

# Smarter Assessments 101: What You Need to Know

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March, 2015

## How are the Smarter English Language Arts and Smarter Math Assessments an improvement upon previous exams?

- **ANNUAL:** The previous assessments were given as many as three times each year. This year, schools are now required to give the new assessments only once each spring. But your child's teacher or school may decide to give students shorter interim assessments during the year to gauge their progress in specific content areas or they can decide to give the entire exam in either subject more than once.
- **MORE QUESTION TYPES:** The previous assessment was almost all multiple-choice questions. The new Smarter Assessments provide students the opportunity to showcase how they think critically and problem solve through items that allow the student to explain answers and show deeper knowledge that is more like what is happening in classrooms on a day-to-day basis (examples on reverse page).

## How do these tests help educators?

- **MEANINGFUL RESULTS:** Delaware educators say these exams are **more valuable tools for teachers** because they provide a better assessment of student thinking and understanding.
- **INSTRUCTIONAL IMPACT:** The results of the annual test and the shorter interim assessments help educators by **identifying areas where students are struggling** so they can **adjust instruction** to reteach needed content and skills.

## What else do I need to know?

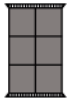
- **SCORE REPORTS:** The Smarter Assessments require written responses that must be scored individually by people trained to judge them objectively. This process takes longer than it does for a computer to score multiple-choice tests. So **families will receive score reports from the state in late July** that will include detailed information on their child's scores, what they mean and how they can support their child's learning at home.
- **EXPECTED RESULTS:** Because the **Smarter Assessments are testing higher-level skills and understanding**, we expect students to find them more **challenging**. We know **fewer students will be proficient** on this test than on the DCAS. That does not mean students are learning less. Instead, it indicates that Delaware public schools are expecting more from students and the assessment is designed to measure how many are reaching the new bar.
- **For a detailed calendar**, which includes other tests your child may be required to take, go to [www.doe.k12.de.us](http://www.doe.k12.de.us) and click on Assessment, then DeSSA.
- **For basic information** about the new college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments, please go to [DelExcels.org](http://DelExcels.org).

## Example: Mathematics Grade 4

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Michael eats  $\frac{4}{6}$  of a bag of crackers. Erin eats  $\frac{5}{6}$  of a bag of crackers.

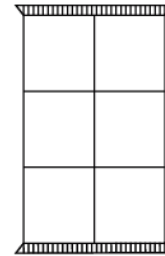
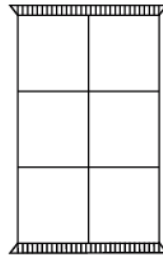


represents one full bag of crackers

**Part A:** Click the spaces on the model to show how many bags of crackers Michael and Erin eat together.

**Part B:** Click on the total number of bags of crackers Michael and Erin eat together.

**Part A:**



**Part B:**

$$\frac{9}{12}$$

$$1\frac{3}{6}$$

$$\frac{1}{6}$$

$$1\frac{3}{12}$$

## Example: English Language Arts Grade 5

1. A student is writing a narrative for his teacher about a family. Read the draft of the story and complete the task that follows.

One day a farmer decided to buy peaches for his three sons.

He wondered what they had done with their peaches so the next day he said, "Children, what did you do with the peaches I gave you?"

"I planted my peach outside," said the oldest. "That way a peach tree will grow in our yard, and then we will have peaches without having to buy them."

The second said, "I sold my peach so I could get some money to buy something we need."

The last said, "I ate my peach and half of mom's."

The children waited for the farmer to say something. They started to get a little nervous about what their father was thinking.

In one or two paragraphs, write an ending for the narrative that follows naturally from the events in the narrative.