
Allowable Testing Accommodations on the Grades 3-8 Assessments

This bulletin provides information on allowable testing accommodations for students with disabilities who are participating in the **grades 3-8 tests in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics**. **These changes only apply to the grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics assessments and do not apply to elementary and intermediate-level assessments in other subjects or to any of the Regents examinations.** The information contained herein is based on the State Education Department's October 2005 publication *New York State Testing Program: Introduction to the Grades 3-8 Testing Program in English Language Arts and Mathematics*.

Generally, students with disabilities must be provided with the testing accommodations indicated in their individualized education programs (IEPs) or 504 Accommodation Plans when taking state assessments. According to state policy, however, testing accommodations that change what a test is measuring are not permitted on the Grades 3 through 8 ELA and Mathematics assessments. Test accommodations that are **not** allowed on the English Language arts and Mathematics assessments are described below.

Grades 3 through 8 English Language Arts

For Reading Sections: Test directions may be read aloud to the students. Because the test measures a student's reading skills (decoding and comprehension), no other parts of this section may be read aloud. The test directions are those instructions, usually in bold-face type, that precede a passage or a test question number. They are not to be confused with any part of the actual student task which follows the test question number.

For Listening Sections: Test directions and all questions (in this part of the test only) may be read aloud to students whose IEPs or 504 Plans include this testing accommodation. If indicated in a student's IEP or 504 Plan, the listening selection may be read aloud more than the standard number of times.

For the Editing Paragraph (Book 2, Grades 3, 5 and 7): Both the editing paragraph and the sample editing paragraph that precede it may be read aloud to students whose IEPs or 504 Plans include this testing accommodation. However, as the test measures writing skills, students are **not** allowed to use spell checking and/or grammar-checking devices during any part of the English Language Arts Test. Students may not have requirements for spelling, paragraphing, and/or punctuation (writing mechanics) waived for any part of the Grades 3 through 8 English Language Arts Test.

Grades 3 through 8 Mathematics

All parts of the test may be read aloud to the students whose IEPs or 504 Plans include this testing accommodation.

Grades 3-6: The use of a calculator is NOT allowed because the test assesses a student's proficiencies involving calculations.

Grades 7-8: Because the multiple-choice test questions assess the student's proficiencies involving calculations, the use of a calculator is **not** allowed when answering multiple-choice questions. A calculator is permitted for short and extended response questions. (A scientific calculator must be used. A graphing calculator is **not** permitted.)

According to guidance provided by the State Education Department, the use of scribes and use of tape recorders are allowable accommodations for both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests. For the English Language arts Tests, students using scribes or tape records must provide all information for the writing sections of the tests, including spelling of difficult words, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar. Students may use a word processor (with spell-checking and grammar-checking devices disabled) instead of a scribe.

Grade 4 Elementary level Science; Grade 5 Social Studies Test; Grade 8 Intermediate level science and Social studies and Intermediate level Technology Education tests.

There are no changes in the accommodations permitted for any of these tests. These tests do not assess reading or writing mechanics. Therefore, the entire test must be read aloud to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504

accommodation Plan (504 Plan) requires this accommodation. Additionally, spell checking and grammar-checking devices must be provided for students with disabilities and students should not be penalized for spelling, grammar and/or punctuation requirements if the IEP or 504 Plan requires these accommodations when taking the elementary and intermediate-level assessments in social studies.

For additional information on test accommodations Please refer to the State Education Department's publication *Test Access and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Tools to Guide Decision Making (August 2004)*. This publication is available on the State Education Department's web site at: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialded/publications/policy/testaccess/guide.htm>

More detailed information on the New York State Testing Program can be found in the School Administrator's Manual which is available on SED's web site at: www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/sam.

Advice to Local Leaders

- NYSUT members, especially those who are members of the Committee on Special Education, should request appropriate information and training on testing accommodations.
- Local leaders should monitor the implementation of school district procedures requiring teachers and other school personnel who have students with disabilities enrolled in their classes or on their caseloads have copies of the individualized education programs of these students.