
Texas Success Initiative Assessment

STUDENT INFORMATIVE BROCHURE



What Is the TSI Assessment?

The TSI Assessment (TSIA) is part of the Texas Success Initiative program designed to help determine if you are ready for college-level coursework in the general areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. This program also will help determine what type of course or intervention will best meet your needs to help you become better prepared for college-level coursework if you are not ready.

If you are an entering college student in Texas, you are required to take the TSIA—unless you are already exempt (read below)—to determine your readiness for college-level work. Based on how you perform, you may either be enrolled in a college-level course that matches your skill level and/or be placed in the appropriate developmental course or intervention to improve your skills and prepare you for success in college-level courses.

Do I Have to Take the TSI Assessment?

Not all incoming students need to take the TSIA. There are many ways you can be exempt. Qualifying for a TSI exemption means that you can enroll in any entry-level college course without restrictions. In other words, there are no prerequisites for enrollment in the entry-level college courses. In most cases, exemptions are subject specific, which means you may qualify for an exemption in one area such as reading but not in another area like mathematics or writing. You may be exempt if you:

- Have met the minimum college readiness standard on the SAT®, ACT, or the English III/Algebra II STAAR End-of-Course high school tests;
- Have successfully completed college-level course(s);
- Have enrolled in a Level-One certificate program (fewer than 43 semester credit hours);
- Are not seeking a degree; or
- Have been, or currently are, in the military.

If you think you may be exempt, please contact an adviser at your college or university. For more information, visit our website at thecb.state.tx.us/tsi (See #2 and click on **TSI/Exemptions**).

How Does the TSI Assessment Work?

If you are not exempt from taking the TSIA, you will be asked to take three tests: one in mathematics, one in reading, and one in writing. Where necessary, you may be given an additional diagnostic test in a particular subject. This diagnostic test is designed to provide more detailed information regarding your academic strengths and weaknesses.

These assessments include multiple-choice questions that are aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. For the writing assessment, it's likely that you will be asked to also write an essay.

Here are more details about how the TSIA works:

- The assessments are **computer adaptive**, which means that questions increase or decrease in difficulty level depending on how you respond.
- The assessments are **untimed**, which means there is no time limit on how long you can take to complete the assessment; however, it is important to allow yourself enough time to complete each test because the results are a key factor in determining the course or courses in which you can enroll.
- In most cases, this assessment provides **immediate results upon completion**. When you complete the assessment, you immediately receive information on your score and your skill or proficiency levels.
- You may start and stop anytime during your test session by using the **"save and finish later" option**, except during the essay, which must be started and completed in the same session. If you select this option, you must return and complete the remaining assessment within 13 calendar days.

Students with Disabilities

- Students with disabilities who would like to request accommodations for testing must contact the disabilities services office at the college or university to identify themselves and provide necessary documentation as requested by the institution. Submitted documentation will be reviewed to determine the appropriate accommodation(s), according to institutional policies and federal and state laws. High school students taking the TSIA should contact their counselor to determine appropriate accommodations. Accommodated test versions include braille and large-print options.

Mandatory Pre-Assessment Activity

Before you take the TSI Assessment, you must participate in a Pre-Assessment Activity. The college, university, or school district where you take your test is required to provide the Pre-Assessment Activity, as well as document your participation. It is a requirement that you complete this activity before you take the test. The activity includes the following:

- An explanation of the importance of the TSI Assessment and how the assessment works;
- Practice test questions and feedback;
- An explanation of all your college developmental education and/or high school options if you don't meet the minimum passing standard; and
- Information on campus and community resources that will help you succeed as a college student.

Contact the college, university, or school district where you plan to take the test for details on completing the mandatory Pre-Assessment Activity.

What Does the Assessment Cover?

The **TSI Assessment in Mathematics** is a multiple-choice assessment that covers the four content areas listed below. There are approximately 20 items on the TSI placement test and 10 items in each section of the Diagnostic Test (for a total of 40) for those students not meeting the college readiness benchmark on the placement test.

- **Elementary Algebra and Functions** measures your knowledge of linear equations, inequalities, and systems; algebraic expressions and equations; and word problems and applications.

- **Intermediate Algebra and Functions** measures your knowledge of quadratic and other polynomial expressions, equations, and functions; expressions, equations, and functions involving powers, roots, and radicals; and rational and exponential expressions, equations, and functions.
- **Geometry and Measurement** measures your knowledge of plane geometry; transformations and symmetry; and linear, area, and three-dimensional measurements.
- **Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability** measures your knowledge of interpreting categorical and quantitative data, statistical measures, and probabilistic reasoning.

The **TSI Assessment in Reading** is a multiple-choice assessment that covers the four content areas listed below. There are approximately 24 items on the TSI placement test and 10–12 items in each section of the Diagnostic Test (for a total of 40–48) for those students not meeting the college readiness benchmark on the placement test.

- **Literary Analysis** measures your skill in identifying and analyzing ideas in and elements of literary texts.
- **Main Idea and Supporting Details** measures your skill in identifying the main idea of a passage and in comprehending explicit textual information in a passage.
- **Inferences in a Text or Texts** measures your skill in synthesizing ideas by making a connection or comparison between two passages and in making an appropriate inference about single passages.
- **Author's Use of Language** measures your skill in identifying an author's purpose, tone, organization or rhetorical strategies, and use of evidence in determining the meaning of words in context.



The **TSI Assessment in Writing** is an assessment that contains a multiple-choice section and an essay section.

Multiple-Choice Section

The multiple-choice section of the **TSI Assessment in Writing** measures your skills in the four content areas listed below. There are approximately 20 items on the TSI placement test and 10 to 12 items in each section of the Diagnostic Test (for a total of 40–48) for those students not meeting the college readiness benchmark on the placement test.

- **Essay Revision** measures your ability to provide coherence, organization, and good word choice—and your ability to achieve rhetorical effectiveness and use evidence.
- **Agreement** measures your ability to perform subject-verb agreement and pronoun agreement, as well as your ability to determine verb tenses.
- **Sentence Structure** measures your knowledge of topics like comma splices and run-on sentences; improper punctuation; fragments and parallelism; and subordination and coordination.
- **Sentence Logic** measures your ability to correctly place modifying phrases and clauses, and your ability to use logical transitions.

Essay Section

You may also be asked to write a five-paragraph persuasive essay (approximately 300–600 words) on a controversial issue or one of current interest. You will be expected to clearly state a main idea and provide specific examples and details to back up your main idea, as well as follow conventions of standard English. You will not be allowed to use a dictionary or other outside resources, but you may use plain scratch paper (provided at the testing center) to plan your essay and write your rough draft(s).

How to Prepare

Take advantage of free sample questions to improve in areas where your academic performance is not the strongest. These sample questions help you familiarize yourself with the types of questions asked on the TSI Assessment. To access the full sample questions document, visit collegeboard.org/texas-sample-questions.



Can I Retake the Test?

If you are not satisfied with your performance, you may retake the TSI Assessment at any time. However, before you attempt to retest, it is strongly recommended that you set aside time for additional study. Check with the testing center at the college or university at which you plan to retest for information concerning retesting and review workshops.

For additional information on the TSI Assessment, please contact an adviser/ counselor at your college or university.