

# MYTHBUSTERS

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS

### ROUND 1: HOW YOU LEARN

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

##### Examples

Extra time  
on tests



Visual  
Schedules



Noise-  
Cancelling  
Headphones



Sensory  
Tools



Preferential  
Seating



Accommodations change how a student accesses or participates in instruction by giving them the tools and strategies they need to learn without changing the curriculum or learning expectations.

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**Accommodations give an unfair advantage.**

- ❌ FALSE! They don't provide extra help; they remove barriers so students can access learning in a way that works for them.

**Accommodations cannot be used for state testing.**

- ❌ FALSE! If an accommodation is documented in a student's IEP or 504 Plan, the school must provide it during state assessments — as long as the accommodation is allowable for that specific test and does not alter the construct being measured.  
TN Code § 49-6-6001

For example, if there is a math subtest measuring how quickly and accurately a student can calculate basic math facts, a calculator is not allowable. However, on a math subtest measuring how a student solves a real-world math problem, a calculator is allowable.

**Accommodations should be used if they increase the student's assessment scores.**

- ❌ FALSE! Accommodations should be used to ensure the student has access to the test and can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. They should never be selected to raise a score or hide the impact of the disability.

**You can't use accommodations on the ACT/SAT.**

- ❌ FALSE! Students can use accommodations on these tests if the IEP team determines they are needed and if the accommodations are allowable on the test. The ACT or SAT can challenge the request and make the final determination on the use of an accommodation during testing.



Quick Tip: With appropriate accommodations, additional modifications to content and curriculum may not be needed. Modifications should only be determined after considering accommodations.

#### MODIFICATIONS



## ROUND 2: WHAT YOU LEARN



Modifications change what a student is taught or expected to learn, or what the student is expected to demonstrate by adapting the curriculum or task based on their individual needs.

### MODIFICATIONS

#### Examples

- Reducing the amount of content a student must learn
- Providing an alternate or adjusted assignment or test
- Using an alternative grading rubric or scale aligned to the individually adapted learning expectations, simpler tasks, reading passages with simplified vocabulary and/or sentence complexity
- Reduced writing expectations
- Hands-on activities instead of written reports, etc.

### TRUE OR FALSE

**You can't get a general education diploma if you have modifications.**

- ❌ FALSE! Some modifications may affect graduation requirements, but many students with modifications still earn a general education diploma by meeting their state's criteria.

**A student with modifications cannot be in a regular classroom.**

- ❌ FALSE! Many students with modifications learn alongside their peers with the right support in place.

**Students who need modifications can't be taught in a general education classroom.**

- ❌ FALSE! Students can and should be taught in the classroom that is their "least restrictive environment" (LRE), meaning they have the greatest possible access to their peers without disabilities while still making expected progress. Many students who need modifications learn alongside their peers for all or part of the day.

**Once modifications are in place, they never need to change.**

- ❌ FALSE! Students grow and change! Plans should be reviewed at least once a year to make sure they meet the students' needs.

**The more modifications in a plan, the better.**

- ❌ FALSE! More isn't always better. Plans should be customized to what the student actually needs and uses to promote independence to the greatest degree possible.

**Modifications only apply to the classroom.**

- ❌ FALSE! Modifications can also support students in non-academic settings such as the cafeteria, hallways, and buses. Students may also need additional or different modifications for field trips and extracurricular activities.

**How are accommodations and modifications determined?**

Evaluations, student performance across settings, general education teacher/special education teacher/related service provider input, parent observations, student feedback, and medical reports.

