

Read Aloud non-embedded Accommodation for Grades 3-5 ELA Reading Passages

This document includes information about an update to the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* (UAAG) based on the March 6, 2015 governing member vote:

- Effective immediately, the Read Aloud non-embedded accommodation is allowed in Grades 3-5 for all ELA reading passages for the 2014-2015 Smarter Balanced summative assessment administration.
- As an accommodation, there must be documented need of a read aloud for ELA reading in a student's IEP or 504 plan.
- States may collect data regarding which students IEP teams determine are eligible for this accommodation.
- This accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1-2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment).
- By June 2015 Smarter Balanced members will discuss the ELA non-embedded read aloud accommodation and evaluate the practicability of adding the embedded text-to-speech accommodation.
- Smarter Balanced's read aloud guidelines are available here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Scribing-Protocol.pdf> and are added to the UAAG.
- Consistent with a member's policies regarding accessibility resource approval, a member may require districts or schools to submit a request for approval prior to making this accommodation available.
- A member state may elect **not to make available** to its students, any universal tool, designated support, or accommodation that is otherwise included in the *Guidelines* when the implementation or use of the universal tool, designated support, or accommodation is in conflict with a member state's law, regulation, or policy.

Smarter Balanced uses evidence-based decision making practices throughout the test development process, which includes recommendations and decisions concerning accessibility resources. Discussions regarding read aloud/text-to-speech with a multi-disciplinary team of experts revealed that experts view decoding in grades 3-5 differently. Although some experts view decoding as the interaction between the student and written text, other experts have a broader perspective. These other experts view decoding as the interaction between a student and information at large, which can include text, tactile, audio, gestures and other presentation styles.

Current language included in the UAAG:

Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Read aloud	Text is read aloud to the student by a	This accommodation is appropriate for

Update Regarding Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines

<p>(for ELA reading passages, grades 6–8 and 11, blind students in grades 3–8 and 11 who do not yet have adequate braille skills)</p>	<p>trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the <i>Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual</i>. All or portions of the content may be read aloud.</p>	<p>a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1–2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students in grades 3–5, read aloud will not be an available accommodation. Content experts agree that this accommodation should not be provided during these grades because it would compromise the construct being measured. • For students in grades 6–8 and 11, read aloud is available as an accommodation for students whose need is documented in an IEP or 504 plan. <p>Reports can be run to indicate the percent of students who had access to read aloud on reading test passages.</p> <p>Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis—not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text.</p>
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Updated language for the UAAG:

Update Regarding Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines

Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Read Aloud (for ELA reading passages, all grades)	For the 2014-2015 school year, text is read aloud to the student via an external screen reader or by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the Smarter Balanced <i>Test Administration Manual</i> and <i>Read Aloud Guidelines</i> . All or portions of the content may be read aloud.	<p>This accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1-2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment). One example is a student who is blind and is not yet proficient in Braille. Read aloud is available as an accommodation for students whose need is documented in an IEP or 504 plan.</p> <p>Reports can be run to indicate the percent of students who had access to read aloud on reading test passages. Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis – not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text.</p>

Questions and Answers

Q1. When will the UAAG be updated?

A1. The UAAG will be updated to reflect this change and uploaded to the Smarter Balanced website Monday, March 9, 2014.

Q2. When is this change effective?

A2. States may authorize this accommodation effective immediately for the 2014-2015 school year.

Q3. Why is the availability of this accommodation restricted to the 2014-2015 school year?

A3. Governing members want this accommodation to be available as quickly as possible for students with documented need. In addition, governing members want to be thoughtful about future implementation and by June 2015 will consider implementation of this accommodation for 2016-2017 and later.

Q4. Are members required to collect data regarding which students are eligible to receive this accommodation?

A4. No, members are not required to collect this information for 2014-2015.