

# STAR Testing Protocol

## IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Star testing occurs 3 times during the school year (fall, winter and spring). Each test period lasts 3 weeks. Teachers schedule class testing during the first 2 weeks and the remaining week is for makeup testing.
  - Teachers are responsible for completing makeup testing of their students who were absent on test day or paused a test to finish later. During the makeup week lists of students who still need to complete STAR tests will be emailed daily to staff.
2. The testing periods for the 2014-15 school year are:

Test Period	Dates	Grades
Fall	September 8-26	1 <sup>st</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>
Winter	December 1-19	1 <sup>st</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>
Spring	April 20-May 8	1 <sup>st</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>

3. If you want a student to retake the test you must contact your evaluating administrator for authorization. You will need to explain why a retake is warranted and obtain authorization to give the retake **prior to** retesting the student.

## Instructions for preparing for the test

1. Schedule time for your class to take the Star assessment, either in a computer lab or reserve chrome books. Choose a day within the first 2 weeks of the test period. The classroom teacher or assigned special education teacher must administer STAR testing to their students. Students with IEP's should be tested by their assigned special education teacher. **Do not allow substitute teachers to give this important assessment.**
2. Login to the STAR website. Access this site either through the STAR button at the top of the school website or through the Technology Portal STAR button under "Training Resources". The site address is: <https://hosted325.renlearn.com/150471>.
  - Confirm that you are able to login. If you are a new teacher in the district: your username and password are the same: <initial of first name and full last name> (example: Maria Simpson is msimpson). You will be prompted to change the password after you login.
  - Print the class list with student logins. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "Star Instructions- Printing Class List with Student Logins")
3. You may choose to review the Star Pretest Instructions with your students before you administer the assessment. They are located in a separate packet in this folder.

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4. Encourage students to do their best:
  - Test results provide us with a clear picture of their strengths and areas for growth in each subject. They should do their best so we know what their learning needs are.
  - Test results will be used to identify students for support and enrichment intervention.
5. Prepare students to have a silent activity (i.e. book or magazine to read, writing journal, or other class work) available in case they finish early.

## Instructions for proctoring the test

1. Before students login, read the proctor script to the class. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "STAR Proctor Scripts")
2. Have students log in with their usernames and passwords. After students log in, you or an assisting adult must enter the monitor password for each student. The password is "proctor". **Do not share this password with students.** Using this password provides important test security. Although this procedure is a bit time consuming, it is essential to the fidelity of our assessment process.
3. If a student enters their login incorrectly three times, they will be locked out. You must unlock the account. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "Directions for Clearing Locked Accounts")
4. Actively monitor students during the test by walking around the room and/or using Lanschool in the computer lab.
5. Assistance for regular education students:
  - Star Reading or Early Literacy: You cannot assist students during the test. Do not read any part of the test, rephrase, pronounce words or give hints or examples.
  - Star Math: **NO CALCULATORS ALLOWED.** Students need scrap paper to work out problems. It is nearly impossible for a student to give his/her best effort without working out problems on paper. You can read questions to students upon request. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "Star Math Enterprise: Read Aloud Accommodations")
  - Star Math: There is an audio feature that is available for students who scored below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on STAR Reading. Please contact Maria Simpson before your scheduled test date to have this feature activated for individual students.
6. Assistance for students with IEP's or 504's: **You must provide accommodations as written in the plan.** They are entitled to the same accommodations that they receive for state assessments. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "Accommodations for Students with Disabilities")
  - Please contact Maria Simpson to have time extended or the Math audio feature activated for students whose IEP's or 504 plans require these accommodations.

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## 7. When to Pause or Abort a Test:

- Pause the test whenever a student must leave the room. If you don't pause, the questions will continue to come and will time out as if the student chose not to answer. **Paused tests must be completed within 8 days.** Sometimes the test will automatically be paused when a student logs off; however, this does not always happen. Please manually pause the test to ensure it works.
- Abort the test whenever a student is guessing, cheating or not taking it seriously. The student must then restart the test from the beginning.
- (Reference the documents in this packet entitled, "Star Guidelines for Pausing and Aborting Tests" and "Resuming an Interrupted Test")

## 8. *If you need assistance during the test contact Maria Simpson either by telephone (office: #7034, cell: 414-861-2067) or email.*

### Instructions for concluding the testing process

1. Conference with each student individually on their test performance. Share their scaled score, percentile rank, and performance level. Conferencing should occur either immediately after the student has completed the test or during class time within 5 school days of completing the test. (Reference the document in this packet entitled, "Star Student Conference Guide")
2. Test all students who were absent or have paused tests before the testing window ends.
3. Send a copy of the Parent Report to the home of every student within 2 weeks after each testing period has ended. Also share Star results with parents during Parent-Teacher conferences.
4. Use STAR resources such as the Record Book and Instructional Planning reports to plan in-class differentiation for students scoring basic and advanced.

\*You will receive a grade level report on STAR results after each test period. This is the official district report that is used to identify students for diagnostic testing and possible intervention. The report includes alphabetical and performance level lists for each grade level, and has scaled scores, percentile ranks and other pertinent scores for every student.

\*\*Remember to contact Maria Simpson by email or telephone (office: #7034, cell: 414-861-2067) for assistance.



## Star Instructions- Printing Class List with Student Logins

1. On the Home page, click **Users**.
2. Select **View Students** under the Students section.
3. Select your school from the **School** drop-down list, if necessary.
4. Select your class from the **Class** drop-down list.
5. Click the Search button.
6. Click the **Passwords** tab.
7. Print and/or save the report.



## STAR Proctor Scripts

Read these instructions to your students before they take the STAR Math, Reading and Early Literacy tests. Read them exactly as printed so that students know what to expect and what is expected of them.

### A. STAR Math

"You are going to take a test called STAR Math Enterprise. It is a math test that has multiple-choice questions. You will answer the questions on a computer, chrome book, or an iPad. You must work the problems out on note paper because calculators are not allowed."

(If students are in grade 7 or higher): "For some of the algebra and geometry questions, there will be an on-screen calculator and an on-screen formula reference sheet that you can use to answer the questions."

"There are 34 questions on the test, and it should take you somewhere between 20 and 30 minutes to answer all of the questions. If a clock pops up in the top corner, it shows you how much time you have left to answer a question before it moves on to the next question. You will usually be able to answer a question before the clock even pops up, so you may not see it at all during your test."

"This test will probably be harder than other math tests you have taken. That is because STAR Math selects questions just for you to see how much you know about math. You will probably even see math concepts or problems that you have never been taught in school. This is normal for how this special type of test works. Try not to get frustrated by this. Just try to give the best answer to each problem and you will do fine."

"Do not worry if someone finishes the test before you because every test is different. Do not worry about how many questions you think you get right, or how many you think you get wrong. Everyone will probably miss some of the questions. The main goal is for you to do the best you can."

"This test is very important because your results tell me what skills you have already mastered and which skills you are ready to learn."

"I will review your test results with each of you individually after you complete the test and share the results with your parents/guardians."

## STAR Proctor Scripts

### B. STAR Reading

"You are going to take a test called STAR Reading Enterprise. It is a reading test that has fill-in-the blank and short-answer questions. You will answer 34 questions on a computer, chrome book, or an iPad. It will take about fifteen minutes to answer all of the questions. If a clock pops up in the top corner, it shows you how much time you have left to answer a question before it moves on to the next question. You will usually be able to answer a question before the clock even pops up, so you may not see it at all during your test."

"Do not worry if someone finishes the test before you because every test is different. Do not worry about how many questions you think you get right, or how many you think you get wrong. Everyone will probably miss some of the questions. The main goal is for you to do the best you can."

"This test is very important because your results tell me what skills you have already mastered and which skills you are ready to learn."

"I will review your test results with each of you individually after you complete the test and share the results with your parents/guardians."

### C. STAR Early Literacy

"You are going to take a test called STAR Early Literacy Enterprise. You will answer 27 or more questions on a computer, chrome book, or an iPad. It will take about fifteen minutes to answer all of the questions. If a clock pops up in the top corner, it shows you how much time you have left to answer a question before it moves on to the next question. You will usually be able to answer a question before the clock even pops up, so you may not see it at all during your test."

"Do not worry if someone finishes the test before you because every test is different. Do not worry about how many questions you think you get right, or how many you think you get wrong. Everyone will probably miss some of the questions. The main goal is for you to do the best you can."

"This test is very important because your results tell me what skills you have already mastered and which skills you are ready to learn."

"I will review your test results with each of you individually after you complete the test and share the results with your parents/guardians."



## Directions for Clearing Locked Accounts

1. On the Home page, click **Users**.
2. Click **Clear Locked Students** under the Student section.
3. The Clear Locked Students page lists all students whose records are locked.
4. To clear account locks:
  - for all students, click **Clear All Student Locks**.
  - for individual students, click **Clear** in the row for each student whose account should be unlocked; when you do this, the student's name will be removed from the list.
5. When you have finished unlocking student accounts, click **Done**.



## STAR Math Enterprise: Read Aloud Accommodations

### **The Issue**

Renaissance Learning™ has received requests about reading STAR Math Enterprise™ aloud when administering STAR Math Enterprise. School district personnel want to know whether this practice is permissible and if there is evidence of impact on validity.

### **General Conclusion**

The general recommendation for STAR Math Enterprise is to allow read aloud for students who need it, based on professional judgment. We make this recommendation based on the fact that there is no evidence indicating that this practice invalidates the STAR Math Enterprise scores.

### **Guidelines for providing reading support in STAR Math Enterprise**

1. Examiners may read to any student who needs help decoding STAR Math Enterprise test questions.
2. While examiners may read a word aloud, they may not define or explain that word.
3. Students may not use calculators, unless the IEP calls for it.
4. Examiners should always make a note on the student's and school records that read aloud.
5. School personnel should check their state department policies about reading aloud the state math assessment. Most states allow educators to read the state math tests aloud, several require the school to request permission from the Department of Education, and some require that it be noted that the student received help reading the state math test.

### ***Is it ok to help students with specific words in STAR Math Enterprise, even without an IEP?***

Yes, an examiner may read a specific word aloud, but may not define it. For example, the examiner could say, "triangle," but could not point to a triangle within a STAR Math Enterprise item or say "that's a shape with three sides."

### ***Does read aloud impact STAR Math Enterprise scores?***

There is no evidence that read aloud has an adverse effect on the technical adequacy of STAR Math Enterprise or other assessments. At the same time, reading a test aloud technically constitutes a non-standard administration. We advise users that strictly speaking, the norms may not apply.

The scaled scores are interpretable the same way, whether or not the test was read aloud. The norm-referenced scores are less clearly unaffected. We advise that this should be left to educator discretion. We expect any distortion in the norm-referenced scores that results from reading the test aloud to be negligible.



# The STAR Assessments and Students with Disabilities

The STAR assessments (STAR Reading™, STAR Early Literacy™, and STAR Math™) are suitable for use with students with disabilities. Since STAR uses computer adaptive testing, the difficulty of the test is adjusted automatically to reflect the skill level of a student. Therefore, the assessments are more likely to present items that correspond to the broad range of abilities of all students, including those with special needs. STAR minimizes frustration for students because the difficulty of questions is “adapted” based on a student’s response pattern. For example, if a student misses a question, the next question will be easier. If a student answers a question correctly, the difficulty level will increase.

Because the STAR assessments are computer adaptive, they gather valid and reliable information in a relatively short period of time. STAR Reading and STAR Math were developed using a nationally representative sample that contained students with special needs based on their proportional representation. These students completed the assessments using standard time limits. The students with disabilities were receiving instruction in inclusive settings as required by their Individualized Education Programs.

STAR Reading and STAR Math include the ability to provide extended time limits for students who may need more time to process the questions and enter a response. To do this, go to **Student Settings > Edit Student Settings**, and check the **Extended Question Time Limit** box for students requiring this accommodation.

## Students with Visual Impairments

For students with limited vision, the introductory screens of the STAR assessments respond to the “High Contrast” accessibility feature within Windows and the “Switch to Black and White” accessibility feature in MAC OS 10. In addition, the assessment screens within STAR already provide visual contrast through a light background and black writing. Furthermore, STAR assessments are compatible with Mac OS 10’s “Zoom In” accessibility feature, which allows users to magnify nearly all STAR screens.

If students are blind, however, the STAR assessments may not be appropriate. STAR Reading, for example, is based on a reading comprehension task. The student must be able to read the on-screen prompt in order to assess his or her ability to read and comprehend. The same is true with STAR Math and STAR Early Literacy, in which the student will have to respond to on-screen prompts. We recommend that the teacher or specialist who works with the student evaluate the suitability of the STAR assessments for a given student with a visual disability and use the appropriate adaptive strategy. We also encourage you to contact Renaissance Learning™ to let us know how you are adapting our assessments so we can share your strategies with other users.

Since the STAR assessments use Flash technology, they do not work well with screen reader software such as JAWS Adaptive Speech Reading.



## Students with Hearing Impairments

STAR Reading and STAR Math may be used with students who are deaf or hard of hearing using standard administration procedures. The text of STAR Reading should not be signed to the students because it is an assessment of their ability to comprehend printed text. At the discretion of the teacher or specialist, STAR Math may be signed to the student if there is a question about the student's ability to understand the text. If this adaptation is used, the results of the assessment should be evaluated cautiously. It is reasonable to assume that the same adaptations or accommodations permitted for standardized or state assessment may be used with STAR Math.

STAR Early Literacy items feature an auditory component. This component is critical to the assessment of the skill on which the item is based. The assessment is not appropriate for deaf students and most hearing-impaired students. If you believe that a student has sufficient residual hearing to complete the items successfully, the results should be interpreted cautiously in order not to underestimate the early literacy skills of the student.

## Students with Limited Motor Skills

STAR offers accommodations for students with disabilities through the accessibility options built into a computer's operating system. For instance, students with limited motor skills can execute STAR's mouse-related functions through the keyboard when "mouse keys" is selected under Accessibility Options within the Windows operations system. The Mouse Keys option is also available for the Mac under **System Preferences > Universal Access > Mouse > Mouse Keys**.

The STAR assessments work using the keyboard or mouse to input answers. Generally speaking, the STAR assessments are also compatible with the adaptive devices typically used by students with limited motor skills. The devices may be part of the operating system or may be add-on devices such as cursor or keyboard controllers. If you have had particular success with an adaptive strategy, we encourage you to contact Renaissance Learning so we can share your success with other users.

## External Review

Federal IDEA regulations allow the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) processes in special education determinations (although RTI is about more than just special education determinations). In addition, the federally funded National Center on Response to Intervention<sup>1</sup> (NCRTI) has given the STAR assessments some of its very highest ratings for screening and progress monitoring—meaning they are among the best assessment tools for RTI purposes including use with students in special education programs.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=71](http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=71)

### Star Guidelines for Pausing and Aborting Tests


1. There are times when there may be a need to pause a STAR test and resume it later, such as a fire alarm or the end of a class period.
2. During a STAR test, you can press <Ctrl>+<A> to bring up a menu with the option to [Resume Later] or [Stop Test]. Clicking either will prompt for the monitor password.
  - There is also a [Cancel] button to go back to the test. Clicking [Stop Test] has the same affect as aborting a test, and the student will begin a new test when they log back in and click Take a Test; the incomplete test will not be scored.
3. Clicking [Resume Later] allows the student to resume their test at a later time, starting on the same question number at which the test was paused. They will see a different item at the same level as the item that was last shown. The test can be paused and resumed as many times as needed, but it can only be resumed within the following numbers of days from when the test was started:
  - STAR Math Algebra, STAR Math Geometry, and STAR Reading Spanish: 2
  - STAR Early Literacy, STAR Math Enterprise and non-Enterprise, and STAR Reading Enterprise and non-Enterprise: 8
4. Closing the test window during a test will allow a student to resume from where they left off, though it is recommended to use the <Ctfl>+<A> functionality.







## Resuming an Interrupted Test

 *Computer* refers to a desktop or laptop computer that accesses STAR Reading via Renaissance Place using a web browser. *Mobile device* refers to an iPad® running STAR Apps on iPad®.

An unfinished test can be resumed if the test was interrupted in one of the following ways:

- If the test was intentionally paused by the teacher or test monitor.
- If the student lost connection to the server or accidentally closed the browser or App during the test.

Resuming an unfinished test on a computer >>

1. Start the web browser and go to the Renaissance Place Real Time address (URL).
2. On the Welcome page, click **I'm a Student**.
3. The student enters his or her user name and password, and then clicks **Log In**.
4. On the Home page, below STAR Reading, the student clicks **Take a Test**.
5. The student will see a message on the STAR Reading Student page reminding the student that he or she has an unfinished test.

The student clicks **Start** to resume the test.

6. The teacher or test monitor should enter the monitor password and click **OK**.
7. A message will confirm that the test is resuming, and then the student can finish taking the test.

Resuming an unfinished test on an iPad® >>

1. Start STAR Apps on iPad®.
2. The student enters his or her user name and password, and then taps **Go**.
3. The student will see a message reminding the student that he or she has an unfinished test.  
The student taps **Start** to resume the test.
4. The teacher or test monitor should enter the monitor password and tap **Continue**.
5. A message will confirm that the test is resuming, and then the student can finish taking the test.

### Notes:

- An unfinished test can only be resumed within eight days of the interruption.

- A test can be paused and resumed repeatedly. When a test is resumed, the student returns to the same *place* in the test where the student left off (the same question number), but a different question will be presented. This is done to prevent pausing the test in order to give a student more time to work on a problem.

*Example:* On a Thursday afternoon, Lisa is taking a STAR Reading test. She is on question 12 when she begins to feel ill. The teacher pauses the test and sends Lisa home. Lisa does not return to school until Monday; when she comes back, the teacher resumes the test. She continues the test, starting on question 12 where she left off, but question 12 is no longer the same question she saw last Thursday; it has changed to a new question.

- A test can only be resumed on the platform on which it started. A test that was paused on a computer cannot be resumed on an iPad®, and vice-versa.
- STAR Reading doesn't record scores for incomplete tests (stopped and unfinished), but it does record the total number of incomplete tests for each student in the Test Activity Report.

**See also:**

Taking a STAR Reading test

Testing Password preference

## Star Student Conference Guide

1. How would you rate the effort you gave on this Star assessment?  My Best  
 Just Enough  Very Little
2. Your scaled score was \_\_\_\_\_ with a percentile rank of \_\_\_\_\_. This places your score level at \_\_\_\_\_ (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Minimal).
3. Are you satisfied with this outcome? Why or why not?
4. Is this performance an accurate example of your ability in this subject? Why or why not?
5. How would you like to improve your performance on the next Star assessment? What will you do to improve?



## Directions to Locate Student Login Information

1. On the Home page, click **Users**.
2. Click **View Students**.
3. Search for the student whose information you need to view. Use the first name initial and 1<sup>st</sup> three letters of the last name.
4. Click **Search**.
5. The students who matched your search will be listed at the bottom of the page. Click the **Password** tab to view login information.

