



Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP)

Read Aloud Protocol

Introduction

A test reader is an adult who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. The student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The test reader must be trained and qualified and must follow the Read Aloud Protocol presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has accurate access to test content.

A test reader is allowable for ELA, math, and science as a documented accommodation in all grades. Human reader as an accommodation is used for students with a documented reading disability who need an in-person reader during testing. Note that this accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1–2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment).

Qualifications for Test Readers

- The test reader should be an adult who is familiar with the student and who is typically responsible for providing this support during educational instruction and assessments.

Preparation

- The test reader is expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format in advance of the testing session (either online or paper). Having a working familiarity with the test environment and format will help facilitate the reading of the test.
- The test reader should have a strong working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports available on the assessments.
- The test reader should know about any additional designated supports and/or accommodations the student will need to use during the test. This will ensure that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations.
- In addition to a test reader, students may make use of any other approved specialized tools or equipment during the test as appropriate. The test reader should be made familiar with any assistive technology or approved supports the student requires.
- The test reader should have extensive practice in providing read-aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before working directly with a student.
- The test reader should be knowledgeable of procedures for reading aloud text by content area.
- The test reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support.
- The test reader does not have a role in manipulating the test or assisting with any other support tools.

General Guidelines

- The test reader's support should ideally be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.
- The test reader should read each question exactly as written and as clearly as possible.
- Throughout the exam, test readers should strive to communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- The test reader should avoid gesturing, head movements, or any verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words not otherwise emphasized in the text.
- The test reader should avoid conversing with the student about test questions as this would be a violation of test security; respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions verbatim as needed.
- The test reader should not paraphrase, interpret, define, or translate any items, words, or instructions as this would be a violation of test security.
- The test reader should spell any words requested by the student.
- The test reader should adjust their reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

Post-Administration

- The test reader must collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the testing session and deliver it to the test administrator in accordance with state policies and procedures.
- The test reader must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance on the test with anyone.

Content Area Guidelines

ELA Images/Graphics/Diagrams

- Before describing an image or graphic, the test reader should determine whether the details of the picture are necessary to understanding and responding to the item(s). In many cases, an image or graphic will be used to accompany a passage or reading excerpt as a piece of visual interest that is not essential in responding to the item. Typically, diagrams are imperative to student understanding and should be read in a logical order.
- The test reader should describe the image/graphic/diagram as concisely as possible following a logical progression. They should focus on providing necessary information and ignoring the superfluous. The test reader should use grade-appropriate language when describing the image/graphic/diagram.
- The test reader should read the title or caption, if available.
- Any text that appears in the body of the image/graphic/diagram may be read to a student. The test reader should read the text in images/graphics/diagrams in the order most suited for the student's needs. Often the reader moves top to bottom, left to right, in a clockwise direction, or general to specific in accordance with teaching practices.

English Usage/Conventions

- Punctuation: The test reader should read all text as punctuated, unless reading the text compromises the construct being measured.
- Ellipses: When an ellipsis is used to signify missing text in a sentence, the test reader should pause briefly, and read as "dot, dot, dot".
- Quotations: Quotation marks should be verbalized as "quote" and "end quote" at the beginning and end of quoted material, respectively.
- Emphasis: When words are printed in boldface, italics, or capitals, the test reader should tell the student that the words are printed that way. In order not to provide an unfair advantage to students receiving this support, the test reader should be cautious not to emphasize words not already emphasized in print. Emphasis is appropriate when italics, underlining, or bold is used in the prompt, question, or answers.
- Misspellings: In some cases, an ELA test item may present a word or phrase that is intentionally misspelled. To determine how the test reader should pronounce this misspelling, it is important to understand what the test item is measuring, since the test reader's goal is to provide support without directing students to the right answer. For example, an item may ask students to identify misspelled words within the passage. In this case, reading each letter of the misspelled words would alert students to the right answer. Instead, the test reader should read each misspelled word but pronounce it as it was intended to be spelled/pronounced. For example, if the word is spelled "Agust," then pronounce it correctly as "August."

ELA Passages

- The test reader should read the passage in its entirety as punctuated (e.g., pauses at periods and commas; raised intonation for questions). They should not verbalize punctuation marks other than ellipses and quotation marks as noted above.
- If the student requires or asks for a specific section of the passage to be re-read with the punctuation indicated, the test reader should re-read those specific lines within the passage and indicate all punctuation found within those lines as many times as requested by the student.
- When test questions refer to particular lines of a passage, the test reader should read the lines referenced as though they are part of the item.

Math and Science Images/Graphics/Diagrams

- Diagrams are imperative to student understanding and should be read in a logical order.
- The test reader should read the title or caption, if available.
- Any text that appears in the body of the image/graphic/diagram may be read to a student. The test reader should read the text in images/graphics/diagrams in the order most suited for the student's needs. Often the reader moves top to bottom, left to right, in a clockwise direction, or general to specific in accordance with teaching practices.

Mathematical Expressions

- The test reader must read mathematical expressions precisely and with care to avoid misrepresentation for a student who has no visual reference. For mathematics items involving algebraic expressions or other mathematical notations, it may be preferable for the reader to silently read the mathematical notations or the entire question before reading it aloud to the student.
- The test reader must read mathematical expressions with technical accuracy. Similar expressions should be treated consistently.
- In general, numbers and symbols can be read according to their common English usage for the student's grade level.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be read as full words. For example, 10cm needs to be read as "ten centimeters." Some abbreviations may be read differently by different readers. For example, cm^3 may be read as "cubic centimeters" or "centimeters cubed."

Science Stimuli

- The test reader should read the stimuli in its entirety as punctuated (e.g., pauses at periods and commas; raised intonation for questions). They should not verbalize punctuation marks.
- If the student requires or asks for a specific section of the text to be re-read with the punctuation indicated, the test reader should re-read those specific and indicate all punctuation found within those lines as many times as requested by the student.
- When test questions refer to a particular section (e.g., diagram, graph) of a stimulus, the test reader should re-read the referenced sections upon the student's request.
- The test reader must read mathematical expressions precisely and with care to avoid misrepresentation for a student who has no visual reference. For items involving algebraic expressions or other mathematical notations, it may be preferable for the reader to silently read the mathematical notations or the entire question before reading it aloud to the student.
- In general, numbers and symbols can be read according to their common English usage for the student's grade level.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be read as full words. For example, 10cm needs to be read as "ten centimeters." Some abbreviations may be read differently by different readers. For example, cm^3 may be read as "cubic centimeters" or "centimeters cubed."