



Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) Accessibility Guide

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Introduction to This Guide

The *Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) Accessibility Guide (AC)* is intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, particularly IEP teams, as they prepare for and implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessments. The AC provides information for classroom teachers, English development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for those students who need them. The AC is also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment.

The universal tools described in the AC apply to all students. The AC recognizes the critical connection between accessibility and accessibility tools in instruction and accessibility and accessibility tools during assessment. This AC is supported by the *VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM)*.

Organization of This User Guide

This guide contains the following sections:

- [Section I](#): This section features the universal tools available on the VTSA.
- [Section II](#): This section features the designated supports available on the VTSA.
- [Section III](#): This section features the accommodations available on the VTSA.
- [Appendix A](#): This appendix provides guidelines for students who need read aloud.
- [Appendix B](#): This appendix provides guidelines for students who need a scribe.
- [Appendix C](#): This appendix provides guidelines for students who need simplified test directions.

Section I. Universal Tools

What are Universal Tools?

Universal tools are accessibility resources of the assessment that are either provided as digitally delivered components of the test delivery system or separate from it. Universal tools are available to all students based on student preference and selection. The universal tools described in this section are not modifications.

Embedded Universal Tools

[Table 1](#) lists the universal tools available to all students for computer administered VTSA. It includes a description of each tool. Although these tools are available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the tools should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the student.

Table 1. Embedded Universal Tool Descriptions

Universal Tools	Description
Breaks	The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student’s need. Breaks of more than 20 minutes will prevent the student from returning to items already attempted by the student. There is no limit on the number of breaks that a student might be given. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Calculator	An embedded on-screen Desmos digital calculator can be accessed for items requiring a calculator when students click on the calculator button.
Digital notepad	This tool is used for making notes about an item. The digital notepad is item-specific and is available through the end of the test segment. Notes are not saved after a break of more than 20 minutes.
Expandable passages	Each passage or stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen.
Highlighter	A digital tool for marking desired text, item questions, item answers, or parts of these with a color. Highlighted text remains available throughout the test.
Keyboard navigation	Navigation throughout text can be accomplished by using a keyboard.
Line reader	The student uses an onscreen universal tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text on the screen.
Mark for review	Allows students to flag items for future review during the assessment. Marking are not saved after a break of more than 20 minutes.

Universal Tools	Description
Periodic table	An arrangement of the chemical elements, ordered by their atomic number, electron configuration, and recurring chemical properties. The ordering shows periodic trends, such as elements with similar behavior in the same column. The periodic table embedded in the TDS is available for grades 8 and 11.
Strikethrough	Allows users to cross out answer options. If an answer option is an image, a strikethrough line will not appear, but the image will be grayed out.
Zoom	A tool for making text or other graphics in a window or frame appear larger on the screen. The default font size for all tests is 14 point. The student can make text and graphics larger by clicking the <i>Zoom In</i> button. The student can click the <i>Zoom Out</i> button to return to the default or smaller print size. When using the zoom feature, the student only changes the size of text and graphics on the current screen. To increase the default print size of the entire test, the print size must be set for the student in TIDE. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Section II. Designated Supports

What are Designated Supports?

Designated supports for the VTSA are those features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators with parent/guardian and student). The designated supports described in this section are not modifications. Students do not need an IEP or 504 plan to be assigned designated supports. The designated supports described in this section are not modifications. It is recommended that a consistent process be used to determine these supports for individual students. All educators making these decisions should be trained on the process and should be made aware of the range of designated supports available.

Designated supports need to be identified prior to assessment administration. Embedded and non-embedded supports must be entered into TIDE. Any non-embedded designated supports must be acquired prior to testing.

Who Makes Decisions About Designated Supports?

Informed adults make decisions about designated supports. Ideally, the decisions are made by all educators familiar with the student’s characteristics and needs, as well as those supports that the student has been using during instruction and for other assessments. Student input to the decision, particularly for older students, is also recommended.

Embedded Designated Supports

[Table 2](#) lists the embedded designated supports available to all students for whom the need has been indicated. It includes a description of each support along with recommendations for when the support might be needed.

Table 2. Embedded Designated Supports

Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommendations for Use
Color contrast	Enable students to adjust screen background or font color, based on student needs or preferences. This may include reversing the colors for the entire interface or choosing the color of font and background.	Students with attention difficulties may need this support for viewing test content. It also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). Choice of colors should be informed by evidence that color selections meet the student’s needs.
Masking	Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student. Students are able to focus their attention on a specific part of a test item by masking.	Students with attention difficulties may need to mask content not of immediate need or that may be distracting during the assessment. This support also may be needed by students with print disabilities (including learning disabilities) or visual impairments. Masking allows students to hide and reveal individual answer options, as well as all navigational buttons and menus.

Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommendations for Use
<p>Mouse pointer (size and color)</p>	<p>This embedded support allows the mouse pointer to be set to a larger size and also for the color to be changed. A test administrator sets the size and color of the mouse pointer prior to testing.</p>	<p>Students who are visually impaired and need additional enlargement or a mouse pointer in a different color to more readily find their mouse pointer on the screen will benefit from the mouse pointer support. Students who have visual perception challenges will also find this beneficial. The size and color are set in TIDE and cannot be changed during the administration of the assessment. Students should have ample opportunity to practice during daily instruction with the size and color to determine student preference. The mouse pointer can be used with the zoom universal tool. If students are using a magnification program, the enlarged mouse pointer is built into magnification programs and mouse pointer may not be needed.</p>
<p>Spanish language toggle</p>	<p>For items and stimuli that have content in Spanish and English, you can select the language in which to display the content for easier readability.</p> <p>By default, the item will be presented in the language specified at that beginning of the test.</p>	<p>For students whose primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom use of the Spanish language toggle may be appropriate. Students participate in the assessment regardless of the language. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.</p>
<p>Streamline mode</p>	<p>This designated support provides a streamlined interface of the test in an alternate, simplified format in which the items are displayed below the stimuli.</p>	<p>This designated support may benefit a small number of students who have specific learning and/or reading disabilities and/or visual impairment in which the text is presented in a more sequential format. Students should have familiarity interacting with items in streamline format.</p>

Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommendations for Use
Text-to-speech (TTS)	Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student is able to control the speed as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice or via a volume control.	Students who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities, or by students who are blind and do not yet have adequate braille skills. This support will likely be confusing and may impede the performance of students who do not regularly have the support during instruction. Students who use text-to-speech will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.
Turn off any universal tools	Disabling any universal tools that might be distracting or that students do not need to use or are unable to use.	Students who are easily distracted (whether or not designated as having attention difficulties or disabilities) may be overwhelmed by some of the universal tools. Knowing which specific tools may be distracting is important for determining which tools to turn off.

Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Some designated supports may need to be provided outside of TDS. These supports, shown in [Table 3](#), are to be provided locally for those students unable to use the designated supports when provided digitally.

Table 3. Non-Embedded Designated Support Descriptions

Non-Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommended Use
Bilingual dictionary	A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary is a language support. A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary can be provided for the VTSA.	For students whose primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom, use of a bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary may be appropriate. Students participate in the assessment regardless of the language. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Non-Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommended Use
Color contrast	Test content of online items may be printed with different colors.	Students with attention difficulties may need this support for viewing the test when digitally provided color contrasts do not meet their needs. Some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities) also may need this support. Choice of colors should be informed by evidence of those colors that meet the student’s needs.
Color overlays	Color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment.	Students with attention difficulties may need this support to view test content. This support also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). Choice of color should be informed by evidence of those colors that meet the student’s needs.
Magnification	The size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, tables, graphics, navigation buttons, and mouse pointer) may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device or software. Magnification allows increasing the size and changing of the color contrast, including the size and color of the mouse pointer, to a level not provided for by the zoom universal tool, color contrast designated support, and/or mouse pointer designated support.	Students used to viewing enlarged text or graphics, or navigation buttons with or without changes to color contrast, may need magnification to comfortably view content. This support also may meet the needs of students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The use of this designated support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Medical device	Students may have access to an electronic device for medical purposes (e.g., Glucose Monitor). The device may include a cell phone, and should only support the student during testing for medical reasons.	Educators should follow local policies regarding medical devices and ensure students’ health is the highest priority. Device settings must restrict access to other applications or the test administrator must closely monitor the use of the device to maintain test security. Use of electronic devices may require a separate setting to avoid distractions to other test takers and to ensure test security.

Non-Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommended Use
Noise buffers	Ear muffers, white noise, and/or other equipment used to block external sounds.	Student (not groups of students) wears equipment to reduce environmental noises. Students may have these testing variations if regularly used in the classroom. Students who use noise buffers will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.
Read aloud	Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines in Appendix A . All or portions of the content may be read aloud.	Students who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities, or by students who are blind and do not yet have adequate braille skills. If not used regularly in instruction, this support is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments. Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis – not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment and/or the use of a separate setting.
Read aloud in Spanish	Spanish text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines in Appendix A . All or portions of the content may be read aloud.	Students receiving the translations designated support and who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities. If not used regularly during instruction, this support is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment and/or the use of a separate setting.

Non-Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommended Use
Scribe	Students dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate. The scribe must be trained and qualified, and must follow the administration guidelines provided in Appendix B .	Students who have documented significant motor or processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that make it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then records the students' responses verbatim. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Separate setting	Test location is altered so that the student is tested in a setting different from that made available for most students.	Students who are easily distracted (or may distract others) in the presence of other students, for example, may need an alternate location to be able to take the assessment. The separate setting may be in a different room that allows them to work individually or among a smaller group. The student may read aloud to self, use a device requiring voicing (e.g., a Whisper Phone), or use Amplification. It may also include a calming device or support as recommended by educators and/or specialists. Or, the separate setting may be in the same room but in a specific location (for example, away from windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners, in a study carrel, near the teacher's desk, or in the front of a classroom). Some students may benefit from being in an environment that allows for the movement, such as being able to walk around in some instances, students may need to interact with instructional or test content outside of school, such as in a hospital or their home. A specific adult, trained in a manner consistent with the TAM can act as test proctor (test administrator) when student requires it.
Simplified test directions	The test administrator simplified or paraphrases the test directions found in the TAM according to the Simplified Test Directions guidelines in Appendix C .	Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this rescue. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.

Section III. Accommodations

What Are Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the VTSA. The accommodations described in this section are not modifications. Accommodations all yield valid scores that count as participation in assessments that meet the requirements of ESSA. They allow students to show what they know and can do. Digitally-embedded and non-embedded accommodations are available for students for whom there is documentation of the need for the accommodations on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan. Accommodations provided to a student during VTSA must be accommodations provided during classroom instruction and other assessments given throughout the school year. One exception to the IEP or 504 requirement is for students who have had a physical injury (e.g., broken hand or arm) that impairs their ability to use a computer. These students may use the speech-to-text or the scribe accommodations (if they have had sufficient experience with the use of these), as noted in this section.

Determination of which accommodations an individual student will have available for the assessment is necessary because these accommodations must be made available before the assessment, by entering information in TIDE for embedded accommodations, or by ensuring that the materials or setting are available for the assessment for non-embedded accommodations.

Accommodations for test administration are provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations rather than reflect their impairments. Although test accommodations provide students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, they do not guarantee equal outcomes. Again, an appropriate or reasonable accommodation should not interfere with the use of interpretation of a student's scores. Accommodations for the VTSA must be entered in TIDE prior to testing.

Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations?

IEP teams and educators make decisions about accommodations. These teams (or educators for 504 plans) provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan.

The IEP team (or educator developing the 504 plan) is responsible for ensuring that information from the IEP is entered into TIDE, so that all embedded accommodations can be activated prior to testing. This can be accomplished by identifying one person from the team to enter information into TIDE, a form that lists all accommodations and designated supports needed by individual students on IEPs or 504 plans.

Embedded Accommodations

[Table 4](#) lists the embedded accommodations available for the VTSA for those students for whom the accommodations are included on an IEP or 504 plan. The table includes a description of each accommodation along with recommendations for when the accommodations might be needed and how it can be used.

Table 4. Embedded Accommodation

Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Braille	A raised-dot code that individuals read with fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) is presented in a raised format. Contracted UEB and non-contracted UEB braille is available; Nemeth code is available for math.	Students with visual impairments may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. Due to limitations with refreshable braille technology, refreshable braille is not available for VTSA. For VTSA, braille will be presented via embosser. Alternative text descriptions are embedded in the assessment for all graphics. The type of braille presented to the student (contracted or non-contracted) is set in TIDE.

Non-Embedded Accommodations

[Table 5](#) lists the non-embedded accommodations available for the VTSA for those students for whom the accommodations are documented on an IEP or 504 plan. The table includes a description of each accommodation, along with recommendations for when the accommodation might be needed and how it can be used.

Table 5. Non-Embedded Accommodations

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Alternate response options	Alternate response options include but are not limited to adapted keyboards, large keyboards, Sticky Keys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches.	Students with some physical disabilities (including both fine motor and gross motor skills) may need to use the alternate response options accommodation. Some alternate response options are external devices that must be plugged in and be compatible with TDS.

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Braille (paper/pencil assessment)	A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform).	Students with visual impairments may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. The type of braille presented to the student (contracted or non-contracted) is set in TIDE. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Calculator	A non-embedded calculator for students needing a special calculator, such as a braille calculator or a talking calculator, currently unavailable within TDS.	Students with visual impairments who are unable to use the embedded calculator for items requiring a calculator will be able to use the calculator that they typically use, such as a braille calculator or a talking calculator.
Print on demand	Paper copies of stimuli and/or items are printed for students. For those students needing a paper copy of a stimulus or item, permission for the students to request printing must first be set in TIDE.	Some students with disabilities may need paper copies of either stimuli and/or items. A very small percentage of students should need this accommodation. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Speech-to-text	Voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer, to dictate responses or give commands (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, and saving work). Voice recognition software generally can recognize speech up to 160 words per minute. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.	Students who have motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia) or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that make it difficult to produce text or commands using computer keys may need alternative ways to work with computers. Students will need to be familiar with the software and have had many opportunities to use it prior to testing. Speech-to-Text software requires that the student go back through all generated text to correct errors in transcription; thus, prior experience with this accommodation is essential. If students use their own assistive technology devices, all assessment content should be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Word prediction	<p>Word prediction allows students to begin writing a word and choose from a list of words that have been predicted from word frequency and syntax rules. Word prediction is delivered via a non-embedded software program. The program must use only single word prediction. Functionality such as phrase prediction, predict ahead, or next word must be deactivated. The program must have settings that allow only a basic dictionary. Expanded dictionaries, such as topic dictionaries and word banks, must be deactivated. Phonetic spelling functionality may be used, as well as speech output build into the program which reads back the information the student has written. If further supports are needed for speech output, see text-to-speech or read aloud policies. Students who use word prediction in conjunction with speech output will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.</p>	<p>Students who have documented motor or orthopedic impairments, which severely impairs their ability to provide written or typed responses without the use of assistive technology, may use word prediction. Students who moderate to severe learning disabilities that prevent them from recalling, processing, or expressing written language may also use word prediction. Students will need to be familiar with the software, and have had many opportunities to use it in daily instruction. Use of word prediction does require that students know writing conventions and that they have the review and editing skills required of all students. It is important that students who use word prediction also be able to develop planning notes and review their writing with or without text-to-speech. If students use their own assistive technology devices, all assessment content should be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.</p>

Appendix A. Read Aloud Guidelines

Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader

When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the VTSA, 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. 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 trained and qualified and must follow these guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content.

On VTSA, test readers are allowable across all grades as a designated support.

Qualifications for Test Readers

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

Presentation

- Test readers should 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 strong working knowledge of the accessibility features, embedded and non-embedded designated supports, and embedded and non-embedded accommodations available on the VTSA.
- Test readers should have extensive practice in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before working directly with a student.
- The reader should be knowledgeable of procedures for reading aloud text by content area.
- The test reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support. A suggested test reader script is included at the end of the Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader.
- Unless otherwise specified by a student's IEP or 504 plan, the test reader does not have a role in manipulating the test or assisting with any other support tools. Test readers should be ready with appropriate script that reinforces the parameters during the test session.

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 RIDE 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.

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, in a clockwise direction, 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 about it 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 must 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.
- Additional examples may be found in the table below.
- 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.”

Table 6. Test Reader Guidance for Mathematics

Numbers		
Description	Example(s)	Read as:
Large whole numbers	632,407,981	“six three two comma four zero seven comma nine eight one”
	45,000,689,112	“four five comma zero zero zero comma six eight nine comma one one two”
Decimal numbers	0.056	“zero point zero five six”
	4.37	“four point three seven”
Fractions - common		“one half, one fourth, two thirds, four fifths” Other common fractions include “sixths, eighths,

Fractions - not common • read as “numerator over denominator”	$\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4} \frac{2}{3} \frac{4}{5}$ $\frac{14}{25}$ $\frac{487}{6972}$	tenths” “fourteen over twenty-five” “four eight seven over six nine seven two”
Mixed numbers - read with “and” between whole number and fraction	$3 \frac{1}{2}$ $57 \frac{3}{4}$	“three and one-half” “fifty-seven and three fourths”
Percents	62% 7.5% 0.23%	“sixty-two percent” “seven point five percent” “zero point two three percent”
Money - if contains a decimal point, read as “dollars AND cents”	\$4.98 \$0.33 \$5368.00	“four dollars and ninety-eight cents” “thirty-three cents” “five three six eight dollars”
Negative numbers • do NOT read negative sign as “minus”	- 3 $-\frac{5}{8}$ -7.56	“negative three” “negative five eighths” “negative seven point five six”
Dates (years)	1987 2005	“nineteen eighty-seven” “two thousand five”
Roman Numerals	I II III IV	“Roman Numeral one” “Roman Numeral two” “Roman Numeral three” “Roman Numeral four”
Ratios	$x: y$	“x to y”
Operations		
Description	Example(s)	Read as:
Addition	$\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ + 27 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $13 + 27 =$ $13 + 27 = ?$	“thirteen plus twenty-seven equals” “thirteen plus twenty-seven equals question mark”
Subtraction	$\begin{array}{r} 487 \\ - 159 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $487 - 159 =$	“four eight seven minus one five nine equals”

	$487 - 159 = ?$	“four eight seven minus one five nine equals question mark”
Multiplication	$\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ \times 49 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $63 \times 49 =$	“sixty-three times forty-nine equals”
	$63 \times 49 = ?$	“sixty-three times forty-nine equals question mark”
Division – Vertical or Horizontal	$\begin{array}{r} 120 \\ 15 \overline{)8} \\ \hline \end{array}$ $120 \div 15 = 8$	“one two zero divided by fifteen equals eight”
Operations with boxes	$3 + \square = 8$	“three plus box equals eight”
Expressions		
Description	Example(s)	Read as:
Expressions containing variables (any letter may be used as a variable)	$N + 4$	“‘N’ plus four”
	$8x - 3$	“eight ‘x’ minus three”
	$4(y - 2) + 5 = 7$	“four open parenthesis ‘y’ minus two close parenthesis plus five equals seven”
	$V = \frac{4}{3} r^3$	“‘V’ equals four-thirds pi ‘r’ cubed”
	$\frac{ t - 2}{6} \leq 15$	“the absolute value of ‘t’ (pause) minus two (pause) over six is less than or equal to fifteen”
	$x^2 y^3 = -36$	“‘x’ squared ‘y’ cubed equals negative thirty-six” or “‘x’ to the second power times ‘y’ to the third power equals negative thirty-six”
	$156x \geq 4$	“one five six ‘x’ is greater than or equal to four”
Coordinate pairs	the point (-1, 2)	“the point (pause) negative one comma two”
Answer choices with no other text	the point A is at (6, 3)	“the point ‘A’ is at (pause) six comma three”
	A. (-3, -4)	“‘A’ (pause) negative three comma negative four”
Parallels	$\overline{AB} \parallel \overline{CD}$	“line segment AB is parallel to line segment CD”
Perpendiculars	$\overline{AB} \perp \overline{CD}$	“line segment AB is perpendicular to line segment CD”

Suggested Test Reader Script (To Be Used with Student in Advance of the Day of Testing)

Hi _____,

I'm the person who will be reading your test to you when you take the VTSA next week. 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 on the screen.¹
- I will not be using different character voices or changes in my tone when I read. I will be using a very direct voice that does not change very much, no matter how exciting the story or test item gets.
- If there is a picture that has words in it, I will read those words. If you ask, I will re-read the words as well.
- Sometimes there may be something about a word or phrase that might give you a hint if I read it out loud. In those cases, I will skip the word, point to it on screen [or on your booklet if braille or print on demand], and continue to read.
- I can still help you with your [**list any assistive technology that the student may require that would need adult support -- if that support is provided by you].
- You can ask me to re-read parts of the test if you didn't hear me or need more time to think.
- 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 and tell you 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'll work together during the test?

¹ A reader may click on something on the screen only if this is an identified need in the student's IEP or 504 plan and the reader has received appropriate training on when and how to do so.

Appendix B. Scribing Guidelines

A scribe is an adult who writes down what a student dictates in a variety of ways (e.g., speech, American Sign Language (ASL), braille, assistive communication device, etc). The guiding principle in scribing is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to test content.

Scribes are allowable on VTSA as a documented accommodation.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCRIBES

- The scribe should be an adult who is familiar with the student, such as the teacher or teaching assistant who is typically responsible for scribing during educational instruction and assessments.
- Scribes must have demonstrated knowledge and experience in the subject for which scribing will be provided.
- Scribes should have extensive practice and training in accordance with VTSA security policies and procedures.

PREPARATION

- Scribes should read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.
- Scribes are expected to familiarize themselves with the test format in advance of the scribing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment will help facilitate the scribe's ability to record the student's answers. Scribes may wish to review the practice test to become familiar with the assessment.
- Scribes should be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan if the student for whom they are scribing has a disability, so that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations.
- Scribes should also have a strong working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available on VTSA.
- Scribes should review the *Scribing Protocol* with the student at least one to two days prior to the test event.
- Scribes should practice the scribing process with the student at least once prior to the scribing session.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Scribing must be administered so that the interaction between a scribe and a student does not interrupt other test-takers, 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 test interface, making use of the embedded and non-embedded tools available for a given item and student.
- Scribes are expected to comply with student requests regarding use of all available features within the test environment.
- Scribes may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., test directions, navigation within the test environment, etc.).
- Scribes may not respond to student questions about test items if their responses compromise validity of the test. 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.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS ALSO USING ASL OR OTHER SIGN SYSTEM

- The scribe should be proficient in the sign system utilized (e.g., ASL) or the scribe should be working with an interpreter proficient in the sign system, as determined by the member.
- When a constructed response is required, the interpreter/scribe should convey the meaning behind the student's indicated response.
- The interpreter/scribe should show the student the written response, but NOT sign the response to the student.
- Probing or clarifying is allowed in the case of classifiers for students using ASL or other sign systems.
- Students may review the written or typed response on paper or on the computer screen and indicate any changes or revisions to the scribe.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS USING BRAILLE

- The scribe should be proficient in reading (visually or tactually) braille in UEB and Nemeth.
- The scribe should enter the responses on paper or online exactly as the student has brailled. In addition to following the content specific guidelines above,

errors in braille code should not be corrected.

- The scribe may ask for the student to read back brailled responses for clarification if the brailled response is difficult to read due to student corrections.
- Students may review the written or typed response on paper or on the computer screen by either using the scribe to read back the entered response or using assistive technology. Students may indicate any changes or revisions to the scribe.

POST-ADMINISTRATION

- The scribe will submit online or paper-based student responses and collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the test session and deliver it to the Test Administrator.

Appendix C. Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions

Simplified test directions is a designated support allowable across all grades on the VTSA. Designated Supports can be provided to any student so long as an informed educator or group of educators determines it is appropriate. Students with difficulties in auditory processing, short-term memory, attention, or decoding may benefit from having test directions simplified for them. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.

A test administrator who provides the simplified test directions designated support is an adult who simplifies the script within the SAY boxes in the VTSA TAM. Test administrators should not deviate from the test directions found in the VTSA TAM in ways that impact the content being measured. The student depends on the test administrator to read the script in the VTSA TAM accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice.

Appendix D. Help Desk Information

Please contact your state's help desk for questions regarding:

- AIR online systems including: the portal, the secure browser, TA Certification Course, the Practice Test, TIDE, the TA Interface, the Student Interface
- VTSA technology requirements
- Documentation available on your state portal
- Ordering paper tests

**Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program
Help Desk**

Toll-Free Phone Support: 1-844-218-1184

Email Support: vthelpdesk@air.org

Please provide the help desk with a detailed description of your problem, as well as the following:

- If the issue pertains to a student, provide the SSID and associated district or school for that student. Do not provide the student's name.
- If the issue pertains to a TIDE user, provide the user's full name and email address.
- Any error messages that appeared.
- Operating system and browser information, including version numbers (e.g., Windows 10 and Firefox 52 or Mac OS 10.9 and Safari 7).

Appendix E. Change Log

Change	Section	Date