



Read-Aloud Protocol for Maine Educational Assessments

Read-Aloud Protocol for MEA Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy eMPowerME Grades 3-8 Spring 2020

When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the eMPowerME assessment, the student may be eligible to work with a test reader. A test reader is an adult who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. Read-Aloud should be consistent with the student's normal routine during instruction and assessments. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content. The student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The test reader must be familiar with the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and sign Test Security Agreement Form.

NOTE: On eMPowerME assessment, test readers are allowable across all grades as an accommodation for Mathematics and Writing/Essay sessions as outlined in the table below.

- Read Aloud on Reading test sessions is NOT ALLOWED
- Read Aloud on the Writing & Language test sessions is NOT ALLOWED
- Read Aloud on the Mathematics sessions is ALLOWED for directions, test questions, answer choices, and passages if applicable
- Read Aloud on the Direct Writing session is ALLOWED for both the passages and prompts

Qualifications for Test Readers

- The test reader must be an adult who is familiar with the student, and is typically responsible for providing this support during educational instruction and assessments.
- Test readers must be familiar with the administration of the assessment in accordance with the TAM, familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the test content, and related conventions for standard oral communication.

Preparation

- Test readers must read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.
- Test readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format in advance of the testing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment and format will help facilitate reading of the test.
- Test readers should have a working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility and accommodations options and features available on eMPowerME assessments. Test readers should be familiar with the all supports and/or accommodations assigned to the student for whom they are reading.
- In addition to a test reader, students may make use of any other approved specialized tools or equipment during the test as appropriate and in accordance with *eMPowerME Accessibility Guide*. Test readers should be familiar with any assistive technology the student requires.
- Test readers should have practice in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before working directly with a student.



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- The test reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support. A test reader script is included at the end of the Protocol for Read Aloud, Test Reader.

General Guidelines

- The test reader's support should ideally be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.
- Read each question exactly as written as clearly as possible.
- Throughout the exam, strive to communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- Avoid gesturing, head movements, or any verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words not otherwise emphasized in text.
- Avoid conversing with the student about test questions as this would be a violation of test security; respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions verbatim as needed.
- Do not paraphrase, interpret, define, or translate any items, words, or instructions as this would be a violation of test security.
- Spell any words requested by the student.
- Adjust your reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

Post-Administration

- The test reader must collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the testing session and deliver it to the Test Administrator in accordance with eMPowerME and state policies and procedures.
- The test reader must not discuss any portion of the test with others.

English Usage/Conventions

- **Punctuation:** Read all text as punctuated.
- **Ellipses:** When an ellipsis is used to signify missing text in a sentence, pause briefly, and read as 'dot, dot, dot.'
- **Quotations:** Quotation marks should be verbalized as "quote" and "end quote" at the beginning and end of quoted material, respectively.
- **Emphasis:** When words are printed in boldface, italics, or capitals, tell the student that the words are printed that way. In order not to provide an unfair advantage to students receiving this support, test readers should be cautious not to emphasize words not already emphasized in print. Emphasis is appropriate when italics, underlining, or bold is used in the prompt, question, or answers.
- **Misspellings:** In some cases, a test item may present a word or phrase that is intentionally misspelled as part of the assessment. In these instances, the student is required to respond in a specific way. When presented with intentionally misspelled words test readers should not attempt to read the word(s) aloud as pronunciation is somewhat subjective.



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Images / Graphics

- Before describing a picture or graphic, the test reader should determine whether the details of the picture are necessary to understanding and responding to the item(s). In many cases, an image will be used to accompany a passage or reading excerpt as a piece of visual interest that is not essential in responding to the item.
- Describe the image/graphic as concisely as possible following a logical progression. Focus on providing necessary information and ignoring the superfluous. Use grade-appropriate language when describing the image/graphic.
- Read the title or caption, if available.
- Any text that appears in the body of an image may be read to a student. Read text in images in the order most suited for the student's needs. Often the reader moves top to bottom, left to right, or general to specific in accordance with teaching practices.

Graphic Organizers

- Before reading a graphic organizer, the test reader should discern the most appropriate and logical manner in which to present the information. In general, information should be presented from broad to specific as indicated by the visual components of the document. The test reader should read the terms exactly as indicated in the graphic organizer. No other information should be articulated. For example, the test reader should not create sentences if information is bulleted or appears in a title or label.
- Use common grade-appropriate language throughout the item and the test when referring to graphic organizers and their attributes (labels, blank cells, stems, etc.).

Mathematical Expressions

- Mathematical expressions must be read precisely and with care to avoid misrepresentation by a student who has no visual reference. For mathematics items involving algebraic expressions or other mathematical notation, it may be preferable for the reader to silently read the mathematical notations or the entire question before reading it aloud to the student.
- Test readers read mathematical expressions with technical accuracy. Similar expressions should be treated consistently.
- In general, numbers and symbols can be read according to their common English usage for the student's grade level.
- Numbers greater than 99, however, should be read as individual numbers.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be read as full words. For example, 10 cm needs to be read as "ten centimeters." Some abbreviations may be read differently by different readers. For example, cm^3 may be read as "cubic centimeters" or "centimeters cubed".



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**Text-To-Speech / Read-Aloud / American Sign Language Specifications Requiring IEP/504 Documentation

**The following chart outlines the components of grade-level, content-level, and specific text that will be accessed within the test platform system by students who have IEP/504 documented approval for Text-To-Speech (TTS). The same chart guidelines should follow for non-embedded accommodations documented by IEP/504 with approval for a human reader (Read-Aloud) and an interpreter (Sign Language). TTS and/or Read-Aloud must be made available to all students who are blind/visually impaired who do not have braille reading skills.

TTS/Read-Aloud/ASL		
Content Area/Sessions	Item	Gr. 3 - 8
Reading 1&2	Test Directions	No
Reading 1&2	Test Questions	No
Reading 1&2	Answer Choices	No
Reading 1&2	Reading Passages	No
Mathematics 1&2	Test Directions	Yes
Mathematics 1&2	Test Questions	Yes
Mathematics 1&2	Answer Choices	Yes
Mathematics 1&2	Passages	Yes
Writing & Language 1&2	Test Directions	No
Writing & Language 1&2	Test Questions	No
Writing & Language 1&2	Answer Choices	No



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

Hi _____,

I'm the person who will be reading your test to you when you take your eMPowerME in [math/ELA]. I wanted to let you know how we'll work together. When I'm reading a test to you, it's very different from when I'm reading to you during class time. I have to follow certain rules.

- I cannot help you with any answers.
- I cannot click on anything in the screen.
- I will not be using different character voices or changes in my tone when I read. It will be very direct voice that does not change very much, no matter how exciting the story or test gets.
- If there is a picture that has words in it, I will read those words. If you ask, I will re-read as well.
- Sometimes there may be something about a word or phrase that might give you a hint if I say aloud. In those cases, I will skip the word, point to it on the screen [or your booklet if paper-version], and continue to read.
- I can still help you with your [*any assistive technology that the student may require]
- You can ask me to re-read parts of the test you didn't hear or need more time/repetition
- You can ask me to pause my reading if you need to take a break.
- You can ask me to slow down or speed up my reading, or read louder or softer if you are having trouble understanding what I read.
- I will only read certain types of punctuation, but if you need me to re-read a sentence how it was punctuated, I can do that.
- 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?



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References

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2014, August). *Appendix B: Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader. Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Implementation Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>.