

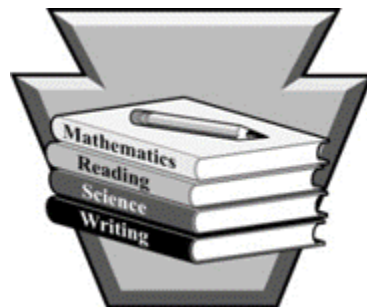


---

# PSSA Science Test Design

---

Designs for Grades 5 & 8



—PSSA Science Test Design—  
—STEELS Aligned—  
2025

## PSSA Science Test Design

The PSSA Science test plan shown in the following table is organized by grade and broken down between autoscored and open-ended (OE) items. Core items are also distinguished from items that serve the role of field test (FT). The following tables summarize the Science test design.

### Operational Science High-Level Test Plan per Form (no. of items).

| Grade | Autoscored |             | Open Ended (OE) |             | Total Core Items              | Total Core Points |
|-------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|       | Core       | Embedded FT | Core            | Embedded FT |                               |                   |
| 5     | 39         | 7           | 3               | 1           | 39 autoscored<br>3 open-ended | 48                |
| 8     | 39         | 9           | 3               | 1           | 39 autoscored<br>3 open-ended | 48                |

### Science PSSA Test Content Blueprints

The content blueprints for the Pennsylvania STEELS-based PSSA science assessment are shown in the following tables. The blueprint includes four Reporting Categories:

- Life Sciences and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability
- Physical Sciences
- Earth & Space Sciences
- Technology and Engineering

### PSSA Science Blueprint Number of Performance Expectations by Reporting Category for Each Test Administration

| Reporting Category                                        | Grade     |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                                           | 5         | 8          |
| Life Sciences and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability | 19        | 30         |
| Physical Sciences                                         | 18        | 19         |
| Earth & Space Sciences                                    | 14        | 15         |
| Technology and Engineering                                | 34        | 38         |
| <b>Total Standards</b>                                    | <b>85</b> | <b>102</b> |

—PSSA Science Test Design—  
—STEELS Aligned—  
2025

**PSSA Science Blueprint: Target Percent of the Core by Reporting Category**

| Reporting Category                                        | Grade   |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                                           | 5       | 8       |
| Life Sciences and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability | 20%–30% | 20%–30% |
| Physical Sciences                                         | 20%–30% | 20%–30% |
| Earth & Space Sciences                                    | 20%–30% | 20%–30% |
| Technology and Engineering                                | 20%–30% | 20%–30% |
| All Areas Total                                           | 100%    | 100%    |

**PSSA Science Blueprint: Target Points by Reporting Category by Grade**

| Reporting Category                                        | Grade  |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                                                           | 5      | 8      |
| Life Sciences and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability | 10–14  | 10–14  |
| Physical Sciences                                         | 10–14  | 10–14  |
| Earth & Space Sciences                                    | 10–14  | 10–14  |
| Technology and Engineering                                | 10–14  | 10–14  |
| All Areas Total                                           | 48 pts | 48 pts |

**PSSA Science Blueprint: Target Core Item Counts by Reporting Category**

| Reporting Category                                        | Grade    |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|                                                           | 5        | 8        |
| Life Sciences and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability | 6–14     | 6–14     |
| Physical Sciences                                         | 6–14     | 6–14     |
| Earth & Space Sciences                                    | 6–14     | 6–14     |
| Technology and Engineering                                | 6–14     | 6–14     |
| All Areas Total                                           | 42 items | 42 items |

—PSSA Science Test Design—  
—STEELS Aligned—  
2025

**Science Test Development Design**

As shown in the operational layout tables below, the PSSA Science tests will consist of two (2) sections. Autoscored items such as Multiple-Choice (MC) and Technology-Enhanced (TE) items can be used in grades 5 and 8. Scenario sets can also be used in grades 5 and 8. At both grade 5 and grade 8, the PSSA Science core can be described as:

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 39 core autoscored items | 39 total points |
| 3 core 3-pt OE items     | 9 total points  |
| <hr/>                    |                 |
| Total                    | 48 points       |

**Science Operational Section Layout Plan for Grade 5**

| Section | Content Emphasis | Number of Autoscored 1-pt Items | Number of 3-pt Items | Estimated Section Testing Time |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1       | Science          | 23                              | 2                    | 41 minutes                     |
| 2       | Science          | 23                              | 2                    | 41 minutes                     |

**Science Operational Section Layout Plan for Grade 8**

| Section | Content Emphasis | Number of Autoscored 1-pt Items | Number of 3-pt Items | Estimated Section Testing Time |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1       | Science          | 24                              | 2                    | 44 minutes                     |
| 2       | Science          | 24                              | 2                    | 44 minutes                     |