

# Scribing

Scribes are individuals who record student responses during classroom assignments and on tests or on state tests when information is communicated by the student through speech, sign language, pointing, gesturing, eye-gazing, or using an assistive communication device. Scribing accommodations are intended for a student with a physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of writing or recording their response during testing, e.g., students who have a reduced ability to write due to pain, paralysis, loss of function, or a loss of endurance and students whose handwriting is indecipherable resulting in illegible written products. Scribes are also an appropriate accommodation for students who can write but have a documented disability in the area of written expression that results in a significant interference with their ability to express their knowledge in writing.

The use of a scribe for each test administration subject (e.g., English Language Arts and mathematics) is considered an allowable accommodation, as long as **all four** of the following criteria are met:

1. The accommodation **must be provided to the student in the classroom for classroom and district-wide tests**, and the accommodation must be documented in writing in the IEP or 504 Plan.
2. The accommodation **cannot** change the content or structure of the test.
3. The accommodation **cannot** change what the test is intended to measure.
4. The accommodation **cannot change** or **enhance** the student's response.

Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP/504 Plan, a team should confirm that the student's disability is documented through a comprehensive evaluation which establishes that the child's written expression skills are significantly below age and state-approved grade level standards even when the child is provided with appropriate instruction and learning experiences. (Note: Scribes are not an allowable accommodation for children who have difficulty focusing, sitting still, or staying on task. The children may receive the accommodations of frequent breaks, snack, and extra time to complete the tests.) The scribe accommodation for testing purposes should be considered an all or none approach. Either the student needs a scribe for the entire subject test or they do not. The scribe accommodation should not be documented on an IEP as an "as needed" accommodation. If a student is not able to complete all of a subject area test without scribe assistance, then all of the test should be scribed for the student.

If an IEP or 504 Plan team determines that a student will have the scribing accommodation, the team should consider whether the student will also need extra time. Typically, scribing is a longer process than testing without the use of the scribe. Providing additional time is appropriate to accompany the scribe accommodation. It is also appropriate during scribing for some students to take more breaks than typically awarded students who do not have accommodations. Planning for extra breaks also may be needed.

If the scribe is also the test administrator for a student, the scribe must be an employee of the district. Any person serving as a scribe must be an **adult and a non-relative** of the student. Students **may not** serve as scribes for another student, even if they are older students.

When working as a scribe with students, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Do not coach or cue students in any way during test administration. This includes gestures and facial expressions. For example, prompts, "Let's list reasons to support your position" or "Do you want to give more examples" give the test taker an unfair advantage and are inappropriate.
- Do not respond to questions during testing that would help the student to understand the item, and aid in responding to an item, or advise/encourage the student to edit or change a response.
- Do not tell students to use certain strategies or clues prior to or during the tests.
- Do not say or do anything that would let a student know whether an answer is correct or not correct.
- Do not ask the student how they got an answer.
- Do not tell the student to redo or review any part of the test.

There are two exceptions to the criteria for the use of a scribing accommodation.

**The “Broken Arm” Exception:** If a student suffers an injury that prevents the student from physically writing the responses, a scribing accommodation may be provided to that student without an IEP/504 plan in place. This is a **temporary** exception. Districts should note the injury and keep a written record of any doctor’s notes on file if such a special case accommodation is provided. Districts **do not need** to call the Kansas State Department of Education to receive permission to provide this accommodation in this circumstance.

**The “Temporary Visual Impairment” Exception:** If a student suffers an injury to the eyes which temporarily severely limits or prevents the student from writing or recording their responses during testing or if the student normally uses corrective lenses but they have been lost or damaged beyond use and they will not be replaced prior to the end of the testing window and consequently the student is temporarily severely limited or prevented from writing or recording their response during testing. This scribing accommodation may then be provided to that student without an IEP/504 Plan in place. This is a temporary exception. Districts should note the need for exception and keep a written record of any doctor’s notes on file if they have a doctor’s note; such a special case accommodation is provided. **Districts do not need** to call the Kansas State Department of Education to receive permission to provide this accommodation in this circumstance.

## **Scribe Accommodation**

### **Method for Scribing**

- The scribe writes exactly what the student dictates. No additions, deletions, or changes may be made that are not initiated by the student.
- The student may review and edit their response after dictating it to the scribe. If the student wants to change anything the scribe has written, the student must direct the scribe to make specific changes to the response.

### **Writing Test Restriction:**

The student is **required** to indicate the beginning of sentences (use of capitals) and the end of sentences (punctuation) on **all** writing tests. This can be accomplished by either of the following methods: a

- The student can indicate where sentences begin and end while the student is dictating the response. **OR**
- The student can edit what the scribe has written when the test is completed.

Additional writing test restrictions:

- Capital letters and punctuation cannot be added by the scribe without student direction.
- The student must ask the scribe to make specific changes to the response.