



Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0)

Understanding the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0)

The State of Florida is undergoing a transition in their student assessments. A new assessment, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0) is being phased in and replacing the existing Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The FCAT 2.0 is aligned to the curricular framework provided by the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards; the assessment is referred to as a criterion-referenced test in that it is testing that students are learning the criteria of the curriculum.

These assessments are a requirement of state and federal law. Under the No Child Left Behind Act all schools are required to be teaching 100% of their students to levels of proficiency. This can be seen through the measures of a criterion-referenced test that monitors students' progress at gaining proficiency with the skills laid out in the curriculum. Individual student performance, including areas of strengths and weakness can be seen through these annual assessments. Areas where educators need to focus instruction on individual or whole grade levels can also be seen. And, school's progress at helping all students achieve the standards is observable.

Students in grades 3-10 will take the FCAT 2.0 in Reading and students in grades 3-8 will take the FCAT 2.0 in Mathematics. In grades 5 and 8 students will take the FCAT 2.0 in Science. The new versions of the Reading and Mathematics are being phased in for Spring of 2011 and the Science Assessment will be given for the first time in the Spring of 2012.

In the school year 2011-2012 only the grade 6 and grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading and the FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake are administered in an online format; more of the FCAT assessments will be administered online in the coming years. In circumstances when a student requires a paper and pencil version due to a testing accommodation, those will be available. The FCAT 2.0 Writing Examination will be administered in the Spring of 2013 for the first time.

Students also take End-of-Course Examinations in Reading and Mathematics/Algebra I. Starting in 2012 students will also take End-of-Course Examinations in Biology, Geometry, and U.S. History. These assessments are all given in an online format unless a student requires a paper and pencil based version as a testing accommodation. Passing the grade 10 Assessment in Reading is a requirement of graduation.

The End-of-Course Examination in Biology replaces the FCAT Science Assessment that was given in 11th grade in prior years. The Algebra I and Geometry End-of-Course Assessments have replaced the FCAT in Mathematics for grades 9 and 10.

Format of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0)

For students taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT 2.0) in grades 3-8, the Reading and Mathematics portions will ask questions in multiple-choice and gridded-response (in mathematics) formats. The Mathematics test may require the use of measurement in metrics or customary measurements, and generally rulers are provided.

A change from previous years on the Reading Assessment of the FCAT 2.0 is an increase in the number of reading passages. There are more historical and classical works on the new test version. There is also a greater number of questions calling for students to make inferences and use prior knowledge.

Some assessments will provide reference sheets for students. The grade 5 FCAT 2.0 Mathematics Assessment provides a reference sheet with formulas; the grade 8 Science Assessment provides a reference sheet of the Periodic Table of Elements.

The test formats are multiple-choice for the FCAT 2.0 in Reading, and multiple-choice and gridded response for the mathematics FCAT 2.0. These assessments are given in a 70 minute period with a break on two consecutive days during the Spring. The Science FCAT 2.0 is administered over an 80 minute period with a break. This is also a two day assessment.

The high school students will take the FCAT 2.0 in Reading during grades 9 and 10. They will also take End-of-Course exams in Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and U.S. History. The test question formats are multiple-choice and fill-in response.

The End-of-Course in Algebra I, Geometry I, Biology I are 160-minute assessment with a 10 minute break; if a student is not finished at the end of the assessment they may continue to work. The U.S. History End-of-Course is given in a 60 minute session. These assessments are given in a computer-based format unless a student requires a paper and pencil version of the test.

If a student requires testing accommodations per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) they will receive those.

Taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0)

The FCAT 2.0 that students take in grades 3-8 are based on the learning standards laid out in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS). The tests are given over two days of testing in 80 minute sessions. Each test has a slightly different number of questions. There are between 50-55 on the Reading and Mathematics Assessments and approximately 60-65 on the Science Assessments.

The End-of-Course exams for Algebra I, Geometry I, Biology I have approximately 65 questions (multiple-choice and fill-in response) to be answered. The U.S. History exam has 30 questions; however the length of the test will increase in coming years.

On all the assessments, students receive their score in a couple formats. There is a scaled score that is based on the number of questions correct, and the difficulty level of the correct/incorrect questions out of the total number questions. Students will also receive Content Area Scores which show how a student did on the individual skills and areas of knowledge that were tested.

Those scores translate into an Achievement Level Score which is based on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the highest level. The score a student gets on the FCAT End-of-Course Examination will equate to 30% of their course grade, with the exception being U.S. History, although in coming years the FCAT End-of-Course will factor into the course grade. For the first administration of the U.S. History test scores are not being reported.

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