Texas Formative Assessment Resource

Educator Guide

TFAR
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2022–2023

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About TFAR

Overview

The Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR) is a free platform that allows teachers to create, administer, and share formative assessments. Educators can choose items from a bank of released State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) items or they can author questions themselves. These assessments are administered to students through TDS, which includes accommodations, or they can be exported as PDFs to be printed and administered on paper. All tests administered online will generate data accessible to the educator through the Centralized Reporting System (CRS). Teachers can also share the assessments they create in TFAR with other teachers in their district.

TFAR is one of many optional assessment resources available to support districts and educators in the 2022–2023 school year. Unlike STAAR Interim Assessments, which measure a broad span of student expectations, formative assessments created in TFAR should be used to measure student performance on specific student expectations to inform a teacher's instructional choices, such as adjusting unit and lesson plans. Assessments built using this tool should be part of a broader set of classroom formative practices (e.g., checks for understanding, exit tickets, and discussions).

Teachers who would like to use TFAR should contact their district or campus testing coordinator to ensure that all Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)–related activities have been completed.

In the 2022–2023 school year, the following grades and subjects have released STAAR items available in TFAR:

- grades 3–8 mathematics
- grades 3–5 Spanish mathematics
- grades 3–8 reading language arts (RLA)
- grades 3–5 Spanish RLA
- grades 5 and 8 science
- grade 5 Spanish science
- grade 8 social studies
- Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History

Purpose of Formative Assessments

The distinctions between diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments are as follows:

- **Diagnostic assessments** measure student knowledge and skills on a variety of student expectations before a new instructional cycle or year in order to inform instructional plans and curriculum to meet the needs of individual students (e.g., Beginning-of-Year assessment, Early Reading Assessment).

- **Formative assessments** measure student performance on specific student expectations throughout the year to inform a teacher's instructional choices, enable timely adjustments to unit plans, and guide changes to lesson plans (e.g., class quizzes, exit tickets).

- **Interim assessments** measure student understanding of a broad span of student expectations at checkpoints during the year to monitor progress, predict summative performance, and identify students in need of intervention (e.g., district/campus benchmarks, STAAR Interim Assessments).

- **Summative Assessments** measure student mastery of a broad range of student expectations at the end of an instructional unit or course. They enable comparison of academic growth and performance to determine program effectiveness (e.g., STAAR summative assessments, student portfolios).

TFAR can be used to create and deliver assessments that are aligned and connected with existing instructional plans, lessons, and curricula. It can be used to help create formative class assessments as part of a broader student progress monitoring system presented here:

Assessment Type	Sample Frequency	Sample Composition
✓ Mini assessment	Every 2–3 days	About 4–5 questions covering 1–2 content standards
✓ Weekly assessment	Once a week	About 7–10 questions covering 3–4 content standards
✓ Monthly assessment	Every 3–4 weeks	About 15 questions covering about 10 content standards
✓ Warm-up ✓ Exit ticket	While warm-ups and exit tickets may occur daily, it is important to note that class time constraints often only allow for a single question tied to a single standard. A teacher should review the cumulative reporting of a standard to understand a student's progress towards mastery.	

Training

Trainings for TFAR are posted on the Learning Management System (LMS), which can be accessed on the [Educators](#) page of the Texas Assessment website. The recorded trainings focus on formative assessments and technology and system resources.

In addition to reading this guide, district and campus personnel administering assessments through TFAR can review the resources available online and those listed in the following table to familiarize themselves with current testing guidelines and procedures.

Training	Tags
Technology Requirements for the Texas Assessment Program	Program Information
TFAR Modules	TFAR Trainings
The Centralized Reporting System (CRS)	System Overview
Texas Formative Assessment Resource Overview	TFAR Trainings

Title	Audience
Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide	Testing Coordinators and Classroom Teachers
Test Delivery System (TDS) User Guide	Testing Coordinators
Setting Up TDS Workstations	Testing Coordinators
Centralized Reporting System (CRS) User Guide	Testing Coordinators and Classroom Teachers

Registration, Authoring, and Administration

TIDE is the user and student management system for all Texas assessments. Users must be added to TIDE before they can access any system.

TDS consists of two components: the Test Administrator Interface and the Student Interface. The Test Administrator Interface is used to schedule or start student testing, and the Student Interface (accessed via the secure browser or the in-browser option) allows students to take the formative assessments.

Reports for the formative assessments are available in CRS. Access to student data reports is controlled by a user's role in TIDE. Teachers must also have a roster association with students to view student results. Teachers who would like to use TFAR should contact their district or campus testing coordinator to ensure that rosters are created in TIDE so that data is available in CRS.

Test administrators will need to familiarize themselves with the *TIDE User Guide*, *TDS User Guide*, *CRS User Guide*, and the tasks they will need to complete during testing.

Tasks

A district that chooses to use TFAR must connect students directly to teachers in TIDE by following the steps below.

- **Add/Update Users**—Educators that administer the formative assessments or review results will need a TIDE account. Instructions on how to upload users can be found in the *TIDE User Guide.* All users that were in the system for school year 2021–22 will need to reset their passwords in order to regain access. Districts should take this opportunity to remove any users that should no longer have access for school year 2022–23.

- **Add Students**—Students must be registered in TIDE. No additional registration steps are necessary. Students will be able to log in to a TFAR test with the correct session ID. More information on creating session IDs can be found in the *TDS User Guide.*

- **Create and Modify Rosters**—Rosters representing classes or other groups of students can be created in TIDE. Teachers must be linked to these rosters to access their students' scores in CRS. Teachers may then create sub rosters within CRS to further group student scores. For instructions on how to create and modify rosters, refer to the How District-level Users Manage Rosters section in the *TIDE User Guide*.

- **Create Questions**—Educators will use the [Authoring](#) system to create questions that they can align to standards. They can use these questions and any from the TEA item banks to construct formative assessments. Educators can share questions and tests they have created with other users within their work group. Refer to the Authoring modules in LMS for information on accessing and navigating the Authoring system, creating questions, and building formative tests.

- **Create Assessments**—Teacher-authored tests can be created by selecting items from the STAAR Released Library (SRL), items shared by other users, or items the teachers create on their own.

- **Schedule or Start a Test Session**—Once students are registered in TIDE and the teacher has created an assessment in TFAR, the test administrator will need to schedule a test session and plan to start a session on the day of testing using TDS. Refer to the *TDS User Guide* for instructions on creating test sessions.

- **Print Test Tickets**—Authorized TIDE users can print test tickets and monitor test progress. The teacher should provide the session ID or test link to the students so they can join the session when it starts.

- **Launch the Test Delivery System**—Ensure that the secure browser application is launched on each student's device or that they have accessed the district test link on the ticket. Test administrators must create a session before students can log in. For proctored sessions, a test administrator must join the session first to be able to approve student requests to join. Refer to the *TDS User Guide* for more information.

- **Assist Students with Logging In**—Students must have the test session ID and their test tickets to log in to the test.

- **End Testing**—Students must click *Submit Test* for their results to appear in the CRS.

- **Results**—Immediately after tests are submitted, CRS will display district-, campus-, roster-, student-, and question-level reports. Users can filter results by specific student demographics. This feature displays the student's score, the student's responses, and the student expectation for each test question. The student-level report also includes each test question. If a test contains constructed-response items, scores will not be available in CRS until these items have been scored. To access constructed-response items, users must click the *Tests to Score* notification at the top of the page while logged in to CRS.

Authoring Questions

The Authoring system provides educators with the ability to create their own items that can be used in test construction and shared with other educators in the user's district. These tests can be administered throughout the year and do not have to be administered at a specific time. The following new question types may be included in TFAR tests.

Question Type	Question Type Description
Equation Editor	Student can write responses in the form of fractions, expressions, equations, or inequalities.
Text Entry	Student responds by writing a brief string of text such as a number, word, or phrase.
Inline Choice	Student selects the correct answers from one or more dropdown menus.
Hot Spot	Student responds by selecting one or more specific areas of a graphic.
Drag and Drop	Student evaluates a given number of options (words, numbers, symbols, etc.) and chooses which responses to drag to a given area (a diagram, map, chart, etc.)
Match Table Grid	Student matches statements or objects to different categories presented in a table grid.
Multiselect	Student can select more than one correct answer from a set of possible answers.
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.
Hot Text	Student cites evidence by selecting highlighted text in a sentence, paragraph, or extended reading.
Short Constructed Response	Student gives a brief explanation in their own words to demonstrate their understanding of content. For writing, student demonstrates proficiency in the skill being assessed by constructing a sentence that corrects a revising or editing error.
Extended Constructed Response	Student writes an in-depth response by explaining, analyzing, and evaluating information provided in a reading selection or stimulus.

Items with Spanish content can be created using the Authoring system. Additionally, there are STAAR Spanish released items in the shared STAAR libraries.

Accommodated Items

Most STAAR accommodations and support tools, including content and language supports, will also be available for released STAAR items in the TFAR item bank. TFAR test attributes must be set in TIDE for Text-to-Speech and Content and Language Supports accommodations to be provided to students. However, Content and Language Supports will not be available on items created by users. Items created by users are also not tagged for accessibility. See the table below for more information about tools and embedded supports for released STAAR items and user-authored items.

Tools and Embedded Supports	User-Authored Items	Released STAAR Items
Text-to-Speech	✓*	✓
Content & Language Supports		✓
Basic Calculator	✓	✓
Graphing/Scientific Calculator	✓	✓
Graph Paper	✓	✓
Periodic Table	✓	✓
Thesaurus	✓	✓
Dictionary	✓	✓
Ruler (Customary & Metric)		
Math Reference Materials		
Science Reference Materials		

*TTS for User-Authored items will read **all** text on page **including** RLA passages.

Most of the standard accessibility tools (e.g., highlighter, color contrast, magnifier) that students are used to interacting with in an online testing environment will also be available on tests created in TFAR.

Sharing Test Content

For 2022-2023, the Authoring system will have one STAAR Released Library. The library will contain both Spanish and English STAAR released items. These items, as well as items created by educators, may be used to create tests at any time using the Authoring system.

The Below Roles Can Share and/or Administer with:	TE	CTC	DTA	DTC	DCU	RCU	ERS	Institution
TE	✓	✓	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup
CTC	✓	✓	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup
DTA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	✓
DTC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	✓
DCU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Only via Workgroup	Only via Workgroup	✓
ERS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RCU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

DCUs and RCUs do not have access to student data in TIDE or Test Administration in TDS.

TFAR Testing Specifications

System Requirements

Test administrators must have a supported browser installed on their computer to use Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) systems. For a detailed list of system requirements, including supported operating systems and web browsers, refer to the Secure Browsers and System Requirements and the Setting Up TDS Workstations sections on the Testing Personnel page of TexasAssessment.gov as well as the Minimum System Requirements for 2022–23 section of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources*. For file uploads and extracts, test administrators will need to be familiar with a spreadsheet application.

Technical Tasks

The following is a list of tasks that campus technology staff should complete:

- **Set Up the Administrator Device**—A test administrator must have an approved version of a web browser installed on any device used for testing. Refer to the Secure Browsers and System Requirements section on TexasAssessment.gov.

- **Set Up Student Devices**—Students will need to install the secure browser on their devices to participate in testing using that application. The application is available for download from the Secure Browsers and System Requirements section on TexasAssessment.gov. Alternatively, students can access the tests via the in-browser option by entering the following URL into the browser URL search bar: https://tx.cambiumtds.com/student.

- **Prepare Network for Online Testing**—Several network configuration tasks must be completed before testing, such as allowlisting, configuring filter systems, and enabling domain name resolution. Technology staff should refer to Setting Up TDS Workstations for directions.

- **Run the Network Diagnostic Tool**—Ensure proper configuration by running the diagnostic tool on each device students will use for testing.

Supported Browsers

Students using personal computers running Windows, macOS, Ubuntu, Fedora, or Chrome OS should download and install either the Chrome or Firefox web browsers. Additionally, Internet Explorer is not supported. Refer to the Setting Up TDS Workstations webpage for a complete list of supported browsers. **NOTE:** Browsers should be set to full screen while taking the test for optimal rendering of test content.

Change Log

Document changes	Version
Training table updated	V2
Authoring Questions table updated	V2
Accommodated Items table updated	V2
Sharing Test Content updated	V2

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