

Test Descriptions

ACT

Frequently accepted by many colleges as part of an application for admission, the [ACT Assessment](#) assesses high-school students' general educational development and their ability to do college-level work. Given six times a year, the multiple-choice test covers English, mathematics, reading, and science; the optional writing test measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

Bilingual Non-Target Language Testing Program

HISD's Bilingual Non-Target Language Testing Program gives [Stanford or Aprenda](#) tests (or parts of them) to students in the district's developmental bilingual, two-way bilingual immersion, and traditional [bilingual programs](#). The tests measure student progress in the programs and, in general, are given in the language of instruction. Make-ups are available, and students with severe mental impairment are exempt from the program.

Credit by Exam

HISD's Credit by Exam Program enables students in kindergarten through grade 12 without prior instruction to advance to a higher grade level or test out of a high-school course. It also helps students with prior instruction to pass a failed course and helps previously home-schooled students, students from unaccredited private schools or foreign schools, and students whose records are unavailable to be placed in the appropriate grade level.

District-wide Kindergarten Norm-Referenced Testing

HISD's [Advanced Academics Department](#) uses the English-language Stanford and the Spanish-language Aprenda achievement tests to conduct district-wide kindergarten norm-referenced testing to identify students suited to the district's Gifted and Talented program. (Norm-referenced tests measure student achievement by comparing a student's performance with a "norming group" of similar students.) On the basis of the home language, teachers decide whether a student would perform better in his or her home language or in the language of his or her instruction. Parents may decline (in writing) to have their children tested.

Gifted and Talented Testing

HISD's [Advanced Academics Department](#) tests students in kindergarten through grade 11 who are applying to the district's Gifted and Talented (G&T) program, potential G&T students, and new students who lack appropriate achievement-test scores and are seeking grade placement. G&T applicants are given the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test and (depending on their home language) either the Stanford or Aprenda.

High-Frequency Word Evaluation

The HFWE measures first- and second-graders' proficiency in reading the [most-frequently used words in English](#). Students take it in the language in which their formal reading instruction is given, and they must pass it to be promoted.

LAT (Linguistically Accommodated Testing)

LAT is a process that enables students who qualify for a limited-English-proficient exemption to take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics, science, and reading tests with accommodations designed to help them better understand the language used on the tests.

NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress)

The [National Assessment of Education Progress \(NAEP\)](#) provides the only national comparison of American students in key subject areas. The federal No Child Left Behind law requires any state receiving Title I funds to have selected schools participate in the NAEP program, which produces "The Nation's Report Card." Ninety-minute tests are given periodically in grades 4, 8, and 12 in core academic subjects, with reading and mathematics tests required in grades 4 and 8 every two years. In 2005 HISD volunteered to be tested in NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment program so that the district's performance could be compared with that of other urban districts and with national averages.

NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test)

The [NNAT](#) measures students' nonverbal reasoning and general problem-solving abilities, regardless of the language the students speak and the students' educational or cultural backgrounds. The 30-minute test is given to all students in kindergarten and grade 5, applicants to the Gifted and Talented program, and selected limited-English-proficient students in all other grades.

Primary Progress Report Program

HISD developed the Primary Progress Report Program as an assessment and non-grade-based report-card program for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 3. A voluntary program that uses portfolios, record-keeping, parental support, developmental checklists, and both formative and summative evaluations, it is designed to increase student achievement and community support in schools with a more nontraditional assessment mode.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

The [PSAT/NMSQT](#) is a standardized test that measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. Cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation and given to all HISD tenth-graders who aren't exempt from the TAKS, it provides practice for the SAT Reasoning Test and also enables students to compete for National Merit scholarships.

SAT

Required by many colleges for application for admission, the [SAT Reasoning Test](#) measures the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills needed for academic success in college. It includes sections on critical reading, math, and writing. There are six 25-minute sections, (including one essay), two 20-minute sections, a 10-minute multiple-choice writing section. In addition, SAT Subject Tests measure

students' mastery of five subject areas: English, history, mathematics, science, and language. Given seven times a year, the SAT Reasoning Test is typically taken by high-school juniors and seniors.

SDAA (State-Developed Alternative Assessment II/Locally Determined Alternate Assessments)

Required and funded by the state, the State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II) tests students in grades 3–10 who receive [Special Education](#) services in public schools or district or state-approved charter schools and for whom any part of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), even with allowable accommodations, is not appropriate. SDAA II assessments cover mathematics, reading, writing, and English-language arts. Locally Determined Alternate Assessments test all subjects and are given to students for whom neither the TAKS nor the SDAA II is appropriate.

Stanford and Aprenda Tests

The Stanford-10 and Spanish-language Aprenda-3 tests measure student performance compared to the performance of similar students throughout the nation. HISD requires all students except those with severe mental impairment to take the test in grades 1 through 11 in the language of their instruction or (for those in special bilingual programs) their "target" language. The results of the tests, which have flexible time limits, are used as one of the passing criteria for students in grades 1–8, to measure a school's progress in meeting its accountability goals, and to aid in placement decisions for various programs.

TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills)

Replaced by the state-mandated TAKS in 2003, the [TAAS test](#) measures students' mastery of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The reading and mathematics tests are given in English to grades 3–8 and 10 (exit-level) and in Spanish to grades 3–6. The writing test is given in English to grades 4, 8, and 10 (exit level) and in Spanish to grade 4; science and social studies tests are administered in English in grade 8.

TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills)

The [TAKS test](#) measures students' mastery of the state-mandated curriculum and requires them to answer a specified number of questions correctly in each section of the TAKS to pass. State law requires all non-exempted students in grades 3–10 in public schools or state-approved charter schools to take the TAKS in either English or Spanish (grades 3–6) or in English (grades 7–10). Untimed tests on mathematics, reading, writing, science, social studies, and English-language arts (ELA) are given in various grades. TAKS Linguistically Accommodated Testing (LAT) is a process that enables students who qualify for a limited-English-proficient exemption to take TAKS mathematics, science, and reading tests with accommodations designed to help them better understand the language used on the tests. TAKS scores affect students' promotion to the next grade in grades 3–8 and district and campus ratings in the state accountability system, and all students must pass the exit-level TAKS to graduate from high school.

TAKS, Exit Level

The state requires all students to pass all parts of the [exit-level TAKS](#) to graduate with a regular Texas high-school diploma. Untimed, it is given every spring to all non-exempted eleventh-graders and any other students (whether still enrolled or not) who still lack passing scores on one or more parts of the exit-level TAKS. Exemptions can be made by Admission, Retention, and Dismissal committees and a one-time postponement is available to non-English-speaking students who have been in a United States school for less than one year.

TELPAS (Texas English-Language-Proficiency Assessment System)

Developed by the Texas Education Agency to meet requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law, the two-part [Texas English-Language-Proficiency Assessment System](#) measures the progress that limited-English-proficient (LEP) students make in learning English. The Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) and Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) annually test all LEP students in kindergarten through grade 12 in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing until they are no longer LEP.

TPRI/Tejas LEE

The [Texas Primary Reading Inventory and Tejas LEE](#) (El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas) measure young students' reading skills and comprehension development in English or Spanish to show where improvement is needed. The TPRI/Tejas LEE is given to kindergartners in the middle and end of the school year and to first- and second-graders in the beginning, middle, and end of the year. All limited-English-proficient students in kindergarten through grade 2 must take it in the language in which their formal reading instruction is given.