

Interpretation of Test Scores– Handout 1

Interpretation of Test Scores

PLAN, EXPLORE, PSAT, ACT, SAT, use various types of scores that this handout may help you understand.



Percentile Score (Percentile Rank) (PR) A percentile score or more appropriately a percentile rank shows a student's rank relative to a large, representative sample of students within the same grade. Percentile ranks range from a low of 1 to a high of 99. The number is the percent of students in the standardized sample that earned lower scores on a test. A percentile rank of 35 means that a student performed higher than 35 percent of the students, but worse than 65% of students in the same grade. A percentile of 80 means the student score higher than 80% of the students, and worse than only 20%.

National Percentile Score

A national percentile rank (score) describes how well a student performed in comparison with a nationwide sample of students in the same grade.

Stanine Scores

Stanines are single-digit scores ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 9, with an average of 5. Since stanines are single-digit scores, they are easy to record and to use in studies a school may wish to conduct. There is a relationship of stanines to percentile ranks.

Percentile Ranks to Stanines

96 and up	9
89-95	8
77-88	7
60-76	6
40-59	5
23-39	4
11-22	3
4-10	2
Below 4	1

Grade Equivalent Score

A grade equivalent score is a decimal number that describes performance in terms of grade levels-and months. For example, if a ninth grade student obtains a grade equivalent of 10.4 on the vocabulary test, he or she is performing like a typical student at the end of the fourth month of tenth grade.

Standardized Tests

A standardized test is one, which has directions, time limits, materials and scoring procedures designed to remain constant each time the test is given. Standardized tests often provide scores based on a norm group.

Non-Standardized Tests

An informal test usually designed to give an approximate index of an individual's level of ability or learning style; often teacher-constructed.