

# HOW THE IXL SMARTSCORE LOCKS IN LEARNING

A guide for teachers and parents



IXL has the power to unlock students' internal motivation to learn and grow. The key is in IXL's SmartScore.

Unlike a percentage score, this unique, adaptive algorithm measures a student's true understanding of a skill. Taking into account several factors, including questions answered correctly or incorrectly, question difficulty, recent answers, and consistency, the SmartScore goes both up and down to ensure students are always working at their exact learning level. Students work through challenges to build momentum, find productive "flow," and feel pride in their earned success.

## How it works

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### Learning and practicing (0-70)

From 0-70, students are practicing or learning a skill. As they build confidence in these early stages, there will be large SmartScore increases for correct answers, and low penalties for incorrect answers.

2

### Building determination (71-90)

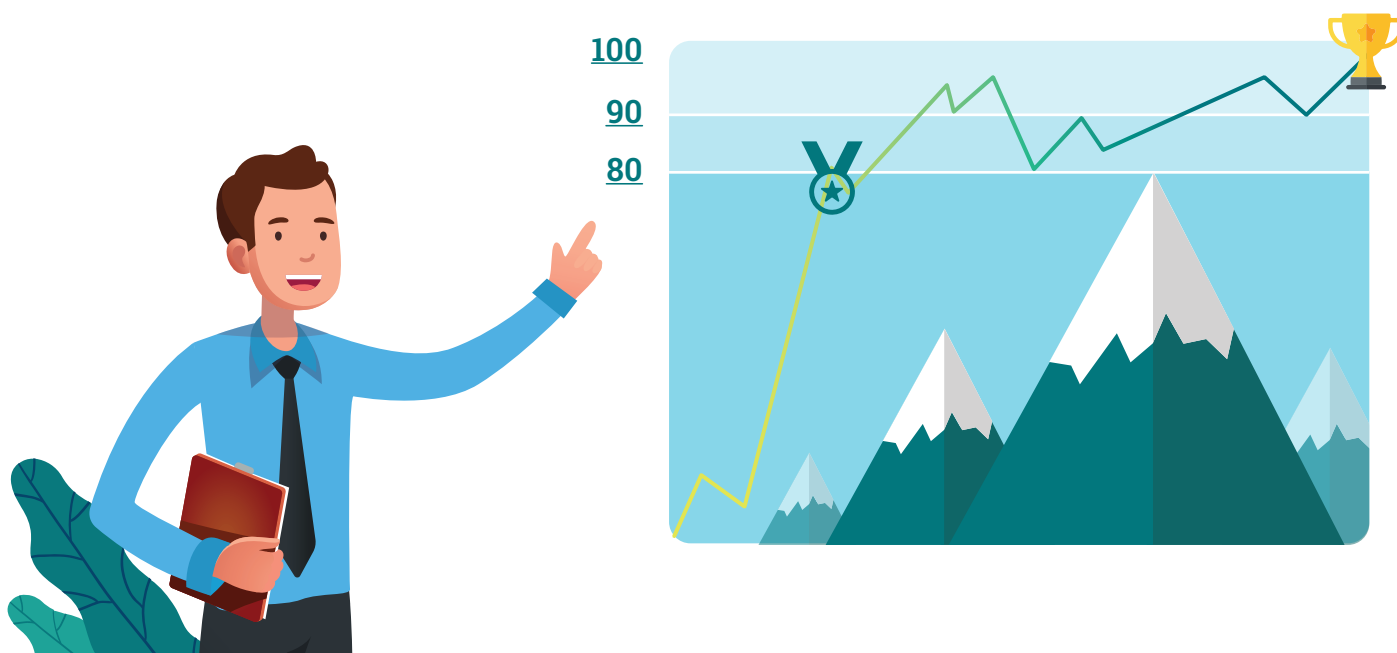
From 71-90, students work through mid-level to high-level rigor questions. While they may initially struggle with these questions, powering through temporary setbacks builds up their determination to learn and further cements their new knowledge.

*At 80, learners are considered proficient in a skill! That means they have a good understanding of the topic and may be ready to move on.*

3

### Going above and beyond (90-100)

At 90, students enter the Challenge Zone. Questions in this stage are rigorous, and students must answer these questions correctly and consistently in order to achieve mastery (100). At this stage, SmartScore increases for correct answers will be small (1-2 points), and penalties for incorrect answers will be larger (3-8 points). Students will need to answer as many as 10 questions correctly in a row to achieve mastery.



## Set SmartScore goals

### Great goal: 80

**SmartScore**  
out of 100 ?

80



A SmartScore of 80 is considered proficiency in a skill and could be the perfect stopping point.

[Research](#) shows that IXL is even more effective when students reach a SmartScore of 80 in at least two skills per week.

### Above and beyond: 100

**SmartScore**  
out of 100 ?

100



While 100 is always within reach, students will need to rely on their determination to push past setbacks in the Challenge Zone to reach 100. This process of persevering through mistakes, known as the “productive struggle,” locks in learning and leads to greater academic gains! When a student achieves a score of 100 on IXL, you can feel confident that they have truly mastered that skill.

## Challenge Zone tips and tricks

For students working on IXL, it is important to understand how the SmartScore works and what to expect – especially in the Challenge Zone. Here are a few helpful tips to share with students:



#### Don't rush!

Challenge Zone questions can be tough, and students will need to get several correct answers in a row to reach 100. Encourage students to check their answers, work carefully and use the knowledge they've gained from earlier questions in the skill.



#### Mistakes are okay!

Remind students that no matter how many questions they miss along the way, they always have the chance to reach mastery (100) in a skill on IXL. It's normal for students' scores to go up and down as they practice. In fact, by making mistakes and learning from them, students are locking in their new knowledge even more than getting everything right the first time.



#### Celebrate success!

When students reach 100 on an IXL skill, they'll experience the unique, magical feeling of earned achievement. This success builds students' confidence in themselves and fuels their momentum to stay motivated and keep learning.



#### Use IXL's built-in support!

The Challenge Zone includes the most rigorous questions in a skill. If students miss a question, encourage them to read the explanation to get the key steps and strategies they need to succeed on the next question. If they're still struggling, have them work through an in-skill recommendation and build up foundational knowledge they need for the more difficult questions.

## Want to know more about the SmartScore?



Watch these videos about [setting SmartScore goals](#) and [how the SmartScore got its name!](#)