



## **ORGANIZATION OF EASTER CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS)**

### **PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND RELEVANT LEARNING (PEARL)**

#### **EARLY READING ASSESSMENT (OERA) AND EARLY MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (OEMA)**

#### **ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

31 July 2025

## **Background**

The OECS *Curriculum and Assessment Framework* (2022) outlines three foundational principles of assessment designed to ensure fairness, validity, and alignment with the OECS vision of fostering “an educated person.” These principles—Learner-Centred, Informs Teaching and Learning, and Balanced—support an assessment culture that empowers learners and educators alike (OECS Commission, 2022).

A Learner-Centred approach ensures that assessment is empowering, reflective, differentiated, and ethical. This means it acknowledges individual learning strengths, encourages students to reflect on their learning, and protects their rights in the collection, storage, and sharing of assessment data. These principles are aligned with global guidance on inclusive and equitable assessment practices ([UIS, 2020](#)).

The second principle, Informs Teaching and Learning, emphasizes the formative nature of assessment and its role in monitoring progress, identifying learning gaps, and providing timely feedback. Assessments must be reliable, valid, aligned with curriculum outcomes, and presented in a way that is understandable and actionable for all stakeholders. This mirrors the UNESCO recommendations that assessment should serve both instructional improvement and system accountability ([UIS, 2022](#)).

A Balanced assessment system incorporates diagnostic, formative, and summative tools that measure a wide range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It uses diverse assessment strategies in various contexts, including learning that takes place outside of the classroom, to provide a holistic view of student development. This principle reflects international best practices that advocate for varied and contextually sensitive tools that accommodate all learners (ACER, 2018; [World Bank, 2019](#)).

Although the OECS Early Grade Reading Assessment (OERA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) are designed to produce reliable, cross-national quantitative data at a key learning milestone, they maintain a low-stakes, diagnostic orientation. These instruments are built not only to measure whether regional outcomes have been achieved but also to provide baseline data for tracking progress over time. In line with the *Curriculum and Assessment Framework*, this data will help educators, Ministries of Education, and stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of reform initiatives and identify areas for continuous improvement across curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems (OECS Commission, 2022; [UIS, 2019](#)).

## Purpose

The OECS Early Reading Assessment (OERA) and OECS Early Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) are standardized assessments designed to evaluate the literacy and numeracy proficiency of Grade 2 students as they transition to Grade 3. The assessments align with the OECS Harmonized Primary Curriculum (OHPC) and contribute to global education goals, particularly SDG 4.1.1.a, which focuses on measuring the proportion of children achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. The benchmark that will be used to quantify performance will be the proportion of students in the end of lower primary school, in participating countries, that meet the Minimum Proficiency Levels (MPL) referred to in SDG indicator 4.1.1(a)

The OERA and OEMA will serve as low-stakes, diagnostic tools to identify student strengths and areas for improvement, rather than ranking or grading students. These instruments focus on providing actionable data to educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance curriculum delivery and implementation, inform instruction and improve teaching methodologies as well as shape educational policies at the national and regional levels.

**Table 1:** Stakeholder Engagement

Level	Uses
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Students receive results and feedback that, guided by their teachers, they can understand and use to improve their learning.</li><li>❖ Teachers use individual results, along with other evidence to guide responsive and differentiated learning.</li><li>❖ Principals use school results to determine priorities for Continuous School Improvement which brings a focus to specific professional development and support necessary to achieve goals.</li></ul>
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Education Officers use District results to work with schools as they develop their Continuous School Improvement Plans. These are amalgamated into District plans for which professional development and resource support is sought.</li></ul>
Central Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Chief Education Officers/Directors use National results to guide the development of national goals for education and to determine budgetary resources which will be made available to support Continuous School and System Improvement</li></ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ To show evidence of the achievement associated with the investment in Education as part of its public accountability</li></ul>
OECS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ To enhance education in the region and inform priorities for research and collaboration.</li></ul>

It is anticipated that assessment data will be shared and used as follows:

Reporting for the dissemination of the data ensures that the different bodies receive the information from the assessments in a form that facilitates evidence based decision making.

The circulation of results in this form will increase the utility of regional assessments and permit maximum use of assessment data by all educators. This coupled with a greater emphasis on formative assessment that is embedded in the DOHPC, will lead to informed decisions about teaching and learning enhancements which will result in bringing the OECS closer to having "every learner succeed".

## **Population Coverage**

The assessment targets the entire population of Grade 2 students enrolled in public schools across OECS Member States. This group represents the reporting population for SDG 4.1.1a. Data on all enrolled students will be collected from the OECS Digest, regardless of attendance on the assessment day, ensuring complete documentation of the eligible cohort.

Systematic exclusions will be documented and limited to:

- Students with severe learning disabilities that prevent meaningful participation (based on nationally defined criteria).
- Schools that could not administer the assessment due to force majeure events (e.g., natural disasters or prolonged closures).
- Schools not participating in the national assessment system (e.g., unregistered private schools, if relevant).

All exclusions, attendance rates, and demographic characteristics of absentees will be reported in the technical annex to monitor equity and potential bias in test participation. Gender, location (urban/rural), and school type are key disaggregation variables used to assess population coverage and representativeness.

The national target coverage—defined as the proportion of the full Grade 2 cohort (by gender) included in the assessment—will be calculated and documented, ensuring compliance with UIS reporting standards. Where possible, missing data or underrepresented subgroups are flagged, and their implications on the reliability of national reporting are discussed in the analytical reports.

**Table 2:** Disaggregation of Grade 2 student data by school and gender

Country	No. of Schools	No. of Males	No. of Females	TOTAL
<b>Anguilla</b>	6	79	80	<b>159</b>
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>	33	365	311	<b>676</b>
<b>British Virgin Islands</b>	11	114	121	<b>235</b>
<b>Dominica</b>	57	263	228	<b>491</b>
<b>Grenada</b>	56	684	634	<b>1318</b>
<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>	31	260	248	<b>508</b>
<b>St. Lucia</b>	77	1118	1051	<b>2169</b>
<b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b>	67	721	665	<b>1386</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>3604</b>	<b>3338</b>	<b>6942</b>

## Home and Instructional Language

In the OECS English is the official language of instruction and the medium used for all regional assessments, including the OECS Early Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) and OECS Early Reading Assessment (OERA). However, linguistic diversity across Member States introduces potential variation in students' proficiency in English due to differences between the language spoken at home and the language used in school. In some rural and isolated communities, local dialects and Creoles may be the dominant or exclusive languages of early childhood communication.

In most OECS Member States, while English is the formal instructional language, a significant proportion of students enter school speaking a home language that differs from Standard English. These include Creole languages (also known as Kwéyòl or Patois) spoken widely in Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as parts of Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda. These languages are French- or English-lexified Creoles with distinct grammar and vocabulary systems. Virgin Islands Creole English and other varieties of Caribbean English Creole are spoken in British Virgin Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Anguilla, which differ in varying degrees from Standard English.

This linguistic difference can impact assessment performance in two primary ways. Students whose dominant language is not Standard English may face difficulties interpreting assessment instructions or item content, particularly in the OERA, which assesses literacy skills. Even in the OEMA, where mathematics content is central, word problems and oral

instructions require a level of English proficiency that may disadvantage non-native speakers. Students navigating between home language and school language often engage in code-switching and translation, which can increase cognitive load during assessments. This may lead to underestimation of their true competencies, especially in reading fluency and comprehension.

While linguistic diversity across the OECS remains an important contextual factor, this diversity does not undermine the validity of the assessments but necessitates careful interpretation of results, especially for national and cross-country comparisons. The OECS Commission and Member States are committed to incorporating these considerations into reporting and using the data to inform inclusive and equitable education strategies.

Given these linguistic dynamics, the following considerations have been integrated into national and regional reporting:

- Interpretive caveats included in the analysis of mean scores and proficiency levels, noting that for some students, lower performance may reflect limited exposure to Standard English rather than conceptual or skill deficits in reading or mathematics.
- Equity-focused interpretation, ensuring that national averages are contextualized and do not obscure the performance and needs of language-diverse subgroups.
- Use of results for targeted interventions, such as early language support programs, dual-language resources, and professional development for teachers in linguistically responsive instruction.

## Assessment Design and Content

The OERA includes three passages spanning three genres, with questions structured to evaluate students' performance across three cognitive levels (literal, inferential, evaluative) and three levels of difficulty. These items were developed by the OERA Development Team and aligned with the OECS Learning Standards to reflect the authentic cultural and social experiences of students in the region. To simulate a familiar classroom environment, the layout of the student test booklets resembled a typical Grade 2 reading comprehension lesson, supported by illustrations generated via AI tools.

**Table 3:** Outline of OERA

Item Format	Number of Items	Duration	Curriculum Outcomes	Text Type
Selected Response	21	1 hour (15-20 minutes per passage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use background knowledge</li><li>• Interact meaningfully with a wide range of genres and text forms</li><li>• Develop vocabulary</li><li>• Recognise and use language structures</li></ul>	Fiction Nonfiction Visual text

Each item in the OEMA is aligned to the Grade 2 Mathematics learning outcomes from the OECS Harmonized Primary Curriculum (OHPC). Assessment tasks were designed to measure factual knowledge (basic facts and procedures), conceptual understanding (relationships between ideas), and procedural knowledge (application of methods to solve problems) as

described in global mathematics assessment frameworks ([UIS, 2019](#); OECS Learning Standards, 2018).

The Constructed Response Assessment is administered in a group setting. Students receive printed booklets with space for open responses while Invigilators read each question aloud, providing time for written answers. Similarly, the Selected Response Assessment is group-administered, using printed test booklets and bubble-style answer sheets. The dual-format approach is intended to capture a comprehensive view of student thinking, offering opportunities for students to show both reasoning and calculation processes.

Item Format	Number of Items	Duration	Curriculum Strands
<b>Selected Response</b>	25	1.5 hours (2 minutes per item)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Number Sense</li><li>● Operations with Numbers</li><li>● Patterns and Relationships</li><li>● Geometrical Thinking</li><li>● Measurement</li><li>● Data Handling and Probability</li></ul>
<b>Constructed Response</b>	12		

**Table 4:** Outline of OEMA

## GPF Alignment and Learning Outcomes

The reporting format for SDG indicator 4.1.1a aims to capture two primary data points:

1. The percentage of students achieving the Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL) in reading and mathematics at each of the key measurement points (Grades 2/3, end of primary, and end of lower secondary).
2. The comparability of results between different assessment programs, along with the conditions or conversion functions that support equivalence across countries.

Despite global progress in expanding educational access, learning data coverage remains limited. While over 200 countries report on primary school enrolment, only 37 countries have reported on learning outcomes (specifically reading at the Grade 2/3 level) in the past three years. This limited uptake led the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) to downgrade SDG indicator 4.1.1a from Tier I to Tier II in October 2023, raising concerns that the change might be misinterpreted as a reduction in importance rather than an issue of underreporting.

The following tables provide a detailed summary of the alignment between the OERA/OEMA and GPF constructs, based on expert review by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

**Table 5: UIS Sub-Criteria Alignment**

Criterion 1: Reading Alignment			Criterion 1: Mathematics Alignment		
<b>1.1a</b>	Minimum 20 score-points aligned to the GPF in reading	met	<b>1.1a</b>	Minimum of 20 score-points aligned to the GPF in mathematics	met
<b>1.2a</b>	Minimum 10 score-points assessing the reading comprehension domain in the GPF grade 2	met	<b>1.2a</b>	Minimum 10 score-points assessing number and operations domain in the GPF at Grade 2.	met
<b>1.3a</b>	The assessment must cover both reading comprehension subconstructs at grade 2 in the GPF	met	<b>1.3a</b>	The assessment must cover at least three out of the four number and operations subconstructs at grade 2 in the GPF as selected in 1.2a(M) above.	met
<b>1.4a</b>	The remaining items can be drawn from any of the domains (decoding, listening comprehension or reading comprehension)	met	<b>1.4a</b>	A minimum of 10 items must be included from any of the 4 non-number and operations domains (measurement, geometry, statistics and probability, and algebra).	met
<b>1.6a</b>	Differences between the language of instruction, home language, and language of assessment must be noted and implications considered for interpretation of the outcomes	met	<b>1.8a</b>	Differences between the language of instruction, home language, and language of assessment must be noted and implications considered for interpretation of the outcomes	met

## Reading

The Minimum Proficiency Level in reading for the end of lower primary schooling is described in ACER (2022) as: Students accurately read aloud and understand written words from familiar contexts. They retrieve explicit information from very short texts. When listening to slightly longer texts, they make simple inferences.

**Table 6:** OERA Text and Item Alignment

Text Type	Text Level	No. of Items at Text Level	No. of Items Above Text Level	No. of Item Not Aligned to GPF	Total Items
Illustration	Grade 2	6	1	1	8
Information	Grade 2	5	0	0	5
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 7:** Grade 2 Reading Domains, Constructs and Descriptors

Domain	Construct	Descriptor
Reading Comprehension	Retrieving Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the meaning of familiar words in a sentence.</li> <li>Locate most pieces of explicit information within a sentence when the information is prominent and there is no or limited competing information.</li> </ul>

**Table 8:** Grade 2 Reading Subconstructs and Descriptors of MPLs

Subconstruct		Description of Minimum Proficiency Level		No. of Items
R1.1	Recognize the meaning of common grade-level words	R1.1.1_E	Recognize the meaning of less common grade 2-level words (e.g., match a given word to an illustration or synonym or provide a brief spoken/signed definition).	4
R1.2	Retrieve explicit information in a grade-level text by direct- or close-word matching	R1.2.1_P	Retrieve a single piece of prominent, explicit information from a grade 2-level text by direct or close-word matching when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information. This will generally be in response to a "who," "what," "when," or "where" question.	3
		R1.2.1_E	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 2-level text by direct- or close-word matching when there is limited competing information. This will generally be in response to a "who," "what," "when," or "where" question.	4
		Total Items		11

One item whose text is at the grade 2 level is classified under the subconstruct R.2: Interpret information, a skill detailed in the GPF at Grade 3 and above. So, whilst the item aligns with the GPF, the skill required exceeds the grade of the text to which it is attached.

Items whose proficiency level is above that of the text level are classified under the subconstruct R.2: Interpret, whereby the students must make inferences by relating pieces of implicit information. This skill is detailed in the GPF at Grade 5 and above and applies to three items in the assessment. Only one item does not align with the GPF as it requires students to relate words in an item stem to the main text illustration. As this is not a synonymous word match and the item requires the student to match an image, it cannot be R1 retrieval which requires direct or close-word matching nor does the item require interpretation.

**Table 8:** OERA Text and Item Alignment

Text Type	Text Level	No. of Items at Text Level	No. of Items Above Text Level	No. of Item Not Aligned to GPF	Total Items
Story	Grade 3	5	3	0	8
	<b>Total Items</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

**Table 9:** Grade 3 Reading Domains, Constructs and Descriptors

Domain	Construct	Descriptor
Reading Comprehension	Retrieving Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the meaning of familiar words in a sentence.</li> <li>Locate most pieces of explicit information within a sentence when the information is prominent and there is no or limited competing information.</li> </ul>
	Interpreting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make simple inferences by relating two or more prominent pieces of explicitly stated information, when there is little or no competing information, in order to identify behaviours, feelings, events and factual information.</li> </ul>

**Table 10:** Grade 3 Reading Subconstructs and Descriptors of MPLs

Subconstruct		Description of Minimum Proficiency Level		No. of Items
R1.1	Recognize the meaning of common grade-level words	R1.1.1_M	Recognize the meaning of common grade 3-level words (e.g., match a given word to an illustration or synonym or provide a brief spoken/signed definition).	1
R1.2	Retrieve explicit information in a grade-level text by direct- or close-word matching	R1.2.1_M	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 3-level text by direct- or closeword matching when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is limited competing information. This will generally be in response to a "who," "what," "when," or "where" question.	3

<b>R2.2</b>	Make inferences in a grade-level text	<b>R2.2.1_E</b>	Make simple inferences in a grade 3-level text by relating two pieces of explicit information in one or more paragraphs when there is more distance between the pieces of information that need to be related and/or a lot of competing information. This will generally be in response to a "why" or "how" question.	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Items</b>				<b>5</b>

## Mathematics

The Minimum Proficiency Level in mathematics for the end of lower primary schooling is described in ACER (2022) as: Students recognise, read, write, order and compare whole numbers up to 100. They demonstrate computational skills involving the processes of addition, subtraction, doubling and halving for whole numbers within 20. They recognise and name familiar shapes and describe their basic attributes. They recognise time in days, weeks and months. They describe location in a space using simple language.

**Table 11:** OEMA Item Type and Alignment

Domain	Item Type	Items at Grade 2 Level	Items Above Grade 2 Level	Items Not Aligned to GPF	Total Items
Number and Operations	Multiple Choice	9	3	0	<b>12</b>
	Constructed Response	2	1	1	<b>4</b>
Non-Number and Operations	Multiple Choice	6	7	0	<b>13</b>
	Constructed Response	6	2	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>

**Table 12:** Grade 2 Mathematics Domains, Constructs and Descriptors

Domain	Construct	Descriptor
Number and Operations	Whole Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count, read, write, compare, and order whole numbers up to 100.</li> <li>Solve addition and subtraction problems within 20 that are presented concretely, pictorially, and symbolically.</li> <li>Divide a group of up to 20 objects into 2 equal sets.</li> <li>Solve simple real-world problems using addition and subtraction facts within 20.</li> </ul>
Measurement	Length, Weight, Capacity...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use non-standard units to measure and compare length and weight.</li> </ul>
	Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell time using an analogue clock to the nearest hour.</li> </ul>

	<b>Currency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count combinations of commonly used currency denominations.</li> <li>Combine commonly used currency denominations to make a specified amount.</li> </ul>
<b>Geometry</b>	<b>Spatial Visualisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compose/decompose a larger two-dimensional (2D) shape from a small number of given shapes without lines showing where the shapes go</li> </ul>
	<b>Properties of Shapes and Figures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and name shapes that are regular and irregular.</li> <li>Recognise and name straight and curved lines and attributes of shapes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Position and Direction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately use the terms left and right.</li> </ul>
<b>Statistics and Probability</b>	<b>Data Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare categories of simple data displays with up to four categories and a single unit scale.</li> </ul>
<b>Algebra</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend non-numerical repeating patterns, recognise repeating units, and identify a missing element.</li> </ul>

**Table 13:** Grade 2 Numbers and Operations Subconstructs and Descriptors of MPLs

<b>Subconstruct</b>		<b>Description of Minimum Proficiency Level</b>		<b>No. of Items</b>
<b>N1.1</b>	Identify and count in whole numbers, and identify their relative magnitude	<b>N1.1.1_P</b>	Count in whole numbers up to 30.	<b>1</b>
		<b>N1.1.2_M</b>	Read and write whole numbers up to 100 in words and in numerals.	<b>3</b>
<b>N1.3</b>	Solve operations using whole numbers	<b>N1.3.1_E</b>	Add and subtract within 30 (i.e., where the sum or minuend does not surpass 30), and represent these operations with objects, pictures, or symbols	<b>2</b>
		<b>N1.3.2_E</b>	Find the triple of a set of up to 10 objects, and divide a group of up to 30 objects into 3 equal sets	<b>2</b>
		<b>N1.3.3_M</b>	Perform calculations involving two or more additions and subtractions, within the limits for meets expectations described above, when order of operations is not a factor	<b>1</b>
<b>N1.4</b>	Solve real-world problems involving whole numbers	<b>N1.4.1_E</b>	Solve simple real-world problems using addition and subtraction facts within 20 (i.e., where the sum or minuend does not surpass 20)	<b>1</b>
		<b>N1.4.1_M</b>	Solve simple real-world problems using addition and subtraction facts within 10 (i.e., where the sum or minuend does not surpass 10)	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Items</b>				<b>11</b>

**Table 14:** Grade 2 Non-Numbers and Operations Subconstructs and Descriptors of MPLs

Subconstruct		Description of Minimum Proficiency Level			No. of Items
<b>M1.1</b>	Use non-standard and standard units to measure, compare, and order	<b>M1.1.1_M</b>	Use non-standard units to estimate and compare the length of objects		<b>1</b>
		<b>M1.1.1_E</b>	Use non-standard units to estimate or measure volume/capacity		<b>2</b>
<b>M2.1</b>	Tell time	<b>M2.1.2_E</b>	Recognize the number of hours in a day, minutes in an hour, and seconds in a minute		<b>1</b>
<b>M3.1</b>	Use different currency units to create amounts	<b>M3.1.1_M</b>	Count combinations of commonly used currency denominations		<b>1</b>
<b>G1.1</b>	Recognize and describe shapes and figures	<b>G1.1.1_E</b>	Recognize and name two-dimensional shapes and familiar three-dimensional figures in everyday life		<b>1</b>
<b>G2.1</b>	Compose and decompose shapes and figures	<b>G2.1.1_M</b>	Compose/decompose a larger two dimensional shape from a small number of given shapes without lines showing where the shapes go		<b>2</b>
<b>S1.1</b>	Retrieve and interpret data presented in displays	<b>S1.1.1_M</b>	Compare between categories of a tally chart, bar graph, or pictograph with up to four categories and a single-unit scale, using terms such as more than or less than		<b>3</b>
<b>A1.1</b>	Recognize, describe, extend, and generate patterns	<b>A1.1.1_M</b>	Copy repeating patterns of items such as colors, shapes, and sounds		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Items</b>					<b>12</b>

**Table 15:** Non-Grade 2 Subconstructs and Descriptors of MPLs

Subconstruct		Description of Minimum Proficiency Level		No. of Items	Grade Level
<b>N1.3</b>	Solve operations using whole numbers	<b>N1.3.3_P</b>	Perform calculations involving two or more operations, within the limits for partially meets expectations described above, when order of operations is not a factor	2	3
<b>N2.1</b>	Identify and represent fractions using objects, pictures, and symbols, and identify relative magnitude	<b>N2.1.1_P</b>	Identify everyday unit fractions (e.g., $1/2$ ; $1/3$ ; $1/4$ ) represented as objects or pictures (as part of a whole or part of a set) in fractional notation	2	3
<b>M1.1</b>	Use non-standard and standard units to measure, compare, and order	<b>M1.1.2_M</b>	Select and use appropriate standard units to measure and compare capacity/volume when measurements involve whole numbers only	1	4
		<b>M1.2.1_P</b>	Solve problems, including real-world problems, involving the perimeter of a rectangle using concrete or pictorial	2	4

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Subconstruct		Description of Minimum Proficiency Level		No. of Items	Grade Level
<b>N1.3</b>	Solve operations using whole numbers	<b>N1.3.3_P</b>	Perform calculations involving two or more operations, within the limits for partially meets expectations described above, when order of operations is not a factor	2	3
<b>G1.1</b>	Recognize and describe shapes and figures	<b>G1.1.1_E</b>	Recognize and name two-dimensional shapes by a written or spoken description of their simple attributes	1	3
<b>G3.1</b>	Describe the position and direction of objects in space	<b>G3.1.1_M</b>	Accurately use the terms left and right, and use simple maps to describe locations using positional terms	1	3
<b>S2.1</b>	Describe the likelihood of events in different ways	<b>S2.1.1_P</b>	Identify the likelihood of an event happening as certain or impossible	1	5
<b>A1.1</b>	Recognize, describe, extend, and generate patterns	<b>A1.1.1_M</b>	Describe numerical patterns that increase or decrease by a constant value with a simple rule, and use this information to identify a missing element or extend the pattern	2	4
<b>A3.2</b>	Demonstrate an understanding of equivalency	<b>A3.2.3_M</b>	Represent real-world addition and subtraction problems within 20 using a number sentence with a symbol or blank to represent the missing value	1	4
				<b>Total Items</b>	<b>13</b>

## OECS Regional Assessment Framework

The OECS *Curriculum and Assessment Framework* (2022) outlines three foundational principles of assessment designed to ensure fairness, validity, and alignment with the OECS vision of fostering “an educated person.” These principles—Learner-Centred, Informs Teaching and Learning, and Balanced—support an assessment culture that empowers learners and educators alike (OECS Commission, 2022).

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Although the OECS Early Grade Reading Assessment (OERA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) are designed to produce reliable, cross-national quantitative data at a key learning milestone, they maintain a low-stakes, diagnostic orientation. These instruments are built not only to measure whether regional outcomes have been achieved but also to provide baseline data for tracking progress over time. In line with the *Curriculum and Assessment Framework*, this data will help educators, Ministries of Education, and stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of reform initiatives and identify areas for continuous improvement across curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems (OECS Commission, 2022; [UIS, 2019](#)).

### **OERA Design and Alignment**

The OECS Early Grade Reading Assessment (OERA) is specifically designed to monitor student progress at a pivotal moment of literacy development—when expectations shift from the Early to the Transitional stage of reading. This stage is characterized by students engaging with increasingly complex text structures and transitioning from oral to silent reading as their primary means of text processing (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). The OERA’s design supports the generation of actionable insights that can inform school-level planning, guide the strategic use of classroom resources, and support differentiated instruction tailored to a diverse range of learners across the region (OECS Commission, 2022; [UIS, 2022](#)).

Recognizing that student progress varies considerably during this stage, the OERA provides a variety of reading experiences to reflect developmental differences and ensure fair opportunities for learners to demonstrate their skills. While the pilot administration in 2024 included an oral reading component—aligned with international early grade reading assessment practices such as those in the *EGRA Toolkit* (RTI International, 2016)—regional experts ultimately determined that the burden imposed by oral administration outweighed the diagnostic value. Key concerns included logistical complexity, financial sustainability, and assessment fatigue among students and teachers ([UIS, 2020](#)). As a result, the revised instrument maintains alignment with the new OECS Harmonized Primary Curriculum and omits oral reading to streamline administration without compromising the quality of data collected. Table 16 outlines the updated table of specifications for the version of the OERA scheduled for administration in May 2025.

**Table 16:** Revised Table of Specification for OERA

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Genre	Passage	Marks	Cognitive Levels	Difficulty Levels
<b>Fiction 38%</b>	The Gift	8	Literal 25% Inferential 50% Analytical 25%	Easy 53% Medium 30% Difficult 17%
<b>Visual 24%</b>	Children’s Fair	8	Literal 50% Inferential 12% Analytical 38%	Easy 48% Medium 28% Difficult 24%
<b>Nonfiction 38%</b>	Okapi	5	Literal 60% Inferential 20% Analytical 20%	Easy 68% Medium 23% Difficult 9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3 passages</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Literal 42% Inferential 29% Analytical 29%</b>	<b>Easy 66% Medium 23% Difficult 11%</b>

#### *OHPC Essential Learning Outcomes*

In support of creating a more focused and efficient curriculum, the OECS Learning Standards and accompanying Curriculum Guides were intentionally designed to streamline the scope and sequence of content across grade levels. This approach reduces unnecessary repetition and redundancy, while introducing spiral learning—a pedagogical strategy in which key concepts are revisited and expanded upon over time to deepen learners’ understanding (OECS Commission, 2022). This intentional design promotes a *lean curriculum* model, ensuring clarity and coherence in instructional delivery and allowing educators to devote adequate time to foundational concepts.

The *OECS Harmonized Primary Curriculum (OHPC)* for Language Arts builds upon this structure by providing educators with opportunities not only to leverage existing best practices, but also to implement research-driven pedagogical shifts. These shifts aim to improve inclusivity and effectiveness in instruction, ensuring that every learner is supported in achieving literacy success (OECS Commission, 2022). While the Language Arts curriculum is composed of three interrelated sub-strands—Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Representing—the OECS Early Grade Reading Assessment (OERA) specifically focuses on *Reading and Viewing*. Within this domain, students engage with a variety of written and visual texts and are expected to apply strategies related to comprehension, vocabulary, structure, and critical thinking. The Essential Learning Outcomes covered in the OERA are outlined in the table that follows.

**Table 17:** OHPC Essential Learning Outcomes for Language Arts

ELO1	Explore, use, and critically apply oral language for pleasure, personal growth, to form and foster relationships and to develop an appreciation and celebration of culture and of oral languages.	
ELO2	Demonstrate a variety of ways to select and engage critically with a range of culturally diverse paper based, visual and digital texts for a variety of purposes, including pleasure, and personal growth.	✓

ELO3	Demonstrate a variety of ways to use background knowledge and interests to select and engage critically with a range of culturally diverse paper based, visual, and digital texts for pleasure and personal growth.	✓
ELO4	Develop their understanding of how an author's choice of vocabulary, language, genre, text form, text features and style influence the meaning of text and define the author's craft.	✓
ELO5	Generate, gather, and organise thoughts to explore, clarify and reflect on ideas, feelings, and experiences as they create a written or representative draft, independently and collaboratively, for a range of audiences and purposes.	
ELO6	Revise the organisation, and language use (vocabulary and grammar) drafted writing or representation, collaboratively and independently, for a variety of purposes and audiences.	
ELO7	Use knowledge of spoken language, written language and writing conventions to refine the precision and enhance the meaning and clarity of their written work.	

### OEMA Design and Alignment

The design of the OECS Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) ensures that students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate a comprehensive range of mathematical understanding. This includes factual knowledge (recall of basic mathematical facts and information), conceptual knowledge (understanding of mathematical principles and relationships), and procedural knowledge (application of methods and rules to solve problems). This structure aligns with internationally recognized models of mathematical cognition and assessment frameworks used in early grade diagnostics ([UNESCO UIS, 2025](#); OECS Commission, 2022).

The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and mathematical processes that Grade 2 students are expected to demonstrate are defined across six core content strands: Number Sense (N), Operations with Numbers (O), Patterns and Relationships (PR), Geometric Thinking (G), Measurement (M), and Data Handling and Probability (D). These content areas reflect the structure outlined in both the OECS Learning Standards for Mathematics and the Harmonized Primary Curriculum for Mathematics, ensuring curriculum alignment and regional comparability (OECS Commission, 2018; [CXC, 2021](#)). The revised table of specifications for the OEMA, designed to ensure balanced coverage across domains and cognitive levels, is presented below.

**Table 18:** OEMA Table of Specifications

Content Strand	Marks						Total Marks	
	Factual (all SR)	Conceptual		Procedural				
		SR	CR	SR	CR			
<b>Number Sense</b>	2	3	2				<b>7</b>	
<b>Operation With Numbers</b>	1	5		1	5		<b>12</b>	

<b>Patterns &amp; Relationships</b>		2			3	<b>5</b>
<b>Geometrical Thinking</b>	2	1			2	<b>5</b>
<b>Measurement</b>	3	3	1		1	<b>8</b>
<b>Data Handling &amp; Probability</b>	1	1	1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Marks</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>41</b>

#### *OHPC Essential Learning Outcomes*

The revised OECS Harmonized Primary Curriculum (OHPC) for Mathematics seeks to cultivate learners who are both creative and critical thinkers, capable of applying logic, problem-solving techniques, investigative methods, organizational skills, and sound reasoning. The curriculum redesign drew on international pedagogical research to streamline the scope and sequence across grade levels by eliminating unnecessary repetition and fostering deep, spiraled learning where key concepts are revisited and expanded over time ([CXC, 2021](#); OECS Commission, 2022). The Essential Learning Outcomes for Grade 2 Mathematics, which are assessed by the OEMA, are described in Table 19.

**Table 19:** OHPC Essential Learning Outcomes for Grade 2 Mathematics

<b>Number Sense</b>	<b>Whole Number</b>	
	<b>N1.1</b>	Saying Number Sequence, Meaningful Counting and Skip Counting
	<b>N1.2</b>	Representing and Partitioning Quantities
<b>Fractions, Decimals and Rational Numbers</b>		
	<b>N2.1</b>	Representing Fractions
	<b>N2.2</b>	Comparing and Ordering Fractions
<b>Operations with Numbers</b>	<b>Additive Thinking</b>	
	<b>O1.1</b>	Understanding the Meaning of Addition and Subtraction and how they Related
	<b>O1.2</b>	Compute Fluently Using Operations (+,-)
	<b>Multiplicative Thinking</b>	
	<b>O2.1</b>	Understanding the Meaning of Multiplication and Division and How They Relate
<b>Patterns and Relationships</b>	<b>Recognizing, describing and extending patterns</b>	
	<b>P1.2</b>	Increasing and Decreasing Pattern
	<b>Variables and Relationships</b>	

	<b>P2.3</b> Writing Expressions and Equations
<b>Geometrical Thinking</b>	<b>Explore and Analyze Geometric Shapes and Relationships</b>
	<b>G1.2</b> Sorting, Patterning and Building with 2D & 3D Shapes
	<b>Recognizing, Naming, and Describing Shapes</b>
	<b>G2.1</b> Analysing and describing shapes
	<b>G2.2</b> Naming 2D & 3D Shapes
	<b>G2.3</b> Describing Relationships Between and Among Shapes
<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Understanding What and How we Measure</b>
	<b>M1.1</b> Developing an Understanding of Measurable Attributes
	<b>M1.2</b> Comparing and Ordering Based on Measurable Attributes
	<b>M1.4</b> Developing and Applying Standard Units of Measure
	<b>Applying Techniques, Tools and Formulas for Measuring</b>
	<b>M2.1</b> Developing Personal Referents for Measuring Attributes
	<b>M2.2</b> Using Tools to Measure Attributes
	<b>M2.3</b> Developing and Applying Formulae for Measuring
<b>Data Handling</b>	<b>Collecting, Organizing, and Displaying Data</b>
	<b>D1.2</b> Collecting, Organizing, Displaying and Communicating Data
	<b>Using Statistical Methods to Analyse Data</b>
	<b>D2.3</b> Predicting and describing the likelihood of events.

## **Administration**

The Silent Reading Comprehension section of the OECS Early Reading Assessment (OERA) evaluates how Grade 2 students independently read and understand text. Following a short introduction from the Invigilator, students read passages and answer multiple-choice questions silently on their own. Invigilators supervise to ensure correct navigation and provide support as needed. While not timed, each passage usually takes 10–15 minutes, with extra time allowed if necessary. Students receive a booklet, answer sheet, and writing materials. If they finish early, feel stressed, or struggle with a question, they are encouraged to take a break or return to the question later.

The OECS Early Mathematics Assessment (OEMA) is a group-administered assessment for Grade 2 students, designed to help teachers understand students' mathematical knowledge and skills to improve lesson planning. The assessment includes a selected response section, where students answer multiple-choice questions after the Invigilator reads each one aloud. Students receive an assessment booklet, answer sheet, working paper, and writing tools, and are encouraged to show their working and take their time. Though not timed, most students complete each question within two minutes. A short break is given after 30 minutes, and students are reassured they can revisit unanswered questions at the end.

The OEMA constructed response section requires students to write their answers and show their working directly in a response booklet. As with the selected response, the Invigilator reads each question aloud while students follow silently, then work independently. Students are provided with a pencil, eraser, ruler, and the response booklet. Upon completion of each section, Invigilators collect and secure all materials for submission to the national assessment authorities. Throughout the process, Invigilators aim to keep students at ease, offer support as needed, and ensure a smooth transition back to classroom activities after the assessment.

## **Scoring**

To maintain consistency across all assessments, a standardized process for grading and scoring will be implemented. Students' responses to the multiple-choice questions will be scored automatically while scorers of the constructed response component of the OEMA will be trained in the use of rubrics and scoring guidelines to ensure fairness and uniformity across all centers. A representative sample of constructed response scripts will be selected after administering the assessment. This sample will include scripts from different grading thresholds to ensure a diverse review during the standardization process.

Post-scoring of constructed responses, moderators will engage in a moderation process to ensure consistency. The moderation process is an essential quality assurance step that ensures scoring reliability and consistency across various evaluators. Specifically tailored to address the complexities of assessing open-ended responses, this process guarantees that each response is evaluated fairly and accurately, adhering to standardized scoring criteria.

Member States will select experienced educators or assessment experts who understand the subject matter and the assessment standards.

## Reporting Procedures

Reporting is a core component of the OECS Early Reading and Mathematics Assessments (OERA and OEMA), ensuring that data generated from the assessments informs classroom practice, school improvement, national education planning, and international reporting obligations under SDG 4.1.1a. Table 6 shows a summary of the reporting process:

**Table 16:** Description of reporting process

Phase	Description
<b>National and International Reporting</b>	Summary statistics and proficiency classifications will be disaggregated by grade, gender, country, and school type. All analyses will conform to the UIS reporting framework for SDG 4.1.1a
<b>Population-Level Estimates</b>	In line with UIS criteria, results will be based on the full eligible population of students in Grade 2. Subgroups systematically excluded or missing due to absenteeism will be analyzed and reported, and their potential effect on representativeness assessed
<b>Documentation and Transparency</b>	All analytical procedures, coding frameworks, psychometric results, and decision rules (e.g., exclusion of unreliable items) will be fully documented in the final technical report

To address the diverse needs of stakeholders, the OECS will implement a **tiered reporting system** tailored to different audiences:

**Table 17:** OECS Reporting Strategy

Stakeholder	Purpose	Content	Format	Delivery
<b>Teachers and Schools</b>	Inform instructional planning and identify student learning needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual student performance reports (including scaled scores and proficiency bands)</li> <li>Class and school-level summaries showing distribution of performance</li> <li>Suggested instructional strategies based on item-level analysis and skill domains</li> </ul>	Simplified printable reports with visual aids (e.g., charts, proficiency color bands)	Through national assessment units and Ministry focal points, supported by training sessions on interpretation and classroom application
<b>National Governments and OECS Commission</b>	Support system-level monitoring, resource allocation, and policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaggregated summary statistics by grade, gender, school type, and Member State</li> <li>Analysis of performance trends, subgroup disparities, and contextual correlations</li> <li>Participation and exclusion rates aligned to UIS coverage criteria</li> </ul>	National and OECS-level reports, policy briefs, and technical appendices	Digitally via secure portals and formal presentation to ministries and stakeholders
<b>International Reporting to UIS (SDG 4.1.1a)</b>	Fulfill global education monitoring obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of students achieving the Minimum Proficiency Level in Reading and Mathematics by grade and gender</li> <li>Documentation of population coverage, test reliability, item performance, and exclusion rates</li> </ul>	Structured technical report aligned to UIS metadata and	Coordinated submission through the OECS Commission to UIS via official reporting channels

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with UIS data specifications and metadata requirements</li> </ul>	submission formats	
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