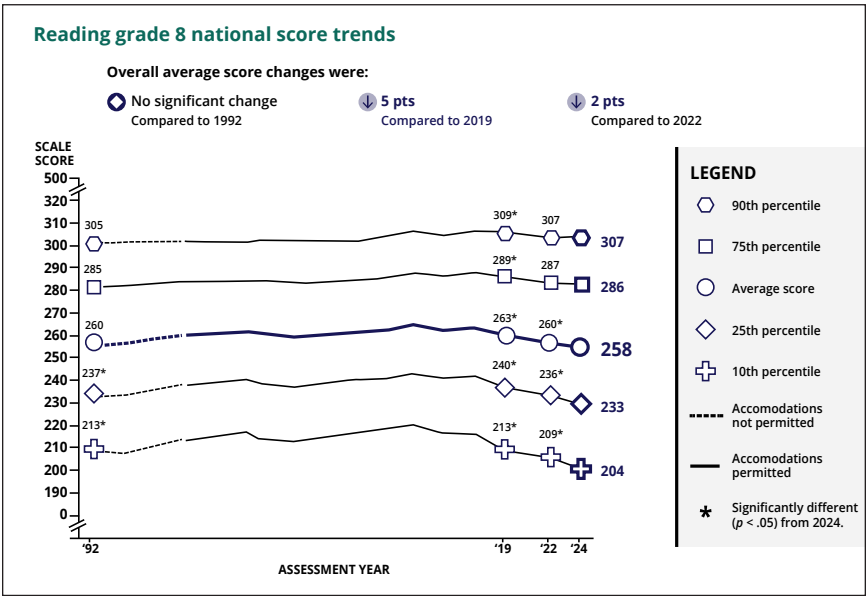
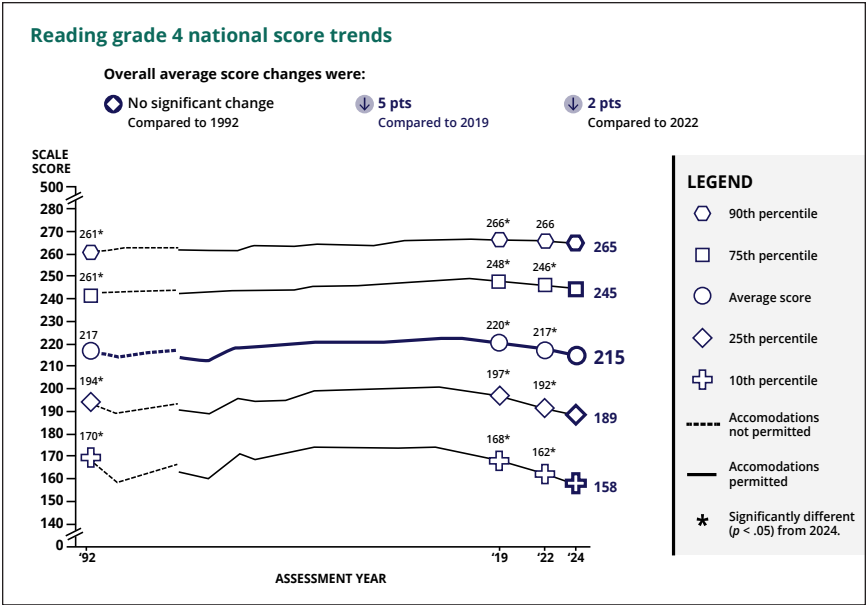
As part of main NAEP, students in grades 4 and 8 are scheduled to be assessed at the national and state levels in mathematics and reading every 2 years. Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, districts and states that receive Title I funds are required to participate in these biennial assessments. Other subjects are assessed periodically. NAEP long-term trend assessments allow the performance of today’s students to be compared with students since the early 1970s and are administered periodically to 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

RECENT NAEP RESULTS

Results from the NAEP assessments are released as they become available, following comprehensive scoring and analysis. Results from the 2024 Main NAEP results were released in January 2025. Below are highlights from the results, which are available at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

2024 NAEP READING AND MATH ASSESSMENT AT GRADES 4 AND 8

In 2024, the average reading score at both fourth and eighth grade decreased by 2 points compared to 2022. In 2024, the average fourth-grade mathematics score increased by 2 points but was still 3 points lower compared to 2019. The average eighth-grade mathematics score did not significantly change from 2022 to 2024 but the 2024 score was still 8 points lower compared to 2019.



## More About NAEP

To learn about upcoming NAEP assessments, download NAEP reports, and access sample questions, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>. Explore the latest NAEP results at <https://nationsreportcard.gov>.

Learn what NAEP means for schools that are selected to participate and get the latest NAEP news in Measure Up: NAEP News for the School Community, available online at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/schools.aspx>.

To hear teachers share their thoughts about why NAEP results are important, view the video *Introducing NAEP to Teachers* at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/participating/schools.aspx>.

To find your NAEP State Coordinator's contact information, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states> and select your state or jurisdiction from the drop-down menu.

For additional assistance, call the NAEP help desk at 800-283-6237.

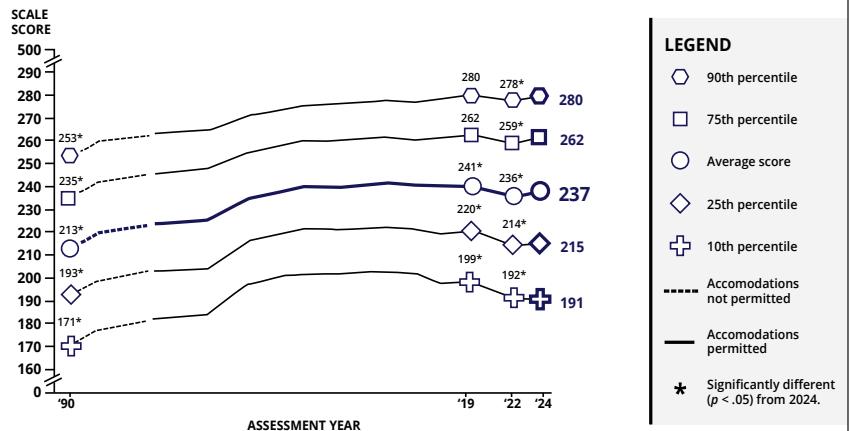
### Mathematics grade 4 national score trends

Overall average score changes were:

↑ 24 pts  
Compared to 1990

↓ 3 pts  
Compared to 2019

↑ 2 pts  
Compared to 2022



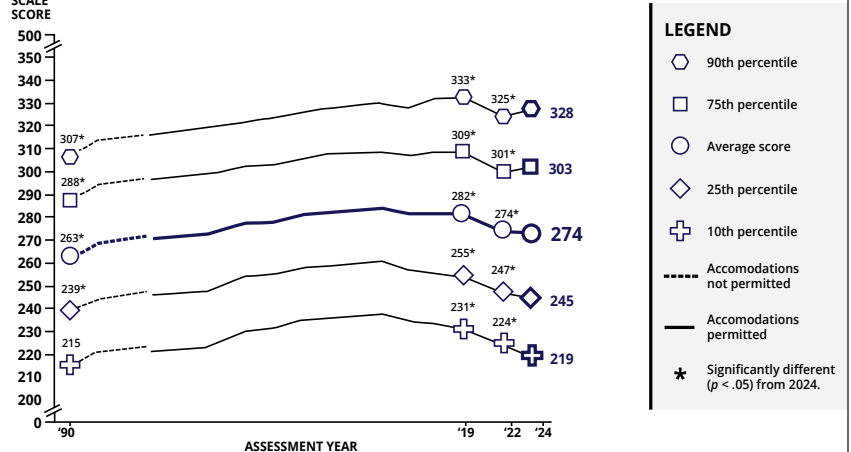
### Mathematics grade 4 national score trends

Overall average score changes were:

↑ 11 pts  
Compared to 1990

↓ 8 pts  
Compared to 2019

○ No significant change  
Compared to 2022



**“The NAEP team that arrived at our school made the assessment process painless. Everyone on the team previously worked as an educator and interacted well with all of our students.”**

—Kimberly Wilborn, Guidance Counselor, Sandburg Middle School, Fairfax County Public Schools, Alexandria, Virginia

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