

How Adaptive Testing Works

With a computer-adaptive assessment, the questions adjust in difficulty based on the student's previous answers. Here is how the assessment might work to determine a middle or high school student's proficiency in basic grammar and usage.

The student wrote a report _____ Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president.

Which preposition would best complete the prepositional phrase?

1. in
2. from
3. **about**
4. with

If the student answers this question correctly, he or she will be presented with a harder question.

Which sentence is not correct?

1. **The hike took us the most farthest we had been from camp.**
2. This project required less work than anyone had anticipated.
3. The patient said she felt worse in the morning than at night.
4. We will have to walk farther than we were told.

If the student answers this question incorrectly, he or she will then receive a question that is easier than the second, but more difficult than the first.

Choose the missing word.

The sun seems to rise _____ each day than it did the day before.

1. early
2. more early
3. **earlier**
4. most early

The assessment continues until enough data is gathered to determine the student's proficiency level. By eliminating questions that are too far above or too far below the student's achievement level, that data can be gathered with fewer questions, making the test shorter.