

Technology and Administration Guide

(Validation Study – Fall 2024)

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Assess 360 Overview and Purpose

Assess 360 is a screening and diagnostic assessment for K-6 students made up of subtests that address foundational skills, oral-reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in English and Spanish. The assessment is given three times per year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to identify how student performance changes over time.

Constructs covered in the assessment include:

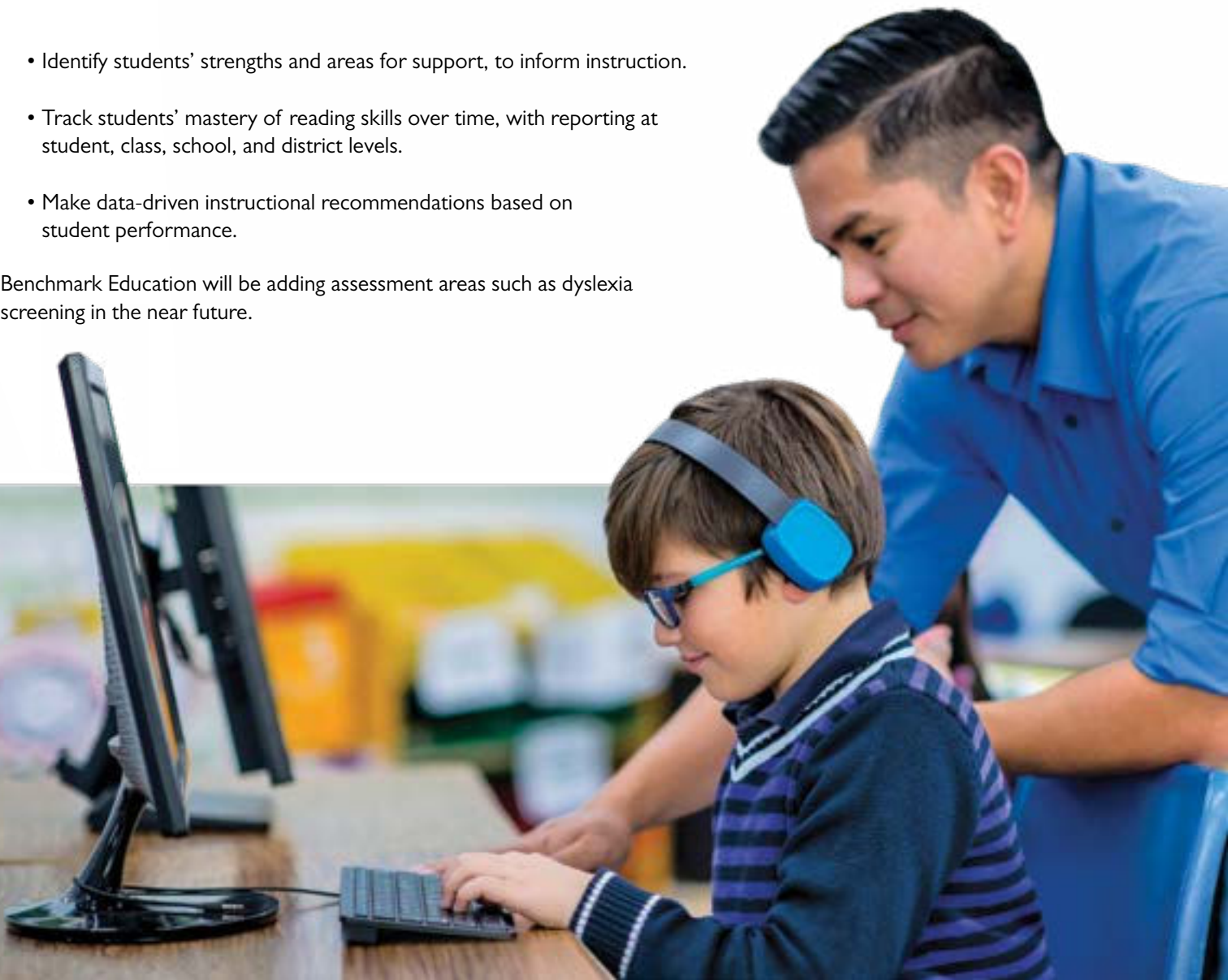
- Phonological Awareness (blending, segmenting, and manipulation)
- Phonics (letter names, letter sounds, nonsense-word decoding, and high-frequency words)
- Spelling
- Oral Reading Fluency
- Comprehension and Vocabulary

Assess 360 utilizes speech recognition to accurately and efficiently assess student performance on a device independent of a teacher in 30–45 minutes. This eliminates the need for teachers to spend time assessing students one-on-one, while producing comparable results.

This assessment will support teacher and administrator decision-making in the following ways:

- Identify students' strengths and areas for support, to inform instruction.
- Track students' mastery of reading skills over time, with reporting at student, class, school, and district levels.
- Make data-driven instructional recommendations based on student performance.

Benchmark Education will be adding assessment areas such as dyslexia screening in the near future.



Administering Assess 360

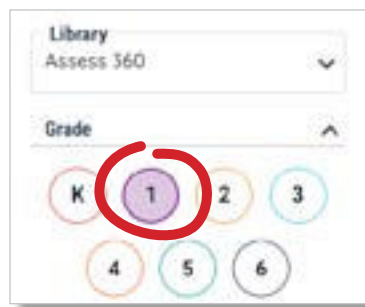
Assigning Assess 360 to Students in Benchmark Universe

Add a new assignment using the Assignment List page.

1. Click **Assignments** on the Dashboard. The Assignment List page appears.
Click **Add New Assignment**.



2. Find "Assess 360" under the Library drop-down menu on the left side.
Then select your Grade.



3. Locate the test icon (e.g., Grade 1 Fall) that was selected to be administered to your class as part of the Assess 360 Pilot Study.



4. Drag the test icon to **Add Assignment** on the right side of the screen.
The Create Assignment screen will then appear.



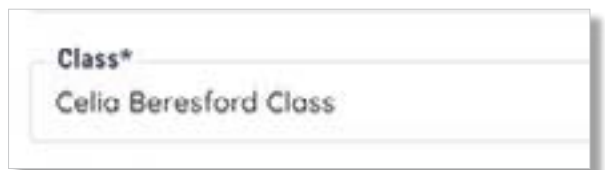
5. The default assignment name is the name of your first selected resource (e.g., Grade 1 Fall). You can modify this name by typing a new name in the **Assignment Name** box.



A screenshot of a text input field. The label "Assignment Name *" is at the top left. The text "Grade 1 Fall" is entered in the field.

Assignments with an assessment can include only one assessment at a time and cannot include any other resources. If you'd like to provide your students with additional resources, create another assignment.

6. Your first alphabetical class is the default selection. If you'd like to choose a different class, choose it from the dropdown. You can select multiple classes from the Class dropdown to create one assignment for multiple classes. If you select multiple classes, an assignment will be created for each class, and all students and groups will be included. The assignments will populate as separate assignments on the Assignment List page.



A screenshot of a dropdown menu. The label "Class*" is at the top left. The selected item is "Celia Beresford Class".


7. Choose a group or groups from the Group dropdown list if you'd like to assign to students within an existing group.



A screenshot of a dropdown menu. The label "Group" is at the top left. The selected item is "Select Group".

Users who select multiple classes lose the ability to choose a group. Users can navigate to the Assignment Details page to add groups and remove any students they do not want to complete the assignment.

8. The default Start Date is the day you are creating the assignment. Select the date if you'd like to set a different start date.



A screenshot of a date input field. The label "Start Date *" is at the top left. The date "09/04/2024" is entered in the field. A calendar icon is visible on the right side of the field.

9. Type or select an end date in the **Due Date** box.

The screenshot shows a text input field labeled "Due Date *". The date "09/27/2024" is entered in the field. To the right of the field is a small calendar icon.

10. Type instructions in the **Instructions to students** box if you'd like to include specific instructions.

The screenshot shows a text area titled "Instructions to students". Above the text area are four icons for text formatting: Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), and Strikethrough (S).

11. The icon and name of the test you selected will appear in the **Materials** box.

The screenshot shows a box titled "Materials *". Inside the box, there is a small icon of a book with the word "Fall" below it, followed by the text "Grade 1 Fall". A close button (X) is visible in the top right corner of the box.

12. In the **Students** box, by default "All Students" in an assigned class will be selected. Make any changes if necessary.

The screenshot shows a box titled "Students *". Inside the box, there is a radio button that is selected, followed by the text "All Students".

13. Select **Save**. On the next screen, you will get a confirmation message that the assignment was saved successfully. It has now been assigned to your students.



14. The Assignment List page is now updated. If you click on the assignment name (e.g., Grade 1 Fall), it will take you to the Assignment Details page. It will show all relevant student information with a Not Started status, indicated by a purple "X" symbol.

The screenshot shows a table with columns: Administration Method, Last Name, First Name, Start, Due, and Status. The first row shows an assignment named "Independent - Assign to Student" for a student named "Student1" with the last name "Cberesford". The start date is "09/04/2024" and the due date is "09/18/2024". The status is "Not Started", indicated by a purple "X" symbol in a circle, which is circled in red in the image.

Administration Method	Last Name	First Name	Start	Due	Status
Independent - Assign to Student	Student1	Cberesford	09/04/2024	09/18/2024	Not Started (X)

Helping Students Prepare to Take Assess 360

Benchmark Education has created slides and a lesson plan script to review with students before they take the Assess 360 literacy assessment. They should be reviewed with your class the day before or the same day as administration. There are also Task Videos teachers can view and share with their class. These are instructional videos which explain how to answer the different types of questions. Students will also see these videos during the Assess 360 test. You can find all of these support materials in Benchmark Universe.

Students should try their best to complete every question included in Assess 360. If students don't know how to respond to an item, teachers can provide support such as:

- Reminding students that they can play audio or video prompts additional times where they are included
- Emphasizing strategies such as sounding out words when they are shown onscreen
- Reviewing directions on how and when to respond out loud



If students do not know how to respond to an item and are doing their best, they can move to the next item by clicking the green arrow if needed. Note that students will not be able to go back and complete skipped items. If they are experiencing frustration or need to take a break, the assessment can be paused and either returned to later or ended.

Classroom and Technology Setup

Headphones and Capturing Student Recordings

Students should wear headphones when taking this assessment to hear directions for each assessment task as well as audio and video prompts. A microphone is required to capture student responses.

A standard computer microphone will work; however, a headset with a microphone will provide the best quality recording. Headphone features that can improve accuracy include noise cancellation, microphones that reach in front of students' mouths on an arm or "boom," and the lack of muting and volume control on the headphones themselves.

To ensure student speech is captured using a headphone set with a microphone:

- Place the microphone about an inch or two from the student's mouth and make sure it will stay in place.
- Talk to the student about not moving or touching the microphone during testing.
- Check headphone volume so that it is not too loud or too soft.
- Make sure the headphones are fully connected to the computer the student is using.
- Practice speaking at an appropriate volume with students. This means louder than a whisper, but softer than speaking to a group. This will allow the speech recognition software to accurately assess student responses.

Teachers can talk with the class before testing to ensure students do not click the green arrow too quickly and cut off recordings. Remind students to fully say their answers and practice "patient behavior", like counting to three or taking a slow breath, before clicking the green arrow. This ensures there is some blank time for the software before moving to the next question.

Test Environment and Classroom Setup

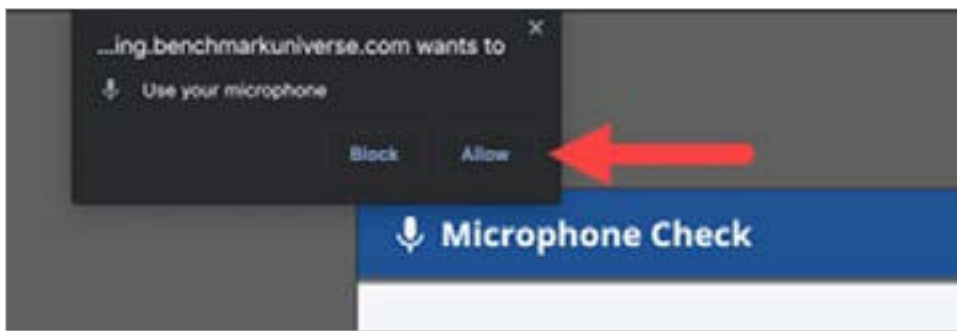
Although speech recognition can accurately rate student speech with a moderate amount of background noise, a quiet and organized classroom will contribute to students' performing their best on Assess 360. Students are best placed 3–5 feet away from each other without the ability to see each other's computers.

Configuring Student Microphones

Since Assess 360 utilizes speech recognition, you'll need to make sure that the student's microphone is enabled on their device. Make sure beforehand that a student knows to select "Allow" when prompted.

These tips will also help you enable your microphone on your device as a teacher.

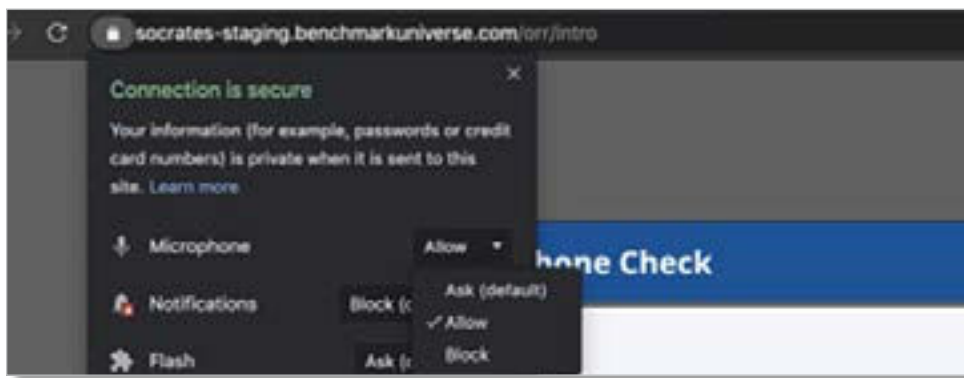
When you first try to use your microphone on Benchmark Universe, all browsers will show a modal like this:



Hit "Allow." If you (or the student) accidentally select "Block" or "Don't Allow," don't worry! Read below to learn how to manually enable your microphone on different browsers.

Google Chrome: Enabling Microphone Permissions

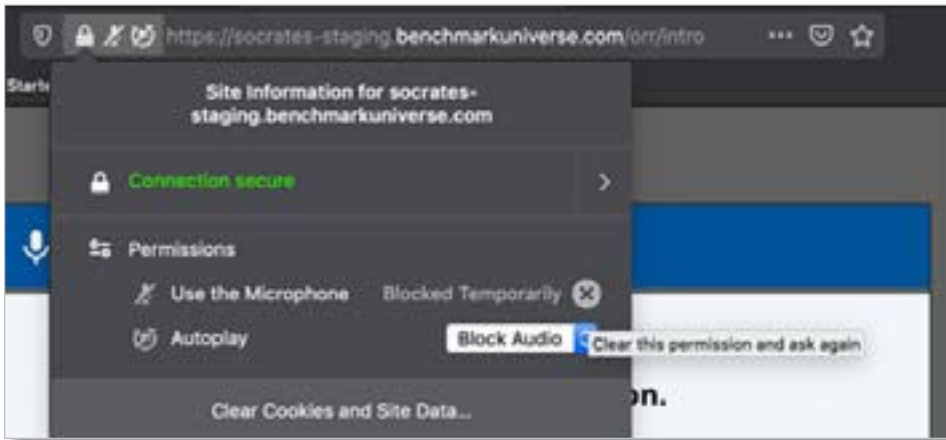
In the URL bar, at the left of the URL, you'll see a Lock Icon. Click on the icon to open the permission window.



For Microphone settings, select Allow from the dropdown.

Firefox: Enabling Microphone Permissions

In the URL bar, located to the left of the URL, you'll see a Lock Icon. Simply click on the icon to open the permission window.

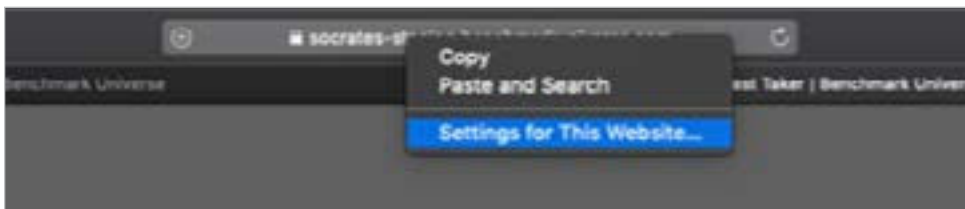


Ensure that the **Use the Microphone** option under Permissions is set to Allowed.

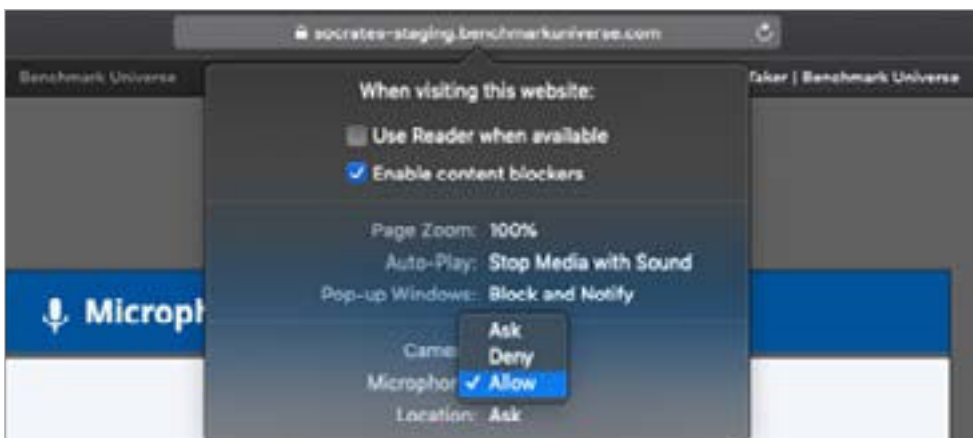
In the case that it isn't, simply remove that setting (using the X next to current status) for **Use the Microphone**.

Safari: Enabling Microphone Permissions

Start by secondary clicking (right-click or control-click) on the URL bar. From there, select the **Settings for This Website...** option.



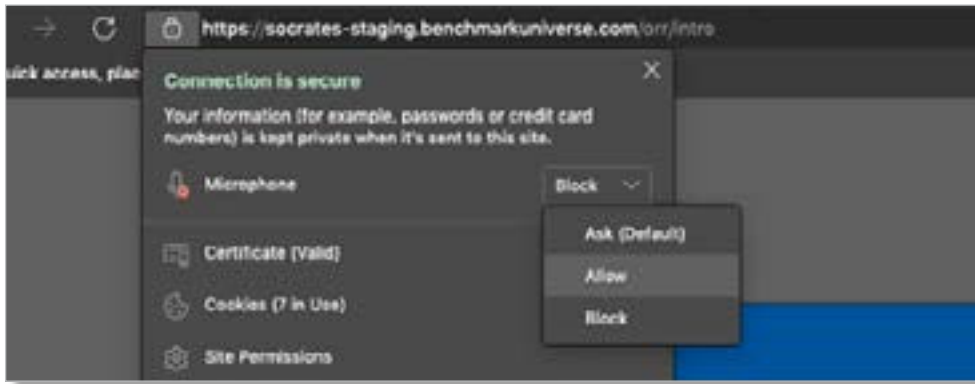
This will open up the permission window. For Microphone settings, select Allow from the dropdown.



Microsoft Edge: Enabling Microphone Permissions

In the URL bar, at the left of the URL, you'll see a Lock Icon. Click on the icon to open the permission window.

For Microphone settings, select Allow from the dropdown.



Still Having Issues?

If your microphone is enabled, but you still can't hear your recording, be sure the volume is turned up on your device.

Check "Sound" in your System Preferences to be sure the Sound Output volume is turned up.

Classroom Accommodations & Student Support During Administration

Benchmark Education is committed to providing a positive and supportive testing experience for all students. Any accommodations defined for individual students on a 504 plan or IEP should be followed during administration of Assess 360. Here are some common situations that may occur:

Embedded Supports – students may use these features during their independent test taking experience

- Adjust font size
- Adjust contrast
- Human Audio (GK-1) Text-to-speech/Audio support/Spoken audio

Non-Embedded Supports – teachers may provide support during administration

- Human Reader / Read Aloud – teachers can read directions out loud as needed during administration
- Zoom Capability
- Separate setting – students may take the test in a supportive environment
- Additional time – Oral Reading Fluency passages are the only timed portion of Assess 360 that cannot be changed. Other subtests are not timed, and teachers may give students as much time as needed to complete these questions.

You may review Benchmark Education's Web Accessibility Statement [here](#).

Assessment Design and Tasks

Phonological Awareness K-2

This section of the assessment examines a range of phonological and phonemic awareness skills to determine students' ability to recognize and manipulate sounds that make up a word.

Phoneme Blending/Combinar las fonemas/Combinar las sílabas: Items assess students' ability to combine phonemes (or syllables, Spanish only) to make a word. Students will be presented with a video prompt. They will press play to listen and view the prompt and then should respond out loud.



Phoneme Segmentation/Segmentar en fonemas: Items assess students' ability to identify the correct phonemes in the sequence that makes up a word. Students will be presented with an audio prompt of a target word. They will press play to listen to three possible answer choices and select the choice that presents sounds in the correct order.



Segmentar en sílabas: (Spanish only) Students are presented with an audio prompt of a target word and then they should respond out loud.



Phoneme deletion: (English only) Items assess students' ability to manipulate sounds to create a new word by taking away a phoneme at the beginning or end of a given word. Students will be presented with an audio prompt. They will press play to listen to the prompt and then should respond out loud.



Sustituir vocales: (Spanish only) Items assess students' ability to manipulate sounds to create a new word by substituting a vowel in a given word. Students will be presented with an audio prompt. They will press play to listen to the prompt and then should respond out loud.



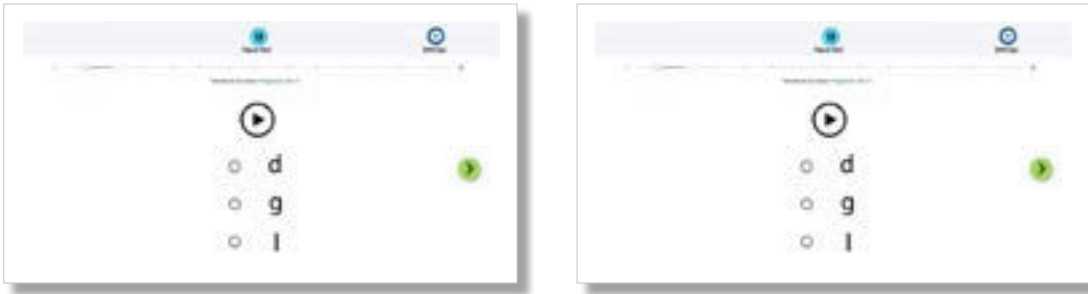
Phonics GK-3

This section of the assessment examines students' abilities in applying the alphabetic principle and decoding skills.

Letter Names/Nombres de las letras: Items assess students' ability to name uppercase and lowercase letters.



Letter Sounds/Sonido de las letras: Items assess students' knowledge of letter sounds. Students hear the sound in the prompt and select the letter that matches the sound.



Nonsense Words/Decoding: (English only) This subtest consists of nonsense words to confirm students' decoding skills. Some students do well on real-word tests of phonics due to their wide sight-word knowledge, yet struggle when applying those same decoding skills to new words. The nonsense-word test accounts for this and assesses true decoding application.



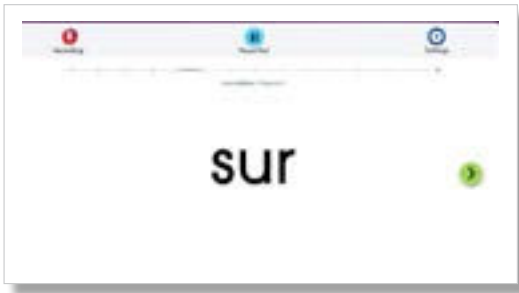
Leer sílabas: (Spanish only) Items assess students' ability to recognize and read syllables. Students will be presented with a syllable on the screen and then should respond out loud.



High-Frequency Words: (English only) Items assess students' ability to read frequently encountered words that are composed of both irregular and regular spelling patterns. Seeing these words out of context provides a more accurate evaluation of a student's ability to recognize and read these words.



Leer palabras: (Spanish only) Items assess students' ability to read words. Students will be presented with a word on the screen and then should respond out loud.



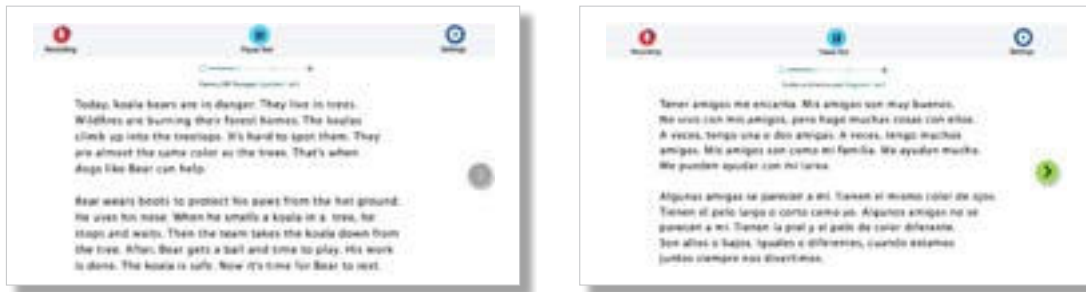
Spelling/Ortografía G1-3

Research has shown that learning to spell and learning to read rely on many of the same cognitive processes and underlying knowledge. There is a strong correlation among students who demonstrate mastery of predictable word patterns and successful readers.

The spelling subtest consists of words that assess students' ability to encode a spoken word into letters. Students will hear a word and then spell it using a keypad.



Oral Reading Fluency/Fluidez en la lectura oral G1-6



Students will read two grade-level fluency passages, one fiction and one informational, to provide a quick snapshot of each student's reading fluency as compared to grade-level benchmarks.

Fluency readings use an automatic 1 minute timer. Students should begin reading immediately once they've completed the task introduction video and click next to see each passage. Students should try to read as much as possible of the passage through the end of the minute to give them credit for words accurately read. Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) will be calculated by the speech recognition engine based on students' reading accuracy and rate.

Vocabulary and Comprehension/ Vocabulario y comprensión



Students will read one literary and one informational passage at grade-level text complexity and answer a series of multiple choice and tech-enhanced item types. In Kindergarten and 1st Grade, the passages are read aloud to students to gauge their listening comprehension skills. Students read the passages themselves in 2nd through 6th grade. Questions focus on essential skills that were identified through a careful analysis of state standards and academic research such as identifying word meaning from context, summarizing, and more at a variety of difficulty levels.

English

F=fall; W=winter; Sp=spring

Assessment / Subtest	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Phonological Awareness							
Phoneme Blending	✓	✓					
Phoneme Segmentation	W, Sp	✓					
Phoneme Deletion		✓					
Phonics & Word Recognition							
Letter Names	✓						
Letter Sounds	✓						
Decoding Nonsense Words	Sp	✓	✓	✓			
High-Frequency Words	Sp	✓	✓	✓			
Encoding/Spelling		W, Sp	✓	✓			
Oral Reading Fluency		W, Sp	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comprehension & Vocabulary	W, Sp	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Spanish

F=fall; W=winter; Sp=spring

Assessment / Subtest	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conciencia fonológica							
Combinar las sílabas	✓	✓					
Combinar los fonemas	✓	✓					
Segmentar en sílabas	(W, Sp)	✓					
Segmentar en fonemas	(W, Sp)	✓					
Sustituir vocales		✓					
Fonética y reconocimiento de palabras							
Nombre de las letras	✓						
Sonido de las letras	✓						
Leer sílabas	(W, Sp)	✓	✓	✓			
Leer palabras	(W, Sp)	✓	✓	✓			
Ortografía		(W, Sp)	✓	✓			
Fluidez en la lectura oral		(W, Sp)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Compresión y vocabulario	(W, Sp)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓