

Understanding Accommodations and Modifications



This document provides a foundational understanding of the difference between accommodations and modifications that may be included in some Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Context is also given for students with Section 504 Accommodations Plans, and/or linguistic accommodations for emergent bilingual (EB) students. Throughout this document you will find linked resources for additional, more specific guidance.

General Definitions

Accommodations

Accommodations change **how** the student learns or demonstrates knowledge and are intended to provide the student with **access** to the general education curriculum. Accommodations reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability on academic tasks, but do not change learning expectations. The objectives of the course or activity remain the same. ARD committees or Section 504 committees should consider whether changes in presentation, response, timing/scheduling, or setting are required for students to access the general curriculum. The rationale for accommodations is often based on the student's full individual evaluation (FIE), Individualized Education Program (IEP), trials with and without accommodations, and/or teacher observations. For more detailed guidance on students with a Section 504 plan, see the [Section 504 Technical Assistance Guide](#).

Accommodation:

Changing

HOW

they are learning



Presentation accommodations alter the way that instruction, directions, and information are presented, and may allow a student with a disability to access information in non-standard ways.



Response accommodations allow students to record their work in alternate ways or to solve or organize their work using some material or device.



Timing/Scheduling accommodations adjust time and scheduling requirements for assignments, homework, and assessments. Students may also require increased use of breaks or reminders to stay on task.



Setting accommodations change the location in which instruction is given or the conditions of the setting.

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Linguistic Accommodations are second language acquisition supports embedded in content-area instruction that make content accessible to emergent bilingual (EB) students.

- ◆ The [English Language Proficiency Standards](#) (ELPS) require that the linguistic accommodations used during instruction be aligned with the student’s proficiency levels and/or familiarity with the content.
- ◆ General education teachers serving EB students use the [Proficiency Level Descriptors](#) (PLDs) to understand student characteristics at each level, document language proficiency progress, and to select appropriate linguistic accommodations.
- ◆ Guided by linguistic accommodations implemented regularly in the classroom, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) can recommend designated supports for state assessments. For dually identified students (EB and receiving SPED services), LPACs are required to work in conjunction with the student's ARD committee to determine which supports are needed based on the student’s language proficiency and an identified disability.

Modifications

Modifications change **what** the student is expected to learn. This typically means the student will not master all grade-level content and may complete or be assessed on simplified or less complex tasks. Modifications are intended to allow the student to **progress** in the general education curriculum. When there are modifications to what the student is learning in the enrolled grade level curriculum, the ARD committee must write an annual goal for the student to address this modification.

Modification:


Changing

W H A T

they are learning





Examples of Accommodations and Modifications

Whether a specific support is an accommodation or a modification is dependent on the content being taught and the grade-level TEKS. An accommodation at one grade level could be a modification at another grade level. Review the following scenarios to see examples of when supports may be considered accommodations or modifications.

Area	Accommodation	Modification
Spell check software 	If the objective of the assignment is to write a three-paragraph essay to describe the water cycle, the use of spell-checking software to support composition and editing is likely an accommodation.	If the objective of the assignment is to demonstrate mastery of specific spelling rules, the allowance of spell check software is likely a modification.

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Area	Accommodation	Modification
<p>Text to speech</p> 	<p>If the objective of the assignment is to learn specific grade-level science content, text to speech technology to support accessibility when the student is reading below grade level is likely an accommodation.</p>	<p>If the objective of the assignment is to demonstrate reading comprehension at grade level, the use of text to speech is likely a modification.</p>
<p>Calculator</p> 	<p>If the objective of the assignment is solving multi-step word problems, the use of a calculation device to support math calculation is likely an accommodation.</p>	<p>If the objective of the assignment is to demonstrate 3- digit x 2-digit multiplication with regrouping, the use of a calculation device to support math calculation is likely a modification.</p>
<p>Extra Time</p> 	<p>If the objective of the assignment is to demonstrate an understanding of the content, extra time to complete the assignment or exam is likely an accommodation.</p>	<p>If the objective of the multiplication fact quiz is to demonstrate fact fluency, the allowance of extra time is likely a modification.</p>
<p>Small Group Seating</p> 	<p>If the objective of the assignment is to read independently for 20 minutes and sitting in a small group with a teacher helps the student maintain attention to the task, small group seating is likely an accommodation.</p>	<p>Setting accommodations are generally not considered modifications since they do not change what the student is expected to learn.</p>

Additional Resources



[Classroom Accommodations - Accommodation Central](#)

- ◇ Provides a list of common accommodations, gives examples, video explanations, and steps for implementation.
- ◇ Includes steps for how to teach a student to use an accommodation, and sample monitoring forms.



[Accommodations and Modifications - Texas SPED Quick Learns | Texas SPED Support](#)

- ◇ Microlearning video that defines and differentiates between accommodations and modifications in the educational setting.
- ◇ Gives examples in which the same instructional adjustment can be an accommodation or a modification depending on the context.

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[Dyslexia Handbook](#)

- ◇ Lists common classroom accommodations for students with dyslexia.
- ◇ States importance of instructional accommodations independent of allowability on a state assessment.



[EB Students Instructional Accommodations Checklist](#)

- ◇ Suggested form for documenting accommodations based on language proficiency levels throughout the year.
- ◇ For use in instructional coaching, progress monitoring, and LPAC documentation.



[STAAR Accommodations Educator Guide](#)

- ◇ Defines and gives examples of accessibility features, designated supports that are locally approved, and those requiring TEA approval.
- ◇ Contains a section on the Connection to Classroom Instruction.



[TELPAS Educator Guide](#)

- ◇ Explains that TELPAS measures the ELPS, and that the stages of second language acquisition are described in the proficiency level descriptors (PLDs).
- ◇ The PLDs guide teachers in providing appropriate linguistic supports and accommodations.



[STAAR Alternate 2 Educator Guide](#)

- ◇ Lists criteria for accommodations, such as maintaining the integrity of the assessment and avoiding leading to or providing the student with a direct answer.
- ◇ Explains that accommodations must be listed in the student's IEP.



[TELPAS Alternate Educator Guide](#)

- ◇ TELPAS Alternate is an assessment based on a year of quality English instruction, and the student performance described in the Observable Behaviors occurs while students have access to the instructional accommodations indicated in their IEP.
- ◇ The alternate proficiency level descriptors (PLDs) describe the English that EB students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can understand and use at each proficiency level.
- ◇ The alternate PLDs guide teachers in providing appropriate linguistic supports and accommodations.



[Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Guide](#)

- ◇ Explains how accommodations and modifications are intentionally aligned with SDI.
- ◇ Includes practical examples of accommodations and modifications.