

# **LEAP CONNECT**

**Procedures for Administering  
the Practice Tests to  
Students Who Are  
Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind**

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## Section 1: Purpose

This manual includes (1) tasks to complete before, during, and after the assessment; (2) strategies that may be used by the practice test administrator (TA) as appropriate for individual students to enhance access; and (3), math graphics enhancement table, and additional resources.

**Procedures for Administering the Practice Tests to Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind must be used in conjunction with the grade- and content-specific Directions for Practice Test Administration (DPTA).**

Generally, the TA will use this document with specified students who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Low vision: uses vision for some activities of daily living.
- No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine functional use of vision.
- Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss.
- Profound hearing loss, even with aids and/or undetermined functional use of hearing.
- Uses braille (contracted or uncontracted)

## Section 2: Responsibilities of the Practice Test Administrator

<b>Before Practice Test Administration</b>
<p>Read and become familiar with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Procedures for Administering the Practice Tests to Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind</i></li> <li>• <i>Directions for Practice Test Administration (DPTA) for each content area and grade</i></li> <li>• <i>ELA Practice Test Reference Materials and Writing Stimuli, Mathematics Practice Test Reference Materials, and Science Practice Test Reference Materials</i></li> </ul>
<p>Develop a plan to administer the practice test. Refer to Appendix B: Planning Templates. Refer to Appendix B: Planning Templates.</p>
<p>Identify what needs to be prepared for each student, based on the information provided in the Procedures for Administering the Practice Tests to Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind, and the ELA, math, and science DPTAs and reference materials. Preparation may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changing the size of graphics as needed.</li> <li>• gathering relevant tactile symbols, graphics, and object replacements with which the student is currently familiar and that appropriately represent the referent in the item.</li> <li>• determining the best positioning for the student that will allow him or her to select a response option and manage fatigue. For example, a student with limited arm movement should not be required to cross midline or use an extended reach to indicate a response. Positioning may include placing response options horizontally or vertically, but in the same order as indicated in the assessment item, or possibly placing them on a tray with dividers or individual electronic devices.</li> </ul>
<p>If the TA is unfamiliar with a student’s mode(s) of communication, conduct the Student Response Check (SRC) and provide the student with practice in selecting an answer from two or three choices using either specific tactile symbols or objects that represent response options, or generic tactile symbols or objects that represent answer options.</p>

<b>During Practice Test Administration</b>
Ensure that the items and response options are presented in ways that do not cue an answer (e.g., always placing the correct answer closest to the student).
Schedule practice test administration in reasonable time slots and during the time of day most appropriate for the individual student.
Use strategies that are already being used successfully with the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• item positioning/placement as described above</li> <li>• student seating/positioning for optimal access</li> <li>• item presentation rate and practice test session duration</li> <li>• familiar tactile symbols (e.g., piece of fur to represent a cat referenced in a passage) and/or objects (e.g., an eraser that is represented in the item)</li> </ul>
Maintain the student’s attention and engagement with the test items. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the student that some items may seem hard.</li> <li>• Give information about the number of answers the student will need to give.</li> <li>• Indicate progress toward completing the number of responses. (“Great, you’ve given three answers; we have __ left to finish.”)</li> <li>• Take breaks as needed.</li> <li>• Provide consistent encouraging statements (e.g., “I like the way you are working.”) prior to administering the next item.</li> </ul>
Use the same response wait time between asking a question and the student response, as used instructionally.
<b>After Practice Test Administration</b>
Review practice test reports available through DRC INSIGHT.

### Section 3: Strategies the Practice Test Administrator May Use

This section defines and provides examples of the strategies that may be used with students. Review the strategies in this section and identify those that are appropriate for implementation with each individual student. The following strategies are described in this section:

- Build Background Knowledge
- Alternative Text in the DPTA
- Tactile Graphics and Tactile Symbols
- Object Replacement
- Sign Language
- Student Response Strategies
- Oral Speech or Signs
- Hand/Finger Response
- Eye Gaze
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system

### Section 4: Build Background Knowledge

Some students may not have the background knowledge and experience that allow them access to certain practice test items. To ensure that these students have an equitable opportunity to access the items, the TA should read each student’s practice test items and associated DPTAs prior to the practice

test administration to determine if there are any passages, graphics, or materials with which the student may need more experience. If the TA determines that the additional experience is appropriate, the TA should present the passages, graphics, or materials prior to administering the practice test to allow the student to gain the background knowledge and experience necessary before accessing the items; **it is not to teach the student the practice test item.** While helping a student gain background knowledge, it is important not to cue an answer to an item. *Refer to Table 2: Building Student Background Knowledge Before Administering the Practice Test. Note: Practices indicated as “Not Allowed” are considered inappropriate test practices or irregularities and have consequences if used during operational testing.*

## Section 5: Building Student Background Knowledge

While building background knowledge, the actual questions and answer options may not be used in order to avoid teaching the item. *Note: The TA is responsible for creating/providing any of the materials described in this table.*

Allowable Practices	Not Allowable Practices
Read/Sign the passage and explain what the prepared tactile graphics or object replacements are and what they represent (e.g., the TA can present a simplified raised line drawing of a plant or an actual plant and explain each part of the plant).	Address or present any of the practice test questions or answers after reading the passage (e.g., if the item is about identifying the main idea, the TA cannot say/sign, “The main idea of the passage is...”).
Present tactile graphics or object replacements that may be unfamiliar to the student and describe them (e.g., the TA can present tactile geometric shapes and talk about all the attributes—names, number of angles, number of sides, characteristics of sides. If the item is about the number of angles related to a triangle, other shapes with angles should be presented to the student while building background knowledge).	Emphasize any pieces of the item or passages that could be construed as teaching solely toward the answer to the specific practice test question (e.g., if the item is about the number of angles related to a triangle, the TA cannot limit the information to a single triangle and that it has three angles).
Read/Sign any necessary alternative text. The TA may explain the graphic, chart, table, timeline, etc. (excluding answer options), further to the student, as long as the explanation does not cue the correct answer. For example, the alternative text may read, “This is a picture of a store that sells flowers.” The TA can read the alternative text as written and explain by saying, “Remember, we smell the flowers at the grocery store? This store sells flowers.”	Read the alternative text and provide additional explanation for actual response options as that could cue the correct answer or explain the graphic in a way that will teach the student the answer. For example, if a question asks, “Why did Jimmy go to the store?” the TA cannot say, “This is the store that Jimmy went to so he could buy his mom flowers.”
Highlight words and phrases by adding tactile symbols/objects or provide further explanation as long as the highlights or explanations do not cue the correct. For example, the TA can read/sign a sentence about a girl going to a farm and say/sign, “A farm is a place where they grow food and raise animals.”	Emphasize words in ways that cue the correct answer or explain a graphic in a way that will teach the student the answer. For example, the TA cannot read/sign a sentence about a girl going to a farm and explain that “A farm is a fun place to visit and see animals” when a question asks, “Where would Jamie like to visit?”

## Section 6: Alternative Text in the DPTA

Many test questions include graphic descriptions to be read to all students. Alternative Text is included for students who are visually impaired and require graphics to be described (documented in an Individual Education Program (IEP)). Alternative Text in the DPTA is bracketed, written in italics, and begins with “For students who are visually impaired, read.”

## Section 7: Tactile Graphics and Tactile Symbols

Tactile graphics and symbols should be created for any student who is unable to see necessary graphics.

**Tactile graphic:** Raised version of a print graphic that is adapted for the sense of *touch* (*Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010 Authority of North America*). Example: Raised lines on a simplified image of the parts of a flower or on a mathematical graph.

**Tactile symbol:** A concrete representation developed for individuals who are totally blind and who have a practical need for a graphic language system. (See <https://txdeafblindproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Tactile-Symbols-Used-at-TSBVI9.8.pdf> Example: A seed glued to a textured triangle to represent a plant or a textured slanted line with a series of dots made of glue on a textured triangle to represent a graph.

- Review the passages and graphics (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, timelines, tables/charts) prior to test administration. Illustrations accompany some passages and items, which serve to focus attention for most students. For some students with vision impairments, these may be distracting and not helpful. In these cases, graphics that are not essential for understanding the item may be suppressed (e.g., covering the graphic, omitting any reference to the graphic).
- Prepare the necessary graphics by providing tactile symbols/graphics already available in the student’s communication system and that match the referents in the passage or item. Digital versions of the graphics are posted in zip files in the Practice Test Library, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/practice-tests>. The following strategies may be helpful:
  - Determine which graphics have insufficient alternative text for the student.
  - Identify the essential components of the graphics (e.g., a car may be essential to understand the item or passage, but the house behind the car may not be) and remove or cover components that are not essential.
  - Add visual contrast to graphics for a student with low vision.
  - Determine ways to simplify the graphics (e.g., lines that indicate highlighting on an apple may not be necessary to include in a tactile symbol).
  - Position titles, headings, labels, and connecting lines to separate with spacing and avoid unnecessary crossing.
  - Add tactile qualities to the graphics using available tools. Possible options include the following:
    - Use a tool such as a tracing wheel to make raised areas on paper or diagramming foil.
    - Use textured materials (e.g., corrugated paper, crochet cotton, string, punched-out dots) glued onto paper to form a raised image.

- Use items such as pliable waxed yarn sticks, hot glue, acrylic or puff paint, raised line graph paper, or compressed sponge.
- Present the tactile graphics/symbols whenever referents are read/signed. Do not use the same tactile graphic in presenting the question and in presenting the answer options. Doing so may cue the correct response. A part of the graphic or a different version could be used. For example, if the tactile graphic in a passage depicts a frog on a lily pad and the answer options are “frog,” “bird,” and “sun,” a tactile symbol of just the frog without the lily pad could be used for an answer option.
- Help the student explore the entire graphic with one or both hands and locate key information.

## Section 8: Object Replacement

Object replacement may be used when the visual and/or tactile graphics do not provide optimal accessibility for the student.

**Object replacement:** An object or part of an object that represents a person, place, object, or activity ([https://www.nationaldb.org/media/doc/SALUTE-Object-Cue-es\\_a.pdf](https://www.nationaldb.org/media/doc/SALUTE-Object-Cue-es_a.pdf)). Example: A silk flower petal, leaf, and stem to represent parts of a flower or interlocking centimeter blocks to represent graphed numbers.

- Use symbolic representations of the objects specified that the student is already using or that are already familiar to the student and that are close matches to the referents in the items. It is usually preferable to use whole objects or parts of objects rather than miniatures due to the visual reference required to understand miniatures (e.g., piece of bark or a twig vs. a toy tree).
- Pair presentation of the object with the term it is representing in print, using braille, sign language, or verbal instruction.
- Use the actual objects specified in the item when feasible (e.g., use pencils when counting a quantity of pencils or actual materials used in step-by-step directions).
- Use objects or parts of objects that can be easily manipulated by the student (e.g., a thin paperback book vs. a hardcover dictionary to represent a book).
- Use objects that stand for things (typically in mathematics items, such as using blocks or other counters for quantities of cars in a parking lot).
- If several of the same objects are required, make sure that all objects provided are as similar as possible. This is especially relevant in mathematics. For example, if an item requires the student to interact with four pencils, provide four pencils that are the same diameter, length, and color, so the student does not get distracted by irrelevant information.
- If geometric shapes are required, make sure the shapes are “true,” especially in mathematics. Some examples follow:
  - Squares and rectangles have parallel sides and four right angles (no rounded corners).
  - Triangles should have angles that exactly match the triangles in the item (no rounded corners).
  - Shape dimensions should be exactly the same (or at least proportional) to those in the item.
  - All shapes should be the same in terms of texture, material, color, and so forth, so the student does not get distracted by irrelevant information. For instance, if a test item requires the student to have a circle, a square, and a triangle, all the shapes should be

- similar in size (e.g., around 3 square inches), the same material (e.g., 3/8-inch foam board), and the same color (e.g., red).
- Two-dimensional shapes should be thick enough for the student to manipulate easily, but thin enough so they are not easily confused with three-dimensional shapes. For example, an item requiring a 3-inch square could have an object replacement of a ¼-inch thick cardboard “square” measuring each length and width of 3 inches. A wooden block measuring 3 x 3 x 3 inches would not be appropriate (i.e., that would be a cube, not a square).
  - Three-dimensional shapes (e.g., cylinders, cones, pyramids, cubes, spheres) should be three-dimensional. For example, an item requiring a cube measuring 3 x 3 x 3 inches could be represented by a wooden block with those dimensions, but a ¼-inch thick cardboard “square” measuring 3 inches by 3 inches (no depth) would not be appropriate (i.e., that would be a square, not a cube).
  - Help the student explore the entire object using one or both hands to understand the representation and locate key information.

## Section 9: Sign Language

- Review the student’s accessibility needs and language use indicated in the student’s Individual Education Program (IEP).
- Determine what language mode the student uses (e.g., ASL, Signed English).
- Note if the student has additional communication needs (e.g., tactile sign, close vision) that affect interpreting and make appropriate preparations.
- Be mindful of the student’s fluency in sign language to appropriately adjust rate of signing and sign choices.
- Preview instructions and test items carefully to prepare for sign language accommodation.
  - Determine how to interpret items so as not to cue an answer (e.g., do not include the definition of the word in the interpretation if the item is asking for the definition).
  - Carefully note when fingerspelling may not be appropriate because it may cue the answer (e.g., fingerspelling “p-e-n” when the test item asks the student to point to the word pen).
  - For multiple-meaning words that are not being assessed as vocabulary, use the word that has the appropriate meaning for the context of the passage and for the student.
  - Refer to vocabulary lists in Appendix D located in the LEAP Connect assessment guides. The vocabulary lists are for American Sign Language (ASL) translation, object replacement, tactile graphics, word boards or word banks, and AT/AAC devices.
- During the test, interpreters may find it helpful to read the full item or hear the entire item before interpreting to the student. This is important to ensure the interpreter does not sign the item in a way that cues the answer.
- Pay attention to vocabulary phrases where English word order is necessary to maintain the intent of the test item (e.g., sign English idioms word for word to maintain the meaning of the idiomatic phrase).
- In cases where items include names of people who do not have established sign names, fingerspell the names the first time and assign each person a sign name. Use only the sign names for the remaining occurrences of each person’s name.

- Work with the TA to ensure reasonable time slots for breaks, to reduce fatigue for student and interpreter.

## Section 10: Student Response Strategies

### Oral Speech or Signs:

- Allow the student to identify the answer by naming/signing the response option (e.g., “dog”); providing the location of the answer (e.g., top, middle, bottom); or providing an associated letter or number (e.g., a, b, c or 1, 2, 3).

### Hand/Finger Response:

- Print response options or allow student to point to the answer on the computer screen.
- Place response options in close proximity to the student’s dominant hand, in the same order as indicated in the assessment directions, and far enough apart so that the student’s response is clear.
- For some students, crossing the midline or extended reach could result in fatigue, thus reducing the reliability of the response.

### Eye Gaze:

- Increase the size of response options as needed and print.
- Consider positioning the response options on a clear surface in a clockwise order (i.e., A in upper left corner, B in upper right corner, and C in the lower center position. Leave an empty space in the center to center the student’s gaze before indicating a response).
- Direct the student to look in the empty space to center his or her gaze, as needed, so that when he or she indicates a response, the observer can clearly see the student’s choice.
- Check to ensure that the TA can clearly determine the student’s selection.

### Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system:

- Ensure the AAC system is available and in working order.

Refer to vocabulary lists in Appendix D located in the LEAP Connect assessment guides. The vocabulary lists are for American Sign Language (ASL) translation, object replacement, tactile graphics, word boards or word banks, and AT/AAC devices.

## Section 11: Reading

In addition to the general guidance provided in this document, please use the following guidance in preparing and administering the reading items.

**All grades** test vocabulary words or vocabulary phrases.

- Vocabulary used correctly in sentences: Use the same sign for the vocabulary word in Procedures for Administering the Practice Tests to Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind 10 all three sentences in the answer options.
- Vocabulary phrases: Sign the phrase in English word order (i.e., sign English idioms word for word to maintain the meaning of the idiomatic phrase).

**Some** practice tests include graphics that are essential to some questions. The graphics include a series of pictures or text features such as numbers, labels, headings, and diagrams, all of which the student uses to answer the questions. The TA can enhance the accessibility using the strategies described in this document. The TA should read the items prior to administering the assessment and determine which strategy creates optimum accessibility for individual students. When tactilely enhancing the graphics or using replacement objects, ensure that the critical features are included. For example, question 25 includes a diagram of a cactus plant. It is important to tactilely enhance or provide replacement objects for the leaves, roots, flowers, and thorns. The dots for the sand are not essential to the item and do not need to be tactilely enhanced or represented with objects. Likewise, it is important not to enhance a graphic to cue an answer (e.g., question 25 illustrates parts of a cactus and the question is asking, “Where are the thorns located on the Prickly Pear cactus?” the TA should tactilely enhance or represent with objects, all main parts of the cactus not just the thorns and leaves).

**All grades** may include timelines, diagrams, and pictures for the purpose of engaging the students. The TA may decide if accessibility increases for the student by tactilely enhancing or representing these graphics with objects.

## Section 12: Writing

In addition to the information provided in this document, please use the following guidance in preparing and administering the writing items.

Constructed-response writing items may include the following, depending on the grade level and tier:

- Mentor text (example story) with images. The images are for engagement and not necessary to complete the writing prompt.
- Character and activity cards. The student uses the cards to choose a character and to reference when adding characters and activities to the writing template. The TA may read or sign the information to the student and the student may dictate the information to the TA (follow scribing protocol provided in the DPTA). The TA may decide if accessibility is increased for the student by tactilely enhancing or providing representative objects for each card.
- Graphic organizer. The graphic organizer may be used by the student to plan for writing and to complete the writing prompt. The TA may decide if accessibility is increased for the student by tactilely enhancing or representing with objects the graphic organizer.
- Idea cards. The idea cards are available for the student to copy onto the graphic organizer. The TA may read or sign the information to the student and the student may dictate the information to the TA (follow scribing protocol provided in the DPTA). The TA may decide if accessibility for the student increases by tactilely enhancing or representing with objects the idea cards. The images on the idea cards are for engagement and not necessary to complete the writing prompt.
- Good writing reminder card. This is to illustrate capital letters, ending punctuation, and a complete sentence. The TA reads the information on the card to the student.
- Writing template with sentence starters. The TA reads the sentence starters to the student.

## Section 13: Mathematics and Science

In addition to the information provided in this document, please use the following guidance when reviewing the DPTA prior to practice test administration to prepare and administer the mathematics and science items to students.

- Reference materials may be included with some items (e.g., formulas, equations, conversion tables, expressions, number lines, data sets, table/charts/graphs). It is important to make these reference materials available for the student to use to select an answer choice.
- (Math only) Most items allow the use of a calculator. For every practice test item, there is initial information for the TA regarding whether a calculator may be used. Note: Specific items described in the DPTA prohibit the use of a calculator, so for those items, the student may not use a calculator, unless indicated in the student's IEP.
- Graphics may be included (e.g., line drawings, icons).
  - Some items have graphics that must be used to solve the problem. Other items have graphics that may be used to solve the problem. The TA must decide what graphics are essential for the student in order to solve the problem. When tactilely enhancing or providing representative objects, the TA should decide what details are essential to increase accessibility for the student.
- Some practice tests include constructed-response items, which require the student to perform a skill, such as graphing data. The TA must provide the indicated manipulatives in a way that the student can perform the skill. Examples include the following:
  - For a student with fine motor disabilities, the TA might provide manipulatives that are larger and/or thicker than paper manipulatives.
  - For a student who uses an AAC system, the student indicates to the TA (e.g., points, eye-gazes) where to move the manipulatives.

## Section 14: Planning Template for Graphics

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

ELA	Math	Science

Review the Strategies section in the Procedures for Assessing Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind and use this chart to plan individual student accessibility for a student who is visually impaired, deaf, or deaf-blind, including students who have low vision, no functional vision, or for whom the TA is unable to determine functional use of vision.

Page(s)	Alternative Text	Braille	Tactile	Visual Contrast	Object Replacement	Other
Example: pp. 45 - 48	Items 1, 6, 8	X	X	Print on yellow paper; enlarge font to 18 pt.	X	X

## Section 15: Planning Template for Sign Language

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

ELA	Math	Science

Review the Sign Language section in the Procedures for Assessing Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind and use this chart to plan individual student accessibility—how to sign words, phrases, or names in a way that does not cue an answer, that is important to sign a certain way, or that requires repetitive fingerspelling—for the individual student who receptively uses sign language.

Page(s)	Words that Require Fingerspelling	Phrases that Require Signing in English Word Order	Names that Do Not Have a Sign Name
Example: pp. 31-32	"hybrid" - ok to fingerspell	"Dig in"	"John Glenn" (fingerspell and then sign "j" and "helmet")

## Section 16: Planning Template for Student Response

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

ELA	Math	Science

Conduct the Student Response Check and read the Student Response Strategies section in the Procedures for Assessing Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind and use this chart to plan individual student accessibility in communicating responses and identify any preparation needed.

Page(s)	Verbal Speech	Signing	Point/Gesture	Eye-Gaze	AAC	Preparation
Example: pp. 8-11				place in clockwise order on eye-gaze board		print and cut apart answer options