**Comparison of a Passage-Based Reading Standard of Learning (SOL) Computer Adaptive Test and a Traditional SOL Test**

A Passage-Based Reading Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) is an assessment that is customized for every student based on how the student responds to the questions. This is in contrast to the traditional test in which all students who take a particular version of the test respond to the same test questions.

Passage-Based Reading Computer Adaptive Testing is similar to traditional testing in many ways, but there are also some differences. This table highlights some of the characteristics that a Passage-Based Reading SOL CAT and a traditional SOL test have in common and some of the characteristics that are different. Explanations are included for clarity.

| **Test Characteristics** | **Same** | **Different** | **Explanation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content assessed** | X |  | Each test form assesses the Standards of Learning (SOL) for a particular course. |
| **Question types/format** | X |  | Each test format has multiple-choice questions and technology-enhanced items (TEI). The number of TEI can range from 5% to 30% as the test adapts to the performance level of the individual student. |
| **Number of test questions** |  | X | For a particular course, the number of test items and passages on a Passage-Based Reading CAT may be different that the number of items on a traditional Reading SOL test. However, all students taking a Passage-Based Reading CAT for a particular course are administered the same number of items. The Reading CAT for Grades 3 through 8 will have four passages and item sets that contribute toward a student's score and one field test passage and item set that is being tried out for future use. Each passage and item set for Grades 3 and 4 includes a single passage and accompanying items. Students in Grade 5 through 8 may receive a paired passage and accompanying items as one of the five total passage and item sets of the Reading CAT. All students taking a traditional form of the reading test are administered the same number of items for a particular course, and there are typically six to seven passage and item sets on the traditional test form. See the [SOL Test Blueprints](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/english-reading-literacy/standards-of-learning) for each reading test on the Virginia Department of Education website for additional information.  |
| **Test questions and passages presented to each student** |  | X | A Passage-Based Reading CAT is customized for each student. In a traditional test, all students who take a particular version of the test respond to the same test questions. |
| **Time to complete the test** | X |  | SOL tests are untimed in both formats. Students should be afforded as much time as needed to complete the test, but are generally expected to complete the test in one day. School divisions have the option of administering the grades 3, 4, and 5 SOL reading tests over two days; however, school divisions are strongly encouraged to consider the changes that have been implemented in the online elementary school SOL tests when finalizing their test administration plans.  |
| **Allowable test manipulatives** | X |  | Each test format allows students access to the same test manipulatives such as scratch paper. The SOL Examiner’s Manual contains a complete list for each SOL test. |
| **Online tools within TestNav 8** | X |  | Online tools are available in each format within the testing software such as the choice eliminator and highlighter. The SOL Test Examiner’s Manual contains a complete list for each SOL test. Practice test items are available to provide an introduction to online navigation and online tools. |
| **Navigation through the test** |  | X | In a Passage-Based Reading SOL CAT, students must answer each question before proceeding to the next question and they are not able to skip questions. Once a question is answered the student is able to navigate back to that question as long as they are in the same passage set of items. Students are not able to return to other passages and test items within the test. This is in contrast to the traditional test, where students can answer questions in a section of the test in any order. For specific CAT navigation instructions, refer to the *Introduction to TestNav 8: Multiple-Choice/Technology-Enhanced Item Tests* document on the Virginia Department of Education [website](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/student-assessment/sol-practice-items-all-subjects). |
| **Special test accommodations** | X |  | The special test accommodations provided for each test format are the same, but the manner in which some test accommodations are delivered to students may vary for a Passage-Based Reading CAT. The SOL Test Examiner’s Manual provides instructions. |
| **Scaled scores** | X |  | Scaled scores remain on a scale of 0 to 600, with 400 indicating pass/proficient and 500 indicating pass/advanced for both test formats. Scaled scores for a CAT are computed using the number of questions answered correctly, as well as the difficulty level of the questions answered correctly. |