



January 2017

Foundations Skills Assessment

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is an annual province-wide assessment of British Columbia students' academic skills, and provides a snapshot of how BC students are progressing in the foundational skills of reading, writing and numeracy (mathematics).

When are the FSAs Held?

The FSA is conducted in six short sessions during the months of January and February. The schedule varies in each school. The assessment is conducted according to procedures developed by the Ministry of Education. There are six separate portions of 30 or 60 minutes taking a total of 4 hours and 30 minutes of class time. The reading comprehension and numeracy portions of the FSA consist of both multiple choice and written response questions. The writing portion of the FSA consists of two impromptu writing tasks, one longer text and one shorter text. The multiple-choice portions of the FSA will be done online using computers at each school site.

Who participates?

All students in Grade 4 and Grade 7 who are capable of meaningful participation are expected to write the FSA. If you have concerns about your child's ability to participate meaningfully, please talk to your school principal.

How are students prepared for the FSAs?

The FSA tests understandings and skills that students develop over a period of years. There is no need to prepare students for specific content. However, it is important to tell them about the assessment beforehand and explain the format as it may be unfamiliar to them (particularly at the Grade 4 level) and somewhat more formal than what they are used to doing. Parents can assist by reassuring their children if they seem anxious regarding the FSA.

How are the results used?

The FSA provides a snapshot of specific skills only. The FSA is not a thorough examination over time of all desired learning outcomes for students. The assessed skills are parts of the foundation that students need for further development of their reading, writing, and numeracy skills

and for future learning success. The FSA is one of many measures used to determine how students are progressing and is to be considered in conjunction with the ongoing school-based assessments and professional judgments carried out by classroom teachers.

The results are used at the school and district level to monitor student learning and to assist in planning for instructional improvements. Individual FSA results are not used in determining a student's report card marks but schools receive an overall summary report and an "item analysis" that shows how students performed on each question. This information is considered along with other data in the development of an annual school-wide plan for instructional improvement.

Small differences in results between grades and/or parts of the assessment itself, or from school to school, should not be regarded as significant. Comparisons of results between schools require that a variety of demographic, social, and cultural factors be taken into account. The use of FSA results in ranking schools has no validity.

When are the results known?

Upon completion of the assessment, the FSAs are marked at the District level. The marked student work book and a one-page report on the overall results of the assessment will be sent home with the student by the end of March, 2017.

What should I do if I have more questions?

For more detailed information about the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment please refer to the Ministry Education provincial web site at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/info/welcome.htm> If you have any questions about how the FSA will be conducted in your school, how it will affect your child or how the results are reported and used, please speak to your school principal.