

ESSENTIAL STANDARDS

Implementation Guide

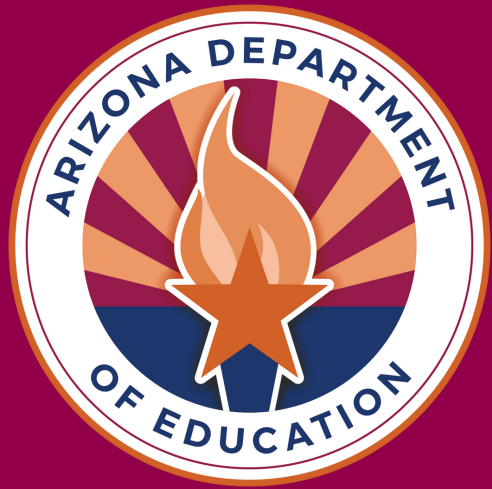




Definition

Essential Standards are individual ELA and math standards selected to receive a greater proportion of questions on the AASA exams. The AASA exams, administered in grades three through eight, are developed based on a standards blueprint approved by the State Board of Education that includes individual ELA and math standards grouped into clusters and identifies an allocation of questions for each cluster. The identified Essential Standards will receive the maximum number of questions allowed by the assessment blueprint.

Note: All standards should be taught and will continue to be included in the test design of the annual state exams.



Where to begin?

A guide on how best to implement the Essential Standards.



Step 1: Find Resources from Academic Standards

ADE has multiple resources and guidance on essential standards and the AASA.

Resources for Supporting Standards

Highlighted Standards Documents for Grades 3-8

Introductory Video

Frequently Asked Questions

Arizona English Language Arts Standards

- ELA Grade 3
- ELA Grade 4
- ELA Grade 5
- ELA Grade 6
- ELA Grade 7
- ELA Grade 8

Essential Standards ELA Resources

Essential Standards English Language Resources

- [Essential Standards Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [8th Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)
- [7th Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)
- [6th Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)
- [5th Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)
- [4th Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)
- [3rd Grade ELA Supporting Standards](#)

Arizona Mathematics Standards

- Math Grade 3
- Math Grade 4
- Math Grade 5
- Math Grade 6
- Math Grade 7
- Math Grade 8

Essential Standards Math Resources

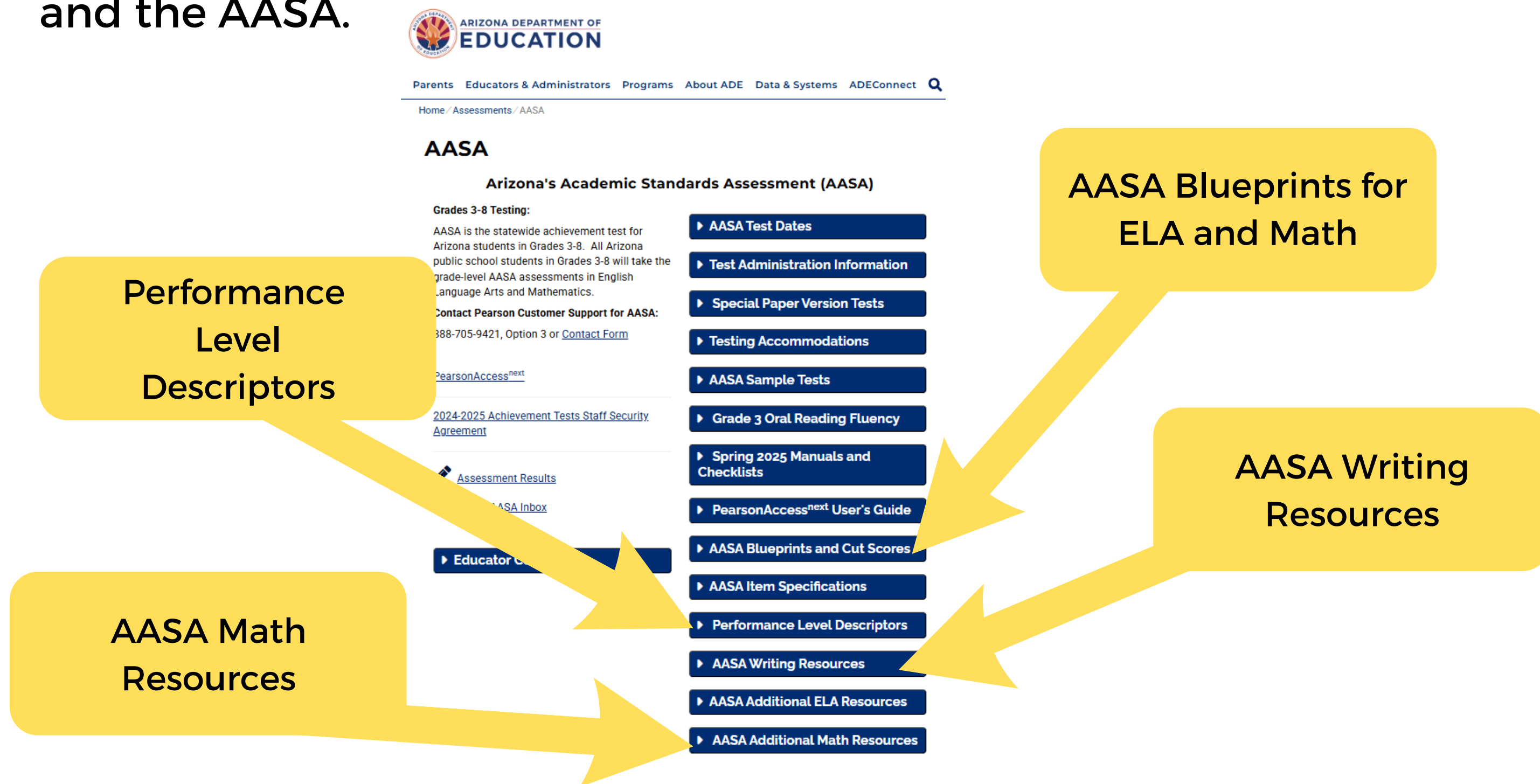
FAQs

- What are essential standards?
- Are all standards on the AASA exam?
- Does this mean I don't have to teach some standards?
- When does this go into effect?



Step 2: Find Resources from Assessments

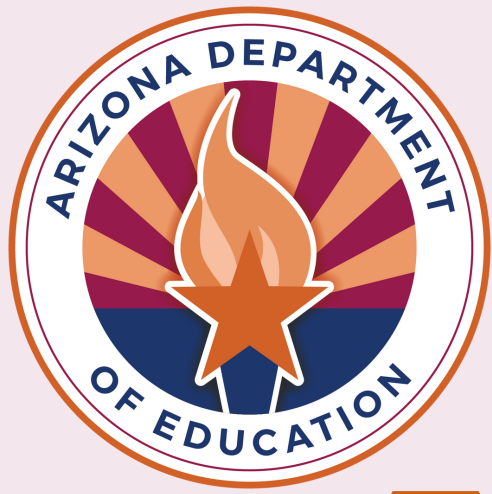
ADE has multiple resources and guidance on essential standards and the AASA.





Step 3: Learn

- Gather teachers, coaches, and administration to understand and unpack the standards.
 - **Note:** All standards should be taught multiple times throughout the year in multiple ways.
- Review the standards and the supporting documents from the Academic Standards and Assessment teams.
 - Ensure teachers, coaches, and administrators know and understand what each standard is requiring of the student and determine what mastery should look like.
 - Find student examples of what mastery looks like throughout the school year.



Step 4: Compare

After teachers, coaches, and administrators understand the standards and the performance level descriptors, compare your scope and sequence to the AASA blueprint.

AASA ELA Blueprint
2016 Standards

Grades 3-5 Reporting Category	Min.	Max.
Reading Standards for Literature	26%	35%
Reading Standards for Informational Text	26%	35%
Reading for Informational Text	26%	22%
Listening Comprehension	0%	13%
Writing and Language	26%	38%
Writing	13%	19%
Language	13%	19%
In Grade 3-5 some items in the Reading and Language stands will also be aligned to the standards for Reading: Foundational Skills		

Grades 6-8 Reporting Category	Min.	Max.
Reading Standards for Literature	24%	31%
Reading Standards for Informational Text	30%	38%
Reading for Informational Text	30%	25%
Listening Comprehension	0%	13%
Writing and Language	30%	38%
Writing	17%	19%
Language	13%	19%

Does your scope and sequence match the percentages in the blueprint?

How do essential standards and supporting standards work together?

AASA Math Blueprint
2016 Standards

Grade 3 AASA Math Blueprint 2016 Standards		
Reporting Category	Min.	Max.
Operations & Algebraic Thinking and Numbers & Operations in Base Ten	49%	53%
<i>Operations and Algebraic Thinking</i>	38%	42%
<i>Numbers in Base Ten</i>	9%	13%
Numbers & Operations - Fractions	18%	22%
Measurement & Data and Geometry	26%	30%
<i>Measurement and Data</i>	26%	28%
<i>Geometry</i>	1%	4%

Grade 4 AASA Math Blueprint 2016 Standards		
Reporting Category	Min.	Max.
Operations & Algebraic Thinking and Numbers & Operations in Base Ten	46%	54%
<i>Operations & Algebraic Thinking</i>	22%	26%
<i>Numbers in Base Ten</i>	24%	28%
Numbers and Operations - Fractions	29%	33%
Measurement & Data and Geometry	15%	19%
<i>Measurement and Data</i>	9%	13%



Step 5: Ask Comparison Questions

- As you examine your scope and sequence, then compare it to the standards and use the performance level descriptors, ask the following questions:
 - When in the scope and sequence are students introduced to the standard(s)?
 - When in the scope and sequence are students developing the skills needed according to the standards?
 - When in the scope and sequence are students expected to demonstrate mastery of the standard(s)?



Step 6: Align

Using the Arizona State Standards, examine curriculum choices to ensure they align with the standards to demonstrate mastery at the highest depth and complexity.

Note: For grades K-3, LEAs must choose a MOWR vetted curriculum to receive MOWR funding.

Does your curriculum address all the standards, offer interactive ways to engage students, and account for accessibility?

If not, what supplemental materials can be used to fill the gaps?

Does the curriculum meet the needs of all students? Are there options for differentiation? Enrichment? Remediation?



Step 7: Assess

- Adjust to using formative assessments frequently. Ensuring you assess where students are in their mastery of all standards.
 - ADE has procured NAVVY for all schools through the 2025-2026 school year. NAVVY is aligned directly to the AASA and will give **feedback on how a student may perform on the AASA.**
- In developing formative assessments, use the Performance Level Descriptors to set mastery levels throughout your scope and sequence at the appropriate unit.
 - Note: Essential Standards will have the maximum number of questions allowed per the assessment blueprint.**



Step 8: Assess Using PLDs for ELA

 ARIZONA'S ACADEMIC STANDARDS ASSESSMENT		English Language Arts Grade 3 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)			
PLD	Standard	Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient	Proficient	Highly Proficient
		For grade-appropriate texts, the Minimally Proficient student	For grade-appropriate texts, the Partially Proficient student	For grade-appropriate texts, the Proficient student	For grade-appropriate texts, the Highly Proficient student
Reading: Literature					
Detailed	3.RL.1	asks and answers questions to demonstrate understanding of a text.	asks and answers explicit questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring to the text as the basis for answers.	asks and answers questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.	asks and answers complex questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers and making inferences where necessary.
			identifies key details that recount and paraphrase stories; determines a central message, lesson, or moral.	recounts and paraphrases stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determines the central message, lesson, or moral and explains how it is conveyed through key details in the text.	provides key details that completely recount and paraphrase stories; determines implicitly stated central messages, lessons, or morals; and explains how these are conveyed through key details in the text.

Standards are created with a vertical articulation. However, at each grade level, standards are written so a student should achieve mastery by the end of the school year. Mastery is considered when a student is proficient by the PLD descriptor.



Step 9: Assess Using PLDs for Math



ARIZONA'S
ACADEMIC
STANDARDS
ASSESSMENT

Math Grade 3 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)

Standard	Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient	Proficient	Highly Proficient
	The Minimally Proficient student	The Partially Proficient student	The Proficient student	The Highly Proficient student
Operations and Algebraic Thinking				
3.OA.A.1	Identify whole number products with visual support.	Interpret whole number products with visual support.	Interpret products of whole numbers as the total number of objects in equal groups (e.g., interpret 5×7 as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each).	Interpret products of whole numbers within 100, representing context using pictures, numbers, and words.
3.OA.A.2	Identify whole number quotients with visual support.	Interpret whole number quotients with visual support.	Interpret whole number quotients of whole numbers (e.g., interpret $56 \div 8$ as the number of objects in each group when 56 objects are partitioned equally into 8 groups, or as a number of groups when 56 objects are partitioned into equal groups of 8 objects each).	Interpret quotients of whole numbers within 100, representing context using pictures, numbers, and words.
		Use multiplication and division within 100 to solve word problems involving equal groups, arrays, and measurement quantities.	Use multiplication and division within 100 to solve word problems involving equal groups, arrays, and measurement quantities.	Multiply and divide within 100 to solve multi-step word problems involving equal groups, arrays, and measurement quantities.

Standards are created with a vertical articulation. However, at each grade level, standards are written so a student should achieve mastery by the end of the school year. Mastery is considered when a student is proficient by the PLD descriptor.



Checklist

- All stakeholders (teachers, coaches, and administrators) are fully aware of the essential and supporting standards.
- The scope and sequence accurately reflects the standards blueprint and address all standards multiple times throughout the year.
- Curriculum and supplemental materials align with the standards.
- Formative assessments align to the Performance Level Descriptors and are in place to check for understanding and mastery throughout the year.



Thank you

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🌐 [Academic Standards](#)

✉ Testing@azed.gov
🌐 [Assessments](#)

