A **test** or **examination** (informally, **exam** or **evaluation**) is an [assessment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_assessment) intended to measure a test-taker's [knowledge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge), [skill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill), [aptitude](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aptitude), [physical fitness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_fitness), or classification in many other topics (e.g., [beliefs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief)).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_%28assessment%29#cite_note-1) A test may be administered verbally, on paper, on a [computer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-adaptive_testing), or in a confined area that requires a test taker to physically perform a set of skills. Tests vary in style, rigor and requirements. For example, in a closed book test, a test taker is often required to rely upon memory to respond to specific items whereas in an open book test, a test taker may use one or more supplementary tools such as a reference book or calculator when responding to an item. A test may be administered formally or informally. An example of an informal test would be a reading test administered by a parent to a child. An example of a formal test would be a [final examination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Final_examination) administered by a teacher in a classroom or an I.Q. test administered by a psychologist in a clinic. Formal testing often results in a [grade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grade_%28education%29) or a [test score](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_score).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_%28assessment%29#cite_note-2) A test score may be interpreted with regards to a [norm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm-referenced_test) or [criterion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criterion-referenced_test), or occasionally both. The norm may be established independently, or by [statistical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistics) analysis of a large number of participants. An exam is meant to test a child's knowledge or willingness to give time to manipulate that subject.

A [standardized test](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standardized_test) is any test that is administered and scored in a consistent manner to ensure legal defensibility.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_%28assessment%29#cite_note-3) Standardized tests are often used in [education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education), [professional certification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_certification), [psychology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology) (e.g., [MMPI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minnesota_Multiphasic_Personality_Inventory)), the [military](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military), and many other fields.

A non-standardized test is usually flexible in scope and format, variable in difficulty and significance. Since these tests are usually developed by individual instructors, the format and difficulty of these tests may not be widely adopted or used by other instructors or institutions. A non-standardized test may be used to determine the proficiency level of students, to motivate students to study, and to provide feedback to students. In some instances, a teacher may develop non-standardized tests that resemble standardized tests in scope, format, and difficulty for the purpose of preparing their students for an upcoming standardized test.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_%28assessment%29#cite_note-Put_to_the_Test:_The_Effects_of_External_Testing_on_Teachers._Educational_Researcher-4) Finally, the frequency and setting by which a non-standardized tests are administered are highly variable and are usually constrained by the duration of the class period. A class instructor may for example, administer a test on a weekly basis or just twice a semester. Depending on the policy of the instructor or institution, the duration of each test itself may last for only five minutes to an entire class period.

In contrasts to non-standardized tests, standardized tests are widely used, fixed in terms of scope, difficulty and format, and are usually significant in consequences. Standardized tests are usually held on fixed dates as determined by the test developer, educational institution, or governing body, which may or may not be administered by the instructor, held within the classroom, or constrained by the classroom period. Although there is little variability between different copies of the same type of standardized test (e.g., [SAT](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAT) or [GRE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GRE)), there is variability between different types of standardized tests.

Any test with important consequences for the individual test taker is referred to as a [high-stakes test](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-stakes_test).

A test may be developed and administered by an instructor, a clinician, a governing body, or a test provider. In some instances, the developer of the test may not be directly responsible for its administration. For example, [Educational Testing Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_Testing_Service) (ETS), a nonprofit educational testing and assessment organization, develops standardized tests such as the SAT but may not directly be involved in the administration or proctoring of these tests. As with the development and administration of educational tests, the format and level of difficulty of the tests themselves are highly variable and there is no general consensus or invariable standard for test formats and difficulty. Often, the format and difficulty of the test is dependent upon the educational philosophy of the instructor, subject matter, class size, policy of the educational institution, and requirements of accreditation or governing bodies. In general, tests developed and administered by individual instructors are non-standardized whereas tests developed by testing organizations are standardized.