

Accessibility Manual for Ohio's English Language Proficiency Assessments



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Accessibility Manual for Ohio’s English Language Proficiency Assessments

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Introduction

Through its partnership with the [English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century](#) (ELPA21), the Ohio Department of Education (Department) supports an assessment system for English learners that reflects the research and progress made in the development of English language proficiency assessments. ELPA21 and the Department's approach to assessment is rooted in the belief that English learners are a diverse group; all English learners are capable of making progress toward English language proficiency; and English learners must acquire discipline-specific language practices that enable them to produce, interpret and effectively collaborate on content-related grade-appropriate tasks.

The Ohio English language assessment system includes a screener, the [Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener](#) (OELPS), and a summative test, the [Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment](#) (OELPA). The OELPS and the OELPA assess students' English proficiency in the language domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Ohio's English language proficiency assessments support individual English learners and their schools and districts by:

- [identifying students as English learners](#) through use of the OELPS;
- monitoring English learners' annual progress in the attainment of English proficiency for academic purposes using the OELPA;
- measuring school district success in meeting [ESSA Title I and Title III accountability benchmarks](#);
- informing decisions about exiting students from English learner services; and
- assessing student's proficiency toward the attainment of the [Ohio Seal of Biliteracy](#).

This accessibility manual applies to the screener (OELPS) and the summative test (OELPA).

The Ohio Department of Education (Department) is committed to providing assessments that best measure rigorous [English language proficiency standards](#) that correspond to [Ohio's Learning Standards](#) in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Ohio's English language assessment system assesses all English learners, including those who have disabilities, and recognizes that the validity of assessment results depends on every student having appropriate access to the assessment. Accordingly, this accessibility manual is designed to guide districts' selection and administration of *Administrative Considerations, Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations* for individual students to produce valid assessment results.

The Department supports the implementation of an assessment system for English learners that reflects the research and progress made in the development of English language proficiency assessments. The Department's approach to English language assessment is rooted in the knowledge that English learners are diverse; all English learners can make progress toward English language proficiency; and English learners must acquire discipline-specific language practices that enable them to produce, interpret and effectively collaborate on content-related, grade-appropriate tasks so that they can make and negotiate meaning in a variety of contexts.

INTENDED AUDIENCE AND RECOMMENDED USE

The *Accessibility Manual for Ohio's English Language Proficiency Assessments* is intended for district and school-level personnel, as well as decision-making teams, including Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, as they prepare for and implement the OELPS and OELPA. This manual provides information for educators of English learners, intervention specialists and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering accessibility features for those students who need them. The manual also is intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment.

This manual applies to all students who take the OELPS and OELPA. It emphasizes an individualized approach to the implementation of assessment practices for students who have diverse needs and participate in large-scale English language proficiency assessments. At the same time, this manual supports important

instructional decisions about accessibility for students who participate in the OELPS and OELPA. Ohio recognizes the critical connection between accessibility in instruction and accessibility during assessment.

ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Although Ohio's State Tests (OST), the OELPS and the OELPA share a common test delivery system and therefore have similar features available, there are differences between policies for Ohio's English language proficiency assessments and [Ohio's State Tests](#) (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies).

The conceptual model, shown in Figure 1, highlights:

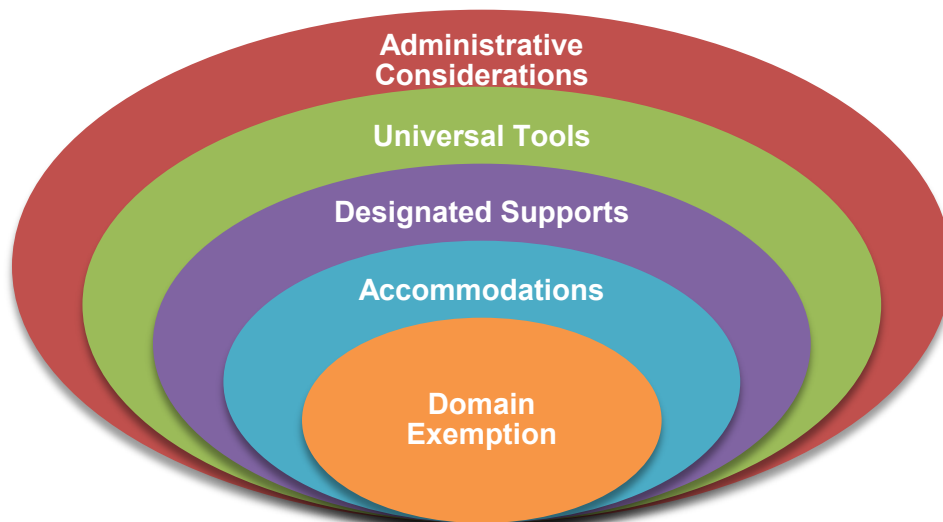
- a) Administrative considerations that support the participation of students in the OELPS and OELPA;
- b) Universal tools (supports available to all students);
- c) Designated supports (supports available for individual students that must be assigned to students in advance of testing); and
- d) Accommodations (supports available to individual students with individualized education programs or 504 plans).

Note: To ensure valid scores and secure administration of the OELPS and OELPA, only those universal features, designated features and accommodations explicitly identified in this manual may be used during test administration. If other accessibility features and accommodations are used, there is a risk that the assessment will no longer measure the intended constructs and will invalidate the results. If you have questions about other accessibility features or accommodations, contact the Office of Assessment at statetests@education.ohio.gov or (614) 466-1317.

Figure 1 also identifies the embedded features (provided digitally as components of the test delivery system) and non-embedded features (provided locally by school or district staff). The universal features, designated features and accommodations identified in this manual all yield valid scores that count as participation in Ohio's English language proficiency assessments when used in a manner consistent with this manual. The conceptual model was developed to ensure that the OELPS and OELPA meet students' accessibility needs. It also recognizes that some students may have characteristics and access needs that require the use of accommodations during instruction and when they participate in the OELPS and OELPA.

To protect the validity and administration security of the OELPS and OELPA, only those accessibility features explicitly identified in this manual should be used during test administration. The use of features that are outside of this document could compromise the OELPS and OELPA validity and invalidate student results.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Accessibility Features for OELPA and OELPS



Accessibility Features of Ohio's English Language Proficiency Assessment System

<p>Administrative Considerations</p>	<p>Adjustable lighting, familiar test administrator, frequent breaks, separate or alternate location, small group or individual administration, specialized equipment or furniture, specified area or seating, time of day</p>
<p>Universal Tools <i>Available to all students</i></p>	<p>Embedded: Amplification, audio support, digital notepad, general directions, headphones, highlighter, keyboard navigation, line reader, mark for review, masking, paginated stimuli and reading mode, strike-through, writing tools, zoom</p> <p>Non-embedded: Blank paper, redirect student to the test, technological assistance with test navigation</p>
<p>Designated Supports <i>Identified in advance and set by test administrator</i></p>	<p>Embedded: Color contrast, disable universal tools, print size</p> <p>Non-Embedded: Color overlay, external magnification or enlargement device, noise buffer, preferred language translation of directions, specialized paper, student reads test aloud, tactile fidgets/fidget devices, external timer</p>
<p>Accommodations <i>Available with an IEP or 504 plan</i></p>	<p>Embedded: None</p> <p>Non-embedded: Assistive technology, braille, large print test booklet, paper-pencil test, scribe</p>
<p>Domain Exemption <i>Available with an IEP or 504 plan</i></p>	<p>Domain exemptions are for student situations that preclude engagement with any of the four language domains (listening, reading, writing and speaking). Districts may exempt students from a domain if the student's disability prohibits the student from participating in the stated domain. Districts may exempt a student from no more than three of the four domains.</p>

RECOGNIZING ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS IN ALL STUDENTS

Both Title I and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) require states and local education agencies to annually assess the English language proficiency of all English learners in the state enrolled in public schools in grades kindergarten through twelve in the domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Sections 1111(b)(2)(G), 1111(b)(1)(F), and 34 CFR § 200.5(a)(2) of the ESEA).

The OELPS and OELPA are designed for all English learners, including those who have disabilities. To better understand the student populations served by Ohio English language proficiency assessment program,

educators should consider the following two definitions:

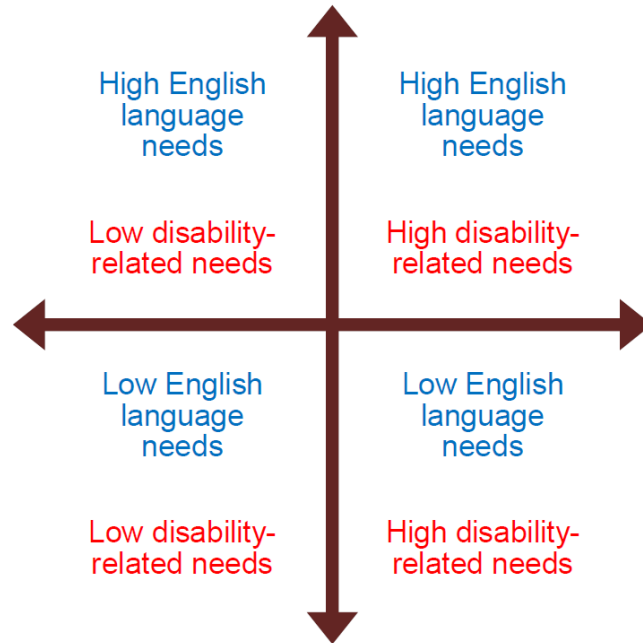
- 1) **English learners** are students who meet the following federal definition: the term “limited English proficient,” when used with respect to an individual, means an individual –
 - (A) who is aged 3 through 21;
 - (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
 - (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - (ii) (I) who is a Native American or Alaskan Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
 - (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
 - (D) whose difficulties in Speaking, Reading, Writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual –
 - (i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in Section 1111(b)(3);
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

- 2) **English learners with disabilities** are English learners who have a 504 plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Those with an IEP may be identified as having one or more categories of disability (autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment and deafness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disability, speech language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment and blindness).

All English learners with disabilities are required to participate in States’ annual summative English language proficiency assessments (the OELPA). Schools must provide appropriate accommodations in accordance with a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. The IEP team for an English learner with a disability should include at least one person who is an expert in English language acquisition. The IEP team is responsible for determining how an English learner with a disability will participate in the OELPS and OELPA. The IEP team determines whether the student will participate in the OELPA with or without allowable accommodations and/or domain exemptions.

To ensure that English learners with disabilities receive appropriate accessibility features and accommodations, IEP team members should consider the degree of each student’s language- and disability-related needs. As shown in Figure 2, accessibility and accommodation decisions should be individualized based on the particular language- and disability-related challenges faced by English learners with disabilities. Students with high English language needs and low disability-related needs will require more language-based supports while their counterparts with high disability-related needs and low English language needs will require more supports that remove disability-related barriers. At the same time, students with high English language needs and high disability-related needs will benefit from more intensive language- and disability-related supports while students with low English language needs and low disability-related needs will require fewer supports that alleviate language- and disability-related assessment challenges.

Figure 2. English Language and Disability Related Needs Affecting Accessibility and Accommodation Decisions.



From “Accommodations Manual: How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of English language learners with disabilities,” by Shyyan, Christensen, Touchette, Lightborne, Gholson, and Burton, 2013. Reprinted with permission.

Section I: Administrative Considerations

WHAT ARE ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS?

Administrators have the authority to schedule students in testing spaces other than classrooms and at different scheduled times, if test security conditions are met. For example, an administrator may consider the decision to test students who are easily distracted in a large group setting in a small group or individual setting. In general, changes to the timing, setting or conditions of testing are left to the discretion of the principal or test coordinator.

Table 1. Administrative Considerations

Administrative Considerations	Description
Adjustable lighting	Lighting in testing location is adjusted to meet the needs of the student by dimming or brightening the lights. Lighting should be adequate for test administrators to monitor students taking the test.
Familiar test administrator	The student knows the test administrator and/or interpreter.
Frequent breaks	All students may take occasional breaks as needed. <i>Frequent breaks</i> are multiple, planned, short breaks during testing based on a specific student's needs (for example, the student fatigues easily). During each break, the testing clock is stopped. If the student leaves the room, the test administrator must collect the student's test materials.
Separate or alternate location	The test is administered in a different location than the location where other students are testing (for example, a different classroom).
Small group or individual administration	A small group is a subset of a larger testing group assessed in a separate location. There is no specific number defined for a small group, but two to eight students is typical. A "group" of one also is permissible. Small groups may be appropriate for read-aloud of paper tests and translated test administration or to reduce distractors for some students. Read-aloud is only allowable on the paper version. <i>Note:</i> The OELPS must be administered in a one-on-one test session.
Specialized seating or furniture	This includes equipment such as adjustable desks or chairs.
Specified area or seating	The student sits in a specific place in the test setting, such as by the window for natural light or beside the test administrator's desk.
Time of day	The student takes test during time of day most beneficial to his or her performance. Care must be taken to ensure that the student has enough time to complete scheduled testing.

Section II: Universal Tools

WHAT ARE UNIVERSAL TOOLS?

Universal tools are accessibility features of the Ohio’s English language proficiency assessments that are either provided digitally through the test delivery system (embedded) or non-digitally at the local level (non-embedded). Universal tools are available to all students based on student preference and selection for use.

EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL TOOLS

The online OELPS and OELPA include a range of embedded universal tools. These features are available to all students and are built-in to the test delivery system. Universal tools for paper-based testing are student strategies or features provided externally by test administrators. See [Appendix A](#) - Accessibility Features for Paper-based Ohio’s State Tests in [Ohio's Accessibility Manual with Appendices](#) for paper-based alternatives to the embedded tools.

Table 2 lists and describes each embedded universal tool available on the online assessments. Although these features are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the feature should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the student (see Section II – Designated Supports).

Table 2. Embedded Universal Tools Available to All Students

Universal Tool	Description
Amplification	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed.
Audio support	<p>The student uses this feature to hear pre-recorded audio of most tasks. With the exception of the text in drag-and-drop text and the text in a word bank, audio support is available for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaking</i> – most tasks have audio support for most (but not all) components; • <i>Listening</i> – all tasks have audio support for all components; all tasks feature unlimited replays; • <i>Writing</i> – all tasks have audio support for all components except for inline editing tasks; and • <i>Reading</i> – audio support is available only for read-along tasks and for all kindergarten tasks and items. <p><i>Online tests.</i> Human read-aloud is not permitted for online tests. All parts of the online test that can be read are presented in the prerecorded audio in the test delivery system.</p> <p><i>Paper tests.</i> In cases where a student cannot take the online OELPA or OELPS and instead takes a paper version, the student will receive audio support via the test administrator. The test administrator will follow the script in the <i>Directions for Administration Manual</i>, which is a secure document sent with the paper test materials. The test administrator also will use an audio CD included with the testing materials. The test administrator with audio CD provides the same audio support that is available in the online version. The test administrator may not read any part of the test not specifically indicated in the script. General guidelines for test administrators reading the paper-based script for the OELPS and OELPA is in Appendix B of this manual.</p>
Digital notepad	The student uses this feature as virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses. The is available through the end of each domain test. Notes are not saved when the student moves on to a different domain test.

Universal Tool	Description
General directions	The test administrator must read the scripted general directions for starting all administrations and must not deviate from the script. After the test administrator has read the directions, students may ask for the directions to be repeated or clarified. General directions may be translated or signed. General directions include the scripted information for students that comes before the test starts. Once students have begun the test, nothing may be clarified.
Headphones or earbuds	The student uses headphones or earbuds to access pre-recorded audio on the assessment. Students must use headphones if tested in a group setting. Students with hearing impairments may use personal FM systems. For more information on additional assistive technology devices and software for use on OELPS and OELPA refer to Appendix D of Ohio's Accessibility Manual .
Highlighter	The student uses this digital feature for marking desired text, items or response options with the color yellow. Highlighted text remains available throughout the test as long as the test session remains active.
Keyboard navigation	The student is able to navigate throughout test content by using a keyboard (for example, using the arrow keys). This feature may vary depending on the device.
Line reader	The student uses an on-screen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text on the screen. <i>Recommendation for Use.</i> Students with attention difficulties or reading disabilities may need assistance with tracking where they are reading.
Mark for review	The student electronically “flags” or “bookmarks” items to review later.
Masking	The student covers an area of the item so they can focus on certain elements of the test item or task. The student may uncover anything masked when ready. <i>Recommendation for use:</i> Students with attention difficulties may benefit from masking answer choices that may be distracting during the assessment. This feature also may be needed by students with print disabilities or visual impairments.
Paginated stimuli and reading mode	The student reads a passage by flipping pages, similar to a book or e-reader. This eliminates vertical scrolling on passages. The student also can select to open the reading mode window which displays two pages of the reading passage at a time.
Strikethrough (answer choice eliminator)	The student electronically crosses out answer choices on multiple-choice items, usually choices that do not appear correct to the student. <i>Recommendation for use:</i> Students with attention difficulties may benefit from striking through answer choices that may be distracting during the assessment. This feature also may be needed by students with print disabilities (including learning disabilities) or visual impairments.
Writing tools	The student uses writing tools to format and edit written responses, such as cut and paste, copy, underline, italicize, bold and undo/redo.
Zoom	Students use the zoom out and zoom in buttons to decrease and increase the size of the text and graphics. Maximum zoom is about 300 percent depending on the device. (Large print paper tests are described in Section IV: Accommodations of this manual.)

NON-EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL TOOLS

Table 3. Non-embedded Universal Tools Available to All Students

Universal Tool	Description
Blank/Scratch paper	Test administrators must provide blank paper to students upon request. The student receives one sheet (or more as needed) of paper with a pencil, pen or marker. In all cases, test administrators must collect and securely shred used paper at the end of each test domain to maintain test security.
Redirect student to the test	Test administrator redirects the student's attention to the test.
Technological assistance with test navigation	<p>Students without the necessary computer skills to participate in OELPA or OELPS may have a trained test administrator help with mouse point-and-click and drag-and-drop and on-screen tool/button navigation (i.e., back, next, submit, start/stop recording, play speaking recording). The test administrator is allowed to assist only with the technology as indicated by the student and must never assist with actual answer responses. Choosing answers for a student is a test security violation and will invalidate the assessment.</p> <p>On writing items where the student is to compose a written response, a test administrator is not allowed to have the student handwrite responses and expect the test administrator to type them into the writing space. For students who are incapable of typing their own responses, see the "Scribe" non-embedded accommodation.</p>

Section III: Designated Supports

WHAT ARE DESIGNATED SUPPORTS?

Designated supports for the OELPS and OELPA are those features (embedded and non-embedded) that are available to any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parent/guardian and student). A relatively small number of students require these additional features. Since providing all supports at on-screen might distract some students, each designated support must be selected ahead of time based on the individual needs and preferences of each student by trained educators or teams using a consistent process. Before testing, students should practice using the designated supports (during instruction when possible and on [OELPA practice tests](#)) and understand when and how to use them. Students may decide whether to use a pre-selected support without any consequence to the student, school or district.

Individualizing access needs on the test for each student provides increased opportunities to accurately demonstrate knowledge and skills.

There are embedded and nonembedded types of designated supports. *Embedded supports* are those that are available digitally as part of the test delivery system; they're built in. They can be enabled by:

1. Uploading a student settings file in [TIDE](#);
2. Marking the features under the "Test Settings" section of the student's record manually in TIDE; or
3. Selecting the support(s) under "Test Settings" in the Test Administrator Interface if approving the student to test during the test session.

Non-embedded supports are not part of the online test delivery system. These supports are not built-in, so test administrators must provide them locally.

WHO MAKES DECISIONS ABOUT DESIGNATED SUPPORTS?

Decisions about designated features should be made by educators (or teams of educators, with parent/guardian and student if appropriate) who are familiar with the student's characteristics and needs. Decisions should reflect those supports that the student uses during instruction and for other assessments. Student input to the decision, particularly for older students, is recommended.

For students with Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plans, their corresponding IEP or 504 teams should make decisions on what designated features need to be provided on these students' assessments.

The following section highlights designated supports and provides recommendations to districts and schools when making decisions about designated features. All embedded designated supports must be configured in the student test settings prior to testing. Appendix A includes a planning tool that districts and schools can use to identify the individual configurations for each student.

EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

Table 4 lists and describes the embedded designated supports available to students taking the OELPS and OELPA. Some descriptions include recommendations for when a student might benefit from using the support.

Table 4. Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Support	Description
Color contrast	<p>The test administrator is able to adjust the text color and screen background color based on the student’s need. The color contrast options, in addition to the default black text on white background, include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Black text on cream background; 2) Black text on light blue background; 3) Black text on light pink background; 4) Yellow text on blue background; and 5) White text on black background. <p><i>Note:</i> Color contrast options for OELPA do not exactly match those offered on Ohio’s State Tests. Students should use the OELPA practice test to determine best options for this feature.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students with attention difficulties may benefit from this feature for viewing test content. It also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). Choice of colors should be informed by evidence that specific text and background color combinations meet the student’s needs.</p>
Disable universal tool	<p>This feature allows disabling any universal feature that might interfere with student performance or be distracting to the student. Some students may benefit from fewer tools in the Test Delivery System when testing. Many of the universal tools available in the Test Delivery System can be turned off. See the Test Administration Manuals on the assessment portal for details about turning student settings on and off.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students who are easily distracted (whether designated as having attention difficulties or disabilities) may be overwhelmed by some of the universal features. Having evidence of which specific features may be distracting is important for determining which features to turn off.</p>
Text size/Zoom	<p>The text size can be preset to one to four levels larger than the default.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 0: 100% (default/no zoom) Level 1: 150% Level 2: 175% Level 3: 250% Level 4: 300% <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students with visual impairments may need to increase the size of text and other item features beyond the 4X zoom universal feature provided by the test platform. A larger computer screen may be needed for this feature to function effectively.</p>

NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

Table 5. Non-embedded Designated Supports

Designated Support	Description
Color overlay	<p>The student is able to overlay a semitransparent color sheet onto paper-based test content.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> This designated feature works best with black text on white background. Some colored overlays may change the original color.</p>
External magnification or enlargement device	<p>The student uses external magnification or enlargement devices to increase specific areas of the test (for example, projector, closed-circuit television, eyeglass-mounted or hand-held magnifiers, electronic magnification systems).</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students with visual impairments may need to increase the size of text and other item features beyond the 4x zoom universal tool provided by the test platform.</p>
Noise buffer	<p>The student uses noise buffers (earphones or earbuds) to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing. Any noise buffer must be compatible with the requirements of the test and allow the student to hear directions from the test administrator and audio features of the assessment.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students who are distracted by external noises within the testing environment may need noise buffers (mufflers, student spacing).</p>
Preferred language translation of directions	<p>Translation of general test directions (not item prompts or questions) is a language support available to students prior to starting the actual test. Test directions can be read aloud or signed by a test administrator who is fluent in the language. Translations may be provided by a human or the test platform.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students who have limited English language skills and/or who do not understand how to respond to an item may benefit from translated directions.</p>
Specialized paper	<p>Students may use test administrator provided grid paper, wide-ruled paper, Braille paper, raised-line paper, bold-line paper, bold-line grid paper, colored paper, etc. The paper cannot contain any writing that gives the student an unfair testing advantage. Examples of additional writing that is prohibited, can include, but is not limited to: graphic organizers and two-column tables. Students may use white boards and markers instead of paper. In all cases, test administrators must collect and securely shred used paper and erase markings on white boards at the end of each test domain to maintain test security.</p>
Student reads test aloud	<p>The student reads the test content aloud to self. This feature includes the use of whisper phone. The test must be administered in a one-on-one setting or in a setting in which the student is separated enough from other students that they cannot hear each other and do not disturb one another.</p> <p><i>Recommendations for Use:</i> Students who are beginning readers may need to hear themselves read in order to comprehend text. Students who tend to rush through assessments and not read text fully may need to read the test aloud.</p>

Designated Support	Description
Tactile fidgets/Fidget devices	Student uses tool for self-regulation, to help with focus, attention, calming, and active listening (fidget spinner, squish ball, focus cube). Tool must be free of anything that may give an advantage during testing or test content.
Timer (external)	Student uses a timer. There are a variety of timers that students may use, ranging from basic kitchen timers to more complex wearable devices that vibrate or flash at preset intervals or timers with visual clues such as a red covering that disappears as the timer counts down. Students may not use cell phones and devices must not connect to the internet.

Section IV: Accommodations

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the OELPA and OELPS and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Accommodations are only for students for whom there is documentation of need on an IEP or 504 plan, so that these students show what they know and can do in English. Below, there are no embedded accommodations, only non-embedded.

WHO MAKES DECISIONS ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS?

IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators make decisions about accommodations. For English learners with disabilities, these teams should include an expert in the area of English language acquisition. These decision makers provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan.

The OELPS may occur outside of the regular school year, as new students register for school. In some cases, an IEP or 504 plan may not yet be in place for the student to be properly screened with accessibility needs in mind. If the district or school discovers that appropriate accommodations on the OELPS were not provided to a student with a disability, the logical step would be to re-test the students with appropriate accommodations. If the results of the OELPS show that the student is not an English learner, then the English learner designation would be removed.

NON-EMBEDDED ACCOMMODATIONS

For information about human read-aloud, see the Audio Support feature in Table 2.

Table 6. Non-embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan

Accommodation	Description
Assistive technology	<p>The student may use assistive technology, which includes such supports as typing on customized keyboards, assistance using a mouse, mouth or head stick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, trackball, speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition. Refer to Appendix D – Assistive Technology Guidelines in Ohio's Accessibility Manual for additional information. The Assistive Technology Manual, 2020-2021 prepared by Cambium Assessment, Inc. on the test portal offers more information.</p> <p><i>Recommendations for Use:</i> Students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard may need an alternative device.</p>
Braille Version	<p>A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (maps, charts, diagrams and illustrations, etc.) is presented in a raised format. Student responses in braille can be transcribed into a scorable test booklet or entered in the data entry interface (DEI). Tests are available in contracted braille in Unified English Braille. Please contact the Office of Assessment for more information at statetests@education.ohio.gov or (614) 466-1317.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students who are blind or have low vision may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics may also be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. Districts and schools requiring large-print paper tests must submit a request in TIDE for Department approval.</p>
Large print paper test	<p>A large print form of the test for students with a visual impairment who are unable to take the test online even with magnification, zoom and other specialized devices. The font size for the large print form is 18-point on 11" x 17" paper.</p>

Accommodation	Description
	<p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students with visual impairments who may not be able to use zoom or magnifying devices to access the test and may need a large-print paper test. Districts and schools requiring large-print paper tests must submit a request in TIDE for Department approval.</p>
Paper test	<p>The student takes a paper-and-pencil version of the test. If a student is unable to take an online test, they may have a paper-and-pencil version of the test. Teams should base this decision on a student’s individual needs only and should not be applied on a group basis.</p> <p>Students who have a paper-based test will have portions of the test read aloud by the test administrator and portions played from the audio CD. See Appendix B for guidance.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Due to cultural considerations or based on an individual disability, some students may be precluded from using the online test. These students may need to take a paper-version of the OELPS or OELPA. This option should be based on a student’s individual needs only and should not be applied on a group basis. Districts and schools requiring large-print paper tests must submit a request in TIDE for Department approval.</p>
Scribe	<p>This accommodation is only for OELPS writing items and the OELPA writing domain test. The scribe accommodation is for students who have a documented significant motor or language processing difficulty or who have had a recent injury and need this as an emergency accommodation (such as a broken hand or arm). The student dictates responses either verbally, using a speech-to-text device, augmentative communication device or assistive communication device (e.g., picture or word board) or by signing, gesturing, pointing or eye gazing. Grammar checker, Internet and stored files functionalities must be turned off. The student must test in a separate setting.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix C - Protocol for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses in Ohio's Accessibility Manual with Appendices for more information about the scribing process. For constructed responses in the writing domain only, students and scribes should follow the section <i>Additional Guidelines for the English Language Arts–Constructed Responses</i> in Appendix C - Protocol for Scribing and Transcribing.</p> <p><i>Recommendation for Use:</i> Students who have documented significant motor or language processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then writes the student’s responses verbatim either in the online test platform or on paper. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment. For these students, dictating to a scribe is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills.</p>

Section V: Domain Exemptions

Domain exemptions are available for the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) and the Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (OELPS). Domain exemptions are for student situations that preclude engagement with any of the four language domains (listening, reading, writing and speaking). Districts may exempt students from a domain if the student's disability prohibits the student from participating in the stated domain. Districts may exempt a student from no more than three of the four domains.

In determining which student situation might be applicable for a domain exemption, administrators and teachers must determine that:

- The student has a documented disability or impairment (IEP or 504 plan) applicable to the domain;
- Even with available accommodations, the student cannot engage with (access) the domain; and
- The 504 plan or IEP team, in consultation with the educator(s) supporting student's English language development, have established a need for a domain exemption. It is essential for the determination process, that the IEP team include participants who have the requisite knowledge of the child's English language development needs. The determination must be documented in the student's plan.

If all three criteria above are affirmed, the District Test Coordinator or District Administrator will register participating students in Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) in advance of the test window and will indicate exemptions under test settings and tools. Please see the [TIDE User Guide](#) for instructions on manually editing or uploading test settings.

A student who can access a domain, even if supporting educators question the soundness of the subsequent scores due to the nature of a student's response(s), are not candidates for domain exemption. For example, a student who is deaf could be exempt from taking the listening domain test or a student who is nonverbal could be exempt from taking the speaking domain test. However, a student with a speech impediment that hampers clear articulation, but who does engage in verbal exchange, should participate in assessing her or his speaking skills in English.

Students will receive an overall designation of Proficient if they receive 4s or 5s on all non-exempt domains. Students cannot receive an overall designation of Proficient if the district fails to test the student in a domain without a valid exemption or the student's score is invalidated after testing.

An example of when a domain exemption may be necessary is when a non-verbal English learner who, because of the identified disability and the absence of appropriate accommodations, cannot engage with the speaking portion of the assessment. Another example is an English learner who is deaf or hard of hearing and cannot access the listening test even with appropriate accommodations or devices, may qualify for an exemption from the listening section. The students in these examples are expected to take the remaining sections of the test. Exemptions from all domains (the entire assessment) are not allowed.

It is important to understand that a domain exemption is only appropriate when the student is unable to access part of the assessment, which is different than the potential to not score well. To determine if a domain exemption is necessary, teachers and administrators must provide assurances of the following:

- The student has a documented disability or impairment in an IEP or 504 Plan applicable to the domain;

- Even with available accommodations, the student cannot engage with or access the domain (It is advisable to use the practice test, if appropriate, to help inform this decision);
- The IEP or 504 Team, in consultation with the educator(s) supporting the student’s English language development, have established a need for the exemption.

Note: It is essential for an English learner with disabilities that there is ongoing consultation with educators who have requisite knowledge of the child’s English language development needs and skills as part of the IEP process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DOMAIN EXEMPTIONS

1. **Q: Can a 504 plan team exempt a student from a domain on the OELPA?**

A: Yes, a student with a 504 plan may be excused from up to three domains if his or her disability prohibits the student from participating in the domain. However, it is unusual for a student with a 504 plan to have a disability severe enough to justify such an exemption. If the student’s disability is significant enough to prohibit participation in a domain, the student will most likely have an IEP.

2. **Q: Can a student reading multiple grades below grade level be excused from the reading domain?**

A: A student may be excused from a domain only if he or she is unable to participate in that domain due to his or her disability and not a lack of instruction or opportunity to learn. For example, it may be appropriate to exempt a student who is blind and cannot read Braille from the reading domain. However, an English learner reading below grade level is still a reader and would not qualify for an exemption. In some cases, recently arrived English learners have had no previous language instruction, even in their native languages, and so may just be beginning to develop fundamental reading skills such as phonological awareness or decoding skills. These students would not qualify for a reading domain exemption unless teams have evidence that it is the student’s disability that is causing his or her inability to access the test and not the student’s lack of previous instruction or opportunity.

3. **Q: May a student who qualifies for the reading access accommodation of read-aloud on the state English language arts (ELA) test be excused from the reading domain on the OELPA?**

A: The OELPA and the OELPS do not allow a test administrator to read to a student any part of the test that is not already read as part of the standard test administration. If a student is appropriately identified for the reading access accommodation of read-aloud on the state ELA test, the student would qualify for a reading domain exemption. The accommodation of read-aloud on the state ELA test is only for a student who is unable to participate in the state ELA test because his or her disability severely limits or prevents the student from accessing printed text. Since these students, due to their disability, are virtual nonreaders and are receiving ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions in foundational reading skills, they would qualify for an exemption from reading on the OELPA.

4. Q: Would all students who take Ohio’s Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD) likely be eligible for exemption from one or more domains?

A: No. A team cannot exempt a student from a domain based solely on cognitive abilities. Some students who take the alternate assessment are readers. Most students who take an alternate assessment have hearing and vision within normal limits, use symbolic language, and do not use an augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) system in addition to, or in place of, oral speech.

5. Q: For a student to receive an accommodation, must the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator document the exemption on the student’s plan?

A: Yes. It is the responsibility of a student’s IEP team or 504 plan coordinator to determine eligibility and to document the exemption in the IEP or 504 plan. The IEP team or 504 plan coordinator should review and document all exemptions in the student’s IEP or 504 plan before the student begins the OELPA. All cases of domain exemptions are subject to monitoring by the Ohio Department of Education.

Appendix A: Optional OELPS and OELPA Planning Tool

Check any that apply.

Student Name: _____

SSID: _____

Date: _____

Administrative Considerations

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustable lighting
<input type="checkbox"/> Familiar test administrator
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent breaks
<input type="checkbox"/> Separate or alternate location | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group or individual administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialized seating or furniture
<input type="checkbox"/> Specified area or seating
<input type="checkbox"/> Time of day |
|---|--|

Universal Tools (pre-checked because they are available to all students)

Embedded Universal Tools		Non-embedded Universal Tools
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amplification/Volume <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Notepad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General directions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headphones/Earbuds <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highlighter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keyboard navigation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Line reader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark for review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paginated stimuli <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strikethrough <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing tools <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blank paper/Scratch paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Redirect student to the test <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technological assistance with test navigation

Designated Supports

Embedded Designated Supports	Non-embedded Designated Supports
<input type="checkbox"/> Color contrast <input type="checkbox"/> Disable universal tools <input type="checkbox"/> Zoom in/out (print size levels 0-4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Color overlay <input type="checkbox"/> External magnification or enlargement device <input type="checkbox"/> Noise buffer <input type="checkbox"/> Preferred language translation of directions <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized paper <input type="checkbox"/> Student reads test aloud <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile fidgets/Fidget devices <input type="checkbox"/> Timer (external)

Accommodations (documentation in IEP or 504 plan required)

Non-embedded Accommodations	Domain Exemption (up to three)
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistive technology <input type="checkbox"/> Braille <input type="checkbox"/> Large-print test booklet <input type="checkbox"/> Paper-pencil test <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Listening <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writing

Appendix B: Guidelines for Reading Paper-based Test Script

In cases where a student cannot use the online version of the OELPS or OELPA and takes the paper test, the student should be provided the non-embedded read aloud feature. When provided the read aloud support, the test administrator will read aloud the parts of the test that have audio support in the online version of the test.

Qualifications of Test Administrators

- As with all state tests, test administrators must be employees of the school district and hold a current, valid license, certificate, or permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education.
- The test administrator ideally should be an education professional who is familiar with the student and who is typically responsible for providing this feature in the classroom.
- Test administrators are trained on state test administration procedures and test security policies.
- The test administrator should have prior experience in providing read-aloud support, allowable only on the paper version, and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this support to a student during test administration.

Preparation Procedures

- Test administrators must familiarize themselves with the test environment and format of the test before administering the test.
- Test administrators must clearly distinguish between the test content that should and should not be read aloud to students. Reading aloud test content that is not identified in the script will result in a test misadministration and will invalidate the test.
- The test administrator must be aware of whether the student requires additional accessibility features that have been approved for use during the test.

Guidelines for Reading Aloud

- The test environment must be configured in such a way as to ensure that the administration does not interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students not taking the test on paper.
- The test administrator must read test content exactly as written in the script and as clearly as possible.
- The test administrator must communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral countenance and posture.
- The test administrator should avoid gesturing, head movements or any other verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words.
- The test administrator must avoid conversing with the student about test items and respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions from the test *verbatim* as needed.
- The test administrator must not paraphrase, interpret, define or translate any items, words or instructions.
- The test administrator may provide spelling of any word in a writing item prompt if requested by the student.
- The test administrator should adjust his/her reading speed and volume if requested by a student. When administering the test in a group, the test administrator should read at a speed and volume that meets the needs of all students in the group.

Post-Administration

- The test administrator must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance with others.