



## Smarter FAQs

**What is Smarter Assessment?** Smarter Assessment is the online assessment system that replaced the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) with Smarter English Language Arts/Literacy and Smarter Mathematics Assessments for grades 3 to 8. It was developed specifically to help teachers and parents see how well students are mastering Delaware’s new higher standards and where they need help in preparing for future success in college and careers.

**Why is this testing necessary?** To help all students graduate from high school more prepared for college and careers, Delaware has been a leader in raising its academic standards. Delaware teachers have been implementing more rigorous standards for the last few years. The Smarter test was developed to measure the new standards and to provide teachers with powerful new tools and resources to support student progress throughout the year.

**Who created the assessments?** Working with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, educators from around the country, including Delaware teachers, participated in creating the assessments, writing questions, and reviewing the tests for content, bias/sensitivity, and accessibility.

**What are computer adaptive assessments? What are performance tasks?** The Smarter English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments each have two components: computer-adaptive assessments and performance tasks. Computer-adaptive testing essentially “customizes” the test for each student by adjusting the level of difficulty based on how well the student is answering the questions. This method provides a more accurate measurement of achievement, particularly for high- and low-performing students. Performance tasks are collections of questions and activities that are connected to a single theme or scenario. They are meant to measure depth of understanding, writing and research skills, and complex analysis.

**How does Smarter Assessment help improve student performance?** With innovative, new question types and computer-adaptive testing, Smarter Assessment provides students with a more engaging test experience, and one that produces more meaningful, accurate results. Through Smarter Analytics, teachers are provided deep levels of sortable data for use individually and in professional learning communities (PLCs). This data gives Delaware educators insight into each student’s college and career readiness early enough to address issues and provide extra support where needed.

**What tools and resources does Smarter Assessment make available to teachers?** The Smarter Assessment is more than a year-end test. It is a complete system that provides the data, tools and resources teachers need to support improvements in student learning throughout the year. This includes a Digital Library of online resources, optional interim assessments and optional interim assessment blocks.

**What is the Digital Library?** The Digital Library is an online repository of more than 2,600 instructional and professional learning resources developed by teachers to assist with assessing students' progress and adjusting instruction when needed. Spanning K–12 and aligned to the Common Core Standards, the resources will help teachers implement effective, aligned practices that are recommended by their peers. Teachers can collaborate and interact, rating materials and sharing classroom experiences through online discussions.

**What are the optional interim assessments?** Optional interim assessments are available for teachers to check in on student progress throughout the year and adjust instruction as needed. The full Interim Comprehensive Assessment mirrors the year-end assessment and gives students the opportunity to experience the full test. Interim Assessment Blocks can be used to check on students' understanding of small sets of related standards.

**How is the test administered and how long does it take?** The assessments are taken online and completed over the course of a few days in 1- to 2-hour sessions. The tests are not timed, and students can take breaks.

**Do the assessments accommodate students with special needs?** Yes. To allow all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners, to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, the Smarter assessment system offers the most complete suite of accessibility tools and accommodation resources ever included in a K–12 assessment. Resources such as Braille and closed captioning address visual, auditory, and physical access barriers, and embedded glossaries in multiple languages and dialects address language barriers. Teachers who work with English language learners and students with disabilities were included in the development of Smarter Assessments to make sure that every child has the chance to show what he or she knows. For students with the most significant intellectual disabilities, an alternate assessment is also available.