STAAR Redesign

February 2022

Accelerating learning continues to be as important as ever and educators are doing incredible and difficult work

- Students have unprecedented needs
- The daily work of operations is consuming an outsized share of time and energy
- Efforts to improve alignment will help improve our ability to accelerate learning

Changes are coming to help improve alignment

- Classroom practices that over-use multiple choice questions, rely on only short reading passages, and limit student writing can get small, short-term gains on STAAR, but evidence has shown they don't lead to high performance or long-term student mastery
- Strong instructional practices lead to increased student understanding and stronger performance on STAAR
- **It is possible for the state summative assessment to be designed so that it better aligns with strong instructional practices, while still accurately measuring student mastery**

STAAR has been proven valid, reliable, aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), with passage readability on grade-level

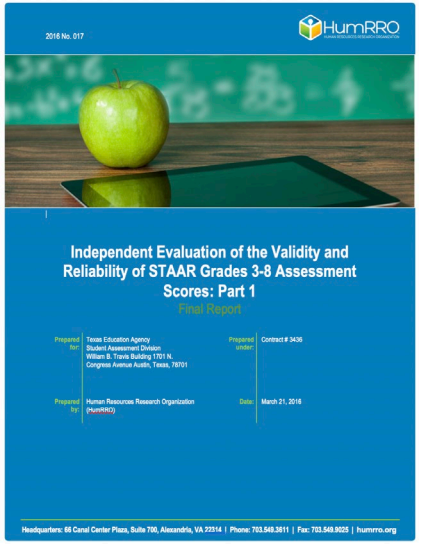
House Bill 743, Rep. Huberty/Sen. Seliger

84th Texas Legislature

"The assessment instrument must, on the basis of empirical evidence, be determined to be **valid and reliable** by an entity that is independent of the agency and of any other entity that developed the assessment instrument."

Analysis Completed in 2016

Findings: STAAR was found to be valid. The evaluation confirmed the **"test bears a strong association with on-grade curriculum requirements."**



House Bill 3, Rep. Huberty/Sen. Taylor

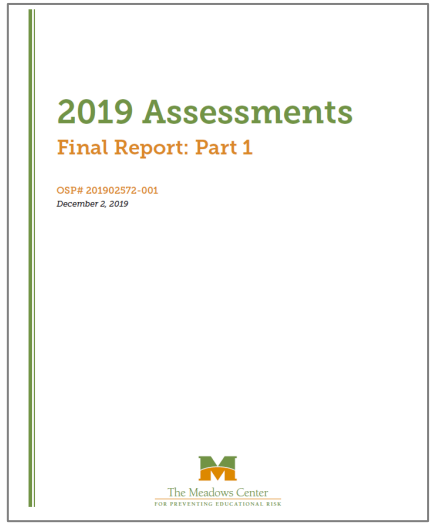
86th Texas Legislature

Required an institution of higher education to conduct a study on the state assessment instruments to independently evaluate the readability and alignment.

Analysis Completed in 2019

Findings: Across grade levels and subjects, all tests included in the study **were aligned with the TEKS** for the grade level tested.

- **91% of passages met the criterion for readability** as defined in the study in terms of text complexity



State and Federal laws require a redesign of Texas's state summative assessment (STAAR), effective 2022-23

HB 3906 in 2019 created **transformative changes to improve the STAAR program.**

- 75% multiple choice cap
- Transition to 100% online testing
- Through-year assessment pilot
- Interim and formative assessments

Additionally, the federal government requires Texas to assess the breadth of the TEKS, which for RLA includes **writing**.

These policies are intended to ensure **assessments engage students in the same ways they are learning in the classroom and reward good instruction** while continuing to accurately measure student mastery.

STAAR is a state "summative" assessment

Assessments provide educators and parents with helpful information to support strong teaching and guide students to their full potential.

State summative assessments serve several primary purposes:

- To determine mastery of a breadth of knowledge & skills for students
- To determine the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction programs after delivery (at the end of a unit or course)
- To help determine which individual students should receive additional holistic supports
- To serve as a bar for rigor and standards alignment in planning

Different types of assessment serve different purposes

School Year or Instructional Cycle

Type	What	When	Why	
Diagnostic Assessments	Measure student knowledge and skills on any variety of student expectations	Prior to a new instructional cycle or year	To inform instructional plans and curriculum to meet the needs of individual students	**Beginning Of Year (BOY)**
Formative Assessments	Ongoing process of measuring student performance on specific student expectations	Throughout the year	To inform instructional choices, student supports, and updates to planning within existing curricular structures	**Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR)**
Interim Assessments	Measure student understanding of a broader span of student expectations	At check-points during the year	To monitor progress, predict summative performance, and identify students for intervention	**STAAR Interim Assessments**
Summative Assessments	Measure student mastery of a broader span of student expectations	At the end of a unit or course	To determine the effectiveness of the program, report summative mastery, and inform future planning	**STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, TELPAS, TELPAS Alternate**

Feedback from educators informed the main components of the STAAR redesign

	In effective classrooms, teachers are…	*...and avoid less effective practices by…*
1	Coherently building students' **background knowledge and vocabulary** in all subject areas...	…not just having students **read passages on random topics**
2	Asking students to **write about what they read using evidence from text**…	…not just **reading without writing**
3	Providing **various open-ended formats** for students to respond to questions…	…not just having students **select among multiple choices**
4	Supporting the learning needs of all students by providing **appropriate accommodations**…	…not requiring all students to perform without **appropriate supports**

The STAAR redesign is based on improving alignment to the classroom experience

	In effective classrooms, teachers are…	*The STAAR redesign will…*
1	Coherently building students' **background knowledge and vocabulary** in all subject areas...	Prioritize **cross-curricular passages** in RLA that reference topics that students have learned about in other classes
2	Asking students to **write about what they read using evidence from text**…	Include **writing in all RLA tests**, reflecting our updated TEKS, and having **students write text-based responses**
3	Providing **various open-ended formats** for students to respond to questions…	Add new**, non-multiple-choice questions** that are more like questions teachers ask in class
4	Supporting the learning needs of all students by providing **appropriate accommodations**…	Move to **online assessments** that provide a full suite of robust accommodations for students with specific learning needs
5	Moving to **online assessments** supports all the changes above and provides faster test results to support accelerated learning.	

The first component of the STAAR redesign is based on the importance of building background knowledge in the classroom

1

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

1 Coherently building students' **background knowledge and vocabulary** in all subject areas...

Knowledge is essential for success as learners and critical thinkers

- 1988, two young researchers and 64 students in Wisconsin changed how we think about reading comprehension.
- The researchers created a replica of a baseball field furnished with wooden figures.
- The students were handed the same story covering half an inning of made-up baseball and asked to reenact it.

Here's the passage they read

1

"Churniak swings and hits a slow bouncing ball toward the shortstop. Haley comes in, fields it, and throws to first, but too late. Churniak is on first with a single, Johnson stayed on third. The next batter is Whitcomb, the Cougar's left-fielder. The ball is returned to Claresen. He gets the sign and winds up and throws a slider that Whitcomb hits between Manfred and Roberts for a hit. Dulaney comes in and picks up the ball. Johnson has scored, and Churniak is heading for third. Here comes the throw and Churniak is out. Churniak argues but to no avail."

Who do you think did the best at correctly reconstructing the story?

1

A. Strong readers
B. Kids with good knowledge of baseball
C. It made no difference

Let's look at another example

1

"Much depended on . . . the two overnight batsmen. But this duo perished either side of lunch-the latter a little unfortunate to be adjudged leg-before--and with Andrew Symonds, too, being shown the dreaded finger off an inside edge, the inevitable beckoned, bar the pyrotechnics of Michael Clarke and the ninth wicket. Clarke clinically cut and drove to 10 fours in a 134-ball 81, before he stepped out to Kumble to present an easy stumping to Mahendra Singh Dhoni."

What happened in this passage?

How Do Children Learn To Read?

Simple View of Reading

Decoding

Ability to apply sound-symbol relationships to read words

X

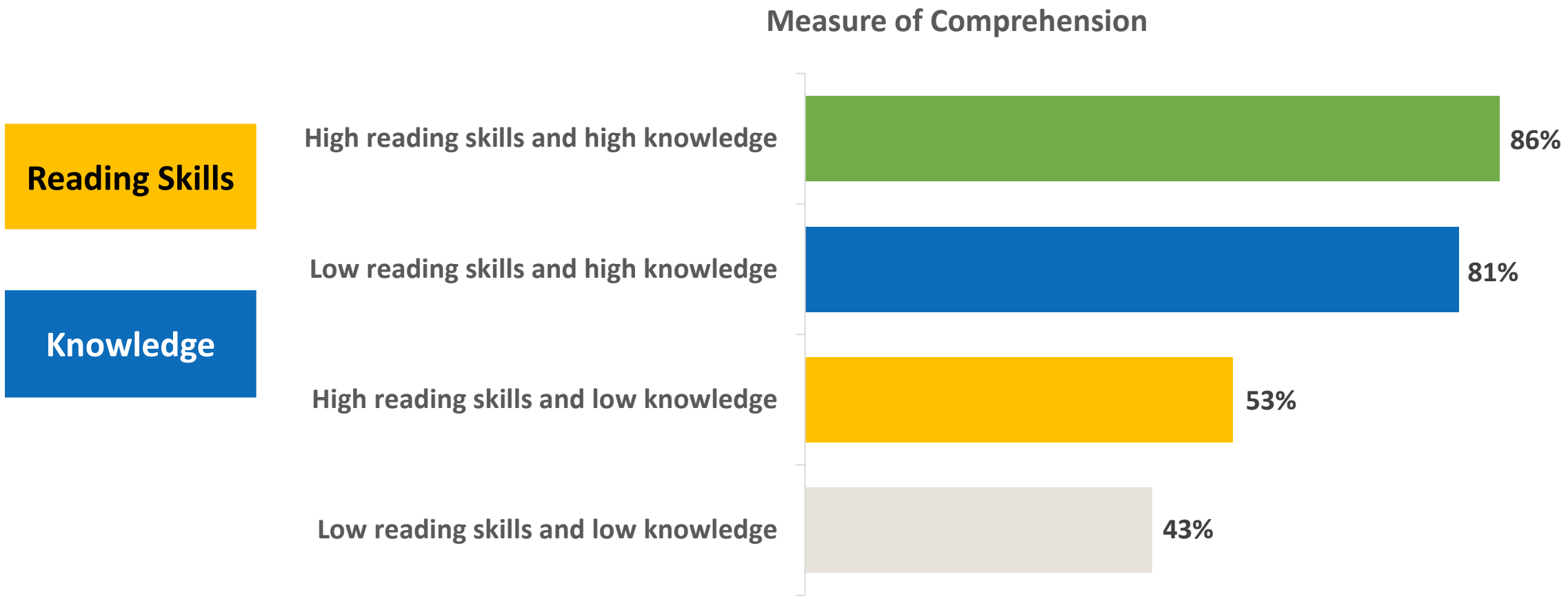
Language Comprehension

Ability to understand spoken language

=

Reading Comprehension

Background knowledge is critical



Recht, D. R. and Leslie, L. "Effect of Prior Knowledge on Good and Poor Readers' Memory of Text." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(1), (1988): p.16.

In effective classrooms, teachers are building students' background knowledge and vocabulary across subjects (I)

1

4th Grade - Student A

4th Grade - Student B

In effective classrooms, teachers are building students' background knowledge and vocabulary across subjects (II)

1

4th Grade - Student A

ELA
Stories of the nautical adventures of a sailor that is also a giant

Science
Lesson about the sun as a source of energy

Social studies
Lesson about the battle of the Alamo

Student A learns different things in Science, Social Studies, and ELA that don't connect to each other

4th Grade - Student B

In effective classrooms, teachers are building students' background knowledge and vocabulary across subjects (III)

4th Grade - Student A

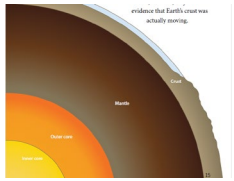
ELA
Stories of the nautical adventures of a sailor that is also a giant

Science
Lesson about the sun as a source of energy

Social studies
Lesson about the battle of the Alamo

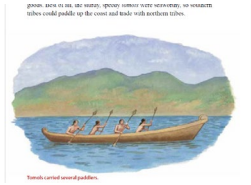
Student A learns different things in Science, Social Studies, and ELA that don't connect to each other

4th Grade - Student B



ELA
Writing lesson to explain the characteristics of earth's layers as part of geology unit

Science
Weathering lesson describing changes in the earth's surface



Social studies
Discussion of terrain and adaptations made by American Indians to navigate the land

Student B is building background knowledge through connections across subjects

The redesign better aligns STAAR with educator efforts to build students' background knowledge

1

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

The STAAR redesign will…

1 Coherently building students' **background knowledge and vocabulary** in all subject areas...

Prioritize **cross-curricular passages** in RLA that reference topics that students have learned about in other classes

Passages already must meet several requirements and get approved by Texas teachers before appearing on STAAR RLA tests

1

Excerpt from Sample Grade 5 RLA Passage, ***The Cholla Cactus***

Searching for Water

3 Regardless of the cholla's size, desert animals have learned to rely on it for survival. Chollas have many stems that are similar to tree branches. Precipitation is scarce in the desert, but cholla stems store rainwater that is absorbed through the plant's root system. Some desert animals depend on the water stored in cholla stems.

4 The desert bighorn sheep, for example, has learned to get water from the cholla cactus. Like many other desert animals, the bighorn rests when the temperatures rise and then goes in search of a cholla when the temperatures cool. The animal uses its large curled horns and its hooves to tear off pieces of a cholla and remove the spines. The bighorn gets water by eating the moist insides of the cholla.

A Desert Bighorn Sheep

Passages are developed, and then reviewed and approved by Texas educators to ensure they:

- represent polished, high-quality writing and are considered exemplary samples of eligible genres
- include reliable and accurate information
- are unbiased against or toward any group
- are as engaging as possible for students
- are appropriate for the intended grade level, including readability indicators
- contain enough content to assess multiple student expectations

Now, passages will also be intentionally selected to cover cross-curricular content

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A Desert Bighorn Sheep

Direct connections to grade four and grade five science TEKS

- 4.10.A: explore how structures and functions enable organisms to survive in their environment
- 5.9.A: observe the way organisms live and survive in their ecosystem by interacting with the living and nonliving components

Although the passage content is connected to science TEKS, students will continue to be assessed only on RLA TEKS

1

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A Desert Bighorn Sheep

Sample Question from Grade 5 RLA Passage, ***The Cholla Cactus***

Assesses Grade 5 Reading TEKS 5.R.7.C: Use text evidence to support an appropriate response.

Which sentences from paragraphs 4 through 6 show that the cholla cactus is difficult to harvest?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

4 The desert bighorn sheep, for example, has learned to get water from the cholla cactus. Like many other desert animals, the bighorn rests when the temperatures rise and then goes in search of a cholla when the temperatures cool. The animal uses its large curled horns and its hooves to tear off pieces of a cholla and remove the spines. The bighorn gets water by eating the moist insides of the cholla.

A Prickly Feast

5 The cholla cactus also provides tasty meals for many other desert animals. Bees enjoy the pollen of its colorful blooms. Birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals dine on the cholla's juicy fruit.

6 The cholla also provides nutritious food for people. Members of the O'odham tribe and other desert-dwelling people eat the flower buds of some types of chollas. They roll the buds on a hard surface to remove the spines and then roast them slowly on an open fire. Once the buds have been thoroughly roasted (usually for a day), they are ready to eat. Cholla buds contain protein, calcium, and fiber—all of which are important to good health.

The second component of the STAAR redesign is based on the interconnectedness of reading and writing

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

2 Asking students to **write about what they read using evidence from text**…

In the classroom, strong teachers are supporting students in becoming better readers by...

Having students write in **all grade levels** and **all subject areas**

Having students write **using evidence from texts** they are reading

Learning to read well means grounding reading, writing, and speaking in evidence from text

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. Writing about what you read strengthens comprehension.

By grounding the discussion in the text, all students are **given an equal opportunity to engage**.

Support **knowledge building** in content-rich text, and point students toward the **most important parts of the text**.

The **length and quality of student recall improves** when responding to content-based lessons grounded in text.

The **ability to cite evidence differentiates strong from weak** student performance on National Assessment Education Progress, AP Exams, and other college-readiness assessments.

McKeown, M. G., Beck, I. L., & Blake, R. G. "Rethinking Reading Comprehension Instruction: A Comparison of Instruction for Strategies and Content Approaches." Reading Research Quarterly, 44(3), (2009): 218-253.

Basing writing (and speaking) in text better reflects effective instructional practices

Prompt based on personal knowledge and experience:

"What is your favorite place that you've traveled to? What did it look like and what was your favorite part?"

Prompt based on text:

"Read these two articles about two different locations. Using evidence from the articles, write a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each location and your recommendation on which one to visit."

Which of these prompts is more aligned with the writing that you have been expected to do in your adult life?

Which of these prompts relies less on school-based instruction and more on outside-of-school experiences?

The redesign better aligns STAAR with how students are writing in the classroom

2

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

The STAAR redesign will…

2 Asking students to **write about what they read using evidence from text**…

Include **writing in all RLA tests**, reflecting our updated TEKS, and having **students write text-based responses**

Previously, students were asked to write in response to a stand-alone question

The previous 4th and 7th grade writing prompts asked students to write in response to a stand-alone prompt, without being asked to read any associated passages.

Example from 2019 Grade 4 STAAR assessment

WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Expository

READ the information in the box below.

Thomas Edison is famous for inventing many things, including the lightbulb.

THINK about inventions that you believe are useful.

WRITE about one invention that is important in your life. Tell what the invention is and explain what makes it important.

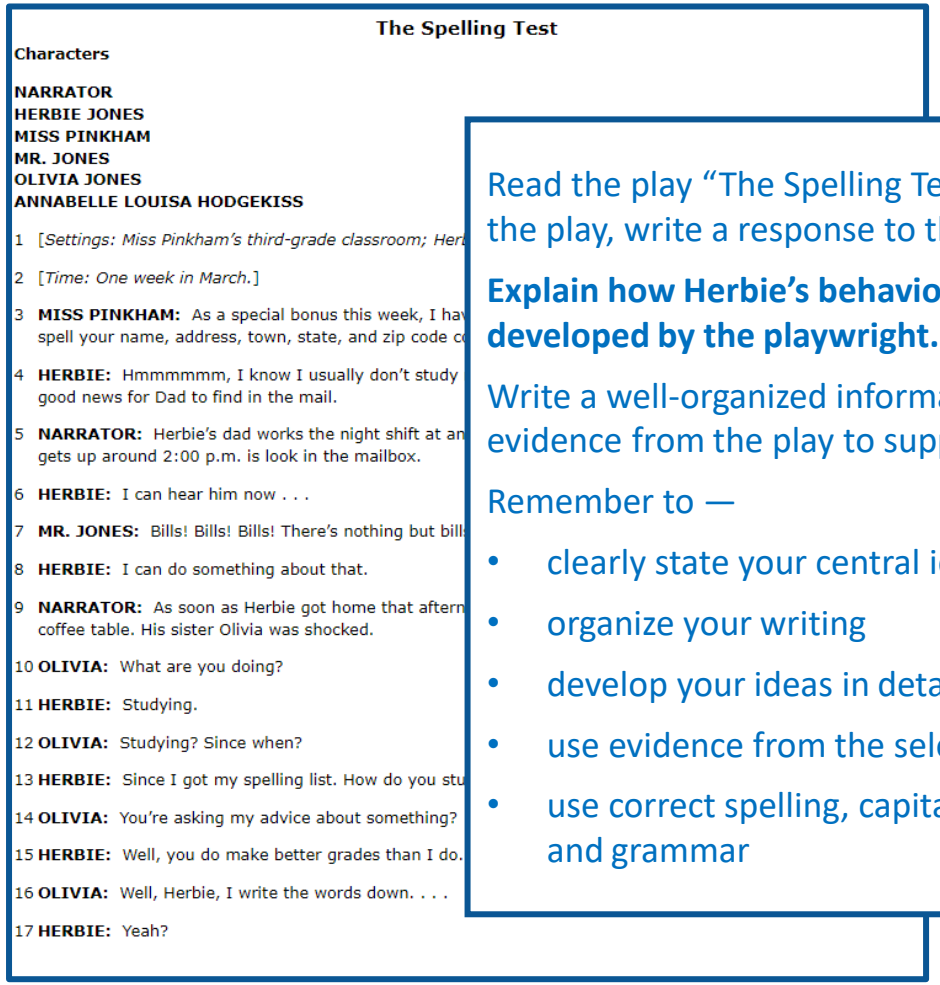
Be sure to —

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your writing in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Based on research and stakeholder feedback, redesigned STAAR will ask students to write using evidence from text

In the redesigned STAAR, writing prompts in **all grade level**s will ask students to write **using evidence from the text** to support their response.

Excerpt from Sample Grade 4 RLA Passage, ***The Spelling Test***



The Spelling Test

Characters

NARRATOR
HERBIE JONES
MISS PINKHAM
MR. JONES
OLIVIA JONES
ANNABELLE LOUISA HODGEKISS

1 [*Settings: Miss Pinkham's third-grade classroom; Her*

2 [*Time: One week in March.*]

3 **MISS PINKHAM:** As a special bonus this week, I hav spell your name, address, town, state, and zip code c

4 **HERBIE:** Hmmmmmm, I know I usually don't study good news for Dad to find in the mail.

5 **NARRATOR:** Herbie's dad works the night shift at an gets up around 2:00 p.m. is look in the mailbox.

6 **HERBIE:** I can hear him now . . .

7 **MR. JONES:** Bills! Bills! Bills! There's nothing but bill

8 **HERBIE:** I can do something about that.

9 **NARRATOR:** As soon as Herbie got home that aftern coffee table. His sister Olivia was shocked.

10 **OLIVIA:** What are you doing?

11 **HERBIE:** Studying.

12 **OLIVIA:** Studying? Since when?

13 **HERBIE:** Since I got my spelling list. How do you stu

14 **OLIVIA:** You're asking my advice about something?

15 **HERBIE:** Well, you do make better grades than I do.

16 **OLIVIA:** Well, Herbie, I write the words down. . . .

17 **HERBIE:** Yeah?

Read the play "The Spelling Test." Based on the information in the play, write a response to the following:

Explain how Herbie's behavior changes and how this is developed by the playwright.

Write a well-organized informational essay that uses specific evidence from the play to support your answer.

Remember to —

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from the selection in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

The third component of the STAAR redesign is based on the types of questions teachers are asking throughout the year

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

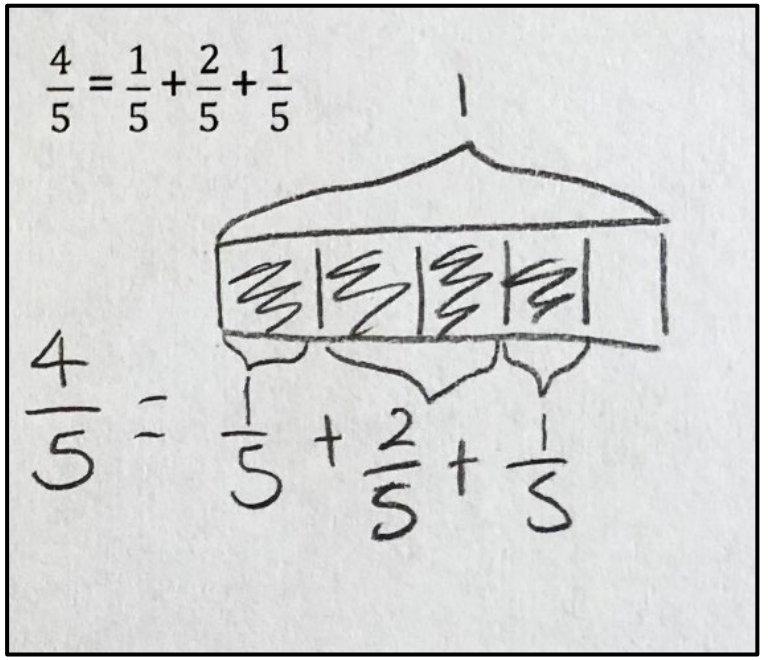
3 Providing **various open-ended formats** for students to respond to questions…

In the classroom, students are asked to engage with content in multiple ways to gain and express understanding (I)

Grade 4 Math TEKS

- 4.3A: represent a fraction a/b as a sum of fractions 1/b, where a and b are whole numbers and b > 0, including when a > b
- 4.3B: decompose a fraction in more than one way into a sum of fractions with the same denominator using concrete and pictorial models and recording results with symbolic representations.

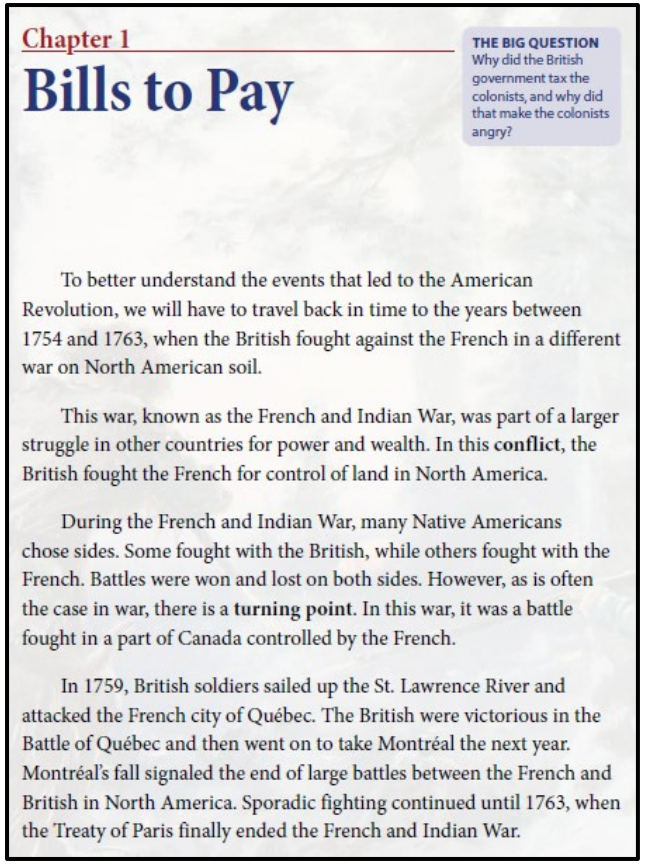
Example: "Draw and label a strip diagram to model the decomposition"



In the classroom, students are asked to engage with content in multiple ways to gain and express understanding (II)

Grade 4 RLA TEKS

- 4.6.F Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding;
- 4.8.A Infer basic themes supported by text evidence;
- 4.9.B Explain figurative language such as simile, metaphor, and personification that the poet uses to create images



Chapter 1

Bills to Pay

THE BIG QUESTION
Why did the British government tax the colonists, and why did that make the colonists angry?

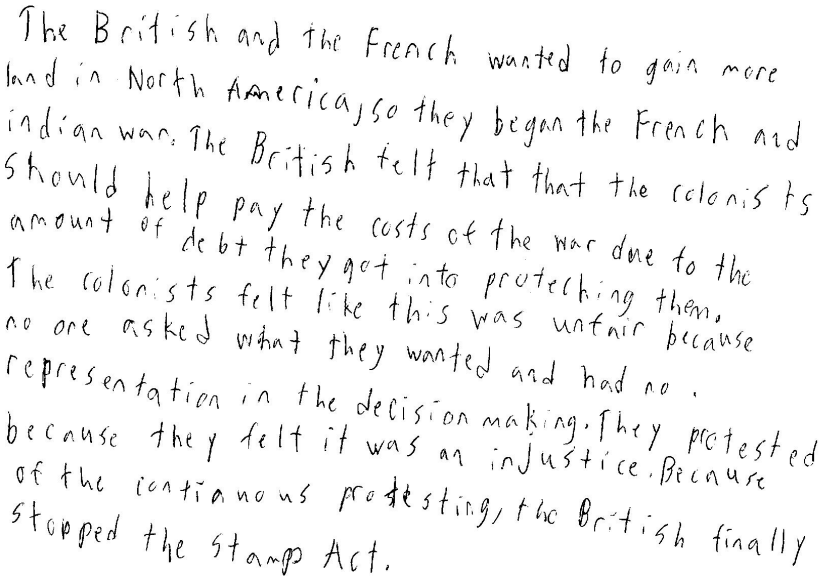
To better understand the events that led to the American Revolution, we will have to travel back in time to the years between 1754 and 1763, when the British fought against the French in a different war on North American soil.

This war, known as the French and Indian War, was part of a larger struggle in other countries for power and wealth. In this **conflict**, the British fought the French for control of land in North America.

During the French and Indian War, many Native Americans chose sides. Some fought with the British, while others fought with the French. Battles were won and lost on both sides. However, as is often the case in war, there is a **turning point**. In this war, it was a battle fought in a part of Canada controlled by the French.

In 1759, British soldiers sailed up the St. Lawrence River and attacked the French city of Québec. The British were victorious in the Battle of Québec and then went on to take Montréal the next year. Montréal's fall signaled the end of large battles between the French and British in North America. Sporadic fighting continued until 1763, when the Treaty of Paris finally ended the French and Indian War.

Example: "Write a cause and effect paragraph explaining how the French and Indian War eventually led to the Stamp Act and colonial protests"



The British and the French wanted to gain more land in North America so they began the French and indian war. The British felt that that the colonists should help pay the costs of the war due to the amount of debt they got into protecting them. The colonists felt like this was unfair because no one asked what they wanted and had no representation in the decision making. They protested because they felt it was an injustice. Because of the continuous protesting, the British finally stopped the Stamps Act.

The redesign better aligns STAAR with the types of questions teachers are asking throughout the year

3

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

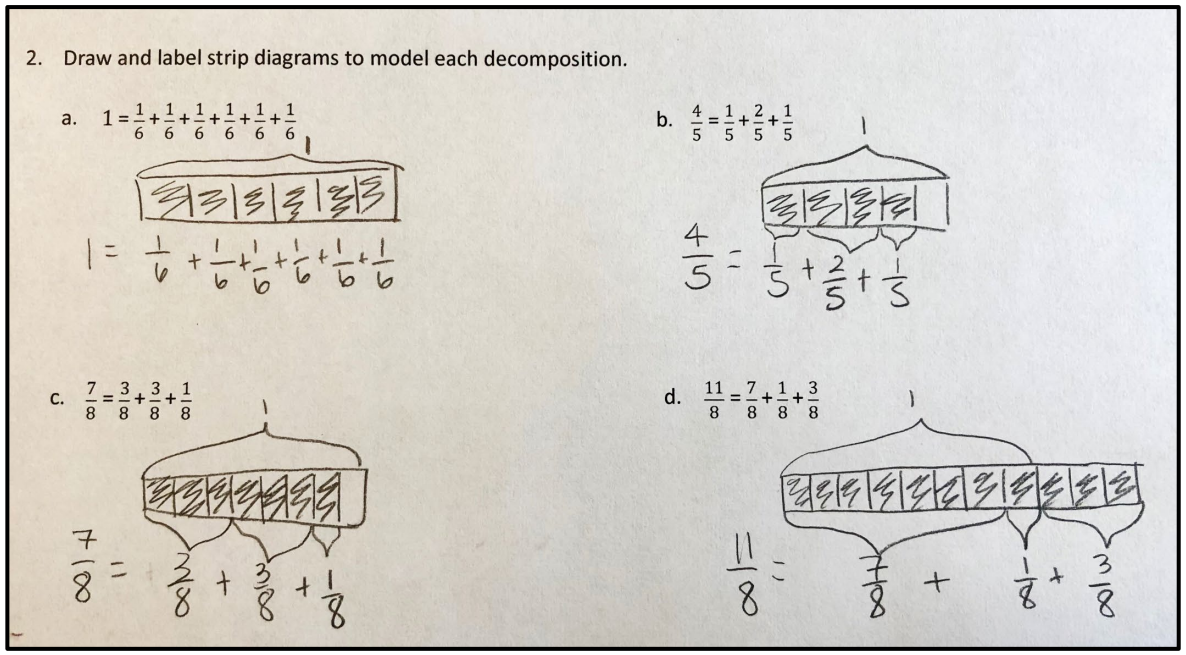
The STAAR redesign will…

3 Providing **various open-ended formats** for students to respond to questions…

Add new**, non-multiple-choice questions** that are more like questions teachers ask in class

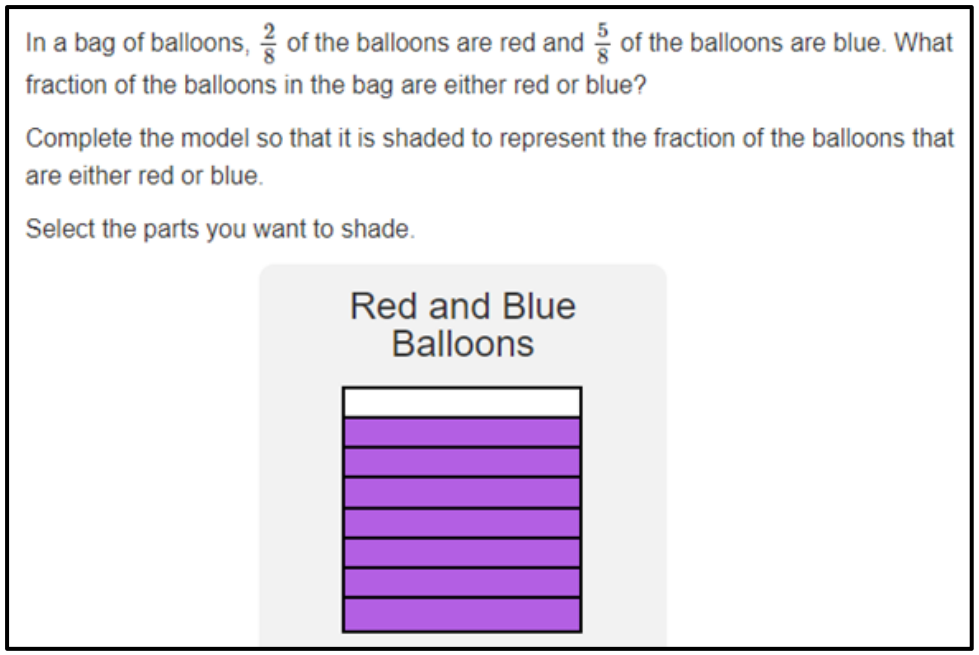
New STAAR question types are more like the kind teachers ask in class (I)

Math, Grade 4 Lesson



In this lesson, students are using shaded fraction models to show their understanding of adding fractions

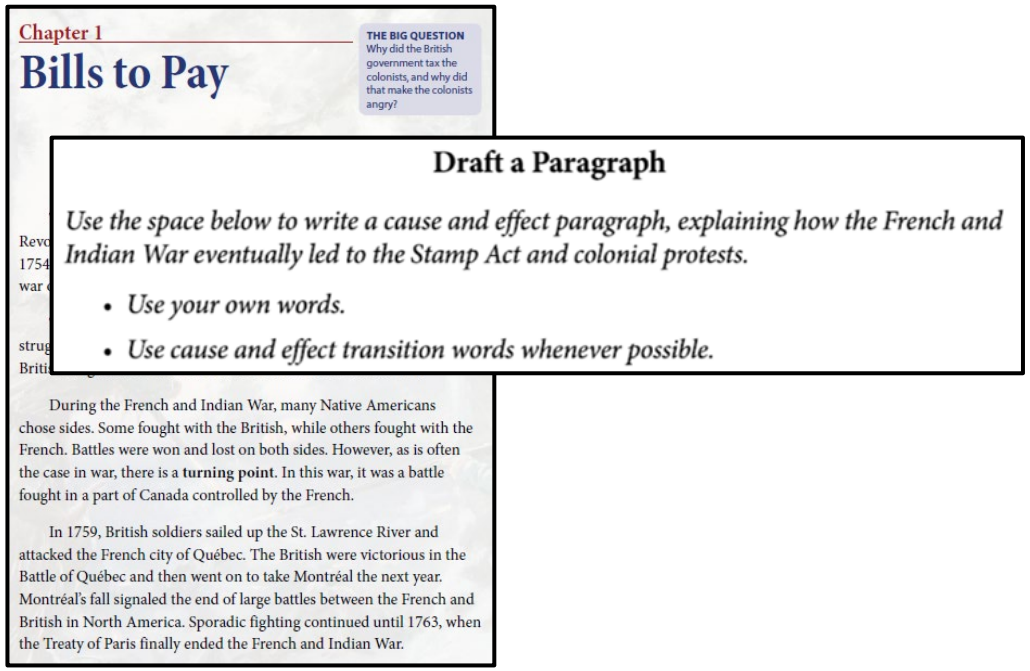
Potential new STAAR question



This potential new STAAR question asks students to shade in a fraction model to represent the addition of two fractions

New STAAR question types are more like the kind teachers ask in class (II)

RLA, Grade 4 Lesson



Chapter 1

Bills to Pay

THE BIG QUESTION
Why did the British government tax the colonists, and why did that make the colonists angry?

Draft a Paragraph

Use the space below to write a cause and effect paragraph, explaining how the French and Indian War eventually led to the Stamp Act and colonial protests.

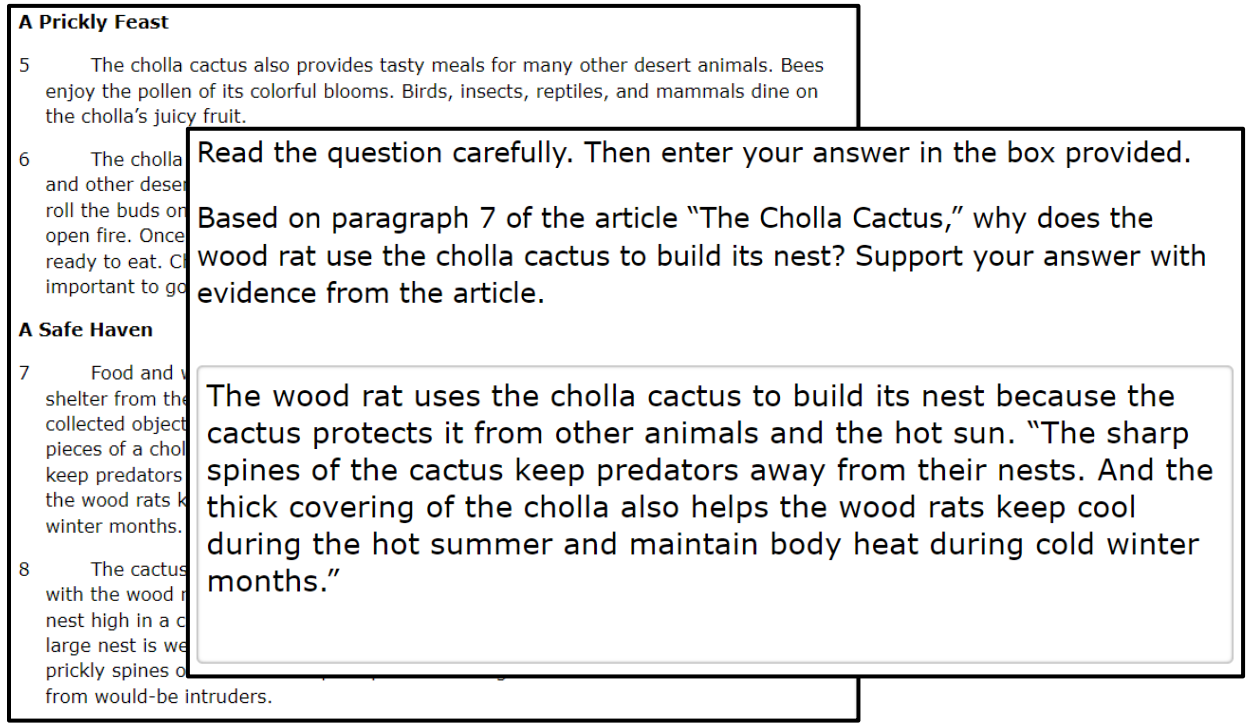
- *Use your own words.*
- *Use cause and effect transition words whenever possible.*

During the French and Indian War, many Native Americans chose sides. Some fought with the British, while others fought with the French. Battles were won and lost on both sides. However, as is often the case in war, there is a **turning point**. In this war, it was a battle fought in a part of Canada controlled by the French.

In 1759, British soldiers sailed up the St. Lawrence River and attacked the French city of Québec. The British were victorious in the Battle of Québec and then went on to take Montréal the next year. Montréal's fall signaled the end of large battles between the French and British in North America. Sporadic fighting continued until 1763, when the Treaty of Paris finally ended the French and Indian War.

In this lesson, students are asked to write an open-ended response using evidence from the text

Potential new STAAR question



A Prickly Feast

5 The cholla cactus also provides tasty meals for many other desert animals. Bees enjoy the pollen of its colorful blooms. Birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals dine on the cholla's juicy fruit.

6 The cholla
and other deser
roll the buds on
open fire. Once
ready to eat. Cl
important to go

A Safe Haven

7 Food and
shelter from the
collected object
pieces of a chol
keep predators
the wood rats k
winter months.

8 The cactus
with the wood
nest high in a c
large nest is we
prickly spines o
from would-be intruders.

Read the question carefully. Then enter your answer in the box provided.

Based on paragraph 7 of the article "The Cholla Cactus," why does the wood rat use the cholla cactus to build its nest? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

The wood rat uses the cholla cactus to build its nest because the cactus protects it from other animals and the hot sun. "The sharp spines of the cactus keep predators away from their nests. And the thick covering of the cholla also helps the wood rats keep cool during the hot summer and maintain body heat during cold winter months."

This potential new STAAR question asks students to answer an open-ended question using evidence from the text

Any new question type will need to be able to meet our existing current rigorous requirements for STAAR questions AND provide additional benefits

New questions will need to meet our existing rigorous requirements for STAAR, including:

- Valid statistics from field tests
- Alignment with TEKS
- Grade level appropriateness
- Lack of bias
- Accessibility for all students
- Review and approval from group of Texas educators who teach the grade level and agree students should be able to answer these questions at the end of the year

TEA has worked closely with students and educators to determine which new question types best support students:

- **600** educators participated in focus groups on new question types
- **200+** students participated in input gathering around new question types including feedback sessions, think-alouds, and perception sharing
- **92%** of educators agree that the new question types allow students to better demonstrate their knowledge.
- **89%** of educators believe that the new question types are more engaging for students
- **80%+** of educators agree that new question types will impact instructional planning

The fourth component of the STAAR redesign is based on the importance of ensuring all kids can access grade-level content

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

4 Supporting the learning needs of all students by providing **appropriate accommodations**…

In the classroom, strong teachers are supporting the unique learning needs of each of their students in many ways

- Visual anchors for vocabulary
- Pre-reading strategies
- Large print
- Calculation aids
- Line readers
- Reading text aloud
- Transcribing or speech-to-text
- And many more!

The redesign better aligns STAAR accommodations with the types of accommodations students receive throughout the year

4

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

The STAAR redesign will…

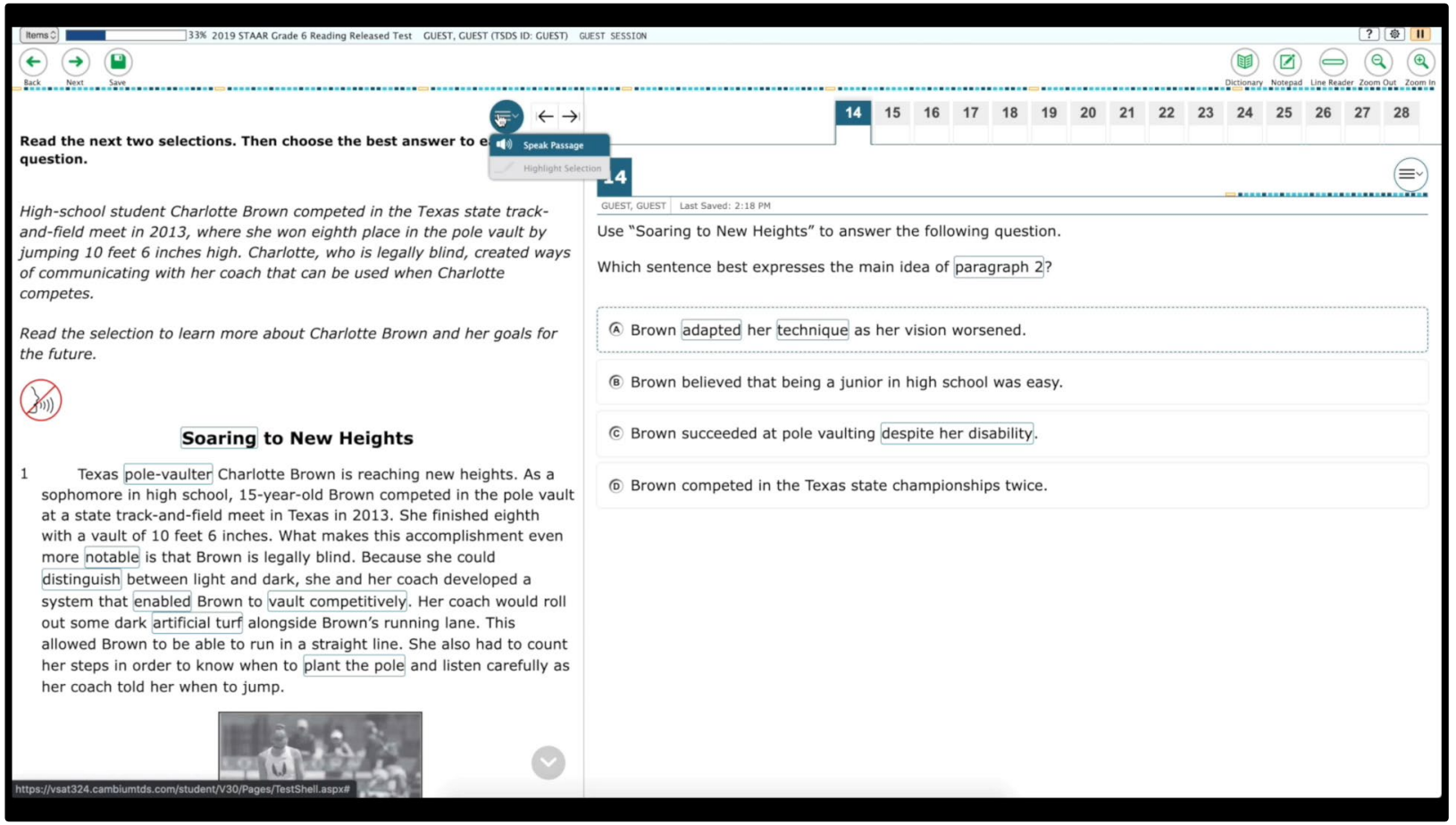
4 Supporting the learning needs of all students by providing **appropriate accommodations**…

Move to **online assessments** that provide a full suite of robust accommodations for students with specific learning needs

Content and language supports and text-to-speech provide robust supports for students who need them

Watch this short video demonstrating some of the available online STAAR accommodations here.

In addition to better supporting students, these online supports greatly simplify administration for staff.



In addition to accommodations for students who need them, online testing also offers accessibility tools for all students

Accessibility Tools

- Highlighter
- Notepad
- Help
- Guideline
- Color
- Zoom
- Mouse Pointer
- Line Reader
- Mark for Review
- Answer Eliminator

Content-Specific Accessibility Tools

- Basic, Scientific, and Graphing Calculators
- Customary and Metric Rulers
- Mathematics Reference Materials
- Science Reference Materials
- Spelling Assistance

Tools to Support Student-specific Accommodations

- Content and language supports (pop-ups, rollovers, and pre-reads)
- Text-to-speech
- Speech-to-text
- Refreshable braille
- ASL videos
- Basic calculators for certain tests

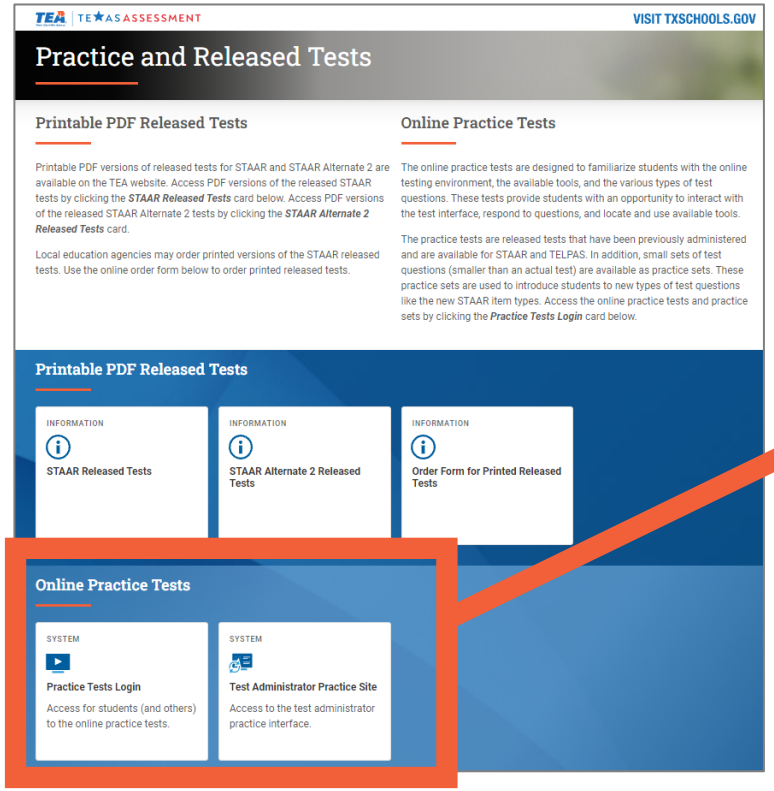
There are multiple ways for educators and students to become familiar with the online testing platform

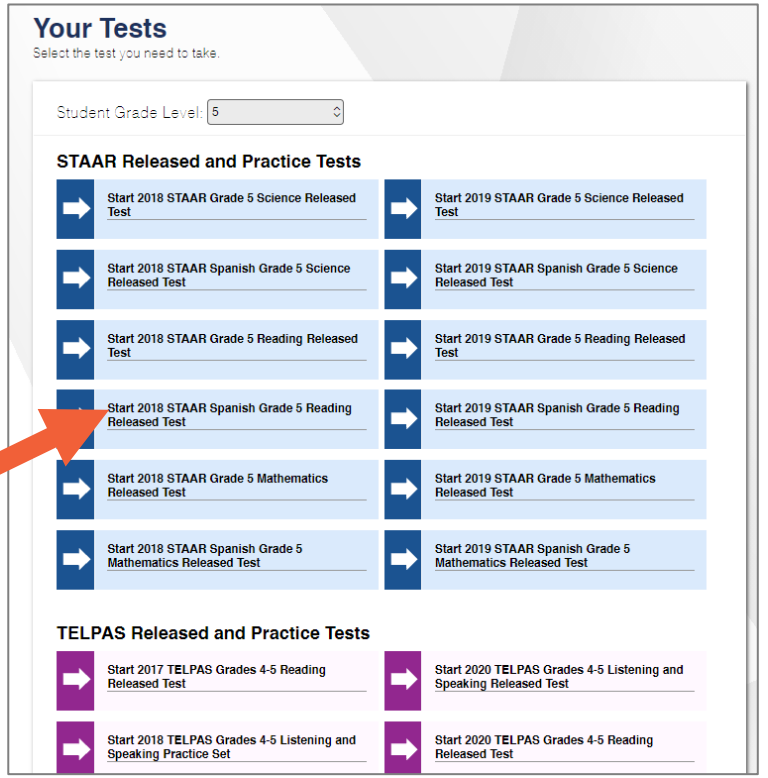
STAAR online practice tests

STAAR Interim Assessments - free, online tests that mirror the summative blueprint and predict students' performance on STAAR

Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR) - free, online tool used to create, administer, analyze, and share formative assessments.

Online practice tests, administered on the same platform as STAAR, are available at www.texasassessment.gov





Transitioning to online assessments enables the redesign of STAAR

In effective classrooms, teachers are…

The STAAR redesign will…

5 Moving to **online assessments** supports all the changes above and provides faster test results to support accelerated learning.

The transition to online testing opens the door to a number of benefits

Primary benefits of online testing include…

Broader access to accommodations

For example, struggling readers have access to pop-ups that clarify vocabulary through the use of simpler language or pictures.

Faster test scores and results

Not having to ship and scan materials means that educators and parents can get student results quicker.

Improved test operations

Reduces the number of materials needed for special administrations of STAAR and eliminates the need to match test materials for oral administrations.

Allows for new, non-multiple-choice questions

Enables more interactive and engaging questions that give students more opportunities to show what they know.

70% of other states have already transitioned to full online testing, including a number of states with highly rural populations.

Previous studies have shown no difference in performance between students who test online and students who test on paper, except for English 1 and English 2 EOCs, which is taken into account during the scoring process.

The statewide feasibility study conducted in 2020 indicated that a two-year transition is feasible

- State benchmarking revealed that 70% of states currently have fully implemented online testing for their primary state assessments.
- The state of Texas is close to having the infrastructure necessary to fully implement online testing, with a small investment in internet connectivity needed for a subset of mostly small and rural districts. Across the state, an estimated $4 million one-time network investment and $13 million annual investment is needed beyond E-rate.
- A two-year transition will allow educators and students time to increase familiarity and comfort with online testing.

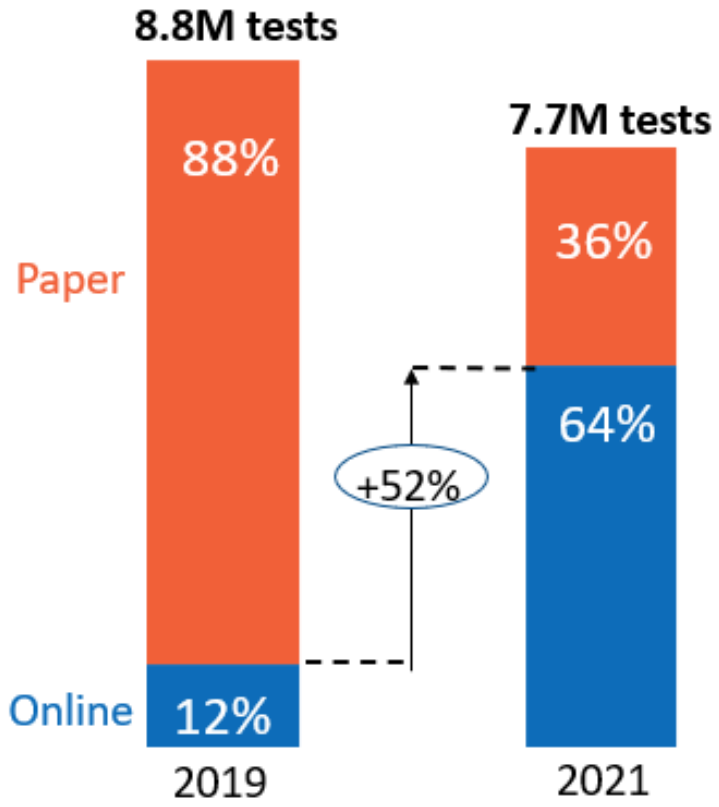
Video explaining the results of the study can be found on the STAAR Redesign webpage.

As a result of the study, the 87th Texas Legislature took action -

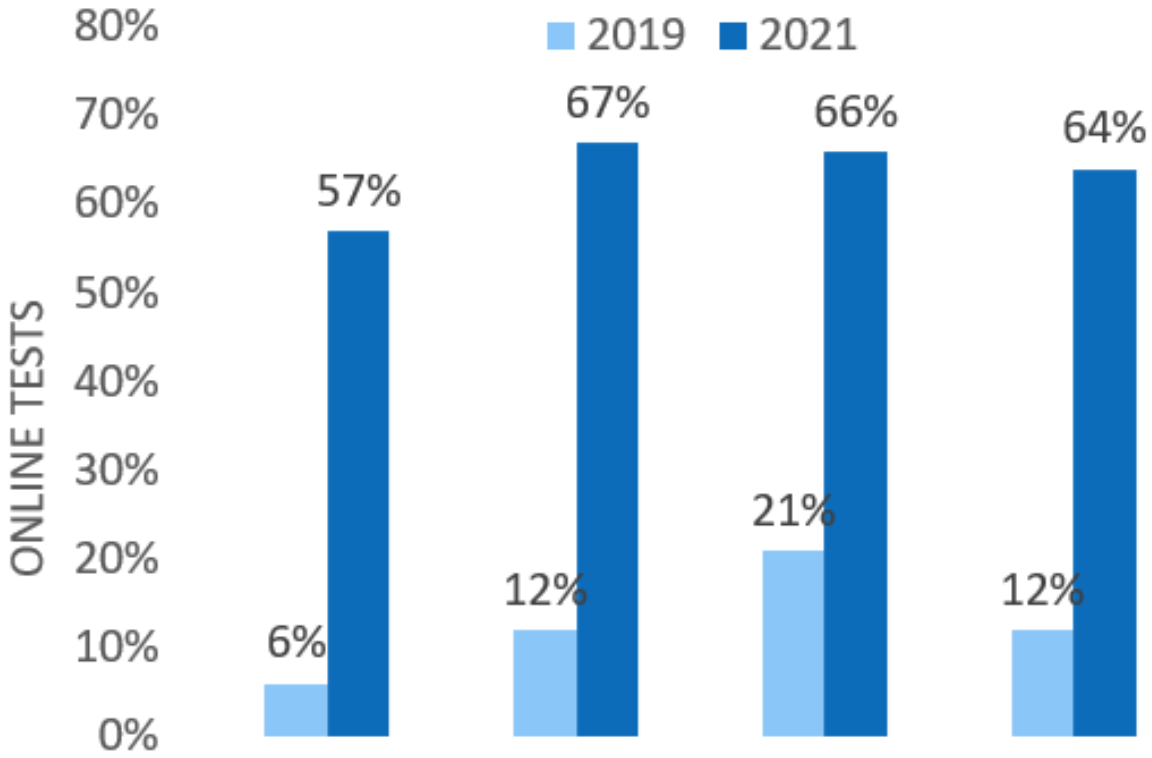
- Confirmed move to online testing by 2022-2023.
- Expand authorized use of the Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment (TIMA) to cover internet connectivity and training for online testing.
- Provides funding for TEA to implement a matching grant to support one-time network infrastructure investment

In 2021, Spring online testing increased from 12% in 2019 to 64%

STAAR online participation increased by **52 percentage points**



We saw increases in students testing online **across all grade bands**



An implementation guide to support districts includes next steps to be fully prepared for the transition to online

Step 1: System-level pre-requisites to implement full online testing

- Adequate network infrastructure
- Sufficient hardware
- Software meets system requirements

Prerequisite #2: Sufficient hardware *To be completed before the start of SY 2022-23*	**Key question** Does each campus have enough devices to support online testing? **Goal / Recommended Minimum** 3:1 student-to-device ratio **How to determine if you've met the goal** Determine the ratio of student testers to devices. Check the minimum system requirements to determine which devices meet the hardware specifications	**Next steps if goal not met** **CREATE A STAGGERED SCHEDULE:** • A staggered schedule allows all students to test within the administration window given the number of students that can test at the same time. **OR** **ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL DEVICES:** • Tap into other funding sources to re-allocate efforts towards network infrastructure (i.e., Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment, Emergency Connectivity Fund.) • Devices that students are using for home-learning can also be brought in for online testing.

Step 2: Suggested actions for successful implementation based on district experiences

- Strategic planning
- Training and familiarity
- Program maintenance

Success criteria #1: Strategic planning	
Key characteristics	**Suggested next steps if key characteristics are not present**
☐ District leadership is clear on what is required for full online testing implementation and why it is important.	**ALIGN ADMINISTRATORS AROUND A SHARED VISION:** • Set up strategic planning meeting for online assessment • Ensure administrators clearly articulate the role of technology, inclusive of online assessments, in their overall vision and mission • Assign clear initiative lead on transition to online to serve as point person and oversee end-to-end process, with district leadership backup
☐ District leadership has established a plan and timeline to moving online and has communicated this across staff.	**CREATE A LAUNCH PLAN:** • Administrators create a detailed launch plan with timeline, milestones, and goals to transition to online testing (e.g., grade by grade, campus by campus). Load testing and increasing staff and students' familiarity with the system should be included in the plan.

Implementation guide shared on Nov 2, in a TAA: "2022–2023 Transition to Online and Other State Summative Assessment Redesign Resources"

LEAs that do not meet the minimum bandwidth speeds for online testing have access to the TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant

- Total grant amount of $4 million
- Maximum of $1.3 million for fiber connection
- Remaining funds for upgrading network connections
- Prioritizes rural districts that apply for E-Rate funds in FY22
- Key dates for the TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant
  - Jan 18 – Grant posted to TEA Grant Opportunities webpage
  - Mar 21 – Applications due
  - May 23 – Awards announced, LEAs may begin grant-funded projects
  - July 21 – LEAs may begin drawing down funds

E-rate's reimbursement rate varies by district type (rural vs urban) and student demographics (% eligible for National School Lunch Program). On average across Texas, ~76% of eligible connectivity costs are covered by E-Rate funding.

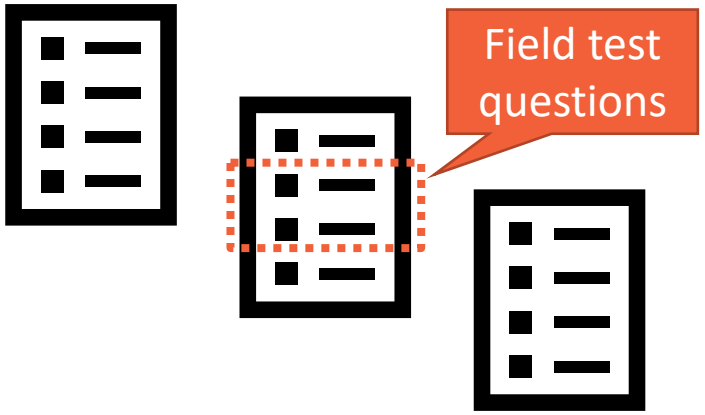
The remaining balance is split between the LEA and matching grant funds.

All of the components of the STAAR redesign are based on improving alignment to the classroom experience

	In effective classrooms, teachers are…	*The STAAR redesign will…*
1	Coherently building students' **background knowledge and vocabulary** in all subject areas...	Prioritize **cross-curricular passages** in RLA that reference topics that students have learned about in other classes
2	Asking students to **write about what they read using evidence from text**…	Include **writing in all RLA tests**, reflecting our updated TEKS, and having **students write text-based responses**
3	Providing **various open-ended formats** for students to respond to questions…	Add new**, non-multiple-choice questions** that are more like questions teachers ask in class
4	Supporting the learning needs of all students by providing **appropriate accommodations**…	Move to **online assessments** that provide a full suite of robust accommodations for students with specific learning needs
5	Moving to **online assessments** supports all the changes above and provides faster test results to support accelerated learning.	

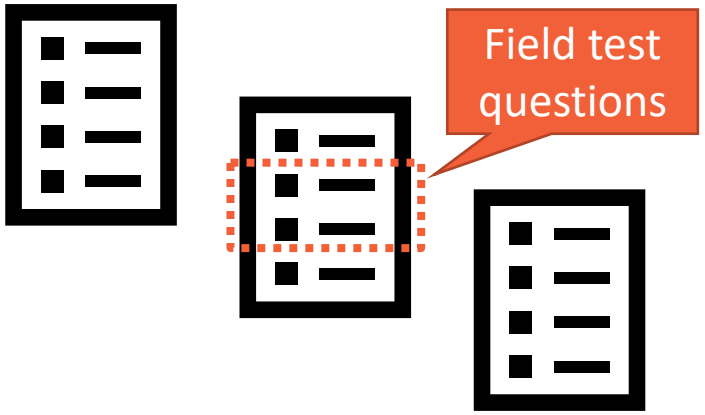
How do we know the redesigned STAAR test won't be harder?

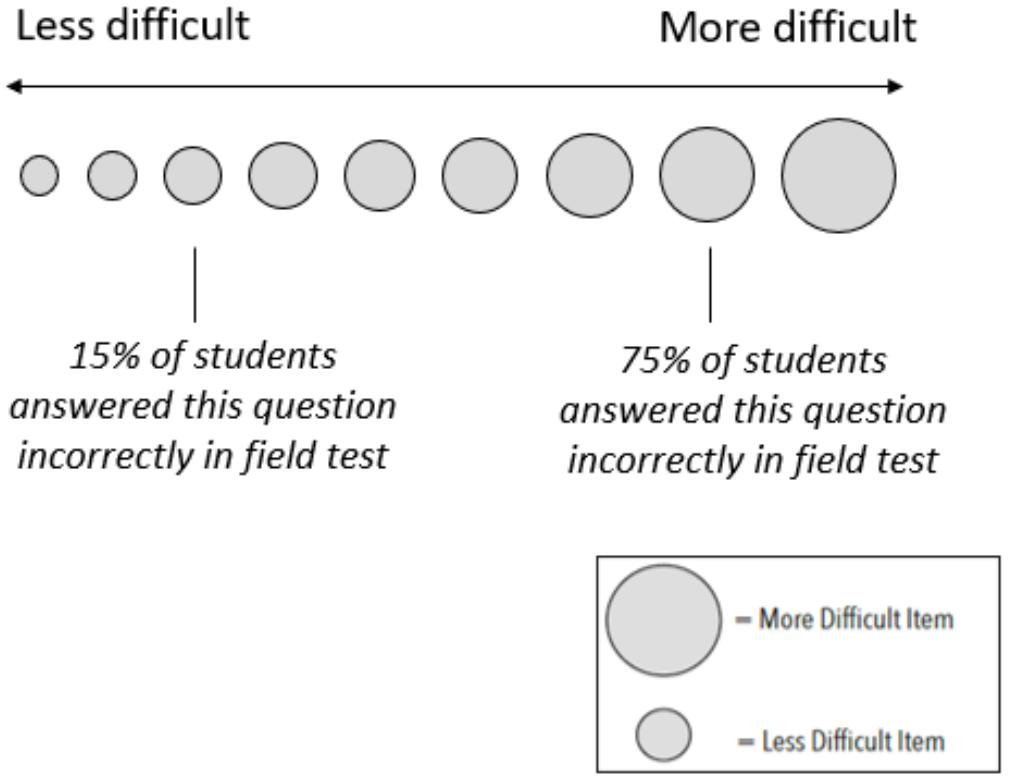
On each STAAR test, a small number of questions do not count towards the student's score. These are **field test questions.**



Through field testing, we can determine the difficulty level of each question

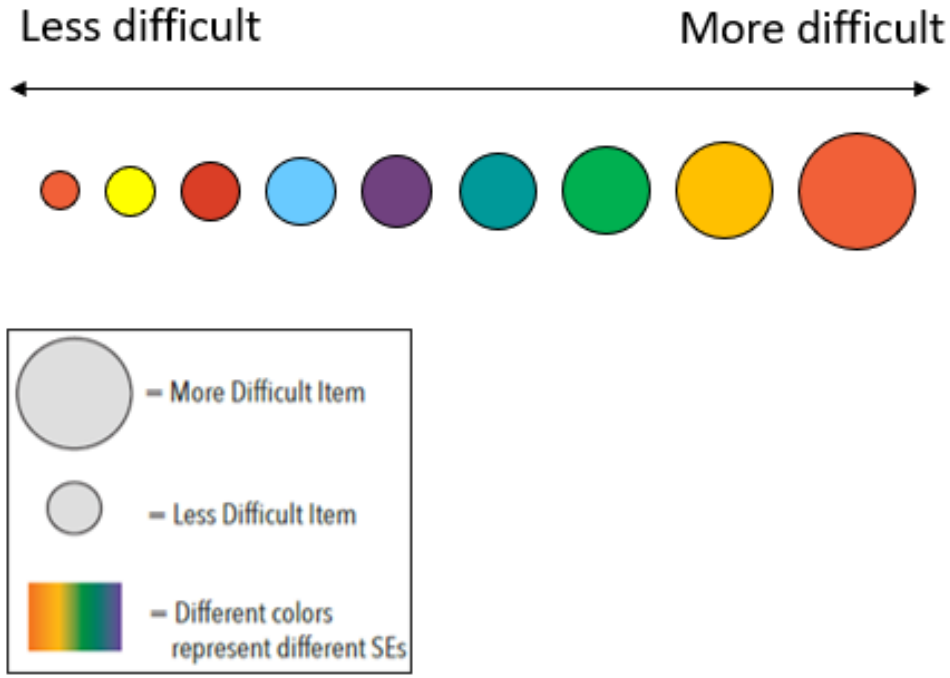
On each STAAR test, a small number of questions do not count towards the student's score. These are **field test questions.**





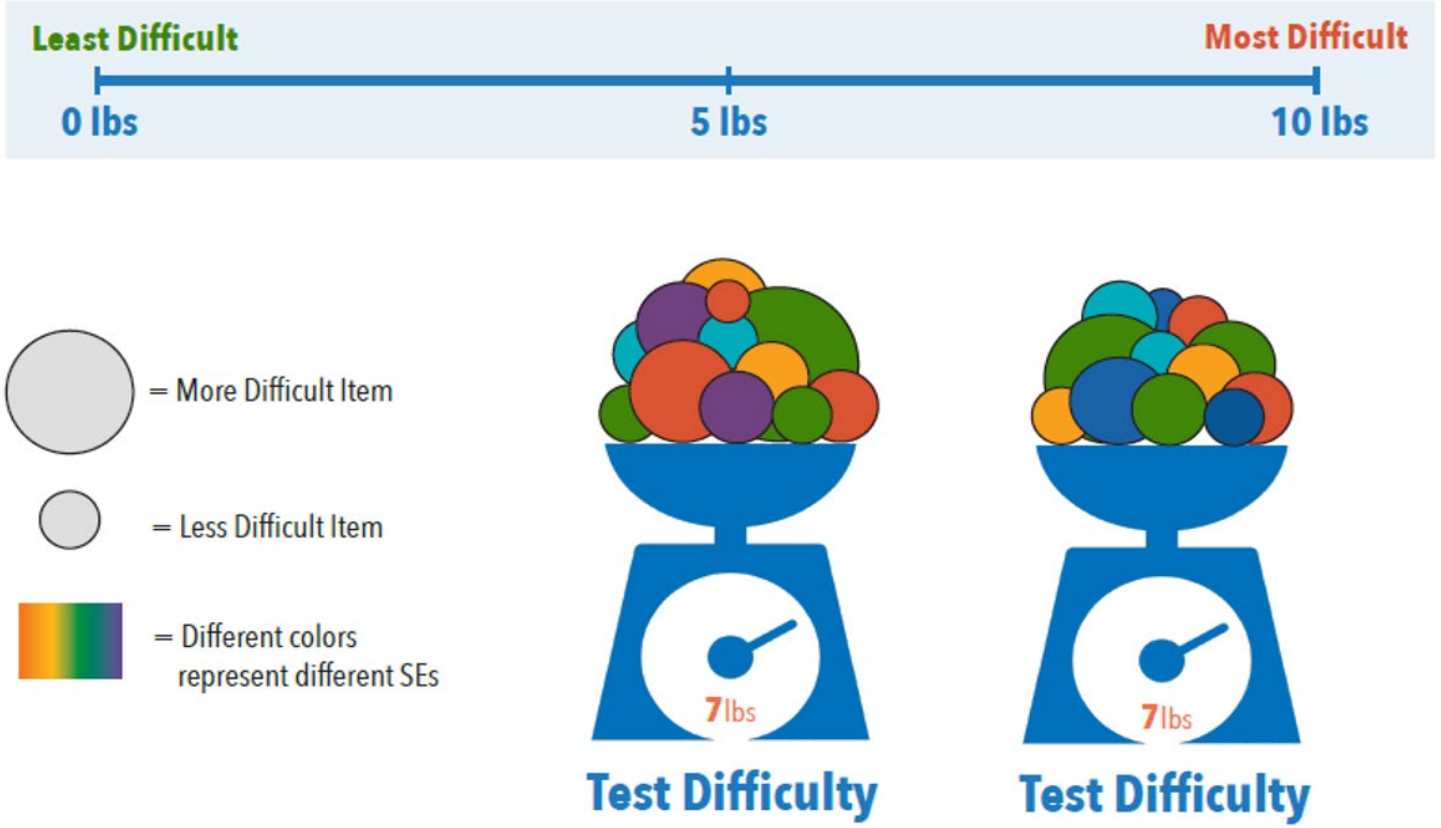
Each question is analyzed based on how it performed on the field test

Questions represent a variety of difficulty levels and student expectations (SEs)…



…which can then be used to build STAAR tests

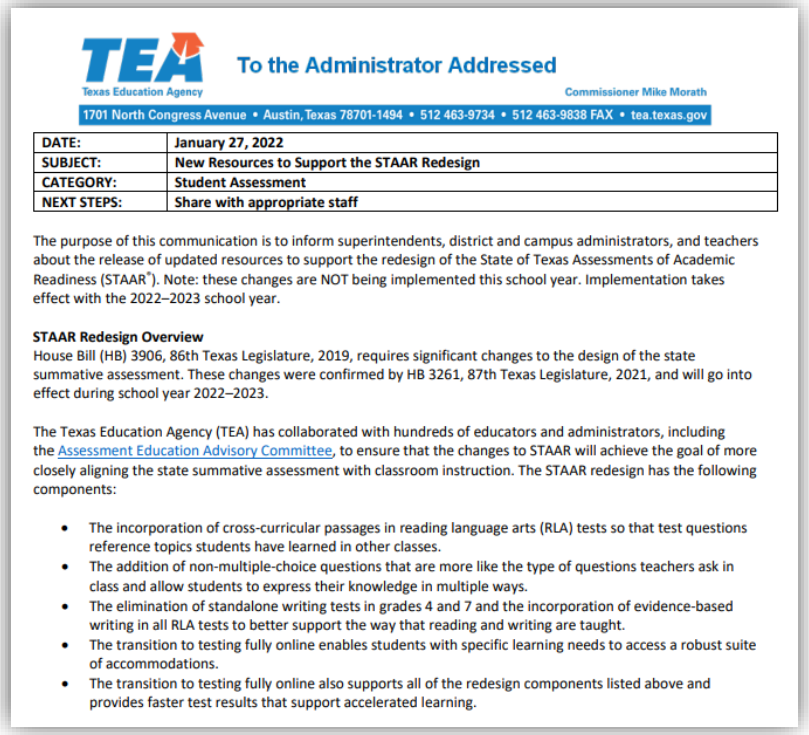
While individual questions can be easier or harder in a given year, the mix of question difficulty is balanced across years using field test results



The redesign does not mean the test will be harder

Based on educator feedback, several resources were released in January and can be found on the STAAR Redesign website

January TAA



To the Administrator Addressed

Texas Education Agency — Commissioner Mike Morath

1701 North Congress Avenue • Austin, Texas 78701-1494 • 512 463-9734 • 512 463-9838 FAX • tea.texas.gov

DATE:	January 27, 2022
SUBJECT:	New Resources to Support the STAAR Redesign
CATEGORY:	Student Assessment
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

The purpose of this communication is to inform superintendents, district and campus administrators, and teachers about the release of updated resources to support the redesign of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). Note: these changes are NOT being implemented this school year. Implementation takes effect with the 2022–2023 school year.

STAAR Redesign Overview

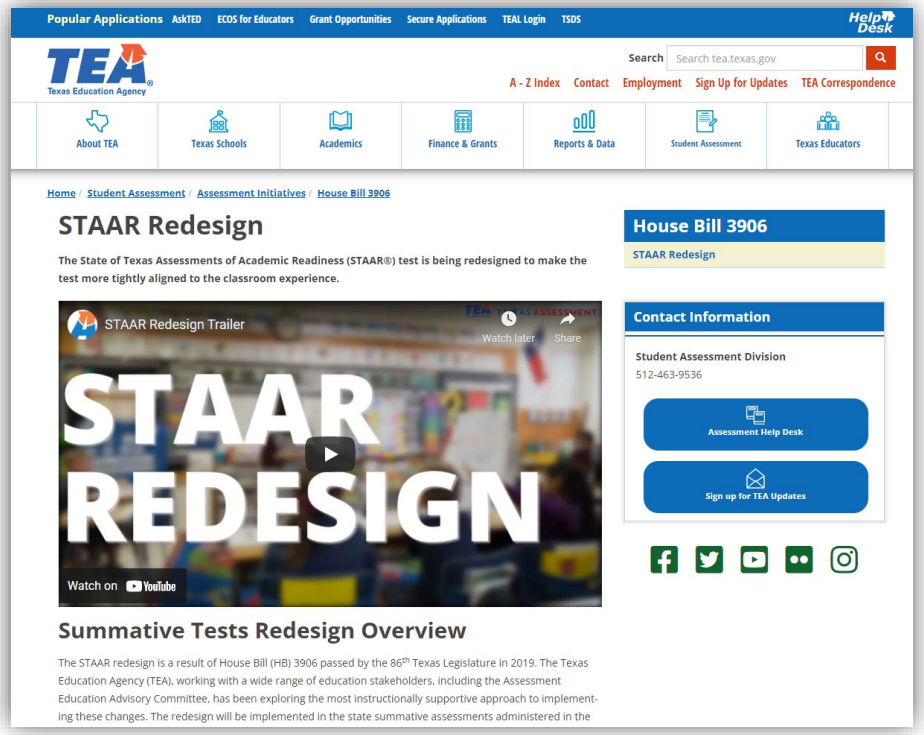
House Bill (HB) 3906, 86th Texas Legislature, 2019, requires significant changes to the design of the state summative assessment. These changes were confirmed by HB 3261, 87th Texas Legislature, 2021, and will go into effect during school year 2022–2023.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has collaborated with hundreds of educators and administrators, including the Assessment Education Advisory Committee, to ensure that the changes to STAAR will achieve the goal of more closely aligning the state summative assessment with classroom instruction. The STAAR redesign has the following components:

- The incorporation of cross-curricular passages in reading language arts (RLA) tests so that test questions reference topics students have learned in other classes.
- The addition of non-multiple-choice questions that are more like the type of questions teachers ask in class and allow students to express their knowledge in multiple ways.
- The elimination of standalone writing tests in grades 4 and 7 and the incorporation of evidence-based writing in all RLA tests to better support the way that reading and writing are taught.
- The transition to testing fully online enables students with specific learning needs to access a robust suite of accommodations.
- The transition to testing fully online also supports all of the redesign components listed above and provides faster test results that support accelerated learning.

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/new-resources-to-support-the-staar-redesign-2022-01-27.pdf

STAAR Redesign Website



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STAAR Redesign

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) test is being redesigned to make the test more tightly aligned to the classroom experience.

STAAR Redesign Trailer — Watch later — Share

STAAR REDESIGN

Watch on YouTube

House Bill 3906

STAAR Redesign

Contact Information

Student Assessment Division

512-463-9536

Assessment Help Desk

Sign up for TEA Updates

Summative Tests Redesign Overview

The STAAR redesign is a result of House Bill (HB) 3906 passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), working with a wide range of education stakeholders, including the Assessment Education Advisory Committee, has been exploring the most instructionally supportive approach to implement-ing these changes. The redesign will be implemented in the state summative assessments administered in the

https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/assessment-initiatives/hb-3906/staar-redesign

Resources include…

A. New question type samplers by content area and grade level on the same platform as STAAR

B. A one-page overview of potential question types by content area and grade level

C. A scoring and reporting guide by content area for new question types

D. Updated STAAR Redesign FAQs

E. Updated blueprints by content area and grade level

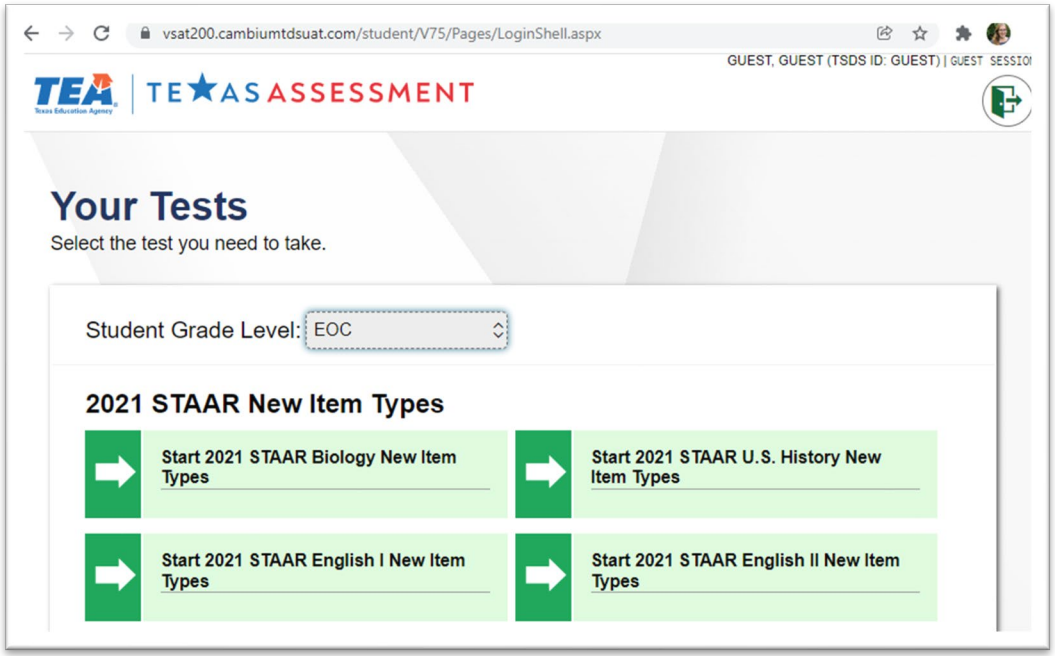
F. Policy on which students qualify for a special paper administration

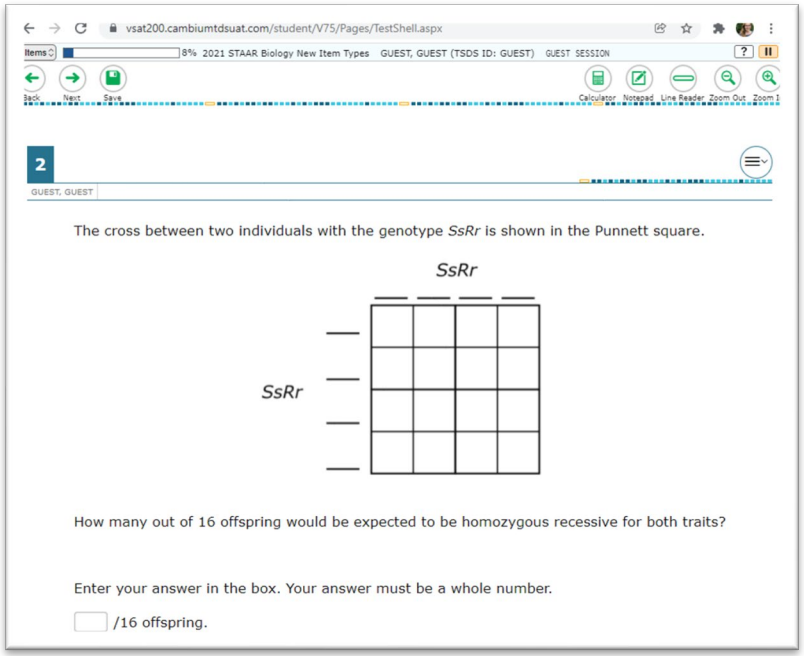
A

New question type samplers are available for each content area and subject level on the same platform as STAAR

Samplers for each STAAR-tested grade and content area are available to the general public in the same location as online practice tests.

- Each sampler includes at least two examples of each potential question type



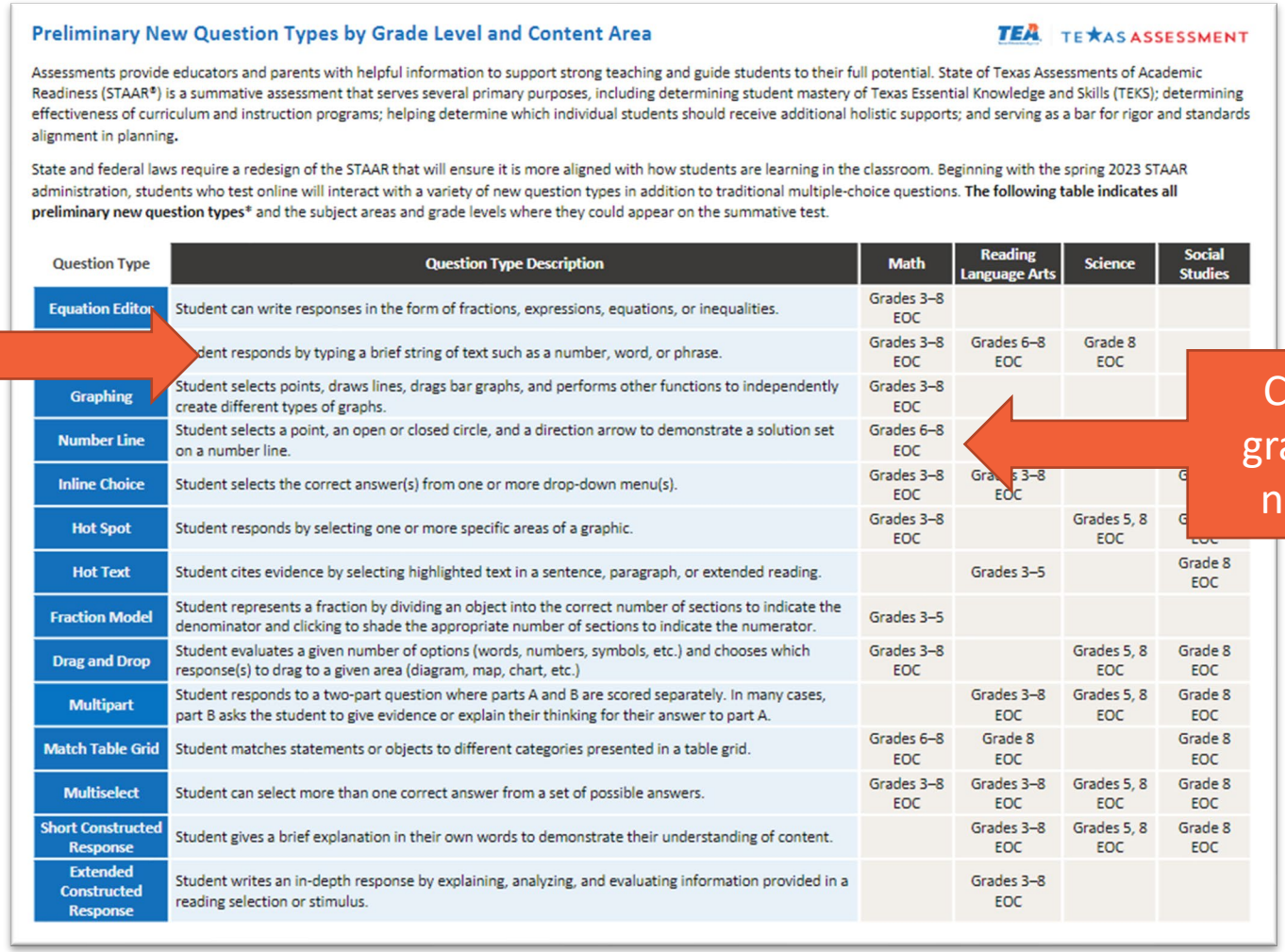


B

A one-page overview provides descriptions of each question type and details which content areas and grade levels they may appear in

A brief description of how each question type functions

Content areas and grade levels for each new question type



Preliminary New Question Types by Grade Level and Content Area

TEA TEXAS ASSESSMENT

Assessments provide educators and parents with helpful information to support strong teaching and guide students to their full potential. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) is a summative assessment that serves several primary purposes, including determining student mastery of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); determining effectiveness of curriculum and instruction programs; helping determine which individual students should receive additional holistic supports; and serving as a bar for rigor and standards alignment in planning.

State and federal laws require a redesign of the STAAR that will ensure it is more aligned with how students are learning in the classroom. Beginning with the spring 2023 STAAR administration, students who test online will interact with a variety of new question types in addition to traditional multiple-choice questions. **The following table indicates all preliminary new question types*** and the subject areas and grade levels where they could appear on the summative test.

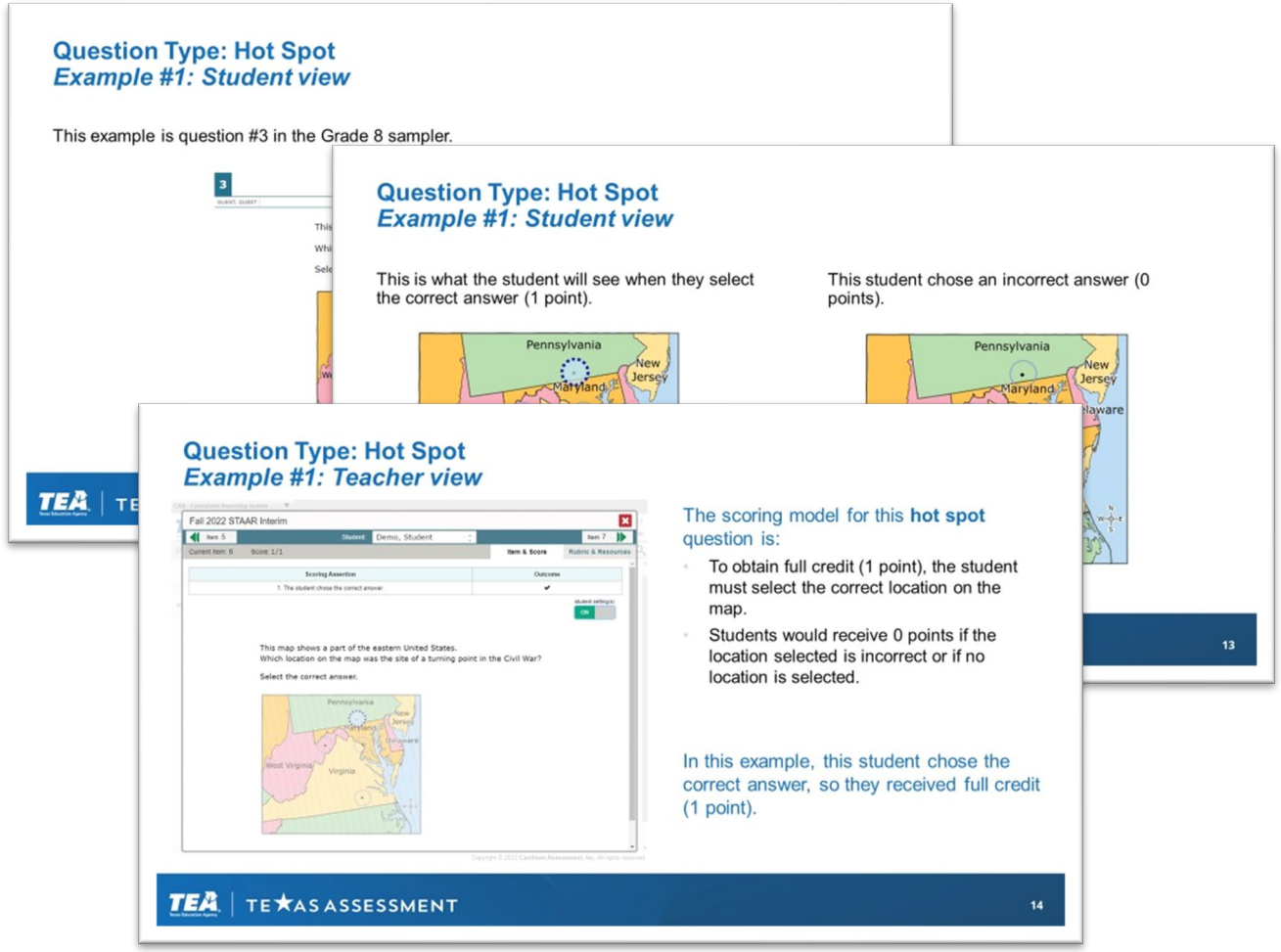
Question Type	Question Type Description	Math	Reading Language Arts	Science	Social Studies
Equation Editor	Student can write responses in the form of fractions, expressions, equations, or inequalities.	Grades 3–8 EOC			
[illegible]dent responds by typing a brief string of text such as a number, word, or phrase.		Grades 3–8 EOC	Grades 6–8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC	
Graphing	Student selects points, draws lines, drags bar graphs, and performs other functions to independently create different types of graphs.	Grades 3–8 EOC			
Number Line	Student selects a point, an open or closed circle, and a direction arrow to demonstrate a solution set on a number line.	Grades 6–8 EOC			
Inline Choice	Student selects the correct answer(s) from one or more drop-down menu(s).	Grades 3–8 EOC	Gra[illegible]s 3–8 EOC		G
Hot Spot	Student responds by selecting one or more specific areas of a graphic.	Grades 3–8 EOC		Grades 5, 8 EOC	G
Hot Text	Student cites evidence by selecting highlighted text in a sentence, paragraph, or extended reading.		Grades 3–5		Grade 8 EOC
Fraction Model	Student represents a fraction by dividing an object into the correct number of sections to indicate the denominator and clicking to shade the appropriate number of sections to indicate the numerator.	Grades 3–5			
Drag and Drop	Student evaluates a given number of options (words, numbers, symbols, etc.) and chooses which response(s) to drag to a given area (diagram, map, chart, etc.)	Grades 3–8 EOC		Grades 5, 8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC
Multipart	Student responds to a two-part question where parts A and B are scored separately. In many cases, part B asks the student to give evidence or explain their thinking for their answer to part A.		Grades 3–8 EOC	Grades 5, 8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC
Match Table Grid	Student matches statements or objects to different categories presented in a table grid.	Grades 6–8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC		Grade 8 EOC
Multiselect	Student can select more than one correct answer from a set of possible answers.	Grades 3–8 EOC	Grades 3–8 EOC	Grades 5, 8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC
Short Constructed Response	Student gives a brief explanation in their own words to demonstrate their understanding of content.		Grades 3–8 EOC	Grades 5, 8 EOC	Grade 8 EOC
Extended Constructed Response	Student writes an in-depth response by explaining, analyzing, and evaluating information provided in a reading selection or stimulus.		Grades 3–8 EOC		

C

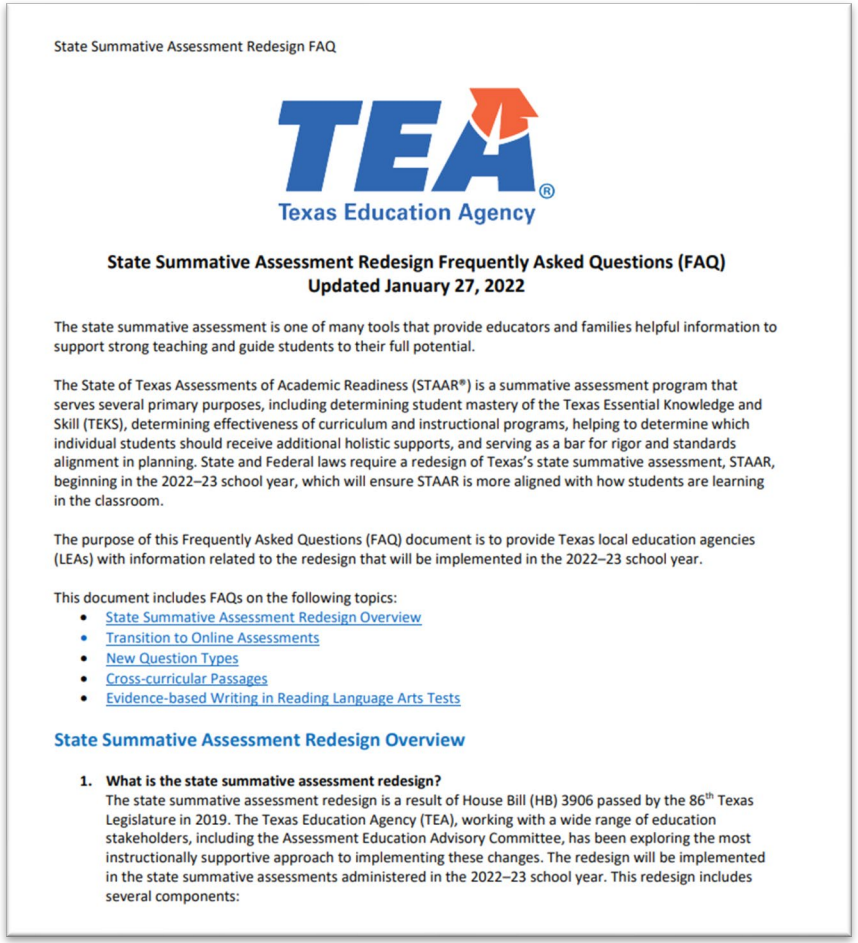
A scoring and reporting guide for each content area explains how potential questions types may be scored and reported

One guide per content area provides an overview of each new question type, including:

- Examples from the sampler
- Sample responses, including potential partial credit
- What educators could see in the reporting system after STAAR is administered



D The STAAR Redesign FAQs document will continue to be updated over time



State Summative Assessment Redesign FAQ

Texas Education Agency

State Summative Assessment Redesign Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Updated January 27, 2022

The state summative assessment is one of many tools that provide educators and families helpful information to support strong teaching and guide students to their full potential.

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) is a summative assessment program that serves several primary purposes, including determining student mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skill (TEKS), determining effectiveness of curriculum and instructional programs, helping to determine which individual students should receive additional holistic supports, and serving as a bar for rigor and standards alignment in planning. State and Federal laws require a redesign of Texas's state summative assessment, STAAR, beginning in the 2022–23 school year, which will ensure STAAR is more aligned with how students are learning in the classroom.

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to provide Texas local education agencies (LEAs) with information related to the redesign that will be implemented in the 2022–23 school year.

This document includes FAQs on the following topics:

- State Summative Assessment Redesign Overview
- Transition to Online Assessments
- New Question Types
- Cross-curricular Passages
- Evidence-based Writing in Reading Language Arts Tests

State Summative Assessment Redesign Overview

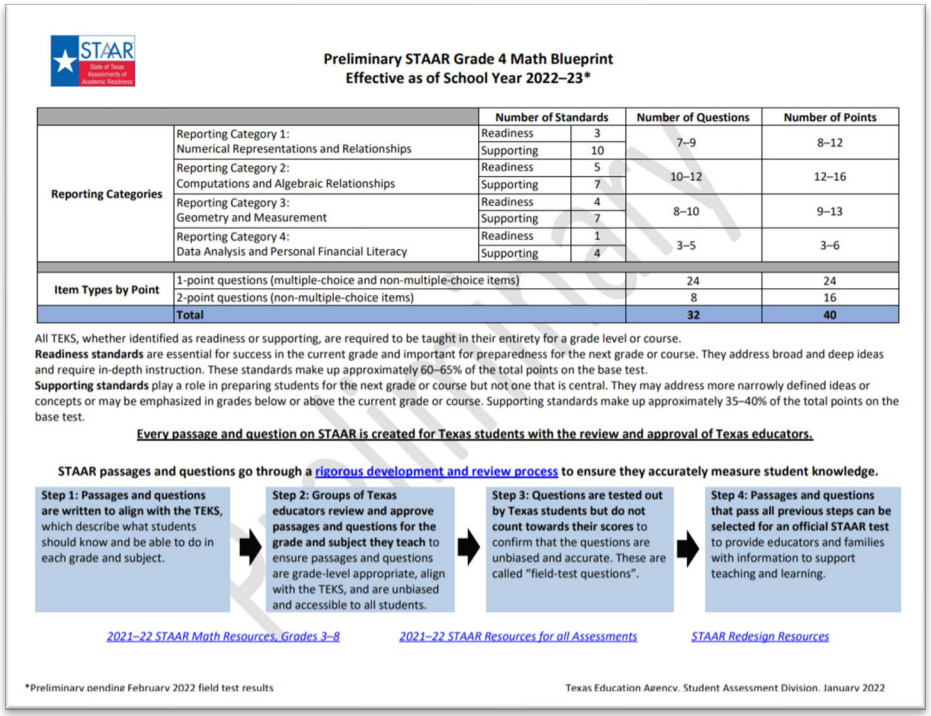
1. **What is the state summative assessment redesign?**
   The state summative assessment redesign is a result of House Bill (HB) 3906 passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), working with a wide range of education stakeholders, including the Assessment Education Advisory Committee, has been exploring the most instructionally supportive approach to implementing these changes. The redesign will be implemented in the state summative assessments administered in the 2022–23 school year. This redesign includes several components:

Please submit questions not covered in our FAQs to our Student Assessment Help Desk

E

Preliminary blueprints for STAAR redesign are available for each content area and grade level

Each blueprint includes a breakdown of the number of questions on each test and a general overview of how STAAR questions are developed and reviewed by Texas teachers



Preliminary STAAR Grade 4 Math Blueprint
Effective as of School Year 2022–23*

		Number of Standards		Number of Questions	Number of Points
Reporting Categories	Reporting Category 1: Numerical Representations and Relationships	Readiness	3	7–9	8–12
		Supporting	10		
	Reporting Category 2: Computations and Algebraic Relationships	Readiness	5	10–12	12–16
		Supporting	7		
	Reporting Category 3: Geometry and Measurement	Readiness	4	8–10	9–13
		Supporting	7		
	Reporting Category 4: Data Analysis and Personal Financial Literacy	Readiness	1	3–5	3–6
		Supporting	4		
Item Types by Point	1-point questions (multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice items)			24	24
	2-point questions (non-multiple-choice items)			8	16
	Total			**32**	**40**

All TEKS, whether identified as readiness or supporting, are required to be taught in their entirety for a grade level or course.
Readiness standards are essential for success in the current grade and important for preparedness for the next grade or course. They address broad and deep ideas and require in-depth instruction. These standards make up approximately 60–65% of the total points on the base test.
Supporting standards play a role in preparing students for the next grade or course but not one that is central. They may address more narrowly defined ideas or concepts or may be emphasized in grades below or above the current grade or course. Supporting standards make up approximately 35–40% of the total points on the base test.

Every passage and question on STAAR is created for Texas students with the review and approval of Texas educators.

STAAR passages and questions go through a rigorous development and review process to ensure they accurately measure student knowledge.

Step 1: Passages and questions are written to align with the TEKS, which describe what students should know and be able to do in each grade and subject.

Step 2: Groups of Texas educators review and approve passages and questions for the grade and subject they teach to ensure passages and questions are grade-level appropriate, align with the TEKS, and are unbiased and accessible to all students.

Step 3: Questions are tested out by Texas students but do not count towards their scores to confirm that the questions are unbiased and accurate. These are called "field-test questions".

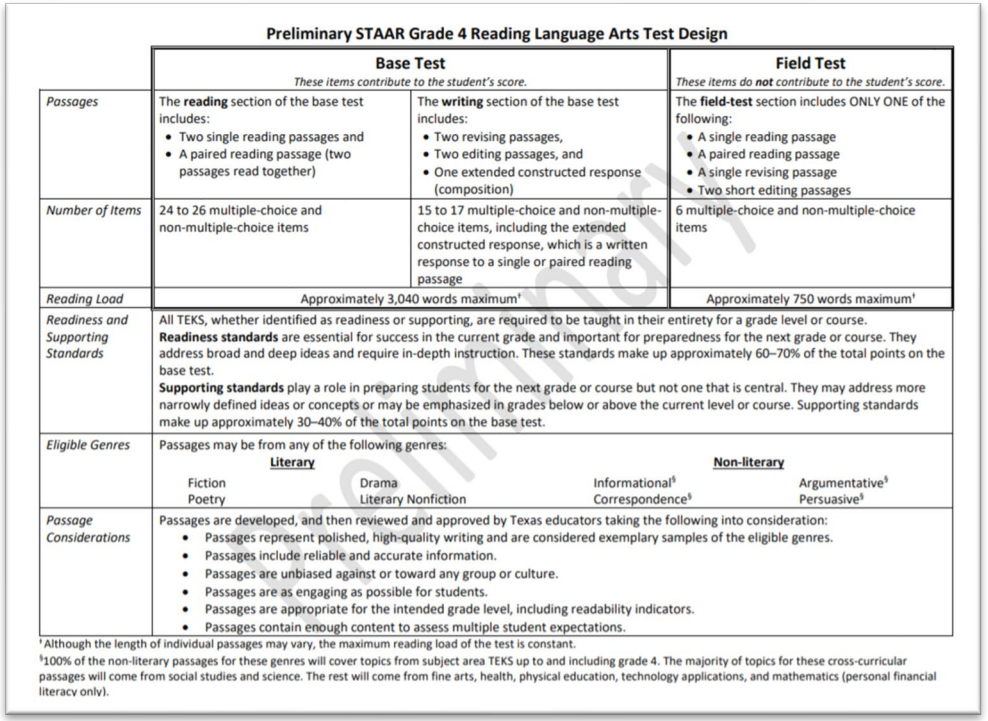
Step 4: Passages and questions that pass all previous steps can be selected for an official STAAR test to provide educators and families with information to support teaching and learning.

2021–22 STAAR Math Resources, Grades 3–8 | 2021–22 STAAR Resources for all Assessments | STAAR Redesign Resources

*Preliminary pending February 2022 field test results

Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division, January 2022

Reading Language Arts (RLA) blueprints also include a breakdown of passages, reading load, genres, and passage considerations, including a note about cross-curricular passages

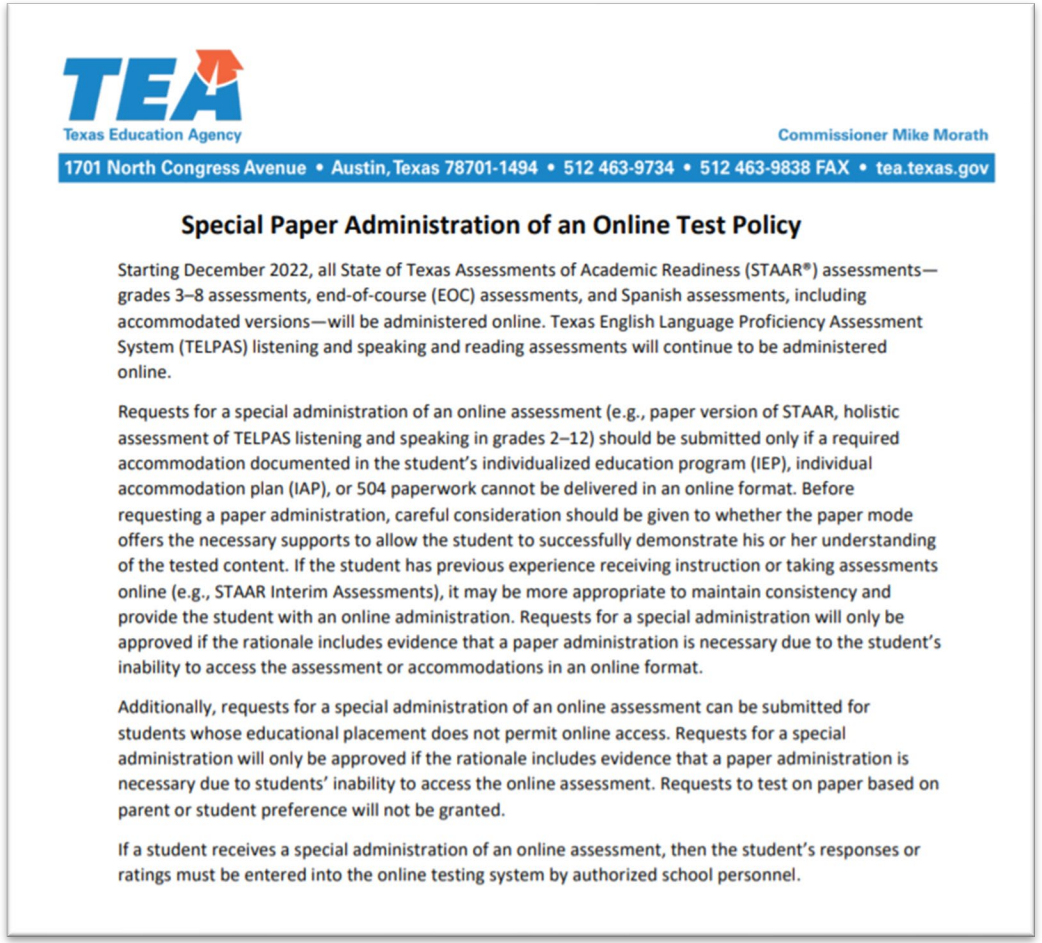


Preliminary STAAR Grade 4 Reading Language Arts Test Design

	Base Test *These items contribute to the student's score.*		Field Test *These items do **not** contribute to the student's score.*
Passages	The **reading** section of the base test includes: • Two single reading passages and • A paired reading passage (two passages read together)	The **writing** section of the base test includes: • Two revising passages, • Two editing passages, and • One extended constructed response (composition)	The **field-test** section includes ONLY ONE of the following: • A single reading passage • A paired reading passage • A single revising passage • Two short editing passages
Number of Items	24 to 26 multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice items	15 to 17 multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice items, including the extended constructed response, which is a written response to a single or paired reading passage	6 multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice items
Reading Load	Approximately 3,040 words maximum[†]		Approximately 750 words maximum[†]
Readiness and Supporting Standards	All TEKS, whether identified as readiness or supporting, are required to be taught in their entirety for a grade level or course. **Readiness standards** are essential for success in the current grade and important for preparedness for the next grade or course. They address broad and deep ideas and require in-depth instruction. These standards make up approximately 60–70% of the total points on the base test. **Supporting standards** play a role in preparing students for the next grade or course but not one that is central. They may address more narrowly defined ideas or concepts or may be emphasized in grades below or above the current level or course. Supporting standards make up approximately 30–40% of the total points on the base test.		
Eligible Genres	Passages may be from any of the following genres: **Literary**: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Literary Nonfiction **Non-literary**: Informational[§], Correspondence[§], Argumentative[§], Persuasive[§]		
Passage Considerations	Passages are developed, and then reviewed and approved by Texas educators taking the following into consideration: • Passages represent polished, high-quality writing and are considered exemplary samples of the eligible genres. • Passages include reliable and accurate information. • Passages are unbiased against or toward any group or culture. • Passages are as engaging as possible for students. • Passages are appropriate for the intended grade level, including readability indicators. • Passages contain enough content to assess multiple student expectations.		

[†] Although the length of individual passages may vary, the maximum reading load of the test is constant.
[§] 100% of the non-literary passages for these genres will cover topics from subject area TEKS up to and including grade 4. The majority of topics for these cross-curricular passages will come from social studies and science. The rest will come from fine arts, health, physical education, technology applications, and mathematics (personal financial literacy only).

F Online testing policy provides guidance to districts about which students qualify for a special paper administration



Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Mike Morath

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Special Paper Administration of an Online Test Policy

Starting December 2022, all State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) assessments—grades 3–8 assessments, end-of-course (EOC) assessments, and Spanish assessments, including accommodated versions—will be administered online. Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) listening and speaking and reading assessments will continue to be administered online.

Requests for a special administration of an online assessment (e.g., paper version of STAAR, holistic assessment of TELPAS listening and speaking in grades 2–12) should be submitted only if a required accommodation documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP), individual accommodation plan (IAP), or 504 paperwork cannot be delivered in an online format. Before requesting a paper administration, careful consideration should be given to whether the paper mode offers the necessary supports to allow the student to successfully demonstrate his or her understanding of the tested content. If the student has previous experience receiving instruction or taking assessments online (e.g., STAAR Interim Assessments), it may be more appropriate to maintain consistency and provide the student with an online administration. Requests for a special administration will only be approved if the rationale includes evidence that a paper administration is necessary due to the student's inability to access the assessment or accommodations in an online format.

Additionally, requests for a special administration of an online assessment can be submitted for students whose educational placement does not permit online access. Requests for a special administration will only be approved if the rationale includes evidence that a paper administration is necessary due to students' inability to access the online assessment. Requests to test on paper based on parent or student preference will not be granted.

If a student receives a special administration of an online assessment, then the student's responses or ratings must be entered into the online testing system by authorized school personnel.

The policy is designed with feedback from Special Education educators to ensure students have access to online accommodations they may need.

More resources to come!

When	What
Fall 2021	**Preliminary blueprints** and **RLA assessed curriculum** available on TEA website.
January 2022	**New question type samplers by grade & subject** on same platform as STAAR and accompanying resources.
Spring 2022	Blueprints and new question types will be finalized based on stand alone field test data.
Summer 2022	**Final blueprints** will be published.
Fall 2022	**Practice tests by grade & subject** on same platform as STAAR, and **constructed response scoring guides**.

Texas educators are key to designing and building high quality assessments

Classroom teachers, instructional coaches, campus and district content specialists, and campus administrators can serve in a variety of ways:

- **Educator passage review** – each potential passage for the RLA test is reviewed and approved by a committee of Texas educators
- **Educator item review** – each potential question for a state test is reviewed and approved by a committee of Texas educators
- **Constructed response rangefinding** – educators are convened to set the scoring boundaries for student essays based on the rubric
- **Subject-area advisory groups** – groups of educators are convened to provide feedback on subject-area-specific topics
- **STAAR redesign focus groups** – groups of educators are convened to provide input on components of the STAAR redesign that are under consideration

Visit the Texas Assessment Learning Management System to apply