

Educator Update: Foundation Skills Assessment Redesign

June 2017



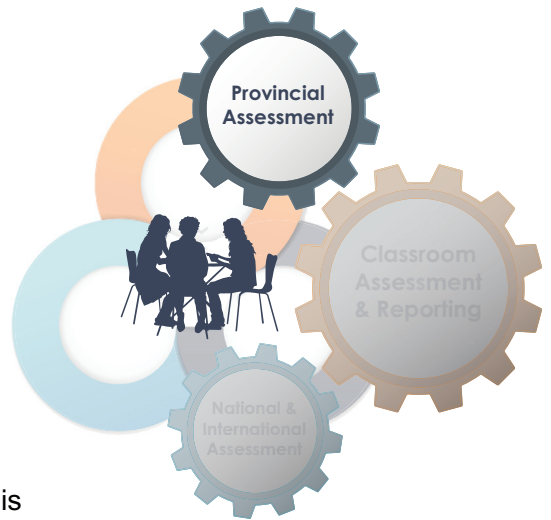
The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is an annual assessment of students' reading, writing and numeracy skills. FSA is British Columbia's earliest provincial indicator of student performance and provides strong evidence of future student achievement. The FSA has been redesigned over the last two years with BC educators and the Ministry is pleased to be sharing this information.

The FSA is written in Grades 4 and 7 and is the first provincially administered assessment in which students participate.

The purpose of the FSA is to:

1. provide system-level information on student performance
2. provide districts and schools with information on student performance
3. support decision making for various purposes

The new FSA will be administered in the fall of 2017, which means teachers will have student results earlier in the school year. This information is intended to support decision making in the classroom and at the school. A new student reporting format is being developed to include descriptive, strength-based language.



Foundation Skills Assessment Development

BC provincial assessments, including the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), have been improved and now align with BC's new curriculum. Teams of educators from across the province have been working since December 2015 to develop the new FSA, which is built on the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment. Following those recommendations, a working group of teachers, administrators, and measurement experts provided a general design for the new assessments.

Quick FSA Facts

- ➔ Assesses reading, writing, and numeracy
- ➔ Administered October 2-November 10, 2017
- ➔ Includes 10-minute group collaboration activity
- ➔ Offers students choice of reading themes
- ➔ Includes engaging online questions
- ➔ Takes approximately 4.5 hours to administer
- ➔ Results returned in the fall
- ➔ Student reports have a new look
- ➔ One-day marking refresher offered in August, 2017
- ➔ Marking remains at the local level



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The new FSA components

The new FSA has four components. With this new design, students are given engaging ways to interact with the assessment, reflect on their thinking, and communicate their understanding. This new structure evolved from discussions with and advice from the FSA Redesign Working Group on having the assessment better mirror classroom practices.

Collaboration component

The FSA begins with a short group collaboration activity to engage students, build connections with their knowledge and experience, and have them choose one of the reading themes.



Student booklet/Written component

Connecting with the collaboration activity, the written component provides students with a choice of reading themes that interest them. Students read the texts, provide written answers to show their understanding, and complete a writing task. Students also complete numeracy tasks that allow them to show their numeracy skills.

Online component

The online component of the new FSA includes engaging and interactive questions in reading and numeracy. Students answer questions by clicking and dragging, highlighting, selecting from a drop-down menu, or entering their numerical response. Online items reflect a range of difficulty and complexity.

Self-reflection component

The fourth component of the new FSA concludes with students reflecting on and analyzing their own experiences in the process and the assessment tasks. This component provides feedback from a student perspective and relates to the Thinking and Communication Core Competencies.



The new collaboration and self-reflection components provide opportunities for students to engage in the assessment in a more meaningful way. These components will not be scored.





What is the same?	What is new?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed by BC educators• Assesses reading, writing, and numeracy• Is administered in Grades 4 and 7• Includes online and written components• Takes approximately the same length of time to administer as the prior FSA• Is scored locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is administered in October/November instead of January/February• Includes group collaboration activity• Includes a choice of reading themes• Uses a variety of engaging question formats• Includes student self-reflection• Is reported on a proficiency scale

Field-testing

In the fall of 2016, the new FSA was field-tested in public and independent schools across the province. Assessment questions from the field test were refined according to statistical assessment data. Feedback from schools that administered the field test was also collected and considered. External experts, including experts in measurement, assessment, and language and mathematics instruction, reviewed the assessment design and final questions.

Administration

The new FSA will be administered in Grades 4 and 7 in October/November. This means that teachers will have their student results earlier in the school year, providing information on what students know, can do, and understand. This information is intended to support decision making related to interventions, planning, resource allocation, curriculum, policy, and research. A new student reporting format is being developed to include descriptive, strength-based language. As the assessment is taking place early in the year, the assessment is based on the end-of-year profiles for Grade 3 and Grade 6.

The FSA will take approximately 4.5 hours to complete and can be done over the course of the six-week assessment period.

Marking

The marking method for the new FSA will remain the same. School districts and the Federation of Independent Schools (FISA) will receive funding for marking activities, and marking will be done locally. The Ministry will continue to provide marking supports, such as scoring guides and student exemplars.

A one-day, optional marking refresh training session will take place in August, 2017. The Ministry will pay a stipend and expenses for one person per school district and representatives from FISA to participate in the refresh training session. Information on this activity will be provided to districts and FISA in June.





Reporting results

Student results will be available in two increments:

- ➔ Immediately following the scoring and score entry, raw-score student reports (including the student reflection component), will be available to schools (October/November 2017).
- ➔ Following standard setting, final student summary reports including categorization on proficiency levels will be available. In the first year of the new FSA, this report will be available in February 2018.

What's next?

June 2017	Sample FSA and specifications posted online
July 4, 2017	Inform the Ministry of attendees; FSA marking refresher
August 21, 2017	FSA marking refresh training session in Richmond, BC
September 2017	FSA administration package and parent information available for districts
October 2–November 10, 2017	FSA administration
November 24, 2017	FSA score entry deadline
November 2017	Student raw-score reports
January 2018	Standard setting session
February 2018	Final student summary reports

What is Standard Setting?

Standard setting is a process of making expert judgements about student performance. Educators determine what performance should look like for each proficiency level category. The proficiency level categories planned for FSA include Emerging → On Track → Extending.

The descriptors for the proficiency levels will be strength-based and descriptive.



The assessment specifications and a full sample of the new FSA are available online.





Foundation Skills Assessment Structure

Collaboration Activity

Collaboration Activity

- Classroom-based
- Introduces and explores themes
- Supports student choice
- Interactive and collaborative
- Strengthens engagement

STUDENT BOOKLET

Reading: Theme 1

Informational text
1 question

Literary text
1 question
1 connecting question

or

Reading: Theme 2

Informational text
1 question

Literary text
1 question
1 connecting question

Reading

- Provides choice of themes
- Open-ended questions encourage cognitive rigour
- Questions structured to scaffold the connections between the big ideas within the texts

Writing

1 writing prompt

Writing

- Students create and communicate their thoughts and ideas from a writing prompt
- Writing purpose and audience may vary

Numeracy

3 numeracy questions

Numeracy

- Students solve a real-life problem that requires them to use numeracy skills
- Open-ended format encourages cognitive rigour
- Based on the Mathematics Curricular Competencies

Self-Reflection

1 open-ended question

Reflection

- Students reflect on their assessment experience
- Focuses on the Core Competencies of Thinking and Communicating

ONLINE

Reading

5 texts 30 questions

Reading

- Students read and respond to a variety of texts
- Engaging questions
- Questions reflect a range of difficulty and complexity

Numeracy

<i>Number</i>	<i>Computational Fluency</i>	<i>Patterning</i>	<i>Geometry and Measurement</i>	<i>Data and Probability</i>
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30 questions

Numeracy

- Students respond to items related to Mathematics Curricular Competencies and Content
- Engaging questions
- Questions reflect a range of difficulty and complexity

Self-Reflection

1 multiple-choice response
1 open-ended question

Reflection

- Explores student learning and attitudes
- Provides feedback from students

