Innovative Accessibility

Smarter Balanced is committed to providing accessibility resources and supporting formative assessment processes that help educators better serve the needs of diverse students, including students who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired.

How We Design Accessible Tests
All test questions are developed using the principles of Universal Design. Teachers and other educators help write test questions and collaboratively review drafts of new test questions to ensure that each item is accessible for the students who need to respond to the test question, as well as fair and unbiased. For example, educators who work with students who have disabilities help ensure that students can successfully answer Smarter Balanced test questions regardless of the students' ability to access auditory or visual information.

How We Support Students
All students who take the test may use embedded Universal Tools to support them while they read and respond to test questions. In addition, educators and IEP teams respectively may determine that students are eligible for additional supports and accommodations. Consortium members annually review and revise policies regarding the resources and how these resources may support students during testing. Students can try out and become familiar with all the resources by using practice tests that states make available.

Recommended Tools to Support Students
See the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines (UAAG) for a comprehensive list of tools.

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Amplification • Illustration glossaries • Highlighter • English glossaries

American Sign Language • Closed captioning • Strikethrough

Keyboard navigation • Zoom • Color contrast • Mouse pointer • Streamline • Magnification • Abacus

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Types of Accessibility Resources

**UNIVERSAL TOOLS**
Universal tools are available to students based on students’ 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 permitted for eligible students if specified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan. Examples: American Sign Language, Braille, Closed captioning

How We Support Implementation and Administration
To support educators and students, the consortium provides:

- a traditional paper braille test and [braille hybrid adaptive](#) test that significantly reduce the time required to print graphics during the mathematics 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 instructional accessibility strategies that help educators connect classroom use of accessibility practices to accessibility resources offered on the interim and summative assessments.