

NCEXTENDI Science Assessment—Grade 8

What are the purposes of the NC Testing Program?

The North Carolina Annual Testing Program is a requirement of General Statute 115C-174.10. As stated, the purposes of North Carolina state-mandated tests are “(i) to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society; (ii) to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and (iii) to establish additional means for making the education system at the State, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results.”

The North Carolina Testing Program, effective with the 2000–2001 school year, was expanded in response to the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to include a system of alternate assessments for students with disabilities. Based on the guidance and requirements from the U. S. Department of Education (USED), the **NCEXTENDI** was developed to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities on the grade-level North Carolina Extended Content Standards in reading and mathematics at grades 3–8 and 10 and in science at grades 5, 8, and 10. The **NCEXTENDI** also assesses students in writing at grades 4, 7, and 10. The **NCEXTENDI** replaced the North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio effective with the 2006–2007 school year.

What is measured by the test?

The **NCEXTENDI** Science Assessment—Grade 8 assesses the science components of the grade-eight Extended Content Standards of Science North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* (NCSCS) adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) in 2004. The test consists of twelve performance items. Each student is individually administered the twelve performance items.

A description of each of the Extended Content Standard goals that are assessed and the percent range of items for each goal are shown in the table below. Each item is also aligned to a thinking-skill level from the cognitive taxonomy described by Marzano et al.

Goal	Description of Goal	Percent Range
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and demonstrate knowledge of the distribution of water on Earth. • Observe, describe and investigate water properties and human impact on water resources. 	22—28
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and investigate the effects of chemicals on human health and conditions. • Explore, observe, communicate and investigate chemical/physical changes within a system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature • Mass • Volume • Precipitate (iron nail in water) • Solubility (what dissolves in water) • Gas production 	39—45

5	Describe evidence of geological events and change over time.	5—11
6	Observe and investigate the function of cells and their role in organisms.	5—11
7	Demonstrate knowledge of the role of microorganisms in human disease.	14—20

How is the test administered?

The *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8 is individually administered to eligible students during the last six weeks of the school year. The assessors use professional judgment to determine an appropriate length of time for each student’s test administration. The *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8 may be administered in one session or in multiple sessions over several days.

Each item has a script that is read by the assessor when presenting the item to the students. For the *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8, the items may be read as many times as necessary, unless otherwise noted in the test directions.

How was the test developed?

The items for science were written by NCDPI/Technical Outreach for Public Schools (TOPS) Science content and test development staff. The items were reviewed and revised by trained, practicing North Carolina teachers and educators specializing in the areas of exceptional children, general education, and limited English proficiency during the 2007–2008 school year.

What kinds of scores do students receive on the test?

Students receive an individual student report (ISR) containing a scale score, achievement level ranking (I, II, III, or IV), and descriptions of student performance associated with each achievement level.

How does Edition 2 differ from previous editions of the test?

This edition of the *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8 contains twelve on-demand performance items with all items administered to all eligible students. This edition of the *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8 also contains presentation scripts.

When will reports be available for spring 2008?

The score reports for the spring 2008 administration of the *NCEXTENDI* Science Assessment—Grade 8 will be delayed until early fall 2008. Analysis of the data and subsequent standard setting must be completed before scale scores and achievement levels can be determined. As soon as these processes are completed, score reports will be produced at the student, school, LEA, and state levels.

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