Optional key stage 1 national curriculum tests: information for parents

Standards & Testing Agency

Key stage 1

What are the optional key stage 1 tests?

If you have a child in year 2, at the end of key stage 1 (KS1) they may take part in national curriculum tests in:

- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- English reading
- mathematics

The tests are not mandatory for schools to administer at the end of KS1, but your child's school may choose to use them to help identify where pupils need additional support as they transition into key stage 2 (KS2).

The English reading and mathematics tests were previously mandatory, but they became optional from the academic year 2023 to 2024 to reduce the overall number of tests children have to take in primary school.

How do the optional tests work?

If your child's school chooses to administer the optional tests, your child may take some or all of the following test papers:

- English reading Paper 1: combined reading prompt and answer booklet
- English reading Paper 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet
- Mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic
- Mathematics Paper 2: reasoning
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: spelling
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: questions

The tests are not strictly timed.

Your child's school will decide whether your child takes part in the tests and may administer them alongside other everyday classroom assessment methods to measure your child's progress.

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) develops the optional end of KS1 tests and recommends they are taken during May, but your child's school can decide and may confirm the exact dates on which they administer them.

Are there any other assessments?

Your child's teachers may choose to use optional KS1 teacher assessment frameworks to make teacher assessment judgements based on your child's overall work and performance in some or all of the following subjects:

- English reading
- English writing
- mathematics
- science

As with the optional tests, this will help to indicate if your child needs more support in a specific subject ahead of transitioning to KS2.

If your child is working below the standards of the national curriculum in one or more subjects, they may be assessed under an alternative teacher assessment – either the:

- optional pre-key stage 1 standards[1], if they are engaged in subject-specific study
- engagement model[2], if they are not engaged in subject-specific study

Will my child receive test results?

If your child takes the optional end of KS1 tests, their school will decide if and how to share the results.

Your child's teachers can use the results, along with the work your child has done throughout the year, to help them understand how your child is progressing at the end of KS1 as they transition to KS2. Your child's school may choose to include the test results in your child's annual school report about their achievements and general performance, but it is not mandatory for schools to do so.

Further information

Your child's teacher will be able to answer any questions about the tests and teacher assessment judgements.

For more details, you can also visit www.gov.uk/STA.

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1 www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-standards-information-for-parents

2. www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model-information-for-parents

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