

Texas Formative Assessment Resource

Frequently Asked Questions

How should educators use assessments and results from the Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR)?

Formative assessments built in TFAR should be used to measure student performance on specific student expectations for the purpose of informing a teacher’s instructional choices. Assessments built using this tool should be part of a broader set of formative classroom practices. TFAR can be used to help build formative classroom assessments as part of a broader student progress monitoring system, as presented in the following table.

Assessment Type	Sample Frequency	Sample Composition
Mini assessment	Every 2–3 days	4–5 questions covering 1–2 curriculum standards
Weekly assessment	Once a week	7–10 questions covering 3–4 curriculum standards
Monthly assessment	Every 3–4 weeks	About 15 questions covering about 10 curriculum standards

As a testing coordinator, how do I register my students?

Refer to the [Test Information Distribution Engine \(TIDE\) User Guide](#) in the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* and to the videos in the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) for more information.

How are TFAR assessments administered to students?

TFAR assessments are delivered through the Test Delivery System (TDS). Refer to the [Test Delivery System \(TDS\) User Guide](#) and the TFAR trainings in LMS for more information.

When the State Board of Education (SBOE) updates the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), are they updated in TFAR?

Since the core content TEKS (mathematics, reading language arts, science, and social studies) are the focus of TFAR, they are updated according to the SBOE Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) schedule. Noncore subjects will not be updated and will be removed once their TEKS expire.

What types of items are in TFAR?

TFAR currently contains State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) released test questions and questions from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) item samplers and online practice tests. STAAR released test questions are added to TFAR each year for all tested subjects, grades, and courses. Additionally, the Authoring system allows

users to create their own questions, which can be used in test construction and shared with other educators in the user's campus and workgroups.

What item-type templates are NOT available in TFAR?

The following three math-related item types are not available in TFAR:

- number line
- graphing
- fraction model

However, samples of these item types from the STAAR Released and Other Texas item libraries can be added to local assessments. In addition, pictures of number lines, graphs, and fraction models can be uploaded into other item templates to create items.

Can item types other than extended, simple, and embedded text entry items (extended constructed response, short constructed response) be hand scored in CRS?

Yes. When using the multipart item template, machine-scored items can be redesignated as hand-scored items. For example, providing partial credit for a complicated drag-and-drop item may be easier to hand score than setting up all answers for machine scoring within the item's grading rubric.

Can authored items be translated into Spanish?

Yes. Please see the [Creating Spanish Items and Assessments](#) resource posted on the TFAR web page.

Can an item or a test be previewed prior to administering to students?

Yes. Items and tests can be previewed by selecting "Preview" from the dashboard. Scoring of the item can be previewed by selecting the Item Score icon in the upper left of the Preview screen to ensure accuracy within the scoring section.

What does the term "DOK level" refer to in Item Properties or Item Filters?

Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels measure the level of cognitive complexity required for students to achieve the correct response. Users can designate the DOK level of their authored items under item properties. TEA items may or may not have a "DOK level" tag. Availability is based on information provided by TEA item writers and vendors.

What is the TDS Student View in Test Properties?

In the test properties for a TFAR assessment, TDS Student View templates are under the Test Tools tab. The selected template connects your assessment with the STAAR test attributes section in TIDE. This connection provides students with their STAAR accommodations, 8-hour pause capability, and the ability to skip items. Without connecting a template, students will not receive their accommodations, items cannot be skipped, and

pauses are limited to 20 minutes.

Note: All tests published prior to the release of the TDS Student View templates must be copied and renamed and a TDS template must be added in Test Properties prior to publishing. All tests requiring student accommodations must use the correct corresponding TDS Student View template.

Can students take a TFAR assessment with TEKS from different grade levels?

Yes. Teachers can create and publish tests in TFAR with different TEKS and different grade levels.

How are specific student accommodations in TIDE pulled into TFAR assessments?

When setting the test properties for a TFAR assessment, TDS Student View templates are available under the TDS Student View tab in the Test Tools section. This selection connects TFAR with students’ STAAR test attributes in TIDE.

What accommodations and accessibility features are available in TFAR?

The table below identifies which tools are available for the different types of items in TFAR.

	Text-to-Speech (TTS)	Content and Language Supports	American Sign Language (ASL)	Speech-to-Text (STT)	Standard STAAR Accessibility Features
TEA Released Items (Non-STAAR)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
STAAR Released Items	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher-Authored Items	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Note: Tools selected under the Test Tools tab will be available to all students. Only item-specific accommodations in TIDE are connected to the templates.

How do I mute text in a teacher-authored item so that the TTS function does not read that text?

When creating an item, after selecting a template and entering text in Part 1 (Compose Item Prompt or Compose Passage Set), highlight the text to be muted. Then select the muting icon from the toolbar. The highlighted text will appear boxed and marked with a red mute symbol and will not be read by TTS.

Is braille available for assessments created in TFAR?

Yes, users can use the Enable Braille Screen Reader Support under Test Properties prior to publishing a test.

Is it possible to search for items with specific accommodations in TFAR?

Yes, available accommodations are listed in the Item Features column on the item grid. In addition, users will be able to search for items with the new accommodations filters within the item filters panel.

Is the copied test data compiled with the original assessment's data in the Centralized Reporting System (CRS)?

No. Once the assessment is copied and the name changed, it will generate separate data reports. The data from tests with different names cannot be combined within CRS.

Why are TFAR tests that I did not administer showing up in my CRS account?

When students transfer to a different campus or district, their CRS data moves with them. Because CRS serves as a historical record of the student's assessments, teachers may see data from TFAR assessments that they did not administer.

Where can I find a help guide for TFAR?

[Cambium's help guide](#) can be accessed by selecting the Help link in the upper right corner after logging into TFAR.

Are there asynchronous training courses available for TFAR?

Trainings for TFAR are posted in LMS, which can be accessed on the Educators page of the Texas Assessment website. The recorded trainings focus on formative assessments and technology and system resources. Trainings include:

- The Centralized Reporting System (CRS)
- Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR) Overview
- TFAR Authoring system modules