# STAAR Accessibility

# **Educator Guide**





Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the <u>Student Assessment</u> 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.



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# **Resources**

- Test Administration Resources
- <u>District and Campus Coordinator Resources</u>
- Assessments for Special Populations
- STAAR Released Test Questions
- STAAR Resources
- STAAR Spanish Resources
- Texas Assessment Program

### **Overview**

### **Purpose**

The goal of State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) accessibility 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, including STAAR Spanish, accessibility falls 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 <a href="Accommodations">Accommodations</a> 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 instruction; however, a student cannot 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 include designated supports that may be made available without TEA approval to students who meet eligibility criteria. The decision 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 through the <u>Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)</u> under the *Administration and Security Forms* module. Accommodation Request Forms must be submitted to TEA in a timely manner 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. Requests should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the individual student's testing window. 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. This type of support must be documented in the student's paperwork as "pending TEA approval."

# **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 their understanding of the tested 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.

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.

Due consideration should be given to the mode in which various designated supports can be offered. 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 <u>Special Administration of an Assessment</u> page of the *Coordinator Resources* for more information.

### **Accommodations**

## **Online Accessibility Features**

Accessibility features are available to all students taking STAAR and STAAR Spanish assessments. Some of these features are embedded in the online system, while others (e.g., individual test administration, general reminders to stay on task) are not. Students can practice using the online accessibility features by accessing STAAR Online Practice Tests on the <u>Practice Test Site</u>. 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 <u>Accessibility Features</u> page of the *Coordinator Resources* for more information on available accessibility features.

(**Q**) (**Q**) Zoom Out Zoom In The Sticky Notes tool allows a 5 6 7 8 student to enter notes about a Read the selection and choose the best answer question. The notes can be Sticky Notes to each question. accessed from the question for Notes are not scored. which the note was created. Virtual-Reality Field Trips: Worth the Investment? All vou can h The student can drag the own breathing as The student can cut, Sticky Notes tool to different To open the *Sticky Notes* airtight helmet. T copy, and paste text to parts of the test page using tool, the student opens the unfamiliar under and from the Sticky the Sticky Notes headers. Context Menu by right-Notes. The remaining wonder if you wou clicking or by selecting the number of characters weren't weighing you down. Suddenly a Context Menu icon and then classmate calls out, "Look!" Your breath that can be entered is selecting Sticky Notes. displayed at the bottom catches in your throat when your eyes land of the text area. on the large blue planet—Earth. Then the school bell rings. You carefully lift the virtual reality (VR) headset off and place it on your Cancel Save and Close desk. You turn to your teacher and say with a smile, "Best field trip ever!" © Definition 3 After entering the notes, the student must select the Save The student can use and Close button to save the the resize handle to note and close the Sticky Notes. resize the Sticky

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

Figure 2. Notepad (available in English and Spanish)

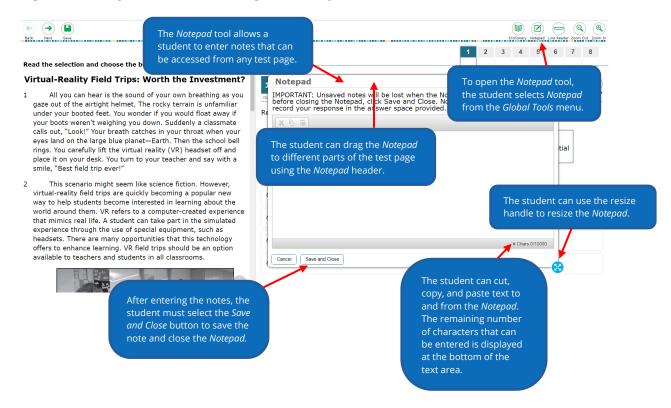


Figure 3. Color Setting (available in English and Spanish)

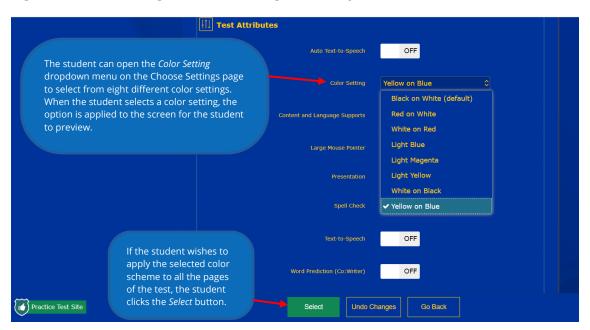


Figure 3a. Color Setting (available in English and Spanish)

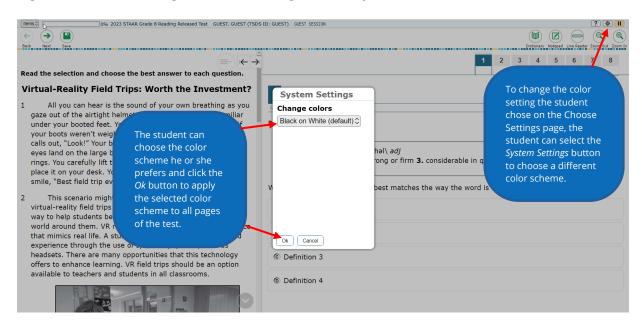


Figure 4. Line Reader (available in English and Spanish)

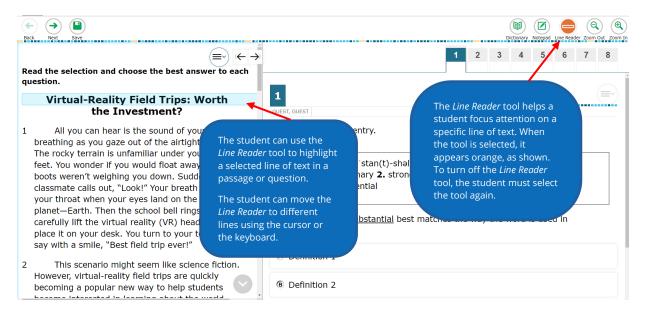


Figure 5. Zoom (available in English and Spanish)

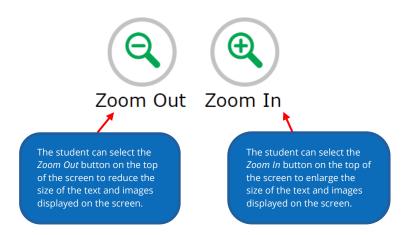
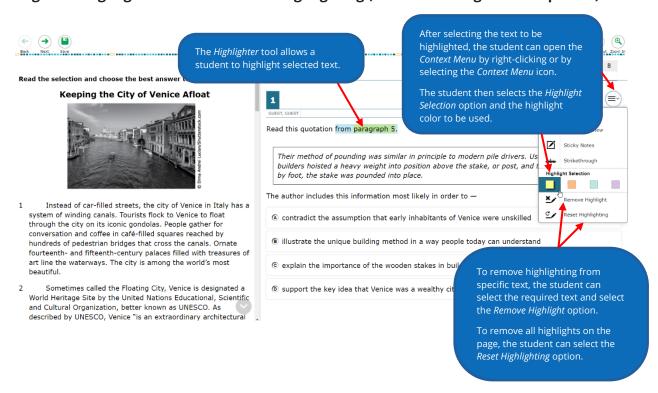


Figure 6. Highlight Selection or Reset Highlighting (available in English and Spanish)



Hill Test Attributes System Default Large Black Auto Text-to-Speech When the student selects The student can open Extra Large Black a mouse pointer option, the *Large Mouse Pointer* Large Green the option is displayed on dropdown menu on the Color Setting the screen for the Extra Large Green Choose Settings page to student to preview. select from eleven Large Red different options. Content and Language Supports Extra Large Red Large White Large Mouse Pointer Extra Large Green English Presentation Spell Check OFF If the student wishes to apply the selected mouse pointer, the student clicks the Select button. OFF Text-to-Speech Practice Test Site Undo Changes Go Back

Figure 7. Mouse Pointers (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 <a href="Locally-Approved Designated">Locally-Approved Designated</a> 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. The test administrator will provide the supports to the student on test day. For example, a student needing supplemental aids 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.

Some designated supports are also available as embedded online designated supports. 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.

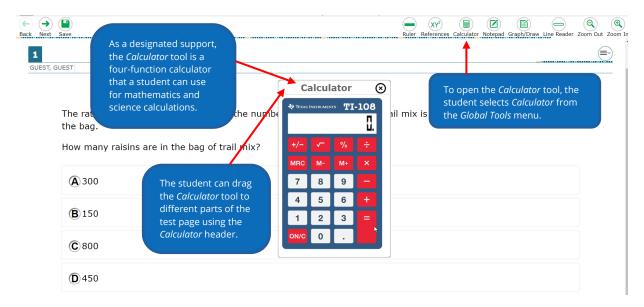
Content and language supports are available as embedded online designated supports. These include pop-ups, rollovers, supplementary materials, and prereading text. The delivery of an online assessment offers an opportunity to provide these types of supports in a standardized way to students who use similar 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 <u>Practice Test Site</u>. 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 is highlighted as it is read aloud.

Please note that 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.

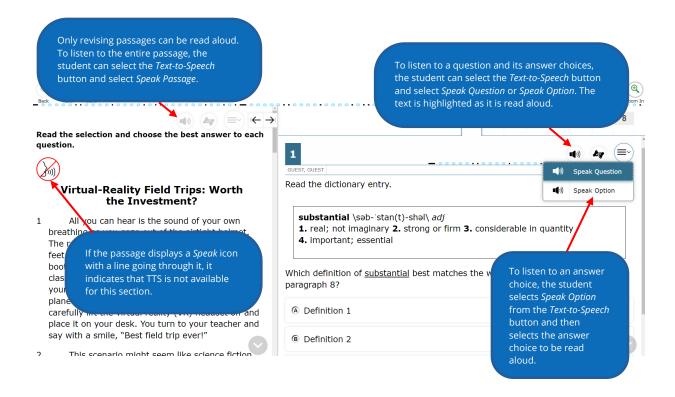


Figure 9a. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)

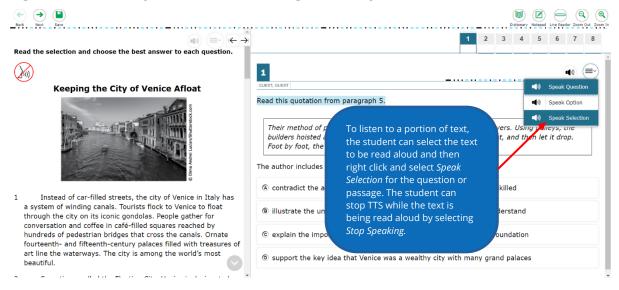
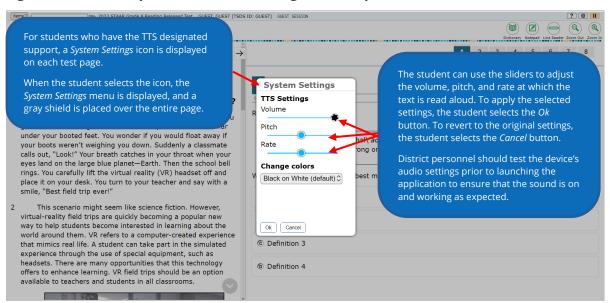


Figure 9b. Text-to-Speech (available in English and Spanish)



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

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

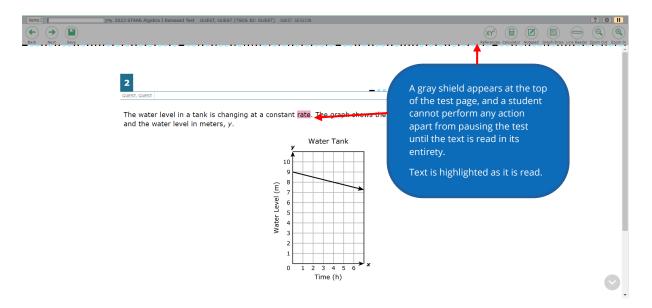


Figure 10a. Auto Text-to-Speech including the five second countdown timer (available in English and Spanish)

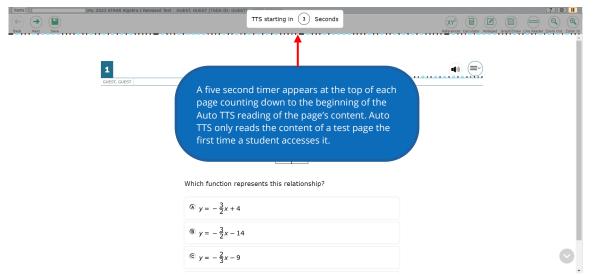


Figure 11. Speech-to-Text (STT) (available in English and Spanish for constructed-response questions)

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.

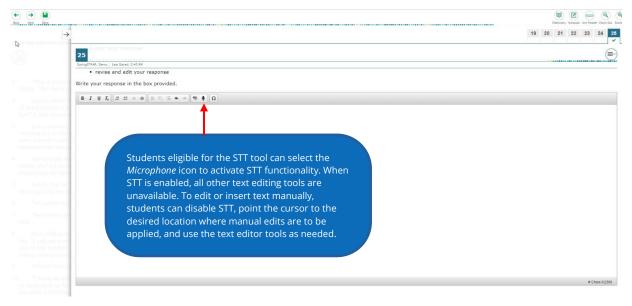


Figure 11a. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish for constructed-response questions)

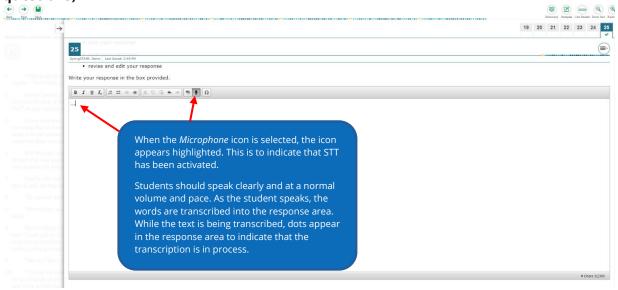


Figure 11b. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish on Sticky Notes)

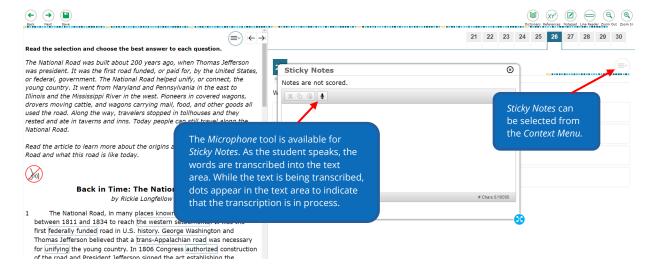
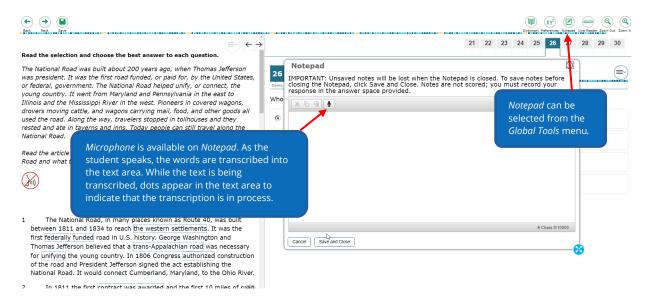


Figure 11c. Speech-to-Text (available in English and Spanish on Notepad)



#### Figure 12. Word Prediction (available in English and Spanish except for Mathematics)

When *Word Prediction* is enabled, students automatically receive word suggestions as they type answers for questions with written responses. This is used to meet the accommodation need of spelling assistance.

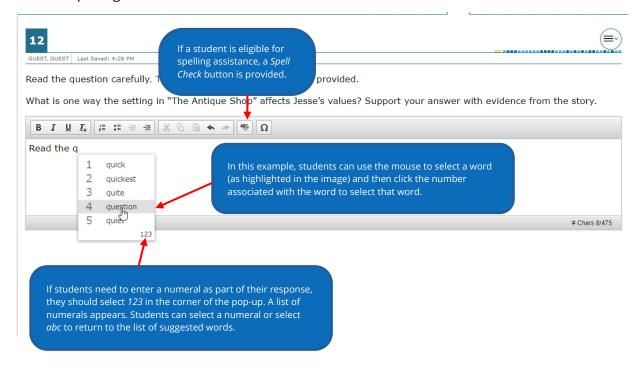
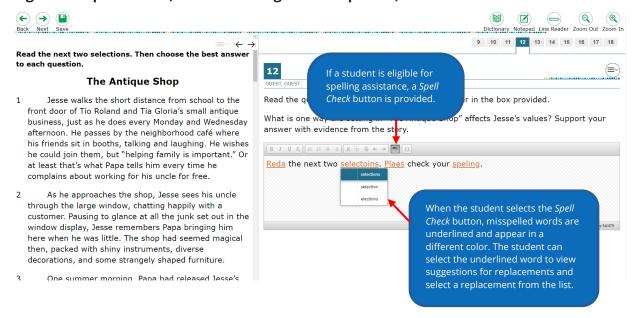


Figure 13. Spell Check (available in English and Spanish)



#### Figure 14. ASL Videos (available in English)

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

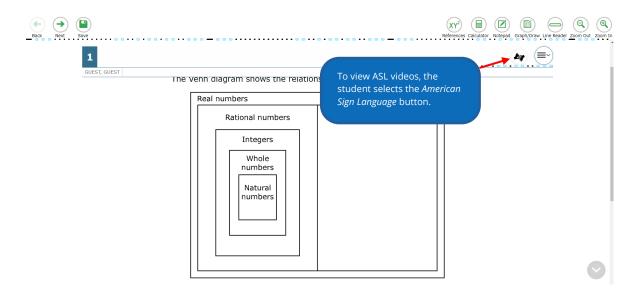


Figure 14a. ASL Videos (available in English)

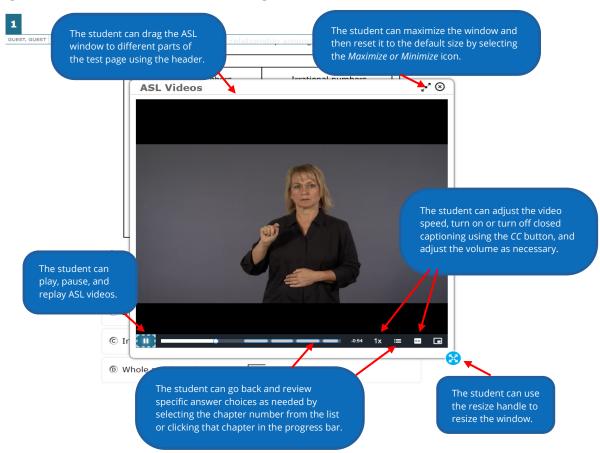


Figure 15. Refreshable Braille Display (available on English versions of RLA and social studies)

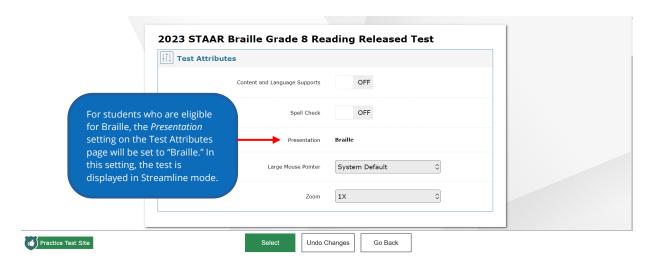
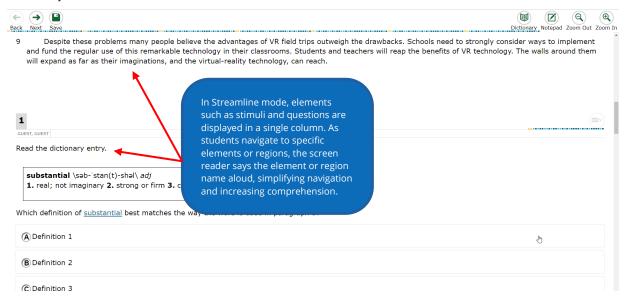


Figure 15a. Refreshable Braille Display (available on English versions of RLA and social studies)



**NOTE:** Refreshable Braille Display will not function with all the supported devices used for testing. Refer to the <u>Minimum System Requirements</u> 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, some of the accommodations in the pop-ups and rollovers may not be identical due to linguistic differences.

#### Rollovers

- 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.

References Calculator Notepad Graph/Draw Line Reader Zoom Out Zoom In **← → □** Back Next Save 9 For students who are eligible (**=**√ for content and language supports, certain test questions The area of a square wall is 182 square feet. Wh include a small *Rollover* arrow pointing toward words or (A) 91.0 ft phrases. Clicking this arrow opens a rollover containing (B) 13.5 ft simplified text. © 54.0 ft ①45.5 ft

Figure 16. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

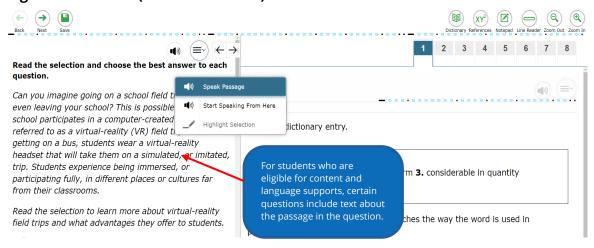
Back Next Save References Calculator Notepad Graph/Draw Line Reader Zoom Out Zoom In A rollover covers the **4**() (=>) original text. Clicking 9 the *Rollover* arrow again closes it. The area of (i) Spea Which meas et of this wall? A = 182 ft<sup>2</sup> (A) 91.0 ft For students who have the TTS designated (B) 13.5 ft support, text in the rollover can be read aloud. © 54.0 ft To listen to the rollover, the student clicks the text-to-speech button and then selects the (D) 45.5 ft Speak Question or Speak Option option.

Figure 16a. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

#### **Prereads**

Offer text before the reading and editing passages (for RLA).

Figure 17. Preread (available for RLA)



#### **Supplementary Materials**

- Include blank Punnett squares for Biology.
- Include writing checklists for RLA.

Figure 18. Supplementary Materials (Punnett Squares available in English)

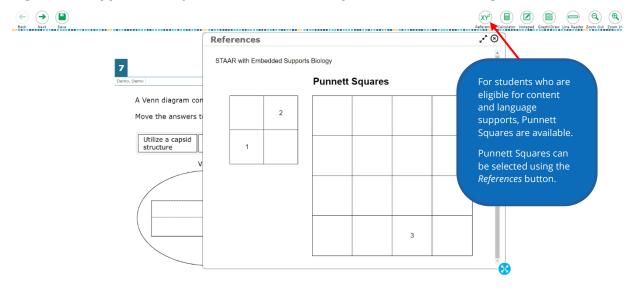
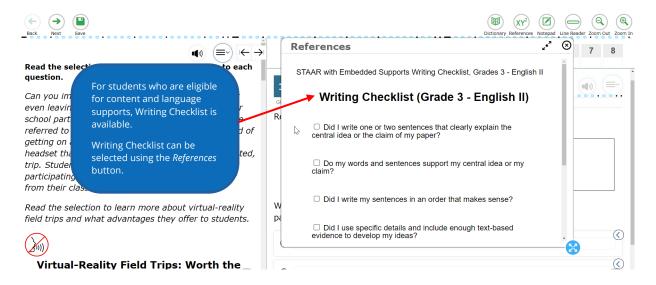


Figure 18a. Supplementary Materials (Writing Checklists available on English and Spanish versions of RLA)

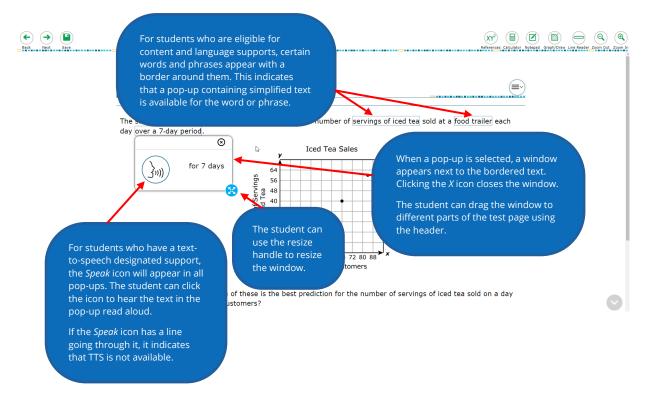


#### **Pop-Ups**

- 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 19. Pop-Ups (available in English and Spanish)



# The Link to Content and Language Supports

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

To make designated support 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
- be 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 accessibility 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 <a href="Special Administration of an Assessment">Special Administration of an Assessment</a> page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

For students who take a braille test (including students who use the screen reader support for Refreshable Braille Displays) and are eligible for content and language supports, district personnel should ensure that student eligibility is correctly marked in TIDE in order to receive a STAAR with Embedded Supports paper test booklet and place an order for braille materials in TIDE. 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 test 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., brailling graphics; pairing graphics with tactile symbols, texts, or objects; enlarging or projecting).

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and eligible for oral or signed administrations and content and language supports must take STAAR online to access these embedded supports. However, since these students are unable to access the TTS function, a signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud. ASL videos are offered as an online option for a signed administration.

ASL videos allow a student to 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. However, it is important to note that 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 <u>Accommodations</u> section of the *Coordinator Resources* and should also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the <u>General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing page of the *Coordinator Resources*.</u>

# **Planning for Testing**

Careful review of the state accessibility 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 choosing 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? Please refer to the <u>Technology</u>
  <u>Guidelines for the Texas Assessment Program</u> page and the <u>Technology Resources</u>
  section 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 <u>Practice Test Site</u>? 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?
- Are computers prepared for testing? For guidance on the Test Delivery System (TDS), refer to the <u>Setting Up TDS Workstations</u> webpage.
- If students are using the Refreshable Braille Display embedded online support, are the computers prepared for testing according to the guidelines laid out in the Setting Up TDS Workstations webpage?

For additional information, contact TEA using the <u>Student Assessment Help Desk</u> or call (512) 463-9536.

