



2016 Nation's Arts Report Card: Summary of Results

Background on the 2016 NAEP Arts Assessment

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) recently released the results of the 2016 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Arts Assessment. NAGB along with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) assessed a nationally representative sample of nearly 8,800 eighth-grade students from 280 public and non-public schools. Approximately one-half of these students were assessed in music (4,300) and the other half in visual arts (4,400).

Developed in 1996, the NAEP Arts Framework served as the blueprint for the assessment – describing the specific knowledge and skills that should be assessed in four arts disciplines: music, visual arts, theater and dance. Additionally, three artistic processes – responding, creating and performing – are central to the framework. As in 2008, the NAGB did not include dance or theatre in the assessment due to budget constraints and the limited number of schools offering programs in dance and theatre at the eighth-grade level. In both 2008 and 2016, also due to budget constraints, only the responding process in music and the responding and creating processes in visual arts were assessed.

Consistency in the survey instrument and questions used in 2008 and 2016 allows for helpful comparisons between the results of the two assessments.

About the Arts Assessments

The responding process in music was assessed with multiple choice and constructed-response questions that required students to produce answers of a few words or sentences. The assessment prompted students 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 analyzed and described works of arts and design. The assessment included multiple choice questions regarding the technical similarity between two self-portraits, aesthetic properties and characteristics of artistic medium, such as charcoal. For the creating portion of the visual arts assessment, students created 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.

Key Findings of the 2016 NAEP Arts Assessment

What Students Know and Can Do

The average scores for eighth-graders were not significantly different between 2008 and 2016, nor were there significant differences in the percentages of students who reported taking music and/or visual arts classes. However, average scores differed by gender and regionally across the country in 2016. Students were assessed separately on responding to existing works of music and visual art and creating their own original artwork.

The NAEP reports average responding scores on a scale of zero 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. The average visual arts responding scale score for eighth-grade students in 2016 was 149, which was not significantly different from the 2008 average of 150. The average music responding scale score for eighth-grade students in 2016 was 147, which was not significantly different from the 2008 average of 150. Scores ranged from 103 (music) and 106 (visual arts) among lowest-performing students to 192 (music) and 189 (visual arts) among highest-performing students.

Music

- Average responding scores for eighth-grade students at each of the five selected percentiles were not significantly different compared to 2008.
- The achievement gap between White students and Hispanic students narrowed in a significant manner between 2008 and 2016, from 32 to 23 on the 300-point scale.
- In response to multiple choice questions in music, 76 percent of students correctly answered a question requiring them to identify the form of vocal music in a recording (same percentage as in 2008); 65 percent of students identified the type of instrumental ensemble performing an excerpt, compared to 71 percent in 2008); 51 percent correctly identified the sound of an instrument after listening to a musical recording (compared to 50 percent in 2008). The NAEP data tables for the multiple choice questions in music provide comparisons on 21 items for the 1997, 2008 and 2016 NAEP Assessments. Statistically significant differences exist between 2008 and 2016 for six of the 21 multiple choice items.

Visual Arts

- For the creating portion of the visual arts assessment, the assessment prompted students to create a self-portrait that was scored for identifying detail, compositional elements and use of materials. The average creating task score for visual arts is reported separately as the average percentage of the maximum possible score from zero to 100. In 2016, the average creating task score in visual arts was 51. In general, students who performed well on the responding questions also performed well on the creating questions.
 - In visual arts, the highest-performing eighth-grade students (those in the 90th percentile) had an average responding score of 189, significantly lower than the average score of 193 in 2008.
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Scores for eighth-grade students at the 10th, 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles were not significantly different compared to 2008.

- Although the 2016 visual arts portion of the assessment included the same creating questions as the 2008 assessment, the creating task score results cannot be compared between the two assessment years because of the small number of these questions in the arts assessment.
- On the creating portion of the assessment, 3 percent of students created a self-portrait that was rated sufficient; 26 percent received a rating of uneven; 59 percent received a rating of minimal; and 11 percent received a rating of insufficient. In the 2008 assessment, the ratings were 4 percent, 25 percent, 57 percent and 14 percent respectively.
- In 2016, an overall average of 43 percent of students chose the correct answers on multiple choice questions in visual arts, compared to 42 percent students who selected the correct answers in 1997 and 2008. In 2016, percentages on multiple choice questions in visual arts ranged from 56 percent of students who correctly identified the purpose of insulating package materials to 22 percent who correctly identified an artistic style that influenced cubism.

The Achievement Gap

Significant differences in scoring appeared across ethnicity, socio-economic status, school type (public or private) and gender. Overall, White and Asian/Pacific Islander students, female students, students in private schools, and students from schools located in suburbs and rural areas scored the highest in both music and visual arts.

Ethnicity

- In 2016, White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher in both music and visual art than Black and Hispanic students. White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 23-33 points higher for responding to music than Black and Hispanic students. For visual arts, Hispanic students scored six points higher in 2016 – the only significant change from 2008 to 2016.
- White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 19-38 points higher for responding in visual arts than Black and Hispanic students. White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 8-16 points higher for creating in visual arts than Black and Hispanic students.

Socio-Economic Status

- Students from lower-income families (students eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch) scored 26 points lower in music and 22 points lower in visual arts than students ineligible for the program.
- On average, lower-income students scored five points higher in 2016 in visual arts than lower-income students in 2008.

School Location

- Students who attended city schools had lower average scores in music than students who attended suburban, town and rural schools—differences of 13, three and nine points respectively,
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with significant differences in scores between city and suburban and city and rural schools.

- Students from schools in the northeast and Midwest had higher scores in music than students who attended schools in the south and west—differences of six and nine points respectively, with significant differences in scores between schools in the northeast and Midwest to schools in the west only.
- Students who attended city schools had lower average scores in visual arts than students who attended suburban, town, and rural schools—differences of eight, two and four points respectively, with only a significant difference between city and suburban schools.
- Students from schools in the northeast had higher scores in visual arts than students who attended schools in the Midwest, south and west—differences of 12, 14 and 11 points respectively.
- In 2016, Hispanic students from rural schools scored on average 21 points higher in music than similar students in 2008.

Parent Education

- Students whose parents graduated from college had higher average scores in music than students whose parents did not finish high school (28 points higher), graduated from high school (20 points higher) and who had some education after high school (12 points higher).
- Students whose parents graduated from college had higher average scores in visual arts than students whose parents did not finish high school (21 points higher), graduated from high school (20 points higher) and who had some education after high school (nine points higher).

School Type

- Eighth-graders in public schools scored 14 points lower for responding in music and 16 points lower in visual arts than students in private schools.

Gender

- Female students scored 15 points higher than their male counterparts in the responding sections of music and 14 points higher in visual arts. On average, male students scored five points lower in 2016 than males in 2008.

Access to Arts Learning Opportunities

Music

- According to the 2016 report, 64 percent of eighth graders attended schools that offered instruction in music at least three or four times a week, compared to 57 percent in 2008. In 2016, 13 percent of students attended schools that offered music less than once a week or not at
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all. In 2016, 8 percent of eighth graders attended schools that did not offer music.

- In 2016, the following percentages of students reported participating in various musical activities in school: playing in a band, 17 percent; playing in an orchestra, 5 percent; singing in a chorus or choir, 16 percent. (These rates of participation virtually did not change from 2008.)
- In 2016, 8 percent of eighth-grade students reported playing with a group, band or orchestra outside school, while 11 percent reported singing in a group, chorus or choir outside school. These numbers declined from those reported in 2008, when 12 percent of students indicated they played with a group, band or orchestra, and 17 percent sang in a group, chorus or choir outside school.

Visual Arts

- Fifty-five percent of eighth graders attended schools that offered instruction in visual arts at least three or four times a week, compared to 47 percent in 2008. In 2016, 21 percent of students attended schools that offered visual arts less than once a week or not at all. In 2016, 14 percent of eighth graders attended schools that did not offer instruction in visual art, the same as in 2008.
- According to the 2016 results, 26 percent of students reported that their teacher did not have them paint or draw once a month, significantly up from 20 percent in 2008. In 2016, 65 percent of 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, which was a significant increase compared to 59 percent in 2008.
- Fewer students responded that they had visited an art museum at least once a year with their class; in 2016, 14 percent reported visiting a museum, a decline from 16 percent in 2008.
- Twenty-five percent of eighth grade students reported visiting a museum or exhibit outside of school, which holds relatively steady from the 26 percent reported in 2008. Meanwhile, in 2016, 13 percent of students reported taking art classes outside of school, down from 16 percent in 2008. However, 43 percent of students kept an art journal or sketchbook outside of school in 2016, which was significantly higher than 40 percent in 2008.
- A higher percentage of students in the northeast reported taking a visual arts course than their peers in other regions.

Teaching and Learning in the Classroom

Music

- The percentage of students who reported whether they listened to a musical performance in a theatre decreased from 72 percent in the 2008 NAEP Arts Assessment to 67 percent in 2016.
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- The percentage of students who agreed that they think they have a talent for music decreased from 36 percent in 2008 to 30 percent in 2016.
- Students who reported that they played a musical instrument on their own and not for school work decreased from 38 percent in 2008 to 35 percent in 2016.
- The percentage of students who reported whether they talked with their family or friends about music not for schoolwork declined from 62 percent in 2008 to 55 percent in 2016.

Visual Arts

- The percentage of students who reported whether they made art on their own and not for school work decreased from 62 percent in 2008 to 56 percent in 2016.
 - Forty-nine percent of students reported that they or a teacher saved their artwork in a portfolio, which was significantly lower than 54 percent in 2008.
 - Twenty-eight percent of students reported that teachers asked them to paint or draw every day, a decrease from 32 percent in 2008.
 - Schools reporting whether there was a full-time specialist on staff to teach visual arts to eighth graders decreased from 77 percent in 2008 to 74 percent in 2016, but these percentages were not significantly different from each other.
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