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THE MOVEMENT FOR
WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

What Do The New AzMERIT Test Results Mean? Coconino Coalition for Children & Youth Oct. 19, 2015



Expect More Arizona is...

A statewide nonpartisan organization dedicated to ensuring every Arizona child has access to a world-class education, from the early years through college and career



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What We Stand For...

High Expectations & Excellence for Every Arizona child:

- Kindergarten readiness
- Early literacy
- College and career readiness
- Degree, certificate or credential attainment
- Funding to support excellence for all
- Great teachers & principals



What We Do...



We are building an education-first culture and creating opportunities for people to take action by:

- Raising Awareness of Critical Issues
- Building Public Support & Spotlighting Excellence
- Moving Parents and Voters to Take Action
- Fostering Statewide Collaboration



Presentation Overview

- What the new state test mean for your child
- How to interpret test results
- How teachers use test results
- How to help your child succeed



Why Do We Test?

- Annual checkup to provide meaningful information to parents and teachers
- Constant, objective benchmark to track your child's progress



WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION



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What is AzMERIT?

- **AzMERIT** = Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching
- Arizona's new statewide achievement test
- Unique to Arizona, developed based upon an Arizona test blueprint
- Represents just one of many measures that gauge your student's progress



AzMERIT Overview

- **Students in grades 3-11 take AzMERIT**
- **Subjects: English Language Arts and Math**
 - Note: Students in Grades 4, 8 and high school will still take the AIMS Science test
- **Given via pencil/paper and online**
 - Schools selected to give it via computers or pencil/paper
 - 40% of schools took the test online last year



Why a New Test?

- Aligned to what students are learning in classrooms today
- AIMS set the bar too low
 - Passing AIMS meant students met a minimum expectation for 10th grade
- AzMERIT helps parents and teachers to know if their children are on track
 - Passing AzMERIT will show that a student meets a high expectation for that grade
 - Passing score means that students are on track for college and career



How is AzMERIT Different?

- Provides a better indicator of what students are learning
- Students are able to show their critical learning skills
 - Applying concepts
 - Showing deeper understanding of a topic
 - Problem solving
- Scores will be comparable across multiple states



What You Need to Know

Elementary & Middle School Students

- Students take English and math tests at grade level
- Less testing time than AIMS
- ELL students participate along with most students with disabilities
- Alternative achievement tests are offered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities



What You Need to Know

High School Students

End of course tests

- English – tests given at the end of English courses in 9th, 10th and 11th grades
- Math – tests are given at the end of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- Tests are given based on participation in these courses, rather than by grade

Not required for high school graduation

- Additionally, students who did not pass AIMS are not required to retake AIMS in order to graduate



What Does the Test Look Like?



Goes beyond the bubble test

- Students are required to show their work
- Extended writing and multi-step questions will ask students to apply the skills and have a deep understanding of what they have learned



Untimed, so your child is given as much time as needed



Includes a writing portion, two reading portions and two math portions



Each student is tested over the course of 2-3 days



3rd Grade Math Test Example

Previous Test Question

Bob has 24 pieces of candy. He wants to give it all away to his 3 friends. He wants them all to get in equal amounts. How many pieces will Bob's friends each get?

- A. 4
- B. 6
- C. 7
- D. 8

AzMERIT Sample Test Question

Consider the equation $d \div 3 = 12$ remainder 2.

- What is the dividend, d ?
- What would the dividend, d , be if there was no remainder?

Enter each answer on a separate line.

The form contains a digital calculator interface. At the top are two empty lines for writing answers. Below that is a row of five small circular arrows (left, right, up, down, and clear) and a numeric keypad. The keypad is a 4x3 grid with numbers 1 through 9 in the top three rows and 0 and . in the bottom row. The entire calculator area is enclosed in a light blue border.



3rd Grade ELA Test Example

Previous Test Question

In the story “A Fetching Rescue”, what is Paragraph 18 mainly about?

- A. Tyler uses his strong legs to swim across the lake.
- B. Tyler makes a huge splash in the water.
- C. Tyler swims toward something that has fallen in the lake.
- D. Tyler watched small rocks fall into the water.

AzMERIT Sample Test Question

Online Learning

1 Learning new things is an exciting part of life. Learning can happen anywhere. There are kids who learn at a school, kids who learn at home and some kids who learn online. Students who learn this way use their computers and the Internet to connect to online classrooms. They use a camera connected to their home computer to let the teacher and other students see them. They can see their teacher and classmates on their screens because their classmates and teacher use a camera, too.

2 Before the Internet, children in remote places sometimes had classes over the radio or used the mail to get lessons and return them. For example, in the past, children who lived in distant parts of Australia were taught using the radio. Every day at a certain time, they tuned in to a special radio station. All the children could hear their teacher at the same time, but they were hundreds of miles apart. They got their lessons in

4 What is the main idea of paragraph 4?
Type your answer in the space provided.

How to Interpret Test Results



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What Will Scores Look Like?

- New test = new scores
- We are setting a new benchmark for student performance
- Scores will look different than before, but it doesn't mean our students are doing worse – instead, it's more accurate view of how our students are doing
- Students and teachers will need time to adjust to the new test



When Will I Get My Child's Scores?

- Initial test results will be available later this fall as we transition to the new test
- Future test results will be available much more quickly
- Student data will continue to be protected by state and federal laws



What You Can Expect with Your Child's Scores



Four Scoring Categories:

- Highly Proficient – Advanced understanding
- Proficient – Fundamental understanding
- Partially Proficient – Partial understanding
- Minimally Proficient – Modest understanding



Family Score Reports & a Family Guide will go to the families of each child who took AzMERIT last spring



Sample Family Score Report

FAMILY SCORE REPORT
AzMERIT
SPRING 2015

Grade 6 Math Assessment

About This Assessment
Maria took the AZMERIT Grade 6 Math assessment in spring 2015. The questions in this assessment measure the knowledge and skills taught in this grade and subject area. Maria's score shows how well she understands Grade 6 Math content. A student who scores **Proficient** or **Highly Proficient** on AZMERIT is likely to be ready for the next grade level of Math.

About This Report

Front:

- Maria's overall score for this assessment includes a numeric score and a proficiency level.
- Her numeric score can be compared with the school, district, and state averages.
- The proficiency level indicates how well students understand current grade level material and how likely they are to be ready for the next grade.

Back:

- Maria's level of mastery is shown for each scoring category.
- Scoring categories represent specific knowledge and skills included in this assessment.
- There is a detailed description of the mastery level for each scoring category.

Maria's Performance on the Math Assessment

Maria's score in Math is 3679, which is Highly Proficient.



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Sample Family Score Report

FAMILY SCORE REPORT

AzMERIT

Legend: Scoring Categories

Below Mastery **At/Near Mastery** **Above Mastery**

Math Scoring Categories

Ratio and Proportional Relationships

Maria performed above mastery in Ratio and Proportional Relationships.

What was assessed? Students understand ratios, rates, and percentages. They use proportions to describe relationships between two numbers and recognize similar relationships. They use ratios and rates to solve problems and to create tables. They convert units of measurement.

What do these results mean? Your student almost always correctly uses ratios, rates, or percents to describe relationships between numbers or values; solves unit rate problems that involve multiple step, real-world situations; or percents; and converts units of measurement to solve problems.

Expressions and Equations

Maria performed at or near mastery in Expressions and Equations.

What was assessed? Students write, read, and find the value of expressions with exponents and letters that stand for numbers. They produce and identify equivalent expressions. They understand that solutions to equations and inequalities are the values that make the equations or inequalities true.

What do these results mean? Your student is often able to find values of expressions with exponents; solve equations and inequalities; use inequalities to describe real-world relationships; and identify independent and dependent variables and use equations to describe the relationship between them.

The Number System

Maria performed at or near mastery in The Number System.

What was assessed? Students solve division problems with fractions. They add, subtract, multiply, and divide when solving problems with multidigit decimal numbers. They find the greatest common factor and least common multiple. They understand the relationship between positive and negative numbers.

What do these results mean? Your student is often able to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division strategically to solve problems; find greatest common factors and least common multiples; use positive and negative numbers; and plot them on a graph; and determine the distance between two points.

Geometry, Statistics, and Probability

Maria performed below mastery in Geometry, Statistics and Probability.

What was assessed? Students find the area of geometric figures and apply techniques used to solve real-life problems. They find the volume of solid figures. They draw polygons and three-dimensional shapes. They recognize statistical questions. They describe, display, and interpret data.

What do these results mean? Your student may have trouble finding the area of polygons; representing data in graphs; recognizing statistical questions; identifying data represented in a graphic organizer; or calculating mean, median, mode, and range; and displaying data visually.

For more information about AzMERIT, go to azmeritportal.org.

AZED.GOV ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Sample Family Report Guide

The image shows the front cover of the AzMERIT Family Report Guide. The title 'AzMERIT FAMILY REPORT GUIDE' is at the top in large, bold, black letters. Below it is a yellow bar with the text 'FAMILY REPORT REPORT AzMERIT SPRING 2018'. To the left is a graphic of the state of Arizona with a star. In the center, there's a box for 'Maria A. Doe' with '4th Grade' and 'Math Assessment'. The main body contains six numbered sections (1-6) with titles like 'Barrel Chart', 'Performance Levels', 'Scoring Categories', etc., each with descriptive text and small diagrams. At the bottom right is a large red 'D' inside a white circle, and at the bottom left is a link to 'www.azmerit.org'. The footer says 'For more information about your student's academic performance, contact your student's teacher or school.'



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AzMERIT Score Report Video



Thanks to Mesa Public Schools for producing this video



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How Do Teachers Use Test Data



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AzMERIT is Not the Finish Line



Test results will be used to:

- Make instructional decisions
- Determine individual needs of students:
 - Extra support?
 - More challenging work?
 - Recommendations for future classes?



Scores do not impact final grades, GPAs, class rank or college acceptance



How Teachers Use Data

- Determine how students are doing compared to their own past performance and to peers
- Communicate better to parents about progress
- Evaluate effectiveness of curriculum and instruction
- Decide teaching strategies to adjust
- Facilitate professional conversations with other educators



Helping Your Child Succeed



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Things You Can Do

- Build a strong relationship with your child's teacher
- Attend your parent teacher conferences
- Set high expectations for your child
- Involve learning in everyday activities
- Give time for your child and your child's teacher to adjust to the new standards & new test



Other Ways You Can Help Your Child Succeed

- Have your child read a variety of materials at home, including fiction and informational texts.
- Involve learning in everyday activities.
 - Mix math into cooking or shopping.
 - Ask your child to express opinions and to back their views.



Parent Resources

-  ArizonaAimsHigher.org
-  Grade by Grade Parent Guides
-  AzMERIT Fact Sheet



HOME STANDARDS ASSESSMENT TAKE ACTION RESOURCES FINALS ABOUT US

Arizona children deserve high-quality standards and a test that prepare them to succeed. It's time to Aim Higher!



53% of our state's 3rd graders are ready for college and career.

Too few Arizona students graduate ready for college, career and life. How can we change this?

It's time to Aim Higher. Our kids deserve to be challenged in school. Today, over half of Arizona's high school students are graduating unprepared for college or a career. It's time we set higher expectations for when our students learn in school so that they are ready to succeed in life. This is why schools across the state have implemented Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards in English and math and are replacing an outdated AIMS test, which set the bar too low.

It will take all of us to ensure that education is a top priority in Arizona. Learn more about how you can help every child get the education they deserve.

PARENTS & FAMILIES COMMUNITY & BUSINESS EDUCATOR POLICYMAKER

PARENT GUIDE

Your third grader's success begins with you.

How to help 3rd graders succeed in reading and writing at home.

What is my child learning this year?

Do you know what your child is learning in school? You can help your child succeed in school by knowing what your child is learning in school.

Reading & phonics skills continue to grow from 1st to 3rd grade. Your child will learn to read words faster and more accurately. They will learn to read longer books and make predictions about what will happen next in the story. They will learn to read words in context and use their knowledge of words to figure out new words.

Math skills also continue to grow from 1st to 3rd grade. Your child will learn to count and add numbers up to 100. They will learn to tell time and measure objects in inches and centimeters. They will learn to identify shapes and sort them into categories.



WHAT AZMERIT MEANS FOR YOUR CHILD

AzMERIT is like an annual checkup – an important opportunity to find out how your child is doing in school. Just as doctors check height and weight, teachers and parents use the test to check how students are doing in English and math.

Know If Your Child is on Track to Succeed

Although testing is never fun, assessments can be effective tools to support your child's learning. When you know what your child is learning in school, it's easier to support in the next school year. In college or career, as a parent, you will have the information you need to make sure your child is making progress and is not falling behind.

New Test, New Scores

AzMERIT will set a more realistic benchmark for student performance. Because the test is aligned with college and career readiness standards, scores will be lower than before; however, this doesn't mean your child is doing worse. Instead, the scores will provide a more accurate view of how your child is doing academically.

Important Things Parents Need to Know

- AzMERIT is a test grades 3 through 8 that takes the AzMERIT test in reading, writing and math each spring. For high school students, the test is given at the end of their English and math courses, similar to a final exam.
- School districts and charter schools can choose to administer AzMERIT via pencil-and-paper or on a computer. This choice is independent to other former assessments.
- Passing AzMERIT is not a graduation requirement for high school students. Scores are not incorporated into college grades; however, they may be in the future.
- AzMERIT will allow faster score reporting. Results should be available before the end of each school year. However, initial results from the spring 2015 test are expected to be released in Fall 2015.
- Parents will receive a score report that provides information on your child's performance in English and math to show you and your teacher can work together throughout the summer and the school year.
- A new law was adopted in 2015 to provide students, teachers and schools with a two-year transition period to adjust to the new AzMERIT tests in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. During this time, our state's accountability system will continue to use the old AIMS test until the new test is fully implemented.
- Groups of Arizona teachers will form a grade-level committee to write AzMERIT, as well as provide recommendations for scoring the end-of-test. The testing vendor will grade the multiple-choice and short answer questions, but provide the committee with the raw data to review and analyze. The Arizona State Board of Education will decide on the final scoring levels.
- The AIMS Science test will still be administered to students in 4th and 8th grade and in high school.
- Your child's test results are protected by a number of state and federal laws. Personal student data will never leave, and never will be, shared with the federal government.



What is AzMERIT?

AzMERIT replaced the AIMS test in reading, writing and math for Arizona students in grades 3 through high school.

AzMERIT is better aligned with college and career readiness standards. It includes more challenging questions and asks students to think more deeply about what they know.

Tips to Help Your Child

- Set shared goals with your child's teacher to reflect your child's interests and what he or she is able to do during the school year.
- Check in with your child's teacher regularly on your child's progress.
- Help your child continue learning at home with fun activities you can do together.
- Talk with your child about AzMERIT in other tests. Your conversations can help reduce anxiety and increase confidence in taking tests.
- If test scores look lower than expected, talk to your child's teacher and work together to determine a plan to help your child improve.



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Download Free Report Resources at ArizonaAimsHigher.org

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Sample Tests & Score Reports

Access sample tests and other resources online at: AzMERITportal.org

The screenshot shows the homepage of the AzMERIT portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Users ▾, Resources ▾, and Supported Browsers. Below this is a banner featuring a stylized orange map of Arizona with a white star in the center, and the text "AzMERIT | Arizona's Statewide Achievement Assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics". On the left side, there is a sidebar with four blue buttons: "Students & Families" (with a graduation cap icon), "Educators & Test Administrators" (with an apple icon), "Test Coordinators" (with a school building icon), and "Technology Resources" (with a computer monitor icon). The main content area has a yellow background. It features a section titled "Announcements" with a microphone icon. The first announcement is about secure browsers for Fall 2015 testing, mentioning the "Secure Browser Installation Manual" and noting that the browser must be downloaded for the new school year. It also links to "Technical Specifications", "Systems Requirements", and "Operating System Support Plan for Test Delivery System". A timestamp indicates the announcement was added on August 12, 2015. Another section lists "AzMERIT Test Windows for School Year 2015–2016". At the bottom, it mentions the "Fall 2015 AZMERIT EOC" and the "Computer-Based Test Window" from October 26 to December 4, 2015. A note states that writing must be completed by November 13, 2015. To the right, there is a "Welcome!" section with three yellow buttons: "Sample Tests" (with a gear icon), "Secure Browsers" (with a shield icon), and "Visit AZ Dept of Ed" (with a group of people icon).

Home Users ▾ Resources ▾ Supported Browsers

AzMERIT | Arizona's Statewide Achievement Assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics

Students & Families

Educators & Test Administrators

Test Coordinators

Technology Resources

Announcements

- The Secure Browsers for computer-based testing in Fall 2015 are now available for download on the Secure Browsers page. For guidance on installation, please refer to the [Secure Browser Installation Manual](#).
Please note: The Secure Browser must be downloaded for the new school year, for both Fall and Spring administrations.
Technology resources such as [Technical Specifications](#), [Systems Requirements](#), and [Operating System Support Plan for Test Delivery System](#) are available in the Key Documents.

Added August 12, 2015

- AzMERIT Test Windows for School Year 2015–2016**

Fall 2015 AZMERIT EOC

Computer-Based Test Window

October 26 – December 4, 2015

*Writing must be completed by November 13, 2015

Welcome!

Sample Tests

Secure Browsers

Visit AZ Dept of Ed

You Can Help Your Child Succeed



Every Arizona child deserves a world-class education.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.



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Join the Movement

 **Sign Up**

 Get updates on AzMERIT and resources
to help your child succeed



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Appendix



Benefits of Online Testing

- New test features - tools, reference sheets
- New item types, not just multiple choice
- More accommodations
- Less expensive than paper tests
- More engaging for students
- Quicker reporting



How Will AzMERIT Impact Accountability



Move on When Reading

- Students will not be held back in 3rd grade this year
 - Students can still receive support, scores still need to be determined



Teacher/Principal Evaluations

- A portion of test scores will be used, along with student growth.



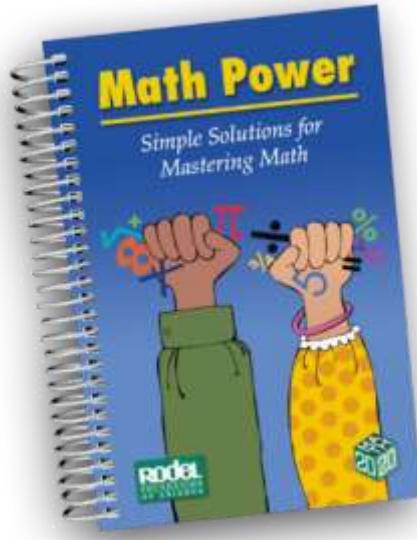
School Letter Grades

- Letter grades will be redefined by SBE



Additional Parent Resources

- Rodel Foundation's Math Power Book for Parents
- Do Your Homework Arizona
- Be A Learning Hero
- The Homework Help Desk
- National PTA Parents' Guides to Student Success



A screenshot of the "DO YOUR HOMEWORK ARIZONA" website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "About", "FAQ", and "Contact". Below the navigation is a large search bar with the placeholder text "I'm a parent looking for help with...". Inside the search bar are three dropdown menus: "Select a Grade K-8", "Select a Subject", and "Submit". Below these dropdowns is a "Search a Keyword" input field with a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar is a "Sign up to Receive Updates" button with an envelope icon. Further down the page, there is a video player showing a woman and a child working on homework together, with the text "Welcome to Do Your Homework Arizona" above the video and the website URL "DoYourHomeworkArizona.org" below it.

