

# Cause and effect essay: standartized tests

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Governments like standardized tests. Administering them is an easy way to collect data in a way that is hard to judge and report on. How do you determine a student's success over time, especially in subjects such as English? Standardized tests, especially those administered at a young age in some countries like Canada, can have plenty of effects that aren't always predictable or positive.

The pressure of standardized tests is incredible, whether it is a grade six PAT (Provincial Achievement Test) in Alberta or an SAT exam in the United States that determines college acceptance. Teachers need their students to perform well, and students often have future goals riding on how well they do. Studying is coupled with stress and parents are often as distressed by the test as their children are. Test anxiety can manifest itself with dizziness, headaches, or nausea, making the testing process even less accurate and more intense. With the wide-spread use standardized tests, teachers often find themselves "teaching to the test." This means more time is spent teaching students how to take an exam and to properly fill in multiple-choice bubbles on an answer sheet rather than explaining concepts and practicing skills.

Students might even have to waste more time taking practice exams, which takes even more time away from actual learning. The results of standardized tests are not entirely accurate. A child may perform differently on different days. Anxiety might be so overwhelming that a child's results could be affected. A standardized test can only assess certain skills. It can accurately evaluate reading comprehension and math computation skills but not writing skills and science aptitude.

Of course, there are a few positive effects of standardized tests. They help prepare people for the future pressure of college and careers where skills are assessed in formal or informal settings. They help children focus, develop study techniques, and learn to accomplish tasks in a set amount of time. Additionally, they help students to set personal goals and to understand that knowledge is an important aspect of life that will be graded and analyzed by someone other than their classroom teacher. Standardized tests make sure that teachers are all “ on the same page” with their curriculum and knowledge so that different schools aren’t teaching at different levels.

The reason for standardized tests is to gain tangible proof on how students are progressing in school and who is ready to attend college. However, the effects of standardized tests are far more intensive than one might think initially.