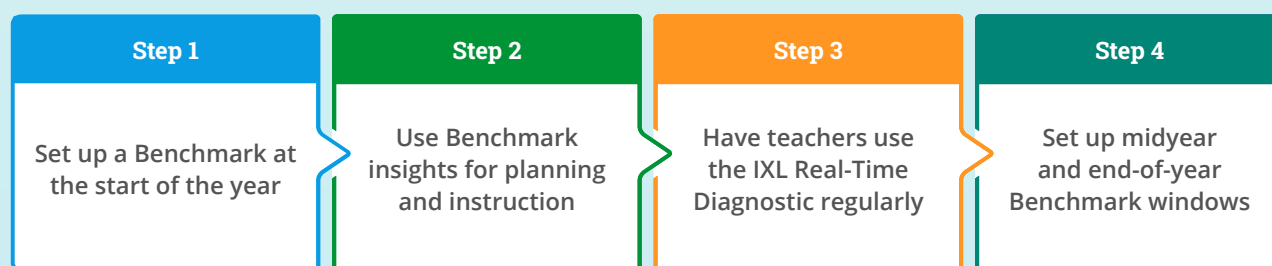# IXL Flex Diagnostic in Benchmark mode

IXL can be used in a multitude of ways to maximize learning for every student in your district. In this guide, we'll share one strategy that can easily fit into any existing routine: Use the IXL Flex Diagnostic in Benchmark mode to assess learners at fixed points in time and guide them to the exact skills that will help them grow the most.

The IXL Flex Benchmark allows you to get all the benefits of a nationally normed benchmark assessment but in a flexible, lightweight format. In as little as 45 minutes, school and district leaders can accurately pinpoint students' grade-level proficiency in math and English language arts.

Beyond a simple benchmarking tool, the IXL Flex Benchmark also enables administrators to:

- Identify areas of improvement
- Hold data-driven conversations with stakeholders
- Meet each student's needs with personalized next steps
- Compare student performance to their peers nationwide

Steps to successful implementation

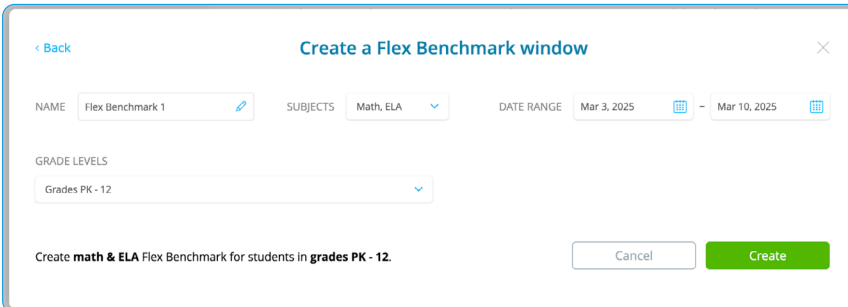| Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Set up a Benchmark at the start of the year	Use Benchmark insights for planning and instruction	Have teachers use the IXL Real-Time Diagnostic regularly	Set up midyear and end-of-year Benchmark windows

1 ▶ Set up a Benchmark at the start of the year

Set up a Benchmark at the beginning of the academic year to see where your students stand. Aim to have data on all your students within the first month.

Create a Benchmark window

The primary administrator for your IXL account can set up a Benchmark by visiting the Settings page, under the Account tab. Under Assessment Windows, click "Add a new window." You can customize and edit:

- Start and end date of the Benchmark window
- Subject/s to assess
- Grade levels to assign the Benchmark to
- Name for the Benchmark (e.g. "Fall benchmark")

Help teachers guide students to complete the Benchmark

Teachers cannot create Benchmarks, but they will be able to see whether their students have been assigned one under their Assessment tab. Teachers can also see if their students have completed the Benchmark by visiting the Diagnostic Overview report under the Analytics tab.
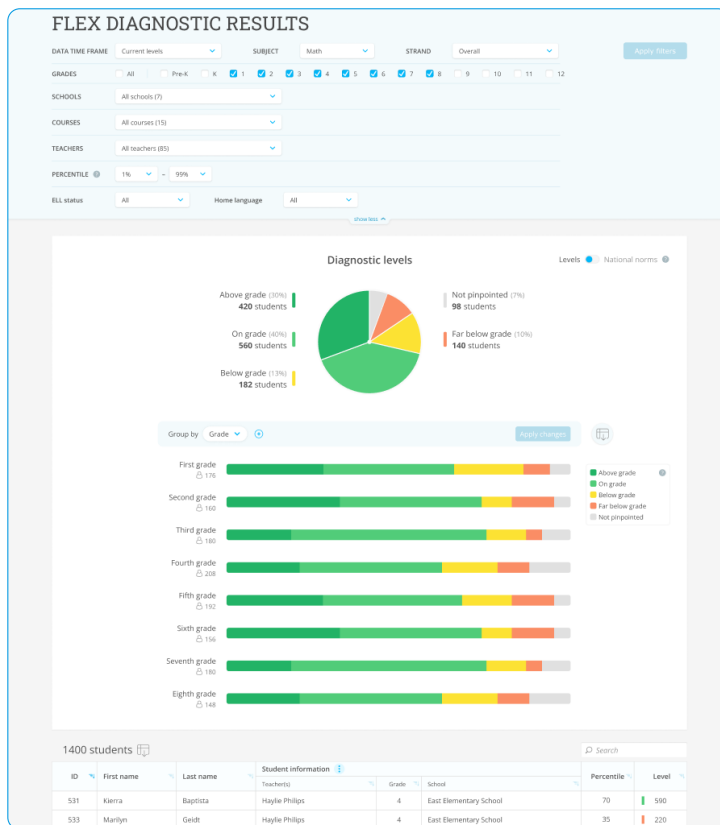
Share this Flex Benchmark implementation plan with your teachers to help them understand their role in facilitating the Benchmark! Steps 1-3 guide educators through monitoring students during the Benchmark and using IXL Analytics to check for completion and review scores.

Monitor completion

The Flex Benchmark pinpoints students' knowledge levels in as little as 45 minutes per subject and can be done over multiple sessions if needed.

To check for completion, visit the Diagnostic Results report under the Analytics tab. You will see the number of students who have completed their Benchmark. Follow up with schools and teachers as needed to ensure students finish the Benchmark before the window ends.

2 Use Benchmark insights for planning and instruction

View district-/school-wide Benchmark data

After the Benchmark window has ended, visit the Diagnostic Results report under the Analytics tab to quickly see the number of students across your district/school who are above, on, below, or far below grade level. Scroll down to view the individual diagnostic levels for each student.

You can download the results as a .csv file by clicking the export icon at the top of the report.

Leverage national norm data

Compare your K-12 students' benchmark scores to see how your school or district is performing against the national average of students using IXL. Nationally normed percentiles are available under the "Percentile" column in the Diagnostic Results and Diagnostic Strands reports. On the Diagnostic Results report, you can also see a visualization of students' percentile ranks by toggling to the "National norms" view.

Identify areas of growth

Use the insights to set district-/school-wide goals and hold data-driven conversations with stakeholders. For example, you may want the percentage of students on or above grade level to increase by 10% by the end of the school year. These growth goals will depend on the specific structures, such as time for intervention or other resources, within your district/school.

Have teachers use insights for differentiated instruction

Using data from the Benchmark, IXL will generate a personalized action plan for every student. Each student's action plan guides them to the specific IXL skills that will help fill their knowledge gaps and build on their existing knowledge.

Encourage teachers to have students follow the action plans to accelerate growth. Steps 4-6 in this Benchmark implementation plan detail how teachers can use action plans and IXL Analytics to personalize instruction, maximize growth, and monitor progress.

3 Have teachers use the IXL Diagnostic regularly

Between Benchmarks, encourage teachers to use the IXL Diagnostic in Real-Time mode to get more frequent data for daily instruction.

By just answering 10-15 questions weekly, students can update their action plans and skill recommendations. This up-to-date data will help teachers make ongoing decisions about how to differentiate instruction, plan for small-group instruction, and help students close knowledge gaps efficiently.

Share this IXL Diagnostic implementation plan with teachers to help them understand how to get students started.

4 Set up midyear and end-of-year Benchmarks

Check progress with a mid-year Benchmark

Set up another Benchmark midway through the year to understand whether students are making adequate progress. With data from the midyear Benchmark, evaluate if the original goals are reasonable. Consider adjusting the goals or increasing intervention and support if needed.

Students will also receive updated action plans whenever they complete a Benchmark, which will help them to continue growing from where they are.

Get year-end data

Near the end of the year, have students complete a final Benchmark.

- For grade levels that will be taking a state assessment: Set up the Benchmark about one month before the test date, which will allow you and your teachers to evaluate students' readiness for the exams and adjust instruction accordingly. Students can use the updated action plans to prepare for the assessment.

- For non-tested grade levels: Set up the Benchmark for a few weeks before the end of the school year. Compare the insights to the data from the beginning of the school year to understand the progress students have made and measure if your growth goals have been met.