The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a standardized test that measures how well students have learned the skills they are supposed to learn in middle school and high school. TAKS tests are a good way to measure what students are learning. Each public school in Texas must teach the same curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (also called the TEKS). The TAKS tests are based on this curriculum—in other words, on what students are being taught in school.

Therefore, the TAKS tests are a good way to measure what students are learning.

Students must be able to show that they can improve the organization and development of ideas in a piece of writing. (Objective 3)

When your child took the TAKS writing test, he or she had to write a composition and take a multiple-choice section that assessed his or her revising and editing skills. (Objective 1 and 2)

How did my child do on TAKS?

Every child who takes a TAKS test gets a report of his or her score. This report is called the Confidential Student Report, or CSR. By carefully examining your child's CSR, you will find out where your child is doing well and where your child may need to improve. For example, if your child has done well on a TAKS test, it is a good indicator that your child is learning what he or she needs to learn in that subject. Remember, the TAKS test cannot test everything that your child is learning. However, your child's score will give you a good idea about the progress he or she is making. If your child did not receive a score on a TAKS test and you do not understand why, please contact his or her school.

If your child receives special education services, he or she may have taken TAKS (Accommodated). While the questions on TAKS (Accommodated) and TAKS are identical, the format of TAKS (Accommodated) is different in these ways: the questions are printed in a larger type size, and there are fewer questions on each page. Also, your child may have been allowed to take this assessment with more accommodations. These supports are intended to help your child show his or her best performance on the test.

Why am I receiving this brochure?

This brochure has three purposes:

• to provide you with a short summary of each objective on the subject-area tests so that you will know what knowledge and skills that objective tested.

• to explain a sample test report so that you can understand your child’s actual test report. The actual test report, which has your child’s name on it and shows his or her test results, has been sent to your child’s school and should accompany this brochure.

• to give you some basic information about the TAKS program.

What is TAKS?

TAKS is the name of the testing program for students in Texas public schools. The letters stand for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

Understanding the Confidential Student Report

A Guide for Parents

Who takes TAKS?

Public school students in grades 3 through 11 take TAKS tests every spring. The chart below shows which subject-area tests are given each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Area</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Subject/Area</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING</strong></td>
<td><strong>Written Composition Rating</strong></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATH</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patterns, Relationships, and Algebraic Reasoning</strong></td>
<td>4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading, Writing, and Language</strong></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every child who takes a TAKS test gets a report of his or her score. This report is called the Confidential Student Report, or CSR. By carefully examining your child’s CSR, you will find out where your child is doing well and where your child may need to improve. For example, if your child has done well on a TAKS test, it is a good indicator that your child is learning what he or she needs to learn in that subject. Remember, the TAKS test cannot test everything that your child is learning. However, your child’s score will give you a good idea about the progress he or she is making. If your child did not receive a score on a TAKS test and you do not understand why, please contact his or her school.

Your child received an overall score on each test, but you can get more information about your child’s strengths and weaknesses by looking at his or her performance on each test objective.
The TAKS reading test assesses how well your child understands what he or she reads. The reading selections your child read on the test included stories, articles, and reports. The knowledge and skills tested are grouped into four objectives.

Objective 1
Basic Understanding

Students must be able to show that they have a basic understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries are all part of developing a basic understanding.

Objective 2
Applying Knowledge of Literary Elements

Students must be able to show that they understand the parts of a story—the events that happen, the setting (when and where the story takes place), the characters, and the main problem. Students must also be able to recognize the literary devices or tools an author uses to help the reader understand a story's structure, events, and overall meaning. At the seventh grade level, students should know literary devices, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism.

Objective 3
Using Strategies to Analyze

Students must be able to show that they can use different strategies to develop an understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Knowing the different purposes for reading (reading for entertainment, reading for information), recognizing the unique characteristics of different types of selections (how an article is different from a story), and using graphic organizers (charts, graphs, outlines, pictures) are all strategies seventh graders need in order to go beyond the basic, literal meaning of a single selection or a pair of selections designed to be read together.

Objective 4
Applying Critical-Thinking Skills

Students must be able to show that they know how to use critical-thinking skills to develop an in-depth understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Students who can draw their own conclusions, make reasonable predictions about what they read, develop their own ideas, and use the text to support those ideas have a deeper, more complete understanding of a selection.