



The CMAS: What are they, and why do they matter?

The beginnings

In 2009, Colorado implemented new, more rigorous academic standards after research showed too many high school students were graduating without the problem-solving and critical thinking skills they need to succeed in college and the workforce.

The new Colorado Academic Standards set guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level across 10 subject areas, including English language arts (ELA), math, science and social studies.

The new standards are different in a number of ways, but place a heavy emphasis on rigor and critical thinking, relevancy and application of skills to the real world, and a strong understanding and ability to communicate understanding in each subject area.

The assessment

To go along with the new standards, the state also implemented new tests, called the Colorado Measures of Academic Success. As suggested by the name, the tests are a way to measure students' progress in English language arts, math, science and social studies. Designed to be administered online, the tests include a variety of interactive questions that are more engaging and aligned with 21st century teaching and learning practices.

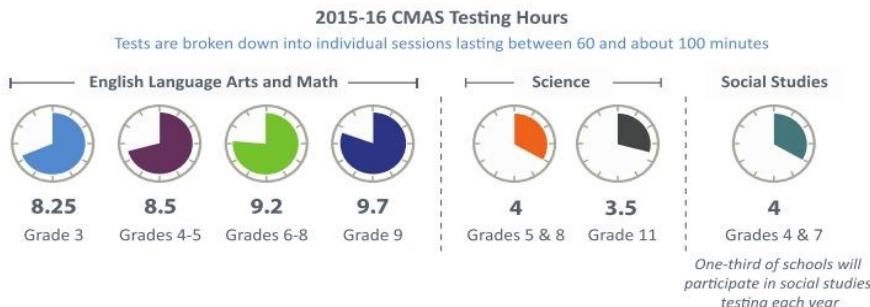
What tests will students take?

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	Grades 3 through 9		SCIENCE	Grades 5, 8 and 11
	MATH	Grades 3 through 9		COLLEGE PREPARATORY EXAM	Grade 10
	SOCIAL STUDIES	Grades 4 and 7 To be done on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years		COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM	Grade 11

So, why should my student take the CMAS?

Participation in CMAS is important because results help students, parents, schools and districts understand whether students have mastered the content they need to know by the end of the school year. At the same time, parents have a right to control their children's education. A new state law requires local school boards to develop a policy allowing parents to excuse their students from participating in one or more state assessments.

Schools and districts will use CMAS results to help improve instruction and to better support students who need more help mastering the standards. Parents can use CMAS scores to see how their students and schools are doing compared to other students and schools across the district, the state and the nation.



When is it?

CMAS testing this school year will take place from April 11–29. But if a district doesn't have enough computers, testing can begin one to three weeks early.