

Salzburg, March 2013

Standardised assessment of English language skills in Academic Year 8, English „Speaking“

Dear mothers, fathers and guardians!

With the amendment of the School Education Act, the legal basis for introducing standards in education has been created. The correlating regulation specifies what all school children need to achieve in the subjects German, Mathematics and English by the end of Academic Year 8. The evaluation of educational standards provides insights into successful teaching and reveals possibilities for improvement of the Austrian school system.

Subsequent to the standardised assessment of mathematics conducted at the end of the last school year, a nation-wide first-time assessment of the standard of education in **English** in Academic Year 8 will now take place. The assessment will be carried out at about 1400 schools across Austria. In the next school year, the assessment cycle is to be continued with the subject German.

The standardised English assessment test - which your son or daughter will take - is scheduled for **Wednesday, 17 April 2013 or Thursday, 25 April 2013**. The pupils will be informed of the exact times by their class teachers.

Assessment testing will be managed by specifically qualified teachers from the school. In a 7 % sample set of pupils from the classes being assessed, a teacher from another school will then conduct the test on the assessment day. The test will comprise 3 test portions „**Listening**“ (Test Portion 1), „**Reading**“ (Test Portion 2) and „**Writing**“ (Test Portion 3) and will last about 3 hours and will start in the first lesson hour.

The test procedure will be as follows:

Welcoming, general explanation (approx. 5 minutes) - “Listening” incl. Instructions (approx. 40 minutes) - Break (10 minutes) - “Reading” incl. Instructions (approx. 40 minutes) - Break (10 minutes) - Writing“ incl. Instructions (approx. 40 minutes) - Break (10 minutes) – Questionnaire (approx. 20 minutes)

The questionnaire the pupils need to fill in after completing the test aims to gather information on the learning conditions at school and outside of school.

The **feedback on results**, which will be available at the end of the first semester of the following school year, will reveal to which extent pupils have actually achieved target competencies. The Head of the school and the English teachers of the assessed 8th Academic Years will receive the assessment results as summarised and **anonymised** reports, which will enable fact-based curricular and scholastic development. (It is not possible to infer the performance of single pupils from the reports provided to the school or teachers!) Moreover, result reports for the school inspectors as well as state and federal result reports will be issued.

The pupils can detach their **personal access code from the test book** with which they can retrieve their **own results** of the standardised assessment test online. The personal access code is provided exclusively to pupils. Since the Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector (BIFIE) has no possibility of allocating results or access codes to individual pupils, **it is NOT possible for BIFIE to replace** the code if it is lost – the BIFIE is not authorised to do this for data protection reasons. **It is therefore important that the pupils keep their access code in a safe place or give it to you for safekeeping.**

English „Speaking“

The competence area “Speaking” will be assessed throughout Austria in a sample of 120 schools with maximally 24 pupils from each school taking the test. Your son/daughter was selected by random sampling for participation in the speaking assessment. The test will take place at some date in **May/June 2013**. The class teachers will inform the pupils in time about their participation, the exact test date and the test procedure.

The speaking assessment will be conducted by a test management team (two teachers from another school) specifically trained for this task. The pupils will be requested to come pairwise for a conversation over approximately 20 minutes. The assessment will include monologue and dialogue speaking phases.

The feedback on English test results will also contain information on the “Speaking” performance of pupils.

The pupils' cooperation in the survey of educational standards is compulsory according to the BIFIE Federal Law Gazette (BGBl I No. 25/2008, § 6 sec. 2 idF BGBl. I No. 113/2009). Any personal data about the pupils will be collected indirectly. All staff members of the Federal Institute BIFIE are bound to secrecy under BIFIE law (BGBl. I No. 25/2008, § 3 sec. 2 idF BGBl. I No. 113/2009).

Please note that the information letter for guardians is available to download in various languages on the BIFIE homepage.

Translations: <https://www.bifie.at/node/2009>

Would you like to read more about education standards?

Additional information can be found in the enclosed leaflet or at our homepage, where you can also download examples of sample tasks:

Standard evaluation of English <https://www.bifie.at/node/1822>

If any questions have not been answered or if you require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at BIFIE through the contact details below:

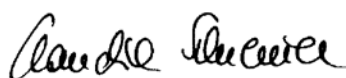
Test conduct: **Tel.: 0662/620088-3500; Email: bist8@bifie.at**

Result feedback: **Tel.: 0662/620088-3700; Email: bist8-rm@bifie.at**

Moreover, please feel free to contact the Interest Group of the Parents' Association. In this case please contact - depending on the area of competence - either the **Austrian Organisation of Parents' Associations of compulsory education schools** (Tel.: 01/53120-3112; mobile: 0699/153 120 00; Email: office@elternverein.at), the **Federal Organisation of Parents' Associations of middle and higher education schools in Austria** (Tel.: 01/53120-3110; Mobil: 0680/141 1 142; E-Mail: office@bundeselternverband.at) or the Parents' Association of all catholic private schools, the **Federation of Catholic Parents' Associations in Austria** (Tel.: 07224 4311; Email: hvkev@mautnermarkhof.at).

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Claudia Schreiner
BIFIE Salzburg Centre Management