



Summary of Results

Background to the 2008 NAEP Arts Assessment

The NAEP Arts Assessment was administered to a nationally representative sample of 7,900 eighth-grade students from 260 public and private schools. Approximately one-half of these students were assessed in music, and the other half were assessed in visual arts.

The NAEP Arts Framework, developed in 1996, serves as the blueprint for the assessment, describing the specific knowledge and skills that should be assessed in the four arts disciplines: music, visual arts, theater and dance. Additionally, three arts processes – responding, creating, and performing – are central to students' experiences in these disciplines. In 2008, due to budget constraints, only the responding process in music and both the responding and creating processes in visual arts were assessed. The responding process in both music and visual arts was assessed with multiple-choice questions and constructed-response questions that required students to produce answers of a few words or sentences. Students were asked to analyze and describe aspects of music they heard, critique instrumental and vocal performances, and demonstrate their knowledge of standard musical notation and music's role in society.

For the responding portion of the visual arts assessment, students were asked to analyze and describe works of arts and design. For the creating portion, students were required to create a self-portrait that was scored for identifying detail, compositional elements and use of materials. Self portraits were rated as *sufficient*, *uneven*, *minimal*, or *insufficient*, based on the student's representation of clear observations and characteristics specific to the individual work. The visual arts assessment included multiple-choice questions regarding the technical similarity between two self- portraits, aesthetic properties, and characteristics of artistic medium such as charcoal.

Although the questions in the 2008 assessment were taken from those administered in the previous arts assessment in 1997, not all of the results can be compared between

the two years. Only the percentages of students' correct responses to the multiple-choice questions in 2008 can be compared to those in 1997.

Key Findings of the 2008 NAEP Arts Assessment

Access to Arts Learning Opportunities

Music

- School administrators reported that 57% of eighth graders attended schools where instruction in music was available “at least 3 or 4 times a week,” compared to 43% in 1997. Conversely, 8% of eighth graders attended schools in 2008 in which instruction in music was not offered, down from 9% in 1997. In 2008, 16% of students attended schools in which music was offered “less than once a week” or not at all.
- The following percentages of students reported participating in various musical activities in school: playing in a band, 16%; playing in an orchestra, 5%; singing in a chorus or choir, 17%; and one or more of the three activities 34%.

Visual Arts

- School administrators reported that 47% of eighth graders attended schools where instruction in visual arts was available “at least 3 or 4 times a week,” compared to 52% in 1997. Conversely, 14% of eighth graders attended schools in 2008 in which instruction in visual arts is not offered, down from 17% in 1997. In 2008, 24% of students attended schools in which visual arts were offered “less than once a week” or not at all.
- Twenty percent of students in both 1997 and 2008 reported that their teacher did not have them paint or draw once a month. In 2008, 59% of the students reported that their art teacher did not have them create things out of clay or other materials in their visual arts class at least once a month.
- The results show a decrease in the number of eighth grade students who are visiting art museums, galleries or exhibitions with their class at least once a year. In 1997, 22% of students responded that they had visited an art museum once a year; in 2008, only 16% reported visiting a museum, a statistically significant decline from 1997.

What Students Know and Can Do

The average responding score was reported on a NAEP scale of 0 to 300 for both music and visual arts. Because music and visual arts are two distinct disciplines, results are

reported separately for each area and cannot be compared. Scores ranged from 105 (music) and 104 (visual arts) among lowest-performing students to 194 (music) and 193 (visual arts) among highest-performing students. In visual arts, the difference between the lower percentile (10th) and the higher (90th) was 89 points.

Music

- In response to multiple-choice questions in music, 52% of students correctly answered a question requiring them to identify the texture of the musical example; only 20% of students scored “adequate” when reading musical notation; 50% were able to correctly identify the sound of an instrument after listening to a musical recording; when asked to identify the origin of a musical style, 52% responded with a “developed” answer. These responses were not significantly different from the 1997 assessment.

Visual Arts

- On the creating assessment in visual arts, the overall average was a 52%. In general, the students who performed well on the questioning also responded well to the creating art task.
- Creating questions required students to create their own works of art and design. The average creating task score for visual arts was reported separately as the average percentage of the maximum possible score from 0 to 100, with a national average of 52. In general, students who performed well on the responding questions also performed well on the creating questions.
- In response to a multiple choice question regarding the technical similarity between two self- portraits, aesthetic properties, and characteristics of mediums, 36% of students correctly responded that “both works combine loose gestural lines with careful drawing.” In response to a multiple choice question requiring students to describe the characteristics of charcoal in the self portraits, 38% of students provided a “partial” answer for these questions. On the creating portion of the assessment, 4% of students created a self-portrait that was rated “sufficient”; 25% received a rating of “uneven”; 57% received a rating of “minimal” and 14% received a rating of “insufficient.”
- In 2008, an overall average of 42% of students chose the correct answer on multiple choice questions in visual arts, the same percentage of students who selected the correct answer in 1997. On multiple choice questions in visual arts, percentages ranged from 62% of students who correctly identified the purpose of insulating package materials to 23% who correctly identified an artistic style that influenced cubism.

The Achievement Gap

Differences in scoring, many of them significant, appeared across ethnicity, socio-economic status, school location (urban, suburban, or rural), school type (public or private), and gender. Overall, White and Asian/Pacific Islander females in private schools located in suburbs, rural areas, or in towns scored the highest in music and visual arts (93% of eighth grade students in the US in 2008 attended public schools).

Ethnicity

- In 2008, white and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher in both music and visual art than Black and Hispanic students. Scores for responding in music for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were 29 to 32 points higher than scores for Black and Hispanic students.
- Scores for responding in visual arts for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were 22 to 31 points higher than the scores for Black and Hispanic students. Scores for creating in visual arts for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were 8 to 12 points higher than the scores for Black and Hispanic students.

Socio-economic Status

- Students from lower-income families (students eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch) scored 28 points lower in music and 9 points lower in visual arts than students who were not eligible.

School Location

- Students who attended city schools had lower average scores than students who attended suburban, town, and rural schools—differences of 13, 14, and 8 points respectively.

School Type

- The average responding score in music for eighth-graders in public schools was 14 points lower than the score for students in private schools and 10 points lower in visual arts.

Gender

- Female students scored 10 points higher than their male counterparts in the responding sections of both music and visual arts.

- Female students scored 6 points higher than male students in creating visual art.

Teaching and Learning in the Classroom

Music

- When students were asked how often they were assigned certain activities in music class, the only statistically significant difference from the 1997 NAEP Arts Assessment was in “writing down music”—from 26% of students in 1997 to 33% in 2008. For other activities in music class, there was no significant change.
- The percentage of students who reported being asked by their teacher to listen to music at least once a month showed a decline from 51% in 1997 to 49% in 2008.
- The percentage of students who reported being asked by their teacher to make up their own music in music class at least once a month showed an increase from 16% in 1997 to 17% in 2008.

Visual Arts

- The percentage of eighth-grade students who were asked by their teacher to write about their artwork in visual arts class at least once a month increased from 21% in 1997 to 27% in 2008.
- The percentage of students whose teacher had them choose their own art project in visual arts class at least once a month decreased from 47% in 1997 to 39% in 2008.
- 54% of eighth-graders reported that they or their teacher saved their artwork in a portfolio in 2008, an insignificant difference from the 50% reported in 1997.