



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:

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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:

- **New types of test questions:** New, non-multiple-choice question types are more like the kind of questions teachers ask in class and give students more ways to show understanding.
- **More cross-curricular reading passages:** Reading comprehension test questions reference topics students have learned about in other classes.

- **Evidence-based writing incorporated into reading language arts tests:** Combined reading and writing tests better support the interconnected way these subjects are taught and eliminate stand-alone writing tests for grades 4 and 7.
- **Robust accommodations in online tests:** The online testing platform provides a full suite of robust accommodations for students with specific learning needs.
- **Tests administered online:** Online testing supports all the changes above and provides faster test results to support accelerated learning.

2. When is the state summative assessment redesign happening?

As specified in HB 3906 requirements and confirmed by HB 3261, the redesign will be fully implemented in the 2022–23 school year.

Transition to Online Assessments

3. When will students be required to take the test online?

Beginning with the December 2022 test administration, Texas students will be required to take the summative assessments online. However, students with extenuating circumstances that prevent them from testing online may qualify for a special administration on paper. More information about special administrations on paper will be made available soon.

Given the unique needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Alternate 2 program is excluded from the electronic testing requirement and will continue to be administered in the current format.

4. What supports exist to ensure that LEAs have the internet connectivity and devices needed to test online?

TEA recognizes that internet infrastructure is critical to successful online administrations of state summative tests. COVID-19 brought an unprecedented increase in technology funding in the form of Governor Abbott’s Operation Connectivity to provide technology devices and infrastructure to help ensure all students could access online content and stay connected. LEAs are encouraged to continue to improve their online capabilities through resources available from state and federal funding mechanisms such as the state Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment (TIMA) and the federal E-Rate fund to support internet connectivity and fiber projects.

TEA is administering a \$4 million grant intended to help LEAs upgrade their network infrastructure to meet the recommended testing speeds. The [TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant](#) is intended to fund one-time, network infrastructure upgrades, including the purchase and installation of last-mile fiber connection or the best available alternative that will achieve the required bandwidth speeds. The grant will also cover the purchase and one-time installation of internal connections necessary to achieve testing requirements.

LEAs can access the [Transition to STAAR Online Assessments Implementation Guide](#) for more next steps and resources to prepare for online testing. Additionally, TEA will send an online testing readiness survey to a targeted list of districts in February to understand which districts need further support preparing for this transition.

5. What are the minimum bandwidth requirements for testing?

LEAs should aim for the recommended minimum network speeds of 500 kilobits per second (Kbps) per concurrent student tester for all online assessment programs. While the required bandwidth for each test will vary, having bandwidth of at least 500 Kbps will ensure that all tests can be successfully administered online. Although this is the recommended minimum bandwidth for online testing, 1 megabit per second (Mbps) per student is the recommended digital learning standard for schools, as determined by technology leaders across the nation (e.g., Consortium for School Networking [CoSN], State Education Technology Directors Association [SETDA]).

6. What are the minimum device numbers needed for testing?

TEA recommends a student-to-device ratio of 3:1, but each LEA's device needs will vary depending on their local test schedule plan. Although this is the recommended minimum for online testing, a 1:1 student-to-device ratio is the recommended digital learning standard outlined in the state's [Long Range Plan for Technology 2018–2023](#).

7. What are the minimum device specifications for testing?

A secure browser that meets [minimum system requirements](#) must be installed on each device used for testing. Refer to the [Quick Guide for Setting Up Your Online Testing Technology](#) for more information on setting up the test administrator and student workstations, configuring the network for online testing, and configuring assistive technologies.

8. What calculators will students be able to use when taking the grade 8 math and Algebra I tests online?

There are two calculators embedded in the online testing system; students may choose to use one or both options during the test:

- Texas Instruments (TI) 84 Plus CE
- Desmos

Students can also choose to use a handheld calculator or calculator application that aligns with the [Calculator Policy \(updated October 2021\)](#). In the transition to online testing, the calculator policy will not change from this current calculator policy.

9. What calculators will students be able to use when taking the grade 8 science and Biology tests online?

Students have access to a four-function and a scientific calculator embedded in the online testing system. Students may choose to use one or both options during the test.

Students can also choose to use a handheld calculator that aligns with the [Calculator Policy \(updated October 2021\)](#).

10. Will students taking the grades 3–7 tests be able to use a calculator?

Calculators are not permitted for students taking the grades 3–7 mathematics assessments or the grade 5 science assessment unless the student meets certain eligibility criteria. Information regarding calculators as a designated support for students with disabilities can be found on the [Accommodation Resources](#) webpage.



11. Will younger students be able to type constructed responses on computers?

Research and other states show that younger students can type online. NAEP conducted a study with 4th grade students that showed that they are capable of using computer programs to type, organize, and write well enough to be assessed. At least 20 other states already require elementary students to write

extended responses online. Additionally, the Texas technology TEKS requires students to be able to type proficiently by grade 3, including learning the proper touch keyboarding techniques and ergonomic strategies.

Students who need support with typing will still have access to existing transcribing accommodations that allow test administrators to transfer student responses into the online system.



12. Do students show a difference in performance if they take a paper test versus an online test?

[Previous studies](#) conducted for STAAR EOC assessments show that there is no significant difference in student performance by test mode with the exception of English I and English II, which is accounted for in the scoring process. A study conducted by the [Georgia Department of Education](#) in 2014–15 found that there were no significant differences in paper and online performance for their state summative assessments, and the small differences that were observed did not favor a specific mode. The study also surveyed student test takers and found that students consistently preferred to take the tests online as opposed to traditional paper and pencil. Additionally, a 2014–15 study conducted for the [ACT](#) found that students performed better on the online version of the tests than on the paper version.

Starting with the 2022–23 school year, all STAAR tests will be built using online field-test statistics, which will ensure that the tests will continue to have the same level of difficulty as previous years.

New Question Types

13. What are new question types, and why are they part of the state summative assessment redesign?

HB 3906 established a “multiple-choice cap,” meaning that no more than 75% of the total points on a test can be based on multiple-choice questions. These new question types are designed with Texas educators to be more aligned to the types of questions teachers ask in class and give students different ways to show understanding. More information and resources on new question types can be found on the [STAAR redesign webpage](#) on the TEA website.



14. Will 25% of the STAAR tests consist of the new question types and 75% remain multiple-choice questions?

HB 3906 states that **no more** than 75% of the points can come from multiple-choice questions. This means that **at least** 25% of points will come from the new question types, and it’s possible that more than 25% of points could come from the new question types.

15. When will full implementation of the new question types occur?

Students will see new question types on state summative tests beginning in spring 2023.

16. How will each test be organized with the addition of new question types?

Preliminary blueprints for spring 2023, which give basic information about how each test is designed, can be found on the [STAAR redesign webpage](#) on the TEA website.



17. Will every new type of question be on every STAAR test?

No, the new question types vary by subject area and grade level. In addition, the specific new question types selected for use on each STAAR test may vary from year to year.

18. Will the new question types take students longer to complete and, if so, will students have extended time to take the test?

TEA will evaluate the amount of time it takes students to complete the new question types during field-testing in February 2022. TEA will use this information when building tests to ensure the overall length of each test does not exceed statutory time limits.



19. Where can I see examples of the new question types?

New question type samplers can be found at: [Practice and Released Tests \(texasassessment.gov\)](https://www.texasassessment.gov). Use the *Practice Tests Login*.



20. What are the different ways students will be able to practice interacting with the new question types?

There are several ways students will be able to practice interacting with the new question types, including:

- New question type samplers can be found at: [Practice and Released Tests \(texasassessment.gov\)](https://www.texasassessment.gov).
- TEA is planning to release full-length practice tests in fall 2022.
- State-developed interim assessments will include new question types starting in the 2022–23 school year. Interims are a free, benchmarking tool aligned to the TEKS that LEAs can use to monitor student progress and to predict summative assessment performance. Interims are administered on the same online testing platform used to administer the state summative assessments. More information may be found at: [STAAR Interim Assessments | Texas Education Agency](#).
- Additionally, teachers can create their own assessment questions using most new question types in the Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR). TFAR is an online platform that allows teachers to create tests using questions from existing question banks or questions authored by the teacher. The platform used to administer tests created in TFAR is the same online testing platform used to administer the state interim and summative assessments. More information may be found at: [Texas Formative Assessment Resource | Texas Education Agency](#).



21. Some of the new question types look like they require more than one correct answer from a student. Will students get partial credit on those questions?

TEA is currently exploring the implementation of partial credit scoring when students are required to identify more than one correct answer. The final decision on whether to implement partial-credit scoring will be made once field-testing is complete and data has been evaluated.

Information about scoring of questions with partial credit can be found in the scoring guide for each content area that is posted on the [STAAR redesign webpage](#).



22. What are short constructed response questions, and how will they be scored?

Short constructed response questions require students to write a brief response in their own words. These questions often go beyond simple recall or recognition. They require students to demonstrate critical thinking skills such as analyzing and synthesizing. Scoring will focus on the content included in the response and the evidence used to support it.

Information about scoring of questions with partial credit can be found in the scoring guide for each content area that is posted on the [STAAR redesign webpage](#). More information about constructed response questions, including rubrics and sample student responses, will be available in Fall 2022.

Cross-curricular Passages



23. What change is being made to passages that appear on the reading language arts (RLA) test?

There will be an increase in the number of cross-curricular informational passages that reference content aligned to the TEKS for other subject areas (e.g., social studies, science, mathematics, fine arts, etc.). While the cross-curricular passages will include topics from other subject areas, the questions will only assess RLA TEKS; students will not be scored on their understanding of TEKS for other subject areas.



24. What steps are taken to ensure that reading passages are high quality?

Passages will continue to be 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.
- contain enough content to assess multiple student expectations

Evidence-based Writing in Reading Language Arts Tests



25. What TEKS will the reading language arts (RLA) tests assess in 2022–23?

All RLA tests will assess both reading and writing (grades 3–8 English, grades 3–5 Spanish, English I, and English II). Students will be scored on both reading and writing questions.

The assessed curriculum for 2023, as well as preliminary blueprints, which give basic information about how each test is designed, can be found on the [STAAR redesign webpage](#) on the TEA website.



26. What will extended constructed response questions look like in the redesigned RLA tests?

All RLA assessments will include extended constructed response questions which require students to write an essay based on a reading passage. (In the past, the composition question was not connected to a reading passage.)

Extended constructed response questions will require students to write a response in one of three modes: informational, argumentative, or correspondence. (In the past, the only mode on grades 4, 7, and English I EOC was informational and on English II EOC was persuasive.)

More information about constructed response questions, including rubrics and sample student responses, will be available in Fall 2022.

27. What TEKS will the RLA tests assess in 2021–22 as a transition to the 2022–23 redesigned tests?

As a transition to the redesigned RLA tests in 2023, a one-year modification will be implemented in 2022. STAAR RLA tests administered in April through December 2022 will include only items that assess the current 2017 TEKS for reading grades 3–8 English, reading grades 3–5 Spanish, and reading and writing in English I and English II.

The TEKS eligible for assessment on each STAAR test for 2021 and 2022 can be found within the [assessed curriculum](#) documents for each grade/subject and course.

Note: The stand-alone writing tests for grades 4 and 7 have been eliminated. The December 2021 STAAR EOC tests for English I and English II will continue to assess the standards in common between the 2009 and the 2017 TEKS.

28. How will extended constructed responses be scored in 2023?

Extended constructed response essays will be scored using a 5-point rubric. The rubric will include two main components—organization and development of ideas and language conventions.

The organization and development of ideas component will score responses on aspects such as:

- quality and development of the controlling idea
- organization
- use of supporting evidence

The language conventions component will score responses on aspects such as:

- grammar usage
- spelling
- sentence construction

More information about constructed response questions, including rubrics and sample student responses, will be available in Fall 2022.