

Accommodations and Modifications

A testing **accommodation** refers to a change in the procedures for administering an assessment. The accommodation is intended to reduce as much as possible the effect of student characteristics that interfere with performance during testing and, subsequently, with valid inferences about the student's abilities. Testing accommodations should not change the *kinds* of abilities being measured; they should change *how* those abilities are measured. If chosen appropriately, an accommodation will provide neither too much nor too little help to the student who receives it.

A testing **modification** is a change in the procedures for administering a test that may affect the constructs being measured. A modification is sometimes necessary when an accommodation is not possible. A testing modification may lead to scores that differ in meaning between students who received the modification and those who did not receive it. Local, school system, or state policy usually determines whether these scores should be interpreted differently. The only modification permitted at Levels 5/6–8 of *CogAT* allows ELL students to omit the Sentence Completion subtest if it will not be administered in their home language. Students who are given this modification receive an alternative Verbal Battery score. See "Omitting the Sentence Completion Subtest for ELL Students" on page 9 for more information.

Students with Special Needs

Some students have characteristics that might make it difficult for them to demonstrate their reasoning abilities through standard testing procedures. Nearly all of these students would have been identified as eligible for special education services and would have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), an Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP), or a Section 504 Plan. The IEP or other plan ordinarily indicates whether the student should receive testing accommodations during school system-wide assessments and what the nature of those accommodations should be. Occasionally, students who have not been identified for receiving special education services might need alterations in their test-taking procedures to manage the effect of a characteristic that might interfere with a valid assessment.

Given the test structure at Levels 5/6–8, many of these students will be able to take *CogAT* without special accommodations. No reading is required, the pace of testing is varied to fit the group, and repeated directions are encouraged for all students.

Calculator usage – The *CogAT* quantitative subtests measure how well a student can hold numerical information in working memory while simultaneously mentally transforming that information in some way, for example, by performing elementary calculations on it. Therefore, a student cannot use a calculator even when the student’s IEP permits calculator usage. Offloading calculations to a calculator removes the transformation processes and invalidates the normative scores.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

The purpose of using testing accommodations with English language learners is to reduce the impact that their limited experience with English has on the measurement of their reasoning abilities. *CogAT* is designed to be accessible to English language learners. Although language is used in all of the subtest directions, it is used in the actual subtest questions only for Sentence Completion. During the Sentence Completion subtest, the student hears a different prompt for each subtest question. For ELL students who do not speak Spanish, the Sentence Completion subtest can be omitted or administered in English but not scored. See “Omitting the Sentence Completion Subtest for ELL Students” below.

Omitting the Sentence Completion Subtest for ELL Students

As a testing modification for ELL students at Levels 5/6–8, you may omit the Sentence Completion subtest in the Verbal Battery. If the Sentence Completion subtest is omitted for all ELL students, then check with your test coordinator for the procedures to follow. Students receiving this modification receive an alternative score for the Verbal Battery that does not include a score for the Sentence Completion subtest, even if the student was administered this subtest.

Typical Accommodations

The testing accommodations most frequently used by students are described below.

Students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans

Tested Off Level	Students who work at an instructional level well above or well below that of their grade peers may take a higher or lower level of the test. (Level 5/6 is the lowest available level.) Reading skills should not be a concern, since the Levels 5/6–8 tests do not require any reading on the part of the students. However, the range of difficulty of the questions in the Levels 5/6–8 tests allows most students to obtain accurate scores using the on-level test.
Repeated Directions	 Proctor Led The test administrator may read aloud the directions and item prompts as many times as necessary to ensure that all students understand what they are supposed to do. If you have some students who may need all of these directions and item prompts repeated as a testing accommodation, then you may want to consider administering the test with audio or administering the paper and pencil test to those students.
	 Audio For each subtest, students may play the directions and item prompts as many times as necessary to ensure they understand what they are supposed to do.

Students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans, *continued*

Separate Location	A separate assessment room should be made available for students who might be distracted by the pace at which their peers work, who may need extra breaks, or who might be disruptive in a larger group.
Assistance with the Online Test	An assistant or proctor may record a student's answers in the online test if the student is unable to do so because of physical impairment.
Other	Accommodations noted in a student's IEP but not included in this list may be used, with the exception of calculator usage. For example, a test administrator who is fluent in the signing or cueing methods used by a student may need to repeat directions or certain portions of the test administration to clarify procedures for the student. Accommodations noted in a student's IEP should be used only if doing so will not alter the nature of the ability the test is intended to measure.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Small Group/Individual Administration	Students may be tested in small groups or individually. There is no minimum group-size requirement for test administration.
Tested Off Level	Students who work at an instructional level well above or well below that of their grade peers may take a higher or lower level of the test. (Level 5/6 is the lowest available level.) Reading skills should not be a concern, since the Levels 5/6–8 tests do not require any reading on the part of the students. However, the range of difficulty of the questions in the Levels 5/6–8 tests allows most students to obtain accurate scores using the on-level test.
Repeated Directions	 Proctor Led The test administrator may read aloud the directions and item prompts as many times as necessary to ensure that all students understand what they are supposed to do. If you have some students who may need all of these directions and item prompts repeated as a testing accommodation, then you may want to consider administering the test with audio or administering the paper and pencil test to those students.  Audio For each subtest, students may play the directions and item prompts as many times as necessary to ensure they understand what they are supposed to do.
Test Administered by ELL Teacher or Individual Providing Language Services	This accommodation allows the student to be tested in the environment that is most comfortable. Also, it makes other accommodations more readily available if their need was not anticipated at the outset of the test administration.
Directions Administered in a Language Other Than English	The directions and item prompts may be administered in a language other than English. The online test with Spanish audio is available for Levels 5/6–8.