

Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) Parents' Frequently Asked Questions

1. What exactly is the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test?
A The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, or 'SDRT', is a group-administered, norm-referenced test given to students in grades 4-10. It is a multiple-choice test that measures students' reading skills in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension, and scanning for information.
2. Will the SDRT have any impact on my child's final grades or GPA?
A No, the SDRT does not affect grades or GPA. However, the SDRT results may affect your child's placement for next year. ("Placement" can refer to different things, such as receiving extra literacy or mathematics support, attending after-school programs, or retention.)
3. How is this test different from the other tests my child has taken, such as the SAT9 or the CAHSEE?
A The SDRT is a standardized, multiple-choice test like the SAT9 or the CAT/6. However, while those tests are mandated by the state, the SDRT was selected by the district to specifically test reading skills. The district decides when to administer the test, and the tests are scored in the district so results are available more quickly.
4. When I add up the scores for the three subtests and average them, it does not equal the Total Reading score. How are the scores on the SDRT calculated?
A The Total Reading score is not an average of the three scores on the subtests -- weighted, unweighted, or otherwise. It is based on the total number of questions answered correctly on all portions of the test and is derived by comparing how the student performed on the whole test with how students from different grade levels at different times of the year have typically performed on the same test.
5. Why do the scores include decimals, e.g., 4.5, 6.3, etc.?
A The whole number represents the grade, and the decimal number represents the month within that grade. For example, 4.5 means fourth grade, fifth month. So a student scoring 4.5 in Reading Vocabulary scored about the same as the typical score of fourth graders tested with the same test in early February (.5) To determine how your child scored in relation to his/her grade level, please refer to the letter you received or contact your child's school.
6. What does each part of the test measure? Specifically, what is included in "Reading Vocabulary," "Reading Comprehension," and "Scanning Skills"?
A The SDRT provides teachers with information about how well students read. SDRT reading material covers literature, informational text, and functional material such as a set of directions. Each of these types of reading material is used to test the following skills:
 - Reading Vocabulary measures the range of words your child knows, based on grade-level expectations;
 - Reading Comprehension measures how well your child understands and analyzes various types of reading material; and
 - Scanning Skills measures your child's ability to skim through reading material to find information.
7. Can you tell me how my child could score well above grade level on two out of three of the subtests, and then score significantly below grade level on the third?
A There are many reasons why this could happen. It could be that your child is truly weak in that one area. Or occasionally, there can be a problem with that particular section of the test. For example, your child may skip an answer in that section, which could throw off all of the answers that follow. In any case, when there appears to be a discrepancy in the test results, your child is a candidate for the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) at Grades 4-8, or the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) at Grades 9

and 10. These assessments are administered individually and give the teacher additional information about your child's reading level.

8. What does "Post High School" mean?

A The Post-High School (PHS) score indicates that your student did as well as a high school graduate would have done on that grade-level test. It does not necessarily mean that your child can read and understand college-level reading material.

9. Why does my child have to take this test every year when he/she scores Post High School each time?

A While a student may score "PHS" on the fourth-grade test, for example, he/she may not score that well on a test for a higher grade level. In addition, having all students take the test each year helps the district get a complete picture of our students' reading performance.

10. What can I do if I do not agree with the recommended program placement for my child?

A As a parent, you have the right to discuss and possibly change your child's program placement. Please contact your child's school and ask for a Placement Review Conference.

11. How can I get my child's SDRT score erased from his/her records?

A If we can determine there has been a problem with your child's test (e.g., your child took the wrong grade-level test), then we will make sure the SDRT score is not reported or put in any school records. If that happens, we will request that the school administer the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) at Grades 4-8 or the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) at Grades 9 and 10 in order to have data regarding the reading level of your student. These assessments are administered one-on-one and give information as to the reading level of your child.

12. Can my child retake the SDRT? I'm sure he/she would do better the second time.

A Your child cannot take the SDRT again this school year. A norm-referenced test such as the SDRT is designed to be administered only once each year. You do have the right, however, to request that your child be assessed with another testing instrument: the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) at Grades 4-8 or the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) at Grades 9 and 10. These assessments are administered one-on-one and give information about your child's reading level.

13. My child scored at "Significantly Below Grade Level" and will be placed in a support program next year. Will this delay his/her graduation?

A In some cases, the district uses results from the SDRT as a tool for intervention, to provide extra literacy support to those students who need it. The purpose of this intervention is to help students catch up to grade level so they can be successful in their coursework and graduate with their class. Starting with the Class of 2006, if your child cannot read at grade level, he/she may not be able to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Students cannot receive a high school diploma from any California public high school until they pass the CAHSEE.

14. My child is an English Learner, and scored "Above, At, or Close To Grade Level". Why is he/she expected to continue next year in a special English Language Development class?

A Congratulations to your child! In addition to students' listening, speaking, and writing abilities, reading skills play a large part in determining English fluency. If your English Learner student scored above, at, or close to grade level on the SDRT, we encourage you to contact the school to have him/her evaluated for possible reclassification to fluent English status.

15. My child is an English Learner, and scored at "Significantly Below Grade Level." What help will my child get to improve his/her reading skills in English?

A As an English Learner, your child will receive academic support next year that is specially designed to help English Learner students improve their fluency in English and catch up to grade level in English reading. Intervention programs include English Language Development and English Reading Support.

16. My child is learning disabled in a special day class; why is he/she required to take the SDRT when he/she will undoubtedly score “Significantly Below Grade Level”? Can I opt to not have my child take this test?
- A Not every learning disabled student scores “Significantly Below Grade Level”. The support and specialized instruction your child receives according to his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) is intended to help him/her achieve grade-level standards. This test helps the teacher and school learn more about your child’s reading skills. As a parent, however, you have the right to request that your child be exempt from certain state and district tests. Please contact your child’s school for further information.