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How to Choose an Achievement Test

by Debbie Thompson (www.TriangleEd.com)

Below are reasons people often choose a particular achievement test.

We hope this will help you make the best decision for your student.

Achievement tests can help you pinpoint strengths and weaknesses your child has in comparison to others who are using the same level of curriculum. There are paper, online, and in-person versions to choose from, so how do you know what test is best?

Our How to Choose an Achievement Test – Infographic will help you know norms, levels, and options to consider in choosing one of the many tests we carry.

Triangle Education Assessments (www.TriangleEd.com) carries all the tests mentioned below, (unless otherwise noted), and they all meet NC (and most other states') yearly testing requirements for a nationally standardized achievement test.

First of all, know your state laws for what academic areas you have to test. www.HSLDA.org has an interactive map in which you can click your state to see what your laws are.

Do you want to minimize testing time? Many tests come with Science and Social Studies. If you do not want or have to give those sections on the [Iowa](#), [Stanford](#) and [TerraNova](#) tests, your overall score will not be hurt. There are also some "Survey" versions of some tests which have fewer questions in most of the sections, thereby minimizing testing times. For example, the [TerraNova survey](#) edition.

If your student has some special needs and is developmentally 7 years or younger, then the [Brigance](#) test is a good option. A kit will arrive on your doorstep that will contain objects to use, a book, a simplified instruction sheet, and a scoring sheet. Follow the instructions and use the objects in your kit to compute scores. Most of the items assessed will be more of a lifeskills checklist like knowing colors, stacking blocks, etc.

If your student is high in certain areas but lower in other areas then choose the level of the test that best corresponds to the average of the curriculum they are using. You might want to choose the level that best correlates to their reading level, however, since most of the multiple-choice tests have the student do a lot of reading. In most states, a parent can choose the best level that matches their child's curriculum. But again, please refer to your state's laws for your specific rules for testing.

Another test which is great to use if a child is scoring differently in certain academic areas than most of their peers would be the [Woodcock-Johnson](#) test. This test is mostly verbal, not multiple choice and goes as low as a child needs to go and as high as they can go so you are going to get purer grade equivalencies than a multiple-choice test which was developed for classroom use. The Woodcock-Johnson must be given by someone specially trained to give it. We can do it by zoom if you are not in the Apex, NC area.

If you need results quickly then the Woodcock-Johnson or Iowa Online or Stanford Online tests will give you results within 48 hours.

If you do not have a BA degree, you cannot give the Stanford paper tests but we can give the Stanford online test for you.

Most paper tests can be done for Grades K – 12 but online tests might be different. For example, the [Iowa E online](#) test is available for Gr K starting December 1st (mid-year norms) but the [Stanford online](#) test starts for Gr 3 students in the spring.

Here is a listing of factors you might want to consider. You can also refer to our Infographic.

If you want a test NOT ALIGNED to the Common Core:

- [Iowa A](#) (Gr K-12) – paper
- TerraNova2 Tests Complete Plus (Gr K-12) or Survey Plus (Gr 2-12) – paper
- Woodcock-Johnson, IV - paper (preschool-adult) – paper and oral

If you want a test ALIGNED or SOMEWHAT ALIGNED to the Common Core:

- ACT (only sold through www.act.org)
- Iowa E (Gr K-12) (only partially aligned) – paper
- Iowa E Online (Gr K-12) (only partially aligned) – computer
- Stanford10 Tests (Gr K-12) – paper
- Stanford10 Online (Gr 3 Spring-12) – computer
- Brigance – for children developmentally 7 years or younger. (Though it is aligned, it is used as a life skills checklist.)

If you want to choose an UNTIMED test:

- Stanford10 (Gr K-12) – paper
- Stanford10 Online (Gr 3 Spring-12) - computer
- Woodcock-Johnson, IV (is mostly untimed – all grades) – paper and oral

If you want to test a GROUP or MULTIPLE GRADES TOGETHER here are grade groupings per test:

- Iowa A or Iowa E (Gr 3-8 can test together, and grades 9-12 can test together) – paper
- Iowa E Online (Gr K- Spring-12) – computer
- Stanford-10 (paper version: Gr 3-4, Gr 5-8, Gr 9-12) – paper (These groupings are a little trickier to do together than the Iowa test, as you must make sure students are on correct pages to start sections.)
- Stanford-10 Online (Gr 3 Spring-12) – computer
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus (Gr 4-5, Gr 6-8, Gr 9-12) – paper
- TerraNova2 Survey Plus (Gr 6-8, Gr 9-12) – paper
- WJ – some tests can be given simultaneously but not all – paper and oral. Can be done by Zoom.

If you want QUICK results:

- Iowa A and Iowa E (Gr K-12) - hand scored – in 1 week

- Iowa E Online (Gr K-12). Results in 48 hours. NOTE: You do not have to have a BA degree because the testing center is proctoring the online test.
- Stanford-10 Online (Gr 3Spring-12). Results in 24 hours. NOTE: You do not have to have a BA degree or training because the testing center is proctoring the online test.
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus or Survey Plus (Gr K-12) – hand scored – in 1 week

If YOU DON'T HAVE A BA degree and you want to give a test at home:

- Iowa A (Gr K-12) – paper (BA requirement is waived during pandemic.)
- Iowa E (Gr K-12) – paper (BA requirement is waived during pandemic.)
- Iowa E Online (Gr K-12) – results in 48 hours
- Stanford-10 Online (Gr 3Spring-12) – results in 24 hours
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus or Survey Plus (Gr K-12) – paper
- Brigance – for developmentally 7 years or younger

If you want the SHORTEST complete achievement test:

- Woodcock-Johnson, IV (all ages and grades) - usually ~75-90 minutes for the basic 9 tests which would give a TOTAL Achievement score, done by one of our trained WJ providers in-person or by Zoom.
- TerraNova2 Survey Plus (Gr 2-12) 215 – 235 minutes
- Gr K - TerraNova2 Complete Plus – 95 minutes
- Gr 1 - Iowa E (Level 5/6) – 160 minutes
- Gr 2 - Iowa E (Level 7 or 8) – 250 minutes
- Gr 3 - Iowa E (Level 8) – 250 minutes, or Iowa E (Level 9) – 295 minutes
- Gr 4 - Iowa E (Level 10) – 295 minutes
- Gr 5 - Iowa E (Level 11) – 295 minutes
- Gr 6 - Iowa E (Level 12) – 295 minutes
- Gr 7 - Iowa E (Level 13) – 295 minutes
- Gr 8 - Iowa E (Level 14) – 295 minutes
- Gr 9 - Iowa E (Level 15) – 235 minutes
- Gr 10 - Iowa E (Level 16) – 235 minutes
- Gr 11/12 - Iowa E (Level 17/18) – 235 minutes or Stanford-10 (Gr 9-12) – 230 minutes (but it can be administered untimed)

NOTE: The above times can be shortened if you do not have to give the Science and Social Studies sections. Grades 1 and 2 would be shortened by 50 minutes and Grades 3-12 would be shortened by 70 minutes.

If you want the LEAST EXPENSIVE achievement test:

- Iowa E, or Stanford10 paper (Gr K-12) (Plus groups get discounts.)

If you want achievement scores for National Honor Society check your local chapter's rules but most accept:

- Iowa A (Gr K-12) – paper (handscored)
- Iowa E (Gr K-12) – paper (machine or handscored)
- Iowa E Online (Gr K-12) – results in 48 hours

- Stanford-10 (Gr K-12) – paper
- Stanford-10 Online (Gr 3 Spring -12) – results in 24 hours
- ACT (www.act.org only)

If you want the achievement test we have which was MOST OFTEN USED IN NC PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

- Iowa E (Gr K-12) – paper

If you want an achievement test we have which is MOST OFTEN USED IN NC PRIVATE SCHOOLS:

- Stanford10 (Gr K-12) – paper
- Stanford10 Online (Gr 3 Spring-12) – computer

If you want an achievement PAPER TEST YOU CAN GIVE AT HOME: (must meet publisher's and your state's requirements)

- Iowa A or Iowa E (Gr K-12)
- Stanford10 (Gr K-12)
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus (Gr K-12) or Survey Plus (Gr 2-12)

If you want an achievement COMPUTERIZED TEST YOU CAN GIVE AT HOME with QUICK RESULTS:

- Stanford10 Online (Gr 3 Spring-12)
- Iowa E Online (Gr K Midyear-12)

If you want a one-on-one test which is partly oral, listening, and writing; is NOT FILL-IN-THE-BUBBLE; allows the child to test as low as they need to but also as high as they can in various subjects; is mostly UNTIMED; with IMMEDIATE REPORT; comes with a CONSULTATION; gives a little purer Grade Equivalencies; and is often used to help determine giftedness or learning glitches:

- Woodcock-Johnson IV (all ages and grades)

If you want an achievement test for a child with SPECIAL NEEDS:

- Brigance for children developmentally 7 years or younger
- Woodcock-Johnson – paper (preschool-adult)

Or choose the paper version of the lowest level available:

- TerraNova2 – Kindergarten level
- Iowa A or Iowa E – Kindergarten level
- Stanford – Kindergarten level

If you want to give an achievement test in the FALL or MIDYEAR:

- Brigance for children developmentally 7 years or younger
- Iowa A paper (Gr K-12)
- Iowa E paper (Gr K Dec. 1 – Gr 12)
- Iowa E Online (Gr K Dec.1 – Gr 12)
- Stanford-10 Tests Online (Gr 4-12)
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus or Survey Plus Tests – paper (Gr K-12)
- Woodcock-Johnson – paper (preschool-adult)

If you want to give an achievement test in the SPRING:

- Brigance for children developmentally 7 years or younger
- Iowa A or Iowa E – paper (Gr K-12)
- Iowa E Online (Gr K-12)
- Stanford-10 Tests – paper (Gr K-12) and online (Gr 3-12)
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus or Survey Plus Tests – paper (Gr K-12)
- Woodcock-Johnson - paper (preschool-adult)

Year Normed

- [Brigance](#) for children developmentally 7 years or younger - 2010
- [Iowa A](#) – paper (Gr K-12) – 2005
- Iowa E – [paper](#) (Gr K-12) and [online](#) (Gr K-12) - 2017
- Stanford-10 Tests – [paper](#) (Gr K-12) and [online](#) (Gr 3 Spring-12) -2018
- [TerraNova2 Complete Plus](#) (Gr K-12) or [Survey Plus Tests](#) (Gr 2 -12) – paper - 2005
- [Woodcock-Johnson](#), IV - paper (preschool-adult) – Copywrite 2014

Special REQUIREMENTS TO ORDER OR ADMINISTER the Tests (Required forms are on our website.)

- Brigance – must be ordered for homeschool use only
- Iowa A and Iowa E - Test Administrator needs a BA degree but waived during the pandemic. We need Homeschool verification form completed each year.
- Iowa E Online — No BA degree or training is required since we are administering it. We need a Homeschool verification form completed each year.
- Stanford10 Tests – Test Administrator needs a BA degree and some training. We have a free 8 minute training video on our website under “Testing Resources”. We need a Homeschool verification form completed each year.
- Stanford10 Online Tests – No BA degree or training is required since we are administering it. We need a Homeschool verification form completed each year.
- TerraNova2 Complete Plus or Survey Plus Tests – none
- Woodcock-Johnson IV - paper (preschool-adult) – administered by our trained testers.

If you want us to give any of the above tests, we can help you either in your home, support group, or in our office. Our travel dates are limited but feel free to call us. Groups get discounts.

If you have other needs or questions, please email us at info@triangleed.com or call us toll-free at 877-843-8837.

Debbie Thompson (www.TriangleEd.com) is Director at Triangle Education Assessments in Apex, NC, which helps thousands of homeschoolers each year with their achievement, cognitive, career, and practice testing needs.

EMBARGOES: All of the above tests can be rented to private and homeschools in NC. We rent NO tests outside of the US. If you are out of state check www.triangleed.com for the latest embargoes and restrictions as they are subject to change.