



# Descriptions of FCAT Accommodations

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2003

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## **Descriptions of FCAT Accommodations**

Described below are accommodations that may be used for the FCAT. These are accommodations that may be used when presenting the FCAT, responding to the FCAT, or in special settings. Guidelines for assistive technology accommodations are also provided. These accommodations are provided as examples. Other accommodations may be provided so long as they do not alter the content or supply cues and information not available to all students. Accommodations used during the testing should be those used in the classroom for daily academic achievement.

*Those items marked with an asterisk (\*) are available in the FCAT Accommodations Tool Kit.*

### **A. Presentation**

#### **Visual Accommodations**

A wide range of visual accommodations is available for presenting FCAT items. Some accommodations are provided to maintain visual attention for the student who has difficulty attending to items; other accommodations present test items in alternative formats for the student who has difficulty sorting and tracking information. Accommodations are also provided in Braille and large print for the student who is visually impaired.

#### **Print versions of the test may be enlarged.**

The district test coordinator may request large print versions of the FCAT.

#### **Braille versions may be requested.**

Braille versions of the FCAT may be requested for students who use Braille materials. Some items may be altered in format as authorized. Test items that have no application for a Braille reader will be deleted. Student performance standards that cannot be assessed in the Braille format will be deleted.

#### **Directions read by the test administrator from the FCAT administration manual may be provided to the student.**

A student who has difficulty processing, attending to, or remembering auditory directions may be provided with the script from the administration manual that provides relevant directions. The student can visually follow the directions as they are read. The script must be returned at the end of the testing session.

#### **Masks templates may be used to cover portions of the test.**

A mask covers portions of the test to direct the student's attention to a specific item. A mask is a blank sheet of paper or cardboard used to cover test items that are not being considered on a test page. Masks reduce the amount of visible print and reduce distractions. Nothing can be written on the mask or template.

**Color transparencies or overlays may be used with the test items.\***

Color transparencies or overlays are colored sheets of transparent paper that can be used to help the student focus on or read text on a page. The sheets may cover the whole page or a sentence.

**An answer sheet may be positioned and secured for optimal access.**

An FCAT answer sheet may be secured to the work area. Tape, magnets, clips, or any similar method can be used to secure an answer sheet. Since tape and other forms of securing may interfere with the scoring process, answers may need to be transcribed by a proctor onto another answer document assigned to the student.

**Spacing may be increased between test items.**

Items in the test manual and on the reference sheets may be reformatted to allow more white space as needed. Test items that are formatted with two or more to a page can be re-formatted to increase space between test items. This can be done to decrease visual distraction on the page or to increase responding space in those cases where a student is responding directly on the test booklet. Reformatting is done by the assessment office.

**Fewer items may be placed on each page.**

Test booklet items and reference sheet items may be reformatted to place fewer items on a page. Reference sheets that are formatted with multiple items to a page can be reformatted to decrease visual distraction and allow students to locate information faster. All reformatting is completed by the assessment office.

**Reading stands and similar paper positioning accommodations may be used.\***

An FCAT test book may be positioned upright for optimal reading. Students with positioning or assistive technology needs and students with visual needs may need a reading stand or similar device to position the book or sheet for optimal viewing.

**Reading passages can be developed with one complete sentence per line.**

**Visual cues that serve as reminders may be placed in the test booklet or answer sheet.**

Arrows or highlighting may be used to remind the student that an answer goes on a response grid or that a question requires a longer written answer. Test answer sheets will need to be transcribed.

**Extra examples can be given for practice.**

**Pages may be tabbed.\***

Pages may be tabbed or otherwise modified to allow easy turning or easy location of important information. Tabs give the student an easier way to grip the page or help the student quickly locate important material. A student who has difficulty turning pages may proceed faster in the testing booklet with tabbed pages. If tabs are on answer sheets, the answers will need to be transcribed into another student answer book.

**Highlighter tape can be used.\***

Highlighter tape can help the student visually separate test items. The tape can also be used to highlight directions and to separate questions from a series of multiple-choice answers.

**Key words and phrases can be highlighted in the directions.**

Key phrases in questions like "support with details" or "which word BEST describes" can be highlighted to remind students of the type of response expected.

**Auditory Accommodations**

Auditory accommodations are available for students who have difficulty processing auditory information, students who are easily distracted, or students with auditory impairments. Listed below are examples of accommodations that will be approved. Other accommodations may be acceptable.

**Test directions may be read aloud or signed for all directions other than reading items.**

Except for reading items, all FCAT test directions may be signed by a qualified interpreter or read aloud. Reading items must be read by the student through visual or tactile means.

**A reader may read directions and items other than reading items.**

**Directions may be repeated, clarified, or summarized.**

The directions may be reread upon request. Directions may be summarized, simplified, paraphrased, or otherwise clarified. The intent is to assure the student understands the task prior to beginning the tests. Text only may be read. Graphs, tables, figures, and charts may not be interpreted.

**Students may repeat or paraphrase directions.**

A student may demonstrate understanding of the directions by repeating, summarizing, paraphrasing, or in any other way stating the directions in the student's own words.

**Text to speech technology may be used to read directions and test items other than reading items.**

**Verbal encouragement may be given during the test.**

Verbal encouragement may be used to keep a student on task and help the student focus on the activity. It may not be used for cueing a student regarding correct or incorrect responses.

**Noise buffers may be used.**

A student may be tested in a separate room to provide special acoustics the student requires. White noise, background music or other noise buffers may be used if deemed helpful to keep the student focused. A test administrator must supervise the administration of the test.

**Directions may be audio taped except for reading items.**

Directions may be audio taped for the student to allow the student to repeat and replay the directions.

**B. Responding**

**Accommodations to Response Input**

The student may use a variety of methods to respond to the FCAT. These include written, signed and verbal response. Written responses may include the use of mechanical and electronic devices. A test administrator or proctor will transcribe the student's responses to the format required by the test. Transcribed responses must accurately reflect the responses of the student without addition or edification. Some examples of accommodations are provided below. Accommodations other than those listed may also be used.

**Responses may be dictated to a proctor.**

A student may respond orally to a proctor. For the writing portions of the FCAT, the student must indicate punctuation and spell select words. A proctor must enter the oral responses exactly as stated. The student may review the written material and direct the proctor on editing.

**Text to speech technology may be used to indicate answers.**

A student may use text to speech technology by typing answers into a software program that will read the responses. A test administrator will transcribe the student's response to the format required by the test.

**Switches may be used to respond.**

The student may use switches to scan the alphabetical or virtual keyboard† to generate letters or numbers for multiple choice items, letters, or words for writing assessments, and to generate words for extended answer questions.

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†A virtual keyboard is a picture of the keyboard presented on a portion of the computer screen. When a pointing device activates keys, the letters are entered into a word processing program. The virtual keyboard is generated by special software or, in some cases, by the computer operating system.

**Computer/alternative keyboards may be used.\***

The student may use a computer equipped with a standard keyboard or any one of a number of alternative keyboards to generate letters or words. These keyboards must be free of any internal or external applications that would prompt the student such as spell checkers, grammar checkers or stored information.

**Pointing devices may be used.**

The student may use any alternative pointing device such as a mouse, track ball, electronic or non-electronic head pointer. These pointing devices can generate letters and words from a virtual keyboard† or paper applications. As with all assistive technology, the software generating the virtual keyboard cannot provide prompts that are not available to other students.

**Communication devices may be used to generate oral or written responses.**

Word and letter based communication devices can be used to generate oral or written responses. Stored sentences cannot be used. Communication devices must be free of grammar checkers, spell checkers, calculators, and any other internal or external prompts. Communication devices must be used in the presence of a proctor who will transcribe the answers onto the answer sheet.

**Answers may be entered directly into the test booklet.**

The student may respond to the FCAT by entering answers directly into the test booklet. A proctor will transcribe the answers onto the answer sheet assigned to the student.

**Responses may be signed to a qualified interpreter.**

Responses may be signed by a student to a qualified interpreter. The proctor will enter the answers onto the answer sheet exactly as signed.

**Digital voice or tape recorders may be used to record answers.\***

Digital voice recorders may be used by a student when providing oral response to FCAT long and short written answer questions. A digital voice recorder will aid a student in reviewing the oral response. Answers may be tape recorded for all items and used as a support/back-up for the proctor transcription. A student may tape record oral answers to be transcribed by a proctor at a later time.

**Special paper may be used for written answers.\***

A student may use special paper such as raised line, shaded line, or color-coded paper to produce legible and timely answers to FCAT questions that require long or short written answers. This paper will provide a student with visual or tactile guidelines, constraints on how high and low to write ascenders and decenders, and better letter and word spacing.

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†A virtual keyboard is a picture of the keyboard presented on a portion of the computer screen. When a pointing device activates keys, the letters are entered into a word processing program. The virtual keyboard is generated by special software or, in some cases, by the computer operating system.

**Math grids may be used to organize mathematical computations.\***

A student may use math grids to help organize mathematical and algebraic computations. These grids help align computations and arrive at answers more quickly and accurately.

**Writing guides or templates may be used to produce legible answers.\***

A student may use writing guides to produce legible answers for FCAT questions. These guides help the student keep written word on the lines in the answer booklet or on a separate sheet of paper.

**Answer sequence may be checked periodically.**

A student's answer sheet may be checked to determine that the student is responding as directed and to determine that the answers on the answer sheet are aligned with the item number. The student may be given feedback to allow correction of incorrect procedure.

**Accommodations to Response Preparation**

Approved adapted calculators may be used for mathematical problems.\*

Students in grade 7 or higher may use a calculator for mathematical problems. An adapted calculator will produce large numbers and/or speak the numbers. No additional calculation applications may be provided with the calculator. Adapted calculators must be used in the presence of a proctor.

**An abacus may be used.**

An abacus may be used at all grade levels for students with visual impairments.

**C. Scheduling**

**A student may be allowed a flexible schedule for the FCAT administration.**

Students with disabilities may use flexible scheduling of tests administration.

- The student may take any of the subtests at a different time of day from the original schedule and at a time of day specified for the student.
- The student may take breaks or attend to the items for brief sessions.
- The student may extend the test over more than one day.

The decision to request flexible scheduling should be based on an assessment of classroom performance.

If flexible scheduling is used, all items must be reviewed before breaks as previous responses can not be accessed and changed after breaks or upon returning the next day. The written test must be completed in one setting.

Flexible scheduling may require individual testing and will require the supervision of a proctor.

## **D. Setting**

Alternative settings may be used for the FCAT. A student may be tested in a special setting to decrease distractions during the testing procedure. Desks must be cleared of all items and surroundings made free of distraction.

### **Special lighting may be used.**

Special lighting that matches the need of a student due to a visual condition may be used. This may be rheostat-controlled lighting that is adjusted by the student, high intensity task lighting, limited or special positioned lighting. Any lighting that has previously been determined to be beneficial to the student may be used during the test. In some cases, this may require individual test administration.

### **Adapted furniture may be provided as needed.**

Adjustable tables, chairs, and modified furniture may be used for testing. Any furniture or furniture accessories that allow special positioning, as needed by the student, may be provided by the student's school.

### **Special acoustics may be provided.**

The student may be tested in a separate room to provide special acoustics the student requires. FM systems may be used to enhance sound and a special room may be used to decrease auditory distractions. White noise, background music, or other noise buffers may be used if deemed helpful to keep the student focused.

### **Opportunity for movement may be increased or decreased.**

Breaks may be changed or rescheduled. All items must be reviewed before breaks as previous responses cannot be accessed and changed after breaks.

### **Stimuli may be reduced.**

A setting may be provided that reduces distractions from surrounding items.

### **The test may be administered in a familiar place for students who are homebound and hospitalized.**

For students who are homebound or hospitalized, the test can be administered by a proctor in the student's location.

## **E. Assistive Devices**

Many electronic and non-electronic assistive devices may be used during the FCAT. These assistive devices include low tech and high tech devices for presentation, responding, and setting control as described above. Other assistive devices may be requested and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Only those assistive devices that are used for ongoing daily instruction for academic achievement should be considered for the FCAT. Assistive devices used in oral and written responses can generate sentences using letters, words, and common phrases. Devices, which are

sentence based, that is devices that store only complete sentences for communication or writing, cannot be used.

These assistive devices must be free of internal or external applications that would prompt the student. The devices cannot have spelling checkers, grammar checkers, calculators, or stored information enabled. Currently, speech synthesizers can be used only by students with visual impairments and cannot be used in the reading test. Assistive techniques, which change the content of the FCAT, cannot be used. Written directions and items cannot be substituted or changed. All assistive techniques must be approved by the district test coordinator and may need to be used in the presence of a proctor.

**Calculators may be used as authorized.**

Students in grade 7 or higher may use approved adapted calculators for mathematical problems. An adapted calculator will produce large numbers and/or speak the numbers. No additional calculation applications may be provided with the calculator. Adapted calculators must be used in the presence of a proctor.

**Visual magnification\* and auditory amplification devices may be used.**

Visual and auditory assistive technology used by the student to complete classroom activities may be used. These accommodations must not provide the student with an unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test.

**Technology such as alternative keyboards, pointing devices, and switches may be used to respond to the FCAT.**

The student may access electronic devices using the access techniques and assistive technology used in daily classroom work.

- The student may use any one of a number of alternative keyboards to generate letters or, when acceptable, words. These keyboards must be free of any internal or external applications that would prompt the student, such as spell checkers, grammar checkers, or stored information.
- The student may use any alternative pointing device such as a mouse, track ball, electronic or non-electronic head pointer. These pointing devices can generate letters and words from a virtual keyboard† or paper applications. As with all assistive technology, the software generating the virtual keyboard cannot provide prompts that are not available to other students.
- The student may use switches to scan an alphabetical or virtual keyboard to generate letters or numbers for multiple-choice items, letters and words for writing assessments, or extended answer questions.

**Audiotaped directions and test items may be provided.**

Audiotaped directions will be allowed for those items that can be read.

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ESE 311930