

TNReady Teacher FAQs

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General educator questions

1. What is the best way to prepare students for TNReady?

TNReady is a new and improved TCAP assessment for English language arts (ELA) and math. TNReady is aligned to the Tennessee State Standards, which are the learning expectations for students in every grade level and content area. The best preparation for TNReady is strong instruction throughout the year rooted in our state standards.

2. How should I use MICA?

You should use MICA to gauge student learning and to increase their comfort with the test design. MICA has between 50-70 items per grade, displays the full range of standards, and is continuously available online (<http://www.micatime.com>).

3. Where else can I find other practice items similar to the items that will be asked on TNReady?

The only state-approved places to find items similar in style to TNReady is MICA. The items for the TNReady operational test and the MICA item sampler come from the same item bank, which has been reviewed by Tennessee educators. Because all items come from the same bank, we are able to say that the items on MICA are the closest to TNReady items.

4. Can teachers proctor their own TNReady exams?

It's considered best practice for another teacher to proctor the exam; however, teachers are not prohibited from proctoring their own exams.

5. Why is the testing window so long?

We believe this will allow districts and schools to schedule the assessment on whatever timeline works for them, tailoring the testing window to their needs. We encourage educators to keep the school operating as normally as possible during the entire window, versus “shutting down” for testing.

6. What do teachers have to cover up on their walls during test administration?

It is not necessary to conceal or remove instructional or reference materials in the testing area, the classrooms, or hallways. A comfortable instructional environment should be maintained during testing windows.

Math tables are an exception. Math tables (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) should be concealed or removed from the testing area during non-calculator subtest of math assessments for Part II.

While we hope that being able to provide a familiar environment will help to ease students’ test anxiety, teachers should not decorate walls with the intention of providing extra support to students. As a general rule, if you would not want the material on the wall for your own classroom assessment, then you should not post it on the wall for the TNReady assessment.

7. How do I know what accommodations my students can receive?

TNReady has been intentionally designed to provide tools to support all students. There is also a suite of additional accommodations for English learners and students on an IEP or 504 plan. Please see the [accommodations chart](#), which outlines which students generally have access to which types of accommodations. Additional information will be provided in the test administration manual, which is currently under revision due to the shift to paper testing.

8. How will my students’ scores affect my teacher effectiveness rating this year?

TVAAS will not compare students’ absolute performance on TNReady to their absolute performance on the previous TCAP tests. Instead, students will be expected to perform about as well on TNReady as their peers who had similar TCAP scores last year. Because *all* students are making the transition



to a new assessment at the same time, this levels the playing field. The student score that will be factored into TVAAS is based on academic growth within that relative comparison to other students with similar academic histories, not based on a student's overall performance. In previous transitions to more difficult tests, teacher evaluation scores remained consistent despite a decline in student proficiency.

As a reminder, TVAAS has been designed so that when a student's score is dramatically out of line with the rest of the student's testing history, that score is flagged as an outlier and removed from the data prior to analysis. The formulas for identifying outliers are more likely to flag and remove a score that is too low than one that is too high compared to the rest of the student's test scores. In this way, teachers are protected from data irregularities that may significantly affect the calculation of the teacher value-added measures.

In addition, Gov. Haslam has proposed to give educators additional flexibility. Educators would have options for how the department calculates the student growth component of their evaluation. These options would include or not include student results from 2015-16 in the student growth score, depending on what benefits him or her the most. Educators will automatically receive the best option.

In other words, if TNReady or TCAP results from this year help a teacher earn a higher evaluation score, they would be used. If they do not help a teacher earn a higher score, they would not be used. And, if at any point in this three-year transition an educator's evaluation would not benefit from including the 2015-16 student growth data, educators would have that data excluded.

More details will be released soon.

9. In the past, students had to sit the whole time they were finished and could not even read. Also, even if the entire class was finished, the proctor could not go on until the time was up. Are those two things still true?

Students do have to sit the entire duration of the time, even if the entire class is finished. However, students **are** allowed to read or do other quiet



activities that are not related to the content area being tested. It is a district/school decision whether to allow activities and what would be permissible for students to do after they finish their assessment.

More questions on TNReady English language arts

1. Do I need to do anything special to prepare for TNReady ELA?

The best preparation for TNReady is strong instruction throughout the year rooted in our state standards, including an understanding of the three instructional shifts highlighted in the standards (discussed in #2). On the TNReady ELA assessment, students will be asked text-dependent, grade-appropriate questions. Text-dependent questions require a close, careful reading of a grade-appropriate, complex text. The answer is found in the text, not from background or outside knowledge. We encourage educators to provide students with frequent opportunities to engage with complex texts and answer text-dependent questions.

2. What are the three instructional shifts?

The three instructional shifts for ELA are knowledge, evidence, and vocabulary.

1. Knowledge: Students build background knowledge through content-rich informational and nonfiction texts.
2. Evidence: Reading, writing, and speaking are grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
3. Vocabulary: Students have regular practice with complex texts and academic language.

3. What is the expected length for student writing on TNReady?

While, in general, a multi-paragraph response is appropriate, the length of the response is less important than the quality of the response. Students should respond completely to the task.

4. How can I score the writing tasks?

The rubrics for the writing tasks are available on the department website ([here](#)).

5. Which writing modes should my students be practicing?

Students should practice all types of writing. On TNReady, students will be asked to write essays from two of the following three modes of writing (in any combination): (1) argument/opinion, (2) informative/explanatory, and (3) narrative. For example, a student could receive an argument/opinion task and a narrative task. Or, a student could receive an informative/explanatory task and an argument/opinion task. Or, a student could receive an informative/explanatory task and a narrative task.

6. Where can I find practice writing tasks?

MICA contains different tasks per grade. The table below has a breakdown of the writing tasks available for each grade level.

Grade	MICA Item Sampler
3	2 Informative/explanatory tasks 1 narrative task
4	2 informative/explanatory tasks
5	1 opinion task 1 informative/explanatory task
6	1 argument task 2 informative/explanatory tasks
7	3 informative/explanatory tasks
8	1 argument task 2 informative/explanatory tasks
English I	3 argument tasks 1 narrative task
English II	2 informative/explanatory tasks
English III	2 informative/explanatory tasks

7. Are all writing tasks on the TNReady assessment being scored?

Yes, all writing tasks will be scored. Narrative writing is being field tested this year, and while it will be scored, the score will be used for internal purposes only in order to develop future test questions.

8. Why are narrative writing tasks included in MICA if they don't "count"?

Narrative writing is an expectation of the Tennessee State Standards for ELA. Students are expected to learn the three modes of writing, including narrative.

9. I thought all writing had to be text-dependent. How can we have narrative tasks that are text-dependent and not basic "creative writing" tasks?

On TNReady, all writing students will be asked to produce is text-dependent, even narrative writing. For narrative writing tasks, students will be asked to use the prompting text in order to develop their story using effective techniques, such as including relevant descriptive details and providing a well-structured event sequences. Thus, a strong narrative essay requires a close read of text to gather the details to make the story cohesive. For example, students may be asked the following: to write a narrative from the point of view from a character in the text; to write the ending or beginning of a narrative text; or, to write a narrative story after reading informational texts. All of these narrative writing tasks require a close reading of the complex text provided. Students do not need to bring background knowledge to the narrative tasks, but they will be asked to use relevant details from the prompting text to complete the task.

10. Is there a list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words?

No, there is not a list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words. On TNReady, students are expected to determine the meaning of vocabulary words based on the context of the grade-appropriate text. As such, any word within the text that can be defined based on context is fair game for assessment.

11. If there's no list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words, how can I teach my students the words they need to know to pass TNReady?

The best way to prepare students for success with academic vocabulary on TNReady is by teaching close reading of complex texts. During close reading of complex texts, students should practice determining the meaning of Tier II/ academic vocabulary words based on the context.

12. What is a "passing" or proficient score for the writing tasks?

The scoring for writing tasks will be determined during the range finding process. Range finders are Tennessee educators who will work with the Tennessee Department of Education to score actual student writing samples against the state standards and the writing rubrics in order to set expectations at each score point. These guidelines will then be used to score all student responses.

13. How can I score the narrative writing tasks since we don't have sample papers?

Until the range finding process is complete, the best way to score all writing tasks is to reference the Tennessee State Standards and the writing rubrics.

More questions on TNReady math

1. Will all students have a no-calculator portion on the TNReady mathematics assessment?

Yes, in all grade levels, the first subtest of Part II will be taken without a calculator. The [calculator guidance](#) provides some high-level information on when calculators will and will not be permitted on TNReady, and it includes a list of many of the approved calculators. The calculator policy applies to all students, [including those with disabilities](#).

2. What types of questions will students be asked on the no-calculation portion?

The questions on the no-calculator portion will include friendlier numbers and may assess standards that require little or no calculation. We have published [additional clarification and examples](#) about the types of questions on which students would and would not be able to use a calculator.



3. How will fluency be assessed on TNReady?

Fluency will be assessed on the no-calculator portion of TNReady in grades 3-6. Fluency standards requiring unspecified, multi-digit computation will be assessed within reasonable limits.

4. What standards will be assessed on the performance tasks for grades 3-8?

The TNReady test blueprints were updated in October. A line was added to specifically address the clusters to be assessed by the performance task during the 2015-16 school year. The updated blueprints can be found [here](#).