

Dictionary

Description of Accommodation

This accommodation facilitates comprehension of unfamiliar words and/or provides spelling assistance for a student with a disability.

Assessments

For a student who meets the eligibility criteria, this accommodation may be used on **ONLY**

- STAAR, STAAR Spanish, and STAAR Modified grades 3–5 reading tests
- STAAR, STAAR Spanish, and STAAR Modified grade 4 writing test

Student Eligibility Criteria

A student may use this accommodation if he or she

- receives special education or Section 504 services,
- routinely, independently, and effectively uses this accommodation during classroom instruction and testing, and
- meets at least one of the following.
 - For use on a reading test, the student has a disability that affects memory retrieval and/or decoding skills.
 - For use on a writing test, the student is capable of organizing and developing ideas and understands the basic function and use of written language conventions (e.g., sentence structures, irregular verbs) but has a disability that is so severe that he or she cannot apply basic spelling rules and/or word patterns (e.g., silent letters, base words with affixes) to written responses.

Authority for Decision and Required Documentation

- For a student receiving special education services, the decision is made by the ARD committee based on the eligibility criteria and is documented in the student's IEP.
- For a student receiving Section 504 services, the decision is made by the placement committee based on the eligibility criteria and is documented in the student's IAP.
- In the case of an ELL with a disability, the decision should be made by the applicable group above in conjunction with the student's LPAC. The decision is to be documented by the LPAC in the student's permanent record file and by the other applicable group, as described above.
- After statewide testing, the accommodation type must be recorded in the ACCOMMODATIONS field on the student's answer document or in the Assessment Management System for online administrations, if applicable. The accommodation type is indicated in the triangle at the top of this document.

No Accommodation Request Form required.



Examples/Types

This accommodation may include **ONLY**

- standard/general dictionary in English (or Spanish for Spanish-version tests)
- dictionary/thesaurus combination
- electronic dictionary that does not allow access to the Internet (e.g., handheld electronic dictionary, speaking dictionary with headphones)
- bilingual dictionary (word-to-word translations; no definitions or examples)
- ESL dictionary (definition of an English word using simplified English)
- picture dictionary
- sign language dictionary

Special Instructions/Considerations

1. A student who uses this accommodation may need to complete the test in a separate setting to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure the confidentiality of the test. Testing in a separate setting for this purpose is not considered the Individual or Small-Group Administration accommodation.
2. The use of a dictionary as a testing accommodation should not replace the teaching of vocabulary or spelling skills as outlined in the TEKS.
3. Dictionaries are a required part of standard test administration procedures (and not considered a testing accommodation) for some statewide assessments. Refer to the document titled "State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) Dictionary Policy," located on the STAAR Resources webpage. If a student in grade 6 or above needs a dictionary not listed in this policy, contact TEA's Accommodations Task Force.
4. As a testing accommodation, students should use the same type of dictionary they routinely use during classroom instruction and testing. The dictionary may be provided by the school or brought from the student's home. However, the dictionary must be commercially produced. Teacher-made or student-made dictionaries are not allowed.
5. Information about the use of dictionaries as a linguistic accommodation for ELLs is available on the Linguistic Accommodations for ELLs taking STAAR webpage.

Student Scenarios

Below are student scenarios that are intended to clarify who is eligible to use a dictionary as an accommodation on applicable statewide assessments. These scenarios do not address every situation in which a student may or may not use a dictionary as a testing accommodation. Additional scenarios will be provided as needed to address feedback received from educators.

1. Lindsay is a third grade student receiving special education services. She struggles with memory retrieval, which affects her ability to understand and learn vocabulary. She also struggles with reading comprehension because she doesn't know what some words mean as she reads. She has been successful when using a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words while reading grade-level texts. Can Lindsay use a dictionary on the STAAR Modified grade 3 reading assessment?

Yes. Lindsay meets the eligibility criteria and may use a dictionary on the STAAR Modified grade 3 reading assessment.

2. Cassie is a fourth grade student receiving Section 504 services for dyslexia. She uses an electronic dictionary that “reads” the definitions aloud to her for words that are difficult for her to decode. She is able to comprehend grade-level texts when using this accommodation. Can Cassie use an electronic dictionary on the STAAR grade 4 reading assessment?

Yes. Cassie meets the eligibility criteria and may use an electronic dictionary on the STAAR grade 4 reading assessment.

3. Kelvin is a fourth grade student receiving special education services. He has weak decoding skills, which affects his ability to comprehend grade-level texts. Kelvin is learning to use an electronic dictionary while reading independently. The teacher reports that Kelvin needs assistance while learning to use this technology. Can Kelvin use this dictionary on the STAAR Modified grade 4 reading assessment next week?

No. Although Kelvin is learning to use the electronic dictionary in classroom instruction, he is not able to independently and effectively use it at this time.

4. Ethan is a fifth grade student not receiving special education or Section 504 services. He has trouble decoding words, which hampers his ability to understand their meaning. He struggles with reading but has success when he has access to a dictionary. Can Ethan use a dictionary on the STAAR grade 5 reading assessment?

No. Ethan does not meet the eligibility criteria because he does not receive special education or Section 504 services.