

Nova Scotia Assessments in grades 3, 6, and 8 gather information about students' independent performance based on selected curriculum outcomes in reading, writing, and mathematics/mathématiques. The curriculum outcomes for each grade level and subject area can be found at <https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/>.

Nova Scotia Assessments are developed with teachers and the Student Assessment and Evaluation division at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Teachers from across the province are involved in various stages of the development and scoring of Nova Scotia Assessments.

Nova Scotia Assessments provide

- teachers with information to help plan instruction
- parents and guardians with information about how their child is doing in reading, writing, and/or mathematics/mathématiques
- the department, regions, and schools with information to help make decisions

Student performance is reported across four levels in reading, writing, and mathematics/mathématiques. Level 3 is the expectation for all subject areas assessed. "Expectation" means the level of performance expected for students to continue meeting the learning demands in the subject areas assessed. These performance levels are discussed in more detail in the following sections. (Note: Grade 3 French immersion students write only the mathématiques portion of the assessment because they begin formal English language arts instruction only at the beginning of grade 3.)

## Reading

On Nova Scotia Assessments, students read a variety of grade-level texts which include narrative, information, poetry, and visual texts. Then they answer questions to show how well they understand what they read. The four performance levels are described below. Level 3 is the expectation.

### **Nova Scotia Assessments: Reading Performance Levels**

- Level 1:** When independently reading grade-level text, students at performance Level 1 can find information that is clearly stated in the text. They can also infer information that is not directly stated but is clearly suggested in the text.
- Level 2:** When independently reading grade-level text, students at performance Level 2 can use information from the text to form a conclusion. They can use some text features like pictures and titles to help them understand the text. They can also make sense of some abstract language in the text; for example, they may understand that a person who feels "blue" is sad.
- Level 3:** When independently reading grade-level text, students at performance Level 3 can understand how different parts of the text fit together. They can make connections among information in different parts of the text and use the connections to form their own conclusions.
- Level 4:** When independently reading grade-level text, students at performance Level 4 can analyze and evaluate information from the text. They can also make complicated connections among parts of the text to form their own conclusions.

## Writing

On Nova Scotia Assessments, students complete two writing tasks. Teachers from across the province score writing in the following four areas.

**Ideas:** includes main ideas and supporting details

**Organization:** includes an orderly presentation of ideas

**Language Use:** includes word choice and style

**Conventions:** includes such things as punctuation, grammar, and spelling

The scores from these areas are combined into an overall writing performance level. The four performance levels are described below. Level 3 is the expectation.

### **Nova Scotia Assessments: Writing Performance Levels**

- Level 1:** When independently writing grade-level texts, students at performance Level 1 generally include a main idea that is not developed with details, or a main idea is not present. The writing shows little evidence of organization and includes few or no transitions. Students use language (voice, word choice, sentence style) that contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use. They use conventions that contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.
- Level 2:** When independently writing grade-level texts, students at performance Level 2 generally include a main idea that is evident and somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant. The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions. Students use language (voice, word choice, sentence style) that contributes to vague or mechanical writing. They use some correct conventions that contribute to coherent communication.
- Level 3:** When independently writing grade-level texts, students at performance Level 3 generally include a clear main idea that is developed through relevant details. The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions. Students use language (voice, word choice, sentence style) that contributes to clear and fluid writing. They use a variety of generally correct conventions that contribute to effective communication.
- Level 4:** When independently writing grade-level texts, students at performance Level 4 generally include a distinct main idea that is developed through vivid and relevant details. The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions. Students use language (voice, word choice, sentence style) that contributes to vivid and skillful writing. They use a variety of consistently correct conventions that contribute to enhanced communication.

The rubric that teachers use to score writing can be found on the Documents tab for each respective assessment at <https://plans.ednet.ns.ca/nova-scotia-assessments>.

## **Mathematics/Mathématiques**

On Nova Scotia Assessments, students complete questions involving number, patterns/relations, measurement, geometry, and statistics/probability. Computation, estimation, and problem-solving skills are embedded within the assessment. Questions are designed to assess how fully a student understands mathematics. French immersion students write the mathematics portion of the assessment in French. The four performance levels are described below. Level 3 is the expectation.

### **Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics/Mathématiques Performance Levels**

- Level 1:** When working independently on grade-level questions, students at Level 1 can generally solve problems when they are simple and clearly stated or where the method to solve the problem is suggested to them. They can do some basic operations but may not understand when each operation should be used. They can recognize some math terms and symbols, mainly from earlier grades.
- Level 2:** When working independently on grade-level questions, students at Level 2 can generally solve problems similar to problems they have seen before. They depend on a few familiar methods to solve problems. They can usually do basic operations and can usually understand where they should be used. They can understand and use some grade-level math terms and symbols.
- Level 3:** When working independently on grade-level questions, students at Level 3 can generally solve problems that involve several steps and may solve problems they have not seen before. They can apply number operations correctly and can judge whether an answer makes sense. They can understand and use many math terms and symbols.
- Level 4:** When working independently on grade-level questions, students at Level 4 can solve new and complex problems. They can apply number operations with ease. They can think carefully about whether an answer makes sense. They find math terms and symbols easy to use and to understand.

## Questions and Answers

### **When are Nova Scotia Assessments administered?**

- The grade 3 assessment is written at the end of the school year and is based on selected reading, writing, and mathematics/mathématiques outcomes for the end of grade 3.
- The grade 6 assessment is written at the beginning of the school year and is based on selected reading, writing, and mathematics/mathématiques outcomes for the end of grade 5.
- The grade 8 assessment is written at the end of the school year and is based on selected reading, writing, and mathematics/mathématiques outcomes for the end of grade 8.

### **Will the Student Assessment Report affect a student's report card mark?**

No, the Student Assessment Report is intended to provide additional information to help teachers make decisions about instruction in the classroom.

### **Why does the Student Assessment Report show a different level of performance than described on a student's report card?**

The Nova Scotia Assessment is one type of assessment, and its purpose is to provide information about a student's independent performance on selected curriculum outcomes during specific assessment dates. A student's report card summarizes student learning over several months and is based on many types of assessment. When used in combination with classroom assessment information, assessment results may help to inform next steps for instruction.

### **Why does the Student Assessment Report show a different level of performance than expected?**

There may be many reasons. The Student Assessment Report reflects student performance on only the Nova Scotia Assessment. You may want to speak with your child's teacher about these results and other evidence of your child's learning.

### **Why does the Student Assessment Report indicate "Not Enough Evidence (NE)"?**

The student did not complete enough work on the assessment to allow us to determine a performance level. "Not Enough Evidence (NE)" does not mean that student performance was below Level 1.

### **Where can I go for more information?**

If you have questions about your child's results, please contact your child's teacher(s). If you would like more information about Nova Scotia Assessments, please go to <https://plans.ednet.ns.ca/nova-scotia-assessments>.