



Smarter Balanced Accessibility

MITCH AULAKH



Overview

- Where are we coming from?
 - An overview of the past
- Where are we now?
 - Highlighting our transition efforts
- What does the future look like?
 - Mapping the new landscape in education

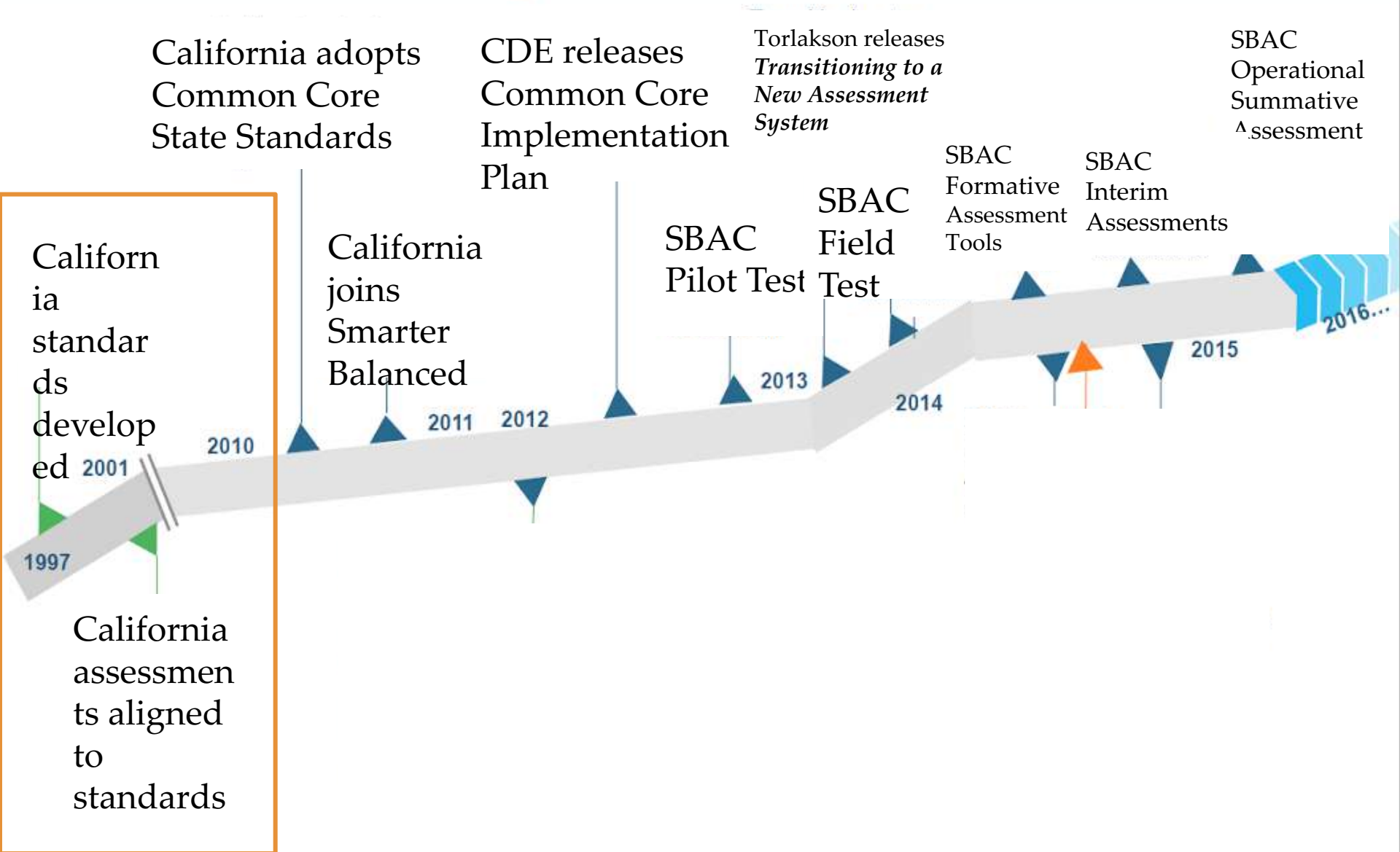




Where are we coming from?

- California Standardized Tests (CST) and California Modified Assessment (CMA)
 - ELA, math, science, and history
 - Science to continue
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
 - ELA, math, and science
 - Science to continue
- Grades 2-11
- Based on 1997/98 adoption of California state standards

Journey Towards the Implementation of College and Career- Readiness



Samples - ELA (Grade 3)



Halley's Comet

1 For centuries comets have been one of our biggest mysteries. They are among the most beautiful and interesting sights in the universe. People from all over the world have been surprised—and often scared—by the sight of a comet blazing across the sky. Edmund Halley, an astronomer in the late 1600s, was very interested in comets. He studied them for most of his life.



2 Part of Halley's studies involved measuring the paths of comets through the night sky. Halley learned that comets move around the Sun in the path of an ellipse. (An ellipse is like a circle that has been stretched out in one direction.) He ascertained that because comets travel in an elliptical path, the same comet could be seen from Earth again and again. This was a brand new concept during his time.

3 In 1682, Halley noticed a comet that was especially bright and large. He spent a long time studying it. Then it disappeared from view. Based on his calculations, Halley predicted that this bright comet would return in 1758 or 1759. This was about 75 years after he first saw the comet. However, Halley died in 1742. Thus, he was not able to see that he was correct. This same bright comet returned right on time. Not long after that, because Halley had learned so much about it, the comet was named "Halley's comet" in his honor.

4 Scientists who had been following Halley's work began to look back through history. They learned that for centuries there had been mention of a comet in the sky about every 75 years, going all the way back to 467 B.C. Often, the return of Halley's comet seemed to coincide with important events in history. For many years people believed that Halley's comet caused catastrophes, from sicknesses to war.

5 Since then, scientists have learned more about comets. They now know that comets do not cause bad events. They have also learned what comets are like. All comets consist of a head and a tail. Some comet tails are longer than others. The head is made mostly of ice, plus some dust and pieces of rock. U.S. astronomer Fred Whipple coined the phrase "dirty snowballs" to describe comets. Comets move through the sky very quickly. However, their speed depends on how close they are to the Sun. When Halley's comet is farthest from the Sun, or at its *aphelion*, it moves about 2,040 miles per hour. When it is closest to the Sun, or at its *perihelion*, it moves at an amazing 122,000 miles per hour!

6 For a long time scientists wondered where comets came from. Today, most scientists believe that comets come from an unseen cloud of particles called the Oort cloud. This cloud probably surrounds our solar system. It may contain somewhere between 10 and 100 trillion comets.

7 People today remain fascinated by this celestial time-traveler. The most recent visit from Halley's comet was in 1985-1986. This time, scientists all over the world studied the comet. Two Soviet spacecraft, the *Vega 1*

Go On ►



Dolphins Use Mirrors to Observe Changes in Themselves



- 1 Until recently, it was not known if creatures other than chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, and humans could identify themselves in a mirror. Cats and dogs have been known to see themselves in a mirror and think another cat or dog was looking at them. Studies have shown that dolphins are able to use mirrors to notice the difference between themselves and other dolphins.
- 2 Dolphins have excellent memory skills. Researchers at New York Aquarium performed a test to determine if the dolphins' high level of intelligence would include recognizing themselves in a mirror. First, researchers placed 13-year-old Presley and 17-year-old Tab in a pool with mirrored walls. Then, the dolphins were marked with nonpoisonous black ink on their heads, stomachs, or fins which they could not see without a mirror. Both Presley and Tab swam directly to the mirror, each turning and angling to expose the mark and taking a long, hard look in the mirror. It was the first time a dolphin had reacted to a mirror by examining itself.
- 3 The test was repeated with the marked location changing each time, but the reaction was always the same. The dolphins swam straight to the mirror and studied the marked spot on their bodies. They were not interested in the marks placed on their partner. Presley and Tab became the first marine mammals to demonstrate an ability to recognize themselves and to notice changes in their appearance.

CMA

Go On ►

Differences between CST and CMA reading passages:

CST

- Standard passage length
- Customary use of white space
- Standard font sizes
- Font - Times (a serif font)

CMA

- Shortened passage length
- Additional white space
- Larger font sizes
- Font - Helvetica (a sans serif font)

CMA

Samples - ELA (Grade 3) continued



Part 1 California English-Language Arts Standards Test

and Vega 2 got a close look at the comet as it raced around the Sun. Halley's comet should next return in 2061. Who knows what high-tech equipment will be around to study it then? However, other comets are periodically discovered making a once-in-a-life-time visit. If you get the chance to study one of these stellar fireballs, do so. You'll be thrilled!

Edmond Halley is born	Halley discovers the comet for the first time	Halley visits London Museum to discuss the laws of gravity	Halley focuses on the study of comets	Halley dies	The comet returns in view as Halley predicted
1686	1682	1684	1704	1742	1759

References

Anderson, Norman, and Walker Brown. *Halley's Comet*. New York: Dodd Mead Company, 1981.

"Halley's Comet" 12 July 2001 <<http://www.britannica.com>>.

Winter, Frank H. *Comet Watch: The Return of Halley's Comet*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1986.

1 Which of these is an opinion from this passage?

- A Halley's comet should return in 2061.
- B Halley's comet returns about every 75 years.
- C Comets are made mostly of ice, dust, and rocks.
- D You'll be thrilled by the sight of a comet.

Go On ►



Part 2 California Modified Assessment

1 Which of these is an OPINION based on the passage?

- A Dolphins have good memories.
- B Dolphins are only interested in themselves.
- C Dolphins have a high level of intelligence.

2 Read these sentences.

Frankie loves to play soccer. Frankie is my friend.

How can these sentences BEST be combined?

- F My friend Frankie loves to play soccer.
- G Frankie loves to play soccer, my friend.
- H My friend is Frankie he loves to play soccer.

Go On ►

Differences between CST and CMA multiple choice items for ELA:

CST

- Two -columns for most items
- Four answer choices for each item
- Customary use of white space
- Standard font sizes and font (Times)

CMA

- One column for most items
- Three answer choices for each item
- Additional white space
- Larger font sizes and font (Helvetica)

CMA

Samples - Mathematics (Grade 5)

123

Part 1 California Mathematics Standards Test

1 $c + 2\frac{1}{2}$

Which situation could be described by the expression above?

- A Lia jogged c miles yesterday, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles further today.
- B Lia jogged c miles yesterday, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles fewer today.
- C Lia jogged $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles yesterday, and c miles fewer today.
- D Lia jogged $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles yesterday, and c times as far today.

2 What is the volume of a cube that measures 10 inches on each edge?

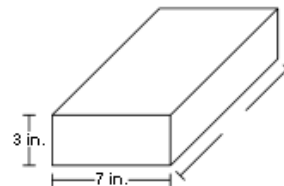
- F 10 cubic inches
- G 100 cubic inches
- H 1000 cubic inches
- J 10,000 cubic inches

Go On ►

California Modified Assessment Part 1

123

2 What is the volume, in cubic inches, of this rectangular solid?



- F 21 in.³
- G 63 in.³
- H 189 in.³

Go On ►

Differences between CST and CMA multiple choice items for mathematics:

CST

- Two -columns for most items
- Four answer choices for each item
- Customary use of white space
- Standard font sizes and font (Times)

CMA

- One column for most items
- Graphics for most items
- Three answer choices for each item
- Additional white space
- Larger font sizes and font (Helvetica)

CMA

Samples - Science (Grade 5)

California Science Standards Test

Part 1



1 Which of the following converts electrical energy into motion?

- A light switch
- B electric stove
- C light bulb
- D electric fan

2 Which list gives the correct order of food traveling through the digestive system after it is swallowed?

- F stomach, esophagus, large intestine, small intestine
- G small intestine, large intestine, esophagus, stomach
- H esophagus, stomach, large intestine, small intestine
- J esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine

Go On ►

CSS 20105 Sample

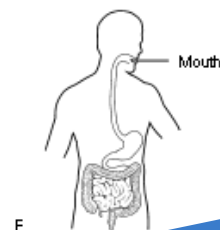
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California Modified Assessment

Part 1



2 Where does food first begin to digest?



G

H

Go On ►

STAR Test Format
Multiple Choice, Single Correct Response

Differences between CST and CMA multiple choice items for science:

CST

- Two -columns for most items
- Four answer choices for each item
- Customary use of white space
- Standard font sizes and font (Times)

CMA

- One column for most items
- Graphics for most items (stems and options)
- Three answer choices for each item
- Additional white space
- Larger font sizes and font (Helvetica)



Alternate Assessments



California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)

- **The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate assessment for children with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) even with accommodations or modifications.**

Replacement still
unknown

- **Alternate achievement standards**





Alternate Assessment Additional Information

- California participated in the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment pilot test
- Potentially utilizing some of the questions from NCSC and developing additional items to do a field test of our own
- More information to come...





Moving Forward with New Assessments



Overview of New Assessment Methods

- STAR is now CAASPP
 - STAR: Standardized Testing and Reporting
 - CAASPP: California Annual Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
- Smarter Balanced Assessments
 - ELA and math in grades 3-8 and 11
 - Computer adaptive portion and performance task
- First round of official results after testing in spring!





The Assessment Challenge

How do we get from here . . .

**Common Core
State Standards
specify K-12
expectations for
college and
career readiness**

. . . to here?

**All students
leave high school
college- and
career-ready**

. . . and what can an assessment
system do to help?



New ELA List of Item Types

- Multiple Choice, Single Correct Response = **MC**
- Multiple Choice, Multiple Correct Response = **MS**
- Evidence-Based Selected Response, 2 part MC = **EBSR**
- Hot Text, Select Text = **HT**
- Hot Text, Reorder Text = **HR**
- Matching Tables = **TM**
- Short Text Constructed Response = **ST**
- Written Response = **WR**

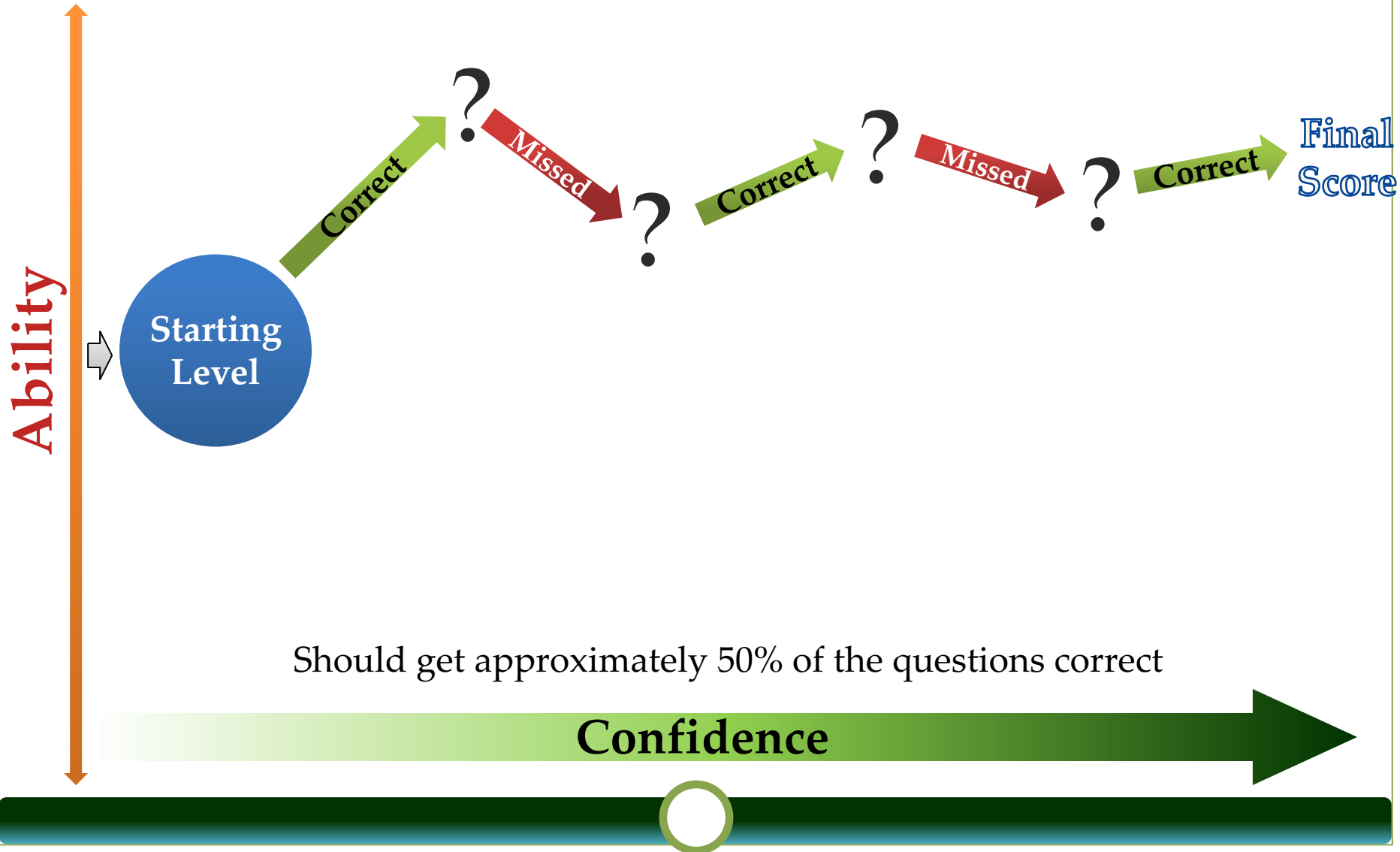


New List of Math Item Types

- Multiple Choice, Single Correct Response = **MC**
- Multiple Choice, Multiple Correct Response = **MS**
- Equation/Numeric = **EQ**
- Drag & Drop = **DD**
- Hot Spot = **HS**
- Graphing = **GR**
- Matching Tables = **MT**
- Fill In Tables = **TI**
- Short Text = **ST**



Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)





Performance Tasks

“Performance tasks provide an opportunity to challenge students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to complex, real-world problems. They can best be described as collections of questions and tasks presented to students that are coherently connected to a single theme or scenario.”





Practice Practice Practice!

- <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>

The screenshot shows the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium website. The logo is in the top left, and the text 'Stay Connected' is in the top right. A navigation bar contains the following items: ABOUT, SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENTS, K-12 EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION, and PARENTS. A dropdown menu is open under 'SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENTS', listing: Field Test, Practice and Training Tests (highlighted with a red box), Sample items and Performance Tasks, Interim Assessments, Item Writing and Review, Achievement Levels, Computer Adaptive Testing Technology, and Test Administration. On the left, there is a photo of a young boy in an orange shirt sitting at a desk with a computer. On the right, the main content area features the heading 'Take the Practice Test' and the text: 'Get an early look at English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessment questions aligned to the Common Core. [READ MORE](#)'.





Practice Test Options

Choose Settings:

G5 Math Practice Test

Language: English ▾

Masking: Masking Not Available ▾

Strikethrough:

Mark for Review:

American Sign Language: Off ▾

Highlighter:

Color Contrast: Yellow on Blue ▾

Text-to-Speech: Stimuli ▾

Word List: English Glossary ▾

Expandable Passages: Expandable Passages On ▾

Test Shell: Standard Test Shell ▾

[Go Back](#)

[Select](#)





New Reports!

Mathematics

Summative Spring 2017

Effective Date: 5/15/2017

The scale, units, and cut-scores are illustrative and are expected to change. Score summaries will be revised in Summer 2014, and tailored by grade and subject in terms of the knowledge, skills, and processes that you have demonstrated you can do.

Overall Score

1872

Adequate Understanding

5

Draft score summary: A student at Level 3 demonstrates **Adequate Understanding** of and ability to apply the mathematics knowledge and skills needed for success in college and careers, as specified in the Common Core State Standards.



π Concepts & Procedures

8

⊖ At/Near Standard

Students can explain and apply mathematical concepts and carry out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency.



Problem Solving and Modeling & Data Analysis

⊖ At/Near Standard

Students can solve a range of complex, well-posed problems in pure and applied mathematics, making productive use of knowledge and problem-solving strategies. Students can analyze complex, real-world scenarios and can construct and use mathematical models to interpret and solve problems.



Communicating Reasoning

✔ Above Standard

Students can clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others.

9

Accommodations

More information available at:

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Reporting-System-Overview.pdf>



Making Assessments *Accessible*



Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations

- Formally known as “Accommodations and Modifications”
 - STAR to CAASPP
- Purpose: provide **ACCESS** to students
 - Yield valid results about student learning
- Basis of providing access: barriers present, but do not modify the “construct being measured”





Which Tools Are Available?

What Tools Are Available for my Student?

	All Students	English language learners (ELLs)	Students with disabilities	ELLs with disabilities
Universal Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓
Designated Supports	✓ ¹	✓ ¹	✓	✓
Accommodations			✓	✓

¹ Only for instances that an adult (or team) has deemed the supports appropriate for a specific student's testing needs.



Universal Tools

All Students

Embedded

Breaks, Calculator, Digital Notepad, English Dictionary, English Glossary, Expandable Passages, Global Notes, Highlighter, Keyboard Navigation, Mark for Review, Math Tools, Spell Check, Strikethrough, Writing Tools, Zoom

Non-embedded

Breaks, English Dictionary, Scratch Paper, Thesaurus

Designated Supports

Adult Rec

Embedded

Color Contrast, Masking, Text-to-speech, Translated Test Directions, Translations (Glossary), Translations (Stacked), Turn off Any Universal Tools

Non-embedded

Bilingual Dictionary, Color Contrast, Color Overlay, Magnification, Noise Buffers, Read Aloud, Scribe, Separate Setting, Translated Test Directions, Translation (Glossary)

Accommodations

Embedded

American Sign Language, Braille, Closed Captioning, Streamline, Text-to-speech

Non-embedded

Abacus, Alternate Response Options, Calculator, Multiplication Table, Print on Demand, Read Aloud, Scribe, Speech-to-text

504 or IEP



Universal Tools

- **Universal tools** are access features of the assessment that are either provided as digitally-delivered components of the test administration system or separate from it.
- Available to all students
- Embedded (in the test system) and Non-Embedded (not in the test system)
- Breaks, calculator (for certain items), digital notepad, English Dictionary (for performance tasks), English glossary, expandable passages, global notes, highlighter, etc...





Embedded Universal Tool Sample

Questions: 1 / 7

SAVE

1

Select the sentences that support the inference that the area is in population. Select **all** that apply:

A similar boom-and-bust cycle occurred in the 1920s. At that time, a wolf, a moose, a porcupine, a beaver, and a mink were all present. And we had a lot of food. The whole pack of pups, and the members of the pack, and more moose get eaten. However, the population of the area decreased.

2

Which of the following sentences from the passage **best** support living organisms are part of the food chain?

(A) "The energy you use to live every day travels from one living organism to another in a chain that starts with the sun."

- Mark for Review
- Notepad
- Tutorial

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0	.	$\frac{\square}{\square}$

city park

Glossary

an open, public space with grass





Designated Supports

- Features available to **any student** for whom the need has been indicated by an educator or team of educators
- Must be activated prior to testing (input into test system)
- Color contrast, masking, Text-to-Speech (math stimuli, not for passages), translations, etc...
- Embedded and Non-Embedded





Embedded Designated Supports

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

A Few New Neighbors
by Kerry McGee

One afternoon, Jessie spotted a tiny bird fluttering around Mrs. Baxter's front door. Mrs. Baxter had just moved into an apartment.

It's probably looking for somebody to fill the bird feeders, Jessie thought.

The bird perched on the edge of the wreath. Then it disappeared.

Disappeared? Jessie ran over to Mrs. Baxter's door. Where had it gone?

A jumble of sticks and grass stuck out from the middle of the wreath. Suddenly, Jessie understood. A nest! A bird's nest sat right in the middle of Mrs. Baxter's wreath. The bird poked its head out and looked at Jessie. Then it fluttered away.

1



Which number is equal to 10^4 ?

- A 100
- B 1,000
- C 10,000
- 100,000



Accommodations

- **Accommodations** are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the Smarter Balanced assessments.
- Prescribed in 504 or IEP plan and loaded before testing
 - IEP team
 - Regularly used in class
- American Sign Language (ASL), Braille, closed captioning, Text-to-Speech (ELA passages), abacus
- Embedded and Non-Embedded





So what are the supports?

Appendix A: Summary of Smarter Balanced Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

	Universal Tools	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Embedded	Breaks Calculator ¹ Digital Notepad English Dictionary ² English Glossary Expandable Passages Global Notes Highlighter Keyboard Navigation Mark for Review Math Tools ³ Spell Check ⁴ Strikethrough Writing Tools ⁵ Zoom	Color Contrast Masking Text-to-Speech ⁶ Translated Test Directions ⁷ Translations (Glossary) ⁸ Translations (Stacked) ⁹ Turn off Any Universal Tools	American Sign Language ¹⁰ Braille Closed Captioning ¹¹ Streamline Text-to-Speech ¹²
Non-embedded	Breaks English Dictionary ¹³ Scratch Paper Thesaurus ¹⁴	Bilingual Dictionary ¹⁵ Color Contrast Color Overlay Magnification Read Aloud Noise Buffers Scribe ¹⁶ Separate Setting Translated Test Directions Translations (Glossary) ¹⁷	Abacus Alternate Response Options ¹⁸ Calculator ¹⁹ Multiplication Table ²⁰ Print on Demand Read Aloud Scribe Speech-to-Text

*Items shown are available for ELA and math unless otherwise noted.



Getting Specific

- California is also working on an additional category of supports called **individualized aids**
- Details are still not fully released, but an additional support may be utilized by special request





Resources

- CAASPP Matrix:
 - <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/documents/caasppmatrix1.pdf>
- Smarter Balanced Accessibility Guidelines:
 - http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines.pdf
- Smarter Balanced Guidelines FAQ:
 - http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_FAQ.pdf
- Smarter Balanced practice tests
 - <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>
- Interim assessments to come soon!





CAASPP Matrix

Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for the CAASPP for 2014–15

Universal Tool (U) Designated Support (D) Accommodation (A)	English-Language Arts			Mathematics	Science California Standards Test (CST) and California Modified Assessment (CMA)	Primary Language Standards Test in Spanish (STS) for Reading/Language Arts
	Reading	Writing	Listening			
Math Tools (i.e., non-embedded ruler, non-embedded protractor)	–	–	–	U (for specific items)	–	–
Multiplication Table	–	–	–	A (beginning in grade 4)	–	–
Noise buffers (e.g., individual carrel or study enclosure or noise-cancelling headphones)	D	D	D	D	D	D
Print on Demand	A	A	A	A	–	–
Pupil marks in paper-pencil test booklet (other than responses including highlighting)	U	U	U	U	U	U
Read Aloud (previously known as "Test questions and answer options read aloud to pupil or used audio CD presentation – excluding passages")	D (for items, not passages)					
	A (for ELA reading passages, grades 6–8 and 11: visually impaired in grades 3–8 and 11 who do not yet have adequate braille skills)	D	D	D	A	A
Scratch Paper	U	U	U	U	U	U





Embedded Accommodations

Table 5 lists the embedded accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessments for those students for whom the accommodations are included on an IEP or 504 plan. The table includes a description of each accommodation along with recommendations for when the accommodation might be needed and how it can be used. For those accommodations that may be considered controversial, a description of considerations about the use of the accommodation is provided.

Table 5. Embedded Accommodations

Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
American Sign Language (ASL) (for ELA Listening items and math items)	Test content is translated into ASL video. ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen. Students may view portions of the ASL video as often as needed.	Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who typically use ASL may need this accommodation when accessing text-based content in the assessment. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. For many students who are deaf or hard of hearing, viewing signs is the only way to access information presented orally. It is important to note, however, that some students who are hard of hearing will be able to listen to information presented orally if provided with appropriate amplification and a setting in which extraneous sounds do not interfere with clear presentation of the audio presentation in a listening test.
Braille	A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Contracted and non-contracted braille is available; Nemeth code is available for math.	Students with visual impairments may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. Refreshable braille is available only for ELA because Nemeth Code is not available via refreshable braille. For math, braille will be presented via embosser; embosser-created braille can be used for ELA also. The type of braille presented to the student (contracted or non-contracted) is set in TIDE, or state's comparable platform. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Closed captioning (for ELA listening items)	Printed text that appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented.	Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who typically access information presented via audio by reading words that appear in synchrony with the audio

Section III: Smarter Balanced

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials for Smarter Balanced assessments. Assessment accommodations for students who need them; they allow these students to show what they know. Smarter Balanced states have identified digitally-embedded and non-digital accommodations for students for whom there is documentation of the need for the accommodation (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan. One example is for students who have had a physical injury (e.g., broken hand) and cannot use a computer. These students may use the speech-to-text accommodation. Students who have had sufficient experience with the use of these), as noted in the TIDE, may use these accommodations.

Determination of which accommodations an individual student needs for an assessment is necessary because these accommodations may be needed for an assessment, either by entering information into the TIDE, or by ensuring that the material is accessible for non-embedded accommodations.

The Smarter Balanced Test Administration and Student Accommodations could increase cognitive load or create other barriers for students who need them or who have not had experience using them. Because Smarter Balanced states agreed that a student's parent/guardian should be responsible for specific accommodations through a parent/guardian report, parents/guardians are aware of the conditions under which accommodations are used. Information included in the parent/guardian report is used for educational decisions (such as eligibility for an Advanced Placement course) and for documenting/reporting the use of the accommodation elsewhere.

Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations

IEP teams and educators make decisions about accommodations for students with IEPs or 504 plans) provide evidence of the need for accommodation in the IEP or 504 plan.

The IEP team (or educator developing the 504 plan) is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is entered into the TIDE, or state's comparable platform, so that accommodations can be activated prior to testing. This can be done by one person from the team to enter information into the TIDE, or by providing information to the test coordinator who enters into the TIDE, or a form that lists all accommodations and designates the responsible person on IEPs or 504 plans.

Smarter
Assessment Consortium
Usability, Accessibility,
and Accommodations

Prepared with
National Center on



Guidelines: Frequently Asked Questions

November 5, 2014

Smarter Balanced states identified frequently asked questions (FAQs) and develop responses to support the information provided in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines. These questions and responses to the information in the Guidelines document apply to the Smarter Balanced interim assessments.

States may use these FAQs to assist districts and schools with transitioning from their assessments to the Smarter Balanced assessments. In addition, the FAQs may be used to ensure understanding among staff and schools regarding the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessments. Use them with decision-making teams (including parents) as decisions are made and in respect to use of the Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.

Additional information to aid in the implementation of the Guidelines is available in Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) Module, the Test Administration Implementation Guide. These documents will be made available over the next few weeks.

The FAQs are organized into four sections. First are general questions. Second is a section about specific universal tools and designated supports. Questions that pertain to specific universal tools and designated supports. Questions that pertain to specific universal tools and designated supports. Questions that pertain to specific universal tools and designated supports. Questions that pertain to specific universal tools and designated supports.

Overview of FAQs, with Links to Answers

General FAQs

1. What are the differences among the three categories of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations?
2. Which students should use each category of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations?
3. What is the difference between embedded and non-embedded approaches? How might educators decide what is most appropriate?
4. Who determines how non-embedded accommodations (such as read aloud) are provided?
5. Are any students eligible to use text-to-speech for ELA reading passages on Smarter Balanced assessments?
6. Why are some accommodations that were previously allowed for my state listed in the Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines?
7. Under which conditions may a state elect not to make available to its students an accommodation that is allowed by Smarter Balanced?
8. Can states allow additional universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations for individual students on a case by case basis?
9. What is to be done for special cases of "sudden" physical disability?



Guidelines: Frequently Asked Questions

identify accommodations for students for whom there is documentation of the need for the accommodations on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan.

Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations may be either embedded in the test administration system or provided locally (non-embedded).

2. Which students should use each category of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations?

Universal tools are available to all students, including those receiving designated supports and those receiving accommodations. Designated supports are available only to students for whom an adult or team (consistent with state-designated practices) has indicated the need for these supports (as well as those students for whom the need is documented).

Accommodations are available only to those students with documentation of the need through either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan. Students who have IEPs or 504 accommodation plans also may use designated supports and universal tools.

What Tools Are Available for my Student?

	All Students	English language learners (ELLs)	Students with disabilities	ELLs with disabilities
Universal Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓
Designated Supports	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accommodations			✓	✓

* Only for instances that an adult (or team) has deemed the supports appropriate for a specific student's testing needs.

3. What is the difference between embedded and non-embedded approaches? How might educators decide what is most appropriate?

Embedded versions of the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are provided digitally through the test delivery system while non-embedded versions are provided at the local level through means other than the test delivery system. The choice between embedded and non-embedded universal tools and designated supports should be based on the individual student's needs. The decision should reflect the student's prior use of, and experience with, both embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. It is important to note that although Print on Demand is a non-embedded accommodation, permission for students to request printing must first be set in Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) or the state's comparable platform.

4. Who determines how non-embedded accommodations (such as read aloud) are provided?

IEP teams and educators make decisions about non-embedded accommodations. These teams (or educators for 504 plans) provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan (see Guidelines, pages 15-17). States are responsible for ensuring that districts and schools follow Smarter Balanced guidance on the implementation of these accommodations (see [professional development materials]).



Questions?

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