

MSTAR Universal Screener

Mini-Manual for Spring Administration

TEA has developed the MSTAR Universal Screener, a formative assessment system administered to students in grades 5-8 to support instructional decisions in mathematics. The content of the MSTAR Universal Screener is based on algebra-readiness knowledge and skills as identified in the Texas Response to the Curriculum Focal Points (TxRCFP).

The purpose of the MSTAR Universal Screener is to help teachers make two important decisions within the Response to Intervention (RtI) process: (1) are students on-track or at-risk for meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness, and (2) what is the degree of intensity of instructional supports or supplemental interventions needed for students who are at-risk for not meeting expectations in algebra and algebra-readiness? Teachers will be able to monitor students' risk status by administering comparable forms of the MSTAR Universal Screener in fall, winter, and early spring.

The “MSTAR Universal Screener Mini-Manual” provides necessary information to aid you in administering the spring MSTAR Universal Screener to your students. The spring administration of the MSTAR Universal Screener will be available **March 21, 2011 – April 22, 2011**.

Additional information may be accessed in the Program Materials after logging into the MSTAR Universal Screener portal in TMSDS.

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Prior to administration

Access and review Program Materials

1. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
3. Click the “Program Materials” tab near the top of the page.
4. Open or download the “MSTAR Performance Levels and Interpretive Guide” and the “Universal Screener FAQ.” (Additional documents in Program Materials may be helpful to you such as the “Transadapted Universal Screeners,” “Math Resource Sheets” (TAKS math charts), etc.)
5. Review these documents prior to administration to understand the purpose and role of the MSTAR Universal Screener and what types of data you will receive.

Look up student usernames/passwords, if needed

1. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
3. Select a class under “Your Classes.” (Click the “Click here” link to create a new class.)
4. Click the “Class Details” tab near the top of the page.
5. You should now see a “Teacher Roster” which lists the students in that class and their usernames/passwords.

Add new student(s) manually, if needed

1. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
3. Select a class under “Your Classes.” (Click the “Click here” link to create a new class.)
4. Click the “Class Details” tab near the top of the page.
5. You should now see a “Teacher Roster” which lists the students in that class and their usernames/passwords.
6. Click “Add/Remove Students.”
7. Click “Click here” to create a new student account.
8. Select “Manual” and click “Next.”
9. Input student and class information to receive a username and password for the student.
10. *Please note:* It will be approximately 1 hour before manually-added students are able to access the screener.

Need help or have questions?

With questions regarding the MSTAR or TMSDS online system, you may contact Region 10 at TMSDS@region10.org or call or email the customer support desk at 1-888-778-7737 or k12support@corek12.com. All other questions can be directed to mstarscreener@tea.state.tx.us.

Administration Instructions

General information

- The MSTAR Universal Screener has 28 items, and students should be able to complete the assessment in one 45-minute class period. However, the MSTAR Universal Screener is not timed, and students may pause the test by clicking “Pause Test.” When a student logs back in, he/she will be allowed to resume the test.
- The spring administration will be accessible March 21, 2011 – April 22, 2011.
- Please provide a quiet and secure environment for students to access and take the assessment. Monitor the students as they take the assessment.
- Students may not use calculators unless as an accommodation.
- Ensure accommodations for students who need them are provided.
- Check to make sure pop-up blockers are *disabled*. The test will appear in a pop-up, so be sure to allow pop-ups.

Online administration instructions

1. Provide each student with his/her username and password, a copy of the appropriate grade level [TAKS math chart](#) to use as a resource, and scratch paper.
2. Direct the students to log in at www.TMSDS.org.
3. Once they log in, have students click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
4. Students should enter the appropriate Spring Test Code in the test code box and click “Go.”
 - 5th grade Spring 2011 Test Code: 36937
 - 6th grade Spring 2011 Test Code: 36945
 - 7th grade Spring 2011 Test Code: 36940
 - 8th grade Spring 2011 Test Code: 36939
5. Students should be taken to the testing tunnel where they will see the first item. (If students do not see a new screen, ensure the pop-up blocker is turned off and try again.)
6. As the students progress through the test, they will use the cursor to enter a response, click on “Submit Answer,” and then will be taken to the next question. Should the student want to move to the next question, he/she can always click on “Skip Question” to progress forward.
7. Once the student has completed the test, a reminder will appear alerting the student to the questions that were skipped, and the student will be allowed to go back to work through those by clicking on each skipped question number.
8. After all responses have been entered, students will click “Finish Test” to submit responses.

If you have technical difficulties during testing, call the customer support desk at 1-888-778-7737.

Paper/pencil administration instructions

1. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
3. Select a class under “Your Classes.”
4. Click the assessment you will be administering.
5. Click the “Print” button to open and print the assessment.

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6. Administer the assessment to your classes. Remember to give students a copy of the appropriate grade level [TAKS math chart](#) to use as a resource and scratch paper.
7. After administering the assessment, student responses *must* be input online to receive accurate data. Each student will receive a scale score which cannot be calculated by hand.
8. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
9. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
10. Select a class under “Your Classes.”
11. Select the MSTAR Universal Screener you administered.
12. Click on the “Answer Sheet” for each student to enter in answer choices.
13. *Please note:* Sending the MSTAR Universal Screeners home with students or using the items as practice problems invalidates the assessment.

Troubleshooting

- After entering the test code and clicking “Go,” nothing happens.
 - Check to ensure the pop-up blocker is disabled. The test will appear in a pop-up window.
- A student logged in to his account, but ended up in another student’s account.
 - This is a caching (stored Internet files) problem. One student’s data is being stored on the computer, so when another student tries to log in on that computer, the browser refers to the previous student’s data. You should contact your IT administrator or the customer support desk at 1-888-778-7737 should this issue arise.
- After logging in, the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link is not seen, only a link to “TMSDS.”
 - Most likely, you need to acquire a 2010-2011 TMSDS password. Contact TMSDS@region10.org for assistance.

If you have technical difficulties during testing, call the customer support desk at 1-888-778-7737.

After administration – now what?

Access “MSTAR Universal Screener Overview” on Project Share

TEA encourages you to participate in the MSTAR Universal Screener Overview, a new course in Project Share, that will assist you in learning how to interpret the results obtained after administering the screener. This course provides a brief overview of the Middle-School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR) Universal Screener and describes how to interpret the results to make instructional decisions.

1. Log into Epsilon from <http://www.projectsharetexas.org>. Enter log in information at the top right-hand corner of the page. (If you do not have a Project Share account, contact your regional education service center.)
2. Select the “Courses” option from the left-hand menu on the My Portal page.
3. Select “Search Courses” from the Courses menu.
4. Search for the course by title. Enter the title “MSTAR Universal Screener Overview” and click “Search.”
5. On the search results page, identify the appropriate course and click the corresponding handshake icon in the Action column to join the course.
6. When prompted to enter the access code, enter **1899**.
7. Confirm your name and role in the course and click “Join.”
8. Click on the “Syllabus” tool in the left-hand menu to learn about the various components associated with the course.
9. To exit a course and access other tools in Project Share, click “Exit Course” in the upper, right-hand corner.

Access MSTAR Universal Screener reports

There are a variety of reports to help you interpret the results of the MSTAR Universal Screener.

The **Class Performance Summary Report** provides administrators and teachers the ability to analyze class performance on a particular assessment as represented in a histogram. Administrators have the ability to analyze performance for any grade and subject. Individual student performance is displayed below the histogram. Reports can be printed for the entire class and student performance by tiers.

The **MSTAR Comparison Reports** allow teachers and administrators to compare results from the MSTAR Universal Screener. Results can be compared for individual students, classes, or grades over time (Fall, Winter, and Spring administrations of the MSTAR Universal Screener). For any administration of the MSTAR Universal Screener, results can also be compared across classes, teachers, or grades.

The **Comparisons Over Time** reports allow teachers and administrators to compare results from the MSTAR Universal Screener over time (Fall, Winter, and Spring administrations of the MSTAR Universal Screener). Comparisons can be generated for individual students, classes, or grades.

The **Comparisons Across Classes** report allows teachers and administrators to compare results from the MSTAR Universal Screener across classes for the same teacher for one administration of the MSTAR Universal Screener (Fall, Winter, or Spring).

Additional reports are available to administrators.

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To access the reports:

1. Go to www.TMSDS.org and enter your username and password to log in.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the “MSTAR Universal Screener” link.
3. Select a class under “Your Classes.”
4. Click the “Reports” tab.
5. Select the “Class Performance Summary Report” or the “MSTAR Comparison Reports.”
 - If you select the “Class Performance Summary Report,” you will need to choose an administration and click “Next” to see the data from that administration.
 - If you select the “MSTAR Comparison Reports,” you can choose either the “Comparisons Over Time” report or the “Comparisons Across Classes” report.
 - i. Comparisons Over Time report:
 1. Select “All” under “Assessment.”
 2. Then select either “All classes” or a specific class to view.
 3. Click “Next” to view the report.
 4. You may change the “Report Filters” to add or remove data from the graph. After selecting different criteria under “Report Filters,” you *must* click “Update” for the graph to reflect your selections.
 5. You may click “Edit” to change the “Report Criteria.” This will take you back to the selection page.
 - ii. Comparisons Across Classes report:
 1. Select one administration under “Assessment.” (Do not select “All” under “Assessment.”)
 2. Then select “All classes” under “Classes.”
 3. Click “Next” to view the report.
 4. You may change the “Report Filters” to add or remove data from the graph. After selecting different criteria under “Report Filters,” you *must* click “Update” for the graph to reflect your selections.
 5. You may click “Edit” to change the “Report Criteria.” This will take you back to the selection page.

Additional information

- Contact your regional education service center (ESC) to receive additional information about upcoming MSTAR Academies, additional Project Share online modules, and other professional development opportunities.
- Download the IES Practice Guide on [Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention \(RtI\) for Elementary and Middle Schools](#).
- Join the [TEA Mathematics listserv](#) to receive updates about curriculum and professional development.