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Welsh Government

Online personalised assessments in reading and numeracy

Information for parents and carers of children
in Years 2–9 in Wales



2020

Further information

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What are personalised assessments?

Personalised assessments are online assessments of learners' skills in reading and numeracy. They are taken by pupils in Years 2–9 in schools in Wales.

There are currently assessments for Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading (English and Welsh).

Numeracy (Procedural) focuses on numerical facts and procedures – the numerical 'tools' that are needed to apply numeracy within a range of contexts.

Reading personalised assessments provide information on how well your child understands a text and whether they are able to make judgements about what they are reading.

From 2021 there will also be an online assessment for Numeracy (Reasoning).



What is the purpose of personalised assessments?

The assessments provide feedback on your child's reading and numeracy skills so that they, their teachers and parents/carers can understand where they are in their learning journey. The information from the assessments helps teachers to plan next steps and to support learners to make progress.

A personalised assessment gives a snapshot of your child's skills at a particular time. It is just one source of information on your child's knowledge and understanding that teachers will consider alongside the other information they have about your child's reading and numeracy work in the classroom.



How do the assessments work?

The personalised assessments are ‘adaptive’ which means that each learner will have a unique assessment. Questions are chosen based on the learner’s response to the previous questions; in Numeracy (Procedural), if a learner answers a question correctly, they will get a harder question. If a learner cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, they are given an easier question. In the reading assessments, groups of questions are linked to a reading text – if a learner answers the group of questions correctly they will move on to a more challenging text and questions, but if they answer incorrectly they will receive an easier text and questions. This tailors the level of challenge for every learner.

Learners will get some questions right and some questions wrong as the assessment gathers information on the limits of what each learner can do at that particular time. Learners are not confined to questions linked to their year group or age. Teachers can start the assessment with questions from a lower year group if appropriate. The ‘adaptive’ nature of the assessments means that the level of difficulty will vary throughout the assessment until enough information is collected to provide feedback on your child’s skills.



How long do they take?

Children can work at their own pace and therefore the assessment time will vary in length. The length of the assessment is not a reflection of the learner’s ability. Numeracy (Procedural) usually takes between 20 and 40 minutes, and Reading usually takes between 30 and 50 minutes. When the system has collected enough information to assess the learner’s skills the assessment will end automatically. The assessments can be paused or stopped by a teacher at any time if required.



What language will the assessment be taken in?

The assessments are available in both English and Welsh.

When scheduling a numeracy assessment, teachers set the language in which the assessment will be taken. The alternative language version of the question is available to the learner as a pop-up window at any time.

Learners in English-medium schools take a reading assessment in English only. Learners in Welsh-medium schools take reading assessments in Welsh, and from Year 4 they also take a reading assessment in English.



When are assessments taken?

Assessments can be taken at any time during the school year. Schools can decide on the time that they wish to have the information on their learners' skills in order to plan teaching, learning and progression.

Your child will take the reading and numeracy assessments at least once during the school year. The assessments are also available to schools for an optional second use within the school year so that they can see how learners are progressing.



Do all children take them?

The assessments have been designed so that nearly all children will be able to access them without special arrangements.

However, where accessible versions are needed, the assessments have been devised to meet the widest possible range of needs, and to work with a wide range of commonly used access technologies.



Children can be provided with support to access the assessments in the same way that they are provided with support to access work day-to-day in the classroom.

There are modified versions available for children who require them. These include colour and contrast options, text enlargement, use of screen readers (for Numeracy (Procedural) only), and Braille and tactile diagrams. The assessments are compatible with standard assistive technologies.

Feedback reports – what they tell me

After an assessment, the school will have feedback on your child's skills which they may discuss with your child before sharing with you. The feedback is a snapshot of your child's skills at the time each assessment was taken.

The first section of the report, '**The hardest questions I got right were on these skills:**', lists the areas in which your child gave correct answers for the most challenging questions.

This feedback is based on the assessment taken on 03/03/2020.
In the assessment I saw the following text types: Narrative, Information, Poem.

The hardest questions I got right were on these skills:

using text features

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

applying reading strategies with increasing independence to a range of familiar and unfamiliar texts

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

using the different features of texts to make meaning

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

deducing connections between information

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

This feedback is based on the assessment taken on 24/02/2020.

The hardest questions I got right were on these skills:

finding a length, weight/mass or capacity by reading simple scales

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

finding perimeters of simple shapes (all side lengths shown)

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

adding or subtracting single-digit numbers to/from larger numbers

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

counting objects by grouping

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

The second section of the report, '**Some of the questions I got wrong were on:**', relates to the easiest questions answered incorrectly.

Some of the questions I got wrong were on:

explaining relevant details from texts

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

skimming to gain an overview of a text

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

identifying how texts differ in purpose, structure and layout

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

Some of the questions I got wrong were on:

adding and subtracting tens, e.g. $60 + 40$

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

understanding place value for whole numbers up to 100

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

finding change or working out differences (up to £1)

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

solving money problems (up to £1)

[Sample question \(PDF\)](#)

The final two sections '**Most pupils with similar skills are able to ... and are likely to move on to:**', relate to your child's overall performance in the assessment and provide an overview of the sort of skills that learners with a similar pattern of answers are able to achieve or are working towards.

Most pupils with similar skills are able to:

- skim texts for gist, key ideas and themes, and scan for detailed information
- show an understanding of main ideas and significant details in various sources
- identify ideas to show deep understanding
- use inference and deduction to read between the lines

And are likely to move on to:

- understand how punctuation can vary to affect meaning
- understand the main ideas and significant details in different texts on the same topic
- identify how a text is organised to make the content clear
- compare and contrast themes and issues across a range of texts
- identify different views of a topic and any areas of agreement and contradiction

Most pupils with similar skills are able to:

- understand place value for whole numbers up to 100
- add or subtract single-digit numbers to and from larger numbers and can work with money (up to 20p)
- interpret simple information presented in lists, tables, tally charts, or in simple diagrams (e.g. block charts) with 1 symbol representing 1 unit

And are likely to move on to:

- add or subtract 2-digit numbers (without 'breaking the tens') and remember facts from the 2-, 5- or 10-times tables
- find a half or quarter of a group of objects and use a scale on a simple thermometer (scale in 1's)
- recognise common units for length, weight/mass or capacity, and can read 'half past', 'quarter past' and 'quarter to' on a 12-hour clock

The feedback is just one source of information on your child's overall knowledge and understanding. Your child's teacher will consider this feedback, alongside other information they have on your child's skills in reading and numeracy work in the classroom, in order to plan their learning.

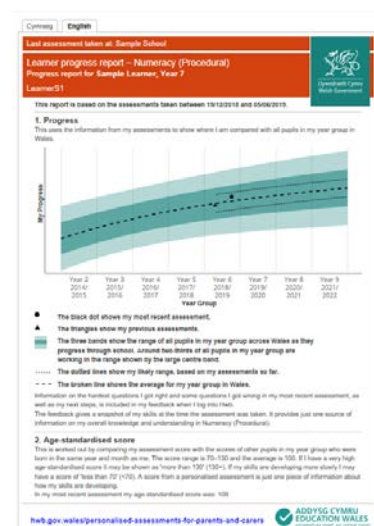
Progress reports – what they tell me

The school will also share progress reports, showing progress over time in the reading and numeracy personalised assessments.

The progress chart shows all the online assessments your child has taken. Using the information from their assessments, the graph shows where your child is in comparison to all other children in their year group across Wales. You will be able to see your child's progress from one year to the next.

The progress report also includes your child's age-standardised score from their most recent assessment. The score shows how your child has done compared with other children in Wales born in the same year and month. The score range is 70–130 and the average is 100.

Schools will decide when to share these reports with parents/carers. Please note that schools are able to provide progress reports for Numeracy (Procedural), but progress reports for Reading will not be available until late in the 2020/21 school year.



Should my child prepare for the assessments?

No. The purpose of personalised assessments is to find out children's strengths and possible next steps in reading and numeracy so that their teachers can help them develop their skills.

The assessments are designed to be easy to use. Familiarisation assessments are available so that schools can ensure that children see and understand the question types before they take an assessment, and are familiar with how the assessment works.

Can I help my child to improve their reading and numeracy skills?

Yes, definitely! Getting involved in your child's learning while at home and out and about can make a big difference to their progress. Any of the following will be a huge help.

- Using numbers when shopping or planning trips, or when looking at football scores, times of TV programmes, budgeting, etc.
- Sharing activities that involve reading and numeracy, such as cooking, playing board games, watching or playing sport, writing e-mails, map reading, etc.
- Talking about words and numbers you come across in everyday life such as signs in your community or news articles.



Useful information

For ideas on helping your child at home with fun activities, go to www.facebook.com/beginsathome

Education Wales – information about Education in Wales.
www.facebook.com/educationwales/

BookTrust – find a range of programmes and projects designed to help people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy reading and writing.
www.booktrust.org.uk

National Numeracy – help your child with numeracy.
www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/your-childs-maths (This website is only available in English.)

Bitesize – the BBC’s free online resource to help children in the UK with their school work.
www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

Free school meals – find out if you are eligible. Go to www.gov.wales then select ‘Topics’, ‘Education and skills’, and then the ‘Learner inclusion, well-being, behaviour and attendance’ section, and then ‘Food and drink in schools’.

MEIC – a confidential helpline service for children and young people in Wales. It offers help on a range of issues from finding out what’s going on in your local area to helping to deal with bullying.
www.meiccymru.org

Hwb – the learning platform, full of useful resources.
hwb.gov.wales

Welsh in Education Resources Branch, Welsh Government – commissions Welsh and bilingual educational resources to support all national curriculum subjects. You can get resources in a digital format through Hwb at hwb.gov.wales and those in a print format are available from www.gwales.com.

For more information please contact welshresources@gov.wales

Various animations and videos are available on our YouTube channel – Addysg Cymru / Education Wales at www.youtube.com/channel/UChE7WUE5FCk0ozxl3JkjHHw/playlists

