

2005–2006



FACT SHEET

What is the FCAT?

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is the foundation of the statewide educational assessment and accountability program. The FCAT program includes assessments in the following areas:

- Writing for students in grades 4, 8, and 10
- Reading and mathematics for students in grades 3 through 10
- Science for students in grades 5, 8, and 11

What is the purpose of the FCAT?

The purpose of the statewide assessments is to gather information of two kinds:

- Parents, students, and teachers need FCAT data to provide information about student mastery of skills.
- The public needs FCAT data to understand the “educational health” of students and to hold schools and districts accountable for progress.

What is measured by the FCAT?

The FCAT measures student knowledge and understanding of reading, writing, science, and mathematics content as described in the *Sunshine State Standards*. There is a direct connection between the *Sunshine State Standards* and the questions on the FCAT.

What are the *Sunshine State Standards*?

The *Standards* are skills and competencies that Florida students should be able to learn from an early age, as defined by practicing classroom teachers, educational specialists, business people, and concerned citizens from Florida.

When do students take the FCAT?

- FCAT writing in February.
- FCAT reading, mathematics, and science in March.

Ask a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor for the exact testing dates.

How can students prepare for the FCAT?

Teachers should prepare students for success on the FCAT by teaching the important content in the *Sunshine State Standards*. Students may also benefit from the free, easy-to-use teaching resource, *FCAT Explorer* (<http://www.fcatexplorer.com>), offered via the Internet by the Florida Department of Education or review of the *FCAT Sample Test* booklets at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatsmpl.htm>.



For more information about FCAT, contact:

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<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas.fcat.htm>



General Test Taking Tips for Parents to Remember

1. Make sure your child **attends school regularly**. Remember that tests reflect the overall achievement of your child. The more often the child is in a learning situation, the more likely he/she will do well on tests.
2. Give your child **encouragement**. Praise him/her for the things done well throughout the year. A child who is afraid of failing is more likely to make a mistake.
3. See that your child has a **well-rounded diet**. A healthy body leads to a healthy, active mind.
4. See that your child **completes homework assignments**. Homework supports classroom instruction and can help your child increase his/her comprehension of the classroom work.
5. **Meet with your child's teacher(s)** as often as possible to discuss your child's progress. Parents and teachers should work together to benefit the child.
6. Ask the teacher(s) to suggest **activities for you to do at home** with your child. Such activities can help your child improve his/her understanding of school work.
7. Make sure your child is **well rested** on school days. Children who are tired are less likely to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of classwork and tests.
8. Try not to be overly anxious about test scores. Too much emphasis on test scores can be upsetting to children.
9. Find out which tests your child will take and for what purposes. The school principal and counselor should provide you with a schedule of testing for the year and explain the use of the tests.
10. Make sure your child arrives **on time** for school.
11. See that your child **dresses comfortably**. Students should wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the weather.
12. If your child wears a hearing aid or glasses, be sure he/she remembers to use them during all testing sessions.
13. Make sure your child receives any necessary test taking accommodations.
14. Remember, make sure that your child is well rested and has a healthy breakfast on the day of the test.