

STAAR Accommodations

Educator Guide



Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the [Student Assessment](#) website.

[Texas Educator Committees](#)

The Texas Education Agency encourages highly qualified educators to apply to participate in educator committees for the Texas Assessment Program. Click the link or scan the QR code for more information.



Table of Contents

- Resources4**
- Overview5**
 - Purpose5
 - Accessibility Features.....5
 - Locally-Approved Designated Supports5
 - Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval6
- Test Participation Decisions7**
- Accommodations.....8**
 - Online Accessibility Features8
 - Online Designated Supports..... 12
 - Content and Language Supports Guidelines 22
 - The Content and Language Supports Connection 28
 - Special Situations 29
- Planning for Testing..... 31**

Resources

- [Texas Assessment Program](#)
- [STAAR Resources](#)
- [STAAR Spanish Resources](#)
- [Test Administration Resources](#)
- [Assessments for Special Populations](#)
- [STAAR Released Test Questions](#)
- [*District and Campus Coordinator Resources*](#)

Overview

Purpose

The goal of State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) accommodations is to ensure that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response modes of the state assessments. In order to meet this goal, STAAR accessibility features and designated supports are designed to allow all examinees to demonstrate their knowledge of the content being assessed without the format of the assessment, the non-tested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers. The various accessibility features and designated supports made available on STAAR online and paper assessments are also designed to be the same as or similar to the designated supports commonly used during classroom instruction.

For STAAR and STAAR Spanish, accommodations fall into three categories: accessibility features, locally-approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring Texas Education Agency (TEA) approval. It is important to refer to the individual designated support policy documents in the [Accommodations](#) section of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* for comprehensive information about the procedures and materials in each category.

Accessibility Features

Accessibility features may be provided to students based on their needs. In general, these procedures and materials are available to any student who regularly benefits from their use during classroom instruction; however, a student may **NOT** be required to use them during a state assessment. District or campus testing coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials. In some cases, a student may need to complete the assessment in a separate setting to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the assessments are maintained.

Locally-Approved Designated Supports

Locally-approved designated supports may be made available without TEA approval to students who meet eligibility criteria. The use of these designated supports should be based on the eligibility criteria and aimed at addressing a student's consistent academic struggle in a specific area even after intensive instruction and remediation. Eligibility is determined by the appropriate team at the campus level as indicated in each policy document.

The decision to use a designated support during a state assessment should be made on an individual student basis and should take into consideration the student's needs and whether the student routinely receives that designated support during classroom instruction and classroom testing. This does not mean that the designated support must be used every day

during instruction but that:

- the student has used the support often enough during classroom instruction and testing that the student can use it independently during the state assessment (independent use applies to some designated supports [e.g., calculation aids] but might not apply to others [e.g., oral administration]), and
- the accommodation has been proven to be effective in meeting the student’s specific needs as evidenced by student scores or teacher observations with and without accommodation use.

Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval

For designated supports requiring TEA approval, district personnel must submit an Accommodation Request Form in the *Administration and Security Forms* module in the [Test Information Distribution Engine \(TIDE\)](#). Accommodation Request Forms must be submitted in TIDE by the due dates listed in the Calendar of Events to allow committee members the ability to process and review requests, as well as to communicate to district personnel the appropriate procedures for administering a TEA-approved designated support. For circumstances that require a designated support request but occur after this time (e.g., newly enrolled student, medical emergency, updated admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee decision), the district coordinator should contact the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536 and ask to speak to a member of the Accommodations Task Force for further instructions. A ticket may also be submitted to the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).

Test Participation Decisions

A student should be designated as eligible for a special paper administration of an online assessment only if a required accommodation documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP), individual accommodation plan (IAP), or section 504 plan paperwork cannot be delivered in an online format. Careful consideration should be given to whether the paper mode offers the supports necessary to allow the student to successfully demonstrate his or her understanding of the assessed content. If the student has previous experience receiving instruction or taking assessments online (e.g., STAAR Interim Assessments), it may be more appropriate to maintain consistency by providing the student with an online administration.

Due consideration should be given to the mode in which various designated supports can be offered. Some supports, such as mathematics manipulatives or an oral or signed administration, can be provided to students taking either an online or a paper test. A mathematics or science braille test can be provided only with a paper form; however, a reading language arts (RLA) or social studies braille test can be provided online using a refreshable braille display.

Refer to the [Special Administration of an Assessment](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for more information.

Accommodations

Online Accessibility Features

Accessibility features are available to all students taking STAAR and STAAR Spanish. Several accessibility features are embedded in the online system, and students can practice using them by accessing STAAR online practice tests on the [Practice Test Site](#).

The following figures describe the accessibility features that are embedded in the online system and provide their associated icons. These features are available automatically on all STAAR assessments (i.e., mathematics, RLA, science, and social studies) and do not need to be activated in the online system. Refer to the [Accessibility Features](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for more information on available accessibility features.

Figure 1. Sticky Notes (available in English and Spanish)

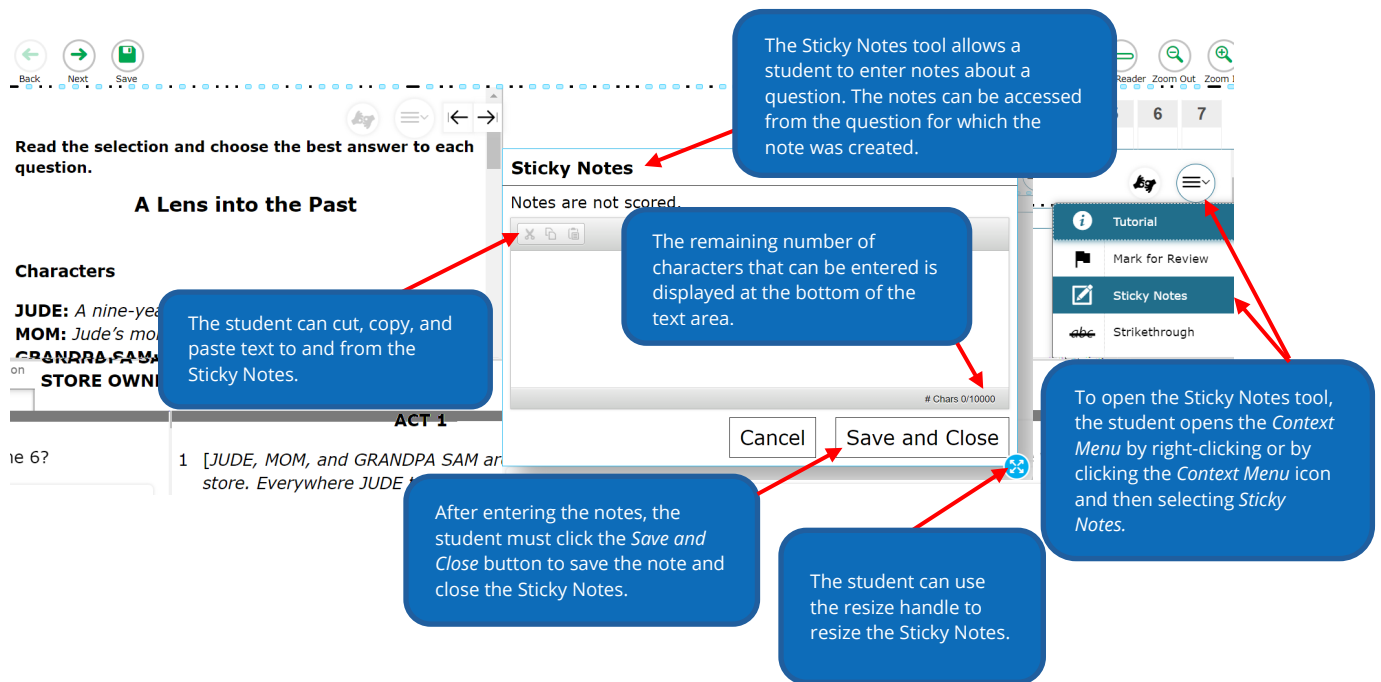


Figure 2. Notepad (available in English and Spanish)

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Passage 1:

Rachel is visiting her grandmother while her sister Claire is at sleepaway camp. Grandma gets Rachel out of bed to show her something in the woods nearby.

from A Forest Full of Stars
by Noah Weisz

- Outside, the darkness is thick. Grandma switches on a flashlight and starts walking. Her sneakers make a *shh-shh* sound in the grass.
- "Where are we going?" Rachel asks, a little nervous.

Notepad

IMPORTANT: Unsaved notes will be lost when the Notepad is closed. To save notes before closing the Notepad, click Save and Close. Notes are not scored; they are only for your response in the answer space provided.

Chars 0/10000

Cancel Save and Close

To open the Notepad tool, the student selects *Notepad* from the *Global Tools* menu.

The student can drag the Notepad to different parts of the test page using the Notepad header.

The student can cut, copy, and paste text to and from the Notepad. The remaining number of characters that can be entered is displayed at the bottom of the text area.

After entering the notes, the student must click the *Save and Close* button to save the note and close the Notepad.

The student can use the resize handle to resize the Notepad.

Figure 3. Color Setting (available in English and Spanish)

Test Attributes

Auto Text-to-Speech OFF

Color Setting Yellow on Blue

Large Language Supports

Large Mouse Pointer

Presentation

Light Magenta

Light Yellow

Red on White

White on Black

White on Red

✓ Yellow on Blue

Select Undo Changes Go Back

Before starting the assessment, the student can open the *Color Setting* dropdown menu on the Choose Settings page to select from eight different color settings. When the student selects a color setting, the option is applied to the screen for the student to preview.

If the student wishes to apply the selected color scheme to all the pages of the test, the student clicks the *Select* button.

Figure 3a. Color Setting (available in English and Spanish)

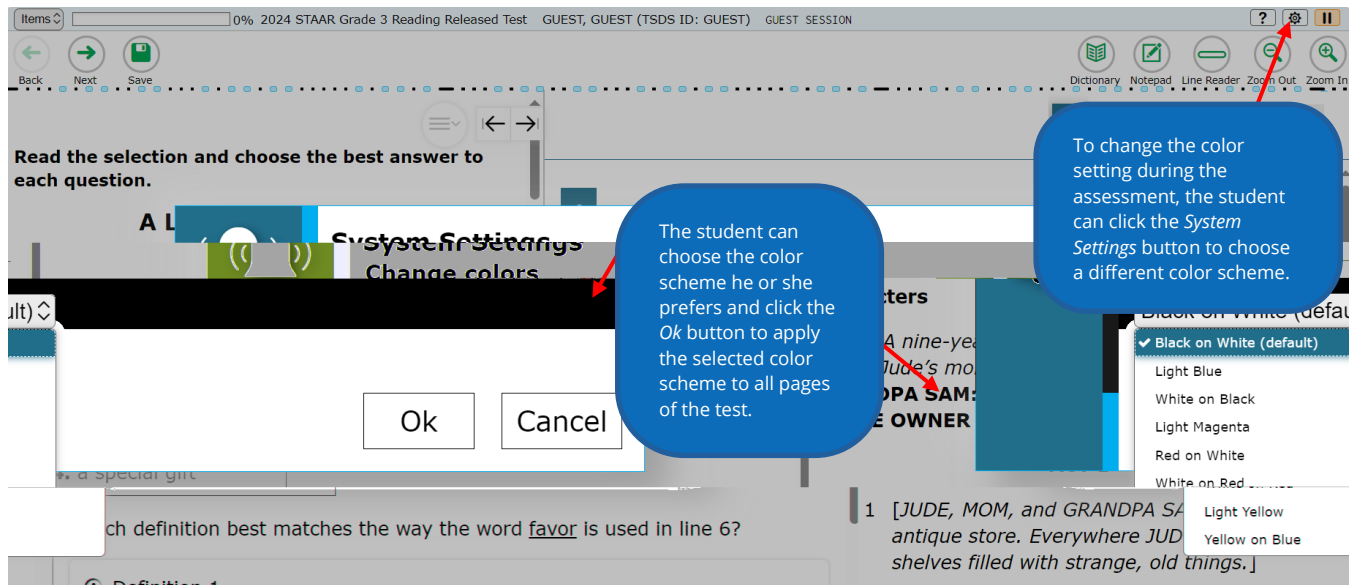


Figure 4. Line Reader (available in English and Spanish)

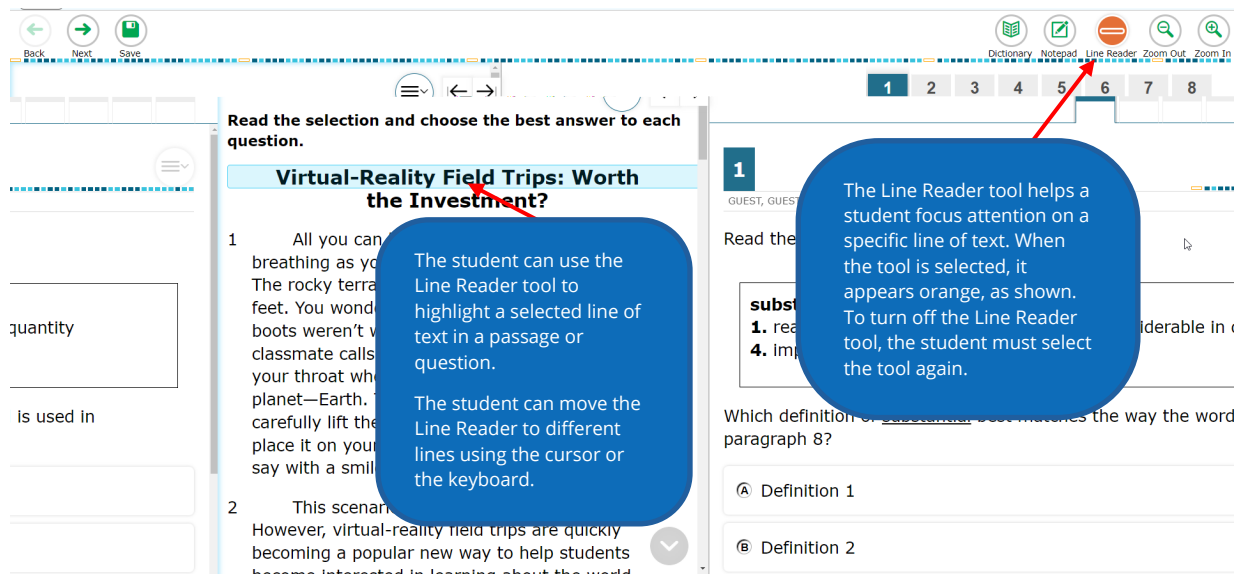


Figure 5. Zoom (available in English and Spanish)

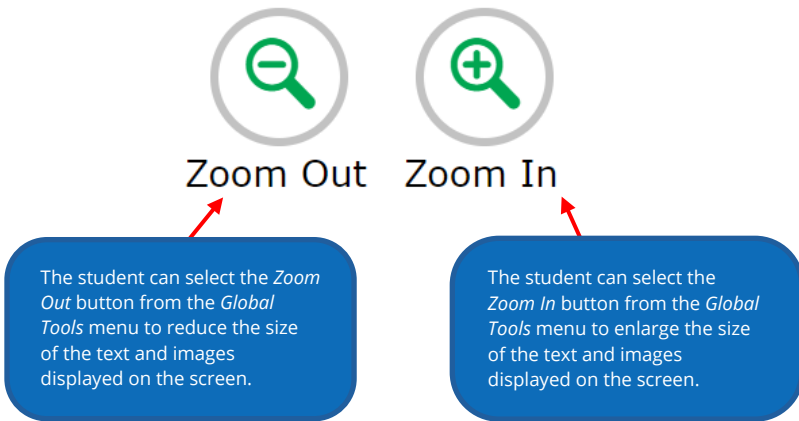


Figure 6. Highlight Selection (available in English and Spanish)

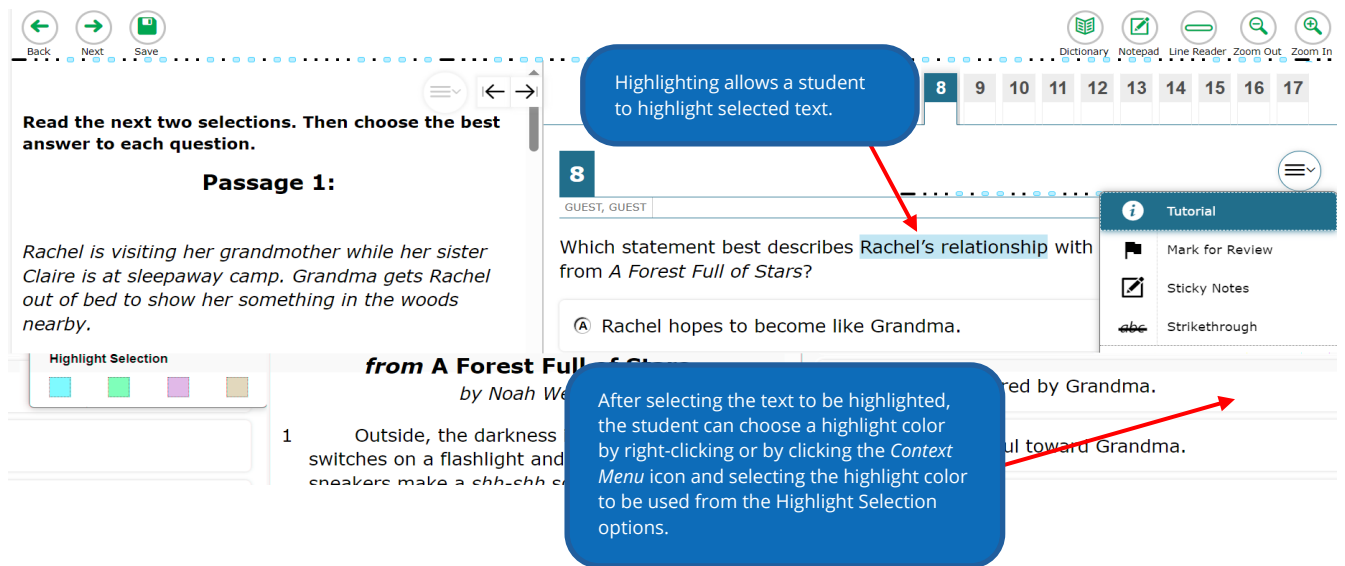


Figure 6a. Remove Highlight or Reset Highlighting (available in English and Spanish)

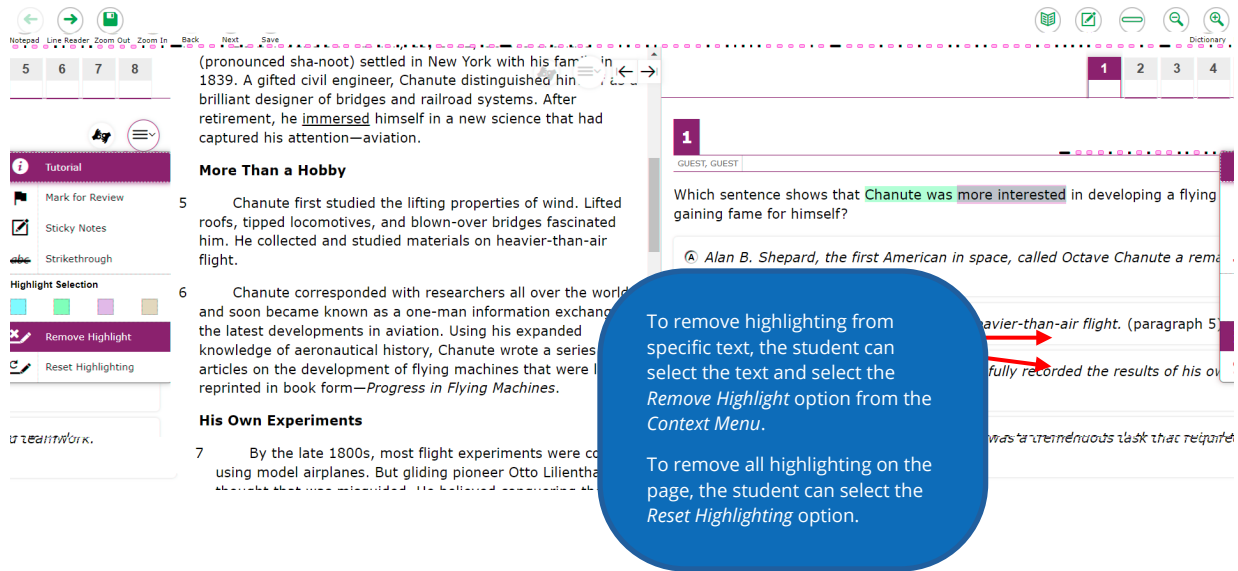
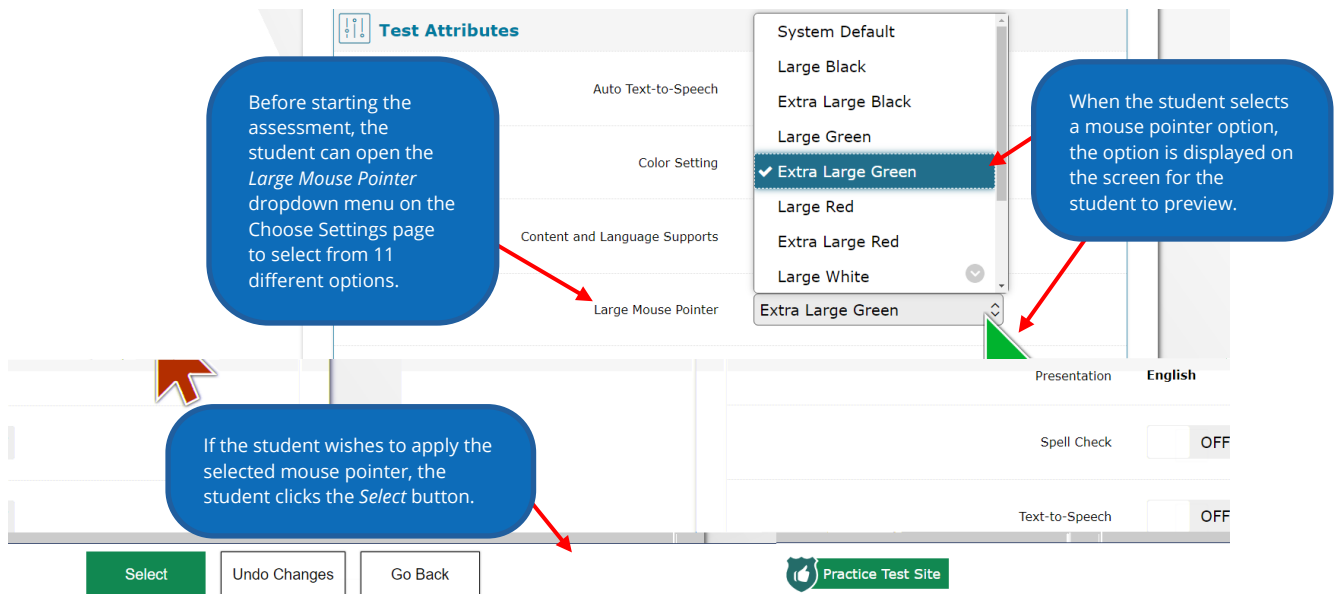


Figure 7. Large Mouse Pointer (available in English and Spanish)



NOTE: The student cannot change the selected mouse pointer option after the test starts.

Online Designated Supports

Designated supports are available to students who meet the eligibility criteria as determined and documented by the appropriate team at the local level. Some of these designated supports are embedded in the online system, while others are not. More specific information can be found in the individual policy documents on the [Locally-Approved Designated Supports](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

Non-embedded designated supports may be made available to students testing online as well as to those testing on paper and will be provided by the test administrator to the student on the day the assessment is administered. For example, a student needing supplemental aids for an assessment will need to use the type of assistance he or she uses in the classroom (e.g., grade-appropriate grammar and mechanics rules, mnemonic devices), since supplemental aids are not embedded in the online system.

Embedded designated supports are available to students testing online. For example, a student needing reading support can receive an oral or signed administration of the test using text-to-speech (TTS) or American Sign Language (ASL) videos.

Content and language supports are available as embedded online designated supports and include pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials. The delivery of an online assessment offers an opportunity to provide these types of supports in a standardized way to students who use similar designated supports in the classroom and find the online test to be the most appropriate and accessible for them. These supports are applied only to particular passages and test questions based on expert judgments about which designated supports are likely to make a question more accessible to students.

Students should practice using the online designated supports by accessing STAAR online practice tests on the [Practice Test Site](#). The following figures describe the embedded designated supports in the online testing system.

Figure 8. Calculator (available in English and Spanish)

The Calculator tool must be set as a designated support in TIDE for grades 3–7.

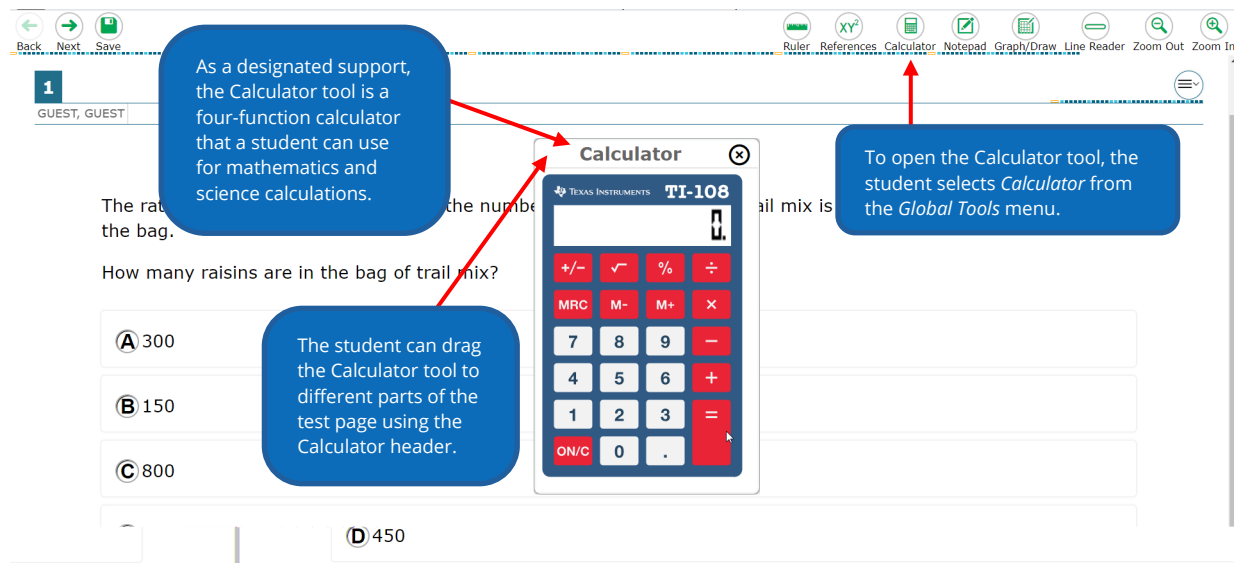


Figure 9. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

Students who have the TTS designated support can listen to text being read aloud. The text, as well as the line in which it appears, is highlighted as it is read aloud.

TTS uses the local device's native accessibility voice packs. Please make sure that a Spanish voice pack has been activated and tested prior to the administration of an assessment with Spanish TTS.

Only revising passages can be read aloud. To listen to the entire passage, the student can click the *Text-to-Speech* button and select *Speak Passage*.

To listen to a question and its answer choices, the student can click the *Text-to-Speech* button and select *Speak Question* or *Speak Option*. The text is highlighted as it is read aloud.

If the passage displays a *Speak* icon with a line going through it, TTS is not available for this section.

To listen to an answer choice, the student selects *Speak Option* from the *Text-to-Speech* button and then selects the answer choice to be read aloud.

Figure 9a. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

To listen to a portion of text for a question or passage, the student can select the text to be read aloud and then select *Speak Selection* from the *TTS* button. The *Speak Selection* and *Start Speaking From Here* options are also available by right-clicking.

Figure 9b. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

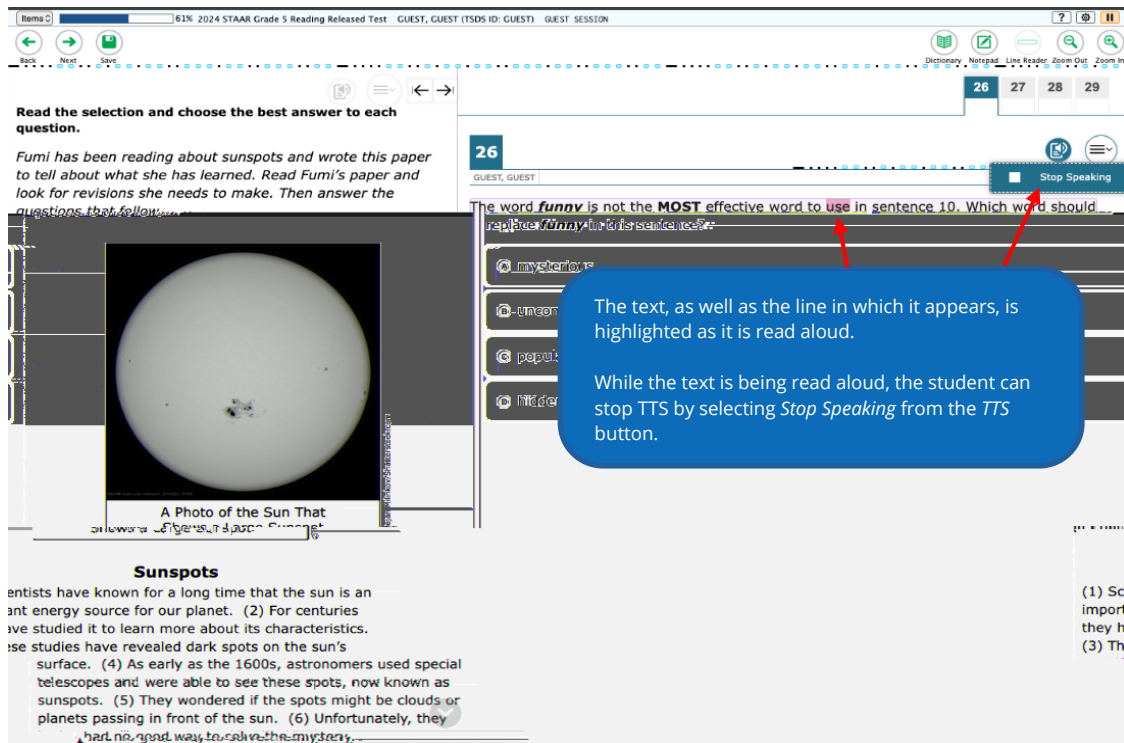


Figure 9c. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

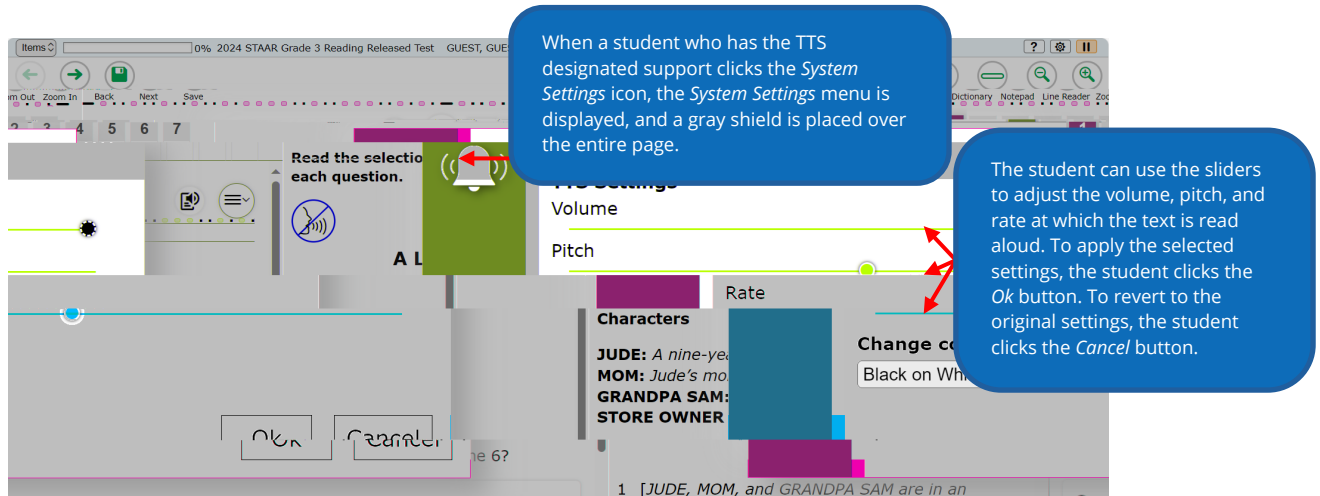


Figure 10. Auto Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

For a student who has the auto TTS designated support, test content on the page is pre-read to the student when the student first accesses a page.

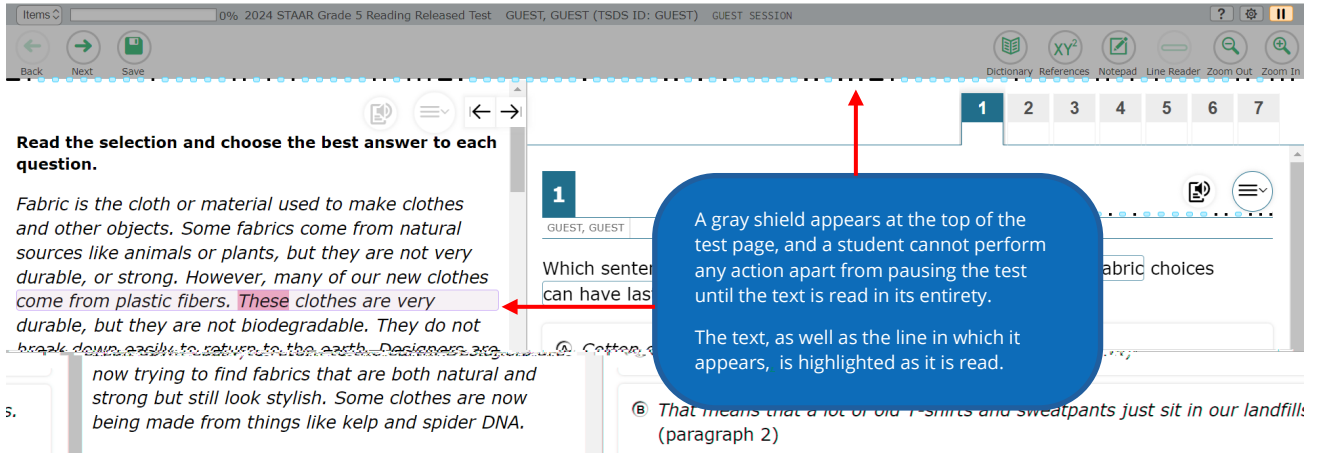


Figure 10a. Auto Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

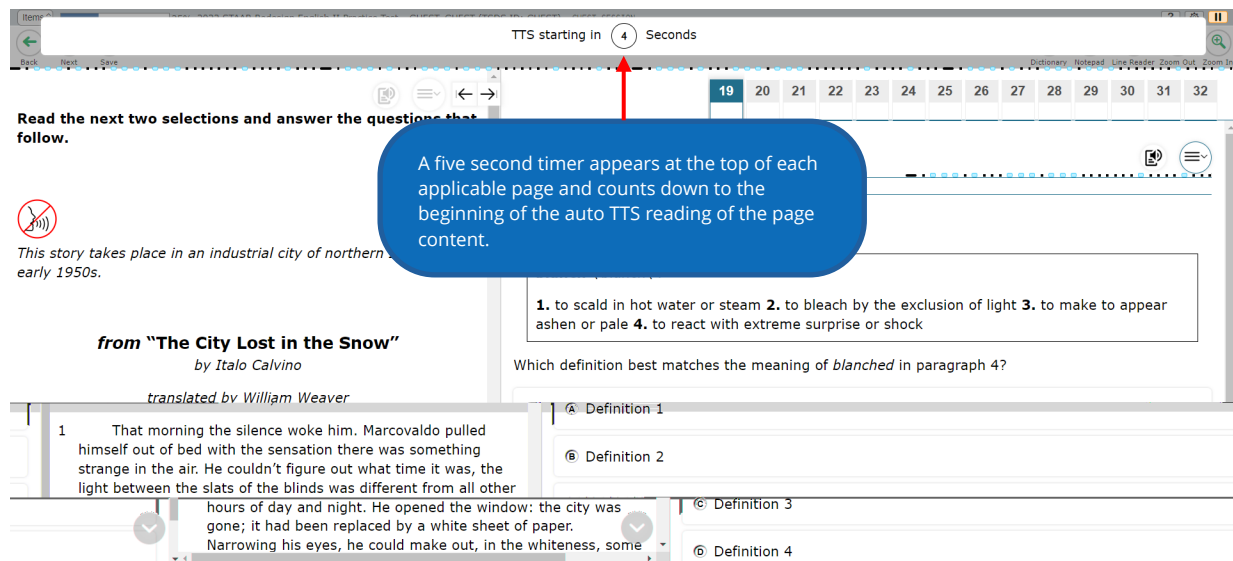


Figure 11. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish for constructed-response questions)

For students receiving a speech-to-text (STT) accommodation, test administrators should ensure that the microphone on the device used for testing is turned on and configured properly prior to launching a test that includes constructed-response questions.

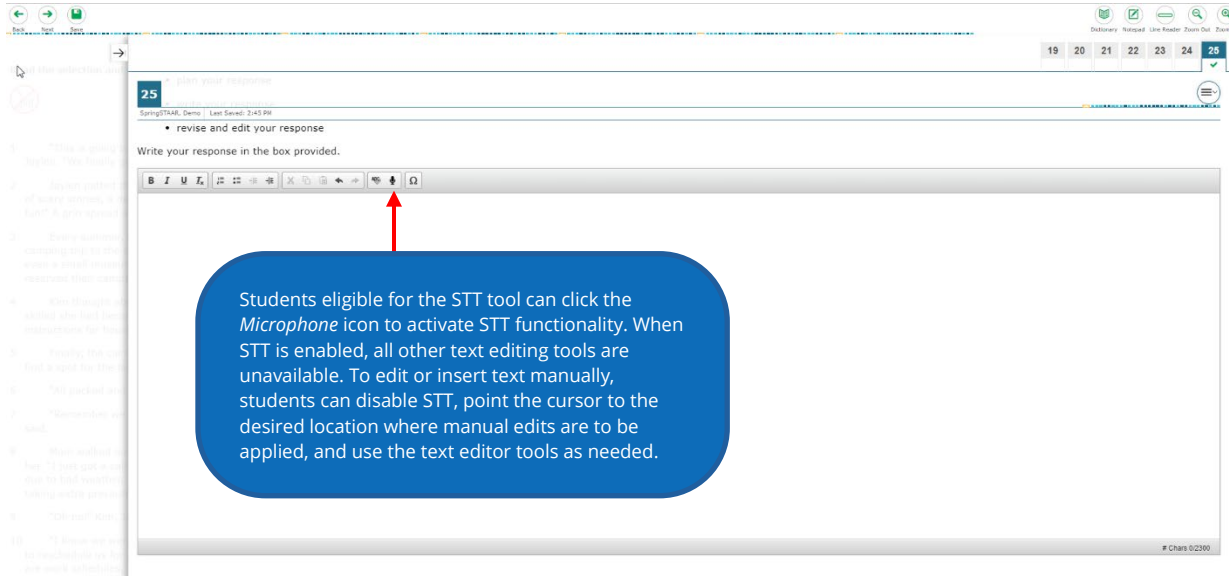


Figure 11a. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish for constructed-response questions)

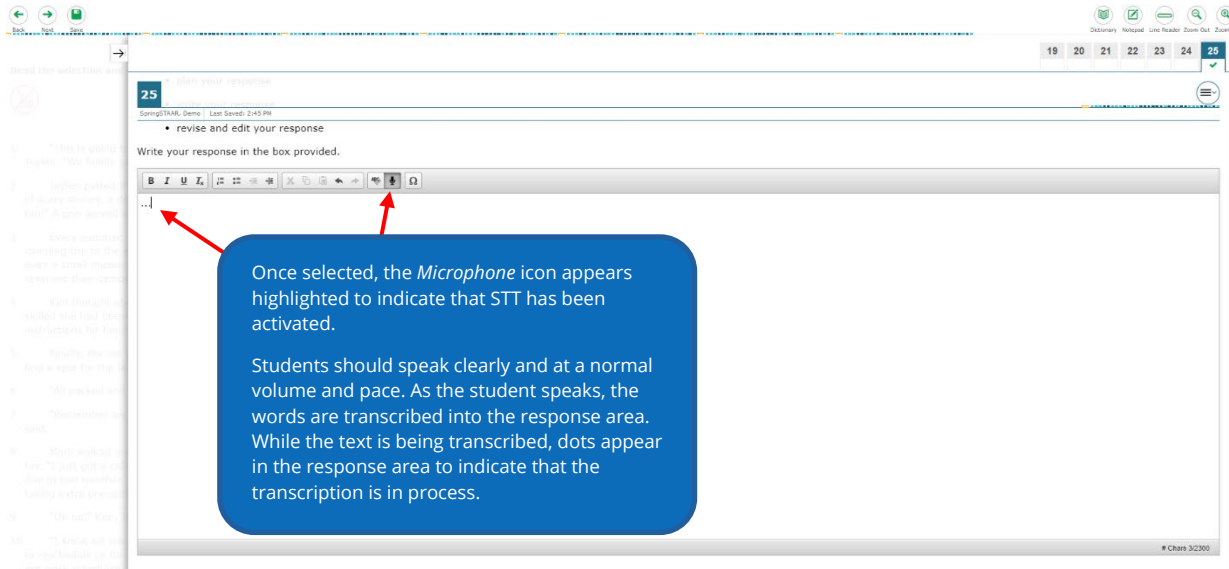


Figure 11b. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish for Sticky Notes)

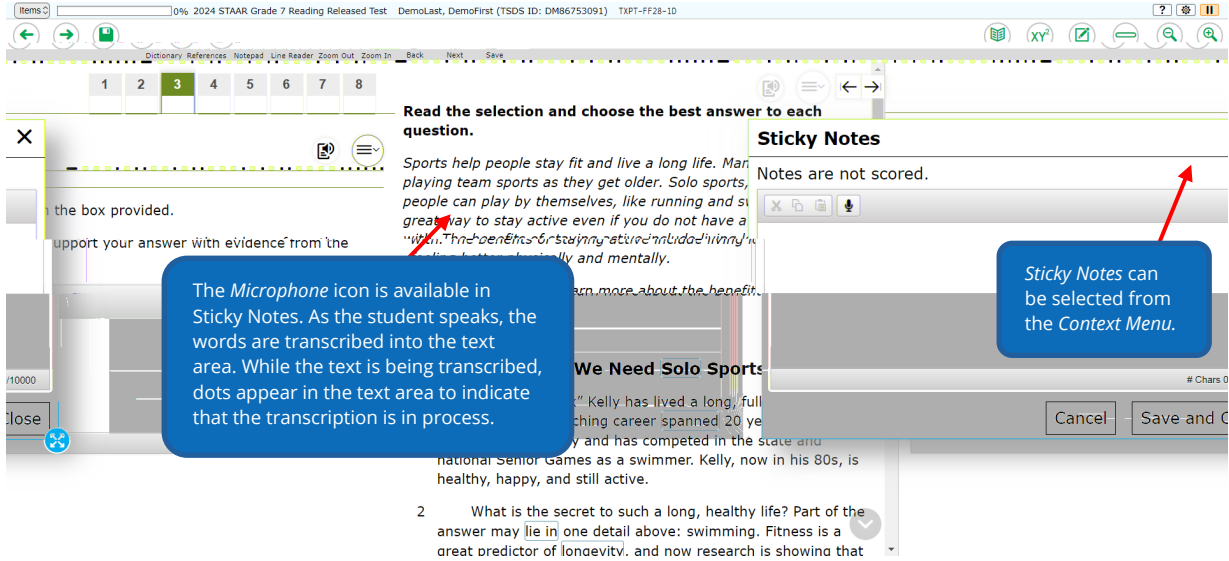


Figure 11c. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish for Notepad)

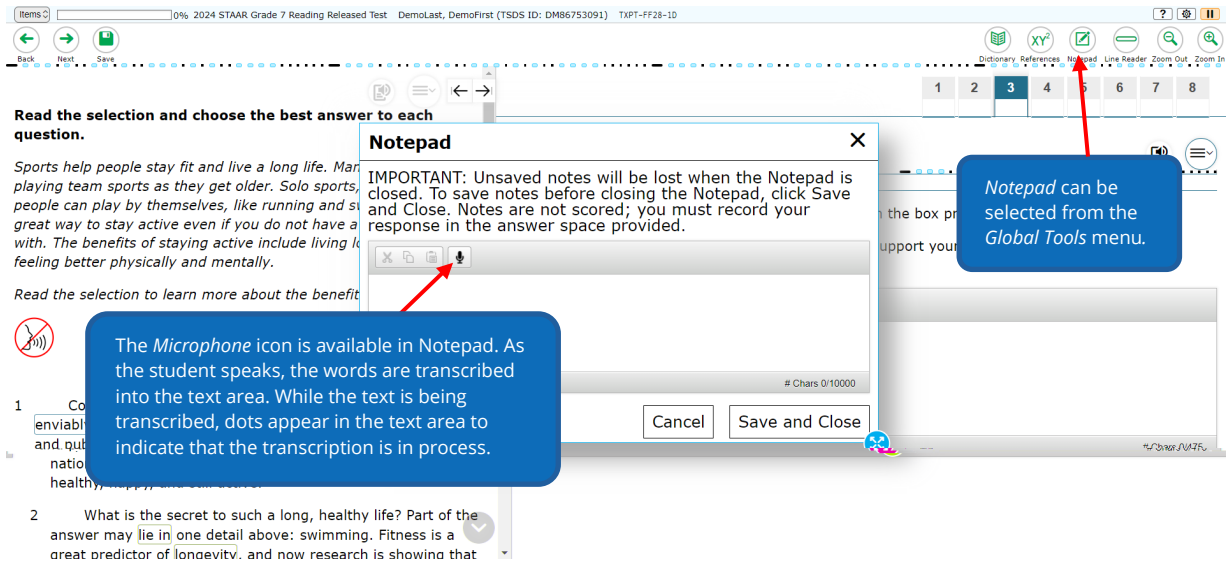


Figure 12. Word Prediction (Co:Writer) (available in English and Spanish except for mathematics)

Word Predictions (Co:Writer) meets the accommodation need of spelling assistance. When Word Prediction (Co:Writer) is enabled, students automatically receive word suggestions as they type answers to constructed-response questions.

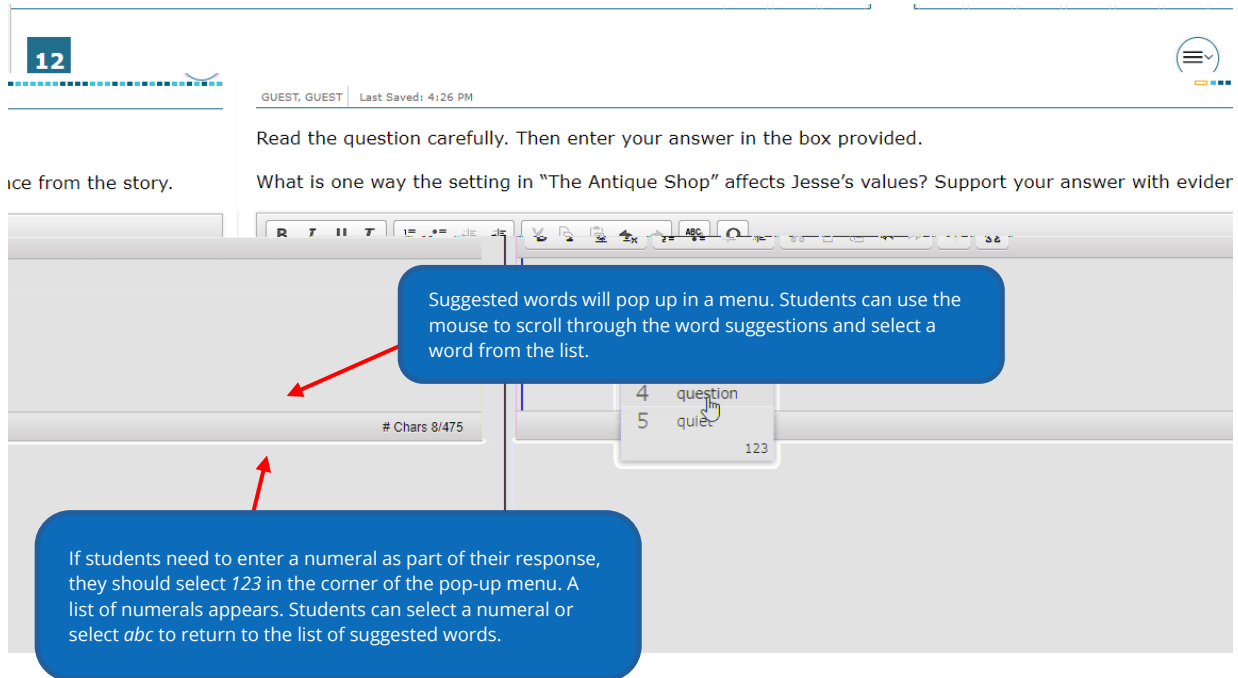


Figure 13. Spell Check (available in English and Spanish)

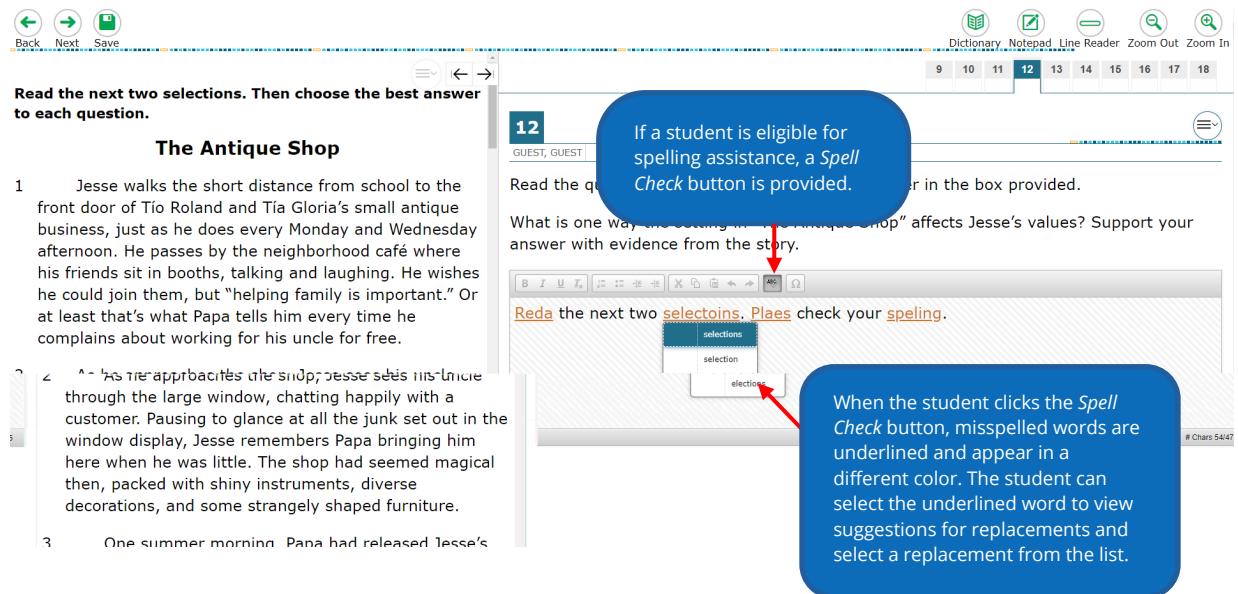


Figure 14. ASL Videos (available in English)

Students who have ASL as a designated support can watch videos that translate test content into ASL.

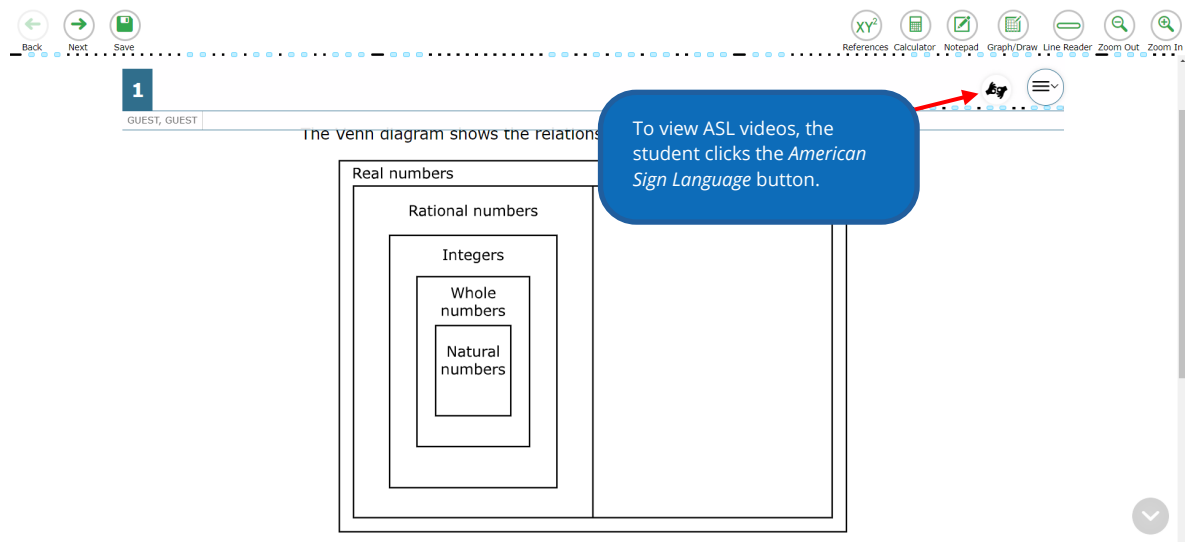


Figure 14a. ASL Videos (available in English)

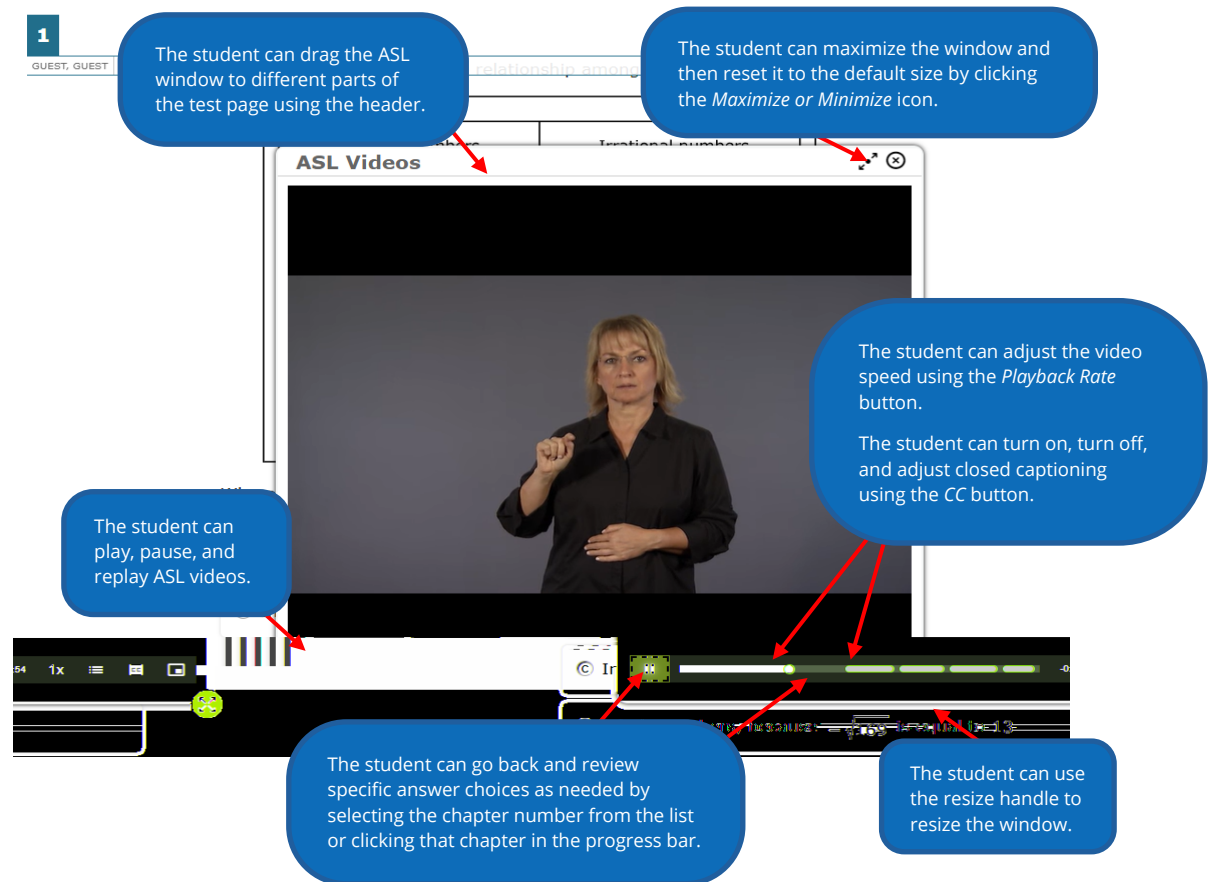


Figure 15. Refreshable Braille Display (available on English versions of RLA and social studies)

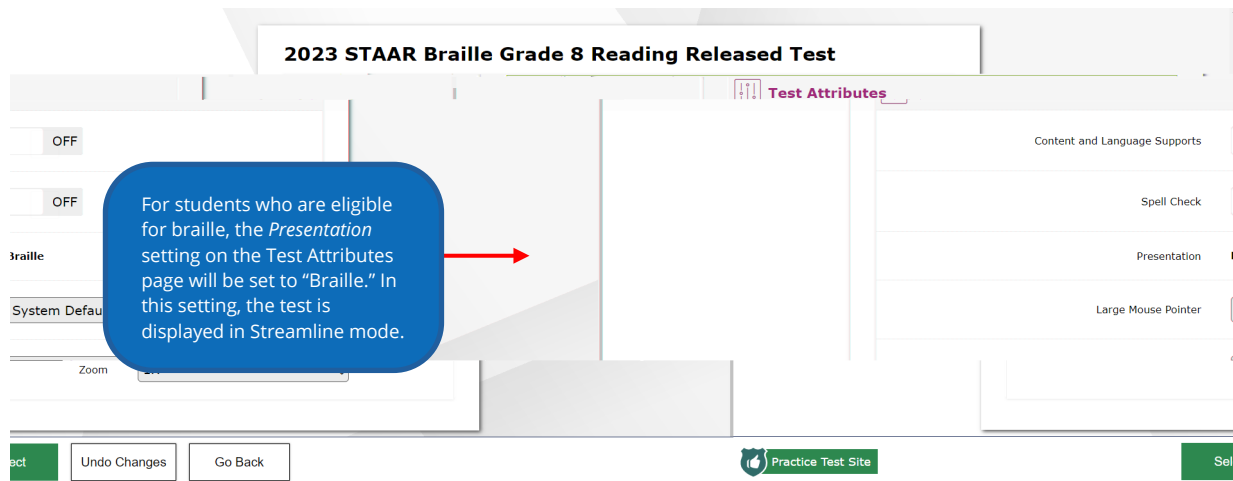
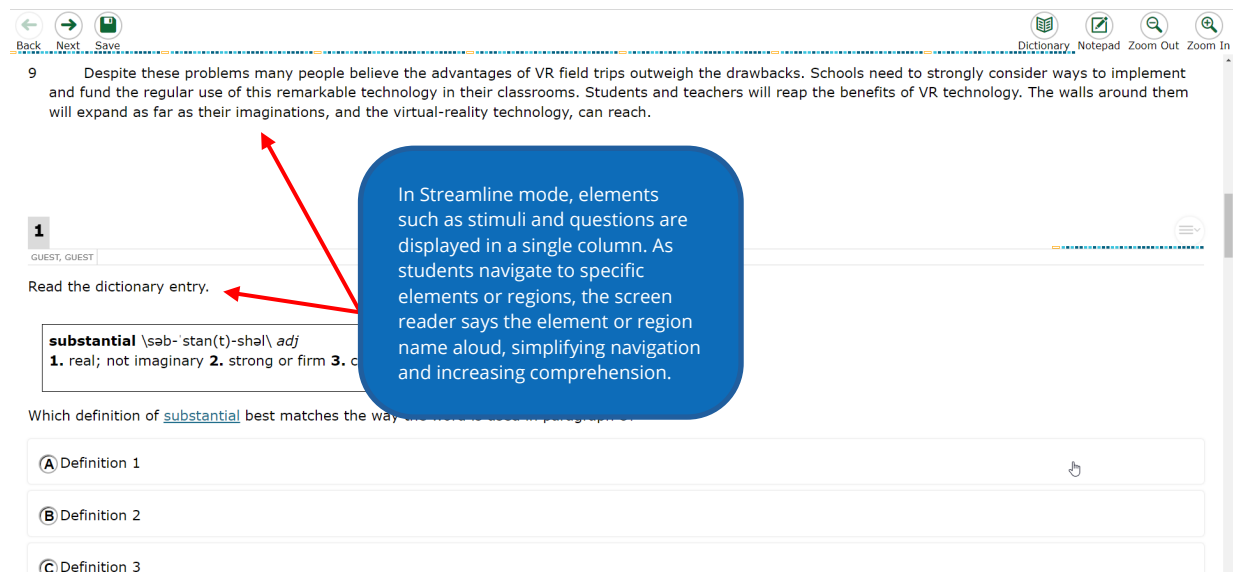


Figure 15a. Refreshable Braille Display (available on English versions of RLA and social studies)



NOTE: The refreshable braille display will not function on all supported devices used for testing. Refer to the [Minimum System Requirements](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for supported systems and requirements.

Content and Language Supports Guidelines

These designated supports are available on STAAR and STAAR Spanish assessments in the form of pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials. Although STAAR Spanish uses the same guidelines for content and language supports as the English version of STAAR, some of the accommodations in the pop-ups and rollovers may not be identical due to linguistic differences.

Pop-Ups

Pop-ups can be used to do the following:

- isolate specific information in a question that corresponds to each answer choice
- isolate specific text or information in a passage that is referenced in the question or answer choices
- isolate specific information in a graphic or list that is referenced in the question
- define literary terms
- apply an allowable supplemental aid (e.g., graphic organizer, place value chart, t-chart, graphic of a scientific concept, timeline, map) to specific questions or answer choices
- include the formula from the grade-specific reference material when the question specifies the measure or conversion to be performed
- direct student attention to parts of the grade-specific reference materials
- provide clarifying information for a graphic organizer, political cartoon, or map
- provide a visual representation in the passage, question, answer choices, or constructed-response questions by adding graphics, photographs, or animations
- define or clarify construct-irrelevant words, phrases, and sentences using plain language, synonyms, definitions, examples, and consistent language

Figure 16. Pop-Ups (available in English and Spanish)

For students who are eligible for content and language supports, certain words and phrases appear with a border around them. This indicates that a pop-up containing simplified text is available for the word or phrase.

When a pop-up is selected, a window appears next to the bordered text. Clicking the X icon closes the window. The student can drag the window to different parts of the test page using the header.

The student can use the resize handle to resize the window.

For students who have the TTS designated support, the *Speak* icon will appear in all pop-ups. The student can click the icon to hear the text in the pop-up read aloud. If the *Speak* icon has a line going through it, TTS is not available.

Based on the scatterplot, which of these is the best prediction for the number of servings of iced tea sold at a food trailer each day over a 7-day period.

Rollovers

Rollovers can be used to do the following:

- provide a visual representation in the passage, question, answer choices, or constructed-response questions by adding graphics, photographs, or animations
- define or clarify construct-irrelevant words, phrases, and sentences using plain language, synonyms, definitions, examples, and consistent language
- bullet or separate steps in a process (e.g., multi-step problem, sequence of events)
- reword complex questions or answer choices to condense text
- reorganize and simplify historical excerpts

Figure 17. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

Back Next Save

References Calculator Notepad Graph/Draw Line Reader Zoom Out Zoom In

9
GUEST, GUEST

The area of a square wall is 182 square feet. What is the length of one side of this wall?

(A) 91.0 ft
(B) 13.5 ft
(C) 54.0 ft
(D) 45.5 ft

For students who are eligible for content and language supports, certain test questions and answer options include a small *Rollover* arrow pointing toward words or phrases. Clicking this arrow opens a rollover containing simplified text.

Figure 17a. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

Items 3% 2024 STAAR Grade 3 Mathematics Released Test GUEST, GUEST (TSDS ID: GUEST) GUEST SESSION

Zoom Out Zoom In Back Next Save

Ruler References Calculator Notepad Graph/Draw Line Reader

2
GUEST, GUEST

This list shows three clues about a number.

- The number is greater than 89,000.
- The number is less than 91,103.
- The number has a digit greater than 7 in the thousands place.

Which of these could be the number?

A rollover covers the original text. Clicking the *Rollover* arrow again closes it.

Speak Que
Speak Opti

For students who have the TTS designated support, text in the rollover can be read aloud.

Prereading

Prereading offers a list of important words and phrases from the reading passages and is available in all English and Spanish RLA assessments for students who meet eligibility.

Figure 18. Prereading (available on English and Spanish versions of RLA)

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Cooking can be a fun, creative activity. Read the article to learn more about why it is important for everyone, including children, to learn to cook.

Here are some important words and phrases from the article.

Health experts: People who know a lot about health
dish: recipe
prepare: make or cook
handle: hold and use
kitchen tools

For students who are eligible for content and language supports, prereading text appears above each reading passage.

The Skill of Cooking

- 1 Have you ever wished you could make dinner just the way you like it? It may seem like cooking is something only **certain** people know how to do, like a **magic trick**. But cooking is not magic. It is a skill that everyone—even children—can learn to enjoy.
- 2 **Health experts** encourage people to cook. **A study** done at a university shows that people are healthier when they eat food made at home. After all, if you **add** all the ingredients yourself, you always know what you are eating. (Ingredients are the foods you put together to make a **dish**.)

Figure 19a. Supplementary Materials (Writing Checklist, available on English and Spanish versions of RLA)

The screenshot displays a digital reading application interface. On the left, a reading passage is visible with the following text:

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Can you imagine going on a school field trip without even leaving your school? This is possible when your school participates in a computer-created experience referred to as a virtual-reality (VR) field trip. Instead of getting on a bus, students wear a virtual-reality headset that will take them on a simulated, or imitated, trip. Students experience being immersed, or participating fully, in different places or cultures far from their classrooms.

Read the selection to learn more about virtual-reality field trips and what advantages they offer to students.

Below the passage is a red 'no audio' icon and the text: **Virtual-Reality Field Trips: Worth the**

On the right, a 'References' pop-up window is open, titled 'References' and 'STAAR with Embedded Supports Writing Checklist, Grades 3 - English II'. It contains a 'Writing Checklist (Grade 3 - English II)' with four items:

- Did I write one or two sentences that clearly state my central idea or the claim of my paper?
- Do my words and sentences support my central idea or claim?
- Did I write my sentences in an order that makes sense?
- Did I use specific details and include enough text-based evidence to develop my ideas?

A blue callout box with a red arrow pointing to the 'References' button in the top toolbar contains the text: 'Students who are eligible for content and language supports can select the *Writing Checklist* by clicking the *References* button.'

The Content and Language Supports Connection

The use of designated supports occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet students’ individual needs, thus allowing students to maximize their academic potential. The content and language supports available for STAAR assessments offer opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in the required state assessments.

To make designated supports decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of designated supports (e.g., assignment and test scores with and without the designated support, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine whether the designated support becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student’s age or changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the designated support.

Decisions about designated supports used during a statewide assessment should:

- be made on an individual basis,
- consider the student’s needs, and
- consider how supports are routinely and effectively used during classroom instruction and testing.

Although it is unlikely that students routinely use the computer-based content and language supports during classroom instruction, they may use variations of them, as illustrated in the table that follows. This list is not exhaustive but includes examples of classroom designated supports that may correspond to the embedded content and language supports on STAAR.

Classroom Designated Support Examples that Link to STAAR Content and Language Supports
The teacher introduces a new book to a struggling reader prior to it being read aloud or independently. The topics discussed might include major concepts, difficult words, setting, characters, or prior knowledge of the subject.
The teacher points out the meaning of a word in a dictionary or a synonym in a thesaurus.
The teacher isolates specific information to focus the student on the core concept being taught.
The teacher acts out or has the students role-play newly introduced vocabulary or difficult concepts.
The teacher simplifies difficult vocabulary and then reformats complex word problems by

bulleting or spacing out each step required to solve the problem.
The teacher provides the student with a specific supplemental aid (e.g., chart, table, graph, checklist, map, timeline) applicable to the question being posed, the assignment, or the task.
The teacher provides the formulas needed to solve a problem.
The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to identify people and places.
The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to define or clarify vocabulary.
During classroom discussions, the teacher clarifies or rewords complex text or questions using simpler language.
The teacher directs the student (e.g., highlight, bold, point to, flag the information) to the specific parts of the passage, diagram, map, or figure that is being discussed.
The teacher presents parts of a complex concept one at a time.

Educators, parents, and students must understand that designated supports provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from designated supports allowed for use on state assessments. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet each student's needs. Unlike instruction, state assessments are standardized to provide a reliable comparison of outcomes among all examinees. Certain designated supports used in the classroom would invalidate the content being assessed or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment if used during testing. For this reason, not all designated supports suitable for instruction are allowed during state assessments. However, the policies for accommodations on state assessments do not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to aid student learning.

Special Situations

Because content and language supports are embedded designated supports presented in an online format, replicating these features in a paper or braille test version is not always possible. Technology-based supports enable most students to test online; however, in those instances in which the use of an embedded support is not feasible or the administration of an online assessment is inappropriate due to a student's particular disability, a student may be tested using a paper test booklet. Additional information can be found on the [Special Administration of an Assessment](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

For students taking STAAR braille who are also eligible to receive content and language supports, including students using a refreshable braille display, district personnel should ensure that student eligibility is correctly marked in TIDE in order to receive STAAR with embedded supports test booklets along with braille materials during the initial order window.

Once materials are received, the test administrator will use the secure test instructions to provide access to the content and language supports in the specific assessment being administered. The secure test instructions will provide picture descriptions of content and language support images and graphics (e.g., charts, tables, graphs) that may be reproduced for accessibility (e.g., braille graphics; pairing graphics with tactile symbols, texts, or objects; enlarging or projecting).

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and are eligible for an oral or signed administration with content and language supports must take STAAR online to access these embedded supports. However, a signed administration is allowed for parts of the test that can be read aloud but cannot be accessed through TTS.

ASL videos are offered as an online option for a signed administration. Students can independently select and change the level of signing support during the test administration by selecting chapters to review specific parts of the videos as needed. ASL videos are available only for test questions and revising passages in English and are not offered on Spanish tests or for content and language supports (e.g., pop-ups, rollovers). In these instances, test administrators may sign test content in the same way they do for paper tests. Test administrators should be trained using the [Accommodations](#) section of the *Coordinator Resources* and should also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the [General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

Planning for Testing

Careful review of the state accommodations policies is required so that students receive only those accessibility features and designated supports that are allowed or approved by TEA for use on state assessments. District and campus coordinators, test administrators, and other campus personnel involved in state testing must consider the following questions related to ensuring accessibility for students on test day:

- Which students will receive accessibility features or designated supports on test day?
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students who will use accessibility features and designated supports on test day? For example, ensuring that calculators and other equipment have sufficient batteries or selecting separate settings for students who use certain supports requires advance planning.
- What staff training is needed to properly provide certain designated supports? For example, entering a student's responses in the Data Entry Interface (DEI) or providing an oral or signed administration of a paper test requires advance training.
- What campus and district procedures are in place to ensure test security, especially if the student is using technology as a support? Refer to the [Test Security](#) and [Technology Resources](#) sections of the *Coordinator Resources*.
- What procedure is in place and who is responsible for recording designated supports in TIDE?
- Have students had the opportunity to practice interacting with the tools and features on the [Practice Test Site](#)? It is important that students have used the online practice tests to become familiar with selecting answers, using the online tools, moving through the assessment, and submitting the assessment.
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students taking different versions of STAAR with different designated supports? For example, should students taking STAAR online without designated supports be grouped with students taking STAAR online with designated supports? Should students taking STAAR on paper and students taking STAAR online be grouped together?
- Have devices been properly configured for testing? For guidance on the Test Delivery System (TDS), refer to the [Setting Up TDS Workstations](#) webpage.
- If students are using the refreshable braille display embedded online support, are the computers prepared for testing according to the guidelines laid out on the Setting Up TDS Workstations webpage?

For additional information, contact TEA using the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#) or call (512) 463-9536.



TE★AS ASSESSMENT