

NC Check-Ins Science Grades 5 and 8 Test Specifications

NC Check-Ins Overview and Purpose

NC Check-Ins are interim assessments aligned to North Carolina grade-level content standards in science for grades 5 and 8 developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). There are three NC Science Check-Ins at each grade level administered after approximately nine weeks of instruction (NC Check-In Window 1, October; NC Check-In Window 2, January; NC Check-In Window 3, March). Each NC Science Check-In is constructed around the NC Essential Standards Numbering for Science Grades 5 and 8: Physical Science (P), Earth Science (E), and Life Science (L).

Since local education agencies (LEAs)/charter schools are not assumed to be following the same pacing or curriculum, all three NC Science Check-Ins will be available within each testing window for both grade levels. More than one NC Science Check-In can be selected within any given window, but each NC Science Check-In can only be given once within any given year.

The main purpose of NC Check-Ins is to provide students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders with immediate in-depth action-data and a reliable estimate of students' current performance on the selected sub-set of content standards. A secondary purpose is derived from NC Check-Ins strong relationship with grade-level end-of-grade (EOG) summative tests. Both EOGs and NC Check-Ins share a common item bank, and performance on the NC Check-Ins serves as an early indicator of a student's level of preparedness for the EOG summative test.

The NCDPI does not have validity evidence to support using results from NC Check-Ins as a predictor of student performance on the EOG summative test. Even though there is evidence of a significant correlation between scores from NC Check-Ins and EOGs, this correlation evidence by itself does not signify prediction. The overall value of NC Check-Ins is the use of in-depth action-data for formative purposes throughout the year to help students and teachers adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes.

Prioritization of Standards

- The NC Check-Ins are aligned to the NC *Standard Course of Study* (NCSCS) for Science, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in March 2011.
- The NCSCS may be reviewed by visiting the NCDPI/K–12 Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction for Science webpage at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/science/>.
- The following content specifications are for test development purposes only and are not presented as a mandated pacing guide. The delivery of curriculum and instruction is a local decision; therefore, it is the expectation that since most objectives aren't taught in isolation, some schools will not

have covered all areas in all standards assessed in any one NC Check-In by the time the administration window closes.

- Data from content standards that have not been taught should be used as pre-test data.

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GRADE 5 SCIENCE		
NC Check-In Life (L) Assessed Standards (25 Items)	NC Check-In Earth (E) Assessed Standards (15 Items)	NC Check-In Physical (P) Assessed Standards (25 Items)
L.1.1	E.1.1	P.1.1
L.1.2	E.1.2	P.1.2
L.2.1	E.1.3	P.1.3
L.2.2		P.1.4
L.2.3		P.2.1
L.3.1		P.2.2
L.3.2		P.2.3
		P.3.1
		P.3.2

GRADE 8 SCIENCE		
NC Check-In Life (L) Assessed Standards (30 Items)	NC Check-In Earth (E) Assessed Standards (24 Items)	NC Check-In Physical (P) Assessed Standards (24 Items)
L.1.1	E.1.1	P.1.1
L.1.2	E.1.2	P.1.2
L.2.1	E.1.3	P.1.3
L.3.1	E.1.4	P.1.4
L.3.2	E.2.1	P.2.1
L.3.3	E.2.2	P.2.2
L.4.1		
L.4.2		
L.5.1		
L.5.2		

Test Format

All NC Science Check-Ins are available in online administration format *only* and consists of 15 to 30 items. All items for NC Science Check-Ins at grades 5 and 8 are four-response multiple-choice items. Each question is worth one point.

Administration

The NCDPI offers three NC Check-Ins per grade level within a school year. Participation in any NC Check-In is entirely voluntary. Each NC Check-In administration has a pre-defined test window set by the NCDPI. The NCDPI may adjust the testing window within a school year to accommodate for unanticipated circumstances, such as inclement weather. Schools are given the flexibility to schedule the administration of NC Check-Ins at any time during a designated window. NC Check-Ins are not timed assessments.

Student Reviews, Scores, and Reports

Teachers have access to students' test books (for paper administrations) or an electronic copy of the NC Check-In (for online administrations) to use for review sessions with students. Within five days of administering an NC Check-In and submitting student responses, school administrators and teachers have access to student, class, and school-level custom reports generated by NCDPI scoring and reporting software. These reports provide a summary of standard level performance expressed as number and percent of items answered correctly by student, classroom, and school. These reports are intended to support formative uses at the classroom and school level.

Comparing performance of schools across public school units is highly discouraged because schools are not assumed to be following the same pacing or curriculum. Schools are not expected to have completed the entire scope for all standards assessed in a NC Check-In prior to the administration because curriculum pacing is a local decision.

The NCDPI produces a [state aggregate report](#) with the summary of percent correct by item grouped by standard. The purpose of this report is to provide a reference on the empirical difficulty of items administered in the NC Check-In.