International Benchmark Test (IBT)

Australian Council for Educational Research

Student assessment program for primary and secondary schools

- English
- Mathematics
- Science

Compare performance nationally and internationally.

Compare students between grades and over time.
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

Professor Geoff Masters AO
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Council for Educational Research

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 primary and secondary schools 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. 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.

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

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

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

**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

- See how students perform against a developmental scale at a glance.
- Benchmark report enables comparisons to other IBT schools nationally and internationally.
- Receive an interactive report in MS Excel format.
- See graphical comparisons at the click of a button.
- Identify patterns and trends in student performance.
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.
Dear Principals and Teachers,

On behalf of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), ET Education Services would like to invite your students to participate in this year’s IBT program. IBT is an internationally administered program of assessments in English, Mathematics and Science specifically designed for students in primary and secondary schools.

ACER has been instrumental in the implementation, management and reporting of large-scale surveys such as the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) which monitors the Reading, Mathematics and Science skills of students in 65 countries. ACER brings its experience in these types of assessments to the IBT program.

In the last 2012 PISA survey, Malaysian students fared well below the international average, with a ranking of 52 out of the 65 countries that took part. One skill generally lacking in Malaysian students is that of higher order thinking. With this in mind, in the Malaysian Education Blueprint of 2013-2025, the Ministry of Education set a goal of elevating Malaysia’s ranking to the top one third of countries by 2025.

In support of the Ministry of Education’s objective, ET Education Services will administer the IBT program throughout Malaysia with the intention of improving the reasoning and higher order thinking skills of Malaysian students in the three subject areas. With a yearly update of new and stimulating content, the IBT program has experienced substantial growth in the top schools in Malaysia.

ET Education Services is the official licensee in Malaysia for the IBT program. For more than 28 years, we have been a pioneer in the education industry, engaging in student counseling, international school placement, and assessments of student ability.

We look forward to working with you in this year’s IBT program.

Kind regards,

Matthew Gan
ET Education Services Sdn Bhd

For more detailed information about IBT, visit www.et-studyabroad.com

For any further assistance, contact

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