

## ACCESS for ELLs 2.0:

# Frequently Asked Questions on Accommodations, Accessibility Tools, and Test Administration Procedures

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## ACCESS FOR ELLS 2.0

### Overview

How have allowable accommodations changed for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

WIDA and member states have created new *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodation Guidelines* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/guidelines>) and *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodations Descriptions* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/descriptions>) that apply to both online and paper-based test administrations. Many previous accommodations have now been either built into test items or the online test platform or are offered as variations to standard test administration procedures. The new guidelines were released, along with additional support materials, in June 2015.

Do the new *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines* and the *Accessibility and Accommodation Descriptions* apply to the Kindergarten *ACCESS for ELLs* and to the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs*?

No, the Kindergarten *ACCESS for ELLs* and the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs* will continue to use their existing accommodation guidelines for 2015-16. The new framework, guidelines, and descriptions being introduced with ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 will be integrated into the Kindergarten *ACCESS for ELLs* and to the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs* in 2016-17 testing.

### Selecting Accommodations

What are the differences between an accommodation, an accessibility tool, and variations in standard test administration procedures?

Accommodations are available only to ELLs with disabilities when listed in an approved IEP or 504 plan, and only when the student requires the accommodation(s) to participate in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 meaningfully and appropriately. Provision of accommodations to students with disabilities is required by federal and state laws. However, many additional tools are now available to all ELLs, called accessibility tools. In addition, test administration procedures such as changes in the test setting or test group size are now available to all ELLs, at the discretion of Test Coordinators.

Do students need to have an IEP in order to take the paper-based test; can a Test Administrator or ESL teacher make that determination?

Each state will provide guidelines on situations in which paper-based testing would be allowed and on the process for making that determination.

Who should make the decision about allowing a variation of a test administration procedure? (Can the Test Administrator make this decision?)

The supports listed as “test administration procedures” are available to any student, as needed, at the discretion of the Test Coordinator (or principal or designee), provided that all security conditions and staffing requirements are met.

Can the accommodations selected for the state content assessment be used on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

In some cases, yes, they may be used. However, accommodations policies for ELP testing and content area testing are not identical, and are not interchangeable. The ELP tests and content area assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science serve different purposes, and therefore, different accommodations may be allowed for each. For example, if the Listening section of ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 were presented in American Sign Language (ASL) to a deaf or hard-of-hearing student, the test would be measuring the student’s proficiency in comprehending ASL, not spoken English. Similarly, if the Reading test were read aloud, the construct of reading English on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 would become a test of a student’s ability to comprehend spoken, rather than written, English.

Does an alternative exist to taking the test on a to computer? Can a student with a disability who cannot use a computer take a paper-based ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

Yes. Paper-based versions exist of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 for students who are unable to use a computer, and must be included in their IEP or 504 plan. The accommodations matrix in the *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Descriptions* document provides information on which accommodations are offered only on paper-based test administrations (e.g., a human read-aloud, large print test, and Braille test are all examples of accommodations available only on hard-copy/print versions of the test).

Will there be provisions for visually impaired students?

Yes, any student (including those with visual impairments) will have access to accessibility tools such as the magnifier, line guide, color contrast, and color overlay. In addition, students with visual impairments may take a Braille or larger print version of the test, and may respond using a braille notetaker or braille writer.

## Accessibility Tools

What are accessibility tools?

For ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, accessibility tools may either be embedded in the online test or provided to ELLs by Test Administrators for online or paper-based tests, and are available to *all* ELLs taking ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.. Examples of accessibility tools

include highlighter, line guide, magnifier, and color overlay. All accessibility tools are available to *all* ELLs during testing, and do not require specific designation prior to testing in order to be made available to the student.

## Administration

### Communicating Accommodations to Test Administrators

How will we know which accommodations to provide to students on the day of the test?

Each school should designate knowledgeable staff to maintain a list of students requiring specific accommodations and provide this information to the Test Coordinator (in order to schedule test sessions appropriately), and to the Test Administrators administering the test with accommodations. Depending on the WIDA-member state, the list of selected accommodations may be uploaded to the student's pre-ID file and printed out with the student's test ticket, or selected in the WIDA Assessment Management System directly. (Only three accommodations that are embedded within the online test require pre-test designation to be activated; the remaining accommodations are delivered locally by Test Administrators.) A post-test survey is available for Test Administrators to record the accommodations provided to students during testing.

### Accommodations Embedded within the Online Test Items

Will we be able to pause within the test for students with IEPs, for example, to provide extra time for reading?

Yes, the system will allow students to pause, as needed, and to take the test at their own pace.

Which accommodations are embedded within test items and not locally-delivered during the test session?

There are three accommodations provided as part of the online test itself:

- Manual control of test item audio:
  - (description) Manual play of Listening, Writing, and Speaking test items where there are audio prompts
- Manual repeat of test item audio:
  - (description) Manual repeat of Listening, Writing, and Speaking test items where there are audio prompts
- Extended Speaking Test Response time:
  - (description) Students are provided up to twice the regular testing time to complete the Speaking test

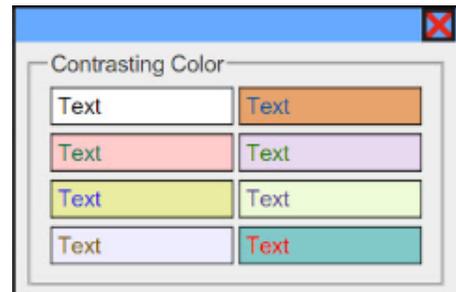
Are any of the online accommodations exclusive of one another, or cause another accessibility tool to be canceled?

No, the accommodations or accessibility tools are designed to work independently of each other. For example, the online accommodations, “manual control of start audio play of item” and “repeat item audio” are not automatically bundled together; each must be requested to be activated during the test.

Color contrast and color overlay seem almost the same. What’s the difference?

Color contrast and color overlay provide students with different types of visual interaction with the test items. If needed, most students taking the online test will probably select color contrast rather than color overlay.

Color contrast allows student to select from a variety of background/text color combinations: white with black text, pink with green text, yellow with blue text, light grey with brown text, orange with blue text, dark grey with green text, light green with purple text, and dark green with red text.



Color overlay allows a student to change the background color that appears behind text, graphics, and response areas, similar to the “security” screens that some people put over their computer screen. Five colors are available: pink, yellow, blue, green, and orange.

**Students who are blind or visually impaired**

What accommodations and accessibility tools will be available for blind or visually impaired individuals?

Accommodations: braille and large print paper tests will be available, and most of the accommodations used for the previous ACCESS for ELLs will be available (e.g., braille writer/braille notetaker). Additionally, read aloud and other accommodations are also available. Refer to *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodation Guidelines* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/guidelines>) and *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodations Descriptions* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/descriptions>) for more information.

Accessibility Tools: Magnification, line guide, color contrast, color overlay, and the ability to display the test on a large monitor will all be standard available features on the online assessment.

### Read-Aloud Accommodations

What are the text demands found in the different test domains of ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

When making accommodations decisions, IEP teams should consider the default format in which test directions and test items will be presented on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. (The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 directions and items both provide greater accessibility supports for all ELLs.)

Table 1. Presentation Format of Each ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Test (Before Accommodations)

	<b>Online Administration</b>	<b>Paper-Based Administration</b>
Directions for All Four Domains	Available to all ELLs in text format, as well as embedded pre-recorded human voice audio	Available to all ELLs in text format
Listening Test Items	Scenario and items are delivered using embedded pre-recorded human voice audio, but the answer choices may either be text or text and graphics	Scenario and items are delivered as pre-recorded human voice audio via CD, but the answer choices may either be text or text and graphics
Reading Test Items	Questions and passages are text-based. Answer choices may either be text or text and graphics	Questions and passages are text-based. Answer choices may be text or text and graphics
Writing Test Items	Presented as text with human voice audio. Student will answer by writing either on paper or keyboarding.	Presented as text. Student will answer by writing either on paper or keyboarding.
Speaking Test Items	Presented as text with human voice audio, with modeled student responses. Answers will be provided by the student verbally.	Presented as text and as pre-recorded human voice audio via CD, with modeled student responses. Answers will be provided by the student verbally.

Which read-aloud and repeat accommodations options might be appropriate for my student? Should I rely on the audio support embedded in the item prompts, or use a human reader? Should I give the online or paper-based test?

Depending on the needs of the individual student, and the format in which the student prefers in order to take the test (i.e., online or paper-based), the IEP or multidisciplinary team will determine whether read-aloud and/or item-repeat accommodation option is most appropriate for the student, and how these will be provided: either on the computer or by a human reader. Refer to the *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodations Descriptions* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/descriptions>) for information on each accommodation and to the *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodation Guidelines* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/guidelines>) and for Decision-Making Questions.

In both paper and online formats, all students will automatically have access to pre-recorded human voice audio embedded into test item prompts. In the online test, the listening, writing, and speaking test item prompts will play automatically (a “start prompt manually” accommodation is available); in the paper-based test, the listening and speaking audio is delivered using a CD.

The online test will likely be appropriate for most students, including ELLs with disabilities, and is more efficient to administer. The online test contains more multi-modal support built directly into test items that can supplement read aloud and repetition accommodations. Students can manually control the start and repeat of the test item audio.

WIDA recommends, in particular and where possible, the online administration of the Listening and Speaking tests since they include innovative features such as a virtual Test Administrator to deliver the item, centralized (rather than local)\_scoring, and use of a “model student” to provide examples of expected linguistic responses from an actual student.

The paper-based test may be appropriate for students who need more **intensive** support, for example, from a human reader; or for students who are unable to or unfamiliar with, the use of technology. For speaking and listening, the Test Administrator can manually-control the delivery of the item prompts via the CD or the student can have a human reader accommodation. For the Writing test, students may elect to provide either hand-written or online responses, and all students, regardless of the test format, may have the Writing prompt read to the student by a human reader. Human readers will use and follow the script provided and refer to the Human Reader Guidelines found in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines*.

For students with a read-aloud accommodation, will the Test Administrator read from their own test booklet or computer screen, a script, or from the student’s test booklet or computer?

For the online test, the human reader will read the text exactly as it appears on the computer screen. For the paper-based test, the Test Administrator will read from a script, following human reader guidelines found in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines*.

### Tracking and Monitoring a Student's Progress and Placement of Responses

Can a Test Administrator ensure that a student is on the correct page? Can the Test Administrator assist a student in finding the question or answer space on the online assessment?

Yes. A Test Administrator may verbally redirect student's attention to test, in English or in student's native language, and monitor the correct placement of responses, either onscreen or in the test booklet.

A Test Administrator may NOT prompt a student regarding the correctness or completeness of his or her response.

### Repetition of Directions

Can test directions be repeated on ACCESS for ELLS 2.0?

Repetition of the test directions by the Test Administrator are permitted as a variation of a test administration procedure.

### Repetition of Questions

Can test questions be repeated on ACCESS for ELLS 2.0?

As part of the online test administration, the test audio plays automatically. However, there are instances in which a human reader may repeat the item. For the online test, the Listening test response options can be repeated; for the paper-based test, the Listening and Speaking test asks the student to request that the Test Administrator repeat the test item audio.

### Extended Time

Does the test, or individual test questions, have time limits? How does extended time work?

Recommended time limits for the Listening, Reading, and Writing portions of ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 have been provided to support the scheduling of test administrations. the use of time-and-a-half (i.e., 50 percent additional time) is allowed for all students beyond the recommended time. Students with disabilities are permitted to take each subdomain test over the course of a single school day, if the need for extended time has been documented in the IEP.

## Scribing Accommodations

What requirements must be met in order for a student to receive a scribe accommodation?

The need for a scribe must be documented in an IEP/504 plan, and the accommodation must be used by the student during routine classroom instruction and assessment.

What should the scribe do during the test, and how should they do it?

A scribe must be a certified Test Administrator. He or she will either write the student’s dictated responses in the paper test booklet, or enter the responses in the online assessment, at the time of testing. Students receiving the scribe accommodation may respond to test items orally, by gesturing/pointing, or by using an assistive technology device or software (e.g., speech-to-text, picture/symbol communication system, etc.). All responses must be entered by the scribe exactly as dictated by the student, who is allowed to edit what the scribe has written. Specific guidelines are provided in the Guidelines for Using the Scribed Response Accommodation available at <http://wida.us/accommodations/guidelines>.

How should a scribe enter responses during an online test administration?

The new *Guidelines for Using Accommodations and Accessibility Tools for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0* contain detailed guidance for using the scribed response accommodation, including acceptable and non-acceptable practices. Please refer to the guidelines document for this guidance.

What is the difference between “scribing” and “transcribing?”?

See Table 2 below for a general description and examples of the difference between “scribing” and “transcribing.”

Table 2. Response Accommodations Available for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

Type of Support	Selected Response Accommodations Allowed for Both Online and Paper-Based Test Administrations (Unless Noted)
Responses <b>scribed</b> for the student <i>during</i> testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses <i>scribed</i> by Test Administrator as responses are dictated or indicated (SR)</li> </ul> Student may either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dictate responses orally, or</li> </ul>

Type of Support	Selected Response Accommodations Allowed for Both Online and Paper-Based Test Administrations (Unless Noted)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gesture or point to correct responses</li> </ul>
Device used by student to respond to test questions (Test Administrator must <b>transcribe</b> responses <i>after</i> testing is completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Word processor or similar keyboarding device to respond to test items (WD)</li> <li>● Student responds orally using external augmentative and alternative communication device or software, such as a speech-to-text device (AC)</li> <li>● Student responds using a recording device, which is played back and <i>transcribed</i>, either by student or Test Administrator (RD)</li> </ul>
Braille or large print test (Test Administrator must <b>transcribe</b> responses <i>after</i> testing is completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student either responds verbally, and responses are <i>scribed</i>; or</li> <li>● Student responds using a b11raille writer or b11raille notetaker (BW), and responses are <i>transcribed</i></li> </ul>

Refer to the *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Accessibility and Accommodations Descriptions* (<http://wida.us/accommodations/descriptions>) for information on each accommodation.

## Listening Domain

### Headsets vs. Script Reading

For the online test administration, can teachers still read from a script as an accommodation, or do all students need to use headsets to listen to the audio test items?

For a student who requires a read-aloud accommodation from an in-person human reader, he or she must take the entire test in paper-based format. This should be stipulated in the IEP.

### Lip-reading

How do you administer the Listening assessment to a student who lip-reads?

The IEP team should designate the student for a paper-based test administration, and the accommodation of a read aloud by an in-person human reader. Schools should order the oral reading script with their test materials. The student should be tested separately, or with others in the same grade-cluster and tier who will receive the same accommodation.

## Reading Domain

Can the student receive the read-aloud accommodation on the Reading test, if this is included in his/her IEP?

No, the reading aloud of test items on the Reading test is **not** permitted. If the Reading test were read aloud, the test results would be invalidated, since it is a test of a student's ability to read English, not comprehend spoken English. (See IDEA, 34 CFR §§300.160(b)(2)(i) and (ii).)

## Speaking Domain

### Assistive Technology Augmentative Communication System

If a student uses an augmentative alternate communication (AAC) device or speech-generating device as an accommodation, can he or she use this device for the speaking portion of the WIDA ACCESS?

Use of speech-generating or picture-to-speech device would violate the speaking construct of the ELP assessment, which focuses on the student's ability to vocalize sound.

Is the certification process for assistive technology devices currently being used by other consortia parallel to the one being used by WIDA?

Yes, WIDA certification requirements for assistive technology devices are consistent with those used by the other consortia. Schools must confirm the functionality of the devices and software within their technology environment prior to ACCESS 2.0 online testing by conducting a simulation using the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Practice Tests.

## Writing Domain

### Assistive Technology

If a student taking the paper-based test has an accommodation to respond to test questions using a word processor, how do the student's test responses get transmitted for scoring?

If the student requires this accommodation, then he or she must be given a word processor or similar keyboarding device to respond to test items, and the responses must be transcribed verbatim into the student's test booklet by the Test Administrator once the student has completed the test.

### Blank/scratch paper

Can scratch paper be provided to students for organizational writing tasks?

For grades 1-3, planning space will be provided in the test booklet. For grades 4 and higher, scratch paper may be used. The scratch paper will not be scored and must be destroyed by the school after the test administration.

Should scratch paper be provided by schools for students taking the online test administration?

Yes, scratch/blank paper is allowed for all students taking either the online or paper-based test administration.

### **Graphic Organizers**

Can students use blank graphic organizers during the writing test if they have that accommodation in their IEP?

No. Students may recreate their own graphic organizer on the scratch paper provided, but they may not use pre-printed organizers.