

FAQs on the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*®

For more detailed information about the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*, please click [here](#). Additional FAQs about the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills* can be found by clicking [here](#).

Q: What is the background and history of *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*® (ITBS®)?

A: The *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills* for elementary pupils were developed in 1935 under the direction of the staff of the College of Education at The University of Iowa. The first edition, then called the *Iowa Every Pupil Test of Basic Skills*, was developed by E. F. Lindquist, Harry Greene, Ernest Horn, Maude McBroom, and Herbert Spitzer.

The sole purpose for the *Iowa Every Pupil Test of Basic Skills* was the improvement of instruction. To aid the authors in research and development from the beginning, participating schools have devoted twenty minutes of annual test administration time to the tryout of new items for future tests. Using this method, as many as 7,000 items can be tried out under nearly ideal conditions every year.

Over the years, the Iowa Testing Programs have continued to grow until now almost all public, parochial, and private school pupils in Iowa regularly and voluntarily participate. In addition to the benefits provided by a regular tryout program for new items, annual testing of pupils provides an excellent research base for studying longitudinal and development and investigating innovations in measurement techniques.

The *ITBS* consist of a variety of educational achievement instruments enjoy a history of development that has been an integral part of the research program in educational measurement at The University of Iowa for the past 70 years.

Detailed technical information on the *ITBS* can be found in the *Guide to Research and Development for the ITBS*, which is available for purchase.

Q: Why is fall testing more desirable than spring testing?

A: Two important uses of test scores are to check year-to-year progress and to determine areas of relative strength and weakness. To accomplish these purposes most effectively, test results must be available early enough in the school year so that teachers and administrators have a chance to incorporate this diagnostic information into their instructional decisions.

Diagnostic information can be obtained from a fall norm-referenced test (NRT) program. Remediation strategies can also be developed based on the information from fall testing. Used properly, these results offer a predictable glimpse of which students are most at risk of not meeting academic performance goals required for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Fall testing allows districts to effectively use test results in a collaborative way. Once a fall-to-fall testing schedule is established, district administrators can easily look for longitudinal patterns in student achievement. These patterns can be used to focus professional development strategies or determine instructional areas that need additional resources while there is still time to implement them before spring high-stakes testing.

Q: What is the difference between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests?

A: Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) are designed to compare students (i.e., disperse average student scores along a bell curve, with some students performing very well, most performing average, and a few performing poorly). These types of tests are most appropriate when one wishes to make comparisons across large numbers of students or important decisions regarding student placement and advancement.

Criterion-referenced assessments (CRTs) measure how well a student performs against an objective or criterion rather than another student. Criterion-referenced classrooms are mastery-oriented, informing all students of the expected standard and teaching them to succeed on related outcome measures. These types of tests are most appropriate for quickly assessing what concepts and skills students have learned from a segment of instruction.

Q: What are the benefits of norm-referenced tests?

A: Standards-based measurements only tell half the story. Students and districts do not exist in isolation. In today's increasingly mobile society, chances are good that students will spend at least part of their lives in another state. They will compete for jobs and opportunities against students from other states, often with other sets of expectations for what Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) means. NRTs like The Iowa Tests® provide a research-based, external validator for districts. In addition to providing detailed information on whether your students are mastering content skills, NRTs also gauge how well districts are doing compared to national averages. NRTs help tell the whole story of a students' academic progress.

Q: What are the testing options available through Riverside Publishing for the *ITBS*?

A: The **Complete Battery** offers educators the broadest range of testing available. Districts can administer as much or as little of the Complete Battery in the combination that is right for a given district.

The **Core Battery** offers the same level of diagnostic information and difficulty as the Complete Battery, but in a targeted format. This is a good battery for districts focused on basic achievement in the critical content areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics.

The **Survey Battery** is a quick screening instrument, typically used when time is a concern. The Survey Battery requires only 30 minutes for each test, yet still yields highly reliable scores.

The Compete, Core, and Survey Batteries of The Iowa Tests were administered to groups of students during standardization. The relationship between them is based upon actual student performance, and they offer comparable scores. Districts can intermix the batteries across grade levels with ease.

For details on each battery's test-taking times and number of items, click [here](#).

Q: What *ITBS* reporting options are available from Riverside Publishing?

A: Paper Reports: The Iowa Tests feature a wide variety of reports designed for parents, teachers, and administrators. These reports explain individual student test results in plain, easy-to-understand language using bar graphs to guide understanding. Each score report can be customized to include the score types best suited for a specific need.

Paperless Options: Customers looking for ways to limit paper storage can choose to have any report delivered to them as an Adobe® Acrobat® (PDF) file on CD-ROM instead. Paper and digital reports can be “mixed and matched” in any combination.

Web-Based Reporting: *Interactive Results Manager™ (iRM™)* is a dynamic, web-based application that allows educators to explore data from The Iowa Tests on demand. With a few clicks of the mouse, *iRM* allows educators to disaggregate test data and examine individual results.

Local Scoring Options: *Riverside Local ScoringPro™ (RLSP)* is a powerful software application that gives you local control of your assessment results. *RLSP* works with your NCS OpScan® and Scantron® OMR scanners to enable scanning, scoring, and printing of The Iowa Tests.

For more information on Riverside Publishing scoring services related to The Iowa Tests, please click [here](#).

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