



Read-Aloud Protocol for Maine Educational Assessments - NWEA



Read-Aloud Protocol for NWEA MEA Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy NWEA Grades 3-8 & 3rd year high school Updated Spring 2022

When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the NWEA assessment, the student may be eligible to work with an assessment reader. An assessment 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 assessment content. The student depends on the assessment reader to read the assessment questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the assessment. The assessment reader must be familiar with the MEA Read Aloud Protocol, and sign Assessment Security Agreement Form.

For students who have Read Aloud as an accommodation as included in an IEP or 504 Plan, assessment readers are allowable across all grades as an accommodation for Mathematics, Language, and only specific components of the Reading session as outlined in the table below.

- Read Aloud on the Mathematics session is permitted on all elements contained within the assessment.
- Read Aloud on the Language Use session is permitted on all elements contained within the assessment.
- **Read Aloud on the Reading session is permitted for answer choices, question directions, question/prompts, and test directions ONLY. Read Aloud is NOT PERMITTED for reading passages.**

Qualifications for Assessment Readers

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

Preparation

- Assessment readers must read and sign an assessment security/confidentiality agreement prior to assessment administration.
- Assessment readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the assessment environment and format in advance of the assessment session. Having a working familiarity with the assessment environment and format will help facilitate reading of the assessment.
- Assessment readers should have a working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility and accommodations options and features available on NWEA assessments.



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- In addition to an assessment reader, students may make use of any other approved specialized tools or equipment during the assessment as appropriate and in accordance with *NWEA Accessibility Guide*. Assessment readers should be familiar with any assistive technology the student requires.
- The assessment reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support. An assessment reader script is included at the end of the Protocol for Read Aloud, Assessment Reader Script.

General Guidelines

- The assessment 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 the text exactly as written as clearly as possible.
- Throughout the assessment, 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 assessment questions as this would be a violation of assessment security; respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions verbatim as needed.
- Refrain from paraphrasing, interpreting, defining or translating any items, words, or instructions as this would be a violation of assessment security.
- Spell any words requested by the student.
- Adjust your reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

Post-Administration

- The assessment reader must collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the assessment session and provide it to the Assessment Administrator in accordance with NWEA and state policies and procedures.
- The assessment reader must not discuss any portion of the assessment 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, assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment readers should not



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attempt to read the word(s) aloud as pronunciation is somewhat subjective.

Images / Graphics

- Before describing a picture or graphic, the assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment reader should read the terms exactly as indicated in the graphic organizer. No other information should be articulated. For example, the assessment 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 assessment 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.
- Assessment 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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Read-Aloud Specifications **Requiring IEP/504 Documentation**

The following chart outlines the specific components and text that will be allowed within the NWEA/MARC assessment platform system regarding Text-To-Speech (TTS) and Read Aloud/Human Reader.

TTS is an embedded support/accommodation that should be consistent with the student's normal routine during instruction and regular classroom assessments. Read Aloud/Human Reader is a non-embedded accommodation requiring IEP/504 documentation and should be consistent with the student's normal routine during instruction and regular classroom assessments.

Content Area/Sessions	Item	TTS	Read Aloud Human Reader
Reading	Question Directions	Yes	Yes
Reading	Questions /Prompts	Yes	Yes
Reading	Answer Choices	Yes	Yes
Reading	Reading Passages	No	No
Language Use	Question Directions	Yes	Yes
Language Use	Questions /Prompts	Yes	Yes
Language Use	Answer Choices	Yes	Yes
Language Use	Passages	Yes	Yes
Mathematics	Question Directions	Yes	Yes
Mathematics	Questions /Prompts	Yes	Yes
Mathematics	Answer Choices	Yes	Yes
Mathematics	Passages	Yes	Yes



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Suggested Assessment Reader Script (to be used with student in advance of the assessment day)

Hi _____,

My name is <insert name> and I will be working with you today to support you during your NWEA [math, reading, language usage] assessments. I wanted to let you know how we'll work together. When I'm reading a assessment to you, it's very different from when I'm reading to you during class time. I have to follow certain rules.

- You have to provide the answers. I cannot help you with any answers.
- You must click items on the screen. I cannot click on anything in the screen.
- I will be keeping my voice the same tone. 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 assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment, 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 assessment?

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/>.