

# Accessibility Adjustments Within SMART

SMART is a new assessment and aromatawai tool for Years 3-10. It replaces e-asTTle with up-to-date technology. It has been designed to align with the strengthened New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, supporting Reading, Writing and Mathematics, and Pānui, Tuhihi and Pāngarau.

Schools and kura will be able to use SMART for assessments twice a year from Term 2, 2026.

SMART is designed to support low-stakes assessment that fits naturally into everyday learning. It provides teachers | kaiako with reliable progress information to help identify the next steps of learning, and to support reporting to parents and whānau.

Participation in SMART assessment is intended to be calm, routine and familiar. A consistent, low-stress assessment experience is essential to making results meaningful and comparable—especially for learners who experience anxiety, fatigue, or sensory overload. Accessibility adjustments are an important part of achieving this.

## Making Accessibility Adjustments in SMART

Accessibility adjustments are used during assessment to meet a range of physical, emotional, sensory, medical and learning needs. They provide flexibility in the ways learners are assessed, reducing barriers so that students | ākonga are better able to demonstrate what they know.

Note that decisions about appropriate adjustments should involve the student | ākonga, family | whānau, teachers | kaiako, and learning support.

A key principle in applying accessibility adjustments for assessment within SMART is that if students | ākonga use adjustments in their normal classroom setting, they should be used for the assessment.

## Accessibility adjustments within SMART

The following accessibility adjustments are available within the SMART on-line tool:

- Magnification tools (ie ability to increase font size)
- Adjustable colour themes (5 versions)

SMART also allows keyboard vs mouse navigation and supports assistive technologies such as:

- personalised keyboards including Braille keyboards
- personalised mice
- personalised screens including screen readers (which provide text-to-speech functionality) for visually impaired students | ākonga
- voice control and use of mouth stylus for students | ākonga with limited mobility.

Where students | ākonga undertake a paper-based assessment, SMART can generate separate question and answer sheets for every year level and every assessment, for distribution in an assessment session.

## Colour Themes

Accessibility colour themes—such as blue, green, lilac, or yellow tinted backgrounds with black text—are designed to support people who experience visual stress or difficulty reading high-contrast black text on a white background.

These difficulties may occur in people with:

- Dyslexia
- Irlen Syndrome / visual stress
- ADHD (attention and sensory sensitivity)
- Light sensitivity or migraines
- Low vision requiring reduced glare

It is important to remember that colour preferences are individual. No single colour is “for” a specific condition. Schools and kura will decide on how colour themes are applied and who has access to them. In SMART the colour themes are available to all students | ākonga.

Colour themes do not replace professional diagnosis but provide practical day-to-day support.

The right colour is simply the one that helps the user read with less strain.

Colour Theme	Commonly Supports	Why it Helps
Blue paper / black text	Dyslexia, visual stress, migraines	Reduces contrast, stabilizes text
Green paper / black text	Irlen Syndrome, glare sensitivity	Softens visual field, reduces flicker
Lilac/purple paper / black text	Visual stress, dyslexia	Warm, low contrast. Reduces brightness sensitivity
Yellow paper / black text	Dyslexia, ADHD, low vision	High contrast without harsh white glare

### Extra time and rest breaks

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SMART twice yearly assessments are not timed by the tool. This means that:

- Extra time allowances and rest breaks do not need to be set up in SMART
- If a timed session is required, the teacher | kaiako is responsible for managing the timing, including any extra time allowances.

SMART also allows teachers | kaiako real-time control to pause, resume or extend assessments for the whole cohort being assessed.

## How to use Accessibility Adjustments within the SMART online tool

### Turning on adjustments within SMART

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Students | ākongā can control font size while in the assessment using the magnify icon in the top left of their screen.

If colour theme needs to be adjusted, the school | kura administrator or teacher | kaiako must do this before the assessment session begins - either prior to or at the beginning of the assessment session.

Turning a colour theme on or off is done from the SMART dashboard, under the Preparation column, by selecting the Accessibility Preferences option. Once the Accessibility Preferences option is selected, students | ākongā requiring a colour theme can be searched for in the search function and selecting the required theme. Selecting “x” then removes the colour theme, if required. The adjustment (colour theme) can be applied:

- to a specific assessment attempt for the student | ākongā, eg NZC Y8 Writing. This option can be used after students | ākongā have been allocated their assessments to apply to the assessment they are going to take, or
- across all assessments for a student | ākongā by applying the adjustment to the student | ākongā profile. This only works if done before students | ākongā have been allocated their assessments for an upcoming assessment period

### Schools | Kura enter adjustments into students' | ākongā SMART profiles

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If an adjustable colour theme is going to be used, this adjustment must be entered into each student's | ākongā SMART profile by the school | kura, **before the assessment takes place**. This will give teachers | kaiako visibility of assigned adjustments on the session dashboard. This adjustment:

- Must be applied to the correct assessment domains
- Must be validated before assessment day
- Cannot be changed once the student | ākongā has started the assessment.

## Need to test devices and accessibility tools and familiarise students | ākonga before assessment

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All devices being used, any assistive technology and/or adjustable colour themes being used in an online assessment should be tested prior to the assessment session to ensure everything is working.

Devices can be tested using the SMART Device Readiness Check - this is done by opening a web browser on the device and entering the following URL into the address bar <https://smart.education.govt.nz/pages/diagnostics> and pressing return. The page will automatically run a compatibility check and results will display on screen. For further guidance on what to do if a result is “Partial” or “Fail”, please refer to the “SMART – Preparing to use SMART” Module which can be found [on the Education Learning Management System](#).

Whether assistive devices are compatible with SMART can be checked when students | ākonga complete [the SMART Familiarisation Experience for NZC](#) or [TMOA Familiarisation Experience](#). The Familiarisation Experience is a practice site designed to help students | ākonga get used to the SMART assessment experience, using the devices and appropriate assistive technologies they use in the classroom and which they will use in the assessment. It will also support all students | ākonga to become familiar with the various item types and practise using them with confidence.

## Principals | Tumuaki Responsibilities

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Principals | Tumuaki are responsible for ensuring:

- Students | ākonga and their families | whānau know the adjustments students | ākonga are using in the classroom will be used in SMART assessments
- School-wide procedures are in place for assigning and checking adjustments
- Adjustments added to SMART are correct
- All required equipment is available, and tested prior to assessment
- Teachers | kaiako understand the supports each student | ākonga will receive
- The assessment environment allows adjustments to be delivered properly (e.g. separate rooms for oral/sign support).

We're committed to making SMART as clear and easy to use as possible. If you have feedback, queries, or if you need further support, please get in touch with [SMART.Enquiries@education.govt.nz](mailto:SMART.Enquiries@education.govt.nz)