



Standard Guide for Defining the Test Result of a Test Method¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 2282; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 The purpose of this guide is to provide guidelines for identifying the elements that comprise the test result of a test method and to illustrate how these elements combine into the test result.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

E 177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods

E 456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics

2.2 *ISO Standard*:³

ISO 3534 Statistics--Vocabulary and Symbols, Part 2: Applied Statistics

3. Terminology

3.1 Terminology E 456 provides a more extensive list of terms in E11 standards.

3.2 *Definitions*:

3.2.1 *characteristic, n*—a property of items in a sample or population which, when measured, counted or otherwise observed, helps to distinguish between the items.

3.2.2 *observation, n*—the process of obtaining information regarding the presence or absence of an attribute of a test specimen, or of making a reading on a characteristic or dimension of a test specimen.

NOTE 1—Observation is also associated with the attribute or measurement information obtained from the process. The term “observed value” is preferred for this second usage.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E11 on Quality and Statistics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E11.20 on Test Method Evaluation and Quality Control

Current edition approved May 15, 2009. Published June 2009. Originally approved in 2003. Last previous edition approved in 2003 as E 2282–03.

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), 1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse, Case postale 56, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland, <http://www.iso.ch>.

3.2.3 *observed value, n*—the value obtained by making an observation.

3.2.4 *test determination, n*—the value of a characteristic or dimension of a single test specimen derived from one or more observed values.

3.2.5 *test method, n*—a definitive procedure that produces a test result.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—Examples of test methods include, but are not limited to: identification, measurement, and evaluation of one or more qualities, characteristics, or properties. [ASTM Regulations 2.2.6]

3.2.6 *test observation, n*—see *observation*.

3.2.7 *test result, n*—the value of a characteristic obtained by carrying out a specified test method.

NOTE 2—The test method specifies that one or a number of individual observations be made, and their average or another appropriate function, (such as the median or the standard deviation), be reported as the test result. It can also require standard corrections to be applied, such as correction of gas volumes to standard temperature and pressure. Thus, a test result can be a result calculated from several observed values. In the simple case, the test result is the observed value itself. **ISO 3534-2**

3.2.8 *test specimen, n*—the portion of a test sample needed to obtain a single test determination.

3.2.8.1 *Discussion*—When used for a physical test, this is sometimes called “test piece.” For a chemical test, it is sometimes called test portion or test sample. For optical and other tests, it is also sometimes called test sample. In interlaboratory evaluation of test methods and other statistical procedures, it is best to reserve the word sample for the whole amount of material involved and not the individual test specimens, pieces or portions being tested.

3.2.9 *test sample, n*—the total quantity of material (containing one or more test specimens) needed to obtain a test result as specified in the test method. See test result.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 All test methods have an output in the form of a test result. This guide provides information on the construction of test results from more elemental measurements.

4.2 A well defined test result is necessary before any precision statements can be made about the test method.

4.2.1 Form and Style for ASTM Standards, Section A21, requires that every test method shall contain a statement regarding its precision, preferably as a result of an interlaboratory test program. Reporting of such studies is described in [E 177](#), which illustrates the development of test results from observations and test determinations.

4.2.2 Precision statements for ASTM test methods are applicable to test results. They are not applicable to test determinations or observations, unless specifically and clearly indicated otherwise.

5. Developing the Test Result

5.1 A test method may have three distinct stages: (1) the direct measurement or observation of dimensions or properties, or the occurrence of an event; (2) the arithmetical combination of observed values to obtain a single determination; and (3) the arithmetical combination of a number of determinations to obtain the test result of a test method.

5.2 Observation:

5.2.1 An observation or observed value should be interpreted as the most elemental single reading or corrected reading obtained in the process of making a test or measurement.

5.2.2 An observation may be a classification into one of two categories or a numerical value on a continuous scale. An observation may involve a direct reading (for example, a zero-adjusted micrometer reading of the thickness of a test strip at one position along the strip) or it may require the interpolation of the reading from a calibration curve.

5.3 Test Determination:

5.3.1 For a quantitative test method, a test determination may be described as the process of calculating from one or more observations a property of a single test specimen, or as the value obtained from the process. Thus, a test determination may summarize or combine one or more observations.

5.3.2 For a qualitative test, such as a binary procedure, the test determination may be the total number of items falling into one of the two classifications following repetition of the basic protocol.

5.3.3 In some cases the protocol may require observations to be made under several test conditions and then calculating a test determination from these observations.

5.3.4 Test methods for chemical properties are often based on comparison of the response for a sample to responses of a known standard substance at varying concentrations. The standard curve relates response to concentration of the substance of interest. Responses belonging to the standard curve, and to test specimens, are test observations. The test determination is calculated from the response, or average of multiple responses, for the test specimen using an equation for the standard curve.

5.3.5 Examples of a Test Determination:

5.3.5.1 The measurement of the density of a test specimen may involve the separate observation of the mass and the volume of the specimen and the calculation of the ratio mass/volume. The density calculated from the ratio of one pair of mass and volume observations made on one specimen is a test determination.

5.3.5.2 The determination of the thickness of a test specimen strip may involve averaging micrometer caliper observations taken at several points along the strip.

5.3.5.3 A set of three cigarettes is ignited on a fabric. Each cigarette is observed to burn or not burn. The number of burns out of the set of three is a test determination.

5.4 Test Result:

5.4.1 In general, the test method should describe not only the manner in which each test determination is to be made, but also the number of test determinations to be made and how these are to be combined to provide the test result.

5.4.2 Examples of a Test Result:

5.4.2.1 The test method on density might require that the mass and volume observations of a specimen be combined to give a test determination of density ([5.3.5.1](#)) and the test determination of each of five specimens be averaged to give a test result.

5.4.2.2 The test method for paper thickness may require that the determination of strip thickness in [5.3.5.2](#) be made on ten strips and that the ten test determinations be averaged to give the test result.

5.4.2.3 The test method for a tensile strength test of paper may specify that a tensile strength determination be performed on each of ten specimens and that the ten tensile test determinations be averaged to get the test result.

5.4.2.4 In a chemical analysis, the method may call for the preparation of a single solution from the sample (test sample unit), and measurement on three aliquots (specimens) of the solution. The average of the three analytical test determinations would then be the test result. Alternatively, the method may call for test determinations to be made on different preparations (specimens) of the sample. The average of the determinations would then be the test result for the test sample.

5.4.2.5 In rubber testing, the method may describe not only the shape of the test specimen to be taken from a sheet of rubber, but also the preparation of the sheet, including compounding and curing. For example, one rubber test method specifies that four sheets be individually compounded and cured and three specimens tested from each sheet. The test result is then defined as the average of the four medians, each median being the middle determination, in the order of magnitude, of the three values obtained from a sheet.

6. Keywords

6.1 observation; test determination; test method; test result

ASTM International takes no position respecting the validity of any patent rights asserted in connection with any item mentioned in this standard. Users of this standard are expressly advised that determination of the validity of any such patent rights, and the risk of infringement of such rights, are entirely their own responsibility.

This standard is subject to revision at any time by the responsible technical committee and must be reviewed every five years and if not revised, either reapproved or withdrawn. Your comments are invited either for revision of this standard or for additional standards and should be addressed to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee, which you may attend. If you feel that your comments have not received a fair hearing you should make your views known to the ASTM Committee on Standards, at the address shown below.

This standard is copyrighted by ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, PO Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959, United States. Individual reprints (single or multiple copies) of this standard may be obtained by contacting ASTM at the above address or at 610-832-9585 (phone), 610-832-9555 (fax), or service@astm.org (e-mail); or through the ASTM website (www.astm.org).
