International Benchmark Test

Student assessment program for Grade 3 to Grade 10
- English
- Mathematics
- Science

Compare performance nationally and internationally.

Compare students between grades and over time.
INVIATION TO JOIN THE IBT PROGRAM
from Professor Geoff Masters AO
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Council for Educational Research

Dear Fellow Educators,

I am writing to offer your school the opportunity to participate in the IBT assessment and reporting program developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). ACER has created a global program of school-level tests in English, Mathematics and Science suitable for students across a range of countries. These high-quality tests enable teachers, parents and school leaders to monitor the educational development of students throughout their years of primary and secondary schooling.

The approaches we take to assessing learning and the way we report success or failure at school send powerful messages to students. Over recent years there has been a shift in the focus of educational measurement towards diagnostic assessment and towards a ‘growth mindset’. With a comprehensive reporting program and diagnostic feedback, the IBT can assist educators in establishing the points that individuals have reached in their learning, in setting personal targets for further learning and in monitoring the progress that individuals make over time.

Assessments of progress are a welcome alternative to judging success only in terms of year-level standards. Importantly, the adoption of a growth mindset does not represent a lowering of expectations. On the contrary, it sets high expectations of every learner, including more advanced students who sometimes are not challenged or stretched at school.

The IBT assessment program draws on ACER’s 85 years of experience in educational research. Requiring students to think about topics rather than just recall information, to apply their subject knowledge rather than just remember facts, the IBT is at the forefront of modern educational measurement. With more than 180,000 tests sat annually, and a growing number of schools worldwide participating, I can highly recommend the IBT program for all schools that want to monitor students as they make their way along their personal learning journeys.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

ABOUT ACER
ACER is one of the world’s leading educational research centres. Since it was established in 1930, it has built a strong reputation as a provider of reliable support and expertise to education policy makers and professional practitioners.

ACER has been instrumental in the implementation, management and reporting of large-scale international surveys such TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS and ICILS.

ACER’s mission is to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the life span.
ABOUT IBT

The IBT is an internationally administered program of assessments in English, Mathematics and Science for students in school Grades 3 to 10, with test booklets appropriate for each grade level.

The IBT program was established in 2005 to provide schools in all countries with a high-quality skills-based assessment not linked to any national curriculum. This allows students from all countries to be compared fairly.

Schools use the IBT to:
- Identify student strengths and weaknesses in each subject.
- Provide teachers with reliable data to inform their teaching.
- Compare student and school performance nationally and internationally.
- Monitor student progress from one year to the next.

The IBT is written by a select team of ACER test-writing experts using the latest pedagogical research. Once the assessments have been sat and the data collected, ACER’s experienced psychometricians use the Rasch model of Item Response Theory to analyse the results. ACER then produces developmental scales for each subject onto which students are placed.

TEST DESIGN

For each subject, there are eight test booklets (Level 3 to Level 10). The levels are linked ‘vertically’ using a few common test questions in the booklets of adjacent grade levels. This enables all students to be reported on that subject’s developmental scale regardless of the test booklet sat. The tests are also linked ‘horizontally’ between calendar years by including a few test questions from previous years. This ensures the scale stays the same each year, enabling the monitoring of student growth over time.
In the English tests, students are not asked merely to retrieve information from a passage: they are asked to make inferences, form judgements and reflect on the texts. Questions addressing higher-order thinking skills are used to ascertain whether a student can ‘read between the lines’ and understand subtlety and nuance in the English language.

For Mathematics questions, students are asked to make sense of mathematical concepts in everyday situations. IBT Mathematics is not about simply remembering rules and procedures; it requires students to use higher-order thinking to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
The IBT tests are skill based. They are aligned to but do not follow any single national curriculum. This allows students from all countries to be compared fairly.

The duration of each test is 60 minutes. There are 40–45 multiple-choice questions on each test.

In the Science tests, students are asked to apply scientific principles to particular problems. IBT Science not only assesses students’ knowledge of science, it assesses whether students are capable of applying this knowledge to the given contexts. Many of the higher-order thinking questions are based on scientific enquiry.

1. Michael is in the full shadow of a total solar eclipse.

Which point shows where Michael is located?

A. P
B. Q
C. R
D. S

Question intent: Identifies position on Earth of full shadow during a total solar eclipse.

Diagrams are simple, clean and appropriately labelled.

The reading load required to answer a Science question is kept very basic. This is to ensure scientific concepts are assessed, not a student’s reading ability.

The ENGLISH Strands Assessed
- Reading Comprehension
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar
- Vocabulary

The MATHEMATICS Strands Assessed
- Number
- Measurement
- Space
- Chance and Data

The SCIENCE Strands Assessed
- Earth Science
- Physical Science
- Life Science
RESULTS AND REPORTS

The IBT program provides a comprehensive set of PDF and Excel reports to school leaders, classroom teachers, students and parents. The reports include:

- Student performance on each question and each subject strand.
- Subject scale scores to monitor student performance over time.
- Described achievement bands to outline each student’s current skill set.
- Comparisons of students within the school, grade and class.
- Comparisons to national and international performance to see where students sit globally.
- National certificate of achievement for each student for each subject.

REPORTS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Receive an interactive report in MS Excel format.

See graphical comparisons at the click of a button.

Identify patterns and trends in student performance.

See how students perform against a developmental scale at a glance.

Benchmark report enables comparisons to other IBT schools nationally and internationally.
REPORTS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Comprehensive student report shows parents how their child performed against national and international standards.

Detailed data by subject strand.

Entire class or year level reported against the IBT developmental scale.

Student achievement bands describe the skills and understandings students have demonstrated.

REPORTS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

See the responses of each student for each question.

Certificates of achievement including honour, high distinction, distinction and participation.
ACER INDIA

To facilitate further educational research in South Asia, ACER established its Indian entity, the not-for-profit independent company ACER India. With a focus on improving educational outcomes in the region, ACER India offers assessment services and advice, institution capacity building, consultancy services, professional learning for teachers, and leadership training for principals.

Recent work undertaken by ACER India includes:
- Psychometric analysis of CBSE data.
- Support to NCERT to implement PISA in India.
- Consultancy to World Bank for SSA.
- Consultancy support for Bangladesh National Assessment Program.
- Development of tests for South-East Asian countries (SEA-PLM).
- Publication of Teacher magazine and research-based books.

Dear Principal

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you as a committed partner to improving student learning through IBT. The IBT program is a joint collaboration between ACER’s Australian and Indian offices, offering high-quality international assessments to schools in India and worldwide.

Effective teaching depends on teachers being well informed about their students’ current learning levels and the progress being made by them. The critical questions faced by teachers are: What am I dealing with? and What can I do about it?

The IBT helps teachers and school leaders to identify content strengths and weaknesses in their teaching programs which can then be acted upon to better prepare their students for the future.

Dr Ratna Dhamija
Manager, ACER India

For more detailed information about IBT, visit [http://ibt.acer.edu.au](http://ibt.acer.edu.au)

For any further assistance, contact the IBT team on 11 26464304 or email test.india@acer.edu.au

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‘IBT is a useful and challenging tool to evaluate a child’s status at national level. Most of the questions are thought provoking and give the children a chance to show their potential.’

– KRM Public School, Chennai

‘We highly appreciate ACER IBT as it aligns with our constructivist approach towards learning. It gives us an opportunity to assess not just the knowledge acquired by students but also the ability to analyse and apply.’

– Indus International School, Bangalore