ASER 2024 Assessment tasks

ASER is a 'floor test' that focuses on basic reading and arithmetic, rather than grade-level competencies. The testing process is designed to record the highest level that each child can comfortably achieve.

Testing is conducted at home, rather than in schools, so as to include out of school children and children attending different types of schools. All children in the age group of 5-16 in a sampled household are tested using the same tools, irrespective of age, grade, or schooling status. Every 'basic' ASER survey comprises the reading and arithmetic tools, along with a 'bonus section' designed to assess additional competencies such as English reading and comprehension or applied arithmetic. In 2024, for the first time, ASER included a set of digital tasks to assess children aged 14-16 on their ability to do simple tasks on their smartphones.

The ASER testing process incorporates various measures to capture the best that each child can do. Volunteers are trained to build rapport with children and create a supportive environment for testing. Children are given sufficient time to do each task in the assessment. The testing process is designed to be adaptive to the child's ability so that she does not have to attempt all the levels. Thus, at the core of the test design is the child's comfort and a commitment to accurately record the highest level the child can achieve.

This section outlines the ASER testing process used to assess each child on reading, arithmetic, and digital tasks. **The ASER tool is available in English, Hindi, and 17 other regional languages.**

Reading tasks

All children are assessed using a simple reading tool. The reading test has 4 tasks:

- **Letters:** Set of commonly used letters.
- **Words:** Common, familiar words with 2 letters and 1 or 2 matras/syllables.
- **Std I level text:** Set of 4 simple linked sentences, each having no more than 6 words. These words (or their equivalents) are in the Std I textbooks of the states.
- **Std II level text:** A short story with 7-10 sentences. The sentence construction is straightforward, with commonly used words and contexts familiar to the children. These words (or their equivalents) are in the Std II textbooks used in different states.

While developing the reading tool in each regional language, care is taken to ensure that there is:

- Comparability with previous years' tools with respect to word count, sentence count, types of words, and the use of conjoint letters in words.
- Compatibility with the vocabulary and sentence construction used in Std I and Std II language textbooks of the states.
- Familiarity of words and context, established through extensive field piloting.

Sample: Reading test (Hindi)[1]

Std II level text
सावन का महीना था। आसमान में बहुत काले-काले बादल छाए थे। ठंडी-ठंडी हवा चल रही थी। मुझे झूला झूलने का मन किया। बड़े भैया एक मोटी सी रस्सी लेकर बाहर आए। भैया ने रस्सी को पेड़ से लटकाकर झूला बनाया। सब ने मिलकर खूब झूला झूला। बाकी बच्चे भी आकर मज़े से झूलने लगे। झूलते-झूलते रात हो गई।

Std I level text
बग़ीचे में एक पेड़ है। पेड़ पर एक तोता रहता है। तोते का रंग हरा है। वह लाल टमाटर खाता है।

Letters		
ल	प	स
क		ग
ड	ब	म
ट		झ

Words	
लाल	दूध
	पैर
तेल	किला
मोर	जूता
	कुल
पानी	मौका

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[1] This is a sample. It has been shortened to a more concise layout for the purposes of this report. However, the four components or 'levels' of the tool remain the same in the full version. Assessments in reading are conducted in 19 languages across the country.

How to test reading?

Std I level text (Paragraph)

Ask the child to read either of the 2 paragraphs.
Let the child choose the paragraph herself. If she does not choose, then give her any one paragraph to read.
Ask her to place her finger on the text and read it. Listen carefully to how she reads.

The child is not at **'Paragraph Level'** if she: ■ Reads the paragraph like a string of words, rather than sentences. ■ Reads the paragraph haltingly and stops very often. ■ Reads the paragraph fluently but with **more than 3 mistakes.**	The child is at **'Paragraph Level'** if she: ■ Reads the paragraph like she is reading sentences, rather than a string of words. ■ Reads the paragraph fluently and with ease, even if she is reading slowly. ■ Reads the entire paragraph with **3 or less than 3 mistakes.**
If the child is not at **'Paragraph Level',** then ask her to read words.	If the child can read a paragraph, then ask her to read the story.

Words

Ask the child to read any 5 words from the list of words.
Let the child choose the words herself. If she does not choose, then point out any 5 words one by one for her to read.
The child is at **'Word Level'** if she reads at least **4 out of the 5 words** correctly.

Std II level text (Story)

Ask the child to read the story.
The child is at **'Story Level'** if she:
■ Reads the story like she is reading sentences, rather than a string of words.
■ Reads the story fluently and with ease, even if she is reading slowly.
■ Reads the entire story with **3 or less than 3 mistakes**.

If the child is at **'Word Level'**, then ask her to try to read the same paragraph again and follow the instructions for paragraph level testing. If she can correctly and comfortably read at least 4 out of 5 words but is still struggling with the paragraph, then mark her at **'Word Level'**. If the child is not at **'Word Level'** (cannot correctly read at least 4 out of the 5 chosen words), then show her the list of letters.	If the child can read the story, then mark her at **'Story Level'**. If the child is not at **'Story Level'**, then mark her at **'Paragraph Level'**.

Letters

Ask the child to recognise any 5 letters from the list of letters.
Let the child choose the letters herself. If she does not choose, then point out any 5 letters one by one for her to read.
The child is at **'Letter Level'** if she recognises at least **4 out of the 5** letters correctly.

If the child is at **'Letter Level'**, then ask her to try to read the same words again and follow the instructions for word level testing. If she can recognise at least 4 out of the 5 letters but cannot read words, then mark her at **'Letter Level'**. If the child is not at **'Letter Level'** (cannot recognise at least 4 out of the 5 chosen letters), then mark her at **'Beginner Level'**.

On the Household Survey Sheet, mark the child at the highest level she can reach.

Arithmetic tasks

All children are assessed using a simple arithmetic tool. The arithmetic test has 4 tasks:

- **Number recognition 1 to 9**

- **Number recognition 11 to 99**

- **Subtraction:** 2-digit numerical subtraction problems with borrowing which align with curricular expectations in Std II.

- **Division:** 3-digit by 1-digit numerical division problems with remainder which align with curricular expectations in Std III/IV.

While developing the arithmetic tool for the ASER age group, care is taken to ensure compatibility with the learning outcomes defined for number recognition, subtraction (with borrowing), division (3-digits by 1-digit) in state textbooks for Std I, II and III/IV, respectively.

Sample: Arithmetic test

Number recognition 1–9	Number recognition 11–99	Subtraction	Division
1 4 7 3 6 9 5 2	51 83 37 65 55 26 91 43 36 27	$\begin{array}{r} 46 \\ -\ 29 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ -\ 39 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 47 \\ -\ 28 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 45 \\ -\ 17 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 92 \\ -\ 76 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 84 \\ -\ 57 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 52 \\ -\ 14 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{r} 66 \\ -\ 48 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$7\overline{)879}$ $6\overline{)824}$ $8\overline{)985}$ $4\overline{)517}$
Ask the child to recognise any 5 numbers. At least 4 must be correct.	Ask the child to recognise any 5 numbers. At least 4 must be correct.	Ask the child to do any 2 subtraction problems. Both must be correct.	Ask the child to do any 1 division problem. It must be correct.

How to test arithmetic?

Subtraction (2-digit with borrowing)

Start here →

The child has to solve 2 subtraction problems. Show her the subtraction problems and ask her to choose a problem. If she does not choose, then give her any one problem to solve.
Ask the child to identify the numbers, and then the subtraction sign.
If she is able to identify the numbers and the sign, then ask her to write and solve the problem at the back of the Household Survey Sheet.
Even if the first subtraction problem is answered incorrectly, ask the child to solve the second problem, following the aforementioned process. If the second problem is correct, then ask her to try to solve the first problem again.
If the child makes a careless mistake, then give her another chance with the same question.

↓

If the child **cannot solve both** subtraction problems correctly, or if she is unable to recognise the numbers or the sign in the subtraction problem, then ask her to recognise numbers from 11-99.
Even if she solves one subtraction problem incorrectly, give her the number recognition (11-99) task.

↓

Number Recognition (11-99)

Ask the child to identify any 5 numbers from the list. Let her choose the numbers herself. If she does not choose, then point out any 5 numbers one by one for her to read.
If she can correctly recognise at least **4 out of the 5** numbers, then mark her at **'Number Recognition (11-99) Level'**.

↓

If the child is not at **'Number Recognition (11-99) Level'** (cannot correctly recognise at least 4 out of the 5 numbers chosen), then ask her to recognise numbers from 1-9.

↓

Number Recognition (1-9)

Ask the child to identify any 5 numbers from the list. Let her choose the numbers herself. If she does not choose, then point out any 5 numbers one by one for her to read.
If she can correctly recognise at least 4 out of the 5 numbers, then mark her at **'Number Recognition (1-9) Level'**.
If the child is not at **'Number Recognition (1-9) Level'** (cannot recognise at least 4 out of the 5 numbers chosen), then mark her at **'Beginner Level'**.

If the child **solves both** the subtraction problems correctly, then ask her to solve a division problem.

↓

Division (3-digits by 1-digit)

The child has to solve 1 division problem. Show her the division problems and ask her to choose a problem. If she does not choose, then give her any one problem to solve.
Ask her to write and solve the problem. If she is able to solve the problem correctly, then mark her at **'Division Level'**.
Note: The quotient and the remainder both have to be correct.
If the child makes a careless mistake, then give her another chance with the same question.

↓

If the child is unable to solve the division problem correctly, then mark her at **'Subtraction Level'**.

The child must solve the subtraction and division problems at the back of the Household Survey Sheet.

On the Household Survey Sheet, mark the child at the highest level she can reach.

Digital tasks

All children aged 14-16 are given some simple digital tasks. This section has 3 tasks:

Sample: Digital tasks

Setting an alarm

8:30 in the morning tomorrow

Question: Set an alarm for 8:30 in the morning.

Instruction: If the phone has an AM-PM setting, ensure that the child has selected the correct option before recording the answer.

Browsing for information

First woman President of India

Question: Search on the phone and tell me the name of the first woman President of India.

Instruction: It does not matter which search engine the child uses to find the answer; she could use Google, YouTube, or any other method. She should be able to point to/tell you the correct answer.

Finding and sharing a YouTube video

PMGDISHA Module 1

Question a: Find the "PMGDISHA Module 1" video on YouTube.

Question b: Send/share it with a friend/family member using WhatsApp or Telegram.

Instruction: The child should be able to point to the correct video after searching for it on YouTube.

Ask the child to attempt part 'b', only if she could do part 'a' correctly. If the child does part 'a' incorrectly, then leave part 'b' of the question blank.

For each task, the volunteer can read out the question twice and show the child the keywords for the relevant question in the testing tool. The child's responses to the tasks are recorded as correct or incorrect. If the child does not respond, or says that she does not know the answer, or if the phone stops working in the middle of the task, then such responses are also recorded.