

## Questions and Answers About the GRAD in Mathematics, Reading and Written Composition

### What are GRAD tests?

The Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD) tests measure proficiency on the Minnesota Academic Standards and other essential skills. Students must meet the requirements of these tests in order to be eligible to graduate from a Minnesota public high school. The Written Composition GRAD is a stand-alone test. The grade 10 Reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and the grade 11 Mathematics MCA can also be used to meet graduation requirements. If students are proficient (achieve Meets or Exceeds the Standards), they have met their graduation assessment requirement for that subject. This also applies to students qualifying for the MCA-Modified or Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) in place of the MCAs. [For further information on MCA-Modified and MTAS, view their respective Parent Fact Sheet on the MDE website.](#) (See Just for Parents > Testing Information.) There is also a Mathematics GRAD component in the Mathematics MCA that students take in grade 11 that provides another way for students to meet graduation assessment requirements.

### When is the first opportunity for students to take the GRAD?

The Written Composition GRAD is first given to students in grade 9. The Mathematics GRAD is part of the grade 11 Mathematics MCA. Students not proficient on the grade 10 Reading MCA may take the GRAD retest in the fall. Students who did not pass the GRAD or are not proficient on the MCA in their first attempt have many opportunities to take the GRAD retests.

### What happens if a student does not pass the GRAD in the first attempt?

Students who do not pass the Mathematics GRAD (embedded in the Mathematics MCA) or are not proficient on the Reading or Mathematics MCA, will have numerous opportunities to take a GRAD retest online during the retest windows. Students who do not pass the Written Composition GRAD will be able to take a retest twice a year. Check with your student's school for retest options available in your district.

### What is the Written Composition GRAD?

A student writes to one prompt and the student's essay is assigned a score based on the rater's overall (holistic) impression of the writing.

## What are the Reading GRAD and Mathematics GRAD?

The Reading GRAD consists of several passages and 40 multiple-choice questions. The stand-alone Mathematics GRAD consists of 40 multiple-choice questions. Both of these tests are administered online.

## In what ways can students meet their graduation assessment requirement?

There are a number of ways to meet the graduation requirement:

- Earn a passing score on the Written Composition.
- Earn a proficient score on the Reading and Mathematics MCA or for mathematics a passing score on the GRAD component.
- Earn a passing score on a GRAD retest.
- Receive an individual passing score (for students on IEP or 504 plan).
- Meet the alternate pathway requirements for the Mathematics GRAD.
- Receive an EL exemption.
- Pass an accountability test from another state approved by MDE.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 04) states that all students with disabilities must participate in statewide assessments. For students with a disability, the IEP team decides whether and how the student participates:

1. By taking the GRAD, with or without accommodations, or
2. By taking an alternate assessment for accountability and/or graduation.

## How are the tests scored?

The Written Composition GRAD student essays are scored by trained professionals using a holistic rubric. The range of possible scores is 1 through 6: the passing score is 3 or higher. The Reading and Mathematics GRAD retests have multiple-choice questions scored by computer. The passing scale score is 50 or higher.

## How can students prepare for the tests?

[The “Test Preparation Suggestions for Parents and Teachers”](#) [handout is available on the MDE website](#) with tips on content preparation, general test-taking strategies and using a calculator. (See Just for Parents > Testing Information.)

Other sources that may be helpful are the GRAD item samplers and Reading and Mathematics GRAD retest student tutorial.

- Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and provide examples of the types of questions that are on the test. [You can find item samplers for each grade and subject on the Minnesota Assessments portal.](#) (Go to [www.mnstateassessments.org](http://www.mnstateassessments.org) > Item Samplers.)

- The student tutorial shows students how to navigate through the tests, how to use tools in the online test and how to answer test questions. [You can find the student tutorial on the Minnesota Assessments portal.](#) (Go to [www.mnstateassessments.org](http://www.mnstateassessments.org) > Resources > Student Resources.)

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*For more information, contact:*

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