

# STAAR Dictionary Policy

Dictionaries must be available to all students taking the following assessments:

- State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) grades 3–8 reading language arts (RLA)
- STAAR Spanish grades 3–5 RLA
- STAAR English I and English II

The following types of dictionaries are allowable:

- standard monolingual dictionaries in English or the language most appropriate for the student
- dictionary/thesaurus combinations
- bilingual dictionaries\*
- English as a second language (ESL) dictionaries\* (define English words using simplified English)
- sign language dictionaries
- picture dictionaries

Electronic and paper dictionaries, including applications on a tablet, laptop, or desktop computer, are permitted. If a student uses electronic dictionaries during testing, the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) guidelines regarding this technology must be followed to maintain the security and validity of the assessment. Although some technology may be very useful during a daily academic setting, functionalities that violate TEA guidelines may not be used during a state assessment. Refer to the [Technology Guidelines for the Texas Assessment Program](#) section of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* for more information.

To the extent allowable, students must have access to the same type of dictionary they routinely use during classroom instruction and testing while taking any of the assessments listed previously. Additional sections in the dictionary (e.g., abbreviations, biographical or geographical entries, style or grammar guides) do not have to be restricted, as they are also a part of the dictionaries used routinely during classroom instruction. The school may provide dictionaries, or students may bring them from home. Dictionaries may be provided in the most appropriate language for the student. However, specialty dictionaries, such as teacher-made, student-made, subject-specific, or slang, are **NOT** allowed.

The minimum number of dictionaries a school must provide is one for every five students testing, but the state's recommendation is one for every three students or, optimally, one for each student. Although thesauruses are not required, they are allowable on all the tests listed above, either in combination with a dictionary or as a separate resource. If districts make



thesauruses available to students during testing, it is recommended that there be one thesaurus for every five students.

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\*Bilingual and ESL dictionaries should be provided in accordance with individual student needs based on how much students use them during classroom instruction and testing. While there is no requirement regarding the minimum number of bilingual or ESL dictionaries schools must provide for emergent bilingual (EB) students, it is recommended that there be one dictionary for each student. Additionally, it is important for language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) to consider the degree to which an EB student relies on a dictionary during language arts instruction or testing when making exit decisions at the end of the school year.