

ISA

International Schools' Assessment

QUICK GUIDE

The ISA is a reliable, evidence-based assessment designed to support international schools to evaluate instructional programs, monitor student progress and compare school performance internationally.



Assessments

Subject	Grade
Mathematical Literacy	Grades 3-10
Reading	Grades 3-10
Writing	Grades 3-10
Scientific Literacy	Grades 3-10

The ISA is more than a multiple-choice test, with writing tasks and open-ended questions better illuminating students' thinking processes. Each test is marked by a highly-experienced team of subject matter experts who are trained to evaluate student responses to specific questions.

ISA test questions are also culturally diverse and appropriate for students whose first language may not be English.

Schools administer the test once in the year and can choose to take part in the October, February or May test administration.

Designed for international schools

The ISA is designed for international schools and schools with an international focus. It is built upon the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) frameworks, in consultation with international schools and drawing upon ACER's extensive assessment development experience.*

ISA assessments are not specific to a single curriculum and aligned schools follow a diverse range of curricula including IB, British National, USA and more.


Trusted by schools since 2002, the tests are taken across the world, allowing a truly international comparison. Every year around 60 000 students from hundreds of schools around the world participate in the ISA.

* Note that the ISA is not part of PISA and is not endorsed by the OECD.

Sample Questions

Canoe Hire

A canoe costs 15 zeds to hire for one hour.
After that, it costs 5 zeds for each half hour.



John has 50 zeds.
How many hours can he hire a canoe for?
Enter your final answer in this box.

Show your working in the space below.

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Studying Meowsic

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden are studying how cats communicate. Referred to affectionately as Meowsic, the study is focusing on how cats vary their sounds when communicating with humans and other cats, and also how cats respond to different vocal sounds from humans. Aimed at improving our understanding of how we communicate with pets, the researchers expect that results could improve the quality of animal care generally, not just the care of cats. The researchers also intend to look at whether cat noises vary in different parts of the world. Previous studies have shown that some animals, such as whales, have regional accents.

Such research could easily be dismissed as a waste of resources and a sign of people having too much time on their hands. It is easy to laugh off studies that don't lead directly and obviously to medical discoveries or greater wealth, but something about the notion of learning more about life around us has an irresistible appeal to many people. Anything that expands our understanding of the world around us has the potential to lead to new, and sometimes very useful, discoveries. Brilliant mathematician Alan Turing, now largely regarded as the inventor of computer science, was initially investigating abstract concepts that may even have seemed pointless to some people at the time. Yet today we rely heavily on the fruits of his research. Who knows where a greater understanding of cat-human chat might ultimately lead us?

Does the first paragraph perform the following functions?
Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each function.

Function	Yes	No
giving a factual account	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
giving examples of research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
criticising certain types of research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To learn more, or register your school visit our website acer.org/isa or contact us, isa@acer.org

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Reports

Informative reports provide tracking of individual students' progress over time, as well as rich international comparisons.

The reports use scale scores, rather than raw scores, enabling all students across grades to be compared within the same subject. These scores also enable student performance to be accurately compared from one year to the next, providing quantitative evidence of student progress over time.

ISA scales are also divided into described proficiency levels that provide qualitative information about what progress typically looks like for students.

ISA reports allow schools to see how they are performing compared to other similar schools, school in their region and the full cohort of participating schools around the world.

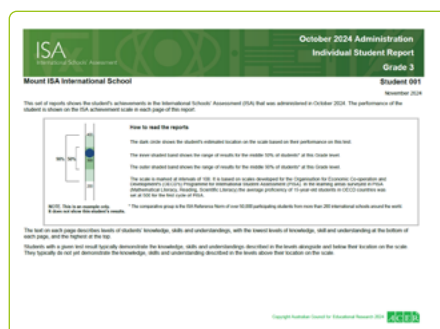
Every ISA school receives the following reports:

- **Individual Student** – for parents/teachers to see current proficiency and track progress.
- **Class** – provides diagnostic information for teachers and grade coordinators.
- **School** – allows schools to benchmark themselves against other schools internationally.
- **National Comparison** – provides a broad picture of school performance against relevant national groups.
- **Interactive Diagnostic** – instant customisation allows schools to interpret and use the data to inform improvements in teaching and learning.

Schools can also choose to purchase the **Interactive Tracking** report which allows schools to monitor performance over a number of years, against reliable benchmarks.

2026 Cycle
Like School Group Report

Grade	Mathematical Literacy	Reading	Scientific Literacy
1	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25
2	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25
3	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25
4	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25	Mean: 215, S.D.: 25



Supporting teachers and school leaders

ACER provides a range of professional learning and support to help schools maximise the value of ISA results and strengthen teaching and learning.

Schools can access a program of webinars designed to support effective test administration and build confidence in interpreting ISA reports. These sessions provide opportunities for educators to engage directly with ACER experts, ask questions and explore practical approaches for using ISA data in context.

ACER also offers workshops and targeted professional learning, supporting teachers and school leaders to deepen their understanding of assessment data, identify areas for growth and apply insights to classroom practice.

In addition, schools receive regular communications and newsletters with updates and guidance to support ongoing improvement across teaching and learning programs.

To learn more, or register your school visit
acer.org/isa

