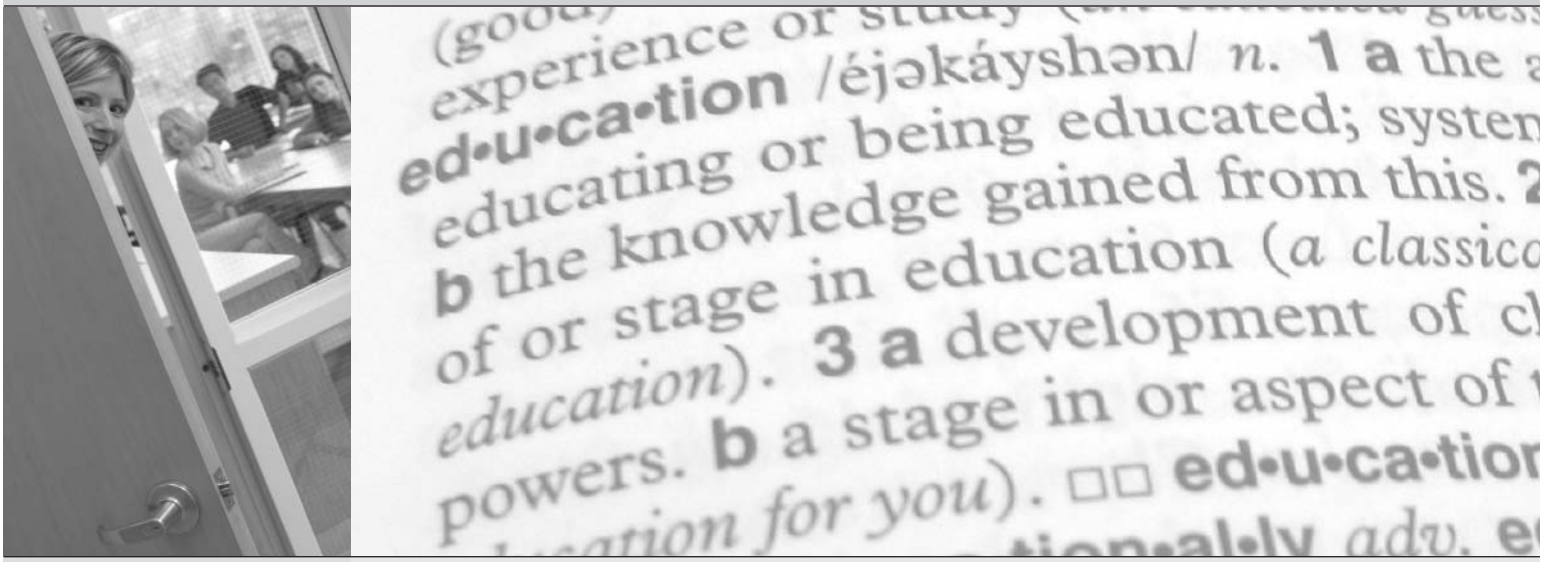
NCES
National Center for Education Statistics

The Nation's Report Card NAEP

U.S. Department of Education
National Assessment of Educational Progress

Sample Questions

General Information About The Nation's Report Card™



2006

Civics

U.S. History

Mathematics

Reading

Writing

Grade 8

National Assessment of Educational Progress

2006 Sample Questions Booklet

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About This Sample Questions Booklet

On behalf of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), I want to thank you for your participation in this essential measure of student achievement in America. NAEP tells us what students in our country know and can do. In the coming year, fourth-, eighth- and twelfth-graders will participate in NAEP. Eighth-graders will take civics and U.S. history as well as participate in field tests for mathematics, reading and writing.

Assessments require about 90 minutes of a student's time, and students only answer questions in one subject. The test booklet contains 50 minutes of test questions and a brief background section. This booklet features sample questions, selected responses, and background questions to help give you a better understanding of what the assessment is like.

NAEP is confidential. Students' answers to all questions are confidential and student names are removed from all assessment materials prior to the materials leaving the school. Individual student scores are not reported.

Results of the civics and U.S. history assessments will be released in the Nation's Report Card in the spring of 2007. They are widely discussed in the press and are used by policymakers, educators, and researchers to make decisions about education policy and funding.

If you have any questions or comments regarding NAEP or would like to view previous *Nation's Report Cards*, please visit the NAEP web site at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard. Also available through the web site is a Questions Tool (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls) which will allow you to review additional sample questions with sample answers.

Peggy G. Carr, Associate Commissioner
Education Assessment
National Center for Education Statistics

NAEP is administered by NCES, a principal component of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. Policy for the assessment, including its content and standards, is set by the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (www.nagb.org).

The Civics Assessment

The NAEP civics assessment encompasses three interrelated components: civics knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. The knowledge component of the assessment is expressed in five fundamental questions:

- What are civic life, politics, and government?
- What are the foundations of the American political system?
- How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

The NAEP civics assessment is also designed to measure the intellectual and participatory skills students need to face the challenges of public life in a constitutional democracy. Central among these are the abilities to describe, explain, and analyze information and arguments, and to evaluate, take, and defend positions on public issues. The third area of the assessment, civic dispositions and participatory skills, refers to the rights and responsibilities of citizens as members of society.

The assessment is made up of multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response questions. The constructed-response questions make up approximately 40 percent of the assessment time. For more information regarding the civics assessment framework please visit http://nagb.org.

NAEP Civics Framework Distribution of Exercise Pool Across Areas of Civic Knowledge

Grade	Civic life, politics, and government	Foundations of the American political system	The Constitution and the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy	Relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs	Roles of citizens in American democracy
8	15%	25%	25%	15%	20%

The U.S. History Assessment

The assessment is organized around three concepts or dimensions: major themes of U.S. history, chronological periods of U.S. history, and ways of knowing and thinking about U.S. history. The themes and periods of U.S. history function as a matrix, with the assessment addressing the role of the themes across the periods.

NAEP U.S. History Framework
Distribution of Question Pool Across Historical Themes

	Themes			
Grade	Change & Continuity in American Democracy	Gathering & Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, & Ideas	Economic & Technological Changes & Their Relation to Society, Ideas, & the Environment	Changing Role of America in the World
8	30%	30%	20%	20%

Eight chronological periods that overlap and vary in depth of coverage are included in the assessment:

- Beginnings to 1607;
- Colonization, settlement, and communities (1607 to 1763);
- The Revolution and the new nation (1763 to 1815);
- Expansion and reform (1801 to 1861);
- Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850 to 1877);
- The development of modern America (1865 to 1920);
- Modern America and the World Wars (1914 to 1945);
- Contemporary America (1945 to present).

Questions include multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response formats. The cognitive dimension of historical thinking is measured by the inclusion of test questions divided between those measuring historical knowledge and perspective (35%) and those measuring historical analysis and interpretation (65%). Constructed-response questions make up approximately 50% of the assessment. Many questions in the assessment are based on visual or textual stimuli. At Grade 8, a portion of the assessment questions may be organized around a single historical issue. For more information regarding the U.S. history assessment framework please visit http://nagb.org.

Civics and U.S. History
Booklet Directions

In each of the next two sections, you will have 25 minutes to answer a series of questions about history or civics. You should think carefully about your answers, and you should use the entire 25 minutes to complete each section.

You will be asked to respond to several different types of questions. Some of the questions will require you to choose the best answer and fill in the oval for that answer in your booklet.

For other questions, you will be asked to write short answers on the blank lines provided in your booklet. Here is an example of a question that requires you to provide a short answer.

Example 1

Who was Thomas Jefferson and why was he important? Try to identify two reasons.

Jefferson was the third U.S. President. He was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence and he bought the Louisiana territory from France.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Also, you will be asked to answer other questions by writing longer, more detailed responses on a full page of blank lines. For example, here is a question that requires you to provide a longer answer.

Example 2

Explain three reasons why the early English settlers of New England left home to journey to North America.

The early English settlers left home for three reasons. Many of them wanted religious freedom because the King would not let them practice their faiths. Some were looking for more land or a way to make a better living because they were poor or hadn't inherited any land. Others hoped to set up a whole new society better than the one they left behind.

When you are asked to write your response be sure that your handwriting is clear. Think carefully about each question and make your answers as complete as possible, using as many lines as you need.

Finally, in some questions you may be asked to draw maps, graphs, charts, tables, or timelines.

If you finish before time is called, be sure to read your work again and change anything that you think will make your answers better.

Sample Civics Questions

Grade 8

1. The President of the United States is elected to a term of

   Ⓐ 2 years

   ● 4 years

   Ⓒ 6 years

   Ⓓ 8 years

2. In the United States, an individual citizen has the right to

   Ⓐ Impeach the President

   ● Vote for government officials

   Ⓒ Make new laws

   Ⓓ Collect taxes

3. The term "separation of powers" refers to

   Ⓐ State powers and duties that are not given to the central government

   ● Division of authority among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government

   Ⓒ Division of the legislature into two houses

   Ⓓ Creation of a national capital that is not a part of any State

4. According to the Bill of Rights, which of the following is NOT allowed?

   Ⓐ A jury trial in criminal cases

   Ⓑ The testimony of witnesses who are relatives of the accused

   Ⓒ A trial held too soon after the defendant has been accused

   ● Cruel and unusual punishment

5. United States Senators are a part of which branch of the government?

   ● Legislative

   Ⓑ Executive

   Ⓒ Treasury Department

   Ⓓ Supreme Court

6. The powers of Congress are set forth in the

   Ⓐ Declaration of Independence

   Ⓑ Articles of Confederation

   ● Constitution of the United States

   Ⓓ Bill of Rights

Sample U.S. History Questions

Grade 8

Questions 1–3 refer to the passage below.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government.

—1776

1. The quotation is from the
   - Ⓐ Articles of Confederation
   - Ⓑ Constitution
   - ● Declaration of Independence
   - Ⓓ Missouri Compromise

2. The primary author of the document was
   - Ⓐ George Washington
   - Ⓑ John Marshall
   - Ⓒ Robert E. Lee
   - ● Thomas Jefferson

3. Explain why the document quoted was written.

   It was written because the United States wanted to be free from laws made by King AV "they" wrote it so we could be able to elect presidents and have our own rights as well. Then no one could take them away

4. Why was the invention of the steel plow important in United States history?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Questions 5–6 refer to the first census of the United States, shown below.

FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES 1790

District	Free White Males of 16 Years and Up	Free White Males Under 16 Years	Free White Females	All Other Free Persons	Slaves	Total
Vermont	22,435	22,323	40,505	255	16	85,539
New Hampshire	36,036	34,351	70,160	630	158	141,385
Maine	24,384	24,748	46,870	538	None	96,540
Massachusetts	95,453	87,289	190,582	5,463	None	378,787
Rhode Island	16,019	15,799	32,652	3,407	948	68,825
Connecticut	60,523	54,403	117,448	2,808	2,764	237,946
New York	83,700	78,122	152,320	4,654	21,324	340,120
New Jersey	45,251	41,416	83,287	2,762	11,423	184,139
Pennsylvania	110,783	106,948	206,363	6,537	3,737	434,373
Delaware	11,783	12,143	22,384	3,899	8,387	59,094
Maryland	55,915	51,339	101,395	8,043	103,036	319,723
Virginia	110,936	116,135	215,046	12,866	292,627	747,610
Kentucky	15,154	17,057	28,922	114	12,430	73,677
North Carolina	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,975	100,572	393,751
South Carolina	35,576	37,722	66,380	1,801	107,094	249,073
Georgia	13,103	14,044	25,739	393	29,264	82,548
Total Number of Inhabitants of the United States Exclusive of Other Territories	807,094	791,850	1,541,263	59,150	694,280	3,893,635

5. The information in the census could be used to answer which questions?

● Which state had the highest official population?

Ⓑ How many people moved to the United States in 1790?

Ⓒ Which state was the largest in area?

Ⓓ How many more male than female slaves were there in 1790?

6. The census was important in 1790 because it

Ⓐ helped determine which citizens were eligible to vote

Ⓑ told people which states had the most members of American Indian nations

Ⓒ told people whether men or women tended to live longer

● helped determine state representation in the House of Representatives

STOP

The Mathematics Assessment

The NAEP mathematics assessment measures students' ability to solve problems in five mathematics content strands: Number Properties and Operations; Measurement; Geometry; Data Analysis and Probability; and Algebra. Within each of these five content strands, students are asked questions that involve low, moderate, and high mathematical complexity.

The NAEP mathematics assessment includes multiple-choice questions, short-answer constructed-response questions, and extended constructed-response questions. The extended exercises allow students to communicate their ideas and demonstrate the reasoning they used to solve problems. The short-answer and extended-response questions make up approximately 50 percent of student assessment time. The assessment also incorporates the use of calculators, rulers, protractors, and ancillary materials such as spinners and geometric shapes in some parts of the assessment, but not all.

Scientific calculator use is permitted on approximately one-third of the test questions. NAEP provides calculators for all students. For more information regarding the mathematics assessment framework please visit http://nagb.org.

NAEP Mathematics Framework
Distribution of Questions Across Content Strands

	Grade 8
Number Properties and Operations	20%
Measurement	15%
Geometry	20%
Data Analysis and Probability	15%
Algebra	30%

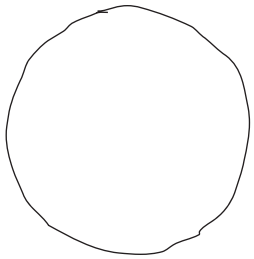
Mathematics Booklet Directions

This assessment uses many different booklets. Each booklet has different questions. Do not worry if the person next to you is working on questions that do not look like those you are working on.

Read each question carefully and answer it as well as you can. Do not spend too much time on any one question.

For some of the questions you may need to write or draw the answer. You can see how this is done in the example below.

Draw a circle in the space below.



You may be given a calculator to use for at least one part of your booklet. If you are given a calculator, you will have to decide when to use it in each section where its use is permitted. For some questions using the calculator is helpful, but for other questions the calculator may not be helpful. After each question you will be asked to indicate whether you used the calculator.

When you receive the calculator, make sure you know how to use it. There are instructions on the back cover of this booklet to help you. If the calculator does not work or if you do not know how to use it, raise your hand and ask for help.

REMEMBER:

Read each question CAREFULLY.

Fill in only ONE OVAL for each question or write your answer in the space provided.

If you change your answer, ERASE your first answer COMPLETELY.

CHECK OVER your work if you finish a section early.

Do not go past the STOP sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

STOP

Sample Mathematics Questions
Grade 8

1. Of the following, which is the best unit to use when measuring the growth of a plant every other day during a 2-week period?

- ● Centimeter
- Ⓑ Meter
- Ⓒ Kilometer
- Ⓓ Foot
- Ⓔ Yard

---

2. Jaime knows the following facts about points *A*, *B*, and *C*.

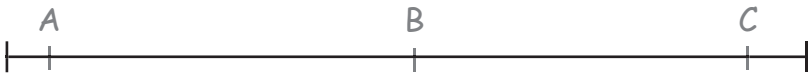
- Points *A*, *B*, and *C* are on the same line, but might not be in that order.
- Point *C* is twice as far from point *A* as it is from point *B*.

Jaime concluded that point *C* is always between points *A* and *B*.

Is Jaime's conclusion correct?

○ Yes ● No

In the space provided, use a diagram to explain your answer.



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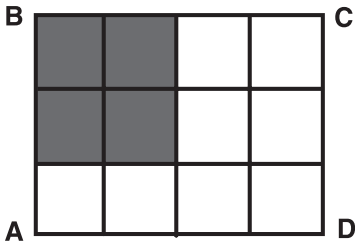


3. In the figure above, what fraction of rectangle ABCD is shaded?

Ⓐ $\frac{1}{6}$

Ⓑ $\frac{1}{5}$

Ⓒ $\frac{1}{4}$

● $\frac{1}{3}$

Ⓔ $\frac{1}{2}$

STOP

The Reading Assessment

The NAEP reading assessment measures students' ability to understand, to interpret, and to think critically about different types of texts. Recognizing that readers vary their approach according to the demands of different types of text, the NAEP framework specifies the assessment of reading in three contexts: reading for literary experience, reading to gain information, and reading to perform a task. (Reading to perform a task is not assessed at Grade 8.) The assessment comprises reading materials selected from publications and other resources typically available to students in and out of school.

Across the three contexts for reading, students are asked to demonstrate their understanding by responding to comprehension questions that reflect four different approaches to understanding text. The NAEP framework accounts for these different approaches by specifying four aspects of reading that represent the types of comprehension questions asked of students. Forming a general understanding questions ask students to consider the text as a whole. Developing an interpretation questions ask students to discern connections and relationships within the text. Making reader/text connections questions ask students to connect information from the text with prior knowledge and experience. Examining content and structure questions ask students to critically evaluate the content, organization, and form of the text. All four aspects of reading are assessed at all three grades within the contexts for reading described above.

The NAEP reading assessment contains multiple-choice questions, as well as short and extended constructed-response questions. Students spend approximately 50 to 60 percent of their assessment time providing written answers to constructed-response questions. For more information regarding the reading assessment framework please visit http://nagb.org.

NAEP Reading Framework
Distribution of Question Pool Across Contexts

	Grade 8
Reading for Literary Experience	40%
Reading to Gain Informative	40%
Reading to Perform a Task	20%

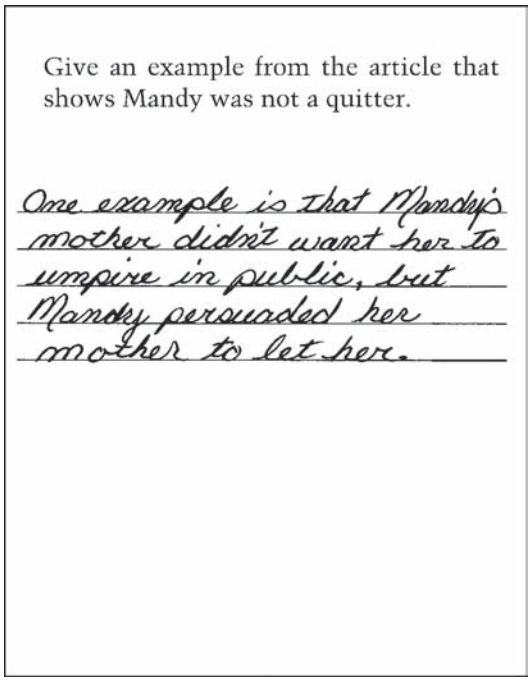
Reading Booklet Directions

In each of the next two sections, you will have 25 minutes to read a story, an article, or a document and answer questions about it. You should think carefully about your answers, and you should use the entire 25 minutes to complete each section.

You will be asked to respond to three different types of questions. Some of the questions will require you to choose the best answer and fill in the oval for that answer in your booklet.

For other questions, you will be asked to write short answers on the blank lines provided in your booklet. Here is an example of a question that requires you to provide a short answer.

Example 1


Give an example from the article that shows Mandy was not a quitter.

One example is that Mandy's mother didn't want her to umpire in public, but Mandy persuaded her mother to let her.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Also, you may be asked to answer other questions by writing longer, more detailed responses on a full page of blank lines. For example, here is a question that requires you to provide a longer answer.

Example 2

Explain how Mandy's mother and brother helped Mandy to become the first woman umpire.

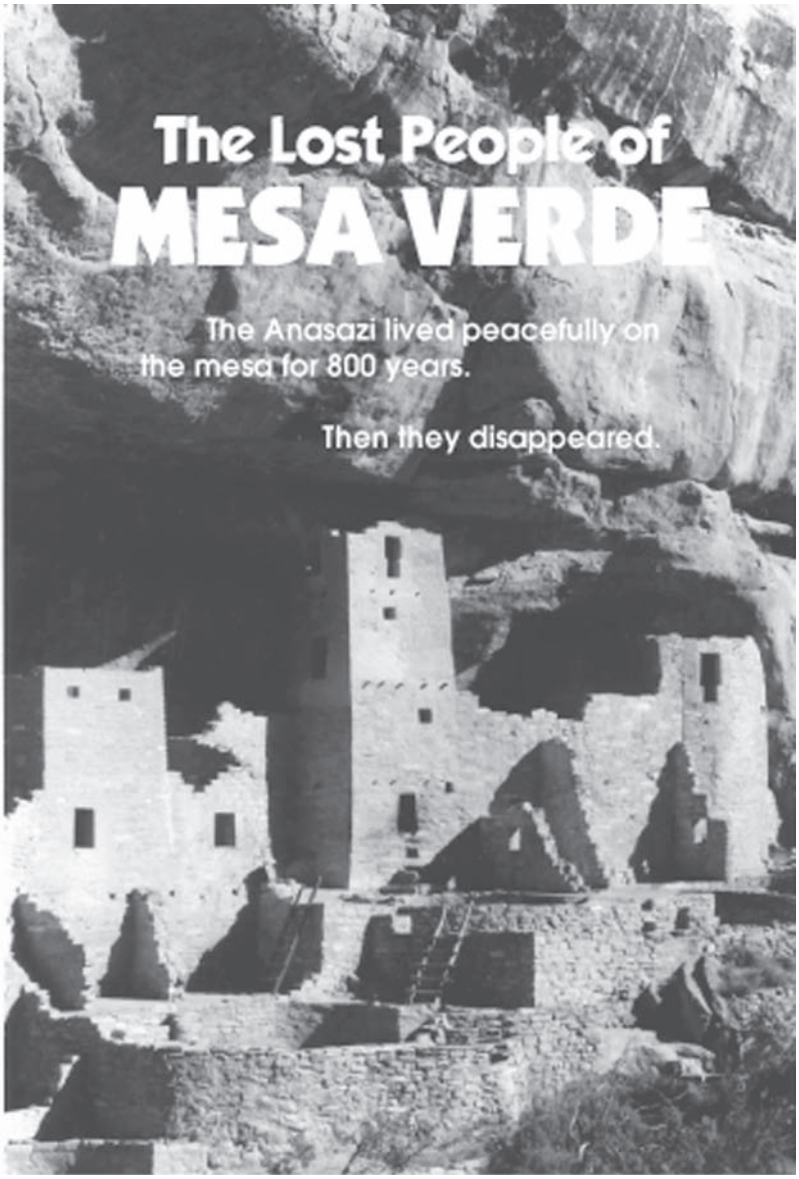
Mandy's mother helped her by agreeing to let her umpire at a public ball game. Mandy did so well that the team offered her a job as umpire. Mandy's brother helped her by letting her play baseball with him. He also helped Mandy to persuade their mother to let her play in public.

When you are asked to write your response be sure that your handwriting is clear. Think carefully about each question and make your answers as complete as possible, using as many lines as you need.

You may go back to the story, article, or document when answering any of the questions. If you finish before time is called, be sure to read your work again and change anything that you think will make your answers better.

STOP

Sample Reading Questions
Grade 8



By Elsa Marston The Image Bank

In the dry land of southwestern Colorado a beautiful plateau rises. It has so many trees that early Spanish explorers called it Mesa Verde, which means "green table." For about eight hundred years Native Americans called the Anasazi lived on this mesa. And then they left. Ever since the cliff houses were first discovered a hundred years ago, scientists and historians have wondered why.

Anasazi is a Navajo word meaning "the ancient ones." When they first settled there, around 500 A. D., the Anasazi lived in alcoves in the walls of the high canyons. Later they moved to the level land on top, where they built houses of stone and mud mortar. As time passed, they constructed more elaborate houses, like apartment buildings, with several families living close together.

The Anasazi made beautiful pottery, turquoise jewelry, fine sashes of woven hair, and baskets woven tightly enough to hold water. They lived by hunting and by growing corn and squash. Their way of life went on peacefully for several hundred years.

Then around 1200 A.D. something strange happened, for which the reasons are not quite clear. Most of the people moved from the level plateau back down into alcoves in the cliffs. The move must have made their

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

lives difficult because they had to climb back up to the plateau to do the farming. But it seems the Anasazi planned to stay in the canyon walls, for they soon filled the alcoves with amazing cliff dwellings. "Cliff Palace," the most famous of these, had more than two hundred rooms.

For all the hard work that went into building these new homes, the Anasazi did not live in them long. By 1300 A.D. the cliff dwellings were empty. Mesa Verde was deserted and remained a ghost country for almost six hundred years. Were the people driven out of their homes by enemies? No sign of attack or fighting, or even the presence of other tribes, has been found.

Archaeologists who have studied the place now believe there are other reasons. Mesa Verde, the beautiful green table, was no longer a good place to live. For one thing, in the second half of the thirteenth century there were long periods of cold, and very little rain fell—or else it came at the wrong time of year. Scientists know this from examining the wood used in the cliff dwellings. The growth rings in trees show good and bad growing seasons. But the people had survived drought and bad weather before, so there must have been another reason.

The sturdy baskets, woven sandals, and beautiful pottery left behind by the Anasazi may be 1,000 years old.

Bureau of Land Management -Anasazi Heritage Center Collections

As the population grew, more land on the mesa top had to be farmed in order to feed the people. That meant that trees had to be cut to clear the land and also to use for houses and fuel. Without the forests, the rain began to wash away the mesa top.

How do we know about erosion problems that happened about eight hundred years ago? The Anasazi built many low dams across the smaller valleys on the mesa to slow down rain runoff. Even so, good soil washed away, and the people could no longer raise enough food. As the forests dwindled, the animals, already over-hunted, left the mesa for mountainous areas with more trees.

And as the mesa "wore out," so did the people. It appears that the Anasazi were not healthy. Scientists can learn a lot about ancient people's health by studying the bones and teeth found in burials. The mesa dwellers had arthritis, and their teeth were worn down by the grit in corn meal, a main part of their diet.

As food became scarce, people grew weaker. Not many lived

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

beyond their twenties. Women died very young, and few babies survived. Living so close together in the cliff houses, where everyone was hungry and worried, the people must have suffered from emotional strain. They probably quarreled often.

In the end the Anasazi must have given up hope that things would get better. Families packed up and went away. Of course, the "ancient ones" did not simply disappear. They moved south-east to another area and mingled with other peoples. After a while their heritage as the people of the Mesa Verde was forgotten.

In time the trees grew back and the plateau became green once more. But, for the Anasazi it was too late. Although they respected nature and tried to farm wisely, land that was used too hard could not support them forever.

Yet in their cliff houses and crafts the "ancient ones" left us a superb monument. It is truly one of the most fascinating pictures of America's past.

WO000822

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WO000823

1. After reading this article, what do you think is the most important information about the Anasazi?

Their ways of life went on peascfully for several hundreds of years.

(Misspelling and grammar reflect actual student response.)

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WO000824

2. The three moves made by the Anasazi are listed below. Explain the possible reasons that were suggested in the article for each move.

500-1200 A.D. - The Anasazi moved from the alcoves to the top of Mesa Verde.

1200 A.D. - The Anasazi moved back down into the alcoves in the cliffs.

1300 A.D. - The Anasazi left Mesa Verde.

WO000826

3. If you had lived with the Anasazi at Mesa Verde, would you have preferred living on the top of the mesa or in the cliff houses built into the alcoves? Explain your preference by using information from the article.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

WO000827

4. If you could talk to the author of this article, what is one question you could ask her about the Anasazi that is not already answered in the article? Explain why you would want to know this information.

WO000828

5. Which idea from the text about the Anasazi do the photographs support?

- They were able to create many useful objects.
- (B) Farming was probably their major source of food.
- (C) Wood seems to have been their primary building material.
- (D) Their life became much easier when they moved into the cliff dwellings.

WO000829

6. Imagine that you are living with the people of Mesa Verde during the 1200's when they left the mesa. Some of your friends and neighbors do not want to leave the area. Based on information in the article, what would you tell these people to convince them to leave?

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WO000831

7. The Anasazi's life before 1200 A.D. was portrayed by the author as being

Ⓐ dangerous and warlike

Ⓑ busy and exciting

Ⓒ difficult and dreary

● productive and peaceful

VB000833

8. The title and photograph on the first page of the article are probably meant to make the disappearance of the Anasazi seem to be

Ⓐ a personal tragedy

Ⓑ a terrible mistake

● an unsolved mystery

Ⓓ an important political event

WO000832

9. Some people say that the Anasazi's success as a civilization may have actually caused their own decline. Using information in the article, explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

STOP

The Writing Assessment

The NAEP writing assessment measures three purposes of writing: narrative, informative, and persuasive. The narrative tasks comprise first-person and third-person fictional stories. The informative tasks comprise description, explanation, and analysis. The persuasive tasks comprise writing to convince, writing to construct an argument, and writing to refute a position.

Across the three purposes for writing, students are asked to respond in a variety of forms. These forms include essays, letters, reports, stories, and articles. Some tasks require students to write for a specified audience; for example, to a teacher, to a committee, or to a friend. Writing tasks in the 2006 assessment incorporate an array of stimulus materials, such as color photographs, comic strips, newspaper articles, and poems.

Each student participating in the assessment will receive one test booklet. At grade 8, students will receive two 25-minute writing tasks. All booklets contain a Planning Page, thus providing students with the opportunity to make notes and organize their ideas. In addition, all participating students are provided with a writing strategies brochure to remind them of various ways to plan and review their writing. For more information regarding the writing assessment framework please visit http://nagb.org.

NAEP Writing Framework Distribution of Time to Be Spent on Tasks for Each Writing Purpose

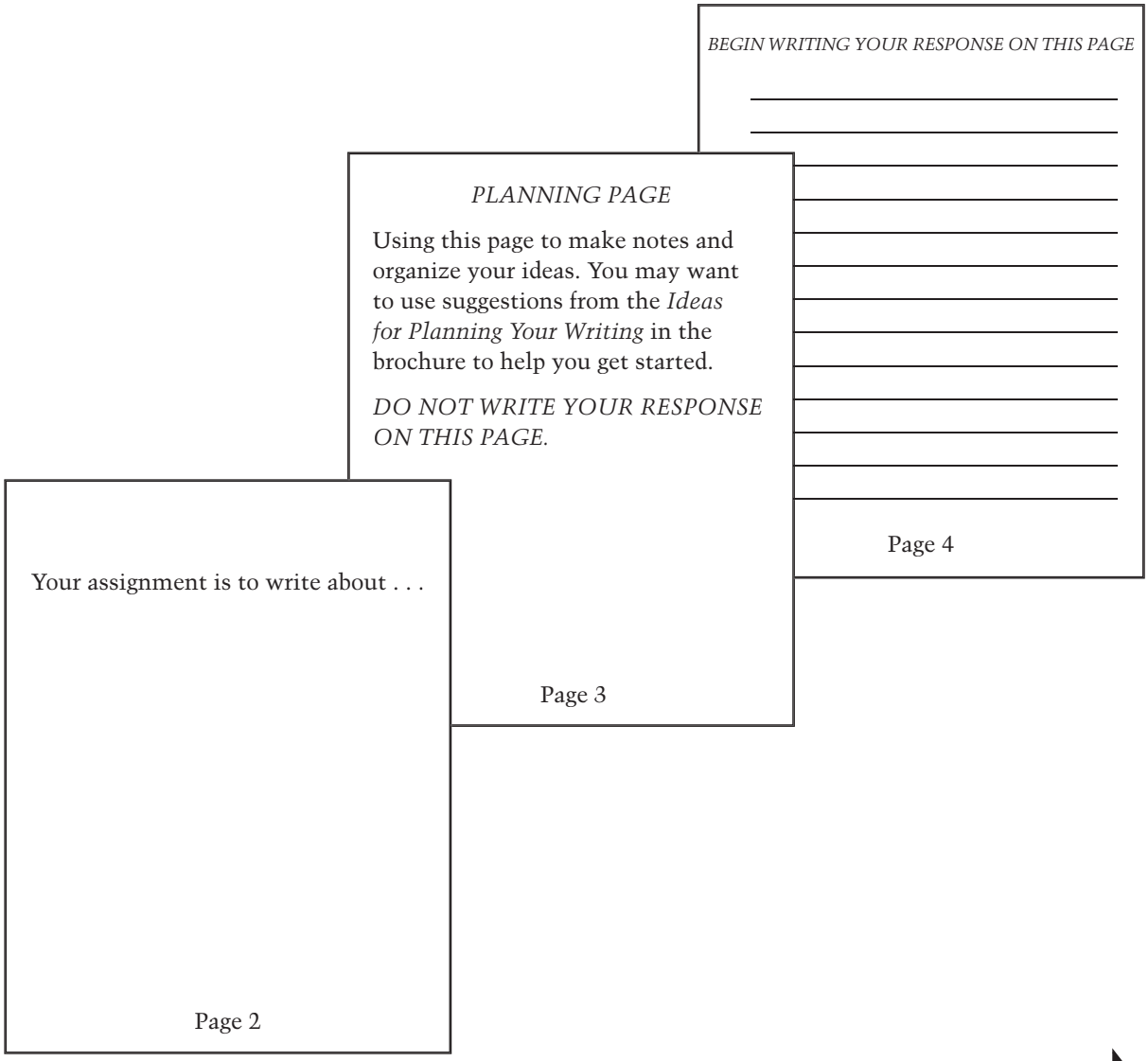
	Grade 8
Narrative	33%
Informative	33%
Persuasive	33%

Writing Booklet Directions

Sections 1 and 2 each contain one writing assignment. You will have 25 minutes to complete each assignment.

In each section, read the page that tells you your writing assignment. Then go on to the planning page where you can make notes and plan what to write. Do not write your paper on the planning page. After the planning page, there are lined pages where you should write your paper.

The following example shows what these pages look like.



GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Remember to start writing your papers on the lined pages that begin on page 4 of each section that has a writing assignment.

For each assignment, you will probably need all of the 25 minutes to plan and write. Use as many lined pages as you need to write your paper. You may want to use ideas from the brochure you have been given to help you plan and review your paper.

If you finish before time is called, read your paper again and make any changes that you think will make it better.

Do not go past the STOP sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

STOP

Grade 8 Sample Writing Prompts

Writing Prompt 1 (with sample response)
Informative: Save a Book

For *Save a Book,* students were asked to explain what book they would save by memorization if they lived in a society where reading was not allowed. Since any book could be chosen, a wide range of responses was acceptable. In this booklet we provide a sample of an "Excellent" response.

> A novel written in the 1950's describes a world where people are not allowed to read books. A small group of people who want to save books memorize them, so that the books won't be forgotten. For example, an old man who has memorized the novel *The Call of the Wild* helps a young boy memorize it by reciting the story to him. In this way, the book is saved for the future.
>
> If you were told that you could save just one book for future generations, which book would you choose?
>
> Write an essay in which you discuss which book you would choose to save for future generations and what it is about the book that makes it important to save. Be sure to discuss in detail why the book is important to you and why it would be important to future generations

Sample "Excellent" Response

"Excellent" responses provided well-chosen details and exhibited sentence variety and precise word choices across the response. In the sample response below, consistently well-chosen detail is provided to support his or her views about *The Giver.* The response is very well organized, with strong transitions. The student's choice of words and comfort with varied sentence structure add power to his or her insights about the importance of books and reading. The "Excellent" rating was given to 4 percent of the responses to this task.

Sample "Excellent" Response

If I could only save one book, I would save The Giver by Lois Lowry. The Giver is one of my favorite books. I think it would benefit future generations, because it shows human faults, gives hope, and it models the "real-life" situation.

The Giver is about a very secluded community of people. The goverment chooses spouses, children, jobs, and determines every course of everyone's lives, except for the Receiver of Memory. He or she alone has all the knowledge of the past. The Receiver can see in color, feels true pain, recognizes animals, he or she holds the world's history in his or her mind. The people of old had chosen to give up color, weather, choosing. Everything was a state of "sameness." Everyone believes everything the government says, everyone follows the rules. This shows how gullible and dependent the human race truly is. To lead an entire community by the nose for countless generations is

Sample "Excellent" Response (Continued)

amazing, and the people themselves had chosen their fate.

Even though this book tells of a very deprived community it does give hope. Jonas, the protagonist, and Gabriel, his adoptive brother, run away from this community. After many days of running from the searching of the community. Jonas hears something. He hears music. Singing and music were not allowed in the community. When Jonus hears the singing he remembers a memory he had received. It was a memory of love. The book closes with Jonas riding towards the new community he sees radiating love.

This book is also very similar to the situation presented. Although there are books, they are not read. Reading for pleasure is simply not done. Books open passages for people. They shed light

Sample "Excellent" Response (Continued)

on different countries, culture, ideas, and much more. Jonas's community is so sheltered None of the ordinary citizens can remember a time of choosing of differentness. Everything is the same for everyone. If these people had had books, then they would have known what they were missing. They Could have felt true emotions and really lived the life they were Given.

The Giver is an outstanding book. It has morals, a story, and is very realistic. If I could I would save The Giver.

Writing Prompt 2
Persuasive: Music Labels

Recently, the music industry started to put rating labels on record albums, compact discs, and tapes. These labels describe the content and language of the music. A local committee is considering a rating label law that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy recordings with negative ratings.

Write a letter to the committee telling whether or not you think that negative rating labels should be used to restrict teenagers from buying certain music. Give specific reasons to support your opinion.

Student Background Questionnaire

General Directions for Grade 8

In the next two sections, you will be asked questions about yourself and your education. The choices for some questions will be written across the page as shown. Fill in the oval for the best answer.

Example 1

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
1. How often do you watch movies on TV?	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

You should have filled in the oval below the answer that best tells how often you watch movies on TV.

The choices for some questions will be written down the page as shown. Now read Example 2 and indicate your answer.

Example 2

2. Which event would you prefer to attend?

Ⓐ basketball game

Ⓑ car show

Ⓒ concert

Ⓓ play

Make your answer mark clear and dark in the oval. If you make a mistake or want to change your answer, be sure to completely erase any unwanted marks.

Do not go past the STOP sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

If you finish before time is called, go back and check your work on that section only. Use your time carefully. Do as much as you can in each section.

STOP

Student Background Questionnaire

In this section, please tell us about yourself and your family. The section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet.

VB331330

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Fill in **one or more ovals.**

   Ⓐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino.

   Ⓑ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano.

   Ⓒ Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American.

   Ⓓ Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American.

   Ⓔ Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background.

VB331331

2. Which of the following best describes you? Fill in **one or more ovals.**

   Ⓐ White

   Ⓑ Black or African American

   Ⓒ Asian

   Ⓓ American Indian or Alaska Native

   Ⓔ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

For the rest of the questions in this section, fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB331333

3. Does your family get a newspaper at least four times a week?

Ⓐ Yes

Ⓑ No

Ⓒ I don't know.

VB331334

4. Does your family get any magazines regularly?

Ⓐ Yes

Ⓑ No

Ⓒ I don't know.

VB331335

5. About how many books are there in your home?

Ⓐ Few (0–10)

Ⓑ Enough to fill one shelf (11–25)

Ⓒ Enough to fill one bookcase (26–100)

Ⓓ Enough to fill several bookcases (more than 100)

VB331336

6. Is there a computer at home that you use?

Ⓐ Yes

Ⓑ No

VB331337

7. Is there an encyclopedia in your home? It could be a set of books, or it could be on the computer.

Ⓐ Yes

Ⓑ No

Ⓒ I don't know.

TB001101

8. About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?

Ⓐ 5 or fewer

Ⓑ 6–10

Ⓒ 11–15

Ⓓ 16–20

Ⓔ More than 20

VB331339

9. How often do you talk about things you have studied in school with someone in your family?

Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

Ⓑ Once every few weeks

Ⓒ About once a week

Ⓓ Two or three times a week

Ⓔ Every day

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB331447

10. How many days were you absent from school in the last month?

Ⓐ None

Ⓑ 1 or 2 days

Ⓒ 3 or 4 days

Ⓓ 5 to 10 days

Ⓔ More than 10 days

VB330870

11. How far in school did your mother go?

Ⓐ She did not finish high school.

Ⓑ She graduated from high school.

Ⓒ She had some education after high school.

Ⓓ She graduated from college.

Ⓔ I don't know.

VB330871

12. How far in school did your father go?

Ⓐ He did not finish high school.

Ⓑ He graduated from high school.

Ⓒ He had some education after high school.

Ⓓ He graduated from college.

Ⓔ I don't know.

VB331451

13. How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Once in a while

Ⓒ About half of the time

Ⓓ All or most of the time

Student Background Questionnaire

Civics—Grade 8

This section has 9 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB594977

1. How often do you study social studies in school?

   Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

   Ⓑ Once or twice a month

   Ⓒ Once or twice a week

   Ⓓ Almost every day

ID100216

2. During this school year, have you studied any of the following topics? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. The United States Constitution	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. Congress	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. The President and the cabinet	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
d. How laws are made	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
e. The court system	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
f. Political parties, elections, and voting	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
g. State and local government	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
h. Other countries' governments	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
i. International organizations (such as the United Nations)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

ID100201

3. Do you do any of the following when you study social studies? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. Read from your textbook	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. Memorize material you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. Read extra material not in your textbook (such as newspapers, magazines, maps, charts, or cartoons)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
d. Fill out worksheets	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
e. Write reports	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
f. Discuss current events	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
g. Watch television shows, videos, or filmstrips in class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
h. Discuss television shows, videos, or filmstrips	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
i. Take part in debates or panel discussions	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
j. Take part in role-playing, mock trials, or dramas	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
k. Write a letter to give your opinion or help solve a community problem	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
l. Have visits from people in your community to learn about important events and ideas	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

VB594978

4. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments that involved social studies?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Once or twice this year

Ⓒ Once or twice a month

Ⓓ At least once a week

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VB594979

5. How often do you use computers at school for social studies?

Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

Ⓑ Once every few weeks

Ⓒ About once a week

Ⓓ Two or three times a week

Ⓔ Every day

VB594981

6. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.

Ⓐ Not at all

Ⓑ Small extent

Ⓒ Moderate extent

Ⓓ Large extent

VB595182

7. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Easier than other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

Ⓒ Harder than other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

8. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

9. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

Ⓐ Not very important

Ⓑ Somewhat important

Ⓒ Important

Ⓓ Very important

Student Background Questionnaire

U.S. History—Grade 8

This section has 10 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

LC000105

1. Did you take a United States history course in the following grades? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. 6th grade	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. 7th grade	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

WP00118

2. Are you taking a United States history course now?

Ⓐ Yes

Ⓑ No

VB598171

3. Since the beginning of middle school or junior high school, how much have you studied the following periods of United States history? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Some	A lot
a. The period before 1815: beginnings through the Revolution (e.g., colonization, settlement, revolution)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. The period between 1815 and 1865: the new nation through the Civil War (e.g., expansion, reform, crisis of the Union)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. The period between 1865 and 1945: the development of modern America (e.g., Reconstruction, industrial growth, United States role in world affairs, the Great Depression, the First and Second World Wars, immigration)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
d. The period between 1945 and the present: contemporary America (e.g., civil rights movement, women's rights movement, Korean and Vietnam wars, environmental movement)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

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VB598095

4. When you study history or social studies in school, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	About every day
a. Read material from a textbook	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
b. Read extra material not in the regular textbook (e.g., biographies or historical stories)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
c. Use letters, diaries, or essays written by historical people	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
d. Discuss the material studied	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
e. Write short answers (a paragraph or less) to questions	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
f. Write a report	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
g. Work on a group project	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
h Give a report on the topic being studied	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
i. Watch movies, videos, or filmstrips	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
j. Take a test or quiz	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
k. Go on field trips or have outside speakers	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
l. Schoolwork in the library	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

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VB598168

5. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments for history or social studies?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Once or twice this year

Ⓒ Once or twice a month

Ⓓ At least once a week

VB598169

6. How often do you use computers at school for history or social studies?

Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

Ⓑ Once every few weeks

Ⓒ About once a week

Ⓓ Two or three times a week

Ⓔ Every day

VB598176

7. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about history or social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.

Ⓐ Not at all

Ⓑ Small extent

Ⓒ Moderate extent

Ⓓ Large extent

VB595182

8. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Easier than other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

Ⓒ Harder than other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

9. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

10. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

Ⓐ Not very important

Ⓑ Somewhat important

Ⓒ Important

Ⓓ Very important

STOP

Student Background Questionnaire

Mathematics—Grade 8

This section has 12 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB543277

1. What math class are you taking this year?

   Ⓐ Geometry

   Ⓑ Algebra II

   Ⓒ Algebra I (one-year course)

   Ⓓ First year of a two-year Algebra I course

   Ⓔ Second year of a two-year Algebra I course

   Ⓕ Introduction to algebra or pre-algebra

   Ⓖ Basic or general eighth-grade math

   Ⓗ Integrated or sequential math

   Ⓘ Other math class

VB543278

2. What math class do you expect to take next year?

   Ⓐ Geometry

   Ⓑ Algebra II

   Ⓒ Algebra I (one-year course)

   Ⓓ First year of a two-year Algebra I course

   Ⓔ Second year of a two-year Algebra I course

   Ⓕ Introduction to algebra or pre-algebra

   Ⓖ Basic or general math

   Ⓗ Integrated or sequential math

   Ⓘ Business or consumer math

   Ⓙ Other math class

   Ⓚ I don't know

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VC084746

3. This year in school, I am in the math course that is right for me.

Ⓐ Strongly disagree

Ⓑ Disagree

Ⓒ Undecided

Ⓓ Agree

Ⓔ Strongly agree

VB525162

4. How often do you use a computer for math at school?

Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

Ⓑ Once every few weeks

Ⓒ About once a week

Ⓓ Two or three times a week

Ⓔ Every day or almost every day

VB543148

5. On a typical day, how much time do you spend doing work for math class on a computer? Include work you do in class and for homework.

Ⓐ None

Ⓑ Half an hour or less

Ⓒ About 1 hour

Ⓓ About 2 hours

Ⓔ More than 2 hours

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VB543155

6. When you are doing math for school or homework, how often do you use these **different types of computer programs**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Once every few weeks	About once a week	Two or three times a week	Every day or almost every day
a. A spreadsheet program for math class assignments	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
b. A program to practice or drill on math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
c. A program that presents new math lessons with problems to solve	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
d. The Internet to learn things for math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
e. A calculator program on the computer to solve or check problems for math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
f. A graphing program on the computer to make charts or graphs for math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
g. A statistical program to calculate patterns such as correlations or cross tabulations	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
h. A word processing program to write papers for math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
i. A drawing program to work with geometric shapes for math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

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VB517159

7. How often do you use these different types of calculators in your math class?

	Never use	Sometimes, but not often	Usually use
a. Basic four-function (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. Scientific (not graphing)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. Graphing	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

8. When you take a math test or quiz, how often do you use a calculator?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Sometimes

Ⓒ Always

HE000659

9. How much do you agree with each of the following statements? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I like math.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
b. I am good at math.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
c. I understand most of what goes on in math class.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

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VB595182

10. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Easier than other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

Ⓒ Harder than other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

11. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

12. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

Ⓐ Not very important

Ⓑ Somewhat important

Ⓒ Important

Ⓓ Very important

Student Background Questionnaire

Reading—Grade 8

This section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB345622

1. Please indicate how much you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about reading and writing. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. When I read books, I learn a lot.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Reading is one of my favorite activities.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Writing things like stories or letters is one of my favorite activities.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. Writing helps me share my ideas.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB379288

2. How often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line..

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
a. Read for fun on your own time	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Talk with your friends or family about something you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Write e-mails to your friends or family	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB345628

3. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **fiction**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Comic books or joke books	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Fiction books or stories (books or stories about imagined events)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Plays	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. Poems	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB345657

4. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **non-fiction**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Biographies or autobiographies	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Books about science (for example, nature, animals, astronomy)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Books about technology (for example, machines, computers)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. Books about other countries	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
e. Books about history	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
f. Other non-fiction books	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB345640

5. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **articles or stories**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Articles or stories in a newspaper	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Articles or stories in a magazine	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Articles or stories on the Internet	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB345644

6. Now think about reading and writing you do for school. For your **English** class this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Have a class discussion about something that the whole class has read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Work in pairs or small groups to talk about something that you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Write in a journal about something that you have read for English class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

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VB345648

7. For your **English** class so far this year, how many times have you done each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	Once	2 or 3 times	4 or 5 times	6 or more times
a. Written a report or paper about something that you have read (for example, a book report)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
b. Made a presentation to the class about something that you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
c. Done a project about something that you have read (for example, written a play, created a web site)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

VB345652

8. Think about the classes that you are taking this year. How often do you read something that is **NOT** a textbook for each of the following classes? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week	I don't take this class
a. English class (for example, plays, fiction books)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
b. Science class (for example, science magazines, biographies of scientists)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
c. Social studies or history class (for example, books about people who lived a long time ago, real letters written a long time ago)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
d. Math class (for example, math word-games)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB345715

9. For school this year, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Once or twice this year

Ⓒ Once or twice a month

Ⓓ At least once a week

VB429520

10. When you have reading assignments in school, how often does your teacher do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
a. Ask you to explain or support your understanding of what you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Ask you to discuss different interpretations of what you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB595182

11. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Easier than other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

Ⓒ Harder than other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VC034559

12. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

13. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

Ⓐ Not very important

Ⓑ Somewhat important

Ⓒ Important

Ⓓ Very important

STOP

Student Background Questionnaire

Writing—Grade 8

This section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB345622

1. Please indicate how much you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about reading and writing. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. When I read books, I learn a lot.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Reading is one of my favorite activities.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Writing things like stories or letters is one of my favorite activities.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. Writing helps me share my ideas.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB379288

2. How often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
a. Read for fun on your own time	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Talk with your friends or family about something you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Write e-mails to your friends or family	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB345665

3. How often do you write each of the following **for school** this year? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Thoughts or observations in a log or journal	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. A simple summary of something you have read	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. A report about something that you have studied or researched	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. An essay in which you analyze or interpret something	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
e. A letter or essay in which you try to convince or persuade others to believe or do something	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
f. A story (such as a story about a personal or imagined experience)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
g. Business writing (such as a resume or letter to a company)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB378055

4. When you write a paper or report **for school** this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Sometimes	Almost always
a. Brainstorm with other students to decide what to write about	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. Organize your paper before you write (for example, make an outline, draw a chart)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. Make changes to your paper to fix mistakes and improve your paper	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
d. Work with other students in pairs or small groups to discuss and improve your paper	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

VB378060

5. When you write a paper or report **for school** this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Sometimes	Almost always
a. Use a computer from the beginning to write the paper or report (for example, use a computer to write the first draft)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. Use a computer to make changes to the paper or report (for example, spell-check, cut and paste)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. Look for information on the Internet to include in the paper or report	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB378126

6. Think about the classes that you are taking this year. How often do you write something that is **at least a paragraph in length** for each of the following classes? Include things you write such as journal writing, reports, investigations, and essays. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. English class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
b. Science class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
c. Social studies or history class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
d. Math class	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

VB345715

7. For school this year, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Once or twice this year

Ⓒ Once or twice a month

Ⓓ At least once a week

VB378054

8. When you write, how often does your teacher talk to you about what you are writing?

Ⓐ Never

Ⓑ Sometimes

Ⓒ Always

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB378131

9. When you write, how often does your teacher ask you to write more than one draft of a paper?

   Ⓐ Never

   Ⓑ Sometimes

   Ⓒ Always

VB429583

10. When your teacher grades your writing, how important is each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not very important	Moderately important	Very important
a. Your spelling, punctuation, and grammar	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
b. The way your paper is organized	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
c. The quality and creativity of your ideas	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
d. The length of your paper	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

VB595182

11. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Easier than other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

Ⓒ Harder than other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

12. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

13. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

Ⓐ Not very important

Ⓑ Somewhat important

Ⓒ Important

Ⓓ Very important

STOP

NAEP Questions Tool Tutorial

The **NAEP Questions Tool** provides educators, researchers, parents, and students with access to released questions from NAEP assessments in nearly all subject areas, dating from 1990.

The questions are presented as

- examples of what NAEP asks students in grades 4, 8, and 12;
- examples of questions that probe students' knowledge of specific content areas; and
- a way to examine student performance on a specific question by race/ethnicity, gender, and other student groupings across the nation and, for mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

NAEP has released over 1,000 questions from past assessments to the public, and will continue to release more after each assessment.

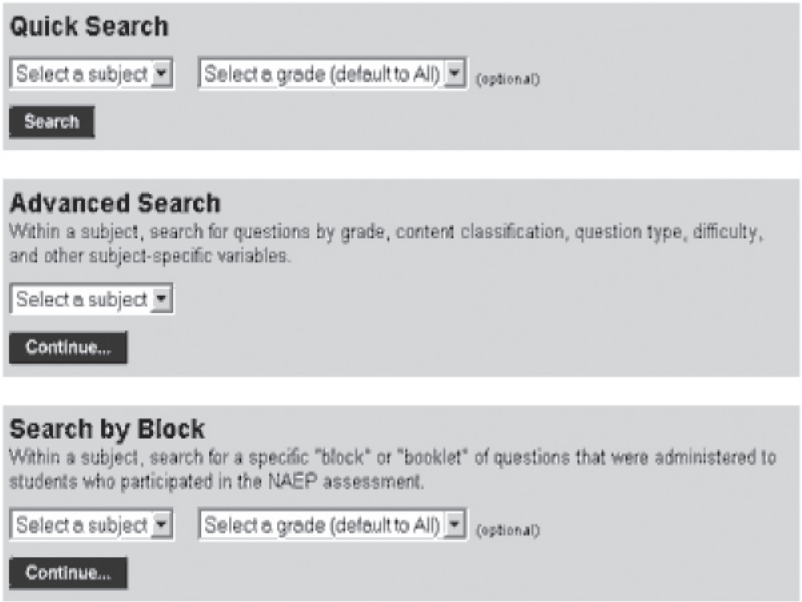
How to Access

The direct URL to NAEP Questions is http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls or click **NAEP Questions** on the Nation's Report Card home page.

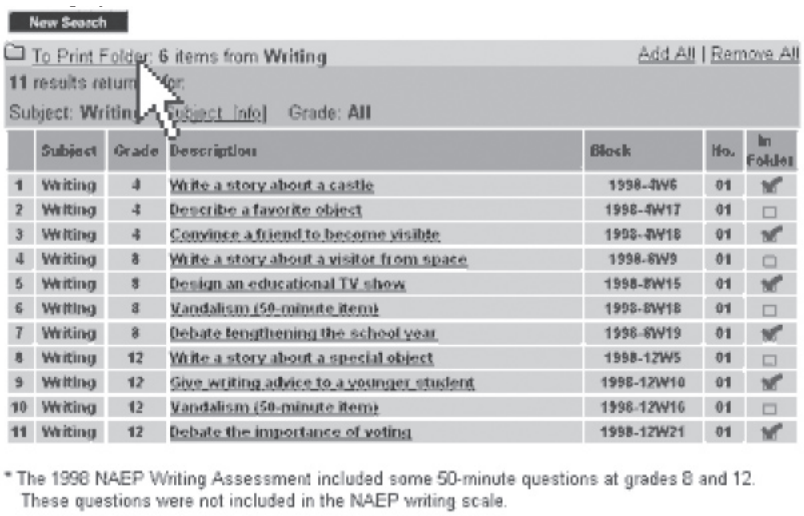
How do I search for specific questions?

1. First, click on **Search Options** on the first screen.

2. Next, select your question search option and click on **Search** or **Continue.** Note that there are several ways to search for questions.



3. Questions that match your search criteria will be listed on the next screen. You can then click on any question to view it.



Some NAEP questions are given to students at more than one grade level. These cross-grade questions are referred to as, for example, 4(8) or 8(4), where the first number refers to the focal grade—the grade level/assessment from which the question and related material was drawn—and the second number (the number in parentheses) refers to the other grade level in which the question was also given.

Three Ways to Search for Questions

There are three ways to search for questions:

- quick search,
- advanced search, or
- search by block.

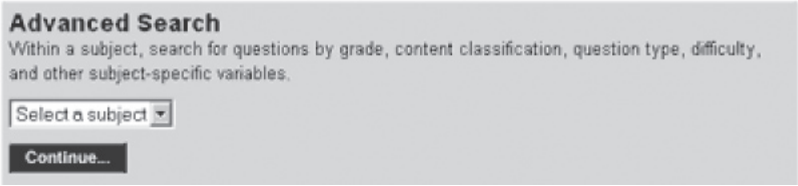
Quick Search

Select a subject and grade by using the pull-down menus.

You must choose a subject but, if you do not choose a grade, you will view questions from all grades. When you have chosen a subject or subject and grade, click on **Search**.

Advanced Search

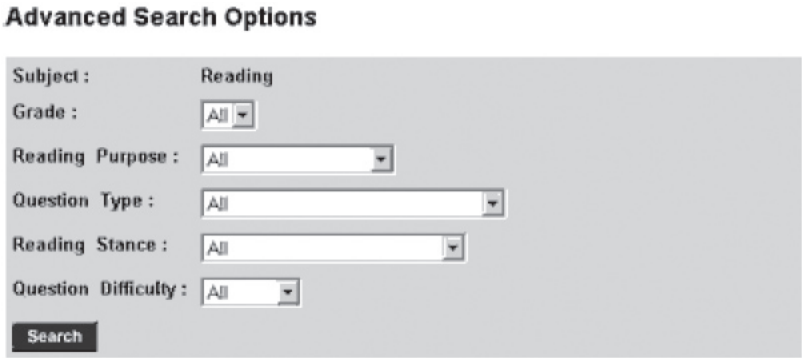
Within a subject, you can search for questions by grade, content classification, question type, difficulty, and other subject-specific variables using **Advanced Search**. First, you must choose a subject and click on **Continue**.



Next, select your advanced search criteria. Note that options will differ depending on the subjects you choose.

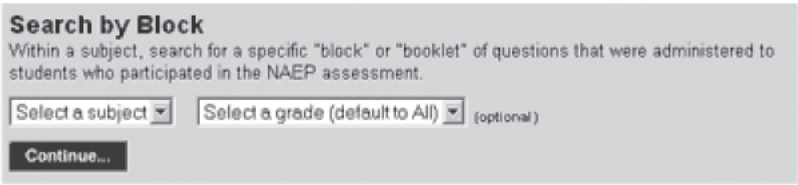
Question difficulty is determined as follows: for multiple-choice and dichotomously scored (right-wrong) items, easy questions are those with scores greater than 60 percent, medium questions are those with scores greater than or equal to 40 percent and less than 60 percent, and hard questions are those with scores less than 40 percent. For constructed-response questions, separate weights are assigned to each score category.

When you are finished, click on **Search**.



Search by Block

If you have a specific "block" of questions you want to view (a "block" refers to the group of questions administered to students in a test booklet), you may use this search feature.



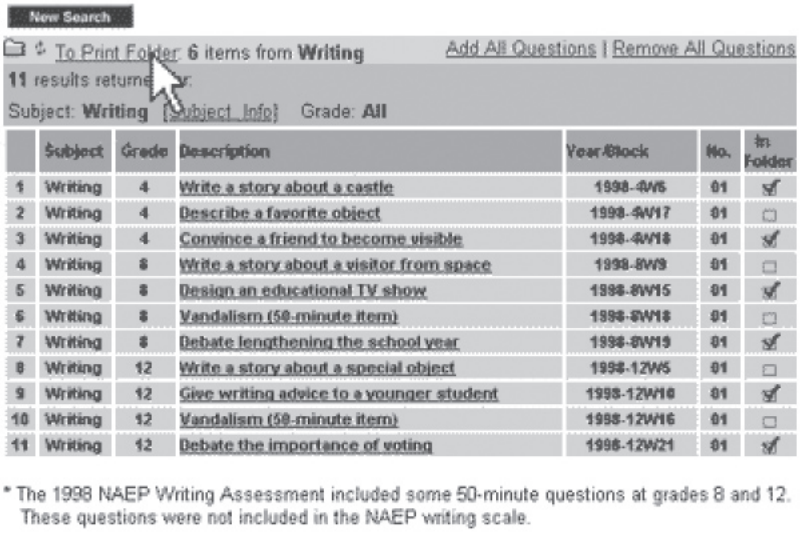
How do I print a question or group of questions?

The NAEP Questions Tool allows users to customize and print NAEP questions. After selecting and saving questions in the **Print Folder,** you can change the question order, delete questions and decide what information you wish to print along with the questions (e.g., scoring guides, content classifications).

Selecting Questions

Select questions to be added to the print document by clicking on the check boxes in the **In Folder** column on the **Search Results** screen. A red check mark appears on each selected check box.

Note: As the check boxes are marked, the number of items in the **Print Folder** is NOT updated. To update the displayed information, click on **To Print Folder** next to the Print Folder icon.



	Subject	Grade	Description	Year/Block	No.	In Folder
1	Writing	4	Write a story about a castle	1998-4W6	01	✓
2	Writing	4	Describe a favorite object	1998-4W17	01	☐
3	Writing	4	Convince a friend to become visible	1998-4W18	01	✓
4	Writing	8	Write a story about a visitor from space	1998-8W9	01	☐
5	Writing	8	Design an educational TV show	1998-8W15	01	✓
6	Writing	8	Vandalism (50-minute item)	1998-8W18	01	☐
7	Writing	8	Debate lengthening the school year	1998-8W19	01	✓
8	Writing	12	Write a story about a special object	1998-12W5	01	☐
9	Writing	12	Give writing advice to a younger student	1998-12W10	01	✓
10	Writing	12	Vandalism (50-minute item)	1998-12W16	01	☐
11	Writing	12	Debate the importance of voting	1998-12W21	01	✓

* The 1998 NAEP Writing Assessment included some 50-minute questions at grades 8 and 12. These questions were not included in the NAEP writing scale.

Adding All Questions to the Print Folder

Clicking on the **Add All Questions** link on the **Search Results** page automatically adds all the displayed questions to the Print Folder.

Removing All Questions from the Print Folder

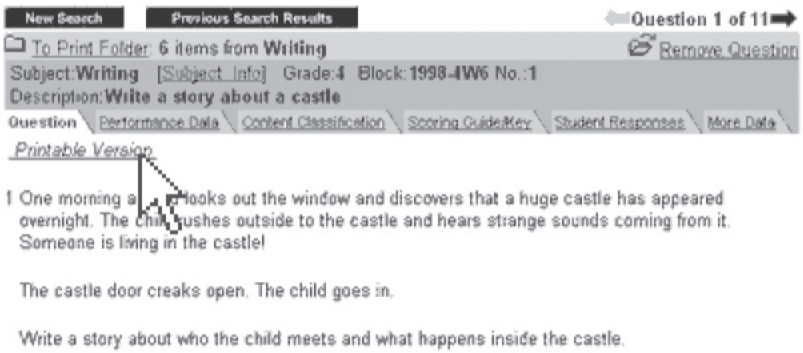
Clicking on the **Remove All Questions** link on the **Search Results** page automatically removes all selected questions from the **Print Folder**.

Printing Individual Questions Directly

Questions are displayed as links on the **Search Options** page. Clicking on a specified question (link) displays the entire question. Clicking on the **Printable Version** link takes you to a screen that has only the question and does not include the NAEP Questions Tool interface. From this page you can print using the browser's print icon.

Adding/Removing Individual Questions to/from the Print Document

You can add or remove questions you are viewing by clicking on the **Add Question/ Remove Question** icon on the upper right of the screen. As you add or remove questions, the number of questions in your print folder will be automatically updated.

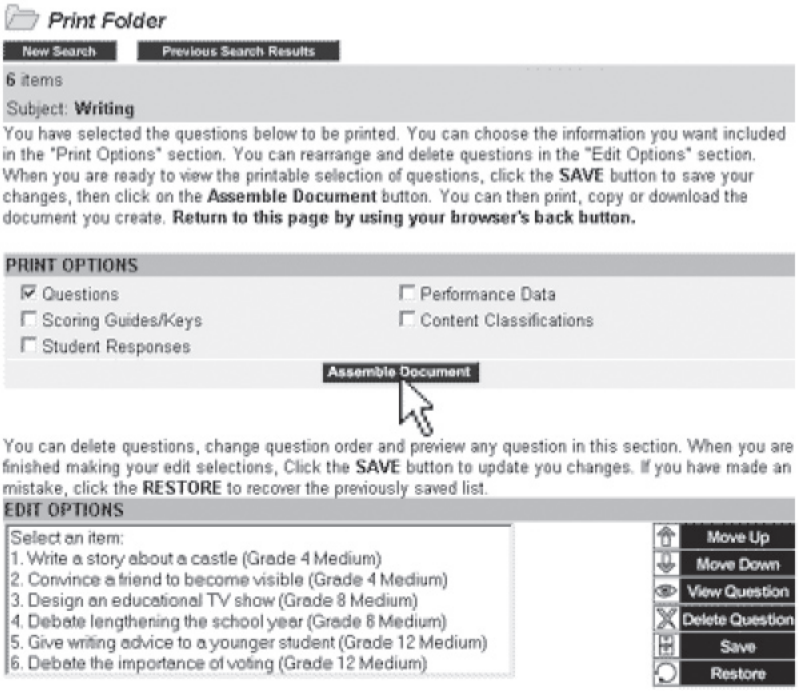


Printing from the Print Folder

The selected questions are put into the **Print Folder** as one document. Clicking on the **Print Folder** link or icon brings you to a page where you have a number of options for formatting your print document. In the Print Options area, you can select items to include with your questions in the print document (for example, scoring guides/keys, performance data or content classification information). Questions are automatically selected on this page. Once you've selected what you would like to be included in your document, you can click **Assemble Document**. Note: In the print document, underlined text represents text that has been substituted for items that were originally part of a set. For the exact wording of items that were given to students, please refer to the text as represented with the tool itself.

Editing the Print Document

The order in which questions appear can be rearranged in the **Edit** section, so that easy, medium, and hard questions are arranged in an appropriate order. For instance, a teacher might want the easier questions to appear first, followed by medium, then harder questions. A question is rearranged by selecting one question then using either the **Move Up** or **Move Down** arrows to the right to move it accordingly. The change can either be retained by clicking on **Save** or be rejected by clicking on **Restore**. You can also preview a question by clicking on the **View Question** button. A question can be deleted from your document by clicking on **Delete Question**.



Clicking on **Assemble Document** creates a printable file. From here, you can print using the browser's print icon or save to disk. You may also use copy/paste to import part or all of the print document into any HTML-aware editor.

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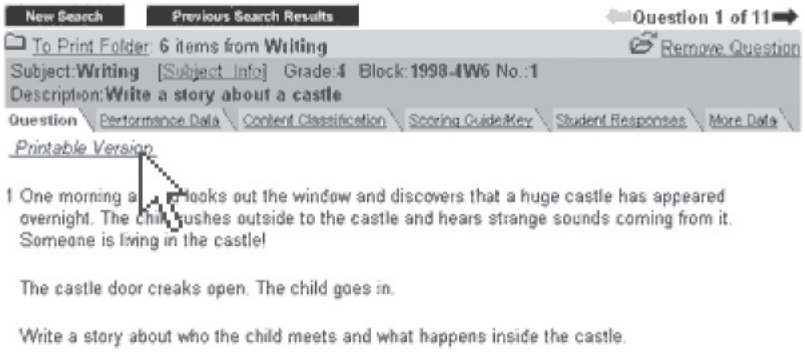
What information can I get about each question?

When you select a question to view, a screen similar to the one below will be displayed.



Information related to a selected question is available by clicking the tabs at the top of the screen. This information includes:

Question - Shows the printable version of the question. When the screen first displays, the question will display. Click on this tab to redisplay the question after another choice has been selected.

Performance Data - Shows information about how students scored on the question.

Content Classification - Shows information about how the question relates to the subject area framework. This includes a description of the content domain—what is being assessed—and the cognitive skills within that domain.

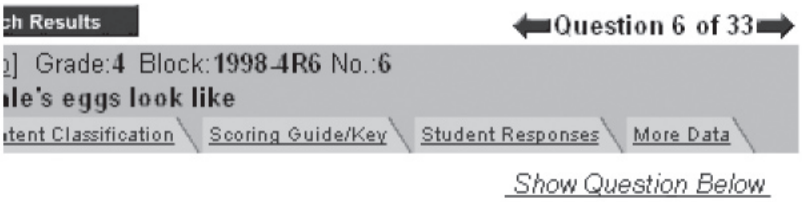
Scoring Guide/Key - Shows the scoring guide or rubric for constructed-response questions and the correct answer for multiple-choice questions.

Student Responses - Shows actual student responses to the question for each score level.

More Data - Displays additional data for each item, including how subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, parents' highest level of education, type of school, region of the country, type of location, Title I participation, National School Lunch Program and achievement level) performed on this question. Provides a link to the NAEP Data Tool, where you can search for more specific national and state NAEP data.

Question - When the screen first appears, the question will be displayed and the **Question** tab will be highlighted. When you are viewing related information other than the question itself, click on this tab to re-display the question.

Links within the question - The question and related graphics or text passages may not fit on the screen area without scrolling. To help you view the different parts of the question, we have added several links above the question on the right side of the screen.



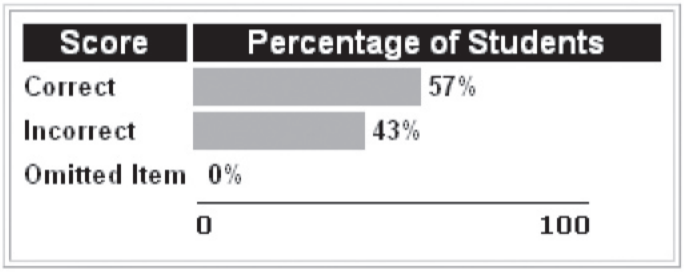
The names of the links may change depending on the type of question and the subject area.

Note that the questions have been formatted to display on the screen and may not be presented in the same way as they were to the student. You can view the questions as they were presented to the student by printing a block of questions in its PDF form.

Performance Data - Shows information about how students scored on the question.

For Multiple-Choice Questions - Shows the percentage of students who answered the question incorrectly or correctly, or who omitted the item.

1998 National Performance Results

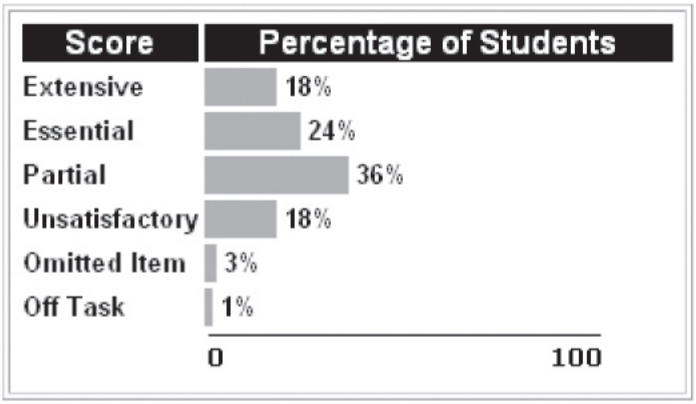


Note:

- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentage may not add to 100 due to rounding.

For Constructed-Response Questions - Shows the percentage of students who scored at each score level, or who omitted the question or were off-task.

1998 National Performance Results

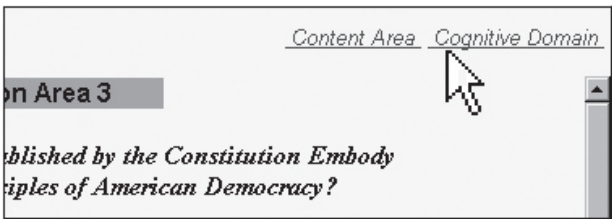


Note:

- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentage may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The scoring criteria will vary depending on the subject and type of question. Click on **Scoring Guide/Key** to see a description of the score levels used for each question.

Content Classification - Shows information about how the question relates to the subject area framework. This includes a description of the content domain—what is being assessed—and the *cognitive skills* within that domain.

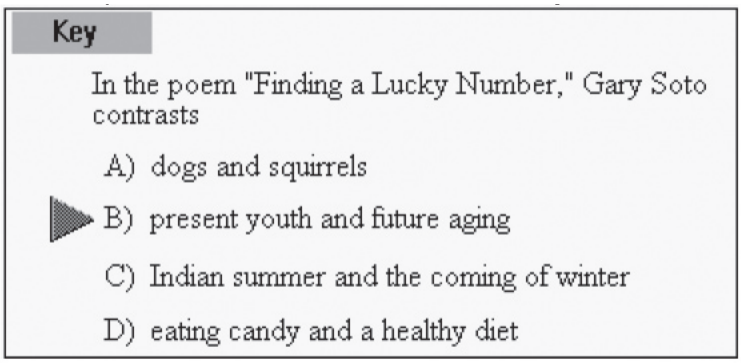


Use the links on the upper right of the Content Classification screen to move between the sections of the screen. Note that the name of the links will vary depending on subject and question type.

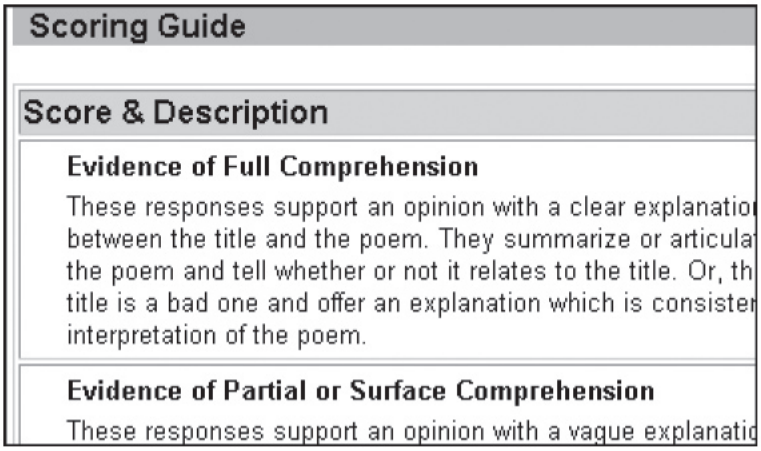
For a more extensive description of the subject area you have chosen, click on **Subject Info** at the top of the screen next to the subject name.

Scoring Guide/Key - Shows information about how the question was scored.

For Multiple-Choice Questions - Shows the "key" or correct answer for the question.

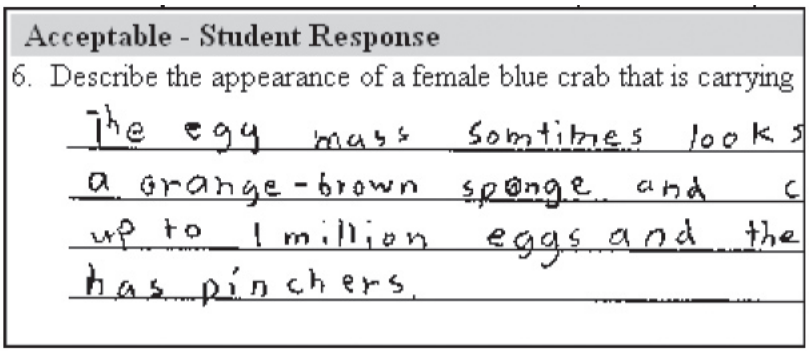


For Constructed-Response Questions - Shows the scoring guide used to determine the score for the student's answer.



Note that the scoring criteria will vary depending on the subject and type of question.

Student Responses - Shows actual student responses to the question for each score level.


Acceptable - Student Response

6. Describe the appearance of a female blue crab that is carrying

The egg mass somtimes looks a orange-brown sponge and c up to 1 million eggs and the has pinchers.

Use the scroll bar to move between the sections of the screen. Note that student responses are available only for constructed-response questions.

In some subjects, you will find a **Scorer's Commentary** button after the student responses. Each subject offers a different model for the scorer's commentary—some provide one for every response, others for both responses. The scorer's commentary gives you additional information on why the response received the score that it did and often refers back to the scoring guide.

More Data - Shows information about how subgroups of students performed on the question. This information enables you to see comparisons between the subgroups. From this screen you can also link to the NAEP Data Tool (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata).

NAEP 1998 National Reading Summary Data Tables for Grade 4
Question Response Percentages (Standard Errors In Parenthes

NAEP ID: R012206F

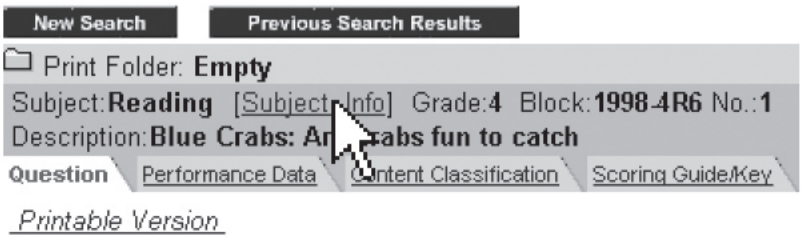
	N	UNACCEPT	ACCEPT	OMIT
-- TOTAL --	1679	58 (1.5)	33 (1.3)	9 (0.8)
GENDER				
MALE	813	58 (2.4)	33 (2.0)	10 (1.3)
FEMALE	866	59 (1.8)	33 (1.5)	9 (1.0)
RACE/ETHNICITY				
WHITE	988	53 (1.7)	40 (1.6)	7 (0.8)
BLACK	281	72 (3.9)	13 (2.5)	15 (3.0)
HISPANIC	313	73 (3.3)	16 (2.2)	12 (2.2)
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	61	**** (****)	**** (****)	**** (****)
AMERICAN INDIAN	32	**** (****)	**** (****)	**** (****)
PARENTS' HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
LESS THAN H.S.	47	**** (****)	**** (****)	**** (****)
GRADUATED H.S.	195	59 (2.6)	32 (2.5)	10 (2.1)

Information about the performance of the following subgroups is included on the More Data screen:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Parents' Highest Level of Education
- Type of School
- Region of the Country
- Type of Location
- Title I Participation
- National School Lunch Program
- Achievement Level

Where can I find more information about the subjects NAEP assesses?

You can find information about each subject by clicking on Subject Info at the top of the screen next to the subject name.



This leads you to more detailed information about NAEP procedures, including a description of frameworks, assessment instruments, scoring, school and student samples for that subject, NAEP reports, and interpreting NAEP results.

You can find even more information about each subject by choosing a subject on the NAEP home page.

Additional Help

For more help with features on the NAEP website, click **Help** in the banner.

For additional help, write to us via **Contact Us**, or e-mail Sherran.Osborne@ed.gov.