

WIAT[®]-III^{CDN} Frequently Asked Questions

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General Administration & Scoring

1. Why is there only one Stimulus Book in the WIAT-III?

The administration of the WIAT-III Stimulus Book is double-sided to reduce the number of materials in the kit. To use the Stimulus Book, sit at 90 degrees to the student (on the corner of a desk) so that both you and the student can see the front of the Stimulus Book, but not the back side of it. To administer each item, just flip each page as before, and then rotate the book around when you are prompted. (See Chapter 2, page 11 of the Examiner's Manual for a diagram of the suggested seating layout).

2. My Stimulus Book only has 5 subtest tabs, but there are 6 subtests listed on its cover.

All 6 subtests are in the Stimulus Book, but the Expressive Vocabulary tab is only visible when you flip the book over. Start at the front and you'll see the tabs that list the name of the first 5 subtests and then flip over the Stimulus Book and notice that there is one more subtest tab.

3. My Stimulus Book doesn't have the Early Reading Skills subtest.

The Early Reading Skills tab is on the far right of the Stimulus Book, but is a little hidden under the blank tab (which actually is the Expressive Vocabulary tab, which it reads on the other side). This Early Reading Skills tab can be found on page 24 of the Stimulus Book, and the administration items begin on page 25.

4. Can I print out (a section or all of) the Technical Manual?

You may print sections or specific tables contained in the manual if it is for personal use. Under these terms, copyright permission is not required.

5. If a student says "I don't know" for a question, does it automatically mean that they got it wrong?

No, there are times when a student may look at an item and will not attempt to answer it by saying "I don't know" or something similar, but then will actually answer the question correctly. In these cases, you score the item as correct and *also* circle "DK", to indicate when a student first fails to attempt an item, as this is another accurate indicator of the students' motivation.

6. Why does the Examiner Manual say that the test only goes up to age 19 years, 11 months? I thought the test could be used with older adults as well.

The manual (pp.1) says that the test only goes up to 19 years, 11 months because in the U.S. the initial release of WIAT-III did not include adult norms. Adult norms were added to WIAT-III U.S. later. In Canada, the WIAT-III included adult norms right from the beginning and was published at the same time as the K-12 norms. However the Examiner manual was already printed when the U.S. changed the test to include adult norms so for now the Examiner manual indicates that the test only goes up to 19 years 11 months when in fact it goes up to 50 years, 11 months. The Canadian Manual Supplement correctly states the age range of the test to include adults up to 50 years, 11 months.

7. Is there a way to score the test by hand or do I have to use the Scoring Assistant?

The Scoring Assistant is provided in every WIAT–III Canadian kit and is a fast and reliable tool for examiners using the WIAT–III. There are various reporting options available and a number of step-by-step tips for scoring written expression subtests right in the software. Scoring the WIAT–III by hand is possible however. All the tables required for scoring are in the Technical Manual provided in the kit on CD format. With hand scoring however, the reporting options are limited to providing composite scores, percentile ranks, age and grade equivalents and growth scale values. Parent Reports, Skills Analysis and Goal Statements and the Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses reporting options are only available through the Scoring Assistant. We recommend using the Scoring Assistant as it shortens the scoring time, reduces error that can be introduced by hand scoring and provides the widest array of scoring and interpretation options.

8. Can I score the Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis by hand?

No, the tables to calculate differences between achievement and processing weaknesses are not included in the manual, therefore you must use the scoring software.

9. I am having trouble scoring the Written Expression subtests in the WIAT–III. Where can I get help?

Included in every WIAT–III CDN kit is the Scoring Workbook that gives numerous examples and case studies of scoring the written expression subtests. As a supplement to the Scoring Workbook, there is also a PDF called [Essay Composition Quick Score](#) which gives a summary and outline of the main points for scoring the essay portion of the written expression subtests. The guide is available on your Technical Manual and Supplementary Materials CD included in every kit. The guide is also available in the Resource Library of the Scoring Assistant Software. In addition to these resources, there are recorded and live webinars focused on scoring the written expression section of the WIAT–III that you can join or download to your home or office computer and watch them at your convenience. Please click [WIAT–III: Scoring the Essay Composition](#) to access this recorded webinar. Please click [WIAT–III: Scoring the Sentence Composition](#) to access this recorded webinar. To sign up for a Live Webinar please follow [this link](#) to view upcoming workshops.

10. Why did the standard scores associated with the average range change from WIAT–II to WIAT–III?

The primary reason the average range was changed was to align the WIAT–III with other tests of achievement. Neither range (for the WIAT–II or WIAT–III) is incorrect. Use is a matter of convention; practitioners are free to use whichever definition they find most useful. Achievement tests usually include 68% of the normal curve in the average range, ability tests usually include about 50% of the normal curve in the average range.

11. What is the difference between grade equivalent scores and standard scores?

In essence, grade equivalents and standard scores are based on different scales and different comparisons: grade equivalents tell you the grade at which the score obtained is an average one; the standard score tells you how the student compares to his or her peers. You'll also notice in Appendix D Table D.2 of the Technical Manual that for each subtest, the developmental and academic progression varies considerably. For example, a raw score of 31 in Pseudoword Decoding yields a grade equivalent of 6:0, yet three more raw score points yields a grade equivalent of 7:2. On other subtests, raw scores can vary by as much as 3 points and still yield the same grade equivalent. In general, grade and age equivalents work best when the construct being described increases with grade/age at a rapid pace. When the progression plateaus, a one-point difference in raw scores can yield very different grade equivalents.

12. How can standard scores be generated for raw scores of 0 on the WIAT–III subtests? How does this affect the composite score?

The reason for providing standard scores for raw scores of 0 is to provide anchor points for the distribution. The composite scores will reflect the low standard score for this subtest but it will also reflect overall performance in this area because composite scores are calculated based upon the sum of the subtest standard

scores that make up the composite.

13. How can you have two subtests with the same standard score, but one grade equivalent is two grades higher than the other?

Grade and age equivalents are not directly comparable across subtests. Age and grade equivalencies have different patterns depending upon the academic and developmental progression of the subtest. It is entirely possible that two subtests with the same standard score can yield very different age/grade equivalencies. Please see Chapter 4, page 79 of the Examiner's Manual for further information on age and grade equivalents.

14. Why are there no age or grade equivalents provided for the composite scores?

Grade equivalent and age equivalent scores are not provided for composites because they are sums of standard scores, and therefore they have already been equated by grade/age. When the composite or subtest scaled scores are normed they are based on grade/age norms, and therefore cannot have an attached grade/age equivalent. Hence, the raw scores must be used to determine grade/age equivalents.

15. Should I use age-based or grade-based scoring?

The examiner must decide which score is appropriate for his/her purposes. If the purpose is to determine ability-achievement discrepancy, age-based scores are recommended as "best practice." If the purpose is to compare the student's scores with those of peers in the same grade, grade-based scores should be used. We do not recommend one score over another. We provide both sets of scores because some school boards prefer one over the other. It is best practice to discuss decision-making with the examiner's supervisor or your school board's chief psychologist, as boards have their own criteria for what types of scores are appropriate to report for various purposes.

Keep in mind that when a student has been retained in a grade, comparing him or her to same aged peers assumes that the equivalent instructional opportunity has been provided. For this reason, grade-based scores are typically preferred for students with a history of grade retention.

16. Why are some grade norms and age norms very discrepant?

This is a common occurrence, as a single age spans two grade levels. For example the 8-year-old sample includes children from both 2nd and 3rd grades. In addition, grade norms include children of the same instruction level, but of differing ages.

17. What norms should I use for assessing adults older than the typical Grade 12 level (~17 – 19 years) with the WIAT-III?

If the client is being assessed for a potential learning disability and you are performing an AAD analysis, you should use age-based standard scores.

If you are investigating an individual's current academic standing relative to achievement strengths and weaknesses, you could use grade-based norms and compare the adult to the norms for the last grade completed by the client (this may be applicable in cases where you're assessing an individual with an Intellectual Delay). The highest grade based information provided by the WIAT-III is Grade 12. Thus any grade based interpretation for adults with post secondary education is likely to result in inflated scores.

If you are trying to determine a High School Equivalency level or rating, it may be that other tests with a broader sampling of behaviours and a stronger link to provincial curricula would be more applicable. Remember that the WIAT is designed to assess foundation skills that allow the individual to function well in an educational environment and does not directly assess any specific curriculum.

18. Why doesn't the Scoring Assistant show me age-based norms for all the subtests and composites when I administered the WIAT-III to a 7 year-old in grade 3?

Out of level age norms are not provided in the WIAT-III Scoring Assistant (or in the tables provided in the Technical manual). If a student is considered very young or old for his or her grade level, age norms may not be available for all subtests or composites. For instance for a 7 year-old in grade 3 who is administered the Essay Composition subtest, age-based norms will not be provided because this student's age is considered out of level for 3rd grade. Instead, you should use grade-based norms for a student who is out of level.

19. Can I score a test using U.S. norms instead of Canadian norms?

Yes, the WIAT-III Scoring Assistant allows users to select Canadian or U.S. norms when reporting results. We recommend all users use Canadian norms, (see next question also), unless there is reasonable justification for using U.S. norms, particularly given differences in test performance between Canada and the U.S. (See Chapter 4 of the Canadian Technical Manual).

20. Are there differences between the Canadian norms and the U.S. norms for the WIAT-III?

Yes, the WIAT-III U.S. and Canadian norms are different and this is why we publish Canadian norms. Just as with previous ability and achievement tests, the WIAT-III Canadian norms are somewhat harder; meaning that on average an individual scored using Canadian norms will have lower standard scores than the same individual scored using U.S. norms. This is an *average* difference and therefore results will vary by individual, by grade and by subtest. Chapter 4 of the Canadian Technical Manual explores the issue of Canada and U.S. differences on the WIAT-III in more depth and users are referred to this chapter for more information.

21. How do I complete an AAD? / I don't see the option for an AAD in the WIAT-III software!

To complete the Ability-Achievement Discrepancy using the WIAT-III software, you must have the software for the ability test (viz., WPPSI-III, WISC-IV, WAIS-IV, or DAS) installed on your computer. Once installed, open the WIAT-III software and you will see an option for the ability tests under the "Score & Report" dropdown menu (please note, the option to compare ability and achievement tests will be listed under the ability tests, *not* the "WIAT-III" or "WIAT-III CDN" option). Choose the combination of tests that you would like to compare (e.g., "WISC-IV-WIAT-III CDN"). Select the Examinee that you would like to report on, and make sure that both ability and achievement tests are checked off in the "Select Assessment(s)" window. Select the options that you would like reported on the ability test, and click "Next". In the lower right of the "WIAT-III Options" window, select the "Ability Score Type", choose either the Predicted or Simple Difference Model, and the Significance Level you would like to compare with, and any other comparisons for the WIAT-III that you would like to see. Click "Next" and then "Create Report" and the Ability-Achievement Discrepancy will be included along with the information you chose.

22. Why can't I run the Scoring Assistant on my Mac computer?

The Scoring Assistant is currently built to run on PCs only. However, on some newer Macs the Scoring Assistant will run if Intel is available or if the Mac is running Parallels software, Bootcamp or VMWare Fusion Software.

Reading Comprehension & Fluency

1. If a Grade 1 student fails the entire first reading passage (The Frog), and the reverse rule cannot be applied as there are no earlier passages, should I discontinue testing this subtest even though the stop point is still two passages away?

No, even if the student fails the first passage you should continue to administer until you reach the stop point. Because the difficulty level of items within a passage will vary, continuing administration of the item set may produce some successful responses. The mixed level of difficulty within a single passage was designed to keep the student engaged in the activity.

2. **What happens if I follow the reverse rule three times on Reading Comprehension, but the student still misses the reversal items on the third reversed item set? Can I reverse again?**

No, you can only reverse three times. Do not go back more than three start points from the grade-appropriate start point. The student's standard score will be based on his or her performance on the last reversed item set. Remember that this score indicates the student's performance in comparison to age- or grade-equivalent peers and will typically reveal what he or she *cannot* do. If an examiner were to administer an even lower item set, the student is no longer being compared to their age or grade mates. To determine what the student *can* do, you may "test the limits" by administering some of the items from an earlier item set. For example, if a student reversed to the 4th grade item set but could not answer any of the items, first calculate his or her score based on the raw score of 0. Then, administer earlier items to determine if he or she can comprehend single words, phrases, or short sentences (Items 1-14).

3. **What happens if a student gets the first question wrong, and while reversing continues to get the next three items wrong as well (so that there are four consecutive wrong answers)? Do I keep administering or do I stop?**

For any subtest that has a discontinue rule of 4 consecutive wrong answers, you should discontinue the subtest whenever a student has met the rule, even if this includes reversal items. For subtests that have both the standard reversal rule and a discontinue rule, it's best to think of the reversal as finding the start point, and then discontinue as finding the stop point.

4. **What is the correct way to reverse in Reading Comprehension?**

If a student obtains a score of two or less on the reversal items for a given *grade* start point, reverse one grade start point, not simply one item. Please note, when reversing it is important to use both the start and stop point with the corresponding grade with which you have reversed to. (e.g., if reversing from grade 5 to grade 4, use the grade 4 stop point as well).

5. **With the Reading Comprehension item sets, is it possible for a student who reverses to an earlier item set (and performs very well) to have a higher standard score than a student who stays in the grade-appropriate item set but performs poorly?**

Yes it is. The important point to keep in mind when interpreting a student's score on Reading Comprehension when they have reversed to easier item sets is that the student was able to demonstrate average or good reading comprehension but only after controlling for word recognition and vocabulary. The Reading Comprehension subtest on WIAT-III is actually a purer measure of comprehension skills than most other assessments because it is less confounded by a student's word reading or vocabulary. A student who scores well at easier item sets therefore is capable of answering factual and/or inferential questions, however only with reading passages that are below his/her present grade placement. This is a critical piece of information to include in a conclusion or report of the student's performance. The fact that they had to reverse to easier item sets is more about range of word recognition and vocabulary than comprehension, and scores on Word Reading, Pseudoword Decoding, Receptive Vocabulary, and Expressive Vocabulary should be used to support this observation.

6. **I am administering Reading Comprehension to a very low functioning student. He/she has reversed to the appropriate item set but is unable to correctly answer any of the questions in the reversed item set. When can I discontinue and how do I explain a standard score that is based on 0 correct responses?**

It is appropriate to use your professional judgment when a student is obviously unable to perform and rapport is at risk. The standard score for 0 correct responses can still provide useful information because there will be other subtests to compare it against. (See response to question #12 also).

7. **How should I score the Reading Comprehension answers when the student provided the answers in an atypical fashion, such as using non-verbal cues (e.g. pointing, spelling the words from the passage) that**

were indicative of some correct responses, but that's all that the student could do.

If the student is having trouble with proper names (e.g., Tamiko, Baobab), spelling out or pointing to those words is acceptable. However, this type of response is not acceptable for any other words.

8. Why were item sets used instead of basal and discontinue rules on the Reading Comprehension subtest?

The Reading Comprehension subtest was created using item sets that were designed to assess an adequate sample of the student's reading achievement, while attempting to minimize the number of reading passages required. The improved scoring procedures for the Reading Comprehension subtest takes into account the difficulty level of the item sets, so it is not necessary to administer additional items to get a more accurate score. However, the examiner can decide whether to administer more items as a way of "testing the limits" in order to gain further qualitative information (for item analysis, for example). These additional item scores should not be used for normative purposes.

9. I have a 5th grader who is reading at the 4th grade level. Why should I start at the grade 5 item set when I know he/she can't read at a 5th grade level?

As is typical of performance within a regular classroom setting, each Reading Comprehension item set is designed to span a range of reading skills. The grade 5 item set, for example, has reading passages designed at the grade 5 reading level, as well as some at the grade 4 and grade 6 reading levels.

If you have additional test data or case history information to support the fact that the student is several levels below grade placement, you may start at 1 level below the grade appropriate start point, particularly if you suspect the grade appropriate start point would be detrimental to examiner-examinee rapport. **HOWEVER**, starting at an earlier grade level *does* count toward the reversal rule, which can be applied a maximum of three times. Therefore for a 5th grade student who starts at a grade 4 level, you would only be able to apply the reverse rule to this particular student a maximum of two more times, as opposed to three more times if they had begun at the grade 5 start point.

10. How does the reversal rule work for Oral Reading Fluency?

For Oral Reading Fluency the reversal is based on timing, however the time allotted to each reading passage is not consistent and does not simply increase over grade levels. When reversing, be aware that the timing varies across different start points, and that you should use the new time limit with the reversed reading passage.

11. In the Oral Reading Fluency subtest, is the number of correct comprehension questions scored against the norms?

No, the number of correct comprehension questions is meant as a behavioural observation, intended to get a better picture of an individual's overall reading performance. To get a more complete picture of reading comprehension strengths and weaknesses, compare performance on Reading Comprehension and Oral Reading Fluency (Reading Rate, Reading Accuracy, comprehension questions & prosody).

Basic and Total Reading

1. What do I do if a student is unable to read any, or very few, of the words on the Word Reading subtest?

If a student is unable to read any words on the Word Reading subtest you might want to administer the Early Reading Skills subtest instead.

2. Do I use a stopwatch to identify when a response takes >3 seconds on the Word Reading subtest?

No, using a stopwatch may affect the automaticity feature of this subtest. Instead you can evaluate response time based on an informal technique (e.g., "one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi").

3. **I have a student in Grade 1 who received a raw score of 0 on the Pseudoword Decoding subtest, but still received a standard score of 78. Why doesn't the scale go down to 40?**

The scale has a natural floor for the earlier grades because the construct that is being measured in this subtest develops later than other reading-related constructs (word recognition, for example). When analyzing data for 1st grade children, the Early Reading Skills and Word Reading subtests may provide the best sample of basic reading skills as it contains the prerequisite skills required for successful performance on the more difficult task of Pseudoword Decoding.

4. **The percentile ranks for Early Reading Skills scores don't seem to make sense – one point difference changes the percentile rank very much, at least for the older students.**

The Early Reading Skills subtest is intended to be a relatively easier subtest for older children (e.g., grade 2 and 3), most of whom will score very high on the subtest. Therefore, missing even one question for these grades will indicate a relative challenge, and the percentile ranks will change accordingly. For instance, a student in grade 2 who gets 32 out of 34 correct will have a corresponding percentile rank of 45, and a grade equivalent of 1.7. Increasing the raw score by just one point results in a corresponding percentile rank of 68, and grade equivalent of 2.9 (much closer to the student's expected ability). Notice that the same scores for a student in the 1st grade result in higher percentiles: 32/34 represents 75th percentile, while the same grade equivalent of 1.7 will more closely match the expected ability level.

5. **How do I know when the student is pronouncing the pseudowords properly?**

There is a pronunciation guide on the Record Form. Furthermore, the WIAT–III kit contains an Audio CD that lets you listen to the correct pronunciations. We recommend that you listen to the tape before you administer the test to familiarize yourself with the correct pronunciations; however, do not let the examinee hear these pronunciations.

6. **Can I provide a student a place marker for the Word Reading and Pseudoword Decoding subtests?**

You may provide these accommodations *only* to "test the limits" after the test has been administered under standard conditions (which do not use these aids). However, students may use their fingers to help keep their place during standard testing.

7. **According to Table D.4, my Grade 7.5 student has a grade equivalent of 3.0 on Pseudoword Decoding. Does this mean that the student decodes nonsense words at the level of a 3rd grader?**

What this means is that the student shares with the average 3rd grader the same number of correct responses on the Pseudoword Decoding subtest. A grade equivalent simply indicates how someone else in that grade would perform on the items given. Please read Chapter 4, page 79 of the Examiner's Manual for some of the limitations of grade and age equivalents.

8. **Which subtest is a good indicator of a Basic Reading deficiency?**

A low score in EITHER Word Reading or Pseudoword Decoding is indicative of a Basic Reading deficit. This is based on the research model of testing reading at all levels of language. In addition, the Skills Analysis component included in WIAT–III allows you to determine more precise basic reading deficiencies based on the types of errors they made during these two subtests.

9. **When scoring the spelling subtest do letter reversals indicate an incorrect response?**

Letter reversals for young children (K to Grade 1 only) can still be counted as correct, provided the reversed/inverted letters cannot be confused with another letter (e.g., b vs. d). Thus, a reversed letter "c" would be correct, whereas a "b" written in place of a "d" would not be. There is some degree of examiner judgment required in order to assess the child's spelling ability. If the child clearly knows how to spell the word but can't write the letters correctly, the examiner should use clinical judgment and perhaps query the child for

clarification.

Written Expression

1. **My students in grade 3 don't know what an essay is? Can I simply tell them to "Write a paragraph about your favourite game" or something along those lines?**

No, we do not recommend altering any script for any subtest on the WIAT–III. If you encounter a student that does not understand the task (perhaps they ask, "What's an essay?" or "How do you write an essay?"), you should simply repeat the instructions as they are presented to the student in the Response Booklet: "Write about your favourite game. Include at least three reasons why you like it."

2. **How long does the essay need to be to get a score from it?**

An essay needs to be at least 30 words in length to get a reliable score from the scoring software. If a student finishes before the time limit, and says they are finished or that they cannot write any more, pause the stopwatch and count the number of words written. If the student has written fewer than 30 words, prompt once by saying "Try to write a full page", as indicated in the Record Form instructions. If the student has written 30 words or more, record the elapsed time and move on to the next subtest. (Please see Chapter 3, page 49 of the Examiner's Manual for more information).

3. **The student wrote the paragraph/essay in all capital letters; how do I score that?**

Essay Composition has two component standard scores (Word Count & Theme Development and Text Organization; as well as a supplemental score, Grammar and Mechanics). For Word Count & Theme Development and Text Organization; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors should be ignored. Theme Development is not a measure of written mechanics, so mechanics are not penalized.

Where written mechanics (including capitalization) are accounted for is in the Grammar & Mechanics Supplemental Score for Essay Composition. If a student writes using all uppercase letters you must be able to differentiate between uppercase and lowercase letters by their relative size in order to receive credit for capitalization. Please see Appendix B.7 (pp. 180-184) of the WIAT–III Examiner's Manual for further instruction on scoring capitalization errors in Essay Composition.

4. **If children misspell either their first or last name are they still given credit for that item?**

The directions in the Record Form state that the child must print his/her first name. The first name should be spelled correctly, however errors in capitalization can be disregarded for children in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

5. **If a child skips a letter in writing the alphabet, do the subsequent letters still receive credit?**

The scoring rules for alphabet writing have changed from WIAT–II to WIAT–III. The student may write letters in any order, in cursive or in print, in uppercase or lowercase. Therefore skipping letters or writing letters out of alphabetical order does not impact scoring. Those letters should receive 1 point as long as they are correctly formed.

6. **For the Oral Word Fluency items, should I give the student credit for stating the sample items?**

No, do not give credit to a student for using the sample items in their response.

Mathematics

1. **Can the student use a calculator on Math Problem Solving or Numerical Operations?**

No – calculators are not allowed when comparing the student's performance to the normative group. You must first follow standardized procedures when administering the subtest. Then, you may "test the limits" by allowing the student to work some problems using a calculator. This qualitative information may help you determine if using a calculator might be an appropriate modification for a student when the learning task is not dependent on calculation.

Have more questions?

For additional information, log on to our recorded webinars at www.psychorp.ca/webinars. Whether you want more information on the scoring and interpretation of the WIAT–III, or have questions related specifically to scoring the Written Expression subtests, we have 6 pre-recorded presentations addressing the most common questions and important issues of the WIAT–III^{CDN} that you can listen to at your convenience. [Click here](#) to view the selection of WIAT–III pre-recorded webinars.