

# Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD) Test Preparation Suggestions for Teachers and Parents



## What Does GRAD Mean?

Students who first entered grade 8 in 2005–06 school year or later must meet the requirements of the Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) in reading, mathematics and writing in order to graduate from a Minnesota public high school. These tests will measure proficiency on the Minnesota Academic Standards and other essential skills. Students who entered grade 8 in 2004–2005 or earlier must pass the Basic Skills Tests (BSTs) to receive a diploma.

The following suggestions for teachers and parents will help students get ready for the GRAD.

## General Preparation

- Students should take courses that address Minnesota's academic standards in reading, written composition, and mathematics. Most schools also make appropriate educational opportunities available to students who are at risk for not succeeding on these tests.
- Familiarize students with the test directions and format. [Access Reading and Mathematics GRAD Item Samplers at the PearsonAccess Website.](http://www.pearsonaccess.com/mn)  
(www.pearsonaccess.com/mn > Support > Item Samplers)  
[Access the Written Composition GRAD Item Sampler on the MDE Website.](http://education.state.mn.us)  
(http://education.state.mn.us > Accountability Programs > Assessment and Testing > GRAD > Item Samplers)
- Use the Perspective Website for additional resources to help address a student's reading and mathematics educational needs. [Visit Perspective for Educators.](http://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/perspective/appmanager/mn/educator)  
(http://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/perspective/appmanager/mn/educator)  
[Visit Perspective for Families.](http://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/perspective/appmanager/mn/family)  
(http://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/perspective/appmanager/mn/family)
- Encourage students to answer all test questions.
- Encourage students to participate in practice sessions at school and home.
- Have students get a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before taking a test.
- Provide students with a study area at home.
- Encourage students to practice good study habits. Students should set aside time every day for homework.

## Writing Tests

- Have students practice writing essays that:
  - Describe, narrate or explain observations of human events or situations.
  - Analyze patterns and relationships of ideas, topics or themes.
  - Construct support for a position, argument, plan or idea.
  - Evaluate an idea, topic or theme based on specific criteria.
- Encourage students to write letters and keep a journal.

## Reading Tests

- Have students read and “think aloud” about the text they are reading.
- Have students read a variety of genres (nonfiction and fiction).
- Discuss viewpoints and new vocabulary presented in different texts.

## Math Tests

- Encourage students to use mathematics every day. They can practice by creating a grocery budget, explaining charts and graphs from newspaper and magazine articles, dividing food portions, using rulers to measure objects, measuring a recipe or adding prices on a shopping trip.
- Encourage students to connect what they are learning in math class to their hobbies, other classes and everyday life.

## Using a Calculator

Talk to your child’s classroom teacher to find out how calculators are typically used in the classroom. Students can’t share calculators with other students or use any calculator manuals during the Minnesota assessments. You can get more information on using a calculator for testing from your school.

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