PracticePlanet
Quick Review Guide

Introduction

PracticePlanet is a web-based resource that provides comprehensive standards-based practice in math, reading, and language arts for students who will take high-stakes state tests in grades 2 through 9.

PracticePlanet's design gives students a realistic practice experience without the mess and repetitiveness of traditional pencil-and-paper test prep materials. Because PracticePlanet is automated, it also offers teachers and students real insight into test readiness without demanding the time and effort required to score and analyze practice tests and review them with students.

Learning to use PracticePlanet is simple. After a teacher has established a class, enrolled students and assigned the appropriate grade-level pretests, PracticePlanet does the rest—administers the pretest, generates the results, identifies the practice modules the student needs, and reports the student's progress along the way.

This guide will highlight the array of features that make PracticePlanet an effective tool in preparing students for high-stakes tests.

Program Highlights

Aligned to State Testing Standards

PracticePlanet uses a pretest to assess a student's level of mastery and automatically assigns practice in the skills he or she needs to develop. The test and practice items in PracticePlanet are carefully aligned with the testing or curriculum standards for the grade levels assessed in each state.

In addition, PracticePlanet items are presented in standardized test formats so that a student's online practice experience is as realistic as possible. Practice that not only targets specific skills but also presents the look and feel of standardized tests helps students build confidence and develop test-taking strategies.

Online Practice, Anytime

Practice and rehearsal are proven strategies for activating and accessing the stored knowledge and skills that students acquire. Test preparation is successful because practicing for a test creates a faster recall process and thus reduces the stress of retrieving stored information.

Since PracticePlanet is a browser-based test practice program, it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, wherever there is an Internet connection.This means that students can practice for tests at home, at the library, at the wi-fi café, etc.—using consistent long-term reinforcement to develop the capacity to use skills and recall knowledge quickly and accurately.

Engaging, Motivating

PracticePlanet is designed to make test practice fun and engaging. A student can choose look and feel features for his or her pesonal pages, as well as a character, or *avatar*, that suits his or her personality.

Skills practice is individualized according to each student's needs; immediate feedback during practice sessions lets a student know instantly if a response is incorrect and why; progress reports keep the student informed of his or her progress.

PracticePlanet provides reward games upon the successful completion of a skill—which motivates students to spend more time on task. Students compare scores and compete as they improve their skills.

Teacher-friendly

One of the important benefits of PracticePlanet for teachers is its ease of use. PracticePlanet's automated pretest and assignment components ensure that a teacher need not devote great amounts of planning time to finding and copying practice materials. The program organizes, analyzes, and reports performance data, both reducing the demands these tasks have traditionally made on a teacher's time and energy and enabling him or her to monitor students' progress accurately with just a glance.

Teachers can use the detailed reports to plan and implement more in-depth interventions with other instructional materials such as PracticePlanet's sister product, Orchard.
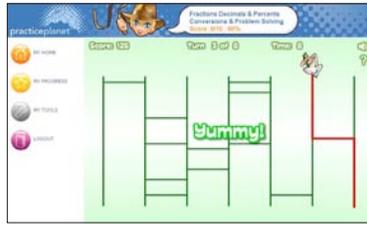
Game Strategy

When a student completes and masters a practice or test question, he or she is rewarded with an interactive game designed to be both challenging and pure fun. Students enjoy competing and comparing game scores.

The secret of PracticePlanet's games is that they motivate *success*: the amount of game play awarded is based on the number of practice items answered correctly—more correct answers, more game play. PracticePlanet's game strategy also helps maintain focus: games are kept distinct from test and practice activities, so that game play does not serve as a distraction during students' time on task.
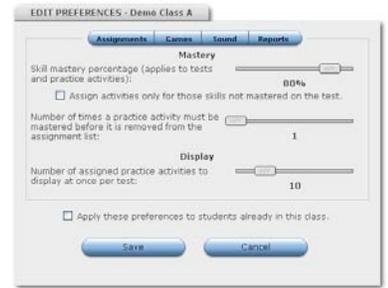
Parameter Control

With PracticePlanet's parameter controls for assignments, games, style, sound, and reports, a teacher can tailor a student's test practice experience to his or her needs.

For example, the teacher can lower the minimum mastery score for individual students who are struggling or raise the minimum mastery score for accelerated students.

A teacher can also set game play parameters: "Inline" (after each item answered correctly) or "Reward" (after a session has been completed).
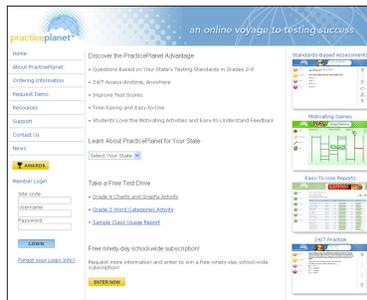
Suggested Activity

1. Getting Started

Go to www.practiceplanet.com to view state-specific standards information, awards, position papers, and more.

Using the site code information provided, login as a teacher.* Select the Edit Class and Edit Preferences buttons; this allows you to change the number of practice sessions assigned, set game play parameters, and more.

Select Assignment to assign pretests. Log Out when you have finished examining teacher controls.

2. Explore the Features of PracticePlanet's Student Pages

Login as a student.* View the My Home student page. Beneath the avatar displayed at the top are tabs the student can click to move between assignment lists for each subject. You will see three types of activities: a pretest, a posttest, and a list of skills that PracticePlanet assigned on the basis of pretest results. Three icons display student status for each activity: a star (skills mastered); a red circle (skills not mastered); and a green semicircle (activity has been begun but not completed).

While at the My Home page, click on My Tools and experiment with different avatars and themes to learn how to customize PracticePlanet for individual styles.

3. Practice Activity

Pick an activity from the list of skills automatically assigned by the pretest.

Answer a few of the questions in the practice assignment. Be sure to select at least one incorrect response to view the immediate feedback. Note, too, that feedback for both correct and incorrect responses gives insight into the thought process involved in arriving at the correct answer.

4. Play a Game

You will receive game play at the end of a session or after individual questions according to the setting in your sample student parameters.

Pick a game from the list in the scroll window. We recommend the Galaxy Shot skee ball game, but feel free to choose any of the others. When you have finished, PracticePlanet will display the scores from your practice session and your game; then it will return you to the My Home page.

There are currently five different games available in PracticePlanet; more are being added periodically.

5. My Progress Page

Click My Progress to view the student's personal progress report. Three indicators give students a real time update: the **status icons** from the My Home page; **progress bars** that compare performance to the mastery level set by the teacher; and the **numeric score** for activities completed. This report can be shared with parents to keep them informed.

Summary

Students succeed on tests when they are confident with the test's content and equipped to handle the stress that tests naturally elicit. It makes sense to prepare for high-stakes tests with a strategy that includes the kind of meaningful practice available anywhere, around the clock, from PracticePlanet. For students who need additional attention to master some skills, PracticePlanet's reports can be used to plan more in-depth interventions. PracticePlanet helps give students the edge they need for success on state tests.

* Login information may be obtained from your PracticePlanet representative. A standard sample teacher ID and student ID have been established to demonstrate PracticePlanet; if these IDs are not in use, you may login as the demo teacher (Username: PPdemo) or as the demo student (Username: SarahBerman) by typing the username in both login fields.