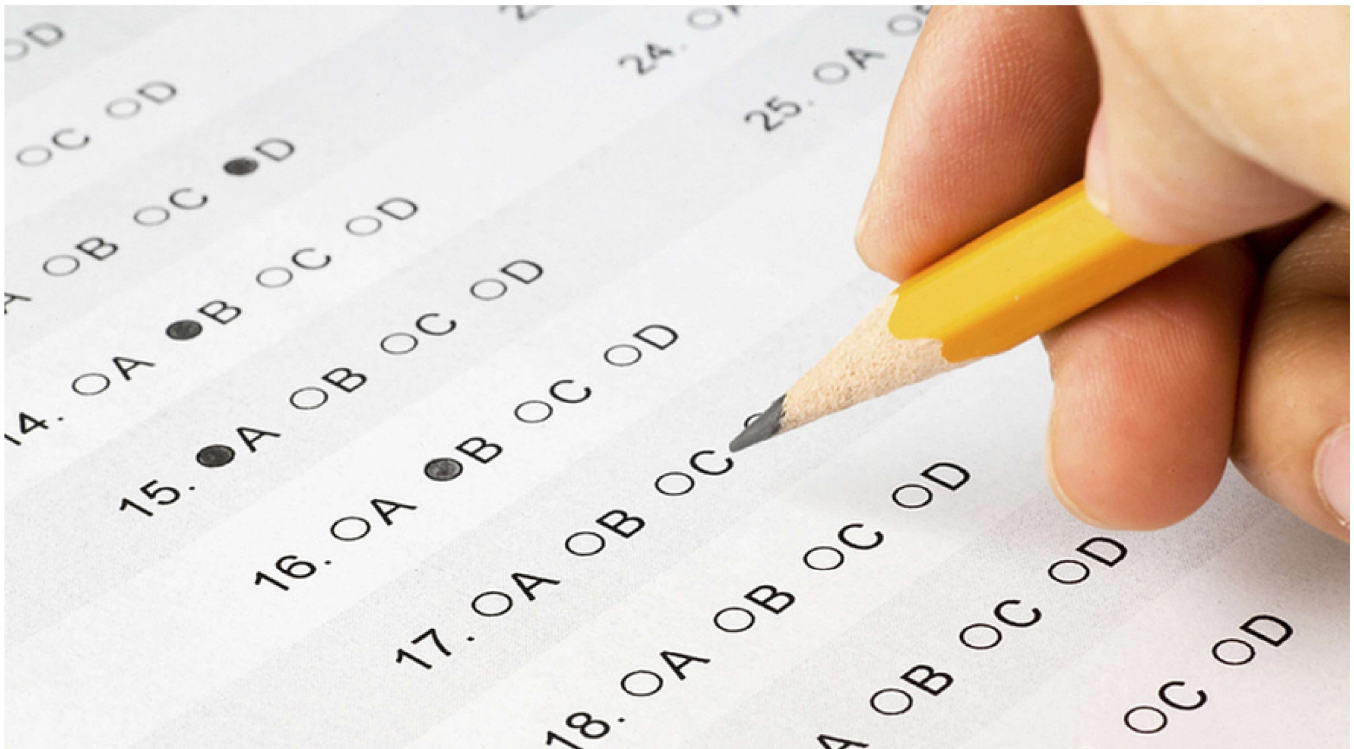


# Too much testing? More parents say it's a problem

By McClatchy Washington Bureau, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.20.15

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A standardized test is a familiar sight to students across the country. Wikimedia common

WASHINGTON — It is testing time in schools all over the country.

Experts say that students are taking more tests than ever. Many people say it is too many.

Meanwhile, lawmakers say they have received many complaints about testing.

## "Fewer, Better" Tests

This spring, lawmakers are trying to rewrite a 2002 law. The No Child Left Behind law was created to improve education in all schools. The law says that students must be tested every year. The purpose is to make sure that schools are doing their job.

An agreement in the United States Senate might reduce the number of tests. The Senate is one of the two houses of Congress, which makes laws for the country. The agreement would make states responsible for testing, not the national government. The states could also decide what to do about the schools that have low test scores.

Senators Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and Patty Murray of Washington are on the education committee. They say the new law should have fewer and better tests.

Congress still needs to vote on the agreement. Any kind of change is still some time away. Meanwhile, complaints about the amount of testing are growing.

"We need fewer, better and fairer" tests, said Susie Morrison. She is an official with the Illinois State Board of Education.

Morrison is not against testing. She said that parents need to know how their children are doing in school. A large number of students graduate from high school but need extra help before college. They did not learn what they were supposed to learn in high school and no one realized it. Testing shows what students know and do not know, she said.

Morrison said that not all tests are good. School districts should stop using some of them.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan is in charge of the government's Department of Education. He thinks the government should remain in charge of testing for the entire country. He does agree that students spend too much time taking tests. They also spend too much class time preparing for them, he said.

## **More Parents Say No**

In Florida, Rosemarie Jensen is one of the leaders of United Opt Out. The group encourages parents to refuse standardized tests for their kids. Opt out means to choose not to do something. Jensen said the number of parents against testing is growing. In Florida, she said, there are 26 opt-out groups alone.

Testing is not a good way to measure a child, said Jensen. She is a former kindergarten teacher who has two children in high school.

"None of this has anything to do with better education," she said.

In her own family, Jensen said, her daughter does well on tests. On the other hand, her son is a good student, but a bad test-taker.

Her son's low test scores make his teachers look bad, although they are good teachers. "They work so hard with him, she said. "That's not fair."

### **Tests Repeat Each Other**

Debbie Veney is with the Education Trust. The group helps students from poor families. She said too many tests repeat each other. Some of them do not give schools useful information.

"However, are tests necessary? Absolutely," she said. It is not enough just to test students to see how well they can read or do math. Schools need to be able to help students who are not keeping up, she said.

## Quiz

- 1 Read the paragraph below from the section "Fewer, Better Tests."

*Morrison is not against testing. She said that parents need to know how their children are doing in school. A large number of students graduate from high school but need extra help before college. They did not learn what they were supposed to learn in high school and no one realized it. Testing shows what students know and do not know, she said.*

What does the paragraph help the reader understand?

- (A) why some students fail to graduate from high school
  - (B) why it is important for students to take tests
  - (C) why parents need to help their children do well in school
  - (D) why some tests are more difficult than other tests
- 2 Which detail from the article explains why students today have to take so many tests?
- (A) Experts say that students are taking more tests than ever.
  - (B) The law says that students must be tested every year.
  - (C) They say the new law should have fewer and better tests.
  - (D) Meanwhile, complaints about the amount of testing are growing.
- 3 Which sentence describes the OVERALL structure of the article?
- (A) The article presents a problem and then explains how some people want to solve the problem.
  - (B) The article compares a new type of test with some older types of tests.
  - (C) The article explains different reasons why students take tests.
  - (D) The article shows the different steps that the government must take to create a new test.

- 4 Read the paragraph below from the section "More Parents Say No."

*In her own family, Jensen said, her daughter does well on tests. On the other hand, her son is a good student, but a bad test-taker.*

The paragraph is an example of which type of text structure?

- (A) cause and effect
- (B) sequence
- (C) comparison
- (D) problem and solution