![Renaissance Star 360 logo]

Renaissance Star 360® Implementation Guide

Assess. Inquire. Act.

Insight drives the teaching profession. As an educator, you face a steady stream of information, from on-the-fly questioning to formal assessment responses, and you must continually adjust course to help students achieve learning targets. You might consider many factors when deciding how to act on data: curriculum guidelines, pedagogical expertise, district priorities, advice from colleagues, and knowledge of students and school, to name a few. This creates a setting that's ripe for data inquiry—a process that transforms insight into action.

Data inquiry is collaborative, ongoing, and focused on improving instruction and learning. When you engage in data inquiry as part of a "cycle of improvement that involves the regular collection and systematic analysis of evidence,"* you're poised to routinely examine data, consider what it could mean, and plan for growth. Star 360 provides data and information that fuel this cycle.

Star 360 is comprised of Renaissance Star Reading, Renaissance Star Math, Renaissance Star Early Literacy, and Renaissance Star Custom. This system of assessments informs data-based decisions and supports instructional frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Moreover, Renaissance Star Assessments are accurate, reliable, and valid. They are highly rated for screening by the National Center on Response to Intervention and for progress monitoring by the National Center on Intensive Intervention.

![National Center on Response to Intervention logo — www.rti4success.org] ![NCII National Center on Intensive Intervention logo]

> "When data is used as part of an ongoing cycle of improvement... teachers can change their instructional practice to improve student achievement."*

Let's get going.

On the following pages, we explain the basics of why and how to administer the Star tests. If you are new to Star Assessments, this information will get you off to a good start. If you've been using Star Assessments for a while, it will help you ensure that you're administering the test with fidelity and explore new ways to enhance your data-inquiry practices.

And remember, we are here to help. Schools that get the most out of Star Assessments take stock of how well they are utilizing Star data and look for ways to improve. We offer a variety of professional learning opportunities to support you in this endeavor. (Links to sample tutorials and activities from one of our online offerings, Renaissance-U, are included throughout this guide.) Contact your Renaissance representative or call (800) 338-4204 for information.

Learn more with Smart Start

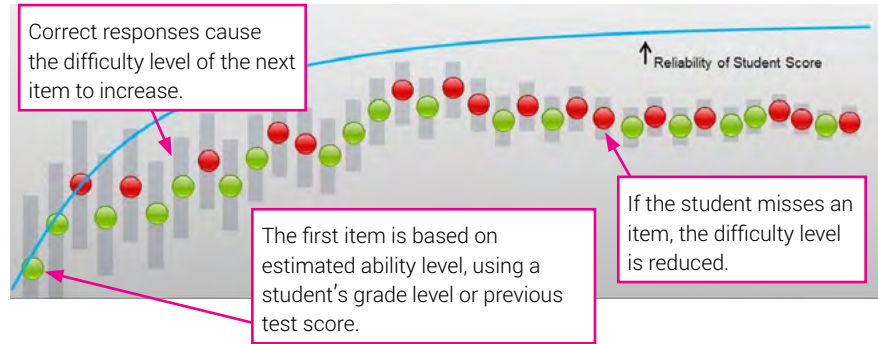Assessment: (Tutorial) What are Star Assessments?

For software instructions, click the question mark in Star 360.

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*Thessin, Rebecca A. 2015. *The need to use evidence in school-based K-12 improvement efforts*. Retrieved from http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=447.

Getting to Know Star Assessments™

How the test works.

Star Assessments (Star Reading, Star Math, and Star Early Literacy) are online computer-adaptive tests (CATs). Instead of grade-level test forms, Star tests tailor items to a student's responses to quickly zero in on the student's achievement level and arrive at a reliable score.

Correct responses cause the difficulty level of the next item to increase.

The first item is based on estimated ability level, using a student's grade level or previous test score.

If the student misses an item, the difficulty level is reduced.

Reliability of Student Score

Key scores

Scaled score (SS)	Percentile rank (PR)	Student growth percentile (SGP)
Is based on the difficulty of items and the number of correct responses. It is useful for comparing performance across grades. All norm-referenced scores are derived from the scaled score. Scaled scores range from 0–1400 in Star Reading and Star Math and from 300–900 in Star Early Literacy.	Indicates the percentage of students nationally who obtained a scaled score equal to or lower than the score of a particular student. PRs are norm-referenced scores and range from 1–99. A student with a PR of 75 performed as well as or better than 75% of same-grade students nationwide.	Compares a student's growth from one period to the next with that of his or her academic peers nationwide—same-grade students with a similar scaled score history. SGPs range from 1–99: lower numbers show lower relative growth; higher numbers indicate higher relative growth. A student with an SGP of 35 grew more quickly than 35% of academic peers.

Test design

While each Star test is individualized and unique, blueprints ensure that a certain number of items from the domains and skill sets are presented to each student.

	RENAISSANCE Star Reading®	RENAISSANCE Star Math®	RENAISSANCE Star Early Literacy®
For whom is the test designed?	Grades 1–12 Also for students in kindergarten who have basic reading skills	Grades 1–12 Also for students in kindergarten who have basic reading and math skills	Pre-K–grade 3 For beginning readers who do not yet read independently or need early literacy skills assessed
What content is on the test?*	Word Knowledge and Skills Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning Analyzing Literary Text Understanding Author's Craft Analyzing Argument and Evaluating Text	Numbers Operations Algebra Geometry Measurement Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability	Alphabetic Principle Concept of Word Visual Discrimination Phonemic Awareness Phonics Structural Analysis Vocabulary Sentence-Level Comprehension Paragraph-Level Comprehension Early Numeracy

*We list an overview of the content areas. See our website (www.renaissance.com) for details.

1. **Students log in with a user name and password.** They test on desktops, laptops, or tablets seven inches or greater.

2. **As students test, the software adjusts the difficulty of each item.** Students answer 34 items for Star Reading and Star Math (or 27 items for Star Early Literacy).

3. **After students test, you have access to the results.** Star tests take about 15 minutes on average. View data through a variety of dashboards and reports.
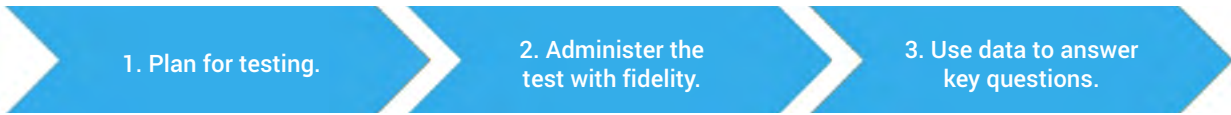

How the test supports data inquiry.

Star Assessments provide a wealth of actionable data. Information from Star Assessments helps you see which students are gaining ground or falling behind, where to focus instruction, who may require intervention, and whether your curriculum and interventions are making a difference. When deciding how Star data will help you answer questions about student performance, keep in mind the following.
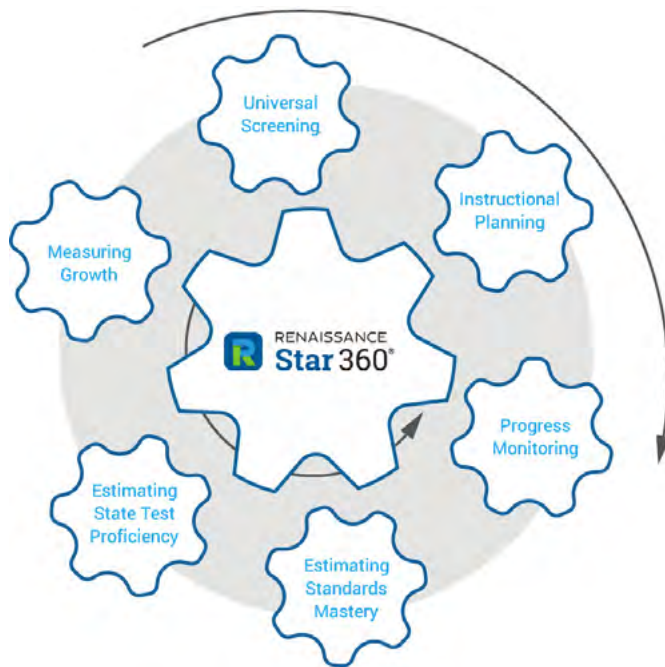
Data from one testing event can be used in multiple ways. Suppose you screen all students in the fall, winter, and spring to get a baseline and see how students progress. The same data can be used to help you answer additional questions: Where should you focus instruction for a student, group, or class? How are students performing in relation to standards? Are students on track to reach proficiency on the state test? You may even use screening data as part of progress-monitoring for some students.

Identify expectations to gauge whether students are meeting them. Setting expectations for student growth, achievement, and standards mastery enables you to view student performance in relation to them. How quickly should students grow? How much do you expect them to achieve by the end of the school year? Your school, district, or state, as well as individual student needs, may also influence expectations.

Three Steps for Acting on Data

1. Plan for testing. → **2. Administer the test with fidelity.** → **3. Use data to answer key questions.**

The three steps described in this section will help you get started with your Star implementation. The process begins with planning, including scheduling testing (e.g., universal screenings) and preparing to interpret and act on student data. Next, you'll be ready to gather data; we explain the critical step of how to administer the test with fidelity. Finally, you'll use the data to help answer key questions about student performance.

Step 1: Plan for testing.

Making a plan helps you get the most out of Star Assessments. Consider when and how often students will test, schedule opportunities for reviewing and discussing data, and determine how benchmarks will help you interpret student performance.

Consider frequency and timing
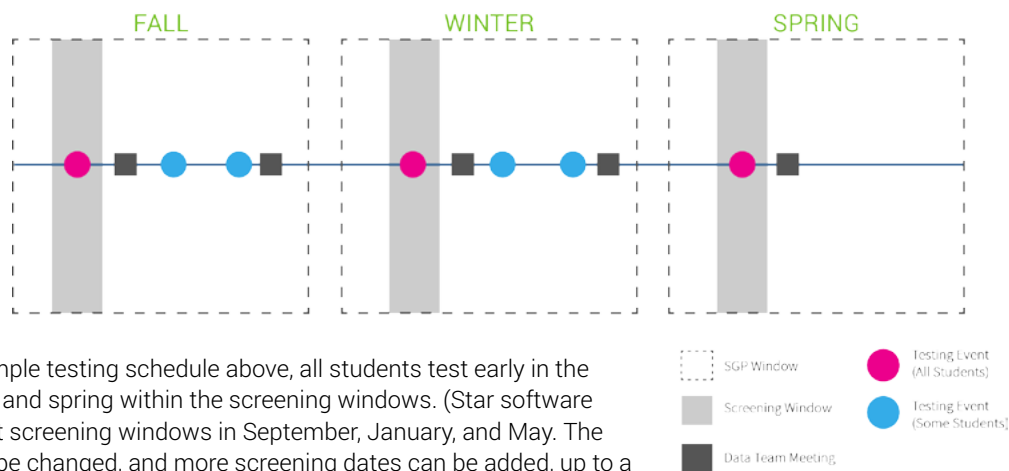
In the example testing schedule above, all students test early in the fall, winter, and spring within the screening windows. (Star software has default screening windows in September, January, and May. The dates can be changed, and more screening dates can be added, up to a maximum of 10 for the school year.) Each screening event is followed by a data team meeting, helping teachers and administrators act on the data quickly. Some students are identified for progress monitoring and test between screenings. Data teams meet periodically during the school year to monitor growth and adjust instructional plans.

Establish data teams

Data teams take many forms, but they are often comprised of teachers and administrators. Data teams meet to review data from multiple sources and discuss how it can be used to improve instruction and student outcomes. Data team conversations lead to group ownership and responsibility, set the stage for improved data literacy, and promote the emergence of a data culture. Data team meetings vary in frequency; they typically occur after major testing events, such as screenings, and also as needed to support instructional decisions.
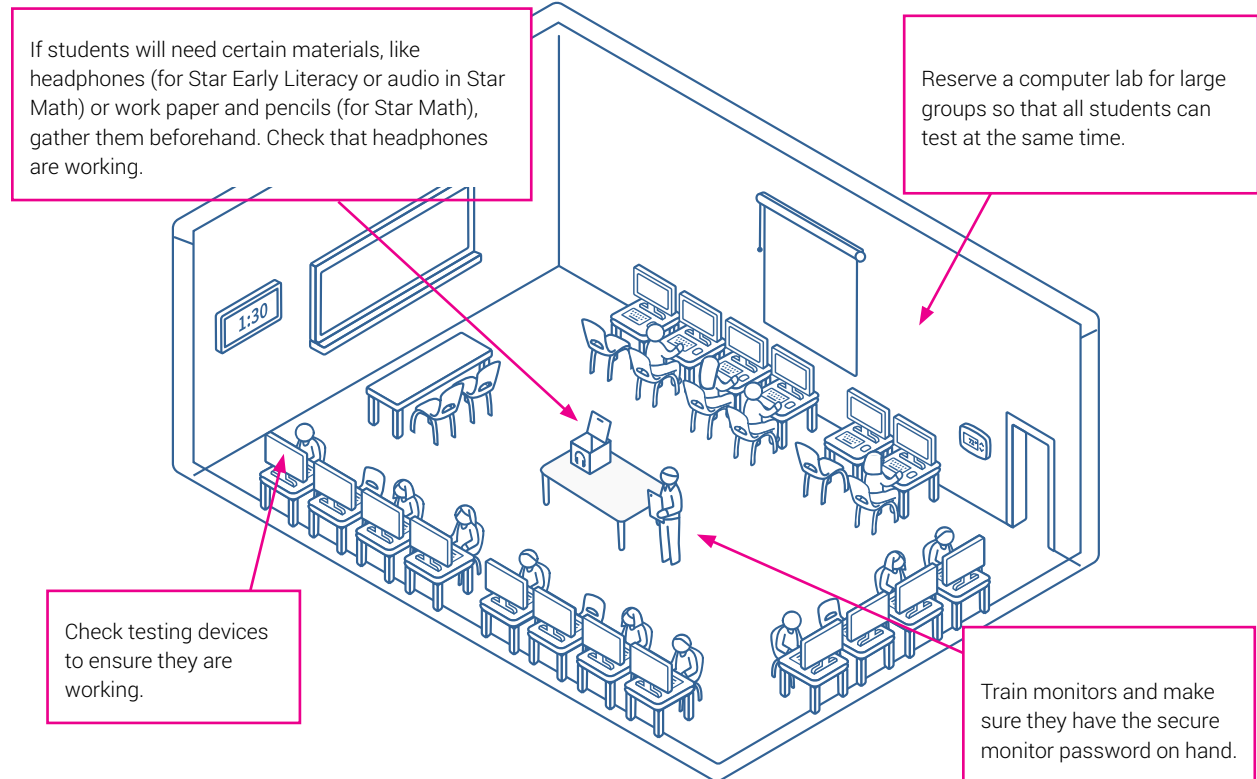
Define benchmarks

When measuring student performance, it helps to have a benchmark in mind—the lowest level of achievement considered acceptable. A benchmark provides context to help you interpret student performance. In Star software, you can select a school, district, or state benchmark. Choose the one that will best inform your decision-making process. Toggle between benchmarks for alternate views.

Step 2: Administer the test with fidelity.

Because you will make important instructional decisions based, in part, on Star data, it's critical that you maintain the integrity of that data. You can do this by replicating the norming conditions as closely as possible and by following test protocol to give all students the same chance to do their best. Administering the test with fidelity helps ensure that scores reflect students' level of achievement.

Create a good testing environment

If students will need certain materials, like headphones (for Star Early Literacy or audio in Star Math) or work paper and pencils (for Star Math), gather them beforehand. Check that headphones are working.

Reserve a computer lab for large groups so that all students can test at the same time.

Check testing devices to ensure they are working.

Train monitors and make sure they have the secure monitor password on hand.

Administer the test

The high-level checklist below lists some main tasks required for administering the Star tests. (Use the Renaissance-U link to access a detailed checklist.) Mark the steps as you complete them; remaining tasks may help you strengthen your implementation. Refer to the checklist throughout the school year to guide discussions with your colleagues or Renaissance coach.

| Get your schedule ready	Get your environment ready	Get your students ready
☐ Plan universal screenings (e.g., fall, winter, and spring).	☐ Check testing devices to ensure they are working.	☐ Go through the pretest instructions.
☐ Schedule an appropriate time and place to accommodate all students' testing needs.	☐ Gather necessary materials and make them available to students.	☐ Distribute user names and passwords to students.
☐ Train and schedule monitors for the event.	☐ Make sure test monitors have the monitor password (if set in the software).	
☐ Identify students who require adaptations to the testing experience.		

Step 3: Use data to answer key questions.

You've assessed students, defined expectations for achievement and growth, and assembled a team for data inquiry. What are your key questions about student performance? How can data from Star Assessments help you answer them? We explore a few possibilities in this section.

### How are students starting out the school year?
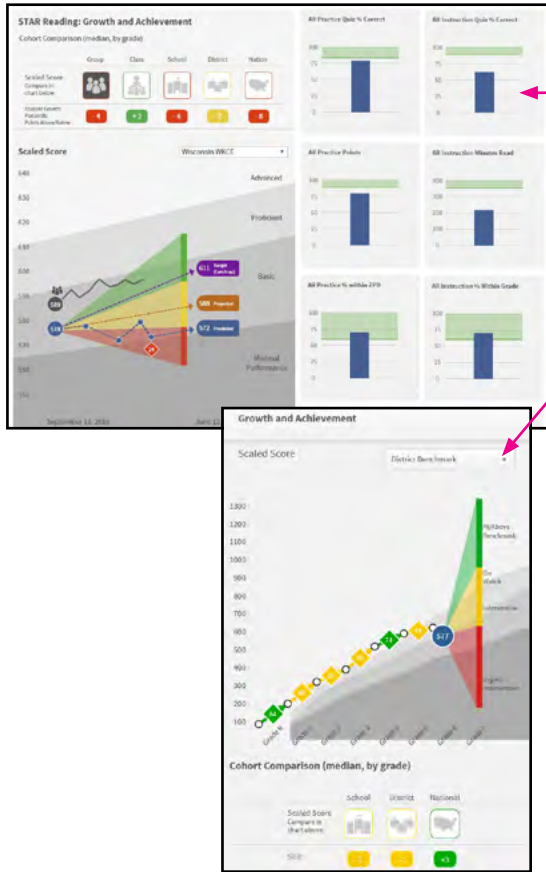
Check the **Dashboards** for an overview of student performance. See scaled score plotted against achievement benchmarks (state, district, or school). Also see how various rates of growth pan out over the school year. Use the all-time view for a quick look at growth and achievement in prior school years.
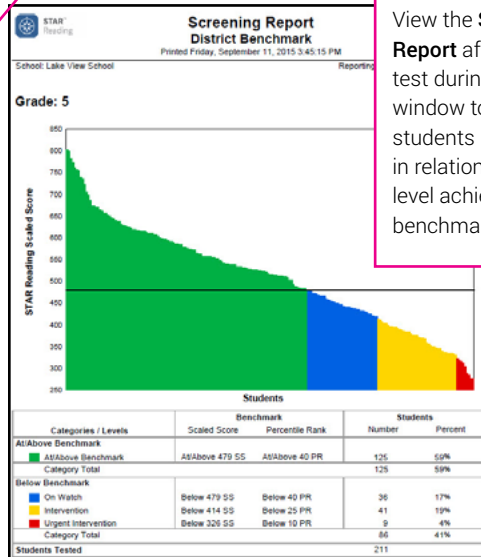
View the **Screening Report** after students test during a screening window to see how students performed in relation to grade-level achievement benchmarks.

How can I help students grow?

Select which skills will be your instructional focus. Consider **suggested skills**, based on students' Star scores, as well as the target pace for your grade level.
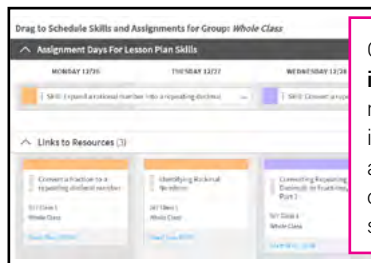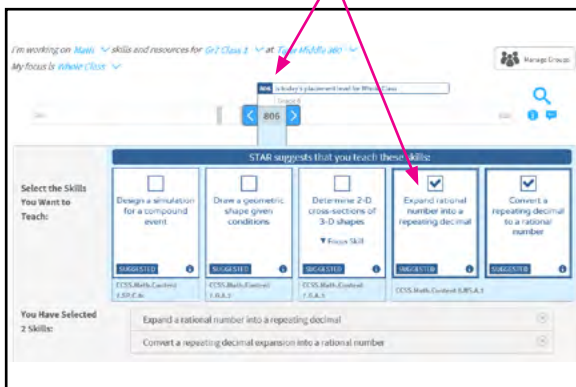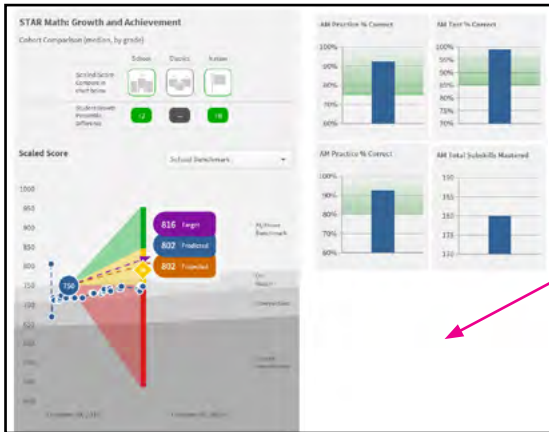

Choose from a variety of **instructional resources** related to the skills you've identified. Some resources address discrete skills; others cover multiple skills.
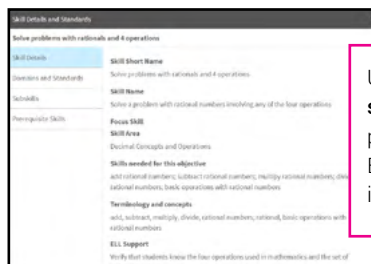
Use information on **skill cards**—including prerequisite skills and ELL support—to help plan instruction.

Are students on track to meet growth and achievement expectations?

Access **Dashboards** for a snapshot of student growth and achievement. See how scaled scores compare to benchmark categories. Use SGPs, recalculated after every test, to gauge whether students are meeting growth expectations. If using Renaissance Accelerated Reader or Renaissance Accelerated Math, view reading or math practice data alongside Star data for a fuller picture of performance.
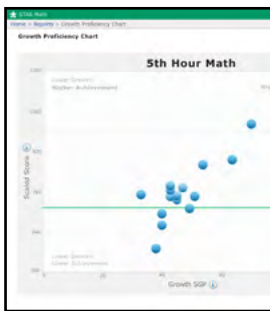
Use the **Growth Proficiency Chart** to see most recent scaled scores in relation to a grade-level benchmark. Also view how students compare to one another according to SGP.
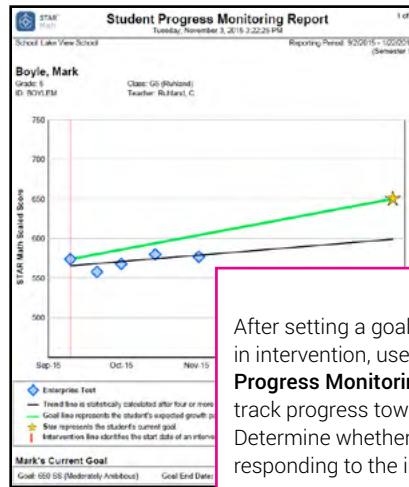
After setting a goal for a student in intervention, use the **Student Progress Monitoring Report** to track progress toward the goal. Determine whether the student is responding to the intervention.

If you ask...	Check the...	So you can...
How did students do on the test?	Record Book	View the most recent scaled score for each student, the corresponding benchmark category, and the test date.
Where can I find more detail about a student's testing experience?	Diagnostic Report	Access key scores, along with definitions, for a single test event. Also check how much time a student took to complete the test.
How are students performing in relation to grade-level standards?	State Standards Report	See which standards students have mastered or are estimated to master by the end of the school year. Also determine which standards might be more difficult for students to master.
How quickly are students growing?	Growth Report	View current SGPs for each student in your class to consider the overall state of growth. You can also see changes in scores between two testing events.

Do you have more questions about student growth and achievement? Star Assessments' array of data displays can help you gain insight as you go about answering them, perhaps with the help of a data team. The reports and dashboards in this section are a starting point; be sure to explore the software to become familiar with all of your options. Also check in with colleagues or, if possible, your Renaissance coach to share your data-inquiry goals and gather input for how Star data can help you achieve them.

RENAISSANCE
Star Custom®

Customized Assessments for Focused Instruction

Star Custom is a formative assessment tool that allows you to administer fixed-form assessments to target specific domains, standards, and skills. Choose skills for assessment and instruction using our data-based learning progressions. Ready-to-use Star Custom Skill Checks are waiting for you to select, schedule, and send directly to students. The feedback you receive on Star Custom Skill Checks will help provide unique insight into how students are performing related to targeted skills, grade-level standards, or district expectations.

Gain unique insight into students' needs.

Find the right skills for assessment and instruction. Star Custom suggests skills students are ready to learn. Use these suggestions to ensure students are mastering essential English and mathematical skills that prepare them for life in the complex 21st century.

Probe mastery of specific skills. Target a subset of grade-level skills to check the degree of students' mastery. Determine where learning gaps exist, which students require more instruction, and which students are ready to move on.

Gauge lesson effectiveness. Assign a pretest to check which upcoming skills students already know. Schedule a posttest to gauge whether students mastered the material. Identify strengths and weaknesses of your lessons from the results.

Eliminate barriers to learning. View item response reports to see common misunderstandings students have about learning material. Explicitly teach with strategies that guide students away from these barriers to learning.

Identify which questions stumped students. Use information from the **Item Responses** view to review areas where reteaching is necessary.
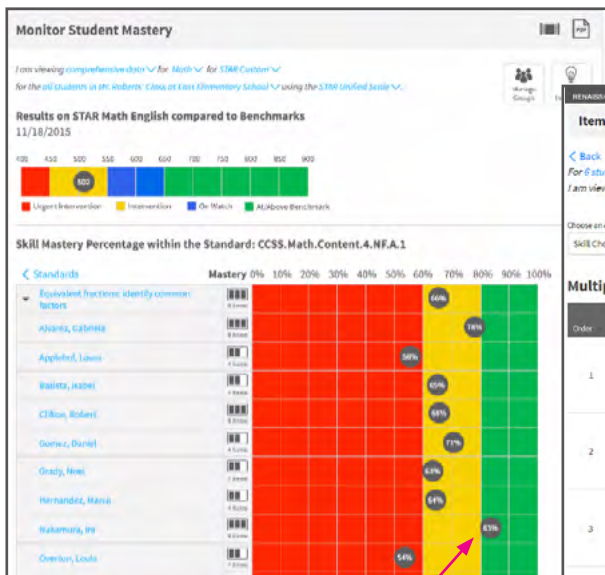
In the **Monitor Student Mastery** view, see how students are progressing in their mastery of selected skills over time.