

PSSA Science Test Design

The PSSA Science test plan shown in the following table is organized by grade and broken down between multiple-choice (MC) and open-ended (OE) items. Core items are also distinguished from items that serve the role of equating block (EB) and field test (FT). The following tables summarize the Science test design. Note that not all equating block items shown in the table below will be unique on all forms.

Standard Operational Science High-Level Test Plan per Form

Grade	Multiple Choice (MC)			Open Ended (OE)			Total Core Items	Total Core Points
	Core	Equating Block*	Embedded FT	Core	Equating Block*	Embedded FT		
4	58	2	8	5	0	1	58 MC 5 OE	68
8	54 + 4 scenario-based	2	6 + 4 scenario-based	5	0	1	58 MC 5 OE	68

*Note that not all equating block items shown in the table below will be unique on all forms.

Science PSSA Test Content Blueprints

The content blueprints for the PAS-based PSSA science assessment (continuing with the 2015 PSSA administration) are shown in the following tables. The proposed blueprint is organized around four Reporting Categories based on the expressed emphasis contained within the PAS, including three under Science Content. The four corresponding Reporting Categories are:

- A = The Nature of Science
- B = Biological Sciences
- C = Physical Sciences
- D = Earth & Space Sciences

PAS-based PSSA Science Blueprint: Percent of the Core by Reporting Category by Grade

Area	Reporting Category	Grade	
		4	8
The Nature of Science	A	50%	50%
Science Content	B	16–17%	16–17%
	C	16–17%	16–17%
	D	16–17%	16–17%
All Areas Total		100%	100%

PAS-based PSSA Science Blueprint: Points by Reporting Category by Grade

Area	Reporting Category	Grade	
		4	8
The Nature of Science	A	34 pts	34 pts
Science Content	B	11–12 pts	11–12 pts
	C	11–12 pts	11–12 pts
	D	11–12 pts	11–12 pts
All Areas Total		68 pts	68 pts

Science Test Development Design

As shown in the operational layout tables below, the PSSA Science test will continue to be two (2) sections starting in 2015. Due to the use of scenarios, the design for grade 4 differs from the design of grade 8. Scenarios are used at grade 8 only. At both grade 4 and grade 8, the PSSA Science core can be described as:

58 core MC items	58 points
5 core 2 pt OE items	10 points
Total	68 points

Science Operational Section Layout Plan for Grade 4

Section	Content Emphasis	Number of MC	Number of OE	Estimated Section Testing Time (in minutes)
1	Science	34	3	49
2	Science	34	3	49

Science Operational Section Layout Plan for Grade 8

Section	Content Emphasis	Number of MC	Number of OE	Estimated Section Testing Time (in minutes)
1	Science	35	3	56
2	Science	35	3	56