

Understanding Scale Scores, Performance Level Descriptors, and Cut Scores

What Are Scale Scores?

KAP score reports relay information about students' performance in terms of scale scores. A scale score is a mathematical conversion of the total number of points a student earned on an assessment into a score along a predefined scale, which allows for consistent reporting of assessment results across years for any specific grade and subject area. Scale scores on all KAP assessments range from 220 to 380.

It is important to note that scale scores can only be used to compare students in a single grade and subject area (for example, grade 3 math). Scale scores cannot be compared across other grades and subject areas.

So, if third graders in a particular building averaged a scale score of 320 in grade 3 math last year and averaged a scale score of 330 in grade 3 math this year, the building may safely be said to have improved year-over-year in grade 3 math performance.

However, a student who earned a 310 on this year's grade 4 math assessment and a 320 on last year's grade 3 math assessment has not necessarily regressed in math. Further, a student who scored 330 on her grade 3 ELA assessment and 340 on her grade 3 math assessment did not necessarily do better in math than in ELA.

What Are Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)?

Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) are available for each test. PLDs define the knowledge, skills, and processes that students likely demonstrate at different levels of proficiency within the reporting categories (1, 2, 3, 4).

These PLDs appear on Individual Student Reports and describe student performance on the assessment.

Level 1: A student at Level 1 shows a *limited* ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 2: A student at Level 2 shows a *basic* ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 3: A student at Level 3 shows an *effective* ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 4: A student at Level 4 shows an *excellent* ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

What Are Cut Scores?

The scale score thresholds dividing the performance levels are called cut scores. Cut scores are generally different for each grade and subject; however, for simplicity, the Level 3 cut score is 300 for all KAP assessments. To understand how your student performed on the assessment, visit with your teachers or school officials.

Cut Scores for KAP Summative Assessments

English Language Arts

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3	220–275	276–299	300–326	327–380
4	220–270	271–299	300–334	335–380
5	220–274	275–299	300–325	326–380
6	220–276	277–299	300–335	336–380
7	220–274	275–299	300–334	335–380
8	220–264	265–299	300–333	334–380
10	220–268	269–299	300–333	334–380

Mathematics

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3	220–275	276–299	300–328	329–380
4	220–265	266–299	300–330	331–380
5	220–272	273–299	300–325	326–380
6	220–272	273–299	300–328	329–380
7	220–265	266–299	300–341	342–380
8	220–273	274–299	300–335	336–380
10	220–272	273–299	300–328	329–380

Science

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
5	220–276	277–299	300–329	330–380
8	220–274	275–299	300–327	328–380
11	220–277	278–299	300–327	328–380

Note: Cut scores do not change from year to year.