

Mathematics Benchmark Tests

Mathematics Benchmark Assessments follow the scope and sequence of the course.

- 6th & 7th grade math benchmarks address these domains: Number Sense, Algebra and Functions, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics, Data Analysis & Probability.
- 8th grade Algebra 1G benchmarks test both pre-algebra (Number Sense and Algebra & Functions) and Algebra standards.
- Algebra 1 and Algebra H benchmarks focus on pure Algebra standards as defined by the state of California.
- All Algebra and Geometry students in middle and high school take the same benchmark assessment.
- There are a minimum of three items for every standard tested.
- Standards that are critical for building a foundation of mathematical understanding are often tested on more than one benchmark assessment.
- Some math standards are taught late in the school year; these are tested on the Math CST.
- Math benchmark data is used as one of the five criteria for Honors Algebra placement, both in 7th and 8th grade.
- Special Education students enrolled in Modified Math will begin taking benchmark assessments during the 2010-11 school year.



History/Social Science Benchmark Tests

History/Social Science common assessments are NEW!

Arcadia Unified School District adopted TCI History Alive instructional materials in 2007. These materials incorporate a history text with a variety of engaging hands-on activities to promote deep understanding of history.

The History/Social Science Common Assessments are not traditional multiple choice tests. Instead they are critical thinking activities that provide students the opportunity to show what they have learned.

All history/social science assessments use Thinking Maps (thinking strategies using graphic organizers).

All three 6th Grade Common Assessments address the critical characteristics of early civilizations.

7th Grade Common Assessments address the following:

- Feudalism in Europe;
- Important contributions of Islam;
- Japanese Samurai

8th Grade Common Assessments address the following:

- Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution
- United States Civil War
- Manifest Destiny

Student work samples are analyzed by all grade level history teachers. Information from the assessments is used to strengthen classroom instruction and prepare students for future success in history classes.

PLANS for Science Benchmark Tests (2010)

Science common assessments will be implemented during the 2010-11 school year. Tests will not be traditional multiple choice tests and will reflect and support the inquiry based program offered in all middle school science classrooms.

Arcadia Unified School District

Middle School Assessment Program

Standards-Based Assessments
designed to monitor student progress
toward meeting grade level standards



What is a Benchmark Assessment?

Benchmark assessments are one measure of student progress toward learning required content in English/Language Arts, Math & History.

- Benchmarks are based on California grade level content standards.
- Benchmarks are objective, secure assessments analyzed for accuracy, reliability and validity.
- English/Language Arts and Math Benchmarks are sophisticated multiple choice tests.
- English/Language Arts and Math Tests are administered three (3) times during the school year:
Benchmark #1 October 19-23 2009
Benchmark #2 January 11-15 2010
Benchmark #3 March 22-26 2010
- Benchmark assessments are not part of a course grade for English or math.

Why give Benchmark Assessments?

Objective, secure assessments provide information to teachers, parents and students about progress toward meeting content standards.

- Benchmark assessments focus on standards, not just skills.
- Given three times during the year, benchmark assessments help teachers focus on student learning.
- Benchmark assessments test the same standards tested on the California Standards Test (CST).
- Unlike the CST, students and teachers review and analyze each benchmark using Student Reports. This prepares student for their future and encourages them to always do their best!

What do teachers do with the results?

Benchmark data is shared with students.

- Students review their answers compared with correct answers.
- Students analyze errors to determine *why* a mistake was made and correct the item.
- Students write goals for areas of concern.
- Students share the results and analysis with their parents.

How do teachers use Benchmark Data?

Teachers spend classroom time to review each benchmark assessment with their students.

Teachers meet with their colleagues from all three middle schools to analyze the test results, share new instructional strategies and plan follow-up lessons.

Teachers also work with their principals to identify students needing additional support (intervention) based upon benchmark, as well as classroom assessment data.

- Intervention classes are taught by skilled Arcadia teachers and focus on critical English & math skills
- Intervention classes are intended to be proactive and support students as soon as problems become evident
- Intervention classes are offered at all three middle schools in English (focus on reading and/or writing) and Math
- Middle school intervention classes are also designed to prepare students to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).
- Summer school is another intervention available to students who qualify.

Some benchmark data is used as one of the multiple measures for placement.

English Language Arts Benchmark Tests

English/Language Arts (ELA) benchmark assessments:

- Test high value content standards in reading and writing.
- The same ELA standards are tested three (3) times; the text selections increase in difficulty with each test.
- Text selections reflect ALL the genres included in the standards (narrative, non-fiction, expository text, persuasion and poetry).
- Test items assess vocabulary, word structure, spelling, elements of writing including sentence structure, paragraph development, revision and editing.

English Language Arts Benchmark Tests for Target Populations

Special Education students enrolled in Language, Read 180 or Bridges to Literature (Modified English) take benchmark assessments aligned to their instructional program. These are NOT grade-level tests.

ELD students enrolled in ELD 1 or ELD 2 block classes take benchmark tests matching their current level of English acquisition. These are NOT grade-level tests.

