



Council for Lifelong Learning  
**Florida Comprehensive Assessment  
Test (FCAT)**

**Fact  
Sheet**

September 2001

1. What is the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test?	<p>The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is a combination of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced items that require students to produce information or perform tasks in such a way that the Sunshine State Standards skills and competencies can be measured. FCAT is an integral part of Florida's overall plan to increase student achievement through higher standards. The Sunshine State Standards outline the skills and competencies Florida students should have in seven subject areas at certain stages of their school career. Florida law requires that student achievement testing be administered annually in grades 3 through 10. <b>(See the Sunshine State Standards Fact Sheet.)</b></p>
2. In what grades is FCAT administered?	<p>The FCAT is administered in grades 3 through 10 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mathematics tests (administered in grades 3 through 10) include information related to other Sunshine State Standards content areas of the arts, social studies, science, foreign language, and physical education. These tests are multiple choice and short-answer/long-answer performance tasks.</li><li>• reading tests (administered in grades 3 through 10) use various books and publications that students should be able to read at their grade level. These tests are multiple-choice and short-answer/long-answer performance tasks.</li><li>• writing test (administered in grades 4, 8, and 10) requires students to prepare original essays on various topics that are scored on a rubric of 1 to 6.</li></ul> <p>Students enrolling in the 9th grade in the fall of 1999 and thereafter must earn a passing score on the 10th grade FCAT in order to graduate with a high school diploma.</p> <p>Science assessment is to begin statewide in 2003 and will be administered in grades 5, 8, and 10. <b>(See the Testing Fact Sheet.)</b></p>
3. When is FCAT administered?	<p>First administered in January 1998, local districts determine when the FCAT is to be administered; however, the law requires the Commissioner of Education to establish a schedule for the administration of the FCAT that provides the latest possible administration and the earliest possible results.</p>

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	<p>The FCAT test dates for the 2001-2002 school year are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCAT writing test - February 12, 2002;</li> <li>• FCAT reading and math tests - March 11-13, 2002 (make-up dates on March 14, 15 and 18, 2002).</li> </ul>
4. How was the FCAT developed?	The Florida Department of Education's Assessment and Evaluation Services Section developed the FCAT in conjunction with classroom teachers, curriculum experts, administrators, and citizens.
5. How is the FCAT scored?	A student's multiple-choice questions are machine scored using a computer program that reads a student's bubbled-in answers. Trained evaluators using a hand scoring process score performance task answers. The handscores are then combined with the computer-generated scores.
6. Once compiled, what do the scores mean?	<p>The FCAT scores are reported on a cut-score scale of 100 to 500. Cut-scores are linked to one of five achievement levels as established by rule, with level one being the lowest level and level five being the highest level.</p> <p>Initially, the Department will use a lower cut-score scale to determine performance, giving students and teachers additional time to transition to the use of the FCAT. The cut-score scale will be increased for tests administered in 2002 and beyond to reflect the scores recommended by over 90 teachers involved in helping to establish FCAT cut-scores.</p>
7. How will a student's scores be used?	As a part of the Student Assessment Program, FCAT data is used to assist in identifying student progress towards mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, the learning gains of students, and for use in determining school performance grade categories. <b>(See the School Grading System Fact Sheet.)</b>
8. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	<p>Section 229.592, F.S. -- Implementation of state system of school improvement and educational accountability</p> <p>Section 229.053, F.S. -- General powers of state board</p> <p>Section 229.0535, F.S. -- Authority to enforce school improvement</p> <p>Section 229.57, F.S. -- Student assessment program</p> <p>Section 229.591, F.S. -- Comprehensive revision of Florida's system of school improvement and educational accountability</p> <p>Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C. -- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test</p> <p>Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C. -- Implementation of Florida's System of School Improvement and Educational Accountability</p>

<p>9. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Florida Department of Education Division of Public Schools (850) 488-8198 <a href="http://www.firn.edu/doe">www.firn.edu/doe</a></p> <p>The Florida House of Representatives Council for Lifelong Learning (850) 414-6694</p> <p>The Florida House of Representatives Committee on Education Innovation (850) 488-7451</p>
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