

# Illinois ISAT Test Prep

## Standardized Tests in Illinois

### Overview of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)



If you have a child in elementary, middle or high school in Illinois, then you need to know about the standardized tests your child will be taking. To comply with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Illinois administers

standardized tests to students beginning in 3rd grade through high school.

In Illinois, students in 3rd through 8th grade take a standards-based test called the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). Standards-based means that test items are based on grade-specific Illinois academic content standards.

The ISAT tests third through eighth grade students in reading and math. Students in 3rd, 5th, 6th and 8th grade also take a writing test, while students

in 4th and 7th grade take a science test. In addition, schools can choose to administer ISAT tests in physical development and health, social science and fine arts.

### Additional Illinois Standardized Tests

Illinois also administers the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), another state standards-based test, to students in 11th grade. The PSAE tests students in reading, math, science and writing. The PSAE is combined with the ACT college entrance exam and two ACT WorkKeys assessments. The ACT test measures students' knowledge in math, science, reading, writing and English to ascertain whether they are prepared for college. The ACT WorkKeys assessments determine if students are job-ready by testing their reading and applied mathematics skills.

PSAE test scores are not a requirement for promotion or graduation. However, PSAE scores are included on high school transcripts and show which students earned Prairie State Achievement Awards for excellent performance on the test.

### What do the ISAT Test Scores Mean?

For the ISAT, students receive one of four scores

for each of the subject areas tested:

- Exceeds standards
- Meets standards
- Below standards
- Academic warning

ISAT test scores alone do not determine if a student will be promoted to the next grade or held back. However, students who receive low scores in reading, math, science or writing might need additional instruction in those subject areas.

### Preparing for Illinois' ISAT Test

For general tips on test preparation, please visit our [standardized test overview page](#). The real preparation for the ISAT, and all standardized tests that assess a wide range of fundamental skills, is to steadily build and master skills in math, reading and writing fundamentals.

Parents can help students succeed in school by making a special effort to get involved in their children's education. **You should ensure your children are doing their homework every night and reading and writing on a daily basis.** In addition, families can hire tutors or use online learning

programs to supplement their children's schoolwork and help to build fundamental skills.

To help your children prepare for state standardized tests such as Illinois' ISAT, you can ask your children's teachers for advice, enroll your children in a test prep program or buy books to help them become familiar with test formats and terminology, to learn test-taking strategies (when to guess, when not to), to become comfortable with time restrictions, and to practice answering different types of questions.

For instance, when a reading passage is followed by comprehension questions, many test prep programs teach students to scan the questions prior to reading the passage so that they can pay special attention to the areas addressed by questions.

Most states release copies of tests or sample test questions from previous years. Parents can use these released test questions as resources to help students practice test skills and students can spend the majority of their time reviewing the key concepts within the sample test questions.

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