



# **Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP)**

# **Accessibility Features for English Learners**

## Introduction

The Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) assessments in English language arts, math, and science include three types of accessibility features for students: universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are all accessibility features designed to help students access the assessments to ensure valid and equitable participation.

### Universal Tools

Universal tools are available to all students. Examples of computer-embedded tools include calculators, notepads, and highlighters. Examples of non-embedded tools include the use of scratch paper and breaks.

### Designated Supports

Designated supports are available to all students but are assigned by a team of educators familiar with the student. Examples include testing in separate settings or using translated forms in math or science.

### Accommodations

Accommodations are available to students with an active IEP or 504 plan. The accommodation must be documented in the plan as an assessment accommodation. Accommodations are considered adjustments to the testing conditions, test format, or test administration that provide equitable access during assessments for students with disabilities. Being a student with English Learner status only is not cause for having an IEP or 504 plan.

## Purpose of Document

This document is intended as a guide for teachers and administrators working with English Learners (ELs) who are required to take the VTCAP. There are many types of accessibility features available, and this document provides guidance around the various options to help determine the appropriate ones for your English Learner student. Remember that these should be determined on an individual basis rather than applied to all ELs at your school or district. Just because there is an available support does not mean it is helpful or appropriate for the grade, proficiency level, and needs of your EL student.

All VTCAP designated supports for designated English Learners **must** be

1. determined with the help of a team
2. documented before testing
3. regularly utilized in the classroom for instruction and assessment

Note: If the English Learner has an active IEP (Individualized Education Program) or a 504 plan, their dual needs should also be considered when assigning accommodations and supports. Any accommodations listed in the IEP may overlap with or be different from the linguistic supports, and the team should consider how these needs and supports work in a standardized-testing situation. The scribe should be an adult who is familiar with the student, such as the teacher or teaching assistant who is typically responsible for scribing during educational instruction and assessments.

## English Learner Testing Expectations

	ELA	Math	Science
<b>1<sup>st</sup> year in the United States</b>	Not required to test	Required to test; scores not included in accountability results	Required to test; scores not included in accountability results
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> + year in the United States</b>	Required to test; scores included in accountability results	Required to test; scores included in accountability results	Required to test; scores included in accountability results

## Universal Tools for All Learners

The Universal Tools are available to all test-takers, not just the English Learners.

### Embedded Tools

No action before testing is needed for learners to access these supports during testing. Like all students, English Learners should be taught how to use these embedded tools prior to testing. EL students may find the highlighter, answer eliminator, and glossary most helpful in navigating the online testing context.

- Desmos Calculators
- Notepad
- Pop-up Glossary (English only)
- Highlighter
- Line Reader Mask
- Answer Eliminator
- Writing Tools
- Magnifier
- Zoom

### Non-Embedded Tools

Materials must be arranged and provided to students as needed. If using a dictionary or thesaurus, students should have practice using it prior to testing. It takes additional work to think in multiple languages, so students need to know how to ask for breaks as needed and appropriate.

- Breaks
- English Dictionary (math and science)
- Scratch paper
- Thesaurus (math and science)

Additional details about the Universal Tools can be found in the [VTCAP Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines](#).

## Available Test Languages

### Translations

In Vermont, the VTCAP in math and science is available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, and Swahili in a computer-based fixed-test format. Languages other than these five are not available for the SY 2024-2025 testing cycle. Test instructions and all test items for math and science will be in the selected language. Universal and embedded supports available to all students utilizing the adaptive computer-based test can also be utilized here. However, the text-to-speech is not available with the translated assessments. Consideration should be made for the literacy levels of the student in both English and the language of the test as well as the language of their prior academic instruction. This is an embedded designated support, so use of a translated VTCAP assessment must be designated in ADAM prior to testing.

## Designated Supports for English Learners

### Bilingual Word-to-word Dictionaries

Acceptable dictionaries to use during testing cannot include definitions, pronunciation, pictures, phrases, or sentences. The dictionary may be utilized in the math, science, and writing sections of the VTCAP. Electronic dictionaries may be used if no paper dictionary is available, but it may *not* be a web-based translator. Extended time should be provided to allow time for use. Consideration should be made for the literacy levels of the student in both English and the language of the dictionary. This is a non-embedded designated support, so use of this support must be designated in ADAM prior to testing.

### Separate Setting

Students who receive pull-out instruction or separate English-language services may be tested in a separate setting. This support for English Learners is intended to allow students to ask for test direction clarifications when needed. Students must be actively monitored throughout the entire testing period as test security must be maintained. This is a non-embedded designated support, so use of this support must be designated in ADAM prior to testing.

### Simplified Test Directions

Students may ask for clarification or simplification of the test directions. This support applies only to the test instructions and NOT to the test items or answer choices. The person providing the simplified test directions must be familiar with the test and the protocol, and it should be a person familiar to the student. This is a non-embedded designated support, and use of this tool must be designated in ADAM prior to testing. Refer to the [Simplified Test Directions Protocol](#) for a full description of the proctor's responsibilities. Students utilizing this designated support may be tested separately, but it is not required.

***Important Note:*** The person providing this designated support must be fully proficient in speaking and listening in the language of the test, whether it is English or the language of one of the translated versions.

## Designated Supports Most Likely to Benefit Students by ELP Level

	<b>Beginning</b> (ACCESS Levels 1/2)	<b>Intermediate</b> (ACCESS Levels 2/3)	<b>Advanced</b> (ACCESS Levels 3/4)
Bilingual word-to-word dictionaries	XX	XXX	XXX
Separate Setting	XXX	XXX	XX
Simplified Test Directions	XXX	XX	X
Translations	XXX	XX	X

For students who are dually designated as receiving both English Learner and Special Education services, decisions should be made as a team about the use of a translated VTCAP. Some supports are only available in the English version, such as ASL or CC, screen readers, or braille. Therefore, the team should discuss their options and make decisions based on the needs and abilities of the student.

Additional details about Designated Supports and Accommodations can be found in the [VTCAP Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines](#).