Practitioner's Guide

MAST SCORE

ABSTRACT

This guide explains MAST (Mastery of Academic Standards & Targets), a criterion-referenced score that summarizes a student's current progress toward mastering reading standards for their state and grade. It covers what MAST measures, how to read and interpret the score and its status labels, how MAST relates to the Standards Mastery Report, how it differs from ARM, and how teachers can use it to plan instruction. The guide is intended for classroom teachers, reading specialists, instructional coaches, and school and district administrators.

DATE

School Year 2026-2027

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Section 1: What Is a MAST Score?

MAST (Mastery of Academic Standards & Targets) is a criterion-referenced score that summarizes a student's current progress toward mastering the reading standards for their state and grade.

MAST draws on evidence from a student's work across Assessment, Tutor, and Instruct whenever that work connects to the reading standards for their state and grade. Not every observation counts toward the score — only work tied to grade-level reading standards factors in. That connection depends on the reading skills a student actually demonstrates, not just the grade level listed on the activity. For instance, a third grader might show a third-grade skill while reading a passage labeled second grade. As students complete more activities, Amira may collect more evidence, but completing an activity by itself doesn't automatically move the score.

Some standards are harder than others, and some results tell us more about a student's mastery than others. MAST accounts for these differences when it calculates the score. It does not simply average the standards-level subscores.

Unlike ARM, which is norm-referenced and compares a student's reading performance with that of national peers, MAST is **criterion-referenced**: it reflects performance against grade-level standards rather than performance relative to other students. See Section 9 for a full comparison of MAST and ARM.

> **Built per state and grade:** MAST is built separately for each state and grade. Amira maps a state's reading skills to that state's grade-level standards, and evidence from those skills contributes to the related standards, which are then combined into the overall MAST score. Because each state defines and organizes its standards differently, MAST scores should be interpreted and compared only within the same state and grade — not just the same grade. The same displayed score should not be assumed to mean the same thing in two different states.

Section 2: How to Read a MAST Score

For Grades 1–8, a MAST score begins with the student's grade and is followed by a three-digit score from 000 to 999. Kindergarten scores use only the three-digit score, with no grade prefix.

Grade band	Score format	Example
Pre-K	Not available	
Kindergarten	Three-digit score only (no grade prefix)	380
Grades 1–8	Grade digit + three-digit score	3380 (Grade 3, score of 380) 6380 (Grade 6, score of 380)

Within the same grade, higher scores indicate that a student is further along toward mastery of the grade level standards. The scale uses equal intervals, so a 100-point difference represents the same amount of difference anywhere on the scale.

Important: the scale endpoints and midpoint are not percentages, percentile ranks, grade equivalents, passing scores, or a count of how many standards a student has mastered. MAST scores should be interpreted only within the same state and grade — a Grade 3 score and a Grade 4 score refer to different sets of standards and should not be compared as points on one vertical scale, and the same displayed score in two different states does not carry the same meaning.

Example: Grade 3, score of 380
Suppose a Grade 3 student receives a MAST score of 3380 near the beginning of the school year. The first digit (3) identifies Grade 3, and the remaining three digits (380) summarize the strength of the student's qualifying mastery evidence across the Grade 3 standards represented in the score.

Lower scores are expected at the beginning of the school year because students are just beginning instruction on a new set of grade-level standards. A score of 3380 does not mean the student has mastered 38% of Grade 3 standards, and it should not be read as a judgment that the student has failed to master the grade. By itself, it does not indicate

whether the student is on track or has met grade-level expectations — pair it with the standards-level results (Section 5) for that picture.

As instruction progresses and students demonstrate stronger mastery, MAST scores should generally increase. By the end of the year, the goal is for students to demonstrate mastery across their grade-level standards, as reflected in the standards-level results.

Example: interpreting a change in score
A change from 3380 to 3680 means the student's overall mastery estimate increased by 300 points on the Grade 3 MAST scale. Because MAST uses equal intervals, a 300-point difference represents the same amount of score difference anywhere on the Grade 3 scale. The higher score indicates that the student's qualifying evidence now supports a stronger overall estimate of Grade 3 standards mastery.

It does not mean the student mastered 30% more standards, and it does not mean the student improved on every standard. Review the standards-level labels to identify specific strengths and standards to revisit.

The 4-digit scale, visualized
The figure below shows how a single student's score (José's MAST score of 3480) is positioned within the Grade 3 scale. José's score falls in the Approaching band, just below the 587 cutline into Proficient.

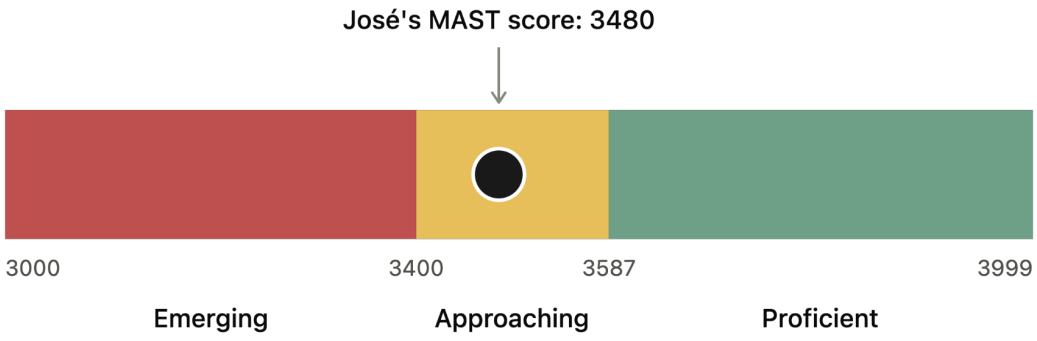


Figure 1. *José's Grade 3 MAST score (3480) shown against the Emerging / Approaching / Proficient ranges, using the current Grade 3 cutlines (000–400 Emerging, 401–586 Approaching, 587–999 Proficient, expressed on the 3000–3999 grade-3 scale).*

Section 3: MAST Status Labels and Cutlines

MAST uses three status labels to describe a student's current results on the path toward mastering grade-level reading standards. Each label also points to a next instructional action:

Level	What it marks	Suggested action
Emerging	The earliest mastery range	Instruction required
Approaching	The middle range	Continue instruction and practice
Proficient	The highest range	Maintain and apply

These labels summarize current performance on grade-level standards; they do not describe everything a student knows or can do.

The cutlines that define each range are set per grade and are not evenly spaced across the 000–999 scale. For example, the "Proficient" cutline sits closer to 500 than to an evenly-spaced midpoint like 700. The same cutline pair applies at BOY, MOY, and EOY — the boundaries themselves do not move during the year; a student's score and status may change as evidence accumulates.

Grade	Emerging	Approaching	Proficient
K	000–338	339–459	460–999
1	000–294	295–483	484–999
2	000–319	320–546	547–999
3	000–400	401–586	587–999
4	000–466	467–585	586–999
5	000–443	444–567	568–999
6	000–315	316–564	565–999
7	000–358	359–546	547–999
8	000–391	392–582	583–999

Table 1. National cutlines by grade. These cutlines are provisional and subject to change.

Section 4: How Score Distributions Shift Across the Year

Because instruction on a new set of grade-level standards begins at the start of the year, it is expected that more students fall in the Emerging and Approaching ranges at Beginning of Year (BOY) than at Middle of Year (MOY) or End of Year (EOY). As students receive instruction and demonstrate stronger mastery, the distribution of status labels should shift toward Approaching and Proficient over the course of the year.

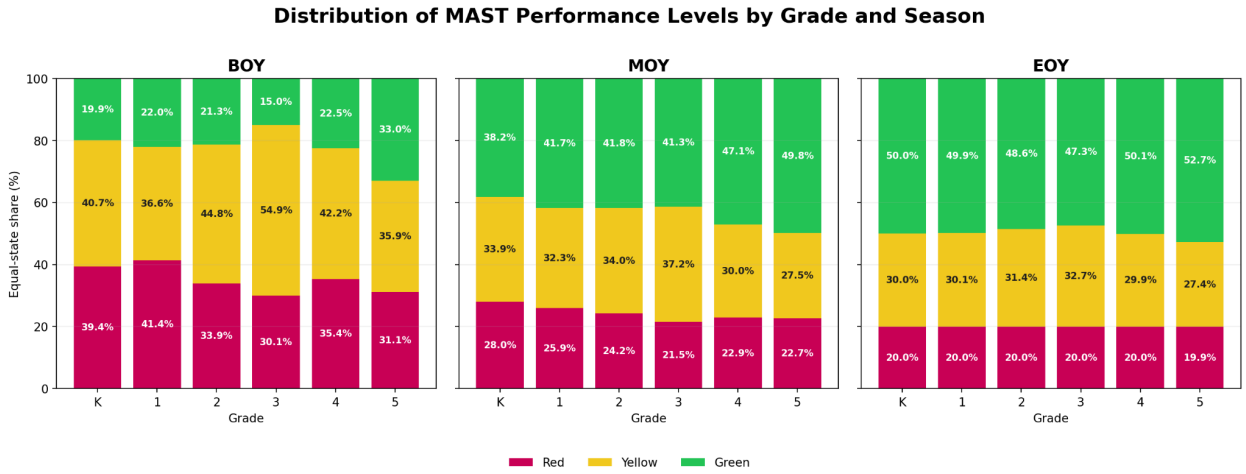


Figure 2. K–5 status distributions by season across a 10-state equal-weight panel, using the provisional cutlines in Table 1.

Using the provisional cutlines, the expectation is that approximately 50% of students will reach "Proficient" by EOY, and 20% or less will remain "Emerging." A class or school that does not yet show this pattern should not be treated as unusual — use these figures as a general reference point rather than a fixed target for any individual class.

Section 5: MAST vs. Standards-Level Results

The overall MAST score and its status label provide the big picture of a student's progress toward mastering grade-level reading standards. Each standards-level result describes the student's current status for one specific standard. The same label (e.g., Approaching) may appear at both the overall and standards level, but at the standards level it applies only to the result beside it — an overall status of Approaching does not mean every standard is Approaching.

The two views answer different questions: overall MAST shows a student's general progress within the grade, while the standards-level results help teachers identify specific strengths and possible instructional needs. Amira calculates the overall score from the student's underlying performance; it does not count, add, or average the standards-level labels shown in the report.

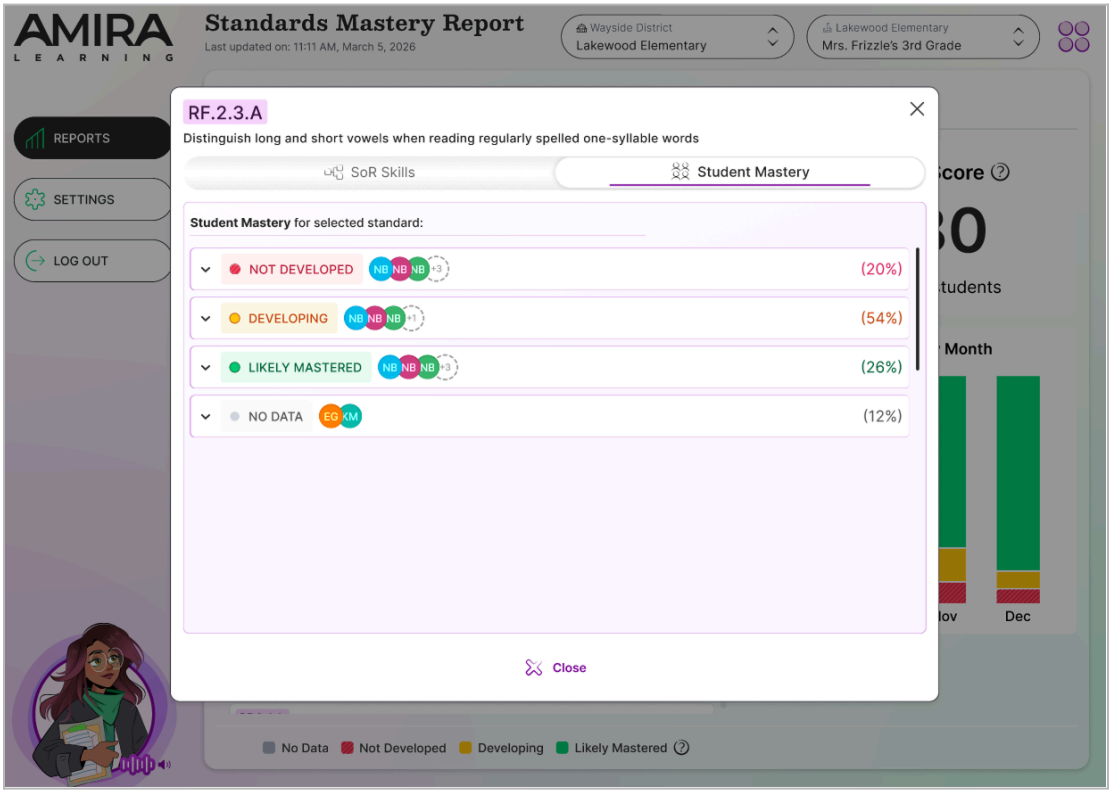
> **Skill Labels vs. Standard Labels:** Skill Mastery labels and Standard Performance Levels are calculated at different levels and do not need to match one-for-one. A Standard Performance Level is not a simple average or count of the related skill labels; the model also weighs differences in skill difficulty and how much information each skill provides. A mismatch between a skill label and its standard's label does not, by itself, mean either result is wrong; start with the Standard Performance Level to decide where support is needed, then use the related skill results and the Skills Diagnostic Report to plan specific instruction.

Section 6: How to Use MAST — A Three-Step Approach

Use MAST in three steps:

1. **Start with the overall score** and status label for the big picture of a student's progress within the grade.
2. **Review the standards-level labels**, focusing on standards already taught or currently being taught, to identify class and student strengths and possible instructional needs.
3. **Select a standard** and review the students grouped by status for that standard. Combine those results with other classroom evidence to plan small-group or targeted instruction.

The overall score alone does not identify which standards need attention — that detail lives in the standards-level results.



Guardrails for using MAST: Interpret standards-level results in light of the curriculum's planned scope and sequence. An Emerging or Approaching result on a standard that hasn't been taught yet may be expected and is not, by itself, a signal to move ahead of the sequence or to act instructionally. MAST should inform how teachers support students within their curriculum and plan, not override when standards are first taught. At the school and district level, use MAST distributions to guide support, target coaching, and adjust pacing.

Section 7: When a Score May Be Limited or Not Yet Available

There are two distinct situations where a MAST result may not be a plain, finalized score: a Limited Evidence flag on a result that is still shown, and No Data, where no score can be calculated at all. These are not the same thing, and neither should be read as low mastery.

Limited Evidence (a flag on a shown result)
Limited Evidence means the Standard Performance Level (or overall result) shown is Amira's best current estimate based on the student's work on related skills and standards so far — the result still displays, with a flag indicating the estimate is tentative. It is not a zero and is not evidence of low mastery. Treat it as a signal to keep an eye out for more evidence, not as a status to act on instructionally by itself; review it alongside other evidence in Amira and in the classroom.

As the student completes more qualifying work in Assessment, Tutor, or Instruct, Amira gains more evidence and updates the estimate — the Performance Level may stay the same or change, and once there is enough evidence the Limited Evidence flag is removed.

No Data (no score shown)
A student may show No Data — no score at all — when Amira cannot yet calculate an overall result from the qualifying evidence available for the student's state or standards authority and grade. This can happen when the student has not yet used Amira, or when recent work has not produced eligible evidence connected to the student's grade-level reading standards. Completing a Benchmark Assessment does not by itself guarantee a score.

> **No Data is not a low score:** No Data should not be read as Emerging or as evidence of low mastery — it simply means Amira does not yet have enough eligible evidence to support a reportable score. If a class shows several students with No Data, that may simply reflect where the class is in its testing or program cycle. If a score is expected but remains missing, confirm the student's enrolled grade and report date, then contact support@amiralearning.com.

When MAST Cannot Be Calculated for a Grade or Class

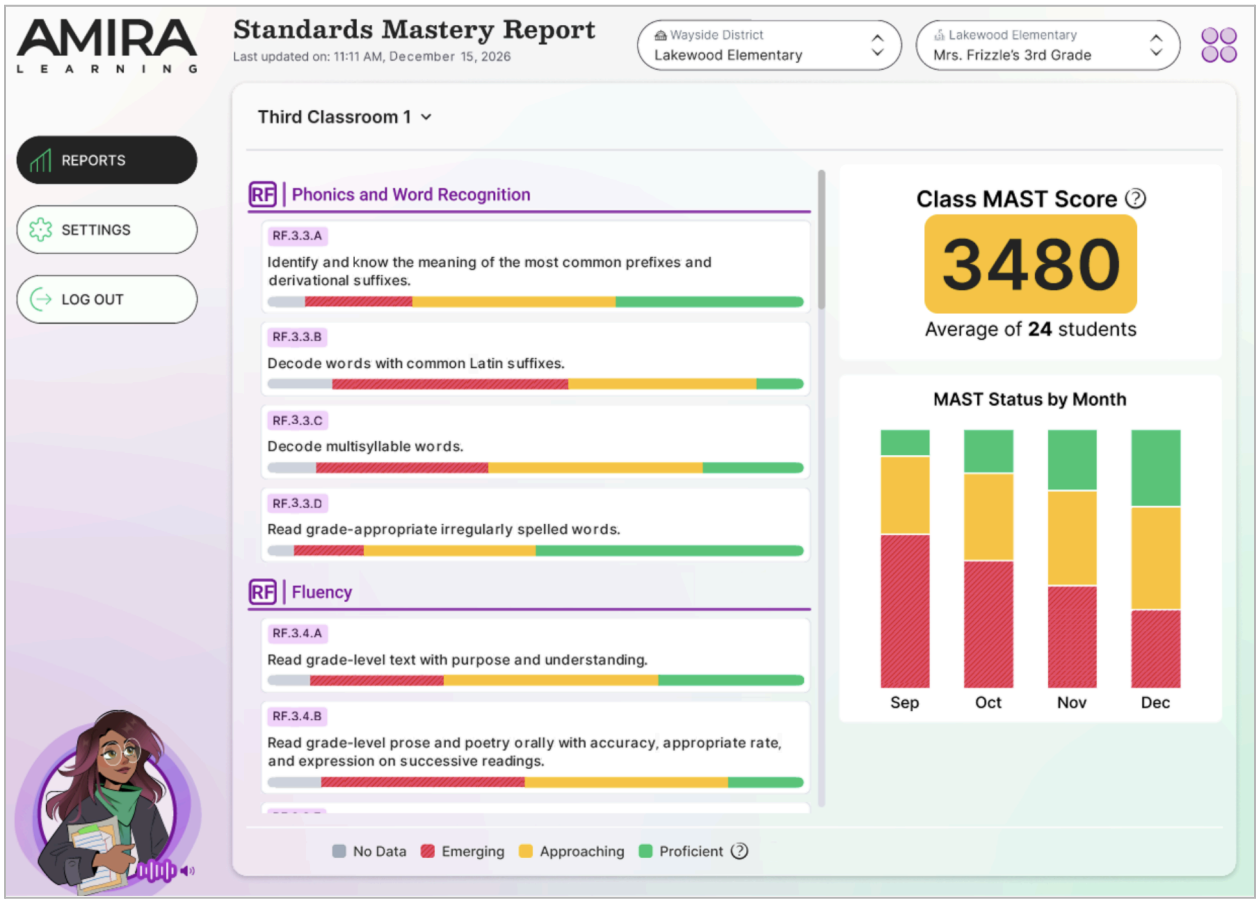
MAST is currently available for grades Kindergarten through Grade 8. MAST scores for Pre-K are not available at this time. Because of this, the Standards Mastery Report will not display a MAST score in a few specific situations:

- A student in a non-supported grade is selected.
- A class made up entirely of non-supported-grade students is selected.
- A mixed-grade class is selected. If a class contains students from more than one grade, the report will display: "MAST score cannot be calculated. Class contains students in multiple grade levels." Teachers can select an individual student view to see standards mastery for that student's own rostered grade level — not the grade level of the class majority.

Section 8: Where to View MAST

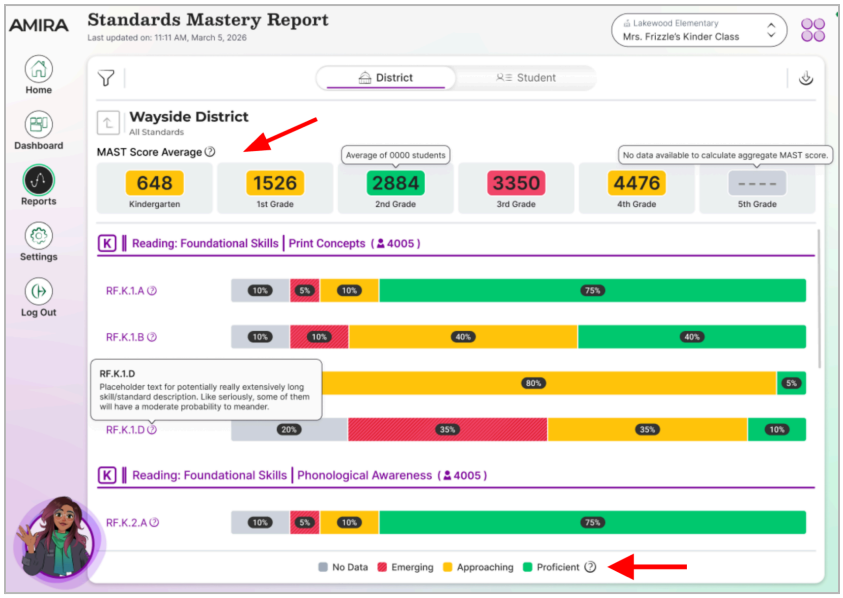
Teacher Standards Mastery Report

Teachers can access MAST in the Standards Mastery Report. The report displays the class average MAST score and allows teachers to view individual students' results using the dropdown menu. An overall MAST score appears as soon as Amira can calculate a result from qualifying skill evidence — it is not tied to completing a particular assessment or a fixed number of activities, though it often appears after a student completes an Amira Benchmark Assessment and may also appear after several instances of activity with Tutor or Instruct. If a student's evidence does not yet meet reporting requirements, the report will show a Limited Evidence flag or No Data (see Section 7). If a selected student or class falls outside MAST's current grade coverage, the report will show a message instead of a score (see "When MAST Cannot Be Calculated for a Grade or Class" in Section 7).



Admin Standards Mastery Report (District and Student Views)
School and district administrators can access MAST in the Admin Standards Mastery Report, available in both District view and Student view.

- **Standard tooltips.** Hovering over a standard displays a tooltip with the full standard name, so administrators don't need to rely on abbreviated labels to know which standard they're looking at.
- **Per-student MAST score column (Student view only).** Student view includes a column showing each individual student's MAST score, alongside the standards-level results.
- **Aggregated MAST score.**
    - In District view, hovering over an aggregated MAST score shows the number of students used to calculate it. If no students in a given grade have data yet, hovering over that empty score box shows a message explaining that instead.
    - In Student view, the score and the number of students used to calculate it are both shown directly — no hovering required.
- **Class-level multiselect filter.** A new filter lets administrators select multiple classes at once, with a search bar to quickly find a specific class. This filter is available in both District and Student views.
- **Grade coverage.** As with the Teacher report, MAST currently covers Kindergarten through Grade 8.



Section 9: MAST + ARM

MAST and ARM are both Amira scores, but they're two different lenses on the same student — not either/or, use both together.

- **MAST (Mastery of Academic Standards & Targets) is criterion-referenced.** It asks: *"How is this student doing against grade-level standards?"*
- **ARM (Amira Reading Mastery) is norm-referenced.** It asks: *"How is this student growing as a reader?"*

One tells you whether a student is on track for grade-level expectations. The other tells you how that student's growth compares to peers nationally. A student can be growing steadily on ARM while still below standard on MAST — or meeting standard on MAST while showing flatter growth than national peers on ARM. Neither score alone tells the whole story.

Feature Comparison

Feature	MAST	ARM
Reference type	Criterion-referenced — measured against grade-level reading standards	Norm-referenced — measured against national peers
Answers the question	"How close is this student to mastering this grade's reading standards?"	"How does this student compare with students nationally?"
Scale	Within-state, within-grade, equal-interval scale (grade + 3-digit score)	Cross-grade norm-referenced scale
What it tells you	Progress toward grade-level standards	How this reader compares with national peers
Best used for	Standards mastery, instructional planning by standard	Peer comparison, national benchmarking
Reach for it when	Planning standards instruction or making reteach vs. move-on calls	Reading BOY/MOY/EOY trends or monitoring an intervention

How They Work Together

Think of MAST as the *what* and ARM as the *how fast*:

1. **Start with ARM** to see whether the student's trajectory (BOY → MOY → EOY) is keeping pace with, ahead of, or behind national peers.
2. **Layer in MAST** to see where a student stands against this grade's standards, and which specific standards need reteaching versus which are ready to move past.
3. **Move to standards-level results** combined with classroom evidence to inform daily instruction and lesson planning.

In short: ARM tells you where a student stands relative to peers. MAST summarizes current results against grade-level standards. Standards-level results and classroom evidence together are what help teachers plan next steps.

Common Pitfalls

- **Don't substitute one for the other.** A strong ARM percentile doesn't mean a student has mastered grade-level standards, and a low MAST score doesn't necessarily mean a student isn't growing — check both before drawing conclusions.
- **Don't use MAST alone for intervention monitoring.** Because MAST is scaled within grade, it's not designed to show growth trends the way ARM is over BOY/MOY/EOY windows.
- **Don't use ARM alone for instructional planning.** ARM won't tell you *which* standards to reteach — that's what MAST's criterion-referenced detail is for.

Section 10: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a MAST score based on?

MAST uses results from a student's work in Assessment, Tutor, and Instruct. Amira combines those results into the overall score.

Does every observation in Amira contribute to MAST?

No. Assessment, Tutor, and Instruct can all contribute, but only work connected to grade-level reading standards is used. Simply completing an activity does not automatically add points to the score.

How is overall MAST different from the standards-level results?

See Section 5. In short, overall MAST is the big picture; standards-level results identify specific strengths and instructional needs.

What does a change from 3380 to 3680 mean?
See the worked example in Section 2. The student's overall mastery estimate increased by 300 points on the Grade 3 scale; it does not mean the student mastered 30% more standards or improved on every standard.

Can MAST scores be compared across grades?
No. MAST is a within-grade scale. A Grade 3 score and a Grade 4 score refer to different sets of grade-level standards and should not be compared as points on one vertical scale.

Why might MAST scores be lower near the beginning of the school year?
Students begin each year with a new set of grade-level standards, so lower scores are expected for most students early in the year — by design, most students are not yet proficient in their grade-level standards at the start of the year. A lower score should not be interpreted as a judgment that the student has failed to master the grade. While an individual score may rise, fall, or stay similar as new evidence comes in, the general trend for the vast majority of students should be upward as the year unfolds.

When does an overall MAST score appear?
An overall MAST score appears as soon as Amira can calculate a result from qualifying skill evidence — it is not tied to completing a particular assessment or a fixed number of activities. Work in Assessment, Tutor, and Instruct can all contribute.

What does Limited Evidence mean, and what should I do?
See Section 7. Limited Evidence is a flag on a result that is still shown — Amira's best current estimate based on the student's work so far — not a zero and not evidence of low mastery. Review it alongside other evidence, and expect the flag to be removed as more qualifying work is completed.

Why might a student have no MAST score (No Data)?
See Section 7. A student may show No Data when Amira cannot yet calculate an overall result from the qualifying evidence available for the student's state or standards authority and grade — for example, if the student hasn't yet used Amira or recent work hasn't produced eligible evidence. No Data is not a low score and should not be read as Emerging. If a score is expected but remains missing, confirm the student's enrolled grade and report date, then contact support.

Does completing more Amira activity automatically raise a student's MAST score?

No. Work in Assessment, Tutor, and Instruct can give Amira more information about a student's mastery, but completing more activity does not add points automatically. A score may increase, decrease, or remain similar depending on what the student's work shows. As a student works on more standards, the score may also come to represent a broader range of grade-level reading skills.

Is the score format different for Kindergarten?
Yes. Kindergarten scores use only the three-digit score, with no grade prefix.

How is MAST different from ARM?
MAST is criterion-referenced: it summarizes a student's Amira results against the reading standards for the student's state and grade. ARM is norm-referenced: it compares a student's reading performance with that of national peers. See Section 9 for a side-by-side comparison.

Where can teachers view MAST?
Teachers can access MAST in the Standards Mastery Report. The report includes the class average and allows teachers to view individual students' results. See Section 8 for the Admin Report views available to school and district leaders.

Where can I get more help with MAST?
Email support@amiralearning.com with additional questions.