

NWEA (MAP Growth): Everything families need to know

ACEA students take the NWEA (MAP Growth) three times per school year in Math and Reading. Students take the assessment on the computer rather than paper pencil form. Here's everything you need to know, from what it is to how teachers use it to help your child learn.

MAP Growth defined

MAP Growth is an interim, responsive, computer-based assessment for K–12 students. That's a really dense definition. Let's break it down.

- **Interim:** The test is taken up to three times a year, usually at the start of the school year, halfway through, and near the end. This lets teachers get clear snapshots of how students are doing often and early enough that they can adjust their lesson plans as needed.
- **Responsive:** Each question on MAP Growth is generated based on the question—and answer—that came right before it. If a student gets it right, the next one is harder. If they get it wrong, the next one's easier. Students can't ace the assessment, even if they're answering questions well beyond their grade level correctly. But what they get is even better than an A at the top of a test paper: they get an accurate measure of their [zone of proximal development](#), or ZPD, the sweet spot for learning and growing. (More on ZPD in a minute.)
- **Assessment:** MAP Growth is a unique testing experience for kids because they don't pass or fail. Students do not get a grade on it, they do get a score, which makes it possible to plot their growth over time, whether that's a single school year or several years in a row.

Your child's [RIT score](#) reflects how they did on the test. (That acronym stands for Rasch Unit, a concept that gets pretty technical pretty fast. In the mood to geek out? [Wikipedia to the rescue!](#)) Your child's RIT is the number that lets teachers know where they are academically and what to focus on to move learning forward.

How teachers use MAP Growth

MAP Growth is a powerful tool for helping your child's teacher understand how best to support every kid's academic needs. In the fall, teachers use MAP Growth scores to understand individual student needs and set goals for the year, based on the learning expectations set for your child's grade at the state level.

In the winter, they use the scores to gauge progress and course correct as needed. In the spring, scores predict how a student is likely to perform on the state-mandated end-of-year test while there's still enough time to modify instruction.

Helping kids focus on mastering grade-level skills during a school year is critical; we all want children meeting grade-level standards and successfully moving from one grade to the next every June. But helping kids stay engaged and develop a deep love of learning is important, too.

What are some of the ways you might see your child's teacher make decisions based on MAP Growth results? If test scores reflect that the whole class needs to brush up on fractions or reading comprehension, for example, they'll likely rework their lesson plan so there's time to revisit and conquer those topics before moving on to more difficult tasks. If scores show student needs are widely different, your child's teacher can use that data to personalize instruction. One of the coolest things about MAP Growth is that it helps teachers quickly and easily access materials that can help each student get to the next step in their learning. For example, teachers can use MAP Growth scores to build personalized math learning paths for kids in grades 3–8 using [Khan Academy](#) (your school may rely on a tool we created with Khan called [MAP® Accelerator™](#)), or they can find the right text for practicing reading and comprehension with [Newsela](#).

Get ready for testing

You're an essential part of your child's learning support system. To help them get the most out of MAP Growth, here are some tips to encourage they do their best.

- In most cases, when teachers use data to inform or guide their teaching, they're using *a lot of* data from a variety of sources, including from daily classwork and observations. Ask your child's teacher how MAP Growth data fits in.
- DON'T view your child's RIT score as a grade. Your child's MAP Growth RIT score isn't a grade. It's a single data point that helps their teacher know what they're ready to learn next. It's there to inform a teacher's instructional decisions, not to label or pigeonhole your child.

Lastly, a moment of gratitude

Families have always been central to every student's MAP Growth journey, so as you're going through the process with your child—from setting meaningful goals and tracking their progress to celebrating their growth. Thank you for the time and commitment you put into supporting your student's learning