



Standards
& Testing
Agency

2020 key stage 2 access arrangements guidance

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1 Introduction

This guidance details the access arrangements available for pupils participating in the 2020 key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests.

Pupils with specific needs may require additional arrangements so they can take part in the KS2 tests. Access arrangements are adjustments that can be put in place to support those pupils. Headteachers and teachers must decide whether any of their pupils will need access arrangements before they administer the tests.

1.1 Overview of access arrangements

Access arrangements must never advantage or disadvantage the pupil. Any support should be based primarily on normal classroom practice. Support must not change the test questions and the pupil's answers must be their own.

It may be helpful to use KS2 [practice materials](#)¹ with pupils before administering the tests. This will enable schools to identify whether pupils need additional support or adaptations, either to the test materials or to their administration.

Access arrangements might be used to support pupils who have:

- difficulty reading
- difficulty writing
- difficulty concentrating
- processing difficulties
- a hearing impairment
- a visual impairment
- English as an additional language

Due to the diversity of pupils' needs, this guidance does not list every circumstance where it would be appropriate to use access arrangements. Some pupils may not be able to access the tests, despite the provision of additional arrangements.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-practice-materials

1.2 Evidence

During a [monitoring visit](#)², local authorities (LAs) may ask to see evidence that any support given to pupils in the tests is regularly provided as part of normal classroom practice. Evidence will vary according to the type of support and may include:

- notes recorded in teaching plans
- individual pupil support plans
- a pupil's classwork

1.3 Maladministration

Schools could be subject to a [maladministration investigation](#)³ if they fail to use access arrangements appropriately. This includes:

- failing to make the relevant application or notification, where required
- early opening of test materials without permission from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA)
- doing anything that could be interpreted as over-aiding pupils
- giving pupils unauthorised additional time
- inappropriate use of a reader, prompter, translator or equipment
- not having evidence that access arrangements used in the tests reflect normal classroom practice
- allowing access arrangements to be administered by another pupil, or a relative, carer or guardian of the pupil

A maladministration investigation may lead to the pupil's result being amended or annulled.

² www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-and-phonics-screening-check-monitoring-visits

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stages-1-and-2-investigating-allegations-of-maladministration

2 Important dates

Date	Activity
Monday 17 February	Applications for early opening, compensatory marks for spelling and additional time open in the Primary Assessment Gateway ⁴ .
Friday 13 March	Deadline for schools to submit applications for early opening and compensatory marks for spelling.
Monday 6 April	Schools notified of the outcome of their applications for early opening.
Monday 27 April	Deadline for schools to make applications for additional time.
Thursday 14 May	Online notification form for the use of a scribe, transcript, word processor or other technical or electronic aid opens in the Primary Assessment Gateway.
Friday 22 May	Deadline for submitting notifications of a scribe, transcript, word processor or other technical or electronic aid.

⁴ www.primaryassessmentgateway.education.gov.uk

3 Changes for 2019/20

3.1 Primary Assessment Gateway

The NCA tools website has been replaced by the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#)⁵.

Schools can use the Primary Assessment Gateway to:

- apply for additional time, early opening, compensatory marks for spelling and timetable variations
- make notifications for pupils who were provided with a scribe, transcript, word processor or other technical or electronic aid
- 'Message us' with confidential access arrangements queries

3.2 Access arrangements application period

The time period for schools to make applications for additional time, early opening, compensatory marks for spelling and timetable variations will be different for 2019/20. This is because schools cannot make applications until their pupil data has been loaded into the Primary Assessment Gateway for pupil registration.

The forms will be available in the Primary Assessment Gateway from Monday 17 February. Schools will no longer need to manually enter pupils' details in the application forms. Instead, they will select the pupil from a drop-down list.

3.3 Early opening applications for multiple pupils

Schools can now request early opening for multiple pupils on the same application form, as long as the proposed date and reason for the early opening applications are the same.

3.4 Compensatory marks application outcomes

Schools will no longer need to wait for the outcomes of applications for compensatory marks for spelling. From 2019/20, outcomes are provided automatically upon submission of the form.

⁵ www.primaryassessmentgateway.education.gov.uk

4 Arrangements requiring applications

Schools must apply to STA, in advance, to request permission to use the following access arrangements:

- additional time
- early opening
- compensatory marks for spelling

Schools can submit application forms in the 'Available activity' section of the Primary Assessment Gateway. Schools should check the status of their early opening applications in the 'Outstanding activity' section as STA may request more information.

STA will only consider applications after the deadlines in exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances may be, but are not limited to, where a pupil's needs have significantly changed, or a pupil joins the school after the application deadline. In such cases, schools should contact STA using 'Message us' in the Primary Assessment Gateway to discuss the pupil's requirements.

Schools must not send copies of application forms with the test scripts as this will slow down the marking process.

4.1 Additional time

Pupils automatically qualify for additional time if they:

- have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in place
- use the modified large print (MLP) or braille versions of the tests

Pupils with an EHC plan are automatically allowed up to 25% additional time. Pupils who use the MLP or braille versions of the tests are automatically allowed up to 100% additional time. Schools do not need to complete an application for these pupils.

Additional time to complete the tests may be appropriate for other pupils who:

- require additional time under test conditions to properly demonstrate their knowledge and understanding
- use the standard or enlarged print versions of the tests
- are waiting for confirmation of an EHC plan

Some pupils should not be given additional time as they should not be taking the tests. This includes pupils who:

- have not completed the relevant KS2 programme of study
- are working at the pre-key stage 2 standards or P scales

Schools should consider whether supervised rest breaks during the tests would be more beneficial to pupils than additional time (see section 6.4).

LAs do not make decisions about applications for additional time, although they will be able to view schools' completed applications. Applications cannot be amended or deleted after submission.

Schools must have evidence to justify their responses to the application questions in case they receive a monitoring visit.

4.1.1 Applying for additional time

Teachers with good knowledge of the pupil's needs should make the application. Reports from educational psychologists or other education professionals are not required. This is because pupils who do not hold a report may still be eligible for additional time. Where a report is already in place, teachers can use it to inform their responses about the pupil.

Schools will need to respond to each of the following 7 questions about the pupil. These questions draw on the teacher's assessment of the pupil's particular abilities or needs:

1. Can the pupil respond appropriately to a simple request or instruction given in English, without being prompted or aided by an interpreter or translator?
2. Does the pupil have a hearing impairment that prevents them from being able to respond appropriately to a simple question or instruction given in English, without being prompted or aided by a communicator or sign language interpreter or having to lip read?
3. Does the pupil need braille or enlarged print in order to read and understand text?
4. Can the pupil focus on a task, which requires them to work independently and without interruption, for at least 15 minutes without being prompted to stay on task?
5. Is the pupil prevented from being able to write independently at a speed of more than 10 words per minute by a physical, motor skill or learning disability?
6. Can the pupil read age-appropriate texts aloud and fluently, at a speed of 90 words per minute, without making errors, or with very few errors (this means less than 5 errors per 20 words)?
7. Does the pupil have difficulty processing information, which prevents them from being able to answer questions on practice key stage 2 tests, even when they are allowed to refer back to the questions?

Schools need to answer all questions before submitting the form. The outcome will confirm whether additional time is awarded or whether the school should consider alternative access arrangements.

Additional time is not cumulative. If a pupil qualifies for additional time for more than one reason on the application form, they are only allowed 25% additional time. However, a pupil who qualifies for additional time for 2 reasons may be allowed the use of an aid as well as 25% additional time. For example, a pupil who has difficulty reading and difficulty writing could use a scribe for writing and still qualify for 25% additional time if they are reading independently.

4.2 Early opening to adapt a test paper

Schools may open test papers up to one hour before a test is due to start, to make adaptations or preparations, without seeking permission from STA. This includes modified test papers. This flexibility is designed to help schools that need to make minor adaptations for their pupils, such as:

- photocopying test papers onto coloured paper
- enhancing diagrams
- enlarging text
- making or preparing for a translation

If schools need to open test papers more than one hour early to make more complex adaptations, they must have an approved application for early opening. This includes modified test papers. If you need to make the same adaptations for more than one pupil, and you require the same amount of time, you can include multiple pupils on the same application form.

STA will only allow schools to open standard test materials more than one day before the scheduled date of a test, or modified materials more than 2 days before the scheduled date, in exceptional circumstances. Schools must provide reasons in the application.

Schools do not need to make applications for early opening for subject-specific guidance and models, which are provided with the MLP and braille tests.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that any modifications to the tests are done correctly. STA will not compensate, or give special consideration, where test papers have been incorrectly modified.

Early opening must not be used to administer tests earlier than the date specified in the statutory test timetable.

4.2.1 Applying for early opening

An application for early opening may be appropriate when the following cannot be done in the hour before the start of a test:

- preparations for MLP or braille versions of the tests, such as setting up visual scanning equipment or preparing tactile diagrams
- enlargement or adaptations of a test paper for a pupil with a visual impairment or other special educational needs or disabilities
- communicators or sign language interpreters planning how they will present a test to pupils with a hearing impairment
- preparation of a written translation of the mathematics test

Only the headteacher, or a person making adaptations, should have access to test papers that have been opened early.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the security and confidentiality of test materials before the administration of tests. They are also responsible for the security of the test scripts until they are dispatched for marking.

4.3 Compensatory marks for spelling

Pupils with a profound hearing impairment may not be able to access the spelling paper of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Raw scores from both English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers are needed to give an overall scaled score for the test. Awarding compensatory marks allows pupils to receive an overall scaled score for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Compensatory marks are based on the average raw score achieved by pupils who take the test.

4.3.1 Applying for compensatory marks

STA will provide the application outcome when the form is submitted.

If STA approves an application, the pupil should not take Paper 2: spelling and should be marked 'Absent (A)' on the test attendance register. The pupil should still take Paper 1: questions.

If the spelling test is administered to the pupil, their script must be sent for marking. The pupil will be awarded marks based on their performance in the test. The pupil will not be awarded compensatory marks.

5 Arrangements requiring notifications

Schools do not need to make applications for the following access arrangements, but they must notify STA about their use once all tests have been taken. Schools submit notification forms in the 'Available activity' section of the Primary Assessment Gateway.

At the end of each test, test administrators should inform the headteacher about:

- any pupils who used a scribe, transcript, word processor or other technical or electronic aid
- who acted as the scribe or transcriber, where applicable
- whether the aid was used for all or part of the test

5.1 Scribes

A scribe is a writing assistant who writes out answers dictated by the pupil during the test. Schools can provide a scribe if other options to enable the pupil to work independently are not appropriate and the use of a scribe is normal classroom practice for the pupil.

A scribe can be used when a pupil is:

- unable to use a word processor
- unable to write or has difficulty writing
- known to experience fatigue

5.1.1 Role of a scribe

The scribe must:

- work at the pupil's pace and not hurry them if they need time for reflection, rest or reading
- have a working knowledge of the subject
- follow the pupil's instructions precisely to draw or add to diagrams, charts and graphs in the mathematics tests
- only make a correction on a test script if asked to do so by the pupil

For the mathematics and English reading tests, the scribe should not pause for the pupil to dictate spellings of words, unless the pupil usually works in this way.

For the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test Paper 1: questions, correct spelling is required for questions assessing:

- contracted forms
- verb forms
- plurals
- prefixes and suffixes

The scribe must pause for pupils to dictate relevant spellings and all language, punctuation and phrasing must be the pupil's own.

For the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test Paper 2: spelling, the scribe must pause for each spelling to be dictated.

5.2 Transcripts

A transcript is a copy of a pupil's answers to improve the legibility, made by an adult at the end of the test, before the pupil leaves the test room. Schools can transcribe all or part of a pupil's test script. If the marker can read the pupil's writing, they will mark the original work.

When transcribing a pupil's work, schools must:

- keep the pupil under test conditions and separate from the rest of the cohort until the transcript is complete
- use a different coloured pen from the pupil, but not red
- transcribe alongside the pupil's answers
- make extensive or full transcripts on a new test paper
- return the pupil's original test script with the transcript attached
- avoid changing the pupil's original answers, including the positioning of commas and decimal places in the mathematics tests

Braille test scripts should not be transcribed, as STA will make appropriate marking arrangements.

5.3 Word processors or other technical or electronic aids

Pupils must use equipment independently, preferably in a separate room to the rest of the cohort.

Schools must test the functionality of the equipment by using the KS2 practice materials. If equipment has functionality that would provide the pupil with an unfair advantage and this cannot be turned off, the pupil must not use the equipment in the test. Schools may arrange for the test to be read to the pupil or for a scribe to record the pupil's answers instead.

Schools should ensure that pupils regularly save their work. Pupils cannot restart a test, and STA will not compensate if work is lost. Any partially completed test scripts must be sent for marking.

After the test, the pupil's work should be printed and attached to their test script and returned in the bag for modified scripts. Schools should ensure that all test content is removed from the equipment.

5.3.1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics

The equipment must not:

- read mathematical symbols in the mathematics test
- read punctuation in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test
- have any spell-check functionality turned on

5.3.2 English reading

Word processors or other technical or electronic aids may be used to record pupils' answers in the English reading test. They must not be used to provide reading support, other than to read the general instructions on page 3 of the reading answer booklet.

6 School-delegated arrangements

The following access arrangements may be used without prior approval, or the need to notify STA, as long as they reflect normal classroom practice.

6.1 Written or oral translations

6.1.1 Mathematics

Written translations should be made during the hour before the test is due to start. If this will take longer, schools must make an application for early opening.

Oral translations may be given by a translator at the time of the tests. This must be on a one-to-one basis. If several pupils require a translator but only one is available, the school should stagger the time the pupils take the test or apply for a timetable variation to administer the test on a different day.

Pupils may answer orally, and the translator can scribe the answers.

Alternatively, pupils may write their own answers in English or in their own language. If the pupil's answers are not in English, the translator must make a transcript at the end of the test before the pupil leaves the test room.

The pupil's original test script must be sent for marking along with the translated test script.

6.1.2 English reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling

Translations can only be made to directions or instructions that are not part of the test questions.

No help may be given with reading or understanding the questions or passages of text.

6.1.3 Notes for translators

If the translator scribes or makes a transcript, the headteacher must complete and submit the notification of an aid form.

Translators should be aware that pupils with English as an additional language may not be familiar with some subject-specific vocabulary and technical terms.

Translators may want to review the test paper to check for any unfamiliar vocabulary before the test is administered. Translators should take care to ensure that any translation does not provide additional support or explanation of mathematical terms.

6.2 Readers

Readers must be used on a one-to-one basis. Schools should consider testing pupils who are supported with a reader in a separate room to avoid disturbing other pupils.

Schools should note the name of the reader used by each pupil for their own records.

Readers:

- do not need to be specialists in the subject being tested
- must understand the test format
- must know what may or may not be read to a pupil in particular tests
- must understand any subject-specific issues that might occur

6.2.1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling

The [notes for readers in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test](#)⁶ gives examples of how particular types of questions should be read aloud to a pupil. Readers should make sure they understand the guidance so that they read each question type correctly, particularly for questions with multiple choice answers. This is so they do not give pupils an unfair advantage by reading questions in a particular way.

6.2.2 English reading

As the English reading test is designed to allow pupils to demonstrate reading skills and comprehension, readers may only help pupils to read the general instructions. This includes information on the front cover of the test paper and any directions that are not part of the actual questions. For example, readers may say 'Questions 1 to 15 are about The Panda Bear (pages 4 to 5)'. Readers must not read the texts, questions or any part of a pupil's response back to the pupil. Specific instructions are included in the test pack.

6.2.3 Mathematics

A reader may help a pupil to read the mathematics tests. They may:

- clarify instructions, as long as no additional information is given which could give the pupil an unfair advantage
- read, but not clarify, subject-specific vocabulary

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/notes-for-readers-in-the-english-grammar-punctuation-and-spelling-test-short-answer-questions

If a mathematics question is read to a pupil, the reader may read words and numbers, but not mathematical symbols. This is so that the function of a mathematical symbol is not inadvertently explained by reading its name.

6.3 Prompters

A pupil who is unable to focus independently may be supported by a prompter.

Schools should keep a record of who acted as a prompter.

Prompters should:

- agree the best way to prompt the pupil before the test begins
- be known to the pupil
- be used on a one-to-one basis
- only be used to draw the pupil's attention back to the task

Prompters must not:

- do anything that could be interpreted as over-aiding the pupil
- advise the pupil which questions to answer or when to move on to the next question
- advise or guide the pupil about the order in which they should attempt the questions

If a pupil finds it difficult to focus on individual questions, schools could use adhesive notes or stickers to cover other questions on the page. In these circumstances, the whole question the pupil is currently working on should remain uncovered until the pupil indicates when they want to move on.

6.4 Rest breaks

The majority of pupils should be able to complete the tests without a break. However, supervised rest breaks may be appropriate for pupils who find it difficult to concentrate or experience fatigue. Rest breaks may also be beneficial to pupils using modified versions of the tests.

Schools must supervise pupils and keep them under test conditions during the rest break. There must be no contact with pupils who have taken the test and no discussion of test content.

Rest breaks should be used by stopping and restarting the clock so that the pupil has the same overall test time. Schools may want to split a test into sections for pupils who are known to need a rest break.

If a school decides to split a test, they should:

- divide the test into sections, or plan when the pupil will have a break, during the hour before it is due to start
- keep the questions in the same order
- give the pupil an opportunity to attempt all parts of a paper, so that the outcome of the test properly reflects their knowledge and understanding

For the English reading test, schools might want to consider stopping the test for a rest break once the pupil has completed each passage of text and answered the questions related to that text.

The test must be completed on the same day that it was started. Any partially completed tests must be sent for marking.

6.5 Accessibility objects in the mathematics test

If a pupil is known to have difficulty accessing 2-dimensional diagrams, schools may show them real objects that look like those illustrated in the mathematics test, so they understand the context of the question.

Number apparatus, counters or number squares must not be used.

Test administrators may indicate on the test papers where real objects are available for pupils to look at. Shapes should be identical to those drawn and relative sizes should be the same.

Schools do not need to notify STA, or receive approval, if they are using accessibility objects in the mathematics tests. The arrangement must reflect normal classroom practice.

6.6 Highlighter pens

Pupils may highlight passages of text, in all of the tests, if they do so as part of normal classroom practice.

Highlighter pens must not be used by the pupil to provide answers or by an adult who may be supporting the pupil.

6.7 Administering tests at an alternative location

Schools can administer the tests at an alternative location to the rest of the cohort away from school. This may include administering at a pupil referral unit or the pupil's home, as long as the pupil is in a fit state.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the security and confidentiality of the tests is maintained and the tests are administered according to the [test administration guidance](#)⁷.

If schools need specific advice or additional information on administering the tests at an alternative location, they should contact STA using 'Message us' in the Primary Assessment Gateway.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-test-administration-guidance-tag

7 Illness or injury at the time of the tests

Pupils who are ill on the day of a test should not take it. If a school knows that a pupil is ill they should not administer the test and should consider applying for a [timetable variation](#)⁸ to take the test on another day. Pupils who were ill, but still took the test, do not qualify for special consideration.

If a pupil becomes ill during a test, the school should stop the test and make a note of the time. The pupil can be given a supervised rest break in school and can continue the test with the remaining amount of time when they are feeling better. If the pupil is not able to continue, or is sent home, the partially completed test script must be sent for marking.

If the pupil leaves the school premises, they will have left test conditions and must not be allowed to continue or restart the test when they return to school.

If the pupil needs a scribe because of a hand or wrist injury that happened within a week of the tests, schools may also allow up to 25% additional time. This is because the pupil is unfamiliar with working with a scribe.

If the pupil is already familiar with working with a scribe, additional time must not be given but the school needs to submit a notification of scribe form.

⁸ www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-how-to-apply-for-a-timetable-variation

8 Further information

8.1 Modified tests

Schools can order and discuss the suitability of braille, enlarged print and MLP versions of KS2 tests by contacting the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 (select option 3) or emailing modifiedtesthelpline@iwanttoconnect.co.uk.

8.2 Help and support

For general enquiries about access arrangements, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

For queries relating to access arrangements to meet a pupil's specific needs, schools can 'Message us' in the Primary Assessment Gateway.



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