

MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations for 2025 MCAS Tests

The Office of Student Assessment Services

January 22, 2025



Presenters

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Logistics for This Session

- Use the Q&A feature to ask a question.
 - We will answer some questions aloud at specified times during this training session, and we will email the Q&A afterwards.
 - Type your questions anytime, but we may not answer them in real time as some questions may be covered during the presentation.
 - Use the thumbs-up icon to “upvote” someone else’s question.
 - Email student-specific questions to mcas@mass.gov instead of asking here.
- This session is being recorded and will be available in about a week in the [MCAS Resource Center](#), along with the slides.
- Closed captioning has been enabled for participants who need it.

Slides for This Session

- Slides were emailed to participants before this session from MCASevents@cognia.org.
- Slides are now being posted in the chat.
 - If you cannot access the slides in the chat, ask in the Q&A.
- After the session, we will send the slides again to participants, and they will be posted in the MCAS Resource Center along with the recording.

Today's Agenda

1. Participation Requirements
2. Important Updates
3. Student Registration
4. Accessibility Features and Accommodations
5. Preparation for Testing
6. Live “Sandbox Time”

1. Participation Requirements

MCAS Participation Requirements

- All publicly-funded students must participate in MCAS tests required for their grade.
 - Includes students in public schools, charter schools, virtual schools, out-of-district placements, SEIS, DYS, and other students receiving instruction with public funds.
- IEP teams determine necessary accommodations for students with disabilities. IEPs and 504 plans list accommodations decisions. Only [Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#) may participate in the MCAS-Alt.
- See the updated *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/.

English Learners – Participation Guidelines

- **ELs** are required to participate in all MCAS tests scheduled for their grade, with **one exception**:
 - First-year ELs are **not required** to take the MCAS ELA test but **may** participate at principal’s discretion.
 - First-year ELs are those who enrolled after March 1, 2024. Check status in SIMS.
- **EL accommodations**: School staff familiar with the student should meet and
 - Review available accessibility features and accommodations for ELs.
 - Consider EL students’ language needs, learning characteristics, and preferences.

Poll Question

What are you most interested in learning about?

- A. How to assign accommodations and accessibility features to students in the Student Registration system
- B. A general overview of accommodations and accessibility options for MCAS tests
- C. A review of how accessibility features and accommodations appear in the new MCAS Student Kiosk
- D. Eligibility for Special Access Accommodations

2. Important Updates

Important Updates

- Additional universal accessibility features: general masking and reverse contrast, notepad tool for all tests
- Bilingual [Spanish/English test](#) for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (grades 3–8 and high school)
 - MCAS ELA tests are not translated
 - Refer to [Expansion of Bilingual Spanish/English MCAS Tests in 2025](#) website for more info.
- Civics is a required test for students in grade 8.
 - Accessibility features and accommodations are available.
- IEP Team must complete: [Companion document: Alternate Assessment Participation Tool](#) for students taking the MCAS-Alt
- Approved graphic organizers, checklists, and supplemental reference sheets posted to the [DESE website](#) are now provided in PDF format.
 - Spanish/English Translations to be posted

Important Updates (continued)

- The MCAS Student Kiosk is the new computer-based testing platform for students.
 - Very similar to previous computer-based platform
- Student Registration will be completed in the MCAS Portal, which is the new test administration and management website for the MCAS tests.
- Text-to-speech is no longer a form-dependent accommodation. TTS can be added or removed during testing, if necessary, without voiding the student's test.
- Embedded Speech-to-Text and Word Prediction accommodation tools are available on MCAS Mathematics, Science, and Civics tests, in addition to ELA tests.

IEP Team Decisions Needed Before Testing

- Team members should review all accessibility and accommodations policies.
- Important decisions required for each student with (and without) a disability taking spring test(s):
 - All students are eligible for accessibility features.
 - Which accessibility features and accommodations will be needed?
- For students with disabilities:
 - Before testing and making decisions, give opportunity to **view a student tutorial and take practice tests (expected by mid-February)**.
 - If read-aloud is needed, use text-to-speech (TTS) or human read-aloud. Schools may list **“text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable.”**
 - Paper-based tests are available and must be listed as an accommodation in IEP or 504 plan for students unable to take computer-based tests.

3. Student Registration (SR)

What is the Student Registration Process (SR)?

- Similar to the previously used SR/PNP, Student Registration is a collection of student-level test data, including
 - students' demographic information
 - registration information for specific tests
 - necessary for **selected accommodations used for MCAS tests**
(Note: Some information can be changed up until end of testing window)
- Used as the basis for initial shipment of test materials to schools, which includes:
 - Student ID Labels
 - Test Administration Manuals
 - Standard booklets, if needed
 - Special test editions (large-print, Braille, Spanish/English, etc.)
- Use Appendix A in the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for a crosswalk of accessibility feature and accommodation numbers and the Student Registration column to assign them correctly.

SR: Special Test Forms and Selected Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Special Test Forms

- Large Print Test Edition
- Braille Test Edition
- Screen Reader Edition
- Compatible Assistive Technology
- American Sign Language Video (ASL edition)
- Spanish/English (Math, STE, Civics)
- Human Read-Aloud
- Human Read-Aloud (Special Access - ELA)
- Human Signer
- Human Signer (Special Access - ELA)

Accessibility Features

- Alternate Mouse/Cursor

Selected Accommodations

- Text-to-Speech Special Access ELA
- Text-to-Speech (Math, STE, Civics)
- Human Scribe (Math, STE, Civics)
- Human Scribe (Special Access - ELA)
- Speech-to-Text (Math, STE, Civics)
- Speech-to-Text (Special Access - ELA)
- Graphic Organizer/Reference Sheet
- Typed Responses
- Calculation Device on Non-Calculator test session(s) (Math only)
- Spell-Checker (Special Access - ELA)
- Word Prediction (Math, STE, Civics)
- Word Prediction (Special Access - ELA)

MCAS Student Registration Guide

- Available on the [MCAS Resource Center](#)
- **Field Definitions, Notes, and Validations** column describes each accommodation and indicates other accommodations that cannot be co-selected.
- **Administrations** lists availability on specific tests.
- **Expected Values** indicates options for column input.

Column Header	Field Name	Required Y/N	Field Length (Max)	Field Definitions, Notes, and Validations	Administrations	Expected Values
T	Human_Read_Aloud_Standard (A5, EL3.2)	N	1	<p>▲ See Appendix A: MCAS Portal Guidance for Form-Dependent Accommodations for additional information.</p> <p>For CBT or PBT</p> <p>Standard Accommodation</p> <p>Test administrator reads aloud a test to a student with a disability.</p> <p>See Appendices D and F of the Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for additional instructions.</p> <p>If expected value equals "Y," then the following criteria must be met, or the record will cause an error message to appear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Reader Edition must be left blank • Compatible Assistive Technology must be left blank • Braille Test Edition must be left blank 	<p>Available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February High School Science • March Math Retest • Grades 3–8 Math, STE, Civics • Grade 10 Math • June High School 	Y = Yes Blank

4. Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Accessibility Features and Accommodations

See the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for a list of:

- **Universal Accessibility Features (UF):** Available to *all* students, either on computer-based tests or as a paper-based equivalent
- **Designated Accessibility Features (DF):** Flexible test administration procedures available to *any* student, at the discretion of principal
 - Includes changes in test location, group size, seating, scheduling
- **Accommodations (A):** Specific supports available *only* to students with disabilities and English learners
- **Special Access Accommodations:** These accommodations may be only be provided to students who meet specific criteria.

Universal Accessibility Features (UF) for *All* Students

Computer	Paper
Highlighter	
Color contrast	Colored overlays
Screen zoom tool	Magnification tool/device
Enlarged Cursor/Mouse (SR)	Enlarged pencil/modified writing instrument
<u>Line reader tool</u>	Tracking device/straight edge
Answer masking	Mask using blank card
Answer eliminator	Use pencil to eliminate answer choices
Item flag/bookmark	Place marker
Audio aids	
Notepad	Scratch paper
Human read-aloud (or sign) <u>selected words</u> as requested by student (not permitted for ELA tests)	
Redirects student's attention to test	
Test administrator repeats/clarifies test direction	
General Masking	Masking
Reverse Contrast	N/A

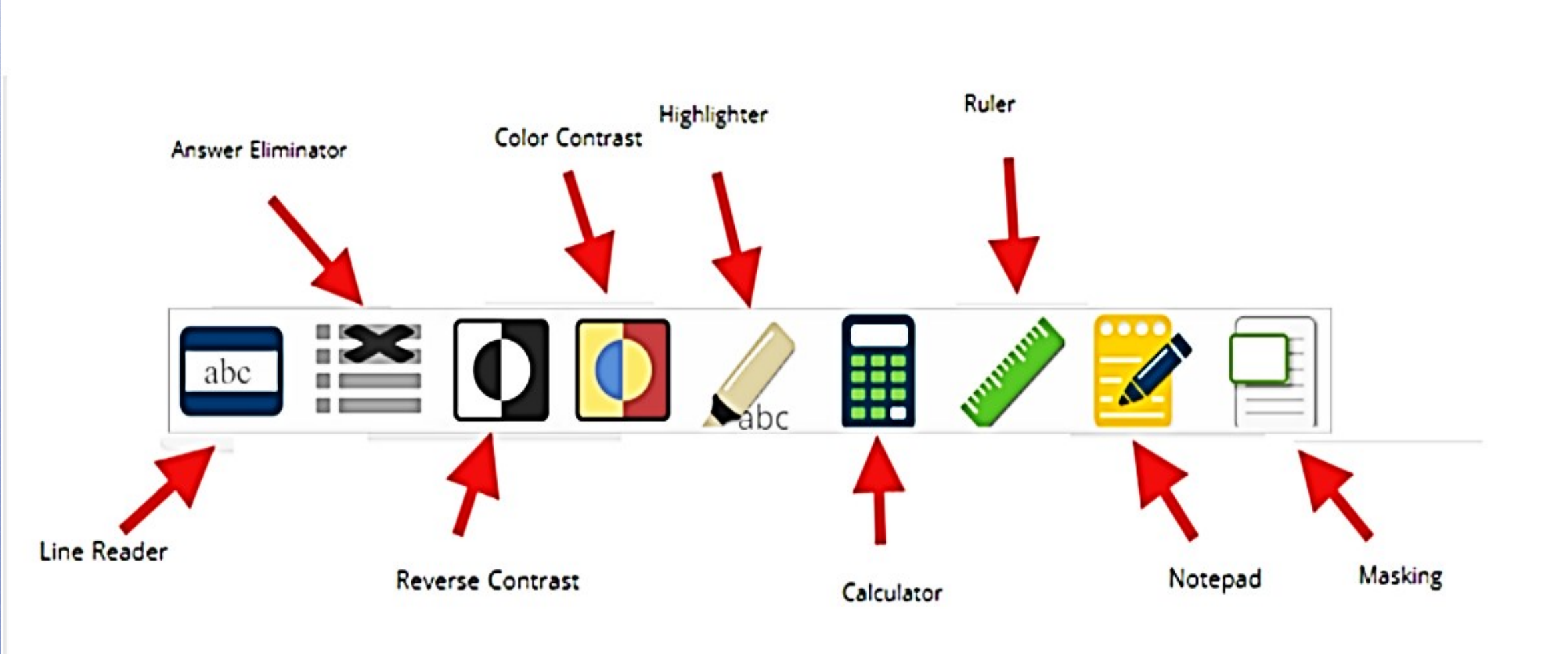
Important Note

Notes entered in the notepad and any highlights made by a student with the highlighter tool will be lost if a student pauses a test for more than 60 minutes, signs out of a test, submits a test, or if there is a circumstance that abruptly closes the kiosk (e.g., the device shutting down due to low battery).

Demonstration

- Universal accessibility features

General Tools for All Students




Enlarged Cursor (SR)

- The enlarged cursor/mouse is selected in Student Registration prior to the student logging into the test.
- Students with this tool may select the size and color of the mouse pointer at any time during the test. Students do NOT need to log out.




Highlighter

Highlighter Tool

Use the highlighter tool  to access different highlighter colors.



To remove highlighting, select the eraser tool  and select the highlighted words. The highlighting will be erased. To erase all highlighting on the page, select **Clear All**.

Try it!

Use the highlighter tool.

1. Open the highlighter tool.
2. Select the color from the highlighter color palette.
3. Select a few words somewhere on this page.
4. Remove the highlighting by selecting the eraser tool or selecting **Clear All**.

Highlighter



Back

Next

Finish

Color Contrast

Question 1

Screen Zoom:

Text-to-Speech:

Images of the embryo and adult stages of three different organisms are shown.

Organism	Embryo	Adult
Grasshopper		
Spider		
Centipede		

Which of the following is the best conclusion that can be drawn from this evidence?

Hide All

- (A) Having similar embryos indicates that these organisms eat the same types of food.
- (B) Having similar embryos indicates that these organisms live in a similar environment.
- (C) Having similar embryos indicates that these organisms share a recent common ancestor.
- (D) Having similar embryos indicates that a certain protein controls how many legs the adult organisms will have.

Default Tuxedo Classic Ruby Chalkboard Nocturnal
Aquiline Eccentric Azure Haunted Celestial Antique
Creamy

abc

Back Next Finish

Line Reader

The following section focuses on Polynesian crickets.

Read the information below and use it to answer the four selected-response questions and one constructed-response question that follow.

Male Polynesian field crickets typically “sing” to attract females by rubbing their wings together. When male field crickets sing, they not only attract

field cricket. The larvae burrow into and feed on the field cricket’s body, eventually causing the cricket to die. Field crickets are the main food source of *Ormia* fly larvae.

Scientists studied Polynesian field crickets and *Ormia* flies on the Hawaiian island of Kauai over several years. They collected data on the number of male Polynesian field crickets found in an area on Kauai. They also determined whether the field crickets had the ability to sing. The data the scientists collected are shown in the table.

Year	Number of Males Found	Ability of Crickets to Sing
1993	72	Most had the ability to sing.
1995	52	Most had the ability to sing.
1999	5	Some had the ability to sing.
2004	133	Few had the ability to sing.

Line Reader



Back Next Finish

Answer Eliminator

Question **21** ▼ ☆

Screen Zoom: 🔍

Text-to-Speech: ↶ ▶ ⚙️

Some populations of Atlantic tomcod fish have an allele that makes the fish resistant to toxic pollutants called PCBs. Tomcod populations in several rivers were analyzed for the presence of this allele. Each river had varying levels of PCB pollution.

Which of the following results would **best** support the conclusion that natural selection is influencing the presence of this allele in the tomcod populations?

Hide All

- (A) ~~All of the tomcod in each of the rivers have this allele.~~
- (B) ~~The percentage of tomcod with this allele remains the same from year to year in each river.~~
- (C) The rivers with high PCB levels have larger percentages of tomcod with this allele than the rivers without PCBs.
- (D) Eggs from tomcod without this allele can hatch in rivers with or without PCBs, and eggs from tomcod with this allele can only hatch in rivers without PCBs.

Answer Eliminator

abc ✖️ 🌓 🗂️ 🖋️ 📏 📊 📄 📁

Back Next Finish

Masking tool

Question **17** ☆

Screen Zoom: 🔍

Text-to-Speech: 🔊

Male Polynesian field crickets typically “sing” to attract females by rubbing their wings together. When male field crickets sing, they not only attract female Polynesian field crickets, but they also attract female *Ormia* flies. When a female *Ormia* fly finds a male field cricket, she deposits larvae on the field cricket. The larvae burrow into and feed on the field cricket’s body, eventually causing the cricket to die. Field crickets are the main food source of *Ormia* fly larvae.

Scientists studied Polynesian field crickets and *Ormia* flies on the Hawaiian island of Kauai over several years. They collected data on the number of male Polynesian field crickets found in an area on Kauai. They also determined whether the field crickets had the ability to sing. The data the scientists collected are shown in the table.

Year	Number of Males Found	Ability of Crickets to Sing
1993	72	Most had the ability to

This question has two parts.

The table shows how the numbers of male field crickets changed over time.

Part B

Which of the following explains what most likely affected the population size of the *Ormia* fly between 1995 and 1999?

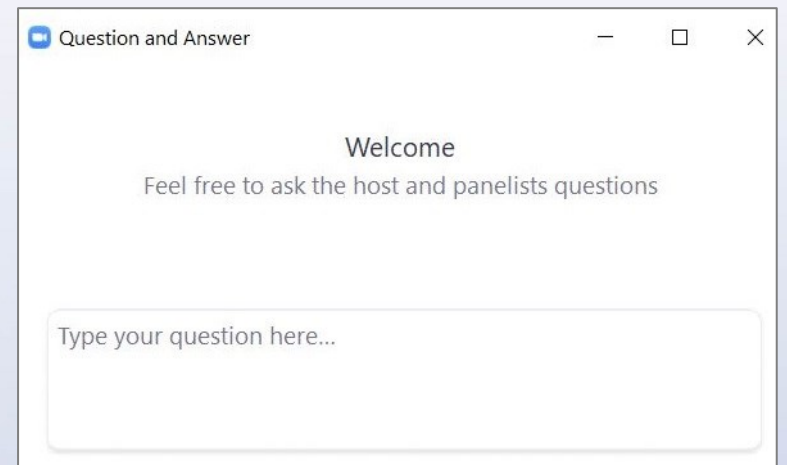
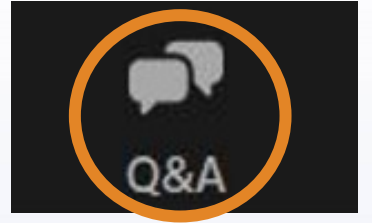
Masking

abc [tools]

Back Next Finish

Questions and Answers

Use the “Q&A” feature to ask questions.



Designated Accessibility Features (DF) for Any Student, at Principal's Discretion

Computer or Paper

Small group test administration (up to 10 students)

Individual (one-to-one) test administration

Frequent supervised breaks

Test in separate location

Seating in a specified area of room, including study carrel

Adaptive or specialized furniture or lighting

Noise buffer/noise-cancelling earmuffs/headphones (no music)

Familiar test administrator

Student reads test aloud to self

Specific time of day

“Stop Testing” policy: If student is not responding to test questions after 15–20 minutes, test administrator may ask if student is finished. If so, collect the student’s test materials.

Student may sit quietly or be excused.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Presentation Accommodations	
Computer-Based	Paper-Based
Paper test, if unable to use computer (SR)	N/A
N/A	Large print test (SR)
Screen reader only for student who is blind and uses a school owned program (SR)	Braille test (SR)
Text-to-Speech or Human read-aloud for Math, STE, or Civics (SR)	Human read-aloud for Math, STE, or Civics (SR)
Human signer for Math, STE, Civics and <u>test questions</u> only for ELA or ASL test forms available of grade 10 math and June Science (SR)	Human signer for Math, STE, Civics and <u>test questions</u> only for ELA (SR)
Test administrator helps student track test items	

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (Continued)

Response Accommodations	
Computer-Based	Paper-Based
Department-provided ELA graphic organizer or Math/STE reference sheets (For STE, Customized reference sheet allowed, if approved by DESE) <i>(SR)</i> (available here)	
Human scribe or speech-to-text device for Math/Science/Civics <i>(SR)</i>	
New for 2025: Word Prediction for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (<i>not ELA</i>) Note: See Appendix E Accessibility and Accommodations Manual . <i>(SR)</i>	
N/A	Answers recorded in test booklet or special paper
N/A	Typed responses <i>(SR)</i> (Transcription not needed)
Responses recorded (audio or video), then transcribed by student during playback	
Monitor placement of test responses	
Braille writer, note-taker, or refreshable Braille display	

Special Access Accommodations

Computer and Paper

Text-to-speech/Human reader for ELA (SR)

Signing the ELA reading passages (SR)

Scribe responses or speech-to-text for ELA (SR)

**Calculator or other mathematics tool, device, or manipulatives
on noncalculator session of Math (SR)**

Spell-checker for ELA (SR)

(Note: available to all students for Math, STE, and Civics)

Word prediction for ELA (SR)

Criteria for Providing Special Access Accommodations

- Special Access Accommodations may be provided only to a limited number of students who:
 - Demonstrated substantial deficits in reading, calculating, writing, or spelling
AND
 - Receive ongoing intervention for these skills
 - These students must require the supports consistently access classroom work.
- Special Access Accommodations may not be provided if student is simply performing “below grade level.”
- Scores may be invalidated if ineligible students are provided Special Access Accommodations.
- Use of Special Access Accommodations will be reported with a notation on
 - Parent/Guardian Reports
 - School and District Rosters

Poll Question

Do students need their own software/web-application for text-to-speech, speech-to-text or word prediction MCAS CBT accommodations?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Demonstration

- Text-to-speech
- Spell-checker
- Speech-to-text
- Word prediction

Text-to-Speech (SR)

Text-to-Speech Selector

Play/Pause

Speech Settings

Question **21** ▼ ☆

Screen Zoom: 🔍

Text-to-Speech:



Volume: 80%

Speed: Slow Normal Fast

Some populations of Atlantic tomcod fish have an allele that makes the fish resistant to to... populations in several rivers were analyzed for the presence of this allele. Each river had v...

Which of the following results would **best** support the conclusion that natural selection is influencing the presence of this allele in the tomcod populations?

Hide All

A All of the tomcod in each of the rivers have this allele.

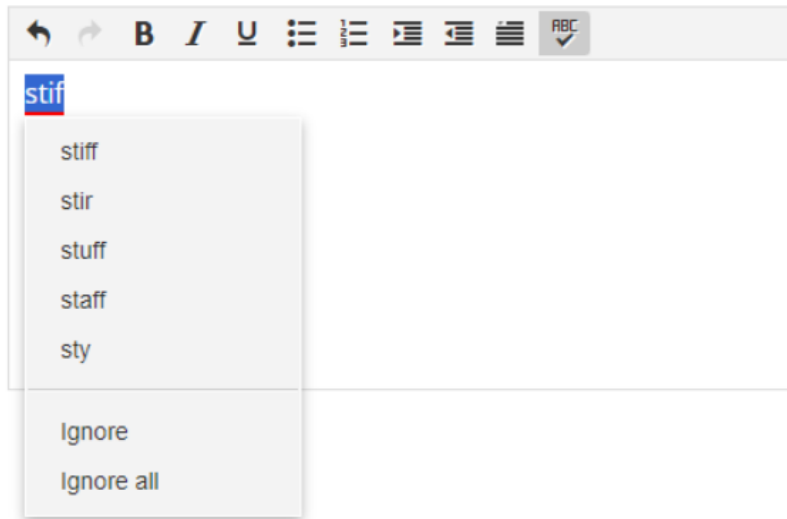
Spell-Checker (SR)

You must type some of your answer into the response box before spell check will work.

All the words in the response box are checked when you use spell check. Any words that may be misspelled will have a red line below them.



When you click on these words, you will see a list of new words to choose from. Select the correct spelling for the word from the list.

Do this for all your misspelled words. You may also retype the misspelled word.

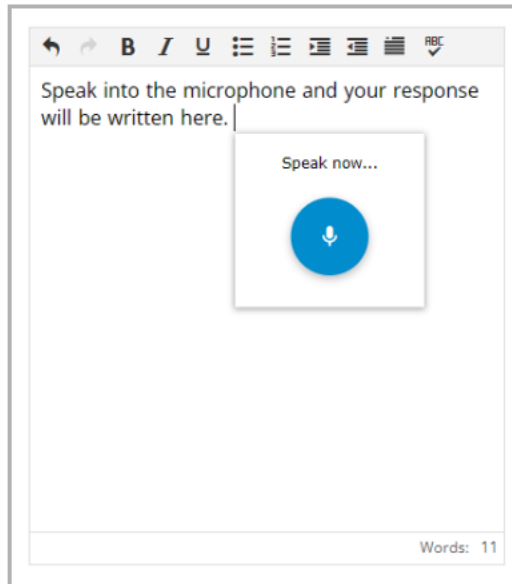


Spell-checker is automatically available for Math, Science and Civics.

Speech-to-text (SR)

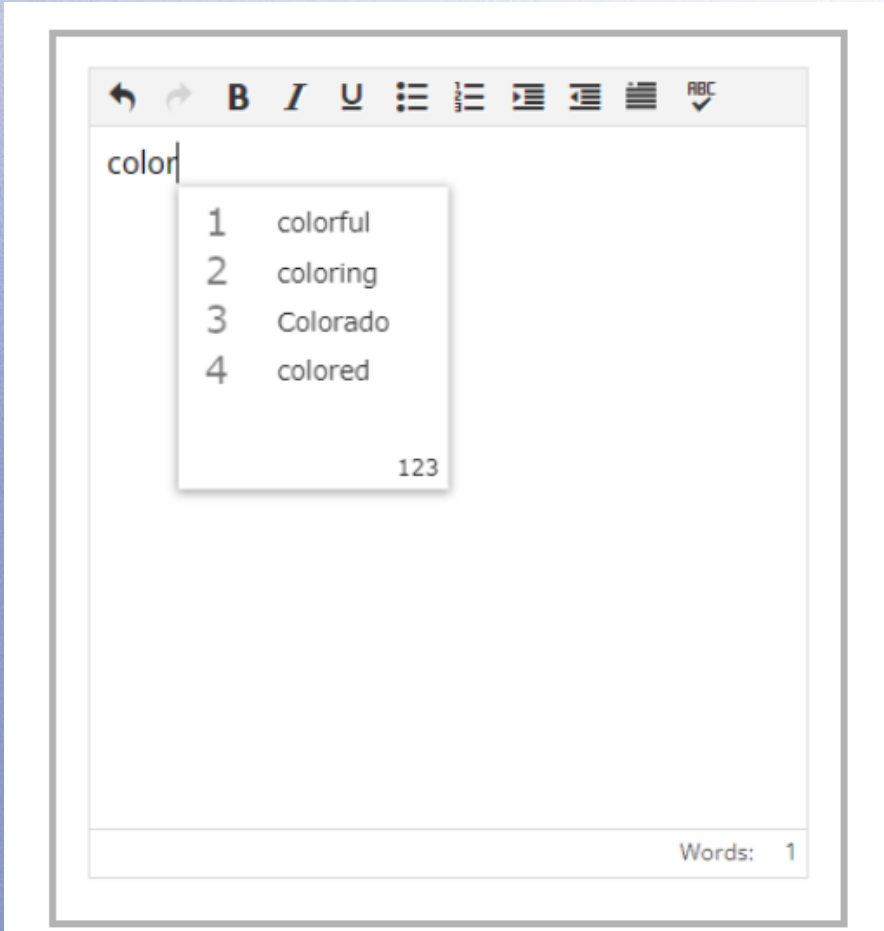
Click on the blue microphone  to use the speech-to-text tool. When the microphone turns white , you may begin speaking into the microphone on your device. The microphone on your device must be enabled for the speech-to-text tool to work.

As you speak, your words will appear as text on the screen. Use your keyboard to delete any words that you do not wish to have appear in the response box.



- Student must be tested in separated space.
- Student should be familiar with speech-to-text prior to providing as an accommodation.
- Standard accommodation for available for Math, Science, and Civics

Word Prediction (SR)



- As student types, a choice of words becomes available.
- Student should have prior experience using word prediction prior to testing
- Standard accommodation available for Math, Science, and Civics

Accommodations for English Learners (ELs)

Computer and Paper

Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary or Glossary
(also available for Former English Learners)

Paper-based Test (SR)

Text-to-speech/human reader for Math, Science, and Civics (in English) (SR)

Scribe/Speech-to-text for Math, Science, Civics (SR)

Word Prediction for Math, Science, Civics (SR)

Spanish/English edition of Math, Science and Civics
([if enrolled for less than 3 years](#)) (SR)

Read aloud/repeat/clarify test directions in student's native language

“Stop testing” policy

Form-Dependent Accommodations



The following accommodations must be assigned correctly before testing. If not assigned correctly, a student's test will need to be stopped and a new test will need to be set up, and the student may need to retake a portion of the test.

- **Form-dependent accommodations for CBT:**
 - ASL video (spring grade 10 Math and June high school Science)
 - Compatible assistive technology
 - Human read-aloud
 - Human signer
 - Screen reader
 - Spanish/English (Math, Science, and Civics)
- **Form-dependent accommodations for PBT:**
 - Large print
 - Braille
 - Spanish/English PBT

New for 2025:

Text-to-speech is not a form-dependent accommodation. The accommodation can be added during testing if necessary, without voiding the student's test.

5. Preparation for Testing

Ensuring Accommodations are Assigned

- Test coordinators can verify accommodations using the Export Students feature on the Student Registration page in the MCAS Portal. (**Administration > Student Registration > Export Students**)
 - This will provide a .CSV file with all students and accommodations for the school.
- Test coordinators and test administrators can view assigned accommodated forms on the View Details/Student Logins page in the MCAS Portal. (**Administration > Test Scheduling > select the scheduled test > View Details/Student Logins**)
- Test coordinators and test administrators can view other assigned accommodations on the summary page that is provided with student logins.
- Individual student accommodations can be viewed on the Edit Students page in the MCAS Portal. (**Administration > Students > search for the student > Edit**)

Preparing for Test Administration

- Provide training to those who will provide accommodations.
 - Test administrators
 - Other professional staff
- Develop plan to monitor accommodations that require 1:1 test administration.
- Provide students opportunities to view **Student Tutorial** and take online **Practice tests** using accommodated format, if appropriate (*expected mid-February*).
- Attend DESE Trainings listed on the [Training Opportunities](#) webpage.

REMINDER:

Provide to all students during testing

- Untimed test sessions
- Blank scratch paper (including blank, lined, or graph paper)
- Assistance from test administrator, as needed, to navigate the computer-based testing platform

Reminders for Paper-Based Testing

- Review and follow **Special Instructions** included with special test forms (e.g., Braille, large-print) to ensure tests are scored properly.
- Designate test administrators to transcribe large-print, Braille, and other responses into standard booklet and included with original in **Special Handling Envelope**.
 - See [Appendix C: Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses](#) of the Accessibility and Accommodation Manual
- Typed responses:
 - One item response per page
 - Each response must not exceed one page
 - Each page must include all parts of each item (e.g., a., b., c., d...)
 - Include student information in header/footer according to Appendix C of the *Principal's Administration Manual*

If a Student Refuses an Accommodation...

- Document student’s refusal in writing; keep in student’s file.
 - Sample refusal form — available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/
- Continue to make accommodation available, if needed, for remainder of test administration.
- Do not make student sign waiver of their right to receive the accommodation.
- Notify parent/guardian of student’s refusal.
- Amend IEP/504 plan for future testing.
 - If appropriate, list accommodation in the IEP/504 plan “as requested by student,” or remove it.
- Update the information in student’s Student Registration if an accommodation was entered incorrectly or was not used.

Upcoming Training Sessions

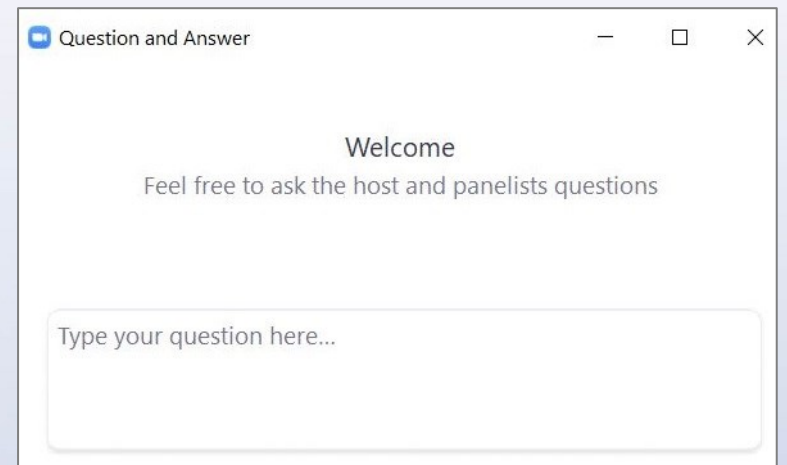
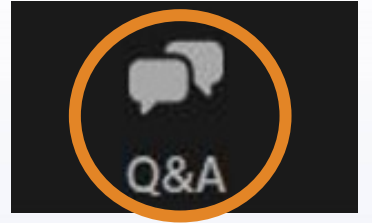
Session	Date and Registration Link	Intended Audience	Recommended Read-Ahead Materials
MCAS Test Security and Administration Protocols for New Staff	Tuesday, January 28 at 9:30–11:15 a.m.	Principals and school test coordinators, district test coordinators	The Spring 2025 MCAS Principal's Administration Manual is planned to be available in advance of this session. Participants are encouraged to review Part I — MCAS Test Security Requirements prior to the training session.
MCAS Test Security and Administration Protocols for Returning Staff	Thursday, January 30 at 9:30–11:15 a.m.		

Upcoming “Office Hours” Sessions

Session	Date and Registration Link	Intended Audience	Recommended Read-Ahead Materials
Student Registration Office Hours for Grades 3–8	Monday, January 27 at 9:30–10:30 a.m.	Principals and school test coordinators for grades 3–8 schools, district test coordinators	MCAS Student Registration Guide
Student Registration Office Hours for High Schools	Wednesday, January 29 at 9:30–10:30 a.m.	High school principals and school test coordinators, district test coordinators	
Office Hours — MCAS Portal Tasks for February Science	Friday, January 31 at 9:30–10:30 a.m.	High school principals and school test coordinators, district test coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCAS Student Registration Guide • Guide to the MCAS Portal • Guide to Creating and Managing Classes

Questions and Answers

Use the “Q&A” feature to ask questions.



6. Live “Sandbox” Time

Poll Question

Which would you to see more information on?

- A. How students use text-to-speech
- B. How students use speech-to-text
- C. How to ensure accommodations are correctly assigned

Next Steps

- **Today:** Complete the evaluation form.
 - Responses are associated with the name and email address used to log in.
 - Email your input to mcas@mass.gov with any questions.
- **Next week:**
 - Receive an email with the Q&A from this session
 - Recording will be available on the [MCAS Resource Center](#).

Email and Phone Support

MCAS Service Center

- Questions on logistics and technology
 - **Web:** <https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/>
 - **Email:** mcas@cognia.org
 - **Phone:** 800-737-5103
 - **TTY:** 888-222-1671
 - Live chat is available at the link on the bottom of the page at the [MCAS Resource Center](#)

DESE Student Assessment Services

- Policy questions (e.g., student participation, accommodations)
 - **Web:** www.doe.mass.edu/mcas
 - **Email:** mcas@mass.gov
 - **Phone:** 781-338-3625
 - **TTY:** 800-439-2370

THANK YOU

The Office of Student Assessment Services



781-338-3625



mcas@mass.gov



www.doe.mass.edu/mcas



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