



Standards
& Testing
Agency

Key stage 2 access arrangements guidance

October 2021

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1 Introduction

This guidance details the access arrangements available for pupils participating in the key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests.

Pupils with specific needs may require additional arrangements so they can take part in the KS2 tests. Access arrangements are adjustments that can be put in place to support those pupils. Headteachers and teachers must decide whether any of their pupils will need access arrangements before they administer the tests.

Schools must make an application to the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) to request permission in advance for some arrangements (section 3). Some arrangements do not require permission, but schools must notify STA of their use once all tests have been administered (section 4). Other arrangements may be used without prior approval, or the need to notify STA, provided they reflect normal classroom practice (section 5).

1.1 Overview of access arrangements

Access arrangements must never advantage or disadvantage the pupil. Any support should be based primarily on normal classroom practice. Support must not change the test questions and the pupil's answers must be their own.

It may be helpful to use KS2 [practice materials](#)¹ with pupils before administering the tests. This will enable schools to identify whether pupils need additional support or adaptations, either to the test materials or to their administration.

Access arrangements might be used to support pupils who have:

- difficulty reading
- difficulty writing
- difficulty concentrating
- processing difficulties
- a hearing impairment
- a visual impairment
- English as an additional language

Due to the diversity of pupils' needs, this guidance does not list every circumstance where it may be appropriate to use access arrangements. Some pupils may not be able to access the tests, despite the provision of additional arrangements.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-practice-materials

Schools can contact STA using 'Message us' on the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#)² if further advice is required.

1.2 Evidence

During a [monitoring visit](#)³, local authorities (LAs) may ask to see evidence that any support given to pupils in the tests is regularly provided as part of normal classroom practice.

Schools must ensure they have documentation to show that a pupil is eligible for access arrangements. Evidence will vary according to the type of support and may include:

- notes recorded in teaching plans
- individual pupil support plans
- a pupil's classwork

1.3 Maladministration

Schools could be subject to a [maladministration investigation](#)⁴ if they fail to use access arrangements appropriately.

This includes:

- failing to make the relevant application or notification, where required
- early opening of test materials without permission from STA
- doing anything that could be interpreted as over-aiding pupils
- not having evidence that access arrangements used in the tests reflect normal classroom practice
- allowing access arrangements to be administered by another pupil, or a relative, carer or guardian of the pupil

A maladministration investigation may lead to the pupil's result being amended or annulled.

² www.primaryassessmentgateway.education.gov.uk

³ www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-and-phonics-screening-check-monitoring-visits

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stages-1-and-2-investigating-allegations-of-maladministration

2 Changes for 2021/22

From the 2021/22 academic year, decisions about access arrangements applications and notifications will resume.

2.1 Additional time applications

Applications for additional time has resumed. Schools must apply to STA in advance, to request permission (section 3.1).

2.2 Compensatory marks for spelling

The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test has resumed. Schools must apply to STA in advance, to request permission (section 3.3).

2.3 Aid notifications

Schools do not need to make applications if a pupil uses a scribe or word processor or other technical or electronic aid in the test, or if a transcript was made of their test script. However, they must notify STA about their use once all of the tests have been taken (section 4).

3 Arrangements requiring applications

Schools must apply to STA, in advance, to request permission to use the following access arrangements:

- additional time
- early opening
- compensatory marks for spelling

Schools must submit application forms in the 'Available activity' section of the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#)⁵ by the deadlines specified in the [KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#)⁶.

STA will only consider applications after the deadlines in exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to, where a pupil's needs have significantly changed, or a pupil joins the school after the application deadline. In such cases, schools should contact STA using 'Message us' on the Primary Assessment Gateway to discuss the pupil's requirements.

Schools must not send copies of application forms with the test scripts as this will slow down the marking process.

3.1 Additional time

Pupils automatically qualify for up to:

- 25% additional time, if they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan
- 100% additional time, if they use the modified large print (MLP) or braille versions of the tests

Schools do not need to complete an application for these pupils. Pupils who are automatically allowed additional time may also use other access arrangements if this is normal classroom practice.

Additional time to complete the tests may be appropriate for other pupils who:

- require additional time under test conditions to properly demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, this may include pupils who are unable to work at the same speed as their peers due to a specific need
- are waiting for confirmation of an EHC plan

⁵ www.primaryassessmentgateway.education.gov.uk

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-tests

Schools should consider whether supervised rest breaks during the tests would be more beneficial to pupils than additional time (section 5.3). If pupils use additional time, they may also require rest breaks.

LAs do not make decisions about applications for additional time, although they will be able to view schools' completed applications.

Applying for additional time

Teachers with good knowledge of the pupil's needs should make the application. Reports from educational psychologists or other education professionals are not required. This is because pupils who do not hold a report may still be eligible for additional time. Where a report is already in place, teachers can use it to inform their responses about the pupil.

Schools will need to respond to each of the following 7 questions about the pupil. These questions draw on the teacher's assessment of the pupil's abilities or needs. Schools must have evidence to justify their responses to the application questions in case they receive a monitoring visit.

1. Can the pupil respond appropriately to a simple request or instruction given in English, without being prompted or aided by an interpreter or translator?
2. Does the pupil have a hearing impairment that prevents them from being able to respond appropriately to a simple question or instruction given in English, without being prompted or aided by a communicator or sign language interpreter or having to lip read?
3. Does the pupil need braille or enlarged print in order to read and understand text?
4. Can the pupil focus on a task, which requires them to work independently and without interruption, for at least 15 minutes without being prompted to stay on task?
5. Is the pupil prevented from being able to write independently at a speed of more than 10 words per minute by a physical, motor skill or learning disability?
6. Can the pupil read age-appropriate texts aloud and fluently, at a speed of 90 words per minute, without making errors, or with very few errors (this means less than 5 errors per 20 words)?
7. Does the pupil have difficulty processing information, which prevents them from being able to answer questions on practice key stage 2 tests, even when they are allowed to refer back to the questions?

Additional time is not cumulative. If a pupil qualifies for more than one reason, they are only allowed 25% additional time. A pupil who qualifies for 2 or more reasons may be allowed the use of an aid as well as 25% additional time. For example, a pupil who has difficulty reading and difficulty writing could use a scribe for writing and still qualify for 25% additional time if they are reading independently.

Schools will receive the outcome of their application upon submission of the form. The outcome will confirm whether the pupil is eligible for additional time or whether the school could consider alternative access arrangements. Applications cannot be amended or deleted after submission.

3.2 Early opening to adapt a test paper

Before making the decision to modify test materials, schools should consider whether modified tests provided by STA would meet the needs of the pupil. Modified tests are primarily designed for pupils with visual impairments, although they may be suitable for pupils with other needs.

Schools may open test papers up to one hour before a test is due to start, to make adaptations or preparations, without seeking permission from STA. This flexibility is designed to help schools that need to:

- photocopy test papers onto coloured paper
- enhance diagrams
- enlarge text
- prepare a translator or signer
- prepare equipment

If you need to open test papers (including modified test papers) more than one hour early to make complex adaptations, you must have an approved application for early opening. If you are planning to make the same adaptations for more than one pupil, and you require the same amount of time, you can include multiple pupils on the same application form.

STA will only allow schools to open standard test materials more than one day before the scheduled test date, or modified materials more than 2 days before the scheduled test date, in exceptional circumstances.

Schools do not need to make applications for early opening for subject-specific guidance and models, which are provided with the MLP and braille tests.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that any adaptations to the tests are done correctly. STA will not compensate, or give special consideration, where test papers have been incorrectly modified.

Early opening must not be used to administer tests earlier than the date specified in the statutory test timetable.

Applying for early opening

Where modifications cannot be made in the hour before the start of a test, the school may make an application for early opening. Appropriate reasons for an application include:

- preparations for MLP or braille versions of the tests, such as setting up visual scanning equipment or preparing tactile diagrams
- enlargement or adaptations of a test paper for a pupil with a visual impairment or other special educational needs or disabilities
- communicators or sign language interpreters planning how they will present a test to pupils with a hearing impairment
- preparation of a written or oral translation of the mathematics test

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the security and confidentiality of test materials. Only the headteacher, or the person making adaptations, should have access to test papers that have been opened early.

3.3 Compensatory marks for spelling

Pupils with a profound hearing impairment and who do not use lip reading or a signing system, or can only use fingerspelling signing, may not be able to access the spelling paper of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Raw scores from both English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers are needed to give an overall scaled score. Awarding compensatory marks allows these pupils to receive an overall test outcome for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Compensatory marks are based on the average raw score achieved by pupils who take the test.

Applying for compensatory marks

When applying, you must confirm that the pupil:

- has a profound hearing impairment and is unable to access Paper 2: spelling
- will take Paper 1: questions

If the application is approved, the pupil should be marked absent (A) on the test attendance register for Paper 2: spelling. The pupil should still take Paper 1: questions. If the spelling paper is incorrectly administered to a pupil who is unable to access the test, their script must be sent for marking. The pupil will be awarded a test outcome based on their achievements in the test and will not be eligible for compensatory marks.

4 Arrangements requiring notifications

Schools do not need to make applications for the following access arrangements, but they must notify STA about their use once all tests have been taken. Schools must submit notification forms in the 'Available activity' section of the Primary Assessment Gateway by the deadlines specified in the KS2 ARA.

At the end of each test, test administrators should inform the headteacher about:

- any pupils who used a scribe, transcript, word processor or other technical or electronic aid
- who acted as the scribe or transcriber, if applicable
- whether the aid was used for all or part of the test

If any of the access arrangements are likely to disturb or aid others in the cohort, schools should consider making arrangements for pupils to complete the test separately.

4.1 Scribes

A scribe is a writing assistant who writes out answers dictated by the pupil during the test. Schools can provide a scribe if other options to enable the pupil to work independently are not appropriate, and the use of a scribe is normal classroom practice.

A scribe can be used when a pupil is:

- unable to use a word processor
- unable to write or has difficulty writing
- known to experience fatigue

The scribe must:

- work at the pupil's pace and not hurry them if they need time for reflection, rest or reading
- have a working knowledge of the subject
- follow the pupil's instructions precisely to draw or add to diagrams, charts and graphs in the mathematics tests
- only make a correction on a test script if asked to do so by the pupil

If a pupil is eligible for up to 25% additional time solely because they have difficulty writing, they may be given either additional time or a scribe, but not both.

English grammar, punctuation and spelling

In Paper 1: questions, the scribe must pause for the pupil to dictate relevant spellings and all language, punctuation and phrasing must be the pupil's own.

Correct spelling is required for questions assessing:

- contracted forms
- verb forms
- plurals
- prefixes and suffixes

In Paper 2: spelling, the scribe must pause for each spelling to be dictated by the pupil.

English reading and mathematics

The scribe should not pause for the pupil to dictate spellings of words in the English reading and mathematics tests unless the pupil usually works in this way.

4.2 Transcripts

If it will be difficult for a marker to read the pupil's writing, schools should make a transcript at the end of the test, but before the pupil leaves the test room. Schools can transcribe all or part of a pupil's test script. If the marker can read the pupil's writing, they will mark the original work.

When transcribing a pupil's work, schools must:

- keep the pupil under test conditions and separate from the rest of the cohort until the transcript is complete
- use a different coloured pen from the pupil, but not red
- transcribe alongside the pupil's answers if only part of the test paper needs transcribing
- make extensive or full transcripts on a new test paper
- return the pupil's original test script with the transcript attached
- avoid changing the pupil's original answers, including the positioning of commas and decimal places in the mathematics tests

Braille test scripts should not be transcribed, as STA will make appropriate marking arrangements.

4.3 Word processors or other technical or electronic aids

Pupils must use equipment independently.

Schools must test the functionality of the equipment by using the KS2 practice materials. If equipment has functionality that would provide the pupil with an advantage and this cannot be turned off, the pupil must not use the equipment in the test. Schools may arrange for the test to be read to the pupil or for a scribe to record the pupil's answers instead.

Schools should ensure that pupils regularly save their work. Pupils cannot restart a test, and STA will not compensate, or give special consideration, if work is lost. Any partially completed test scripts must be sent for marking.

After the test, the pupil's work should be printed and attached to their test script and returned in the bag for modified scripts. Schools should ensure that any test content is removed from the equipment.

English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics

The equipment must not:

- read mathematical symbols in the mathematics test
- read punctuation in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test
- have any spell-check functionality turned on

English reading

Word processors or other technical or electronic aids may be used to record pupils' answers in the English reading test. They must not be used to provide reading support, other than to read the general instructions on page 3 of the reading answer booklet.

5 School-delegated arrangements

The following access arrangements may be used without prior approval, or the need to notify STA, providing they reflect normal classroom practice. Schools must have evidence to show that the pupil routinely receives this support in case of a monitoring visit.

Schools should note the name of the translator, reader or prompter used by each pupil in the tests for their own records.

If any of the access arrangements are likely to disturb or aid others in the cohort, schools should consider making arrangements for pupils to complete the test separately.

5.1 Written or oral translations

STA does not provide translations of the tests, but schools can prepare written or oral translations of the mathematics test to meet an individual pupil's needs.

Mathematics

Translators should take care to ensure that any translation does not provide additional support or explanation of mathematical terms.

Pupils may write their responses in English or in their own language. If a pupil's answers are not in English, the translator should make a transcript of the pupil's answers into English after the test before the pupil leaves the test room. The pupil's original test script must be sent for marking along with the translated test script. Alternatively, pupils may answer orally, and the translator can scribe the answers in English.

Written translations of the mathematics tests can be made one hour before the test is due to start. If it will take longer, schools must make an application for early opening.

Oral translations may be given by a translator at the time of the tests. Translators must work with pupils on a one-to-one basis. If several pupils require a translator but only one is available, the school should administer the test in multiple sittings or apply for a timetable variation to administer the test on a different day. Translators may want to review the test papers before the test is administered to check for any unfamiliar vocabulary.

If the translator acts as a scribe or makes a transcript, the headteacher must complete and submit the notification of an aid form.

English grammar, punctuation and spelling and English reading

Translations can only be made to directions or instructions that are not part of the test questions. No help may be given with reading or understanding the questions or passages of text.

5.2 Readers

Pupils who have difficulty reading may be supported in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics tests. In most cases, these pupils will have a reading age that is considerably lower than their actual age. Readers must not be used by pupils who are capable of reading the test materials themselves.

Readers must be used on a one-to-one basis. If a pupil requests it, the reader may also read back any part of a pupil's written response to a question.

Readers:

- do not need to be specialists in the subject being tested
- must understand the test format
- must know what may or may not be read to a pupil in particular tests
- must understand any subject-specific issues that might occur
- may also act as a scribe if the pupil is not writing for themselves (section 4.1)

If a pupil is eligible for up to 25% additional time solely because they have difficulty reading, they may be given either additional time or a reader, but not both.

English grammar, punctuation and spelling

The [notes for readers in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test](#)⁷ gives examples of how to read particular types of questions aloud to a pupil. Readers should ensure they understand the guidance so that they read each question type correctly, particularly for questions with multiple choice answers. This is so they do not give pupils an advantage by reading questions in a particular way.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/notes-for-readers-in-the-english-grammar-punctuation-and-spelling-test-short-answer-questions

English reading

As the English reading test is designed to allow pupils to demonstrate reading skills and comprehension, readers may only help pupils to read the general instructions.

This includes information on the front cover of the test paper and any directions that are not part of the actual questions. For example, readers may say 'Questions 1 to 15 are about The Panda Bear (pages 4 to 5)'. Readers must not read the texts, questions or any part of a pupil's response back to the pupil. Specific instructions are included in the test pack.

Mathematics

A reader may help a pupil to read the mathematics tests. They may:

- clarify instructions, as long as no additional information is given which could give the pupil an advantage
- read, but not clarify, subject-specific vocabulary

If a mathematics question is read to a pupil, the reader may read words and numbers, but not mathematical symbols. This is so the function of a mathematical symbol is not inadvertently explained by reading its name.

5.3 Rest breaks

The majority of pupils should be able to complete the tests without a break. However, supervised rest breaks may be appropriate for pupils who find it difficult to concentrate or experience fatigue. Rest breaks may also be beneficial to pupils using modified versions of the tests.

Schools must supervise pupils and keep them under test conditions during the rest break. There must be no contact with pupils who have taken the test and no discussion of test content.

Pupils using rest breaks should be given the same overall time as the rest of the cohort. Schools may want to split a test into sections for pupils who are known to need a rest break. If a school decides to split a test, they should:

- divide the test into sections, or plan when the pupil will have a break, during the hour before it is due to start
- keep the questions in the same order
- give the pupil an opportunity to attempt all parts of a paper, so that the outcome of the test properly reflects their knowledge and understanding

For the English reading test, schools might want to consider stopping the test for a rest break once the pupil has completed each passage of text and answered the questions related to that text.

The test must be completed on the same day that it was started. Any partially completed tests must be sent for marking.

5.4 Prompters

A pupil who is unable to focus independently, or who loses concentration easily, may be supported by a prompter. The role of the prompter is to keep the pupil's attention on the test paper but not to help them answer any questions. The prompter may tap on the desk or say the pupil's name, depending on what is normal classroom practice, to remind the pupil to focus on the question they are working on.

Prompters should:

- agree the best way to prompt the pupil before the test begins
- be known to the pupil
- be used on a one-to-one basis
- only be used to draw the pupil's attention back to the task

Prompters must not:

- do anything that could be interpreted as over-aiding the pupil
- advise the pupil which questions to answer or when to move on to the next question
- advise or guide the pupil about the order in which they should attempt the questions

If a pupil finds it difficult to focus on individual questions, schools could use adhesive notes or stickers to cover other questions on the page. In these circumstances, the whole question the pupil is working on should remain uncovered until the pupil indicates when they want to move on.

5.5 Accessibility objects in the mathematics test

If a pupil is known to have difficulty accessing 2-dimensional diagrams, schools may show them real objects that look like those illustrated in the mathematics test, so they understand the context of the question.

Number apparatus, counters or number squares must not be used.

Schools must not explain any subject-specific terminology. If any context or words related to a question are unfamiliar to a pupil, you may show them related objects or pictures, or

describe the context. Test administrators may indicate on the test papers where real objects are available for pupils to look at.

The arrangement must reflect normal classroom practice. Schools may consider making use of early opening arrangements (section 3.2).

5.6 Highlighter pens

Pupils may highlight passages of text, in any of the tests, provided this is normal classroom practice. Pupils must not write their answers with a highlighter pen. Test administrators should not:

- highlight text, unless instructed by the pupil
- draw the pupil's attention to the correct response

5.7 Administering the tests at an alternative location

Schools can administer the tests at an alternative location to the rest of the cohort away from the school. This may include administering at a pupil referral unit or the pupil's home, as long as the pupil is in a fit state.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the security and confidentiality of the tests is maintained and the tests are administered according to the [test administration guidance](#)⁸.

If schools need specific advice or additional information on administering the tests at an alternative location, they should contact STA using 'Message us' in the Primary Assessment Gateway.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-test-administration-guidance-tag

6 Illness or injury at the time of the tests

Schools should not administer a test to a pupil who is ill. If a pupil is not fit to take the test, the school should consider applying for a [timetable variation](#)⁹ for permission to administer the test on another day. Pupils who were ill while taking a test will not qualify for special consideration.

If a pupil becomes ill during a test, the school should stop the test and make a note of the time. The pupil can be given a supervised rest break in school and can continue the test with the remaining amount of time when they are feeling better. If the pupil is not able to continue, or is sent home, the partially completed test script must be sent for marking. If the pupil leaves the school premises, they will have left test conditions and must not be allowed to continue or restart the test when they return to school.

If the pupil sustains an injury to their hand or wrist, that impacts their ability to take the tests, they may use a scribe. If the injury occurred within one week of the tests, the school may also allow up to 25% additional time because the pupil is unfamiliar working with a scribe. In these situations, an application for additional time is not required, but the school should be prepared to explain their arrangements in case of a monitoring visit. If the pupil is already familiar working with a scribe, additional time must not be given. The scribe must follow the guidance in section 4.1 and the school must submit a notification form on the Primary Assessment Gateway.

⁹ www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-varying-the-test-timetable

7 Further information

7.1 Modified tests

Full details about which modified tests are available are included in the [KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#)¹⁰.

7.2 Help and support

For general enquiries about access arrangements, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

For enquiries relating to access arrangements to meet a pupil's specific needs, schools can use the 'Message us – access arrangements' form.

For general enquiries about access arrangements, schools and LAs can use the 'Message us – general enquiry' form.

Message us forms can be found in the 'Available activity' section of the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#)¹¹.

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-tests

¹¹ www.primaryassessmentgateway.education.gov.uk



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Reference: STA/21/8617/e

ISBN: 978-1-78957-596-5



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