



Loess Hills AEA 13: NWEA Consortium

Mathematics & Reading Achievement Level Tests

Administration Guide

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Loess Hills AEA 13 Consortium Achievement Level Tests provide teachers, students, and parents with an accurate assessment of student progress in mastering the skills of Mathematics and Reading. When administered at regular intervals over time, it is possible to find out whether an individual student, or an entire grade level, is making satisfactory progress in these basic skills areas. Teachers can use this assessment information for instructional planning for individual students or an entire class.

The sets of tests consist of multiple levels, and several different levels are given within the same classroom. The first time a student is tested, the appropriate test level is determined by use of placement tests, referred to as locator tests. During the second and subsequent years, the scoring program automatically assigns the correct level to the student based on previous results.

The level tests are valid for any student who can take a paper-and-pencil test as conventionally administered. The tests are not valid for students having difficulty reading and responding in English. As a general rule, if students can read and understand the questions, they should be given the test. If you believe a student is incapable of taking the tests, mark the appropriate special code on the student's answer sheet. (See page 12.) Do not feel obligated to test a student just because an answer sheet is provided. Check with your principal or test coordinator if you are uncertain.

Time

The level tests are not timed tests. A test period of approximately 60 minutes should be sufficient to permit time for instructions and for each student to complete the test. A few additional minutes of supervised testing time is appropriate for students who may need more time.

SECTION TWO: PLACING STUDENTS IN THE APPROPRIATE TEST

IMPORTANT: Locator tests should be administered 1-2 weeks before the Achievement Level Tests to allow time for scoring and assigning levels.

There are two ways to assign the appropriate test level to a student. The first is to secure locator tests from your principal for each student in your class. Using the instructions below, you will have students complete these tests to find the best level test to give each student. It takes approximately 20 minutes to administer the test in each subject area.

After the first testing, except for new students, placement is done by the scoring program. It predicts the best test to assign from a student's previous scores and enters that test number on the individual answer sheets. It then produces a *Level Assignment Report* which shows these assignments. You do not need to administer the locator tests to students whose names are on the list.

Administering Locator Tests

Materials Needed:

- Locator test booklet(s) for each student
- Locator test answer sheet for each student
- Pencils
- Scratch paper for the Mathematics test

The Reading/Language and Mathematics locator tests are used to place new students in the appropriate level of the Achievement Level Tests. If a student has previously taken a test in the level test series, locator tests are not given since a recommended level will be pre-printed on the student's answer sheet.

Each locator test contains a small number of items covering the complete range of the Achievement Level Test series. When students take the locator test, they are, in a sense, taking a very small portion of each test level within the series, although the test items are different.

The locator tests are hand-scored to determine the number of items a student answered correctly. The number correct provides a good estimate of the appropriate level for that student.

Locator Test Administration and Scoring Procedures

1. Give each student a locator test and a locator test answer sheet.
2. Have students put their names on the answer sheet.
3. Be sure students have extra scratch paper for the Mathematics test. **Use of calculators on the mathematics locator tests is not allowed!**
4. The following are suggested directions to read to students. You may modify them to suit the needs of your particular class:

Today, you are taking a test called a Reading/Language (or Mathematics) locator test. The test will show how well you can do different kinds of problems. It has only 16 questions, but some of them are very hard. Please try to do as many as you can. If you come to a question that you don't have any idea how to answer, skip it and go on.

5. Have the students find the directions page in the test booklet and follow along as you read them:

Find the section of your locator answer sheet for READING/LANGUAGE (or MATHEMATICS). It has 16 lines, and each line is followed by spaces marked 1, 2, 3, and 4 (or A, B, C, D, and E). You will fill in the NUMBER (or LETTER) that corresponds to the correct answer to each question. Mark only one answer for each question. If you make a mistake or wish to change an answer, erase your first mark cleanly. Please do not make any marks in the test booklet. (*Calculators may not be used during this test.*) You will have enough time to read and answer all the questions. Some questions will seem easy, others more difficult. If you come to one that you really don't know, skip it and go on. If you skip a question, be sure to skip the same question on your answer sheet. When you finish, close your test booklet and place it on top of your answer sheet. You may begin.

6. It is important that you do not help students with any of the problems so that you get a good estimate of their ability. Some students, particularly those in the early grades, may become frustrated with the difficult problems. Reassure them that they are not expected to know all the answers, and encourage them to do only those they can. As in most other multiple-choice testing situations, if a student is able to bring any prior knowledge to an item and narrow the answer choices down to a few, making an "educated guess" should be encouraged.
7. Use the appropriate scoring template to hand-score the locator tests (or use the answer keys on pages 5, 6, and 7). **Record the number correct on the answer sheet.** Next, look up the suggested test level using the appropriate placement guide tables on pages 5, 6, and 7. **Record the test level on the answer sheet.** (It is advised that these locator answer sheets be kept through the testing season in case a question arises during the scoring process about which level a student was assigned.)

In most cases, the locator test will accurately assign a student to the correct level; however, in rare instances, you may choose a different level if you believe that a student's results are not accurate. For example, suppose you have four students whom you judge to be at about the same level of reading ability. The locator results assign three of them to the same level, while the fourth student's score is substantially higher. Based on what you know about this student, you may reassign him or her to a lower level.

**Use the Answer Keys and
Placement Guides on pages 5, 6, and 7.**

PRIMARY GRADES LOCATOR TESTS

Answer Keys and Placement Guides

Reading/Language

Reading/Language Answer Key				Reading Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	1	8	2	0-4	B01
2	1	9	1	5-7	B02
3	3	10	4	8-10	B03
4	1	11	1	11-12	B04
5	3	12	2	13-14	B05
6	2	13	2		
7	4	14	1		

Mathematics

Mathematics Answer Key				Mathematics Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	C	8	C	0-4	B01
2	C	9	E	5-7	B02
3	B	10	B	8-10	B03
4	A	11	E	11-12	B04
5	C	12	C	13-14	B05
6	A	13	D		
7	B	14	D		

NOTE: The NWEA Primary Locator Tests have only 14 items (in contrast to 16 items on the locator tests for Elementary Grades and Middle Grades). The tests were purposefully designed with fewer items to accommodate the needs of younger students. The placement guides shown in the charts above indicate placement into only the first five levels of each subject series. This is because the higher levels, typically, are too difficult for students in grades two and three.

ELEMENTARY GRADES LOCATOR TESTS

Answer Keys and Placement Guides

Reading/Language

Reading/Language Answer Key				Reading Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	4	9	4	0-3	B01
2	4	10	1	4-5	B02
3	4	11	3	6-7	B03
4	3	12	2	8-9	B04
5	1	13	4	10-11	B05
6	1	14	3	12-13	B06
7	4	15	3	14-15	B07
8	3	16	4	16	B08

Mathematics

Mathematics Answer Key				Mathematics Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	C	9	B	0-4	B01
2	C	10	E	5-6	B02
3	B	11	C	7-8	B03
4	A	12	E	9-10	B04
5	B	13	D	11-12	B05
6	B	14	D	13	B06
7	D	15	A	14	B07
8	C	16	A	15-16	B08

MIDDLE GRADES LOCATOR TESTS

Answer Keys and Placement Guides

Reading/Language

Reading/Language Answer Key				Reading Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	3	9	2	0-1	B01
2	1	10	2	2-3	B02
3	1	11	4	4	B03
4	4	12	3	5-6	B04
5	3	13	3	7-9	B05
6	4	14	4	10-11	B06
7	1	15	3	12-13	B07
8	3	16	2	14-16	B08

Mathematics

Mathematics Answer Key				Mathematics Placement	
Item	Correct Answer	Item	Correct Answer	Number Correct	Level Test
1	D	9	C	0-3	C01
2	B	10	B	4-5	C02
3	A	11	E	6-7	C03
4	D	12	B	8	C04
5	D	13	E	9-10	C05
6	C	14	E	11-12	C06
7	B	15	B	13-14	C07
8	A	16	C	15-16	C08

SECTION THREE: LEVEL TEST ADMINISTRATION

Materials You Will Need

1. **Test booklets.** You will need to secure these after determining the test level placement of each student in each subject. The number of each level test needed depends on the number of students assigned to each level by the locator tests.
2. **Pre-printed answer sheets.** These are printed by the computer and show student name, grade level, school, teacher name, and student ID number. Check to be sure that this information is correct. If you find errors, enter the correct information on a blank answer sheet and use it instead. **Do not try to make corrections on a pre-printed answer sheet!**
3. For students who have previously taken a test in the level test series, a recommended level is pre-printed on the answer sheets.
4. If students have never taken a level test before, it will be necessary for you to enter the test level assigned by the locator test for each subject onto each student answer sheet. Write and bubble-in the test level in the appropriate columns on the front of the answer sheet.
5. **Blank answer sheets.** These are needed for new students and for students whose information on the pre-printed answer sheets is incorrect. For these students, you will need to enter the same information that the computer supplied on pre-printed answer sheets, as well as the test level assignment.
6. **Pencils.** Have enough sharpened #2 pencils with good quality erasers for students to use, plus a supply of reserves.
7. **Scratch paper.** This should be distributed along with the Mathematics booklets so work will not be done on the booklet itself.
8. **Calculators.** Each student will need a 4-function calculator for the first part of the Mathematics test.
9. **Level Assignment Report.** This report is provided in the second and subsequent years of testing. This computer-generated list shows all students in your class who were tested the previous testing season, together with the level test assigned to each student. Check to see if any names have been omitted. Enter those names at the bottom of the list, together with student ID numbers and grades. Enter "new student" level test assignments on the list. This is for your reference only, in case there is a future need to verify assigned levels.

Test Administration Procedures

1. Put a **Do Not Disturb** sign on the door.
2. Encourage students to perform as well as they can. Student attitude affects the validity and reliability of test results, and they will look to you to decide the importance of doing their best.
3. Make sure that each student has a #2 pencil.
4. Distribute calculators and scratch paper for the mathematics test.
5. Give each student his/her pre-printed answer sheet or one on which you have hand-entered the necessary information.
6. Give each student the appropriate test level booklet, which was pre-assigned or assigned by taking a locator test.

Directions for the Reading Tests

The following are suggested directions to read to students as they follow along in their booklets. You may modify them to suit the needs of your particular class:

Look at your answer sheet. Check to be sure that it has your name and student ID number. Look at your test booklet. Make sure that the level number on the test booklet is the same as the level number printed on the front of your answer sheet. For example, if you have B02 printed and bubbled in on your answer sheet, then the level number on your test booklet should be B02.

(Read and bubble in Sample A together with the students.)

Find the section of the answer sheet for Reading. Each line is followed by spaces numbered 1-4. You will fill in the number that corresponds to the correct answer to the question. Notice that the **3** is darkened for Sample A.

Mark only one answer for each question. If you make a mistake or wish to change an answer, erase your mark cleanly. Please do not make any marks in the test booklet.

You will have enough time to read and answer all the questions. Some questions will be easy; others will be more difficult. If you come to one you really don't know, skip it and go on. If you skip a question, be sure to skip the same question on your answer sheet. If you finish the test before you are asked to stop, go back and try to answer the questions you skipped. When you finish, close your booklet and place it on top of your answer sheet.

Any questions? Locate the section for Reading on the back of your answer sheet. Turn to page 1 and begin.

Directions for the Mathematics Test

The following are suggested directions to read to students as they follow along in their booklets. You may modify them to suit the needs of your particular class:

Look at your answer sheet. Check to be sure that it has your name and student ID number. Look at your test booklet. Make sure that the level number on the test booklet is the same as the level number printed on the front of your answer sheet. For example, if you have B02 (or C02) printed and bubbled in on your answer sheet, then the level number on your test booklet should be B02 (or C02).

(Read and bubble in Sample A together with the students.)

Find the section of the answer sheet for Mathematics. Each line is followed by spaces marked A-E. You will fill in the letter that corresponds to the correct answer to the question. Notice that the **E** is darkened for Sample A.

Mark only one answer for each question. If you make a mistake or wish to change an answer, erase your first mark cleanly. Please do not make any marks in the test booklet.

You will have a calculator and scratch paper to use with the first part of the test. When you finish that part, you will come to a page with a stop sign that says to put your calculator away. You will be able to use the scratch paper with the second part of the test.

You will have enough time to read and answer all the questions. Some questions will be easy; other will be more difficult. If you come to one you really don't know, skip it and go on. If you skip a question, be sure to skip the same question on your answer sheet. When you finish the first part of the test, go back and try to answer the questions you skipped. Then go on to the second part of the test. When you are finished, close your booklet and place it on top of your answer sheet.

Any questions? Locate the section for Mathematics on the back of your answer sheet. Turn to page 1 and begin.

Supervision During Testing

1. Monitor students during testing. Start by making sure they are using the correct section of the answer sheet. Check to see that they are making uniform dark marks and are erasing completely. Watch for any conditions like those listed below.

Invalidate a test if a student:

- Copies or receives verbal help from another student
- Marks answers randomly without reading the questions
- Marks answers in the wrong place on the answer sheet
- Marks multiple answers for a variety of items
- Leaves the room for more than 5 minutes (other than a scheduled break)
- Refuses to take or continue the test
- Seems unable to comprehend directions or questions
- Exhibits disabling anxiety

If any of these problems occur, take the student's answer sheet and mark special code number 7 for the appropriate subject. (See page 12.) Tests are **not** to be marked invalid because the student needed more time than others to finish or because procedures were modified to accommodate a special education student's disability. (See "After Testing.")

2. The level tests are not timed tests. A test period of approximately 60 minutes should be sufficient for instructions and for each student to complete the test. If all students finish before the end of the period, you may collect materials; however, if even one student is working, do not collect materials until the test period ends. A few additional minutes of supervised testing time is appropriate for students who have not finished.

After Testing

1. Fill out a *Header Sheet*. There should be one header sheet for each set of answer sheets (usually one header sheet for each class). Provide all information requested.
2. Check that the level number coded on each answer sheet corresponds to the level number on the booklet used. **Remember, answer sheets with missing or incorrect test levels cannot be scored!**
3. Count the answer sheets to make sure none were left in the test booklets or misplaced. Stack them so all face the same direction. Sort the booklets by subject. Count them to make sure none have been lost or mislaid. This is important for test security.
4. Check to make sure that all of the answer sheets you filled in by hand include the student name, grade level, school, teacher name, test level (both written and bubbled) and student ID number (both written and bubbled).
5. Examine each answer sheet and erase stray marks, darken light marks and clean up incomplete erasures. These problems will lower the student's score and decrease the usefulness of the test results.

6. Answer sheets of absent students should not be kept for later. Include these answer sheets in the regular class set to be returned for scoring. These students will be able to make up their test(s) during the retesting stage of the process. Check with your principal or test coordinator about procedures for retesting.
7. Mark any invalid answer sheets with the appropriate special code on the front of the answer sheet in the appropriate subject column.

Special codes:

- 2 ESL exempt
- 4 Special education exempt
- 5 Special education modification
- 6 Other (parental objections on religious or other grounds)
- 7 Invalid (see "Supervision During Testing")
- 8 Tested out of grade-level range (e.g., a middle school special education student tested with an elementary school Mathematics test)

8. Return the header sheet, class list, completed answer sheets, and all other testing materials to your test coordinator or principal.

Administering Retests and Makeup Tests

Results from the level tests will help you plan instruction. They also help teachers who receive your students in the future. It is important to have valid test scores on file for every student. The scoring system automatically assigns a retest to students who score outside the valid range of the test they took. By retesting these students, you can have confidence that they have had every opportunity to experience success and that their scores are as accurate as possible.

1. After the answer sheets have been scored, you will receive a retest list and new preprinted answer sheets for students who scored above or below the valid range of the test they took. These students will take a second test, which is normally two levels higher or lower than the first one, to give them the opportunity to do their best. The test level printed on the answer sheet is the recommended retest level to administer to the student. Check to be certain that you agree with the assigned level, then bubble in the level in the appropriate column.
2. Review the list and decide whether or not each student should be retested. Based on your professional judgment, decide whether low-performing students and special education students have the potential to do better on the retest. Do not retest students who are unlikely to perform better on the retest.
3. At the same time you retest, give makeup tests to students who were absent or whose tests were invalid. You will receive new preprinted answer sheets for these students also.
4. If your *Class Report* has been returned, review the scores on it. In rare cases, a student may have had a bad testing day and received a score that seems unusually lower than his or her normal performance. You may decide to retest that student as well. If so, complete a blank answer sheet with all of the required information, written and bubbled, and assign a test that is one or two levels lower than the one previously taken. **Make certain students don't take the same level a second time.**
5. After testing, complete a *Header Sheet*. Be sure to bubble the *Retest* section in the lower right corner of the page. Return the *Header Sheet*, answer sheets, and all other testing materials to your test coordinator or principal. Be sure that all test booklets are returned in order to maintain test security.

Important Reminders

- ✓ **Use a locator test for any student who does not have a level pre-printed on his or her answer sheet.** (See pages 2-3.)
- ✓ **Record the level assignments on the locator test answer sheets. Keep the answer sheets throughout the testing season in case a question arises during scoring about a student's assigned level.** (See page 3.)
- ✓ **Answer sheets with missing or inaccurate levels cannot be scored.** (See page 11.)
- ✓ **Answer sheets with stray marks, incomplete erasures, and marks that are too light will lower a student's score.** (See page 11.)
- ✓ **It is important to have a valid test score on file for every student. Give retests and makeup tests!** (See page 12.)

Note to AEA 13 Schools: This administration manual is generic for various schools in the country using NWEA Achievement Level Tests, and has only been modified slightly. While our goal structure and questions are unique to AEA 13, the format for NWEA paper-pencil tests is universal. Please note that the manual, including the key for locator tests has references to reading/language tests. AEA 13 schools are not using language tests, so please ignore these references. Keep in mind that the locator test that you give to determine reading levels is the same locator that would be used if you were giving a language test as well. *Be careful that students respond in the appropriate columns of their answer sheet for reading and math, ignoring the language section.*

Questions? Contact your district testing coordinator or Ron Russell, AEA 13 Assessment Consultant, at (800) 886-1480 or rrussell@aea13.org