

Understanding Your *HiSET*® Scores

This publication is intended to assist in understanding *HiSET*® test scores. ETS provides scoring for the exam on a continuing basis. Scores are processed daily and results are transmitted to the state or jurisdiction as they become available.

About the HiSET Exam

The HiSET exam consists of five subtests: Language Arts – Reading, Language Arts – Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Each subtest contains multiple-choice items as well as an essay question on the Writing exam. For more information on the content of the exam go to [What's on the HiSET Exam](#).

How the HiSET Test is Scored

Multiple-choice test scoring

Multiple-choice answer sheets are scored by machine, which gives virtually 100 percent scoring accuracy.

- Each correct answer is worth one raw point.
- The total raw score is the number of questions answered correctly on the full test.
- The scaled score is computed from the total number of raw points in a way that adjusts for the difficulty of the questions.

Essay test scoring

The essay response is scored by trained, supervised, human scorers who follow strict scoring procedures. Written responses are read and scored by scorers specifically trained to score the responses to that question. For more information on how the essay is scored and what that score means go to the [Writing Response Scoring Guide](#)

Passing score

Each state sets its own passing criteria. To know what is required to pass in each state check [Requirements by State or Jurisdiction](#).

Most states use the *HiSET*® passing criteria which means to pass the HiSET exam, you need to:

- Achieve a scaled score of at least an 8 on each of the five subtests
- Achieve a score of at least a 2 out of 6 on the essay
- Achieve a total scaled score across all five HiSET subtests of at least 45.

The HiSET pass score is based on a national study of high school juniors and seniors and indicates that 80 percent of graduating high school students would pass the HiSET exam. A test taker's score reports show whether or not they passed.

What is a scaled score?

Most tests we take in school report a percentage score or raw scores — in other words, the number right versus the number wrong. This method of scoring works well if there is one version of a test. But the HiSET exam uses multiple versions called "forms." So, we can't do a simple comparison of number right versus number wrong because the form one person took might have been slightly easier or slightly harder than the test the person sitting next to them took. To make it fair, we use a "scaled score."

A scaled score is a scoring method that makes it easier to compare scores across different forms of the HiSET test. We get it by statistically adjusting and

converting raw scores onto a common scale. This means on an easier test form, a test taker needs to answer slightly more questions correctly to get a particular scaled score. For a more difficult form, they can get the same scaled score by answering slightly fewer questions correctly.

A passing score of 8 doesn't mean the test taker got eight questions right, it means given the difficulty of the test form they took, they achieved an 8 on a scale of 1 to 20. It also means if you took a different version of the test without additional study, it is likely they would get the same score. A scaled score makes it easy to keep tests fair and to support retesting.

Paper-delivered tests

Scoring for paper-delivered tests is pending receipt of returned answer sheet documents from the test center. Once they are received at ETS, scores are available in approximately:

- Three business days for multiple-choice tests (Reading, Science, Social Studies, Math)
- Five business days for essay tests (Writing)

Computer-delivered tests

For computer-delivered tests, scores are available in approximately:

- Three business days for multiple-choice tests (Reading, Science, Social Studies, Math)
- Five business days for essay tests (Writing)
- Unofficial scores are immediately displayed on the screen after you complete the test for all multiple-choice sections. However, unofficial scores are not displayed for the Writing test.

Understanding scores

- HiSET scores are reported on a 1–20 score scale in 1-point increments.
- ETS has set a national passing score of 8 for each of the five subtests and a combined score of 45 to pass the HiSET exam. **Note:** some states set their own passing score.
- Test takers must also achieve a minimum score of 2 on the Language Arts – Writing essay to pass.
- The HiSET exam also has a College and Career Readiness (CCR) minimum scaled score of 15 for each subtest except the Language Arts – Writing essay. The CCR score for the Language Arts-Writing essay is a 4.

College and Career Readiness Score

- The college- and career-ready indicator, available only on the Individual Test Reports, will display if the test taker shows a level of performance similar to the minimum level required to succeed in college-level credit-bearing courses.
- If the test taker scores at least a 15 on any of the subtests and at least a 4 on the essay, that indicates college and career readiness. Your college- and career-readiness score means you scored at the 75th percentile of graduating high school students and indicates that you should be able to enroll in credit-bearing course work at the university level.

Subtest performance summary

- The subtest performance summary, located at the bottom of each Individual Test Report, outlines how well a test taker performed on each content area. It assists in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Glossary of Terms

Raw score – For multiple choice questions, each raw point corresponds to a single question. For the essay, the raw score refers to the rating assigned by scorers.

Scaled score – The reported score that determines whether a test taker has passed the test. Scaled scores are derived from raw scores and take into account the difficulty of the test form administered.

Passing score – The minimum score required to pass the HiSET exam. This score may differ from state to state.

Possible score range – The lowest to highest scaled score possible on any form of the test.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many questions need to be answered correctly to pass the exam? Unfortunately there is no way to predict this. There are several forms for each subtest and each form contains different questions. The questions on one form may be slightly more difficult (or easier) than those on another form. To make all forms for each subtest comparable, raw scores are converted to scale scores that adjust for difficulty among forms. There is no way to predict which form will be assigned.

How does a test taker know if they passed? The HiSET score report includes a Yes/No indicator of whether the test taker passed the exam. This is based on their highest score compared to their state's passing requirements.

How can a test taker access their scores? Scores are available through the test taker's My HiSET account. They are not sent in the mail. If you do not have Internet access or you need help, contact your test center. As long as you have taken at least one subtest at a test center, they will be able to access your scores. Be prepared to show an approved form of ID to the test center administrator.

What can a test taker do to improve their score? ETS provides a variety of preparation and study tools to help prepare for the test. For more information on the resources available to test takers go to [Preparing for Your HiSET Exam](#).

Do scores expire? HiSET scores are valid for the length of the state contract but do not expire from reporting.