

# ESTAR/MSTAR

Elementary/Middle-School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready



## Universal Screener FAQ

# Copyright

---

© 2017 Texas Education Agency

Copyright (c) Notice:

The materials are copyrighted (c) and trademarked (tm) as the property of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and may not be reproduced without the express written permission of TEA, except under the following conditions:

- Texas public school districts, charter schools, and Education Service Centers may reproduce and use copies of the Materials and Related Materials for the districts' and schools' educational use without obtaining permission from TEA.
- Residents of the state of Texas may reproduce and use copies of the Materials and Related Materials for individual personal use only without obtaining written permission of TEA.
- Any portion reproduced must be reproduced in its entirety and remain unedited, unaltered and unchanged in any way.
- No monetary charge can be made for the reproduced materials or any document containing them; however, a reasonable charge to cover only the cost of reproduction and distribution may be charged.

Private entities or persons located in Texas that are not Texas public school districts, Texas Education Service Centers, or Texas charter schools or any entity, whether public or private, educational or non-educational, located outside the state of Texas MUST obtain written approval from TEA and will be required to enter into a license agreement that may involve the payment of a licensing fee or a royalty.

For information contact: Office of Copyrights, Trademarks, License Agreements, and Royalties, Texas Education Agency, 1701 N. Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701-1494; phone 512-463-9270 or 512-463-9437; email: [copyrights@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:copyrights@tea.state.tx.us)

Version 2

## ESTAR/MSTAR Frequently Asked Questions

---

### **What is the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener and its purpose?**

The purpose of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is to help guide instructional decisions in relation to students' readiness for algebra. The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener fits within the Response to Intervention (RtI) process by helping teachers make two decisions. First, results from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener can be used to help teachers determine if students are on track for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness or if students are at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness. Second, results from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener can help teachers determine the intensity of the instructional support students might need if they have been identified as at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness.

### **How was the blueprint for the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener developed?**

The test blueprint for the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener provides the foundation for defining the content that is assessed and the types of questions that are included. Because the results of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener will be used to make inferences about students' readiness for algebra, considerable care was used in creating the test blueprint. The test blueprint was created using a systematic and iterative process that included multiple perspectives including mathematicians, mathematics educators, and Texas educators. First, a team of mathematicians, mathematics educators, and Texas educators identified the skills needed for algebra-readiness from the Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points in three knowledge representations (Target, Bridging, and Foundational). Second, nationally renowned mathematicians and mathematics educators independently reviewed the test blueprint for mathematical precision and accuracy, importance to algebra, and coherence within and across grades. Third, input from the independent reviewers was integrated and reconciled to create the final test blueprint. Fourth, and finally, the number of items for each grade was determined and included a strategic balance of content and knowledge representations.

### **More specifically, how have Texas teachers been involved in the development and review of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener?**

Teachers and educators from across the state of Texas have been involved throughout the development of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. First, Texas teachers and educators helped draft the initial test blueprint that formed the foundation for the content of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. Second, Texas teachers and educators wrote items for the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. Third, Texas teachers and educators reviewed the items that comprise the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener for their grade-level appropriateness, mathematical accuracy, and alignment with instruction. This

input was used to make final revisions to the items prior to pilot testing. Fourth, and finally, Texas teachers and educators helped pilot test the items. The information gained was used to determine the technical adequacy of the items and create the operational forms of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener.

### **When should the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener administered?**

Comparable forms of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener will be available for administration each year in the fall, winter, and early spring. Each administration cycle will be available for approximately one month. All students should be tested within this window. Two options are available to access the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener can be accessed through the Gateway at <http://texasgateway.org/>. It can also be accessed directly at <https://estarmstar.org>. Users will see an ESTAR/MSTAR icon after logging in. The same username and password is used for either option.

### **Is training available on how to use the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener?**

There are multiple tracks to receive training for the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. In 2010, Trainer-of-Trainers Academies for grades 5-8 were held throughout the spring and summer. Assessments had not been developed for grades 2-4 at that point. Trainers across the state were given the tools to provide information and technical support on the purpose and content of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener and how student performance data can be used within the Response to Intervention (RtI) process of instructional decision-making.

To learn more about ESTAR/MSTAR, please review the courses on [texasmathsupportcenter.org](http://texasmathsupportcenter.org). These courses provide a brief overview of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener and describe how to interpret the results obtained after administering the Universal Screener to students. In these courses, you will find facilitator's guides and additional resources, professional development for both the US and Diagnostic Assessments, and samples of past test items.

For more information, contact the Texas Math Support Center at [mathtx@esc13.net](mailto:mathtx@esc13.net). Manuals describing how to access, use, interpret, and administer the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener are available.

### **How is the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener different from a diagnostic tool?**

The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener differs from diagnostic assessments in the type of information it provides. The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener provides teachers with information to make two important decisions within the Response to Intervention (RtI) process: (1) are students on track or at risk for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness, and (2) for students

who are at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra- readiness, what is the degree of intensity of instructional supports or supplemental interventions needed? However, the results from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener cannot be used to identify the specific instructional supports or supplemental interventions that align with students' persistent misconceptions or errors. Diagnostic assessments can be used to provide more specific information about students' strengths and weaknesses, which can be used to identify instructional supports or supplemental interventions.

### **How is the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener different from benchmark testing for the state assessment?**

The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is different from other benchmarking systems that might be in place in a school or district. Specifically, the content of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener allows teachers to screen for algebra-readiness, or skills and knowledge related to proficiency in algebra. Other benchmark assessment systems are based on a different test blueprint that allows teachers to screen for other skills or knowledge.

### **Should the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener be used to replace your district's benchmarking system for the state assessment?**

The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is designed to complement (not supplant) other assessment systems that might be in place in a school or district. When deciding if the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is appropriate for a school or district, it is important to keep in mind the purpose of the assessment system. The purpose of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is to help teachers make two important decisions within the Response to Intervention (RtI) process: (1) are students on track or at risk for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra- readiness, and (2) for students who are at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness, what is the degree of intensity of instructional supports or supplemental interventions needed. Other assessment systems might be in place in a school or district that are used to make different decisions than are possible with the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. If these decisions are still needed within a school or district context, those assessment systems should be maintained. For example, a school or district might administer a universal screener to identify students who are on track for meeting the expectations of the state standardized assessment system. Because the information obtained from this assessment system is different from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener, administering both universal screeners may be warranted.

### **Are teachers expected to administer the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener to every student in second through eighth grade?**

The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is designed to be administered to all students in grades 2-8 three times per year (fall, winter, and early spring). All students should take the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener to help teachers identify those students who are on track for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness and those who are at risk for not meeting expectations in

algebra and algebra-readiness. The winter administration of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener should follow the fall administration to determine if students have changed risk categories. For example, some students who were identified as on track for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness after the fall administration of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener may have fallen behind as the complexity of the content increased and would subsequently be identified as at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness on the winter administration of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. By assessing all students again in the winter and early spring, teachers can examine the impact of the instructional supports or supplemental interventions on the performance of students who were previously identified as at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness and adjust their instruction accordingly. The winter and early spring administrations of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener can be used to determine if the type and/or intensity of the instructional supports or supplemental interventions needs to be increased or decreased to support student learning.

### **What format will the assessment take and how will it be administered?**

Two options are available to access the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener can be accessed through the Gateway at <http://texasgateway.org/>. It can also be accessed directly at <https://estarmstar.org>. Users will see an ESTAR/MSTAR icon after logging in. The same username and password is used for either option. There are two options for administering the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener. One option is for students to take the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener on the computer using a secure login. Another option allows the teacher to print the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener for paper/pencil administration. If students are taking a paper/pencil assessment, teachers or students may enter their responses into the system using the virtual bubble sheet.

There are 24 items on the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener assessments; all items are multiple-choice. Each has one correct answer and three distractors. The distractors are designed to represent common mathematical errors or misconceptions. The test can be group administered and is not timed. It should take approximately 20-40 minutes for students to take the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener; however, individual times will vary. Students who need to momentarily leave the testing session may stop a test session and return to complete the assessment. All testing needs to be completed during the three testing windows. Each window and the timeframe will be announced statewide prior to the opening via TEA math listservs and other appropriate modes of communication. It is not possible to input answers after the test window closes.

The actual test is not shared prior to administration. Additionally, answers for the tests are not published as the test are meant to be scored only by entering answers online.

### **How will the results of the assessment be reported?**

The ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener results will be directly accessible within

the ESTAR/MSTAR system. An option exists within the system to view and print reports to share with other teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Individual student-level reports and class-level reports are available. Reports are designed to help teachers make instructional decisions from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener results.

### **What kind of information is included in the diagnostic reports?**

**Student and Group Misconception Report** - This report enables teachers to view individual student misconceptions and compare them across a classroom or classrooms. Details for each student can be obtained by selecting the circular icons next to each student's name. A brief interpretive guide video is available above the report.

**Summary Report** - This report provides an overview of each student's performance and may facilitate discussions with parents. The first section captures the student's trajectory along each level of a learning progression. The table below this section provides summaries of the student's overall strengths and areas of opportunity. A brief interpretive guide video is available above the report.

### **How do I get started?**

To access the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener for your teachers and students, the required data has to be uploaded by your district administrator into the ESTAR/MSTAR database through the batch upload process. This can be done for an entire district or for an individual campus.

There will need to be someone in your district who will be responsible for uploading the data. That person can be you or someone from the district offices. Please email the name, email address, and new state TSDS ID number for that person to [mathtx@esc13.net](mailto:mathtx@esc13.net) and staff will create a district admin account for them.

### **Where do I find information regarding TSDS numbers?**

The Texas Student Data Systems ID number is ten digits, more info can be found on [TEA's website](#).

### **Who may I contact if I have additional questions about ESTAR/MSTAR?**

Address any questions regarding ESTAR/MSTAR to [mathtx@esc13.net](mailto:mathtx@esc13.net).