Accessibility and accommodations in MAP Growth

Features and FAQ

NWEA® is committed to making our products accessible for all students. Universal and designated features and accommodations for MAP® Growth™ and MAP Growth K–2 assessments ensure that all students can benefit from assessment activities.

NWEA uses the CCSSO Accessibility Manual to help us define our current features and accommodations—and to make sure we keep delivering what students need. We adopted and implemented this manual in 2018 for two reasons. First, NWEA wants to provide the same experience that a student has on a daily basis in the classroom, which is something CCSSO emphasizes in their accessibility manual. Second, we have learned that some assessment providers are creating confusion in the market because of labeling and defining features and tools differently. Our goal is to provide a universal approach and make the use of features and accommodations as easy as possible—for both the student and educator.

As we continue to add more features and accommodations to our assessment platform, NWEA will stay aligned with all current CCSSO guidelines and updates; this ensures we are providing our users with the best testing experience possible.

Key definitions

Universal features

Universal features are accessibility supports that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. They are either embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (such as keyboard navigation) or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level (such as scratch paper).

Embedded universal features

Feature	Description
Amplification (audio amplification, increase volume, audio aids)	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones.
Calculator	A student can access an on-screen digital calculator for calculator-allowed items. If the calculator is not appropriate (e.g., for a student who is blind), the student may use a calculator provided with assistive technology devices (such as a talking calculator or a braille calculator).

Highlighter (highlight tool)	A student can use this digital feature for marking desired text, items, or response options with a color.
Keyboard navigation (keyboard shortcuts, two-switch system)	A student can navigate through test content by using the keyboard (e.g., the arrow keys). This feature may differ depending on the testing platform.
Answer eliminator	The student uses this feature to cross out answer choices that do not appear to be correct.
Line reader/line guide	The student is able to use this feature as a guide when reading text.
Math tools	These digital tools (e.g., ruler, protractor, calculator) are used for tasks related to math items. They are available only with the specific items for which one or more of these tools would be appropriate.
Notepad	The student uses this feature as virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses
Zoom (item-level)	The student can enlarge the size of text and graphics on a given screen. This feature allows students to view material in magnified form on an as-needed basis. The student may enlarge test content at least fourfold. The system allows magnifying features to work in conjunction with other accessibility features and accommodations provided.

Non-embedded universal features

Features	Descriptions
Breaks (frequent breaks)	A student can take breaks, when needed, to reduce cognitive fatigue. This may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.
English dictionary	A student can use an English dictionary, if necessary. This may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.
Noise buffer (headphones, audio aids)	A student can use noise buffers to minimize distractions or filter external noises during testing. Noise buffers must be compatible with the requirements of the test.
Scratch paper (blank paper)	A student can use scratch paper or an individual erasable whiteboard to make notes or record responses. The school must also provide a marker, pen, or pencil. All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each test to maintain test security. The student can use an assistive technology device to take notes instead of using scratch paper, as long as the device is approved by the state. Test administrators must ensure that all notes taken on an assistive technology device are deleted after the test.

Spanish dictionary	A student can use a Spanish dictionary, if necessary. This may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.
Thesaurus	A student can use a thesaurus containing synonyms of terms. This may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.

Designated features

Designated features are available when an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student, if appropriate) indicates that there is a need for them. Designated features must be assigned to a student by trained educators or teams using a consistent process. Embedded designated features (such as text-to-speech) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology. Non-embedded designated features (such as a magnification device) are provided locally.

Embedded designated feature

Feature	Description
Text-to-speech (audio support, spoken audio)	A student can use this feature to hear audio of item content.

Non-embedded designated features

Feature	Description
Bilingual dictionary **(word-to-word dictionary in English and native language)**	A student can use a bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary as a language support.
Color contrast	A student can display the test content of online items in different colors.
Human reader **(human read aloud, read aloud)**	A qualified human reader can read the test and question content aloud.
Magnification device **(low-vision aids)**	The student can adjust the size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, and graphics) with an assistive technology device. Magnification allows the student to increase the size to a level that's not provided by the zoom universal feature.
Native language translation	A test administrator who is fluent in the student's native language can translate test and question content.
Separate setting **(alternate location)**	A school can alter a test location so that the student is tested in a setting that's different from what's available for most students.
Student reads test aloud	The student can read the test content aloud. This feature must be administered in a one-on-one test setting.

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content—and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Embedded accommodations are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology. Non-embedded designated features (such as a scribe) are provided locally. Accommodations are generally available to students for whom there is a documented need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan; however, some states also offer accommodations for English language learners.

Embedded accommodation

Feature	Description
Text-to-speech (audio support, spoken audio)	A student can use this feature to hear audio of item content.

Non-embedded accommodations

Support	Description
Abacus (individualized manipulatives)	This accommodation may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus.
Assistive technology (alternate response options, word processor, or similar keyboarding device to respond to items)	The student can use assistive technology, which includes supports such as typing on customized keyboards; assistance with using a mouse, mouth or head stick, or other pointing devices; sticky keys; touch screen; and trackball.
Calculator (calculation device)	A student uses a specific calculation device (e.g., large key, talking, or other).
Extended time	Schools can allow flexible scheduling for a student test administration (for example, testing longer than a scheduled test session, multiple breaks).
Human signer (sign language, sign interpretation of test)	A test administrator who is fluent in the language can sign test and question content. The student may also dictate responses by signing.
Multiplication table	A student can use a paper-based single digit (1–9) multiplication table.
Refreshable braille	A student can use a refreshable braille device that provides a raised-dot code that they can read with their fingertips.
Screen reader	Students with no or low vision can use a software application that identifies and interprets what is being displayed on the screen (e.g., text, images).
Scribe	The student can dictate their responses to an experienced educator who records verbatim what the student dictates.

FAQ

1. What if our state or district accessibility and accommodation policies are different from MAP Growth?

MAP Growth serves many different states and international partners; this allows us to standardize our terminology for everyone. This document contains our MAP Growth guidelines only, so we recommend you refer to your state accommodation policies, as there may be differences. For example, your state may consider the use of a dictionary as an accommodation instead of a universal feature, or text-to-speech as an accommodation instead of a designated feature. The reverse may also be true; for example, providing extended time to take a test may be available for all students as a universal feature instead of an accommodation.

2. Do the universal features need to be assigned to a student for the assessment?

No, nothing needs to be assigned. All the embedded universal features will appear for students in the toolbar inside the testing environment. Non-embedded universal features are tools or devices that can be used during the test, but are not associated with the assessment platform.

3. Which students should have access to designated features during testing?

A student can use designated features when an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student, if appropriate) indicates that there is a need for them. The proctor must turn on the feature that the student needs while creating a test session. To learn more about this process, see the MAP Growth Help section.

4. Does NWEA allow read aloud and text-to-speech options for MAP Growth?

Yes, students have multiple options for audio support while taking a MAP Growth assessment. The text-to-speech option is embedded in the test, and the student has full control of the audio. The audio can be paused, stopped, and played on demand.

NWEA also offers a human read aloud option for MAP Growth. Human read aloud is when a person reads the test to the student. In this case, the student and reader would work together to decide what would be read—and if parts of the item would need to be re-read.

5. What is the difference between human voice audio and human read aloud?

Human voice audio is an automatic read-aloud option for students. It is used only for NWEA products that focus on early grades, such as MAP Growth K–2 and some skill areas in MAP® Skills™. The difference between human voice audio versus text-to-speech and the human read-aloud options depends on our NWEA product (MAP Growth K–2, 2–10, and MAP Skills) and what the student is currently using in the classroom or with instruction.

6. Do MAP Growth users need to test using the lockdown browser?

State and/or district leadership must choose if using the lockdown browser is appropriate for all students. Test security is something NWEA takes very seriously, but we also understand that there could be certain circumstances where the lockdown browser is not right for all students. NWEA follows the CCSSO/NCEO accessibility/test security consideration to determine when the lockdown browser is not a good fit for student testing.

7. What third-party software features work on the universal assessment platform when not using the lockdown browser?

The following third-party software features* can be utilized on the platform:

ZoomText	ZoomText is a powerful computer access solution designed for the visually impaired. It offers a combination of magnification and reading tools, as well as enhancements to colors, pointers, and cursors. It works for both Mac® and Windows® operating systems.
Chromebook® magnification	Chromebook has a built-in screen magnifier. This allows users to zoom in and out anywhere on the screen.
Windows magnifier	The magnifier in Windows is part of the Ease of Access Center and can be used to enlarge different parts of the screen. Windows 7 and 8 users can choose from either full screen or lens magnification modes.
Zoom on Mac and iPad®	Mac computers and iPads have a built-in screen magnifier that can magnify a screen up to 40 times its normal display size.
Chromebook® color contrast	High contrast mode inverts the picture so that a white background appears black, black text appears white, and colors are inverted (for example, blue text or graphics become orange).
Windows color contrast	Windows supports high contrast themes for the OS and apps that users may choose to enable. High contrast themes use a small palette of contrasting colors that makes the interface easier to see.
Mac and iPad® color contrast	Increase the readability of the screen on a Macbook or iPad by increasing the contrast of the display. Increase the contrast of the whole screen or emphasize borders between items in the Display section of the Accessibility settings.

JAWS	Job Access With Speech (JAWS) is the world's most popular screen reader, developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse. JAWS provides speech and braille output for the most popular computer applications on a PC.
Refreshable braille device	A refreshable braille device provides a raised-dot code that individuals read with their fingertips.

*If students try using these third-party software tools with the lockdown browser, they will have limited or no functionality. Therefore, NWEA recommends that students who need to use specific features use browser-based testing. If students use the lockdown browser, we recommend they launch the third-party tool prior to launching the lockdown browser.

8. Are practice tests available for students prior to testing?

Yes, practice tests are available for students to familiarize themselves with the assessment, and they provide the same access and functionality as the real MAP Growth tests. We encourage students to use the embedded universal tools, or a designated feature or accommodation, if needed.

9. Which embedded features work with MAP Growth and the lockdown browser?

Support	Mac	iPad	Windows	Chromebook
Keyboard navigation	✓		✓	✓
Text-to-speech	✓	✓	✓	✓
Highlighter	✓		✓	✓
Calculator	✓	✓	✓	✓

10. What are allowable designated features and accommodations for MAP Growth?

NWEA does not place restrictions on which designated features or accommodations can be used. Please carefully consider your state and district accommodation policy along with the accommodations given to students during instruction; this helps ensure that accommodations are as consistent as possible between the classroom and assessments. NWEA understands that states have their own unique criteria and designations for accommodations, which is why we are using the CCSSO Accessibility Manual as our accommodations policy for the MAP Growth assessment. For information on your state's accessibility and accommodations assessment policy, please refer to the National Center on Educational Outcomes state policy site.

11. How can proctors track which accommodations were given on an assessment?

In the test session, under "Assign Accommodations," proctors must record which features and accommodations are given at the time the assessment is taken. After testing, this information will be available in the Comprehensive Data File (CDF).