

MCA Reading Benchmark Report "How To" Quick Guide

Assessments are designed to provide information about student learning, but there is no single assessment that can provide the full perspective of what a student has learned. These assessments provide one data point that should be considered in the context of additional evidence of student learning.

The MCA Benchmark Report is a guidance tool educators can use to learn about performance at the school or district level on each benchmark from the Minnesota Academic Standards. The Minnesota Academic Standards identify the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to learn in each content area by the end of a grade or grade band. These standards are divided into one or more benchmarks which provide details about what students are taught in that content area.

Benchmark performance is calculated by comparing students' observed performance on test content aligned to a benchmark to the expected performance of the "Meets" achievement level cut score for a benchmark at the school or district.

Report Considerations

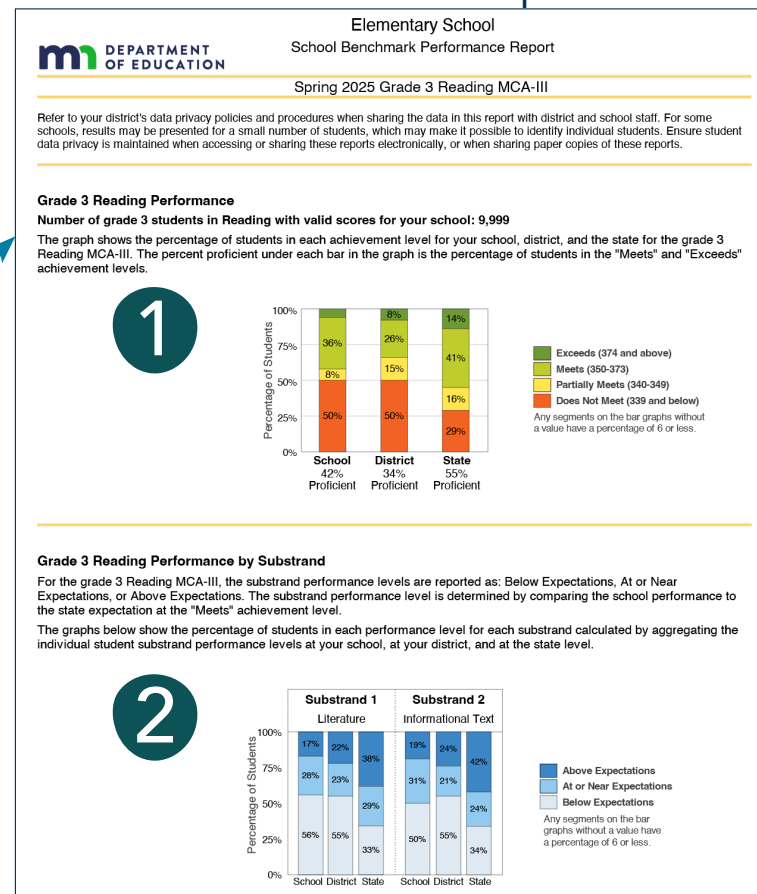
Benchmark reports are created by grade and subject for Reading and Mathematics MCA. Benchmark reports for 2019 and 2021–2025 are available. No benchmark reports were produced for 2020.

The Reading MCA is an adaptive assessment at the "testlet" level, meaning questions are chosen based on the student's responses to a group of questions for a passage or passages.

- The reading benchmark reports show benchmarks organized under one of the three skill domains assessed on the MCA.
- All tests meet the "blueprints" or requirements in the test specifications, which describe how the standards are assessed on the test and in what proportions. However, not all students see items for each benchmark, and other students may see more than one item for the same benchmark.

Note: Science MCA benchmark reports are not available beginning in 2025 due to the transition to a new assessment. Benchmark reports can still be downloaded for previous test administrations.

Sections of the Benchmark Report



1. Overall performance, including:

- The number of students with a valid, reportable score at the organization level for the grade and subject combination of the report.
- An achievement level bar graph at the school, district, and state level, with the percentage of students at each achievement level.
- The percent proficient, shown under each bar graph, is the combined percent of students at the "Meets" and "Exceeds" achievement levels.

2. Substrand performance, including:

- Content area strand names and performance level percentages at the school, district, and state level.
- Performance level categories include: Below Expectations, At or Near Expectations, and Above Expectations.
Expectation is defined as the school's performance on each strand compared to the "Meets" performance level cut score.

Reading Benchmark Report		Spring 2025 - Grade 3
Grade 3 Reading Performance by Benchmark School performance on each benchmark is compared at the "Meets" achievement level cut score. Performance on each benchmark is calculated by comparing school performance on a benchmark to the performance on a benchmark that was achieved at the "Meets" achievement level cut score.		
School performance on this benchmark is less than the "Meets" achievement level.	School performance on this benchmark is similar to the "Meets" achievement level.	School performance on this benchmark is greater than the "Meets" achievement level.
Key Ideas and Details		
Compared to "Meets" Achievement Level	Benchmark	
	3.1.1.1	Literature Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
	3.1.2.2	Literature Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through details in the text.
	3.1.3.3	Literature Describe characters in a story (e.g., motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
	3.2.1.1	Informational Text Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
	3.2.2.2	Informational Text Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
	3.2.3.3	Informational Text Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

- Benchmark performance description.
- Three performance symbols specific to the benchmark report are used to represent school or district performance on each benchmark, including less than, similar to, or greater than the "Meets" achievement level.
An asterisk (*) indicates there were less than 20 student responses for that benchmark and results are not available.
- The skill domain the substandards and benchmarks are organized under.
- Benchmark performance and benchmark code reference. For reading, the four-digit code (such as, 3.1.3.3) lists, in order, the grade (3), substrand (1), standard (3), and benchmark (3).
- Substrand title and benchmark descriptions.

Cautions When Interpreting the Benchmark Report

- For Reading MCA, the number of items for each benchmark will vary because the test is adaptive at the "testlet" level.
- Benchmarks not assessed on the MCA or only within the classroom, or benchmarks not applicable to a substrand, are noted on the report.
- The data displayed on the report are based on the student responses to the test questions (items) from a particular benchmark that were administered to students in a school or district.
- Benchmark performance symbols do not correspond to overall achievement levels for Reading MCA (Does Not Meet, Partially Meets, Meets, or Exceeds the Standards), and the color/shape of each symbol does not reflect benchmark difficulty.



New Minnesota Academic Standards are being implemented for all subjects. Take your district's plan into consideration, and interpret these reports within the context of your school or district environment. The timeline for the first administration of the revised reading assessments is school year 2025–26.

Using the Benchmark Report in Your Classroom, School, or District

The MCA Benchmark Reports are an additional resource educators can use to evaluate and compare performance on benchmarks at the school, district, and state levels on the current year's test. Teachers and district staff can use benchmark report data as a starting point for discussions about strengths and gaps in curriculum.

Guiding questions when reviewing and discussing benchmark reports:

- Are the students who completed the assessment representative of the total student population at your school or district?
- Where and how are specific benchmarks taught in a course's scope and sequence?
- What do you notice about the benchmark data? What surprises you?
- How does the data compare with what you saw in the classroom?
- What additional information do you have about student learning of the benchmarks?
- What may be some reasons for the benchmarks that have symbols indicating performance above the "Meets" achievement level?
- What may be some underlying causes for benchmarks below the "Meets" achievement level?
- Are there additional emerging themes in all the information?
- What are your next steps after reviewing your benchmark data?

Additional Benchmark Resources

View the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K-12)).

View the [MCA test specifications](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Test Specifications).

View the [Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors](#) on the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 site > Plan and Teach > Success Criteria).

View the [Minnesota Questions Tool](#) for released items from MCA test (MDE Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Minnesota Questions Tool).

View Appendix A: *Benchmark Report Calculations Resource* in the [Technical Manual for Minnesota's MCA and MTAS Assessments](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports > Technical Manual).