

Scribing Protocol for WIDA ACCESS

A scribe is an adult who writes down what a student dictates via speech, American Sign Language, or an assistive communication device. The guiding principle in scribing is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to assessment content. Scribes are required to sign the MEA Security and Data Privacy Agreement, found in Appendix A of the [Assessment Security Handbook](#).

Qualifications for Scribes

- The scribe must be an adult who is familiar with the student, such as the teacher or educational technician who is **typically responsible for scribing during classroom instruction** and assessments.
- Scribes must be proficient in the English language.
- Scribes must be able to produce legible written or typed work.

Preparation

- Scribes must read and sign the MEA Security and Data Privacy Agreement found on page 10 of the [Assessment Security Handbook](#) prior to the assessment administration.
- Scribes must sign the WIDA Secure Portal Non-Disclosure and User Agreement found in the [WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#).
- Scribes are expected to familiarize themselves with the assessment format in advance of the scribing session. Having a working familiarity with the assessment environment will help facilitate the scribe's ability to record the student's answers.
- Scribes should have a working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility features available on assessments.
- In addition to a scribe, students may make use of any other approved supports and accommodations during the assessment as appropriate and in accordance with the *Accessibility Guide*. Scribes should be familiar with all supports and accommodations assigned to the student for whom they are scribing.
- Scribes should practice the scribing process with no capitalization or punctuation with the student at least once prior to the scribing session on practice test/sample items to become familiar and comfortable with the process. A suggested scribing script is included at the end of this protocol.

General Guidelines and Expectations

- Scribing must be administered so that the interaction between a scribe and a student does not interrupt other students or inadvertently reveal the student’s answers.
- If not in a separate setting, the scribe should be situated near enough to the student to prevent their conversations from reaching other students in the room.
- For computer-based administrations, scribes must enter student responses directly into the secure browser.
- Scribes may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., assessment directions, navigation within the secure browser, etc.).
- Scribes may not respond to student questions about assessment items if their responses compromise validity of the assessment. The student must not be prompted, reminded, or otherwise assisted in formulating his or her response during or after the dictation to the scribe.
- Scribes may ask the student to restate words or parts as needed. Such requests must not be communicated in a manner suggesting that the student should make a change or correction.
- Scribes may not question or correct student choices, alert students to errors or mistakes, prompt or influence students in any way that might compromise the integrity of student responses. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record exactly what the student has dictated.
- Students must be allowed to review and edit what the scribe has written. If necessary, the student can request the scribe to read aloud the completed text before final approval.

Scribe is available on all tests in the following domains:

Listening, Reading , and Writing

At the student’s request, scribes manipulate universal tools such as the notepad, line guide, or color preferences setting. Scribes provide the same opportunity the student’s peers have to process test items and plan responses, which may include writing outlines, plans, or drafts. When using an AAC device, scribes should have	• Word forms and sentences should be transcribed exactly as dictated; if the student says “want,” do not transcribe as “wants” or “wanted.” • Scribes may allow students to review their responses and make edits, as needed. Scribes make changes exactly as dictated by the student, even if a change is incorrect. Scribes must not cue the student to errors when reading the dictated response aloud. • Scribes may ask students to slow down or repeat a response. Scribes should not record vocalizations such as “um” or “ahh” that accompany a spoken response. • Scribes may ask, “Are you finished?” or “Is there anything you want to add or delete?” Scribes must not coach students, influence responses, or suggest that students review responses.
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experience with the device and the student. Students are not required to indicate additional conventions of writing such as spelling and punctuation.	Scribes may answer procedural questions, such as, “Do I have to fill the entire space?” Scribes must not confirm answers, prompt students to fix mistakes, or answer content questions, such as “What does that word mean?”
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- Responses are scribed into the online test platform or a standard test booklet when a student receives this accommodation. When a scribe is used, the student may respond to test items orally, with gestures or pointing, by eye-gazing, or using an AAC device. Scribing takes place as the student dictates or produces responses, and responses are entered verbatim. All scribing must be administered individually and completed within the testing session. This includes any changes the student makes to the dictated response.

When Assigning Accommodations Consider the Following Questions:

Does the student use an accommodation regularly in the classroom?

If not, consider carefully whether an accommodation is truly needed for testing. Accommodations should not be provided for the first time in a testing situation. Students should be given opportunities to practice the accommodation prior to the assessment.

Does the accommodation address the student’s need?

Accommodations do not reduce expectations or compensate for a lack of knowledge, skills, or prior instruction. The sole purpose of an accommodation is to ensure that a disability does not prevent a demonstration of English language proficiency. Providing unnecessary accommodations can negatively impact student performance.

Is the accommodation appropriate for ELP testing?

Some accommodations that are typically available to ELs taking a content test are not acceptable supports on an ELP assessment. Student support teams must never offer an accommodation that would invalidate the ELP assessment.

Accommodations on ACCESS assessments are intended only for students with disabilities as documented in an IEP or 504 Plan. Accommodations decisions are made by a student’s educational support team (IEP, 504, or Title II of the ADA). They should never be assigned independently by an individual educator outside of the IEP process.

Suggested Scribe Script
(to be used with the student in advance of the testing day)

I'm the person who will be scribing your answers when you take your assessment next week in [math/reading/science]. I want to let you know how we'll work together. When I'm scribing your responses, I will have to follow certain rules.

- I cannot help you with any answers.
- I will enter answers for you.
- I will not use any capitalization or punctuation. You will have the opportunity to proofread the answer and tell me where to add capitalization and punctuation.
- I can still help you with your [any assistive technology that the student may require].
- You can ask me to pause my scribing if you need a break.
- If you ask me a question about the test, all I will say is, "Do your best work. I cannot help you with that."
- Do you have any questions for me about how we will work together during the test?

Before approving a scribe, teams are frequently encouraged to consider:

- Does the student regularly use a scribe during instruction and classroom assessments?
- Is the need due to a disability affecting written expression, fine motor skills, or physical access?
- Can another accommodation (speech-to-text, assistive technology, keyboarding, etc.) provide access more appropriately?
- Would the use of a scribe change what the assessment is intended to measure?

Common Expectations for a Scribe Accommodation

A scribe may be used when a student has a documented disability that prevents them from independently producing written responses.

Typically, guidance includes:

- The accommodation must be documented in the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or other approved accommodation plan.
- The scribe records exactly what the student dictates without editing, correcting, prompting, or influencing the response.
- The student directs all content, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing when required by the assessment.
- Scribes may allow students to review their responses but may not suggest revisions or cue students to errors.