Accessibility & Accommodations

smarter BALANCED

Meeting the Needs of Students

Assessments help teachers and parents know if students are on the path to success.

The Smarter Balanced assessment system provides accurate measures of achievement and growth while challenging students to think critically and solve real-world problems. A core principle of the Smarter Balanced system is accessibility for all students.

The Smarter Balanced tests are designed so that all students—including students who are learning English or have special needs—can participate in the tests meaningfully. As a result, our interim and end-of-year tests include accessibility resources designed to meet the individual needs of students and remove access barriers—allowing participating students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Using the principles of underline universal design, these accessibility resources include braille, Spanish translations, videos in American Sign Language, glossaries provided in 13 languages and several varieties and dialects, as well as translated test directions in 20 languages. Each of these accessibility resources was built with students in mind.

🖥 Check out our sample questions!

What Are Accessibility Resources?

→ **Universal tools**—such as a digital notepad and scratch paper—are available to students.

→ **Designated supports**—like an illustration pop-up glossary—are available to students for whom a need has been identified by school personnel familiar with each student's needs and testing resources.

→ **Accommodations** are available to students with a documented need noted in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. Accommodations include braille and closed captioning, among others.

→ **The Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP)** tool and training module support educators in selecting accessibility resources that match student access needs and preferences.

Developed with Experts

Smarter Balanced worked with educators, students, and experts in the field to design and vet the assessment system. We work with advisory panels on English learners and students with disabilities to ensure that the assessments are developed using principles of universal design and research-based best practices.

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> Smarter Balanced is seen as being the most forward-thinking in their list of accommodations and features for accessibility.
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> **SHEILA SCHULTZ**
> Assessment Researcher, Human Resources Research Organization from "Smarter Balanced passes the test researchers say."

For more information, visit SmarterBalanced.org/Accessibility

Types of Accessibility Resources

Universal Tools

Universal tools are **available to students** based on students' needs and preferences.

Examples: calculator, digital notepad, English dictionary, English glossary.

Designated Supports

Designated supports are **available to students when determined** for use by educators (with parent/guardian and student input, as appropriate) or specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

Examples: color contrast, text-to-speech, illustration glossary

Accommodations

Accommodations are **available for eligible students** if specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

Examples: American Sign Language, braille, closed captioning

https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/usability-accessibility-and-accommodations-guidelines.pdf

Check out our sample questions!

How We Support Implementation and Administration

To support educators and students, Smarter Balanced provides:

→ Multiple ways to deliver braille which allows for an individualized choice for students including: computer adaptive test, hybrid adaptive test for mathematics (reducing the logistics of embossing graphics in schools), and the traditional paper braille test;

→ An accessible calculator that includes support for screen readers, color contrast, adjustable font size, and accessible graphs; and

→ An Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) which guides educators and IEP teams regarding a process that they may use to select resources on the assessments that meet individual student needs.

How We Support Assessment During Instruction

Smarter Balanced collaborated with educators to develop Tools for Teachers Accessibility Strategies, which help educators connect classroom use of accessibility practices to accessibility resources offered on the interim and summative assessments.

For more information, visit SmarterBalanced.org/Accessibility