

# Interim Assessments Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. What are Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments?

The Interim Assessments are one of the three components of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System, which include the Summative Assessments, the Interim Assessments, and the formative assessment processes (i.e., Digital Library). These components are available to all California classroom teachers to use to support teaching and learning throughout the school year. Interim Assessments are optional resources that provide teachers with actionable information about student progress, and are designed to be given at locally determined intervals. The Interim Assessments will help teachers, students, and parents gauge student progress toward college and career readiness, and identify strengths and areas of remediation in relation to the Common Core State Standards.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment System includes two types of interim assessments:

- Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)
- Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)

## 2. What are the differences between an Interim Comprehensive Assessment and the Interim Assessment Blocks?

The Interim Assessments include two distinct types of assessments that draw from the same bank of items and performance tasks:

- Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) are similar to the Summative Assessment in scope and format. They can be used to identify areas of strength or need based on the Common Core State Standards, and provides teachers with information regarding student readiness.
- Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are focused sets of items that measure several assessment targets. Results provide teachers with information about a student's understanding of the topics or standards measured in the IAB.

## 3. Who can use the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments?

The Interim Assessments were purchased through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium membership fees paid by the California Department of Education, and will be available to all K–12 teachers at no cost. Information regarding login and access will be provided in winter 2015.

## 4. When will the Interim Comprehensive Assessments become available?

Smarter Balanced plans to release a fixed-form of the ICAs in winter 2015 for grades 3 through 8 and grade 11, although all teachers in grades K–12 will have access to the ICAs. Smarter Balanced will add a computer-adaptive test (CAT) ICA at a later date.

## 5. When will the Interim Assessment Blocks become available?

Smarter Balanced plans to release a fixed-form of the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) in winter 2015. Smarter Balanced will add computer adaptive test (CAT) IABs at a later date.

## 6. How will the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments be scored?

Computer adaptive test (CAT) items will be machine scored by the Smarter Balanced Test Delivery Engine. Scoring of the constructed response questions and Performance Task Interim Assessment items will be the responsibility of the local educational agency (LEA).

## 7. How will the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments be reported?

- The reports will come directly from the Smarter Balanced Online Test System to individual local educational agencies (LEAs). The California Department of Education will have no access to any Interim Assessment results or reports.
- Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) reporting is the same as for the Summative Assessment: overall scale score with the achievement level per content area/subject.
- Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) will be reported based on three classifications related to the overall scale score: "Below Standard," "At/Near Standard," and "Above Standard."

## 8. What will the Interim Comprehensive Assessment report provide?

The Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) reports will include the same information as the Summative Assessment: overall composite scale score, achievement levels, and claim-level information. Claims for English–language arts pertain to reading, writing, listening/speaking, and research, and in mathematics, the claims pertain to concepts/processes, problem solving, communicating reasoning, and modeling/data analysis.

**9. What will the Interim Assessments Blocks report provide?**

The Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) focus on a smaller set of skills and are designed to provide more targeted information about student performance for teachers. Results will be reported at the claim level. Claims for English–language arts pertain to reading, writing, listening/speaking, and research, and in mathematics the claims pertain to concepts/processes, problem solving, communicating reasoning, and modeling/data analysis.

**10. How should the Interim Assessments be used?**

The Interim Assessments can be administered at any time during the school year. The item bank, in the initial release of the Interim Assessments, will be limited in depth. Therefore, if Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are administered more than once to the same students, individuals may be exposed to the same items. Local educational agencies (LEAs) can administer both types of Interim Assessments at locally determined intervals. For example, an LEA may administer an ICA in the late fall, and then use the IABs to focus on specific areas, and then administer the Summative Assessment toward the end of the school year in the spring.

**11. Is there a local educational agency cost associated with the Interim Assessments?**

No, the costs to access the Interim Assessments are paid by the California Department of Education's membership fees to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The state legislature voted to fund the Smarter Balanced Digital Library of formative tools, and the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments to provide equal access to support materials for all California classroom educators. However, for the Interim Assessments, the items that require hand scoring will be the responsibility of the local educational agency.

**12. Will the California Department of Education have access to a local educational agency's interim scores?**

No. The California Department of Education will not have access to the local educational agencies' (LEAs) scores for the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Only LEAs will have access to the score reports for the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments.

**13. Will the Interim Assessments be available in paper-pencil format?**

No. Smarter Balanced designed both the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) to be computer-based tests, either fixed-length or adaptive, and will not provide a paper-pencil format.

**14. What grade levels will be available for the Interim Assessments?**

The Interim Assessments were developed for students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11; however, all K–12 teachers will have access to the Interim Assessments.

- Assessment administration is not constrained by grade level (e.g., a grade 5 Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) or the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) can be administered to grades above or below grade 5).
- The ICAs for high school are constructed to be consistent with the grade eleven summative blueprints for English–language arts and mathematics. The high school IABs are constructed to focus on content that would be appropriate across all high school grade levels. Schools or districts may choose to administer the high school Interim Assessments in grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12.

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