

Pre- and Post-Tests

Pre- and post-tests are structured assessment tools used to measure change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or confidence as a direct result of a program. They are powerful for evaluating learning outcomes and demonstrating growth over time.

Unlike surveys, which measure perceptions and satisfaction, pre/post tests are designed to assess competency or content mastery, making them ideal for programs focused on training, skill-building, or capacity development.

Purpose

- **Measure learning gains** — capture how much participants have improved after a program.
- **Demonstrate impact** — show quantitative evidence of change in knowledge, skills, or confidence.
- **Identify gaps** in understanding to inform future program design or adjustments.
- **Compare outcomes across cohorts** or program models.
- **Complement qualitative data** by anchoring changes in perception with evidence of cognitive/behavioral change.

When to Use

- **Pre-Program (Baseline Test):** Assess existing knowledge, skills, or attitudes before exposure to training or intervention.
- **Immediately Post-Program:** Re-administer the same (or parallel) assessment to measure growth and learning outcomes.
- **Delayed Post-Test (e.g., 30–90 days later):** Measure retention and whether participants apply learning in real-world contexts.

Best practice: Use matched items across pre and post to ensure valid comparisons.

Sample Question Types

Type	Example
Multiple Choice	Which of the following best defines psychological safety?
Scenario-Based	In this situation, what would be the most inclusive action to take?
Confidence Ratings (1-5)	How confident do you feel facilitating a feedback conversation?

Skill Self-Assessment	I can use SMART goals to guide my professional development. (Likert scale)
Short Answer	Describe two strategies you can use to resolve peer conflict.

For deeper insight, combine content questions with confidence ratings to measure both competence and self-efficacy.

Recommended Tools

Tool	What to Know
Google Forms/Microsoft Forms	• Free, simple, mobile-friendly. • Can auto-grade multiple-choice questions. • Easy export to Sheets/Excel for tracking growth. • Limited analytics beyond raw scores.
Quizizz / Kahoot / Quizlet	• Gamified quizzes with leaderboards and instant feedback. • Great for youth, training programs, or high-engagement workshops. • Visual and interactive, which increases completion rates. • Less suited for professional or formal contexts.
Typeform	• Clean, conversational interface with skip logic. • Good for confidence ratings, scenario-based branching, or short reflective assessments. • More engaging than Forms, but limited free tier.
Qualtrics	• Enterprise-level solution with robust analytics. • Handles pre/post test linkage automatically. • Can create dashboards and export results for leadership. • Best for large organizations with resources; too heavy for small pilots.
LMS Platforms (Canvas, Moodle, Blackboard, TalentLMS)	• Good if program is housed inside an LMS. • Gradebooks and reporting built in. • Useful for formal training with multiple modules. • Setup/admin overhead is higher than standalone survey tools.

SurveyMonkey	• Easy to build pre/post surveys that mix content + self-efficacy scales. • Offers benchmarking features and clean exports. • Paid plan often needed for comparison/analysis features.
Socrative	• Simple, real-time quizzes that can double as pre/post tests. • Works well for live workshops where you want instant feedback. • Limited customization, but quick setup.
Mentimeter	• Interactive polling tool with quiz features. • Useful for live group settings where you want immediate pre/post data. • Not great for asynchronous assessments.
Google Classroom / Microsoft Teams Quizzes	• If the organization already uses these platforms, pre/post assessments can be built right in. • Easy linkage with other program materials. • Simple formats; not as customizable as standalone tools.
Articulate Rise / Storyline (or other eLearning authoring tools)	• Good for embedding scenario-based assessments within a learning module. • Allows branching, feedback, and tracking if paired with an LMS. • Higher design effort, best for polished professional training.

Best Practices for Pre/Post Tests

1. **Align questions with program goals.**
Focus test content on your core learning objectives or competencies.
2. **Use consistent questions or parallel forms.**
Exact same questions are ideal for comparison; if varied, ensure difficulty is equivalent.
3. **Keep it short and focused.**
Aim for 5–10 key items per test. Long assessments discourage completion.
4. **Pilot your questions.**
Test with a small group to check clarity, difficulty, and time required.
5. **Include both objective and reflective questions.**
Blend factual questions with items that ask about confidence or application.
6. **Measure both knowledge and perception shifts.**
For example, “I know how to lead a mentoring session” + “I feel confident doing it.”
7. **Ensure accessibility.**
Use plain language, readable formatting, and mobile-friendly layouts.

8. **Communicate purpose clearly.**

Explain that this is not a test for evaluation of the individual, but to understand program impact.

9. **Use unique identifiers (not names) for linkage.**

Consider using participant codes if anonymity is important but pre/post comparison is needed.

10. **Visualize the results.**

Show pre vs. post gains through charts or simple dashboards — useful for reports, funders, or internal learning.

Bonus

[Scenario-based pre/post test template](#)