



# Managing Multiple Measures

ABOUT TEST SCORE VARIATION

Frequently Asked Questions



## Why might a student's Lexile® reading measures fluctuate?

It's important to look at test scores in aggregate—data trends over time rather than single test scores. Individual test scores fluctuate. Test trends over time is what is important.

Student-related factors that might cause fluctuations in test scores include:

- Motivation
- Attention
- Alertness
- Fatigue
- State of mind

Test-related factors that might cause fluctuations in test scores include:

- Purpose and type of test
- Test administration
- Standard error of measurement
- Regression to the mean
- Range restriction

Test scores offer an estimate of a student's ability. The Lexile® Measures Manager tool helps educators determine a student's optimal measure when assessments taken within 30 days of each other show unexpectedly different Lexile reading measures. For additional information on multiple measures, visit [hub.lexile.com/faqs/#multiple-measures](https://hub.lexile.com/faqs/#multiple-measures).



Your customers might be interested in accessing the Lexile Measures Manager at [measuresmanager.lexile.com/](https://measuresmanager.lexile.com/).

## How does the purpose and type of test impact test score fluctuation?

While all tests serve to assess information about a student's learning, different test types are specifically designed for different purposes and contain unique properties that support these purposes. For example, a progress-monitoring test or interim assessment will provide different information about a student's learning than an end-of-year summative test used to make a judgment about the quality of performance at the end of an instructional unit or course.

Students often perform differently on a 20-minute interim assessment compared to a summative test or high-stakes assessment. Research shows that there is generally less Standard Error of Measurement (the difference between what a test score indicates and a student's actual knowledge

and abilities or “true” score) associated with the results of high-stakes assessments than that associated with the results of interim assessments.

High-stakes or summative tests cover a broad range of curriculum, allowing students of all abilities to answer at least some questions so there is less range restriction. Interim assessments tend to be shorter in length, cover only portions of the curriculum and may restrict scores for students at the higher and lower ends of the spectrum.

Other factors that affect test scores include how well the test is targeted to match the abilities of the students, the length of the test, and the personalization or differentiation of the test items.

## **How does test administration impact test score fluctuation?**

How a test is administered can affect student performance. Factors that can affect test results include:

- Distractions
- Clarity of the directions
- The interaction between the student and the test
- The overall testing environment
- Test security

## **How do home and student factors influence test score fluctuation?**

Home and student factors influence test score fluctuation in several ways. Factors such as if the test date was communicated in advance, if the student had a good night’s sleep, or if the student had breakfast that morning can impact performance. The student’s mental state can also be a factor. If a student went through something traumatic (such as a personal loss) or simply wasn’t motivated, it can affect performance.

## **What can be done to reduce inconsistencies between tests that result in fluctuating test scores?**

To reduce inconsistencies in multiple assessment results and more confidently identify a student’s optimal reading range:

- Collect more test data over time, across a variety of assessments.
- Maintain consistent test practices across all test administrations and avoid days or times where there will be known distractions.
- Encourage students to do their best on all tests and communicate tips for test-taking success.
- Motivate students through praise and encouragement. Highly motivated students perform better and see less variation in their test scores. Studies show that students achieve at higher levels when they feel competent and when they see a direct link between their actions and an outcome.



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