5

M-Step™

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress

A companion guide to the grade 5 Parent Report

M-STEP Parent Report Guide

MICHIGAN Department of Education

August 2026

Thank you for partnering with your school to provide a positive education for your student. As parents and educators working together, we will ensure our children receive an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life.

Michigan's Academic Standards (www.michigan.gov/academicstandards) set clear and consistent educational expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level. A student who follows these standards is ready to succeed in college and the workplace by the time they graduate from high school.

The Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress assessment (M-STEP) is one way to measure student progress in grade 5 based on the academic standards in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Results from M-STEP are just one source of information about your child's learning progress. Local tests, classroom work, and report cards can add more insight into how well your child is learning. To learn more, visit the M-STEP web page (www.michigan.gov/mstep).

As you review your child's results, remember these assessments are a snapshot of your student's progress. Something as simple as a student not feeling well on the day of the assessment could affect their performance. This is why your child's school and teachers use a number of tools and strategies—such as projects, classroom activities, and assessments—to identify learning and achievement levels.

We all share the responsibility of helping every child be successful. At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and helping your child meet them. If your child needs extra support or wants to learn more, work with their teacher to identify resources and opportunities that are appropriate for them. Talk with your child's teacher regularly about how your child is doing and how you can support their learning at home. Building a connection between home and school will greatly improve the impact of your child's learning.

Together as partners, we can ensure success for every child.

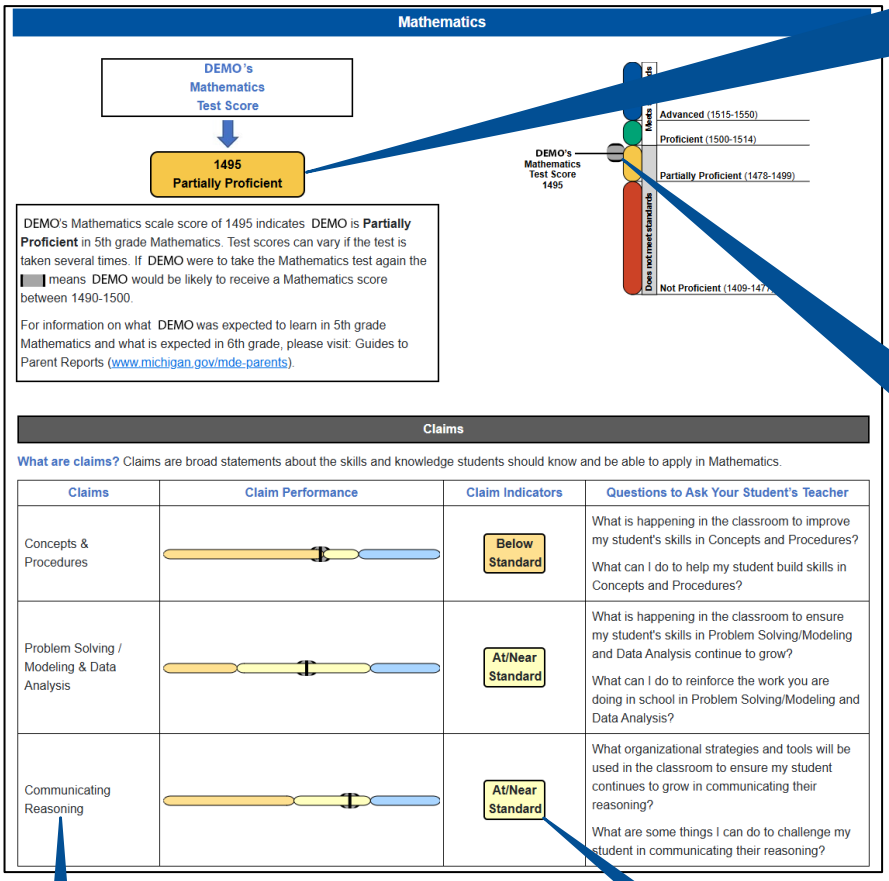
How to Read Your Child's Score Report

Michigan schools assess the progress of fifth grade students on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, or M-STEP. The M-STEP measures what students know and are able to do in relation to Michigan's academic standards. Students in grade 5 take M-STEP tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

M-STEP results are released in late summer to provide parents and teachers with valuable information on where students are doing well and where they might need additional support. Scores also can support instruction by helping educators better align curriculum and instruction to state standards.

Score Report Components

M-STEP results: grade 5
Mathematics example



Student Overall Performance Level and Scale Score
Students receive a numerical scale score and, based on that score, are assigned one of four performance levels: Not Proficient, Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced. This section of the report provides your student's numerical score and performance level.

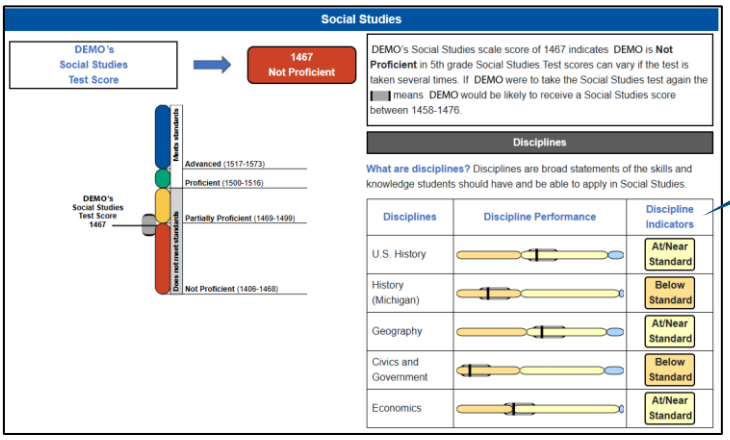
Confidence Interval
Test scores can vary if the test is taken several times; this bar ▮▮▮ shows the ranges of scores your child would be likely to receive if they took the test another time.

Claims
Assessments in ELA and mathematics include sub-categories, called claims, which relate directly to Michigan's learning standards for those subjects. This section describes the claims that were assessed.

Claim Performance Indicators
The report shows at a glance whether your student's score on this claim shows ▮▮▮ above standard, ▮▮▮ at or near standard, or ▮▮▮ below standard. The bar chart indicates the range of possible performance within each claim. The black vertical lines indicate your student's performance.

Score Report Components (continued)

M-STEP results: grade 5 Social Studies example

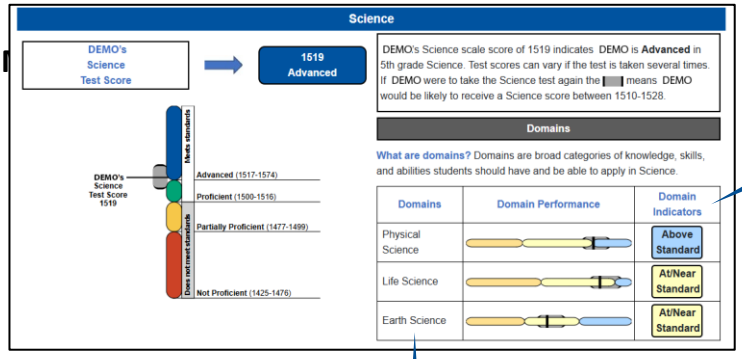


Discipline Performance Indicators
The report displays discipline performance indicators which are reported as

- above standard,
- at or near standard,
- below standard.

Disciplines
Social Studies assessments include sub-categories, called disciplines, which relate directly to Michigan's learning standards for social studies. This section lists the disciplines that were assessed.

M-STEP results: grade 5 Science example



Domain Performance Indicators
The report displays domain performance indicators which are reported as

- above standard,
- at or near standard,
- below standard.

Domains
Science assessments include sub-categories, called domains, which relate directly to Michigan's learning standards for science. This section lists the disciplines that were assessed.

Content Areas on the M-STEP

When you review your child's score report, you will see an overall score as well as other information on how your child is progressing in each content area. The test results, which are aligned to Michigan's Academic Standards, tell you, your child, and your child's teachers how well your student is mastering the standards.

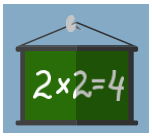
English Language Arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) M-STEP is organized into four areas, or claims:

	Reading	Students can read, understand, and analyze a variety of texts, including stories and nonfiction. This includes identifying main ideas and details, comparing passages, and using content clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students can also draw conclusions and make inferences.
	Listening	Students can understand, evaluate, and respond to information they hear after listening to passages.
	Writing	Students can develop a well organized written response for a variety of purposes and audiences. Their writing must include appropriate detail and evidence to support their main idea, as well as the use of grade-appropriate spelling and grammar.
	Research/Inquiry	Students respond to questions using evidence from multiple passages to support their main idea. This involves being able to identify important information in a text that supports their writing.

Mathematics

The mathematics M-STEP is organized into three areas, or claims:

	**Concepts & Procedures**	Students can understand and use strategies correctly and explain why certain strategies work the way they do.
	Problem Solving/ Modeling and Data Analysis	Students can use problem-solving strategies and skills to solve real-world mathematics problems. Students can also identify important information in a word problem and determine how to use it to solve the problem.
	Communicating Reasoning	Students can explain their thinking and draw conclusions when solving a problem.

Science

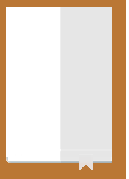
The science M-STEP test is organized into three sub-categories:

	Physical Science	Students can use scientific and engineering ideas, cross-cutting concepts and scientific practices to make sense of phenomena and problems dealing with the fundamental questions “What is everything made of? and Why do things happen?” (p 104, NRC 2012).
	Life Science	Students can use scientific and engineering ideas, cross-cutting concepts and scientific practices to make sense of phenomena and problems associated with “patterns, processes, and relationships of living organisms” (p 139, NRC 2012).
	Earth and Space Sciences	Students can use scientific and engineering ideas, cross-cutting concepts and scientific practices to make sense of phenomena and problems associated with “processes that operate on Earth and Earth’s place in the solar system and galaxy” (p 169, NRC 2012).

National Research Council. 2012. A **Framework for K-12 Science Education:** Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Social Studies

The Social studies tests are grouped into the following sub-categories or disciplines:

 **U.S. History**	Students can identify, describe, and analyze the past using historical thinking and knowledge of the history of Michigan and of the United States in Era 1: Beginnings to 1620, Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763), and Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1800).
History (Michigan)	Students can identify, describe, and analyze the past using historical thinking and knowledge of early Michigan history and post-statehood Michigan history, including understanding the past in their local communities.
Geography	Students can identify, describe, and analyze the world using geographic thinking and understanding of spatial perspectives, including how regions form from common physical and human characteristics, how human activities shape the Earth's surface, and understanding on the environment and society.
Civics and Government	Students can identify, describe, and analyze the purposes of government; Democratic Values and Constitutional Principles of American government; the structure, roles and functions of government; and the essential rights and civic responsibilities demonstrated through active participation in civic life.
Economics	Students can identify, describe, and analyze the fundamental principles and concepts of economics to understand economic activity in a market economy, including how individuals, businesses, and governments make choices within different economic systems.

What Your Child Learned in GRADE 5

English Language Arts

- Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their themes or main ideas.
- Identifying how an author is using evidence to explain or support a topic.
- Giving in-depth descriptions of characters, setting, and events in a story.
- Explaining the relationship or interaction between two or more individuals, events, or ideas based on specific information in one or more texts.
- Writing opinions that offer reasoned arguments and providing facts and details that are logically grouped.
- Writing narratives that develop the plot with dialogue, description, and effective pacing.
- Strengthening writing by planning, revising, editing, or rewriting.
- Using technology to produce and publish writing.
- Conducting short research projects in which a topic is investigated using several sources.
- Participating in discussions by listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, and building on the ideas of others.

Mathematics

- Multiplying multidigit whole numbers quickly and accurately.
- Adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators (bottom numbers) by converting them to equivalent fractions with the same denominator (Example: 2/3 − 1/2 = 4/6 − 3/6 = 1/6).
- Measuring volume using what is known about multiplication and addition and explaining why the measurement makes sense.
- Dividing up to four-digit whole numbers by two-digit divisors (Example: 6,132 ÷ 14 = 438; Use compatible numbers and think: (5600 + 420 + 112 ÷ 14 = 400 + 30 + 8).
- Using models and story contexts to multiply and divide unit fractions by whole numbers and whole numbers by unit fractions. Multiply fractions by fractions (Examples: 2400 ÷ 1/4 = 9600; 3/5 × 3/4 = 9/20).
- Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing decimals to the hundredths place (Example: 0.7 + 1.25 = 1.95).

What Your Child Will Learn in GRADE 6

English Language Arts

- Providing detailed summaries of texts.
- Comparing and contrasting various texts, including poems, stories, and historical novels.
- Describing how a particular story or drama's plot unfolds and how characters respond to the plot development.
- Citing evidence to explain what a story, play, poem, or informational text says, and what clues can be used to make inferences.
- Identifying and evaluating specific claims and arguments in a text.
- Supporting written claims or arguments with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Producing writing that is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources.
- Participating in class discussions about various texts and topics in which the student is prepared to refer to evidence in a text when discussing ideas, restating other people's ideas, and understanding other perspectives.

Mathematics

- Using reasoning of multiplication and division to solve problems about quantities, including such things as percent, cost per gallon, and comparion of boys to girls in a class.
- Learning how to divide fractions and using negative numbers.
- Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing multidigit decimals, and dividing multidigit whole numbers quickly and accurately.
- Writing expressions (mathematics statements) with numbers and variables (letters)
- Evaluating expressions (relationships using numbers and letters with no equal sign) by replacing the variables with numbers and using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to calculate the value.
- Understanding when two expressions are the same.
- Writing equations (relationship using numbers and letters with an equal sign) to model real world problems and solving equations such as 10 + x = 15 to find the value of x to make the equation true.
- Learning about mean (average) and median (middle) to develop an understanding of how data sets can be summarized and what the difference in these values say about the data.
- Solving real-world and mathematical problems involving area (space inside) and volume (how much something holds).

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