

Making Setting Accommodations Est. Time: 1 Hour

Objective

Use a set of guiding questions to identify setting accommodations for a student with a disability based on her individual strengths and needs.

Overview

Students with disabilities often encounter barriers or challenges when accessing the general education curriculum. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that educators address these barriers by providing appropriate accommodations. Careful consideration of a student’s strengths and needs can help guide the identification and selection of instructional and testing accommodations.

An *accommodation* is a change to instructional or testing procedures or materials that allows a student to fully access the information and to accurately demonstrate knowledge. It does not change the expectations of learning or the requirements of the task. Instructional and testing accommodations are generally grouped into four categories:

- Presentation
- Response
- Setting
- Timing and Scheduling

This activity will focus on *setting accommodations*, which allow a change of location or the characteristics of the environment. The following table provides examples of some common setting accommodations.

Setting Accommodations	
Common Barrier	Accommodation Examples
Staying focused or maintaining attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate setting (e.g., different room for testing) • Different location in classroom (e.g., away from distractions such as windows or friends) • Preferential seating (e.g., near teacher) • Study carrels to block visual stimuli • Noise-reducing headphones • Individual setting • Small-group setting • Reduction of visual clutter • Small fidgets

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Setting Accommodations	
Common Barrier	Accommodation Examples
Regulating behavior (e.g., is disruptive, distracts other students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate setting (e.g., different room for testing) • Preferential seating (e.g., near teacher) • Study carrels • Individual setting • Small-group setting
Seeing text or illustrations (e.g., too far from whiteboard, glare from windows)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential seating (e.g., near whiteboard) • Different location in classroom (e.g., away from windows) • Special lighting
Hearing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential seating (e.g., near teacher) • Different location in classroom (e.g., away from noisy areas)
Physically accessing resources or needed equipment/assistive technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different location in classroom (e.g., near electrical outlet, end of row) • Separate location to access equipment (e.g., computer lab)
Visual-spatial tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graph paper to help students align numbers when writing mathematics problems • Writing answers in a test booklet instead of on a bubble sheet (this does not require the student to solve the problem in a booklet and then transfer it to a separate sheet) • Adaptive furniture or equipment (e.g., adjustable-height desk to accommodate a wheelchair) • Ample space for adaptive furniture or equipment • Larger desks or tables (e.g., to accommodate equipment) • Space for a service animal • Storage areas for equipment • Wide, clear aisles for easier navigation

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Setting Accommodations	
Common Barrier	Accommodation Examples
Organization of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual supports (e.g., labeled storage containers, color-coded binders) • Checklist of needed supplies

Note: Although this table highlights common examples of setting accommodations, it is by no means an exhaustive list.

Activity

Identify a setting accommodation for a student with a disability based on his or her individual strengths and needs. Select one of the options below to begin.

Option 1: Identify a student with a disability in your classroom. To preserve the anonymity of your student, be sure to use only her first name or an alias.

1. Describe the student you selected, making sure to include:
 - Information about the student’s age, gender, disability, and first language
 - The student’s strengths (list a minimum of three)
 - The student’s barrier(s)
2. Complete the attached Setting Accommodations Worksheet.
3. Select one setting accommodation from the Setting Accommodations Worksheet.
 - Identify the accommodation you selected and explain how it will address the student’s barrier(s).
 - Provide an example of how you would implement this accommodation.

Option 2: If you are not currently teaching, use the student in the scenario below to complete this activity.

Mason is an energetic 10-year-old boy who speaks English. Typically, he gets along with his peers and is well-liked by his classmates. Because he is quite creative and is fascinated by objects with moving parts, he is actively involved in the robotics club. Although Mason is very bright, he has a learning disability and ADHD. Mason has difficulty processing, retaining, and recalling information. He also has some difficulty organizing materials and keeping up with school supplies. It is quite common for him to complete his homework but then misplace it before he has a chance to turn it in. Mason often becomes easily distracted by what is going on around him and has difficulty staying focused long enough to complete his work.

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1. Complete the attached Setting Accommodations Worksheet.
2. Select one setting accommodation from the Setting Accommodations Worksheet.
 - Identify the accommodation you selected and explain how it will address the barrier(s).
 - Provide an example of how you would implement this accommodation.

Making Setting Accommodations

Setting Accommodations Worksheet

Directions: This worksheet should be completed for an individual student. Read through each item in the left-hand column and determine whether it is a barrier for the student. If it is, circle "Yes." If not, circle "No." For each item with a "Yes," refer to the Setting Accommodations table above and record one or two accommodations in the third column to address the student's barrier(s).

Setting Accommodations		
Barrier	Circle One	If "Yes," list 1–2 accommodations.
Staying focused or maintaining attention		
Regulating behavior (e.g., is disruptive, distracts other students)	Yes No	
Seeing text or illustrations (e.g., too far from whiteboard, glare from windows)	Yes No	
Hearing information	Yes No	
Physically accessing resources or needed equipment/assistive technology	Yes No	
Visual-spatial tasks	Yes No	
Organization of materials	Yes No	

Note: This worksheet was developed specifically for this activity. It is not a standard form.