

DHH
Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

M-STEP Guide for Teachers of Students Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (DHH)

Everything (or almost everything) Teachers of
Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing
Need to Know About M-STEP

- **Overview**
- **Assessment Structure**
- **Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations**
- **Trying Out the Online Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations**
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Overview

This guide addresses some of the major questions teachers might have related to the kinds of Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations that are allowable

for students on the M-STEP assessments.

Note: Much of the information in this document can be found in the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#).

Assessment Structure

The M-STEP is composed of the following content areas and language domains in the corresponding grade levels:

Mathematics – Grades 3-7: Reading is required to answer a variety of question types.

English language arts (ELA) – Grades 3-7: Reading is required to answer a variety of question types. Typing (or Writing) is required to answer some constructed response questions. Listening is required to answer content provided via audio.

Science – Grades 5, 8, 11: Reading is required to answer a variety of question types.

Social Studies – Grades 5, 8, 11: Reading is required to answer a variety of question types.

The default mode for testing is online. However, a student may take the paper/pencil form of the assessment if necessary.

Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Test Timing

The M-STEP assessments are untimed. Students can take the time they need to complete the test, as long as that time falls within the appropriate testing window. Refer to the [M-STEP Important Dates](#) document for more information about the testing windows.

associated video and each question related to the Listening passage will have a video. Students can replay the video as many times as they would like.

Video Sign Language

Students can use a video sign language option for the M-STEP mathematics and ELA tests. This option plays an embedded video of a human signer who signs the test question and answer options. For M-STEP mathematics, every question will have a video. For M-STEP ELA, each Listening passage will have an

Text-to-Speech

There are two types of text-to-speech options for students taking the online M-STEP assessments. Both options provide a synthesized voice for students. Not all students who are DHH will benefit from using this type of support. Some students who have to utilize their lip-reading skills may need to have an in-person human reader. For these situations, see the section of this document related to using in-person human readers.

The two different text-to-speech options that can be enabled by your district's test coordinator are:

- **Text-to-Speech (TTS) – Designated Support**
 - Available for M-STEP mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts; available for students at all assessed grade levels
 - Reads aloud the test questions, passage-based writing readings, and answer options
 - Students can replay the audio as many times as they would like
- **Text-to-Speech Passage (TTS Passage) – Accommodation**
 - Available for M-STEP English language arts, only for students in grades 6-7 whose IEP or Section 504 plan indicates this need
 - Reads aloud the test questions, passaged-based writing readings, answer options, and reading passages
 - Students can replay the audio as many times as they would like

In-Person Human Reader

An in-person human reader can be used for any of the content areas. However, there are some differences between such use for the paper/pencil test and for the online test.

An in-person human reader can be used with students who may:

- need lip reading
- strongly need to have the test administered by someone with whom they are familiar (that is, their daily instructor)
- have a difficult time understanding the synthesized voice produced by the online system's text-to-speech

An in-person human reader can be used in the following ways for the M-STEP:

- **Mathematics:** Can be used with online or paper/pencil testing; must be administered in a one-on-one setting; the Read-Aloud Guidelines in the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#) must be used
- **ELA:** Can be used with online or paper/pencil testing; must be administered in a one-on-one setting; the Read-Aloud Guidelines in the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#) must be used
- **Science and Social Studies:** Can be used as a support only for the paper/pencil testing; the reader must use the Reader Script, which is only available for the paper/pencil test (if you are administering the M-STEP assessment and you do not have the Reader Script, obtain it from your Building or District M-STEP Coordinator); the assessment can be administered to an individual student or in a small group of no more than 5 students of the same grade level and content area

Tips for Readers: To Monotone or Not to Monotone

The Read-Aloud Guidelines found in the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#) say readers should “strive to communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.” This does not mean that readers have to read in a monotone voice without any inflection. It does mean that readers should not overexaggerate words/phrases/sentences/punctuation in a manner that would provide an unnecessary emphasis on any part of the test.

Similarly, the Guidelines say that readers should “avoid gestures, head movements, or

any verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words not otherwise emphasized in text.” Again, the point of this guidance is to ensure that readers are not exaggerating movements that might give away answers. Remember that the tests are designed to show what the student knows, not what the reader knows.

In-Person Signer/Interpreter

For some students, the use of the embedded video sign language option might not be a good choice.

An in-person signer/interpreter can be used with students who:

- might find using the online videos to be difficult; this could include younger students or others with difficulties involving fine motor skills
- strongly need to have the test administered by someone with whom they’re familiar (that is, their daily instructor)

An in-person signer/interpreter can do the following:

- An interpreter may sign the directions, test questions, and answer options for the M-STEP mathematics, science, and social studies assessments.

- For ELA, interpreters can only sign the directions, the content from the Listening passages, and the question/answer options for questions related to the Listening passage. So, if a question does not have a Listening passage with it, it cannot be signed to a student.
- Additionally, for science and social studies, it may be preferable for the students to take the paper/pencil version of the assessment, so the interpreter can use the Reader Script. The script for an interpreter to follow is available for the online mathematics or ELA tests.

For help in determining if, when a signer/interpreter is being used, an assessment can be group administered or administered to an individual student, send an e-mail to the OEAA at mde-oeaa@michigan.gov.

Closed Captioning

Closed captioning is available for the audio portion of the M-STEP ELA test. Some questions contain Listening passages and the content of that audio can be displayed on screen for the student to read. The closed captioning plays with the audio and can be replayed as many times as the student would like.

Trying Out the Online Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

The only way that you and students can determine if a tool meets their needs is to have them try out the tools. You can try out all of the online Universal Tools, Designated

Supports, and Accommodations by following the directions to access the Online Tools Trainings (OTTs) at [this link](#).

Individualized Needs

Because of the very individualized needs of many of your students, you may come across a scenario that doesn't fit neatly into the areas described in this document. When those situations arise, contact Jen Paul at the Michigan Department of Education for help in determining what might work best. Send an e-mail to mde-oeaa@michigan.gov to ask your question or to set up a time to talk.

The [M-STEP website](#) provides additional helpful resources for educators. Consult your District's Assessment Coordinator for further information and resources. If you feel the the district coordinator is not adequately addressing all aspects of the M-STEP test – including making sure your students' needs are being met during testing – become your own advocate for your students.