NWEA FAQ

Accessibility and Accommodations

Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™) is committed to making our products accessible for all students. Various accommodations and accessibility features for Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) and MAP for Primary Grades (MPG) assessments ensure that all students can benefit from assessment activities.

Key definitions:

Accessibility: Web accessibility allows equal access to online content and services for all people, including those with disabilities.	
Screen reader	A software application that identifies and interprets what is being displayed on the screen (text, images, etc.). Screen readers are used by students with no or low vision.
Refreshable braille	A refreshable braille display or braille terminal works in conjunction with a screen reader. These devices display braille characters, usually by means of round-tipped pins raised through holes in a flat surface. Braille readers can use this to read the text output from the computer and enter test using a braille keyboard.
Keyboard navigation	This accessibility feature makes all of a site or application's functionality available through a keyboard, with no mousing required.
Accommodations: Accommodations are changes in materials or actions that enable students to participate in assessments in a way that assesses abilities rather than disabilities.	
Color contrast	This accommodation tool allows a student to change the color contrast of the screen from item to item throughout the entire test. For example, a student may choose an inverse color scheme that makes dark items light and light items dark.
Magnification	This accommodation tool allows students to enlarge text and graphics onscreen while preserving clarity, contrast, and color.
Test aids: Test aids are tools that are available throughout the test. Students can access these tools in the NWEA testing platform and use them at their own discretion.	
Highlighter	This test aid is available for students to highlight desired text to make it easier to read.
Item aids: Item aids are tools that appear only with specific test items, rather than throughout the entire test, depending on the nature of the test item.	
Calculator	This item aid is embedded in relevant items so students can use it for mathematical computations.

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1. **Are practice tests with these accessibility and accommodations features available?**

   Practice tests are available and provide the same access and functionality as real MAP and MPG tests. The practice tests are available from the warmup link on the student login page. While taking a practice test, students will be able to familiarize themselves with tools such as the highlighter and calculator (note: highlighter is not available for tests taken on an iPad® or for MPG). Using third-party software, students can also practice with the screen reader, magnification, and color contrast tools.

2. **Which accommodations, accessibility features, and test aids work with MAP?**

Accessibility	Mac	iPad	Windows®	Chromebook®
Keyboard Navigation	✓		✓	✓
Accommodations				
Screen Reader (JAWS)			✓	
Refreshable Braille			✓	
Color Contrast	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magnification	✓	✓	✓	✓
Test Aids				
Highlighter	✓		✓	✓
Item Aids				
Calculator	✓	✓	✓	✓

3. **Which accommodations, accessibility features, and test aids work with MPG?**

Accessibility	Mac	iPad	Windows	Chromebook
Keyboard Navigation				
Accommodations				
Screen Reader				
Refreshable Braille				
Color Contrast	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magnification	✓	✓	✓	✓
Test Aids				
Highlighter				
Item Aids				
Calculator				

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4. **Does the lockdown browser work with third-party accommodation software?**

   Yes. The user must start the tool prior to launching the MAP lockdown browser. To allow the user full access to third-party tools, use browser-based testing.

5. **Which screen readers can I use with a MAP assessment?**

   NWEA has developed MAP using the W3Cs Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 in order to provide support for assistive technology products. Although other programs may be compatible, we have evaluated and recommend JAWS (version 16 or higher) for testing at this time.

6. **What are allowable and non-allowable accommodations?**

   NWEA does not place restrictions on which accommodations can be used. Please carefully consider your state and district accommodations policy, along with the accommodations given to students during instruction, so that accommodations are as consistent as possible between the classroom and assessments. Bear in mind that there may be inherent concerns about how a particular accommodation may affect the student's test score. For example, while native language translation could be provided by the proctor, teacher, or translator, the translation itself may change the meaning of the test directions or test questions. Therefore, native language translation may have more of an impact on the validity of student's test scores than a quiet test lab. This qualification should be considered when interpreting test scores or using them to make important educational decisions, such as promotion or retention in a course, classroom, or grade.

7. **Can a student enlarge the text without using magnification software?**

   The only way to enlarge text in an assessment is to use a magnification software tool that is either built into the computer's operating system or a third-party tool like ZoomText.

8. **What's the difference between a screen reader and a text-to-speech program?**

   In addition to reading text, screen reader applications provide structural information that non-sighted users need to navigate a webpage or document. For example, JAWS announces what item you've navigated to, such as a button, link, or edit field. Screen readers will also read alternative text descriptions for images if they are provided.

   Text-to-speech programs typically only read text on the screen. Unlike MPG assessments, MAP assessments do not have a built-in text-to-speech feature. Sighted students who need assistance reading print can use screen reader applications like JAWS, but these programs may provide more information than necessary and, like any program, require practice to learn to use. Students who don't normally use assistive technology applications to access a computer would need time to learn the assistive software first, before using it on a test.

9. **How can I track which accommodations were given on an assessment?**

   Proctors must record which accommodations are given at the time the assessment is taken. This information will then be available in the Comprehensive Data File (CDF). For instructions on how to record accommodations and order or view the CDF, please refer to Web-Based MAP Help.

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10. How do I administer an assessment for a student who needs assistive technology software, such as JAWS, ZoomText, or Mac OS X Zoom?

You should first ensure the tool is installed and set up for the student to use. Launch the third-party program first, then launch the lockdown browser. While using the lockdown browser, the student will only be able to access the settings menu for the third-party software by using keyboard commands. If the student needs to adjust settings within a tool, please refer to the keyboard commands to access the settings for that specific tool.

Certain third-party tools may not be compatible with the lockdown browser. In this case, you may choose browser-based testing, or choose a different tool if that is appropriate for the student.

11. Is there a specific standards base to which accessible MAP assessments are aligned?

Accessible assessments have the same alignment as the standard Common Core MAP assessment, with the same goals and subgoals. The only difference between the assessments is that accessible MAP assessments remove questions that contain visual bias and non-accessible item types such as drag and drop, click and pop, and gap match items.

The following tests are currently aligned to the Common Core State Standards:

- Reading grades 2 – 5
- Reading grades 6+
- Language Usage grades 2 – 5
- Language Usage grades 6+
- Math grades 2 – 5
- Math grades 6+

12. Are the reports generated by accessible assessments the same as other MAP reports?

Yes. Accessible MAP assessments will appear on the same student, class, grade, school, and district-level reports that other MAP assessments appear on, including reports used to measure growth.

13. What is the validity of the accessible MAP assessments compared to other MAP assessments?

Accessible MAP assessments are as valid psychometrically in terms of precision and accuracy when compared to their standard Common Core–aligned MAP for Reading, Language Usage, Mathematics and NWEA-aligned science assessments.

14. Do math assessments work with refreshable braille?

Yes. However, there are some limitations. Due to the complexity of some math items, it's possible that not all of the information in an item can be displayed in braille. This issue is due to the screen reader not being able to translate complex math content for the braille display. Freedom Scientific, the creator of JAWS, provides a solution for students who need to use a refreshable braille display for math. In addition, Freedom Scientific is working on a solution to address this issue.

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15. Is there an additional cost to using accessible MAP assessments?

No. If you have already purchased MAP, the accessible version of MAP is part of your subscription.

16. How do I request an accessible MAP assessment?

To request an accessible MAP assessment, please have your System Administrator call NWEA Partner Support at 1-877-469-3287 and ask them to license the accessible MAP assessment to your district.

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) has nearly 40 years of experience helping educators accelerate student learning through computer-based assessment suites, professional development offerings, and research services.

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