

STAAR Accommodations

Educator Guide



Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the [Student Assessment](#) 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

- [Texas Assessment Program](#)
- [STAAR Resources](#)
- [STAAR Spanish Resources](#)
- [Test Administration Resources](#)
- [Assessments for Special Populations](#)
- [STAAR Released Test Questions](#)
- [*District and Campus Coordinator Resources*](#)

Overview

The goal of accommodations for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) is to ensure that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response modes of the state assessments. To meet this goal, STAAR accommodations are designed to allow all students 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.

This Texas Education Agency (TEA) publication is designed to assist district personnel in making accommodations decisions for students taking STAAR by providing an overview of the various accommodations available, including examples. Because STAAR is administered online, this guide focuses primarily on the accommodations embedded in the online testing platform. It is important that students access STAAR and STAAR Spanish online practice tests on the [Practice Test Site](#) to become familiar with these embedded accommodations and practice interacting with the tools and features.

While this guide provides examples of accommodations available in the test delivery system (TDS), further detailed information about STAAR accommodations, including policy documents, eligibility criteria, and examples of allowable and nonallowable accommodations, is available in the [Accommodations](#) section of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources*.

For a student who requires accommodations that cannot be provided online, refer to the [Special Administration of an Assessment](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for more information on paper administrations.

Types of Accommodations

STAAR accommodations are designed to be the same as or similar to accommodations commonly used during classroom instruction. For STAAR and STAAR Spanish, accommodations fall into three categories:

- accessibility features,
- locally-approved designated supports, and
- designated supports requiring TEA approval.

Accessibility features are procedures and materials available to any student who regularly benefits from their use during classroom instruction; however, a student may not be required to use accessibility features during a state assessment. Descriptions and examples of what practices are allowed and not allowed are available on the [Accessibility Features](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*. District or campus testing coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials.

Designated supports fall into two categories: locally-approved designated supports and designated supports requiring TEA approval. Designated supports may be made available to students who meet the eligibility criteria as determined and documented by the appropriate team at the local level and should be aimed at addressing a student's consistent academic struggle in a specific area even after intensive instruction and remediation.

Each designated support allowed for STAAR has a policy document that includes a description of the designated support, eligibility criteria, and which team at the local level has the authority to make the accommodation decision. Policy documents also include examples and special instructions and considerations. All designated supports policy documents are available in the [Accommodations](#) section of the *Coordinator Resources*.

The use of any designated support during a state assessment requires that the student routinely and effectively use it during classroom instruction and testing, and the decision to provide a designated support during a state assessment should be made based on the individual student's needs. Routine and effective use during classroom instruction and testing 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, as appropriate (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.

Locally-approved designated supports may be made available without TEA approval to students who meet the eligibility criteria. Some locally-approved designated supports are

embedded in the online system; others are not. Refer to the [Locally-Approved Designated Supports](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for the list of available supports and their policy documents.

Designated supports requiring TEA approval are for students with unique needs not addressed explicitly with any accessibility features or locally-approved designated supports. The following designated supports require TEA approval:

- Extra Day
- Complex Transcribing
- Mathematics Scribe
- Other

For designated supports requiring TEA approval, district testing personnel must submit an Accommodation Request Form in the *Administration and Security Forms* module in the [Test Information Distribution Engine \(TIDE\)](#). Timely submission of Accommodation Request Forms by the due dates listed on the Calendar of Events allows Accommodations Task Force members to process and review requests and communicate to district testing personnel the appropriate procedures for administering a TEA-approved designated support.

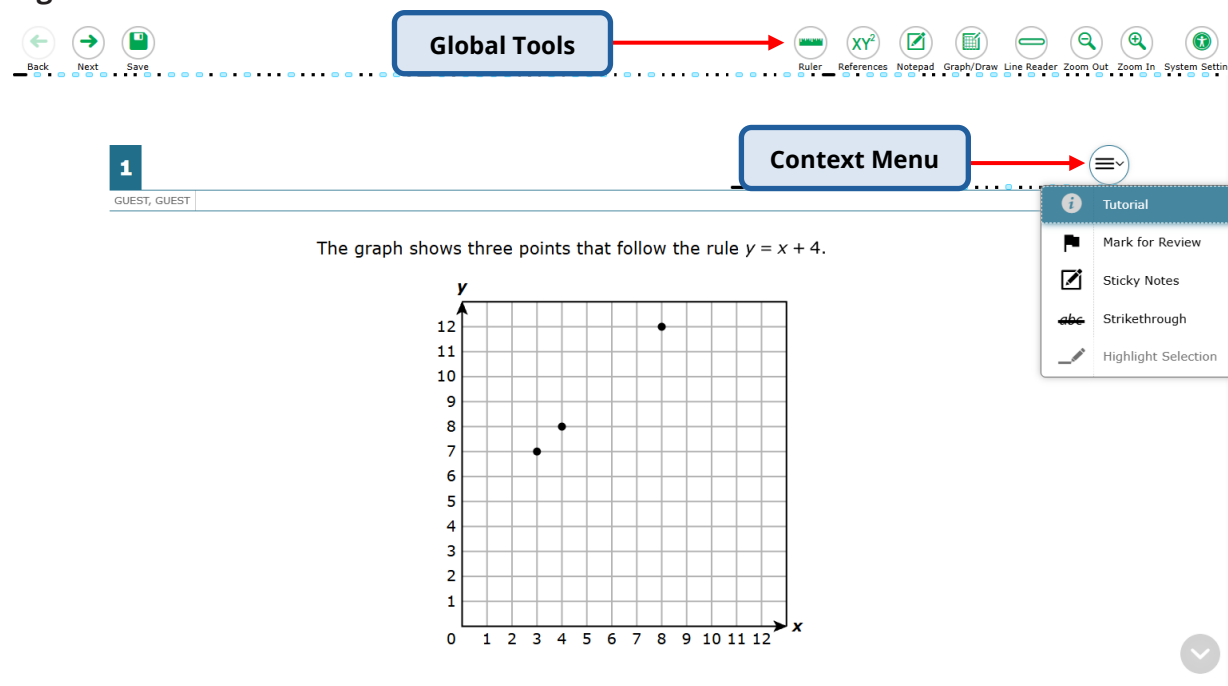
For circumstances requiring a designated support request but occurring after the deadline (e.g., newly enrolled student, medical emergency, updated admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee decision), the district coordinator should contact the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536 and ask to speak to a member of the Accommodations Task Force for further instructions. A ticket may also be submitted to the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).

More information about these four designated supports and their policy documents, as well as the accommodation request process, is available on the [Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

Accessibility Features

The online testing platform offers a range of embedded accommodations. Students can use Global Tools or Context Menu, as applicable, to access these various tools. Global Tools is a set of labeled icons across the top right corner of the test page. Directly below Global Tools is the *Context Menu* button, which is identified by three horizontal lines and offers options in a dropdown menu. The content of each menu depends on what features are available to the student for that particular assessment.

Figure 1. Menus

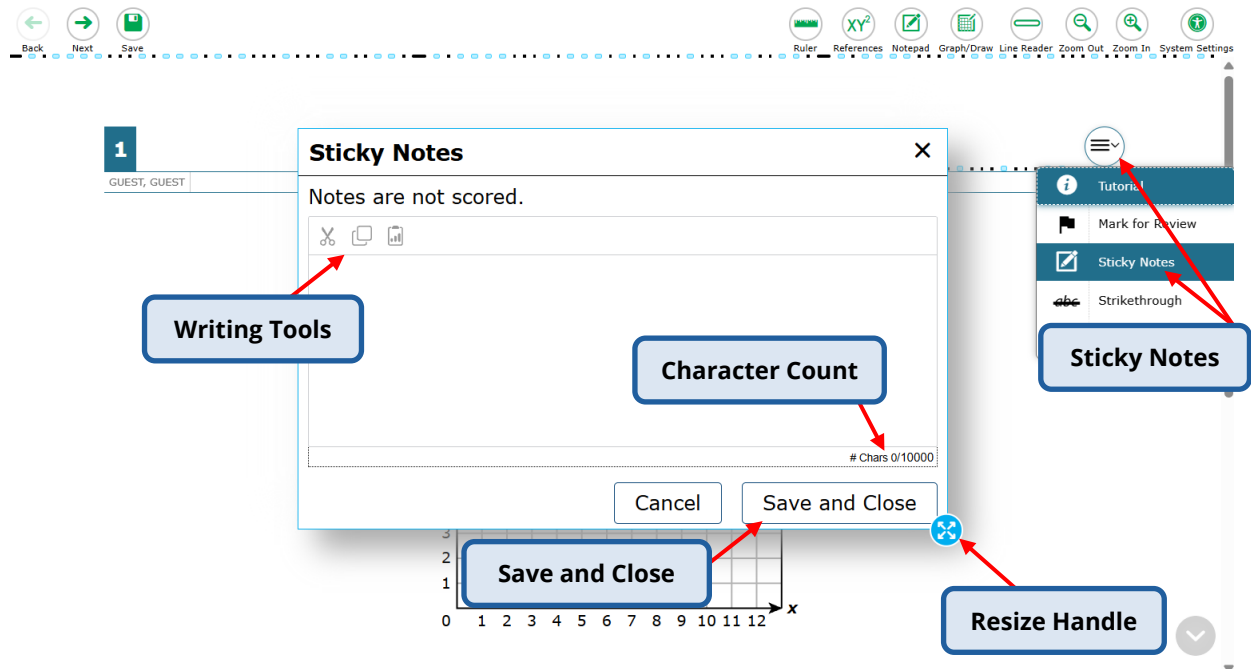


The following figures describe the accessibility features that are embedded in the online system and provide their associated icons. These features are available automatically, without the need for activation, for all STAAR assessments (i.e., mathematics, reading language arts [RLA], science, and social studies).

Sticky Notes

The Sticky Notes tool (available in English and Spanish) allows a student to enter notes about a question. The tool can be accessed from any question, but only the notes associated with a specific question will be visible while viewing that question.

Figure 2. Sticky Notes

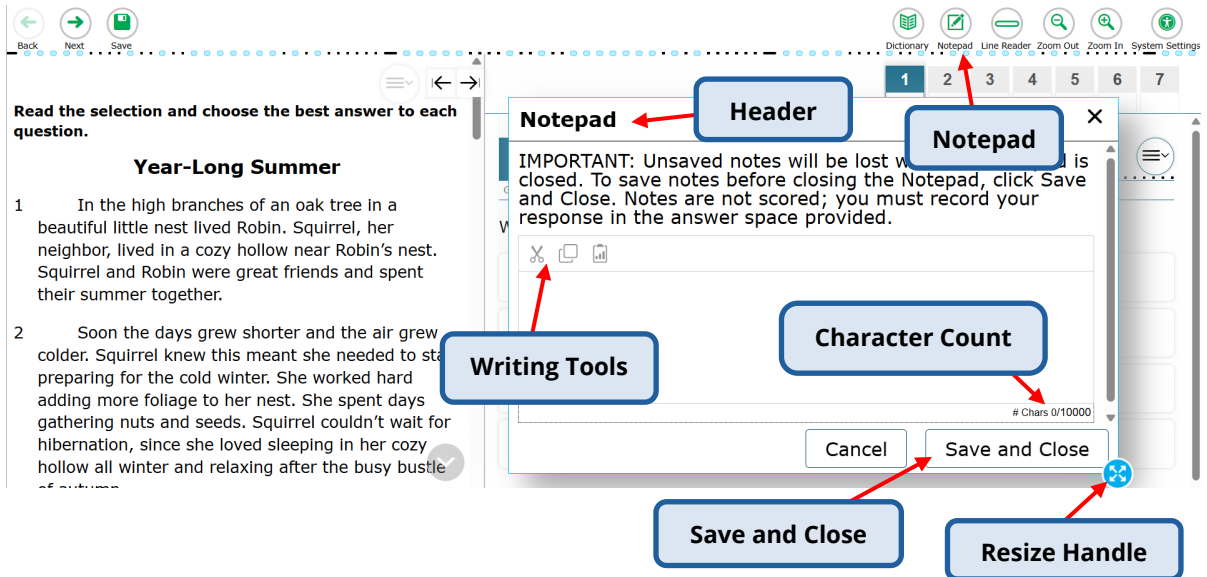


- **Sticky Notes:** The student can open Sticky Notes by right clicking within a question or by clicking the *Context Menu* button and selecting “Sticky Notes” from the dropdown menu.
- **Writing Tools:** The student can type in the text box and cut, copy, and paste text to and from Sticky Notes.
- **Character Count:** The remaining number of characters that can be entered is displayed at the bottom right of the text box.
- **Resize Handle:** The student can use the resize handle to resize the text box.
- **Save and Close:** After entering a note, the student must click the *Save and Close* button to save the note and close Sticky Notes. A pencil icon will appear next to the item number to show that the item has a sticky note.

Notepad

The Notepad tool (available in English and Spanish) allows a student to write notes that can be accessed from any page in the online test.

Figure 3. Notepad

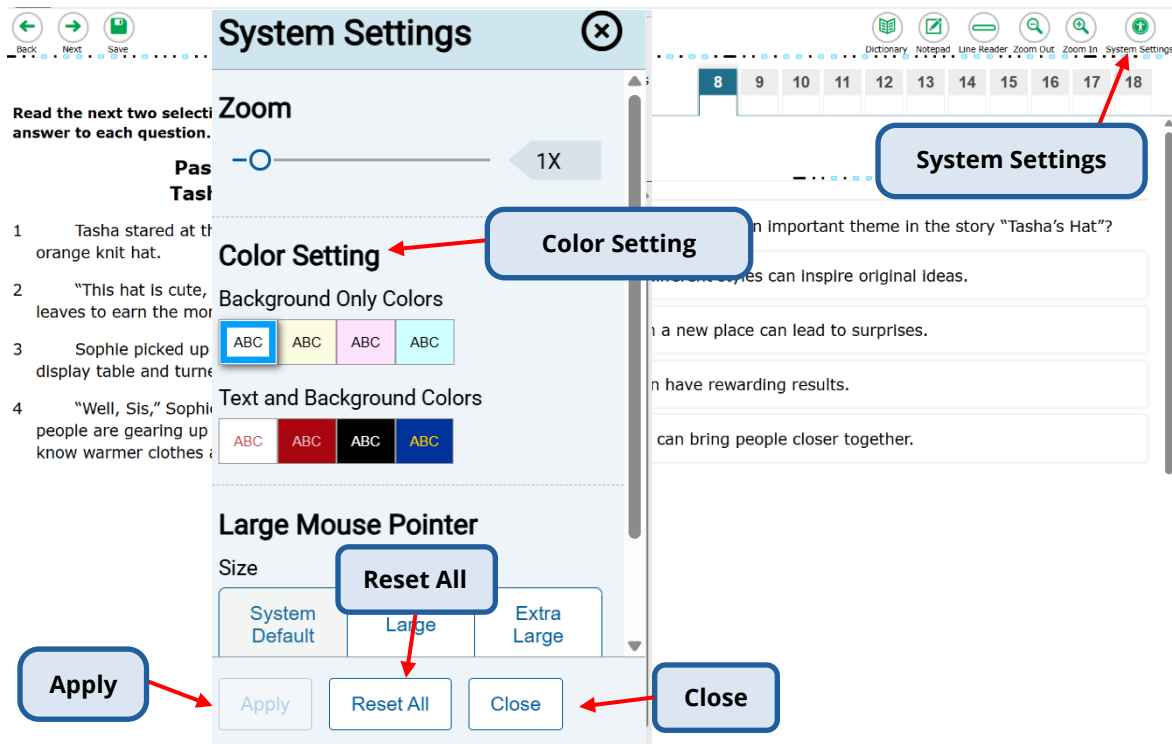


- **Notepad:** The student can open Notepad by clicking the *Notepad* icon in Global Tools.
- **Notepad Header:** The student can move the notepad by clicking and holding the Notepad header and dragging the tool to the desired location on the screen.
- **Writing Tools:** The student can type in the text box and cut, copy, and paste text to and from Notepad.
- **Character Count:** The remaining number of characters that can be entered is displayed at the bottom right of the text box.
- **Resize Handle:** The student can use the resize handle to resize the text box.
- **Save and Close:** After entering a note, the student must click the *Save and Close* button to save the note and close Notepad.

Color Setting

The Color Setting tool (available in English and Spanish) allows students to change the color of the screen and text.

Figure 4. Color Setting

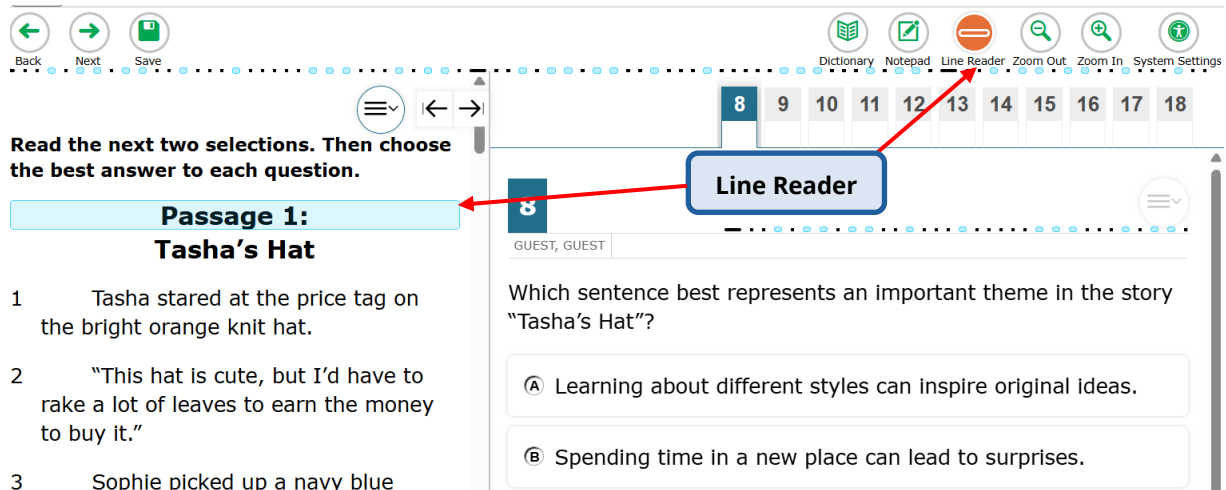


- **System Settings:** The student can access *Color Setting* by clicking the *System Settings* icon in Global Tools.
- **Color Setting:** The student can choose from eight different color settings.
- **Apply:** The student must click the *Apply* button to apply the selected color setting to the test.
- **Reset All:** To revert to the original settings, the student clicks the *Reset All* button.
- **Close:** To return to the test, the student clicks the *Close* button.

Line Reader

The Line Reader tool (available in English and Spanish) helps a student focus on a specific line of text. Line Reader can be used to highlight a selected line of text in a passage or question, and the student can move the line reader to different lines using the mouse pointer or the keyboard.

Figure 5. Line Reader

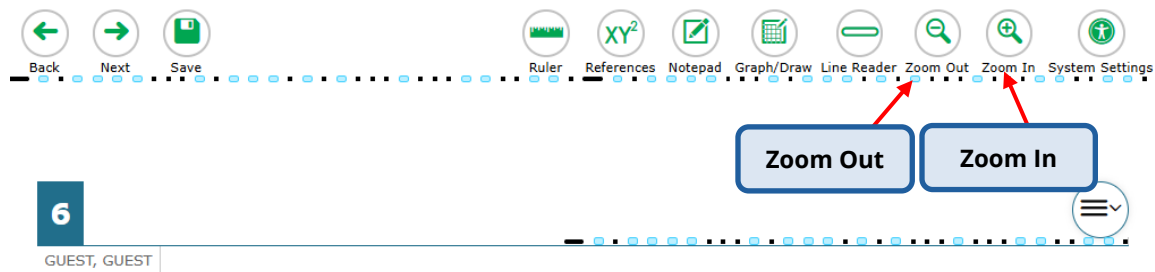


- **Line Reader:** The student can open Line Reader by clicking the *Line Reader* icon in Global Tools. When selected, the icon appears orange, as shown. To turn off Line Reader, the student must click the icon again.

Zoom

Zoom tools (available in English and Spanish) allow students to change the size of the text and images displayed on the screen. Zoom functionality is available using the *Zoom Out* and *Zoom In* icons in Global Tools or by clicking the *System Settings* icon to access the Zoom slider.

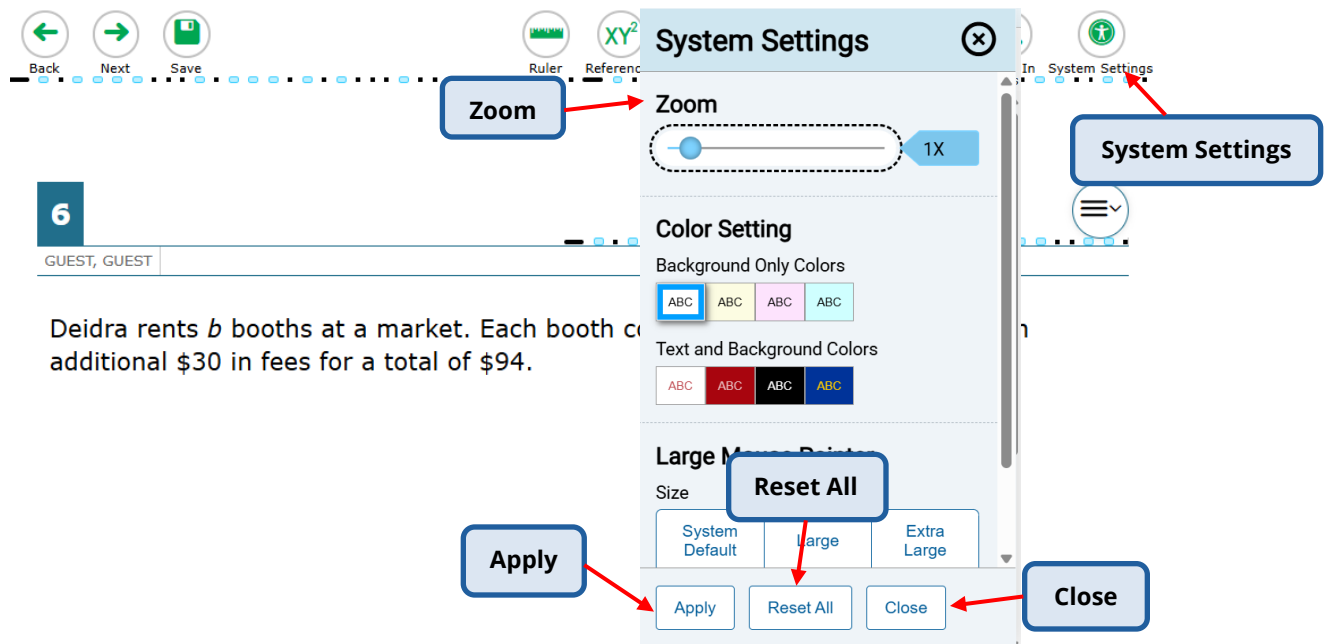
Figure 6. Zoom (Global Tools)



Deidra rents b booths at a market. Each booth costs \$32 to rent. Deidra pays an additional \$30 in fees for a total of \$94.

- **Zoom Out:** The student can click the *Zoom Out* icon in Global Tools to reduce the size of the text and images displayed on the screen.
- **Zoom In:** The student can click the *Zoom In* icon in Global Tools to enlarge the size of the text and images displayed on the screen.

Figure 6a. Zoom (System Settings)

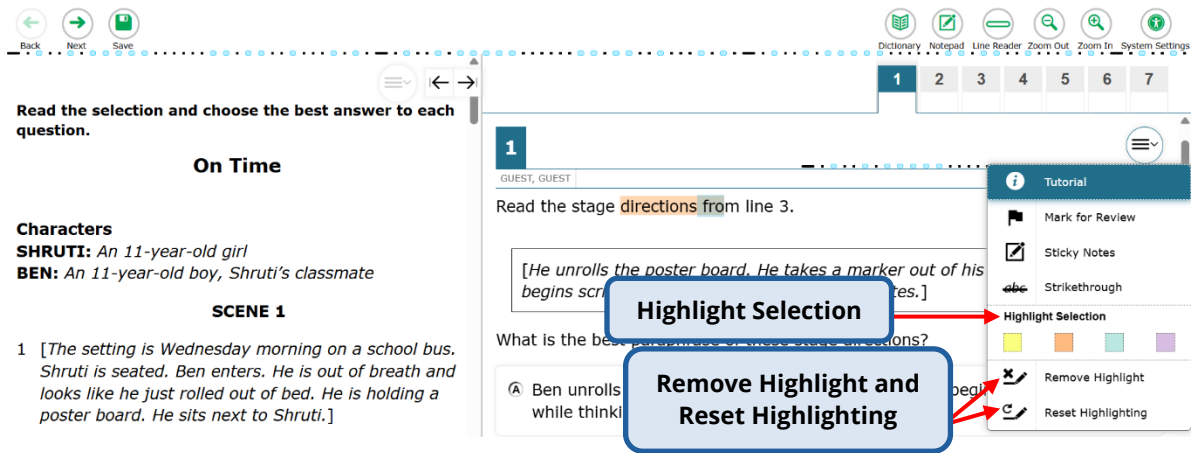


- **System Settings:** The student can access Zoom by clicking the *System Settings* icon in Global Tools
- **Zoom:** The student can use the Zoom slider to adjust the size of the text and images displayed on the screen.
- **Apply:** The student must click the *Apply* button to apply the selected zoom setting to the test.
- **Reset All:** To revert to the original settings, the student clicks the *Reset All* button.
- **Close:** To return to the test, the student clicks the *Close* button.

Highlighting

Highlighting (available in English and Spanish) allows a student to highlight selected text. Students have a choice of color options and can remove and reset highlighting.

Figure 7. Highlight Selection, Remove Highlight, and Reset Highlighting

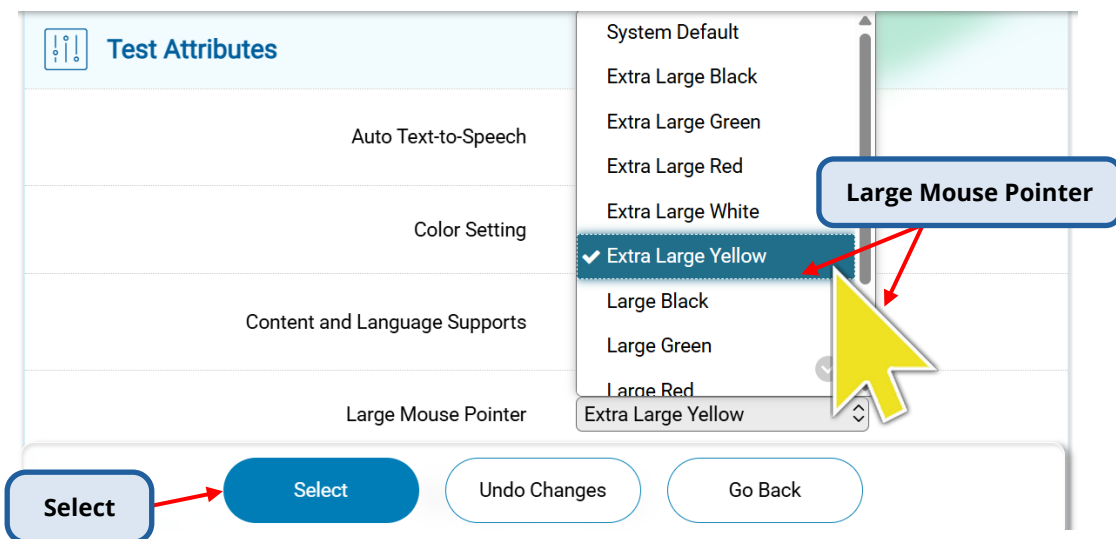


- **Highlight Selection:** After selecting the text to be highlighted, the student can choose a highlight color by right-clicking or by clicking the *Context Menu* button and choosing from the Highlight Selection options.
- **Remove Highlight or Reset Highlighting:** To remove highlighting from specific text, the student can select the text and select “Remove Highlight” from Context Menu. To remove all highlighting on the page, the student can select “Reset Highlighting.”

Large Mouse Pointer

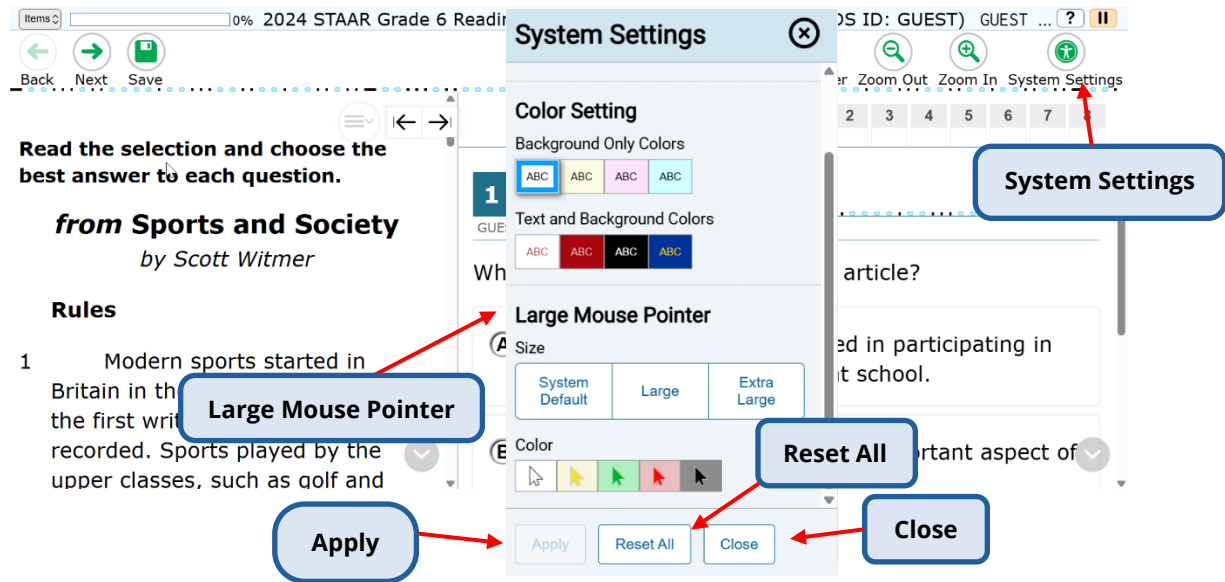
The Large Mouse Pointer feature (available in English and Spanish) allows a student to choose from 11 different mouse pointer options. On practice tests, this tool can be accessed on the Test Attributes page or via the *System Settings* icon. On operational tests, the tool is available via the *System Settings* icon.

Figure 8. Large Mouse Pointer (Test Attributes on Practice Test Site)



- **Large Mouse Pointer:** Before starting a practice test, the student can open the *Large Mouse Pointer* menu on the Test Attributes page.
- **Select:** To apply the selected mouse pointer, the student clicks the *Select* button.

Figure 8a. Large Mouse Pointer (System Settings)



- **System Settings:** The student can access Large Mouse Pointer on both the practice and operational test sites by clicking the *System Settings* icon in Global Tools.
- **Large Mouse Pointer:** The student can select from 11 mouse pointer options.
- **Apply:** The student must click the *Apply* button to apply the selected mouse pointer to the test.
- **Reset All:** To revert to the original settings, the student clicks the *Reset All* button.
- **Close:** To return to the test, the student clicks the *Close* button.

Locally-Approved Designated Supports

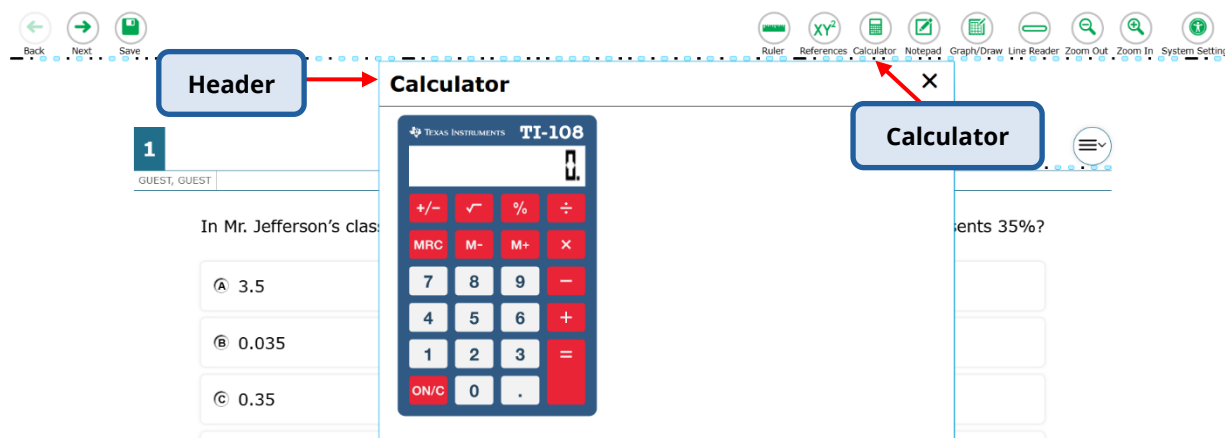
Locally-approved designated supports do not require TEA approval for students who meet eligibility criteria. For students testing online, these supports may be embedded or non-embedded depending on student eligibility and the accommodation needed. For example, a student needing reading support can receive an oral or signed administration of the test using text-to-speech (TTS) or using American Sign Language (ASL) videos, but a student needing supplemental aids for an assessment 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. Non-embedded designated supports will be provided by the test administrator to the student on the day the assessment is administered.

The following figures describe the locally-approved designated supports embedded in the online testing system. As with the accessibility features in the previous section, students can use Global Tools or Context Menu to access various designated supports in the testing platform.

Calculator

The Calculator tool (available in English and Spanish) must be set as a designated support in TIDE for eligible students in grades 3–7. As a designated support, the Calculator tool is a four-function calculator that a student can use for mathematics and science calculations.

Figure 9. Calculator



- **Calculator:** To open the Calculator tool, the student selects *Calculator* from Global Tools.
- **Calculator Header:** The student can drag the Calculator to different parts of the test page using the Calculator header.

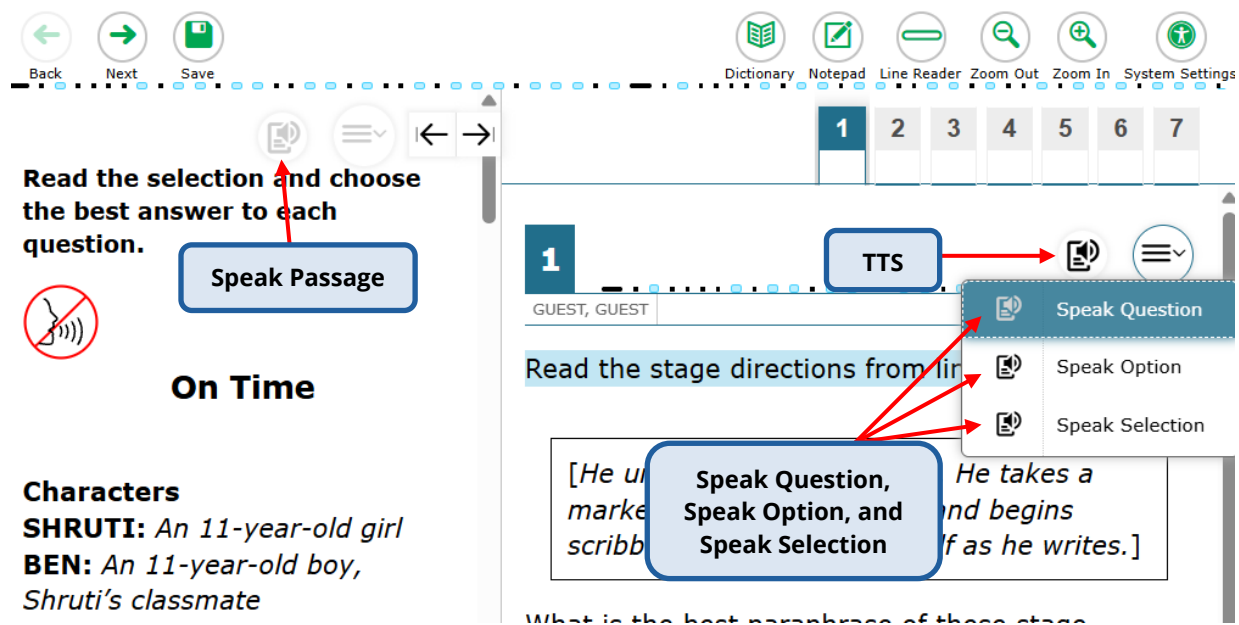
Text-to-Speech

The TTS designated support (available in English and Spanish) allows students to listen to text being read aloud. The student may select eligible test content and questions to be read aloud. The text, as well as the line in which it appears, is highlighted as it is read aloud.

If a *Speak* icon with a line through it is shown, as illustrated in the figure below, this indicates TTS is not available for that section.

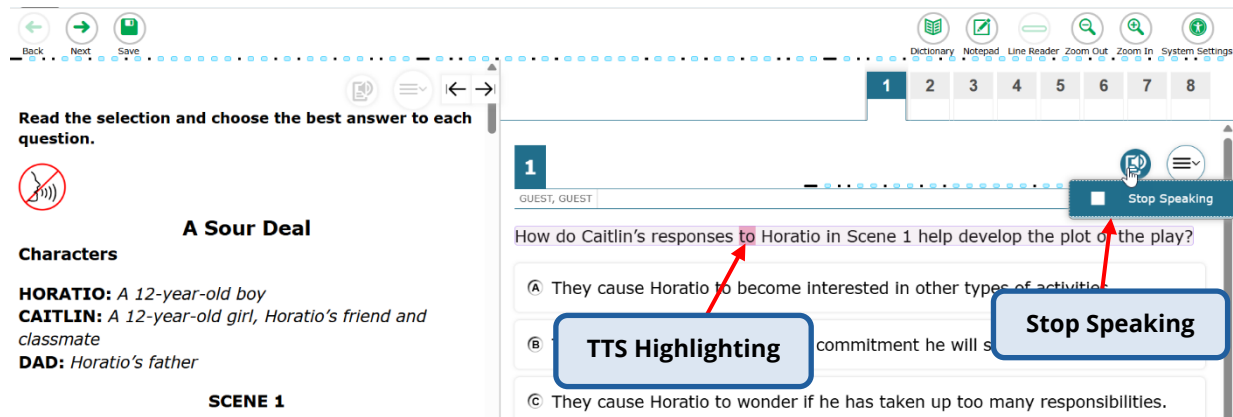
TTS uses the local device's native accessibility voice packs. Please make sure that a Spanish voice pack has been activated and tested prior to the administration of an assessment with Spanish TTS.

Figure 10. Text-to-Speech



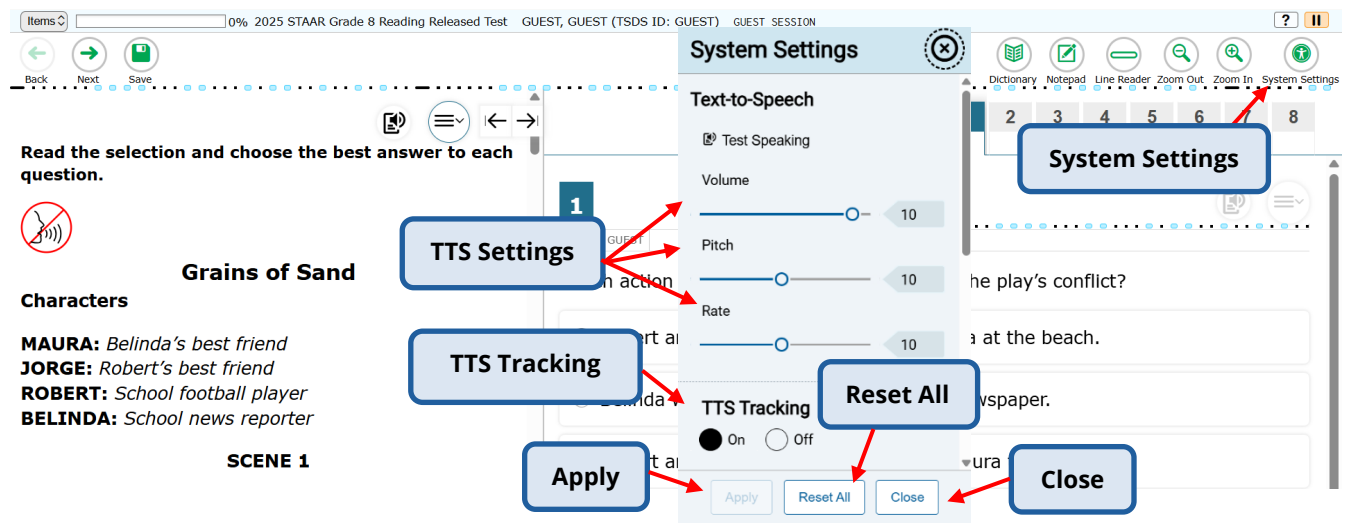
- **TTS:** Students can click the *TTS* button to open a dropdown menu with TTS options.
- **Speak Passage:** Only revising passages can be read aloud. When TTS is available for a passage, the student can select “Speak Passage” to listen to the entire passage.
- **Speak Question:** To listen to a question, the student can select “Speak Question.” The text is highlighted as it is read aloud.
- **Speak Option:** To listen to an answer choice, the student can select “Speak Option” and then select the answer choice to be read aloud.
- **Speak Selection:** To listen to a portion of text for a question or passage, the student can select the text to be read aloud and then select “Speak Selection.” The Speak Selection and Start Speaking From Here options are also available by right-clicking.

Figure 10a. Text-to-Speech



- **TTS Highlighting:** The line in which the text appears is highlighted, and each word is distinguished as it is read aloud.
- **Stop Speaking:** While the text is being read aloud, the student can stop TTS by clicking the TTS button and selecting “Stop Speaking.”

Figure 10b. Text-to-Speech



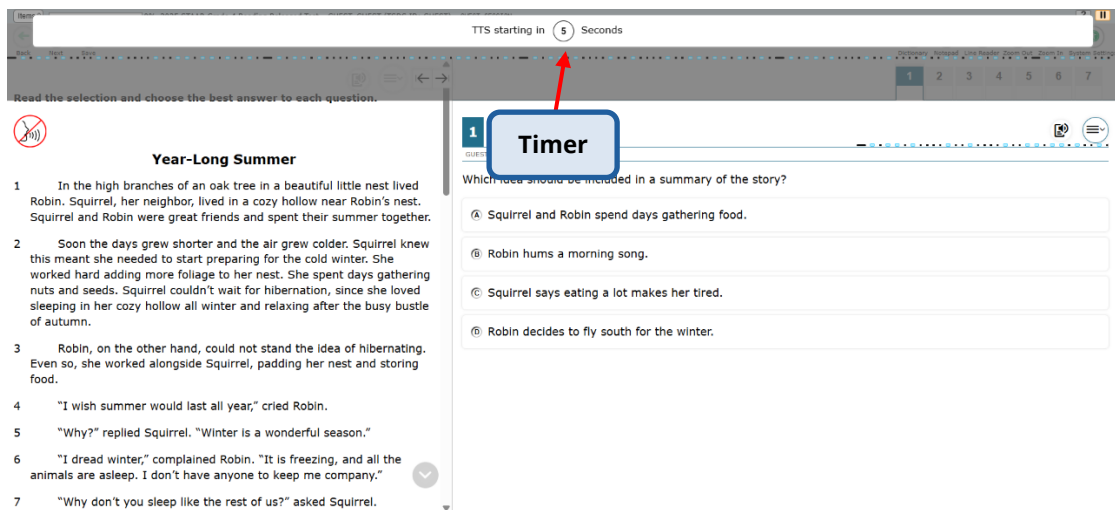
- **System Settings:** A student who has the TTS designated support can access TTS settings and TTS Tracking by clicking the *System Settings* icon in Global Tools.
- **TTS Settings:** The student can use the sliders to adjust the volume, pitch, and rate at which the text is read aloud.
- **TTS Tracking:** The student can select “On” or “Off” to enable or disable TTS tracking.

- **Apply:** To apply the selected settings, the student clicks the *Apply* button.
- **Reset All:** To revert to the original settings, the student clicks the *Reset All* button.
- **Close:** To return to the test, the student clicks the *Close* button.

Auto Text-to-Speech

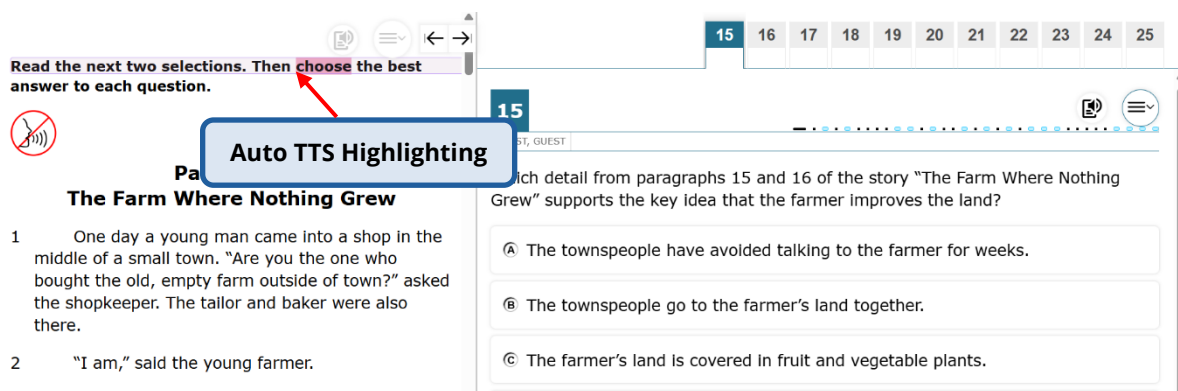
For a student who has the auto TTS designated support (available in English and Spanish), test content on the page is preread to the student when the student first accesses a page. Auto TTS automatically reads aloud the text on the screen and does not allow a student to independently select or change the level of reading support during the test administration.

Figure 11. Auto Text-to-Speech



- **Auto TTS Timer:** A five-second timer appears at the top of each applicable page, such as the beginning of a new passage and its related questions, and counts down to the beginning of the auto TTS reading of the page content.

Figure 11a. Auto Text-to-Speech



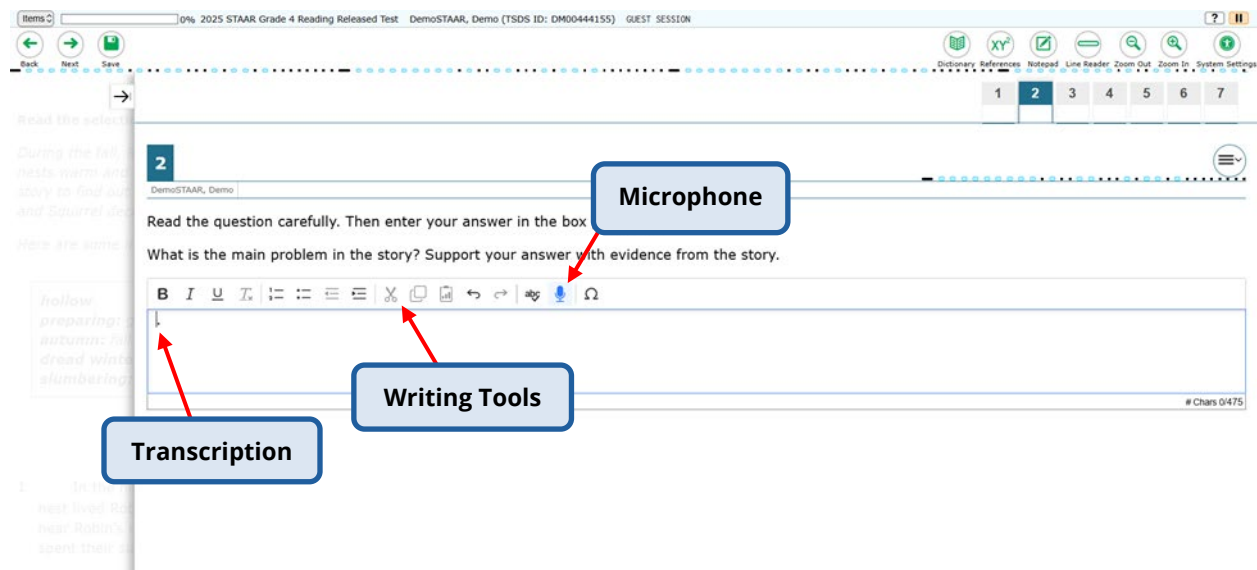
- **Auto TTS Highlighting:** The line in which the text appears is highlighted, and each word is distinguished as it is read aloud.

Speech-to-Text

Speech-to-Text (STT) is available in English and Spanish for constructed-response questions, Sticky Notes, and Notepad. For students who require basic transcribing or spelling assistance delivered via STT, 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.

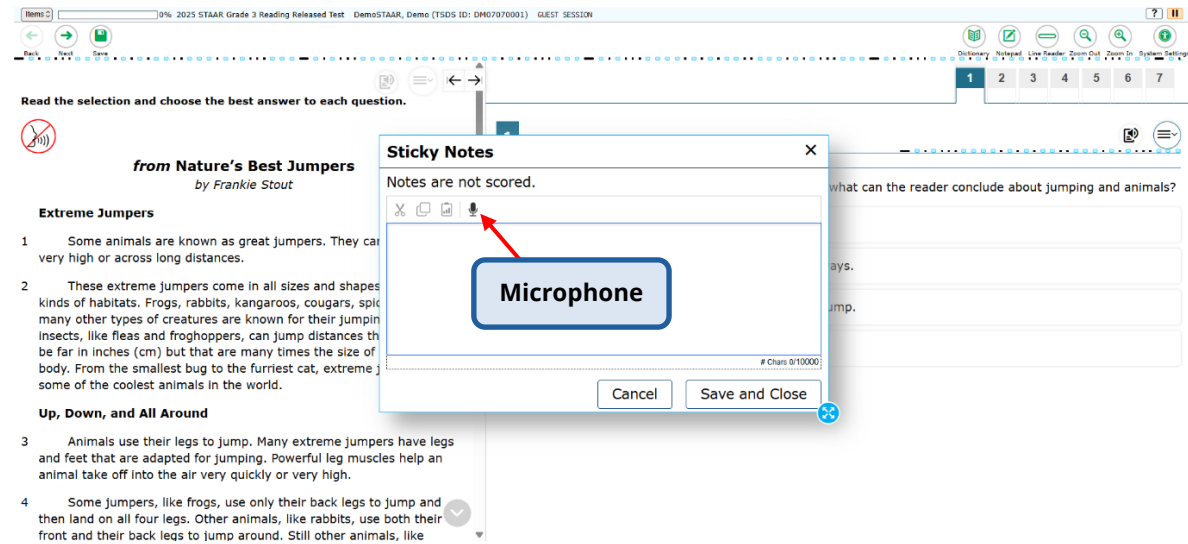
NOTE: For eligible students to access STT on the [Practice Test Site](#), the student's test attributes in TIDE must first be set to indicate STT, and the student must sign in to the practice site with his or her Texas Student Data System (TSDS) ID and a practice test session ID in order to access the practice test session.

Figure 12. Speech-to-Text (Constructed-Response Questions)



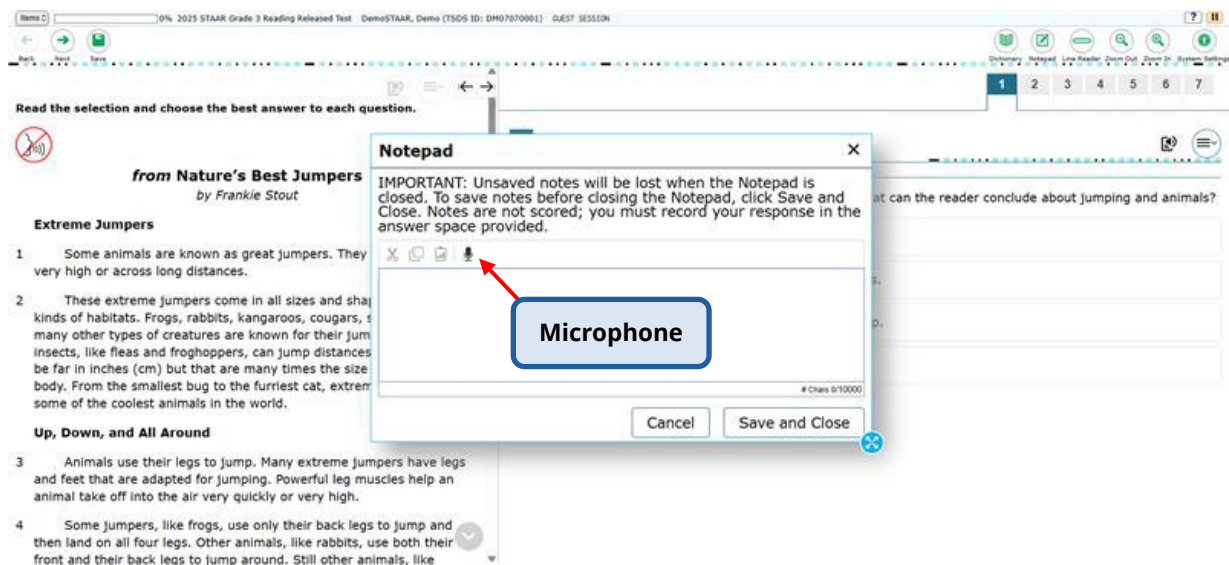
- **Microphone:** Students eligible for STT can click the *Microphone* button to activate STT functionality. Once selected, the *Microphone* button appears highlighted to indicate that STT has been activated.
- **Transcription:** Students should speak clearly and at a normal volume and pace. As the student speaks, the words are transcribed into the response area. While the text is being transcribed, dots appear in the response area to indicate that the transcription is in process.
- **Writing Tools:** When STT is enabled, all other writing tools are unavailable. To edit or insert text manually, students can disable STT using the *Microphone* button, move the mouse pointer to the desired location where manual edits are to be applied, and use the writing tools as needed.

Figure 12a. Speech-to-Text (Sticky Notes)



- **Microphone:** The *Microphone* button is available in Sticky Notes. As the student speaks, the words are transcribed into the text area. While the text is being transcribed, dots appear in the text area to indicate that the transcription is in process.

Figure 12b. Speech-to-Text (Notepad)

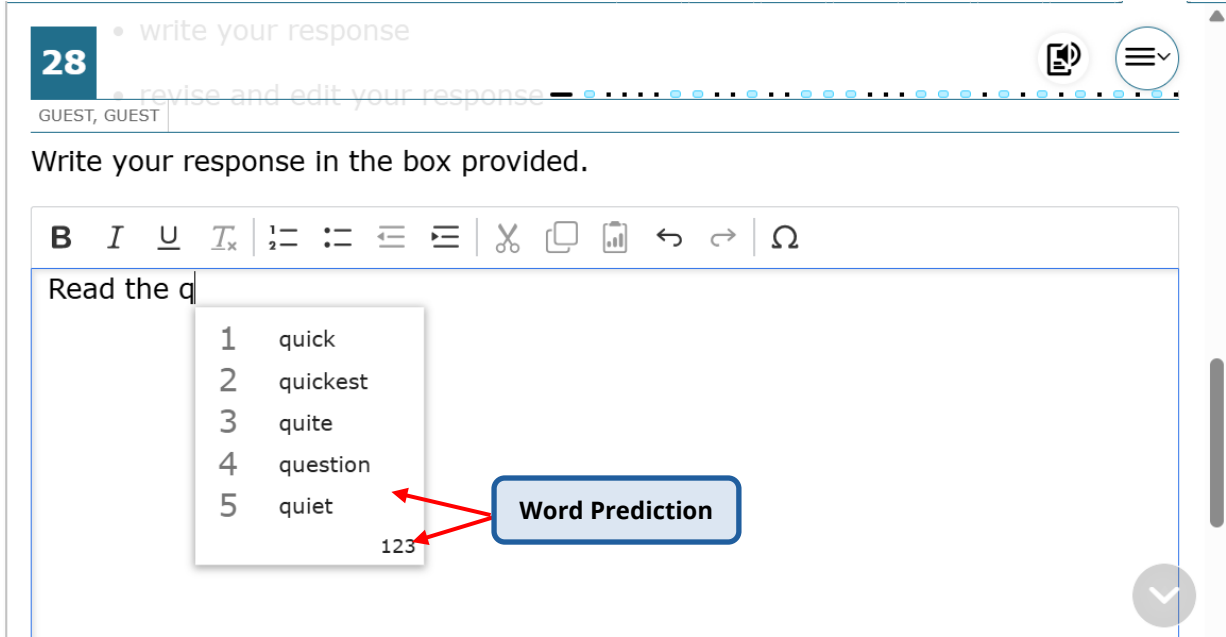


- **Microphone:** The *Microphone* button is available in Notepad. As the student speaks, the words are transcribed into the text area. While the text is being transcribed, dots appear in the text area to indicate that the transcription is in process.

Word Prediction (Co:Writer)

Word Prediction (Co:Writer) meets the accommodation need of spelling assistance and is available in English and Spanish on all assessments except for mathematics. When Word Prediction (Co:Writer) is enabled, students automatically receive word suggestions as they type answers to constructed-response questions.

Figure 13. Word Prediction (Co:Writer)

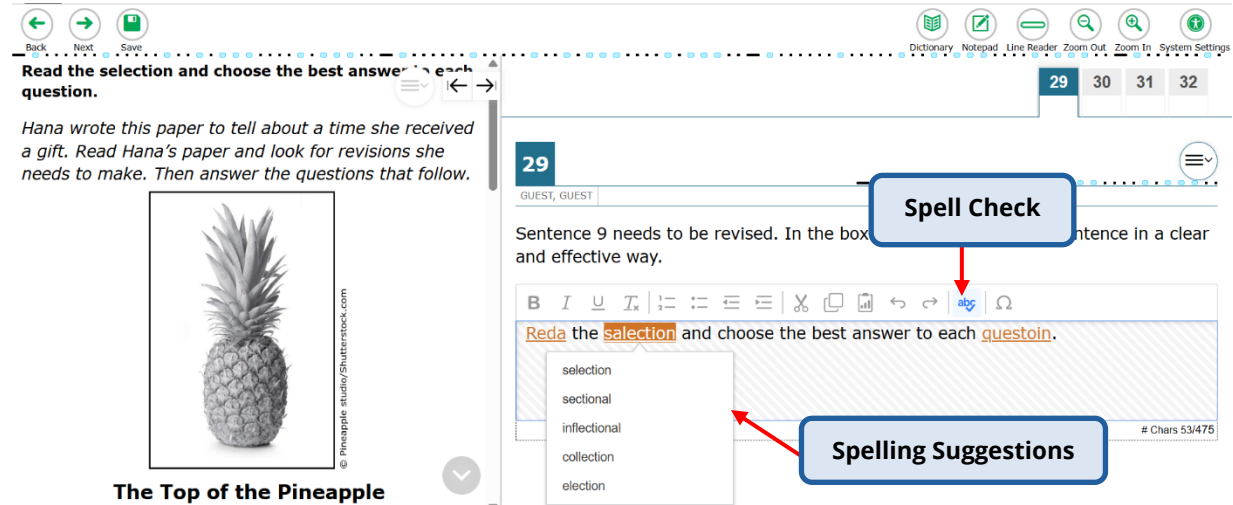


- **Word Prediction (Co:Writer):** Suggested words will appear in a pop-up menu. Students can use the mouse to scroll through the word suggestions and select a word from the list. If students need to enter a numeral as part of their response, they can select “123” in the corner of the pop-up menu to open a list of numerals. Students can then select a numeral or select “abc” to return to the list of suggested words.

Spell Check

Spell Check offers spelling assistance and is available in English and Spanish.

Figure 14. Spell Check

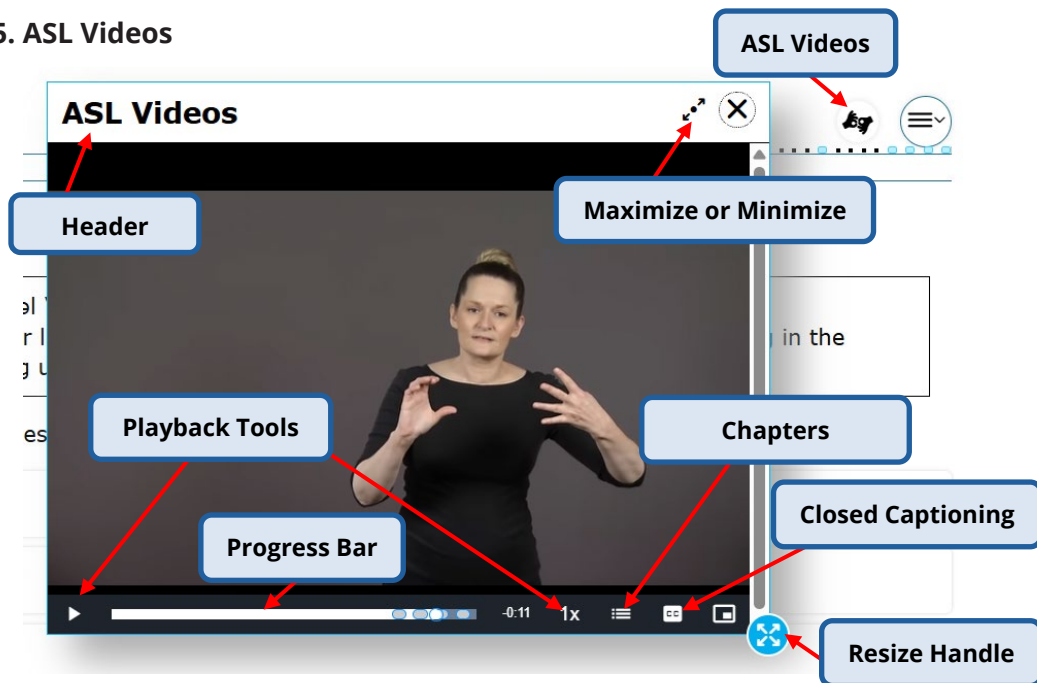


- **Spell Check:** If a student is eligible for spelling assistance, the *Spell Check* button is provided. Students can click on the button to activate Spell Check.
- **Spelling Suggestions:** When the student clicks the *Spell Check* button, typing is paused, and misspelled words are underlined and appear in a different color. The student can select the underlined word to view suggestions for replacements and select a replacement from the list. The student can click the *Spell Check* button again to resume typing.

American Sign Language

The ASL designated support is available as an online option for a signed administration. Students who have ASL as a designated support can watch videos that translate test content into ASL. 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 [Accommodations](#) section of the *Coordinator Resources* and should also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included on the [General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

Figure 15. ASL Videos



- **ASL Videos:** To view ASL videos, the student clicks the *ASL Videos* button.
- **ASL Videos Header:** The student can drag the ASL Videos window to different parts of the test page using the header.
- **Maximize or Minimize:** The student can maximize the window and then reset it to the default size by clicking the *Maximize or Minimize* button.
- **Playback Tools:** The student can play, pause, replay, and adjust the playback speed of the ASL videos by clicking on the corresponding playback tool.
- **Progress Bar:** The student can go back and review specific answer choices as needed by clicking that chapter in the progress bar.
- **Chapters:** The student can go to a different answer choice by selecting the corresponding letter in the chapter list.
- **Closed Captioning:** The student can turn on, turn off, and adjust closed captioning

using the CC button.

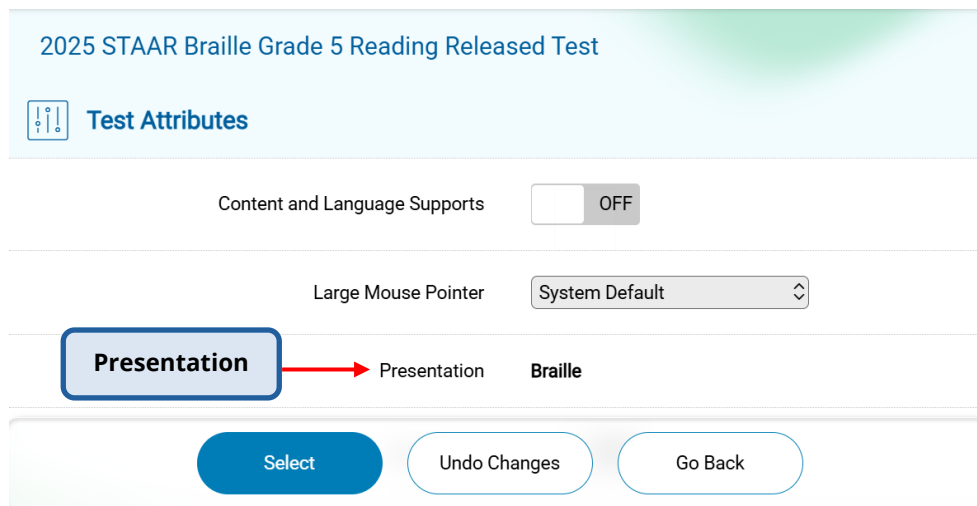
- **Resize Handle:** The student can use the resize handle to resize the window.

Refreshable Braille Display

Refreshable braille display is available on English versions of RLA and social studies.

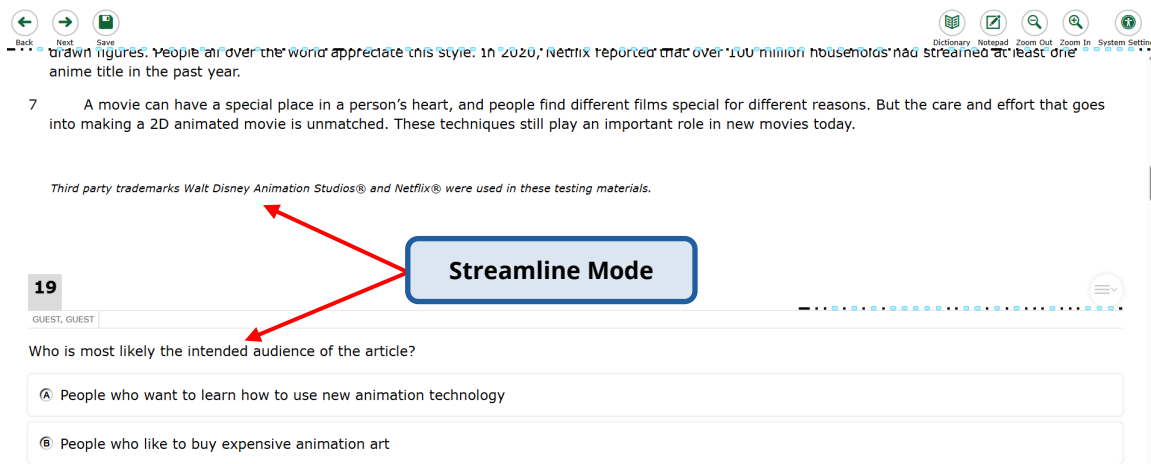
NOTE: The refreshable braille display will not function on all supported devices used for testing. Refer to the [Minimum System Requirements](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for supported systems and requirements.

Figure 16. Refreshable Braille Display



- **Presentation:** For students who are eligible for braille, the Presentation setting on the Test Attributes page will be set to “Braille.” In this setting, the test is displayed in Streamline mode.

Figure 16a. Refreshable Braille Display



- **Streamline Mode:** In Streamline mode, elements such as stimuli and questions are

displayed in a single column. As students navigate to specific elements or regions, the screen reader says the element or region name aloud, simplifying navigation and increasing comprehension.

Content and Language Supports

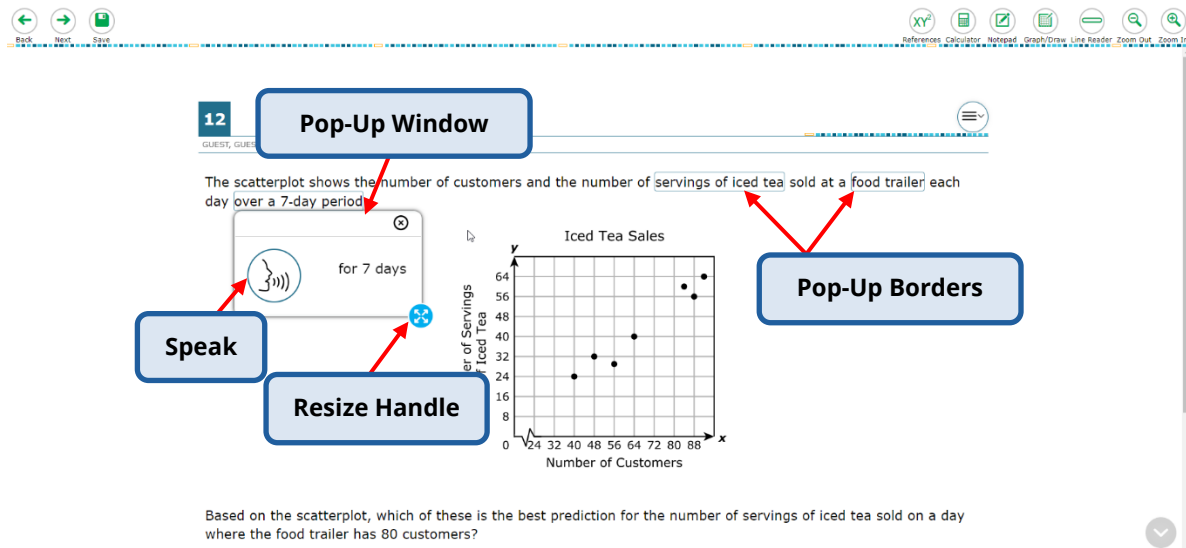
Content and language supports available as embedded designated supports include pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials. The delivery of an online assessment offers an opportunity to provide these types of supports in a standardized way to students who use similar designated 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. Although STAAR Spanish uses the same guidelines for content and language supports as the English version of STAAR, some of the accommodations in the pop-ups and rollovers may not be identical due to linguistic differences.

Pop-Ups

Pop-ups (available in English and Spanish) can be used to do the following:

- 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 17. Pop-Ups



- **Pop-Up Borders:** For students who are eligible for content and language supports, certain words and phrases appear with a border around them. This indicates that a pop-up containing simplified text is available for the word or phrase.
- **Pop-Up Window:** When a pop-up is selected, a window appears next to the bordered text. Clicking the X button closes the window. The student can drag the window to different parts of the test page using the window's header.
- **Speak:** For students who have the TTS designated support, the *Speak* icon will appear in all pop-ups. The student can click the icon to hear the text in the pop-up read aloud. If the *Speak* icon has a line through it, TTS is not available.
- **Resize Handle:** The student can use the resize handle to resize the window.

Rollovers

Rollovers (available in English and Spanish) can be used to do the following:

- 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

Figure 18. Rollovers

The screenshot shows a test interface for question 8. At the top, there are navigation icons: Next, Save, Ruler, References, Notepad, Graph/Draw, Line Reader, Zoom Out, Zoom In, and System. The question text reads: "A circular sign has a diameter of 20 inches. Determine the measurements that are closest to the area of the sign in square inches and the circumference of the sign in inches." Below the text is a list of answer options: 31, 63, 126, 314, 628, 1,256. There are two input boxes: "Area of sign: in.²" and "Circumference of sign: in.". A small blue arrow icon is positioned at the end of the question text. A red arrow points from a blue box labeled "Rollover Arrow" to this icon.

- **Rollover Arrow:** For students who are eligible for content and language supports, certain test questions and answer options include a small arrow pointing toward words or phrases. Clicking this arrow opens a rollover containing simplified text.

Figure 18a. Rollovers

The screenshot shows a test interface for question 29. At the top, there are navigation icons: Back, Next, Save, Ruler, References, Notepad, Graph/Draw, Line Reader, Zoom Out, Zoom In, and System. The question text reads: "The circumference of the base of a cylinder is approximately 94.2 feet. Which measurement is closest to the diameter, d , of the cylinder in feet?" Below the text is a diagram of a cylinder with diameter d and circumference $C \approx 94.2$ ft. Below the diagram is a radio button option: 11 ft. A blue box labeled "TTS" is positioned above the question text. A red arrow points from the TTS box to a menu that includes "Speak Question" and "Speak Option". Another red arrow points from a blue box labeled "Rollover Arrow" to a small blue arrow icon at the end of the question text. A third red arrow points from a blue box labeled "Rollover" to the question text.

- **Rollover Arrow:** A rollover covers the original text. Clicking the Rollover arrow again closes it.
- **TTS:** For students who have the TTS designated support, text in the rollover can be read aloud. To listen to the rollover, the student clicks the *TTS* button and then selects "Speak Question" or "Speak Option."

Prereading

Prereading (available on English and Spanish versions of RLA assessments) offers a list of important words and phrases from the reading passages.

Figure 19. Prereading

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Emi, the narrator of "Winter Wisdom," spent a lot of time at her grandparents' house as a child. Read the selection to find out what Emi and her grandmother did together and what Emi learned from that time in her life.

Here are some important words and phrases from the selection.

origami

honored: proud and happy

one of her sacred pastimes: an activity that was so important to her

absorbed: took all

distress: sadness and worry

transported: carried

Winter Wisdom

1 Growing up, I always spent nonschool days at my grandparents' house. It was a small, quiet home with a well-manicured lawn and a clothesline in the back yard. In the summertime outside, running through freshly laid grass that had just been hung to dry, climbing my grandparents' big oak tree, or lying in the grass counting ladybugs. My grandmother, who was never seen with a hair out of place or a wrinkle on a sleeve, would look at me most afternoons with wide eyes. She would say, "Oh, Emi. Clean up quickly. Your parents will be here soon to take you home."

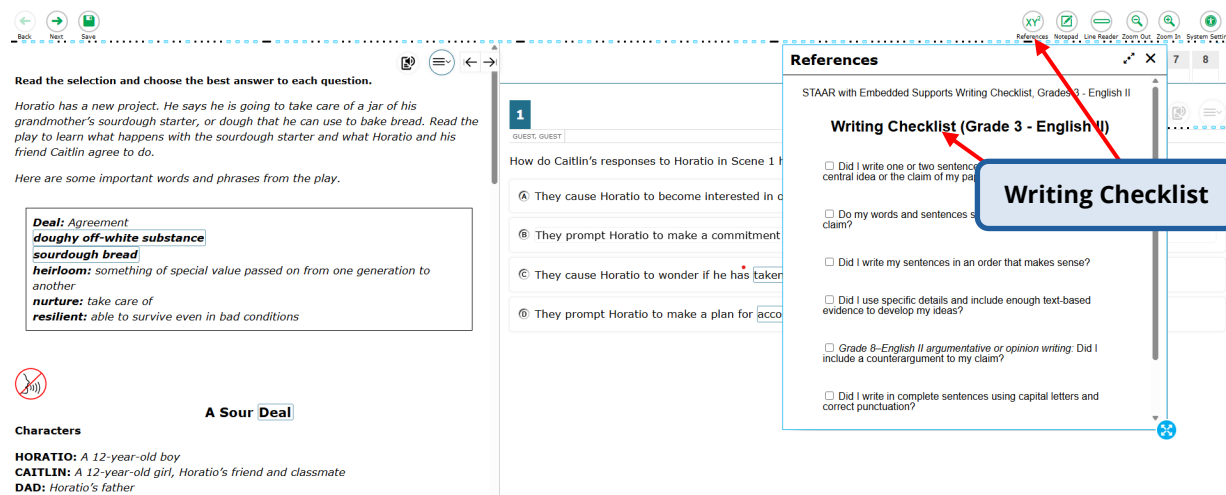
2 Winter breaks were different, though. It was usually too cold to go outside and play, so my grandmother would call me to sit with her at the dining room table to teach me the art of origami. It was likely her attempt to keep me busy and out of trouble. Unaware of her true motive, I would happily oblige. I felt honored to be included in one of her sacred pastimes. My grandmother would pull out smooth sheets of colored paper and spread them on the table, forming a

Prereading Text

- **Prereading Text:** For students who are eligible for content and language supports, prereading text appears above each reading passage. The list of words and phrases represents some of the accommodated words and phrases that appear in the passage.

- **Punnett Squares:** Students taking the Biology assessment who are eligible for content and language supports can select Punnett Squares by clicking the *References* icon in Global Tools.

Figure 20a. Writing Checklist



- **Writing Checklist:** Students who are eligible for content and language supports can access the Writing Checklist by clicking the *References* icon in Global Tools.

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 for 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 circumstance, a student may be tested using a paper test booklet. Additional information can be found on the [Special Administration of an Assessment](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

District testing personnel should ensure that student eligibility is correctly marked in TIDE during the initial order window for students taking STAAR braille who are also eligible to receive content and language supports, including students using a refreshable braille display, to be certain of receiving STAAR with embedded supports test booklets along with braille materials. 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 assessment 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., braille graphics; pairing graphics with tactile symbols, texts, or objects; enlarging or projecting).

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and are eligible for an oral or signed administration with content and language supports must take STAAR online to access these embedded supports. However, a signed administration is allowed for parts of the test that can be read aloud but cannot be accessed through TTS.

State Testing for Students with Dyslexia

State Supports and Test Design

TEA recognizes that many students with dyslexia receive important instructional supports during daily classroom learning, which may include simplified language, guided support, and having text read aloud. Although these practices are appropriate and effective for instruction, state assessments serve a different purpose.

STAAR RLA assessments are designed to measure a student's independent reading comprehension; therefore, the classroom support of having an entire passage read aloud cannot be used during state testing because it would change the task from reading to listening. This would affect what the test measures and limit how accurately results can be interpreted.

How the Assessment Provides Access

The Texas Assessment Program offers targeted, layered supports that reflect classroom practices without replacing the reading skill being assessed.

- **Content and language supports** ([prereading](#) in RLA, [pop-ups](#), [rollovers](#), simplified explanations) help students access unfamiliar or complex vocabulary and ideas in the same way that teacher clarification and small-group instruction do.
- **Oral administration/TTS** for eligible students provides oral support for directions, questions, answer choices, and specific parts of text after students have had the opportunity to read independently. This helps reduce fatigue and supports comprehension when decoding is not what is being measured.

Used together, these supports allow students with dyslexia to demonstrate understanding while ensuring that test results accurately reflect reading ability. For example, once students have had the opportunity to read certain paragraphs, they can have those specific sections reread aloud to them.

Research shows the following:

- Targeted, scaffolded supports improve access for students with learning disabilities without compromising test validity ([Andreou et al., 2019](#)).
- Reading and listening comprehension are related but distinct skills, and oral delivery changes what a reading test measures ([Sticht & James, 1984](#); [Perez et al., 1987](#)).
- Full read-aloud of reading passages changes what a reading test measures and weakens score interpretation ([Sireci, 2004](#); [Laitusis et al., 2008](#)).

Balancing Access with Meaningful Test Results

The Texas Assessment Program is committed to providing equitable, evidence-based access for students with dyslexia while ensuring that assessment results remain meaningful, accurate, and trustworthy. The Student Assessment Division is always working to improve its programs and welcomes feedback through the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).

The Connection to Classroom Instruction

The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet students’ individual needs, thus allowing students to maximize their academic potential.

To make designated supports 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
- consider how supports are routinely and effectively used during classroom instruction and testing.

As an example, the embedded content and language supports available for STAAR offer opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in the required state assessments. 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 STAAR. 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 students. Certain designated supports used in the classroom would invalidate the content being assessed or compromise the security and integrity of STAAR if used during testing. For this reason, not all designated supports suitable for instruction are allowed during state assessments. However, the policies for accommodations on state assessments do not limit an educator’s ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to aid student learning.

Documenting and Communicating Decisions

District testing personnel must carefully review TEA accommodations policies to make sure students receive only those accessibility features and designated supports that are allowed or approved for use on STAAR and STAAR Spanish. While some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for or allowable on a statewide assessment. Providing unfamiliar or inappropriate accommodations during statewide assessments may hinder rather than aid a student. Accommodations documentation should be up-to-date prior to testing so that it reflects the student's current need.

For students receiving special education services, designated supports decisions are made by the ARD committee and are documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP). For students receiving Section 504 services, designated supports decisions are made by the Section 504 committee and documented in the student's individual accommodation plan (IAP). For students not receiving special education or Section 504 services, designated supports decisions are made by the appropriate team at the campus level (e.g., Response to Intervention [RtI] team, student assistance team) and documented according to district policies. Individual policy documents, available in the *Coordinator Resources*, outline eligibility criteria and who at the local level has the authority to approve the designated support.

For emergent bilingual (EB) students, language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) are responsible for coordinating with the students' content-area teachers to make decisions in accordance with the TEA accommodations policies and for maintaining required documentation of those decisions. For an EB student with a disability, the student's LPAC is required to collaborate with the applicable committee (e.g., ARD committee, Section 504 committee) in making both those accommodations decisions related to an EB student's language proficiency and those related to the student's disability. Documentation must be maintained in the student's permanent record file and IEP or IAP.

For EB students taking STAAR in English, the LPAC, as a sole authority, makes decisions for only content and language supports and oral administration. For EB students taking STAAR Spanish, decisions for content and language supports must be made by the ARD committee or Section 504 committee with LPAC collaboration, and decisions for oral administration must be made by the ARD committee, Section 504 committee, RtI team, or the appropriate team at the campus level with LPAC collaboration.

The following table shows the appropriate committees responsible for making accommodations decisions for students taking STAAR and STAAR Spanish. Detailed information regarding committee responsibilities for each designated support is available in the individual policy documents on the [Locally-Approved Designated Supports](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*.

Committee Responsibility for STAAR Accommodations Decisions				
	ARD Committee (special education students)	Section 504 Committee (students with other health impairments, dyslexia)	LPAC (EB students testing in English)	RtI, Student Assistance Team, or other related support (struggling learners)
Basic Transcribing	✓	✓		✓
Braille	✓	✓		✓
Calculation Aids	✓	✓		
Content and Language Supports	✓	✓	✓	
Individualized Structured Reminders	✓	✓		✓
Large Print	✓	✓		
Manipulating Test Materials	✓	✓		✓
Mathematics Manipulatives	✓	✓		✓
Oral and Signed Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spelling Assistance	✓	✓		
Supplemental Aids	✓	✓		✓

Procedures should be established for communicating to the appropriate individuals at the campus level (e.g., ARD committee, Section 504 committee, RtI team, student assistance team, LPAC) any testing decisions that may be in conflict with state assessment requirements or procedures and resolving those matters before testing.

To ensure that students receive the appropriate accommodations during testing, test administrators should verify with campus coordinators before the administration that they are using the most current information regarding student testing requirements and accommodations. Campus coordinators should coordinate with the appropriate district personnel to ensure they have the most current testing and accommodation information for each student. Campus coordinators must ensure all test attributes and testing accommodations are marked in TIDE for students taking an online assessment and that a student's use of designated supports is recorded in TIDE as applicable.

Training

Test administrators and other campus personnel participating in STAAR administrations are required to be trained on test security and administration procedures. Training should be provided annually to ensure a standardized test administration and the best testing experience for Texas students. Annual training is especially important for understanding and implementing new or updated policies and procedures. It is imperative that all individuals participating in STAAR administrations preserve the integrity of test content and student data through strict adherence to the instructions and procedures contained in the test administration manuals. Lack of annual training typically results in testing incidents that may impact students' test scores, campus and district accountability ratings, and, ultimately, an educator's teaching certificate.

The required training for STAAR test administrators includes testing with accommodations to ensure test administrators understand and are able to implement accommodations. In addition, test administrators who are authorized to provide special administrations (e.g., oral, braille) must be provided additional training in specific security protocols regarding viewing secure test content. Responding to test questions, recording secure test content, scoring the test, or discussing the content of the test at any time is strictly prohibited. As a reminder of this obligation, these individuals are required to complete a specific part of the test security oath.

All test security procedures must be followed to ensure the security of the test content and the confidentiality of student information. For students who are using technology-based accommodations, the accommodations must meet the technology use guidelines available in the [Technology Resources](#) section of the *Coordinator Resources*. When district testing personnel are not trained properly or do not follow test security and administration procedures, testing incidents may occur.

Testing incidents that involve accommodation errors typically involve providing appropriate accommodations to ineligible students or not providing appropriate accommodations to eligible students. Examples of accommodation errors include:

- A student was provided an unallowable accommodation.
- A student was provided an accommodation for which he or she was not approved.
- An allowable and approved accommodation was not provided to a student.
- An allowable and approved accommodation was not properly administered or applied.
- District testing personnel administered Complex Transcribing, Extra Day, Mathematics Scribe, or Other designated supports without TEA approval.

Additional trainings related to accommodations and test security are posted in the Learning Management System (LMS), which can be accessed via the [Educators](#) page of the Texas Assessment website. The recording trainings include:

- Accessibility for the Texas Assessment Program

- Test Accommodations: A Training for Test Administrators
- Test Security for the Texas Assessment Program
- Managing Secure Materials for the Texas Assessment Program

Test Results

Accommodations provide students who need them with equitable access to STAAR and STAAR Spanish, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without the limitations imposed by disabilities or language proficiency. STAAR test results for students using accommodations are valid indicators of their academic achievement, just as test results are valid indicators for students who do not use accommodations.

Educators who have a roster association with students can access results for those students through the Centralized Reporting System (CRS). For more information on setting up rosters, refer to the [Reporting](#) section of the *Coordinator Resources*. In CRS, educators can see performance information by assessment, reporting category, and test question.

STAAR score reports include the individual performance level of students, scale scores, and the number of questions answered correctly within each reporting category for each of the assessed grades and content areas.

STAAR report cards explain STAAR results to parents and are available in the Family Portal. Detailed information about STAAR report cards is provided on the [Texas Assessment](#) website.

The Research Portal contains assessment data for all Texas students who participated in statewide test administrations and can be used by educators, researchers, and the public to analyze state assessment results. The Research Portal can be accessed through the Texas Assessment website.

STAAR results may be used in the following ways:

- to help parents monitor their child's progress
- to inform instructional planning for individual students
- to report performance to local school boards, school professionals, and the community
- to evaluate programs, resources, and staffing patterns
- to evaluate districts and campuses in a variety of state and federal accountability measures

Change Log

Document changes	Date of change	Page affected
Added information about state testing for students with dyslexia	March 6, 2026	32

TEXAS ASSESSMENT