



New Meridian



# MAST Accessibility Guide

Grades 3–8

2025–2026 School Year

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# Introduction

## Overview of the Accessibility Guide

This document is intended to provide guidance for Montana school district personnel who must make decisions about testing all students, including special student populations, on the Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) program for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics (math). All students, including students with disabilities and English learners, are required by state and federal law to take part in the state assessments with or without accommodations. Generally, if a student can receive instruction, then they are also able to participate in state assessments. All students enrolled in accredited schools are expected to take part in state assessments in one of three ways:

1. Participate in general population assessments without accommodations.
2. Participate in general population assessments with accommodations.
3. Participate in alternate assessments when the participation criteria are met.

Special student populations include students identified as eligible and receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students identified as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and students who are identified as English learners (EL).

This document also provides information regarding general education students who may require additional supports when taking standardized assessments. These guidelines describe the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the MAST ELA and math assessments.

The specific accessibility features (i.e., universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations) approved by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) are subject to change in the future if additional tools, supports, or accommodations for the assessments are identified based on experience and research findings. Student eligibility for accessibility features is added through the state student information system known as EDUCATE (IC). The EDUCATE (IC) system is designed to collect demographic, enrollment, program participation, and assessment data for each student.

The OPI uploads the student data file from EDUCATE (IC) into the Kite Educator Portal. (See the *Data Management Overview* section in the Kite Educator Portal) Kite then distributes this information to the Kite Student Portal, the online platform used for MAST testing. To protect student data privacy, districts are

responsible for turning on any accessibility tools within the student's Personal Needs Profile (PNP) found in the Kite Educator Portal. Specific data within an IEP is not transferred from EDUCATE (IC) into Kite.

See the [Kite Educator Portal Manual](#) and the [Kite Student Portal Manual](#) for more information on these systems.

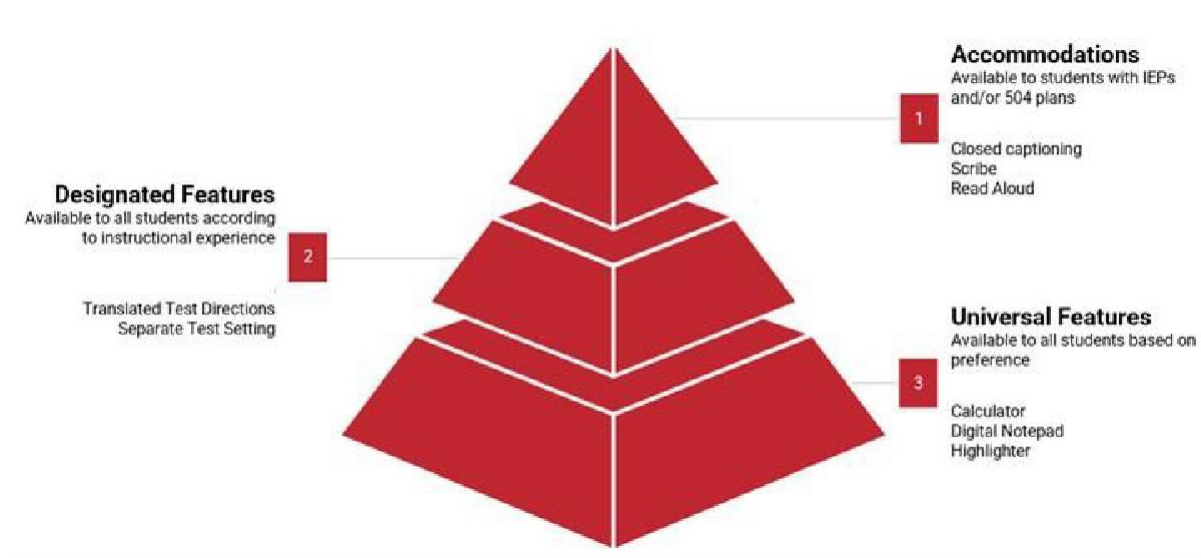
## Intended Audience

This document is intended for district- and school-level personnel and decision-making teams, including Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 and English language development teams, and other teams supporting students as they prepare for and implement the MAST program.

The guidelines provide information on universal tools available to all students and on how to select appropriate designated supports and accommodations for those students who need them. The guidelines are also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions made in instruction and assessment.

## Model for Accessibility Features

All students have universal accessibility features available to them. Some students may have certain characteristics and needs for access that require the use of accommodations when they participate in the MAST program. See Montana's three-tiered approach below.



## Universal Tools (Standard Assessment Tools)

The MAST program offers digital tools embedded into the Kite Student Portal. In addition, districts may provide non-embedded resources outside of the testing platform. Students can choose these universal tools according to their preferences. Universal tools are *not* considered assessment modifications. Assessment in which students have utilized universal tools will produce scores and count as participation toward the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

### Embedded Universal Features

The following tools are available to all students in the Kite Student Portal. For detailed descriptions of tool functionality, see the *Universal Features* section of the Kite Student Portal Manual. All embedded universal tools are available to students and are turned off by default.

Tool Name	Description	Subject
<b>Basic Calculator / Scientific Calculator</b>	Basic Calculator (grades 6–7) performs the basic four functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.  Scientific Calculator (grade 8) performs calculations including those involving exponents, trigonometric functions, and logarithms.	Select math testlets in grades 6–8
<b>English Glossary</b>	Grade and context appropriate definitions of specific construct-irrelevant terms are shown in English on the screen at the end of the passage.	ELA
<b>Eraser</b>	Removes highlighting and striker marks from the screen.	Math & ELA
<b>Expandable passage/questions</b>	With items that have a passage and question, students can drag the divider bar or select options to full-screen the question, passage, or both using the View One View All feature.	ELA
<b>Guideline</b>	Follows the pointer and lightly highlights the text of a reading passage line by line. On tablets, drags an icon attached to the highlight line through the passage.	Math & ELA
<b>Help</b>	The Help text bubble explains how to answer the question based on the question type.	Math & ELA

<b>Highlighter</b>	Selects text on the screen and highlights the selected text using a pink background.	Math & ELA
<b>Keyboard Navigation</b>	Uses keystrokes to navigate and select options.	Math & ELA
<b>Library</b>	Reference sheets are available in the Library tool.	Math Grades 5–8
<b>Mark for Review</b>	Marks a question for later review.	Math & ELA
<b>Masking – Custom</b>	Masks or covers parts of an assessment. A black box displays for the purpose of moving over and resizing areas of the screen.	Math & ELA
<b>Notes</b>	Displays a rectangle on the screen that allows a student to take notes.	Math & ELA
<b>Open Captioning</b>	Printed text that appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented.	ELA
<b>Pointer</b>	Selects content in the assessment.	Math & ELA
<b>Spell Check</b>	Tool for checking the spelling of words in student responses.	ELA performance tasks
<b>Striker</b>	Places a line through a multiple-choice answer choice that is not desired.	Math & ELA
<b>Screen Magnification</b>	Tool to magnify (zoom) the screen 2.0x, 3.0x, 4.0x, or 5.0x.	Math & ELA
<b>Writing Tools</b>	Selected writing tools (i.e., bold, italic, bullets) are available for ELA performance tasks.	ELA perf. tasks

## Non-Embedded Universal Tools

Some universal tools outside of the testing platform may be provided locally by the school or district.

Tool Name	Description	Subject
<b>Breaks</b>	Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals, or after the completion of a single testlet if multiple are being administered in one session. Students may be allowed to take breaks as needed to reduce cognitive fatigue. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.	Math & ELA
<b>Dictionary</b>	An English dictionary may be provided for the performance tasks.	ELA performance tasks
<b>Paper Library</b>	Printed reference sheets can be made available to students who test online or on a paper form.	Math Grades 5–8
<b>Scratch Paper</b>	Students may use blank scratch paper to make notes, write computations, record responses, or create graphic organizers. A whiteboard with a marker may be used as scratch paper.  After the testing session, scratch paper must be collected and destroyed, and whiteboards fully erased.	Math & ELA
<b>Thesaurus</b>	An English thesaurus may be provided for use with the performance tasks.	ELA performance tasks

## Designated Supports

Designated supports are available for use **by any student for whom the need has been identified by an educator** (or team of educators) and agreed to by the parent/guardian and student. The designated supports described in this section are not modifications. Designated supports yield valid scores that count as participation in assessments that meet the requirements of ESSA when used in a manner consistent with these guidelines.

It is recommended that a consistent process be used to determine supports for individual students. All educators making decisions should be trained in the process and be made aware of the range of available designated supports. Designated supports need to be identified prior to assessment administration. Embedded and non-embedded designated supports must be entered into the Personal Needs Profile (PNP) in the Kite Educator Portal. **Any embedded designated supports must be set in Kite at least 24 hours prior to testing.**



## Embedded Designated Supports

The designated supports listed below are available to students in the Kite Student Portal. For detailed descriptions of tool functionality, see the *Assessment Tools* section of the Kite Student Portal Manual. The default setting in Kite for designated supports is OFF unless it is set in Kite for a student. Some designated supports can be set by a user in the student's PNP or by the student when they begin testing. See the '\*\*' for this designation.

Tool Name	Description	Recommended Use	Subject
<b>Color Contrast**</b>	Sets a text color (foreground) and background color with foreground/background options for grey/black, yellow/black, green/white, red/white, or custom options.	For students with attention difficulties, visual impairments, or other disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Color Overlay**</b>	Displays a light-colored background on the screen with options for blue, yellow, grey, red, green, or custom options.	For students with attention difficulties, visual impairments, or other disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Magnification**</b>	The magnification setting enlarges the screen during an assessment to a default magnification level (2.0x, 3.0x, 4.0x, or 5.0x). Students also have the option to zoom in and out.	Students with visual impairments or print disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Masking – Answer Choices</b>	Shows each multiple-choice response option as masked. To close or remove the masked areas or select the X for each box.	For students with attention difficulties, visual impairments, or other disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Reverse Contrast</b>	Sets the text color to white and the background color to black. If a color contrast other than black and white is selected, those colors will be inverted.	For students with attention difficulties, visual impairments, or other disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Spanish Text to Speech (Use Text to Speech: Text &amp; Graphics and Translated Form – Spanish)</b>  Note: Text to Speech appears in the Accommodations tab.	A synthetic voice reads assessment content in Spanish, including instructions, response options, and explanations of visuals like pictures and graphs.	Students whose primary language is Spanish or who have reading disabilities or visual impairments.	Math

<b>Text to Speech: Text &amp; Graphics</b>  Note: Text to Speech appears in the Accommodations tab.	A synthetic voice reads assessment content including instructions, response options, and explanations of visuals like pictures and graphs. Voice reads in the language in which the form is written.	Students who are English language learners or have reading disabilities or visual impairments.	Math & ELA
<b>Translated Form – Spanish</b>	Sets the language of the testlet forms to Spanish.	For students whose primary language is Spanish.	Math

\*\*Also available to students to turn on in the Kite Student Portal

## Non-Embedded Designated Supports

The designated supports below are available to students **outside** of the Kite Student Portal.

Tool Name	Description	Recommended Use	Subject
<b>Amplification</b>	The student adjusts the volume control beyond the computer's built-in settings by using headphones or other non-embedded devices.	Students with hearing impairments.	Math & ELA
<b>Bilingual Dictionary</b>	A bilingual/word dictionary is a language support. A bilingual/word dictionary can be provided for the ELA performance task.	Students whose primary language is not English.	ELA perf. tasks
<b>Magnification Device</b>	<p>The size of the specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, graphics, navigation buttons, and mouse pointer) may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device or software.</p> <p>Magnification allows increasing size and color contrast, including the size and color of the mouse pointer, to a level not provided by the zoom universal tool and/or color contrast designated support.</p>	Students with visual impairments or print disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Medical Supports</b>	Students may have access to medical supports (e.g., a glucose monitor) for medical purposes. The medical support may include a cell phone and should only support the student for medical reasons.	<p>Educators must comply with local medical support policies to prioritize student health.</p> <p>Electronic aids must limit app access or be closely monitored by test administrators for security. Separate settings may be needed to prevent distractions and maintain test integrity.</p>	Math & ELA
<b>Noise Buffers</b>	Ear mufflers, white noise, and/or	Students who are	Math &

	other equipment used to block external sounds.	easily distracted or have a hearing impairment.	ELA
<b>Read Aloud: Items Only</b>  Note: This Designated Support appears in the Accommodations tab of the PNP in Kite Educator Portal.	Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader. The reader must be trained and qualified and must follow the administration guidelines.	Students who are English language learners or have reading disabilities or visual impairments.	Math & ELA
<b>Scribe</b>  Note: This Designated Support appears in the Accommodations tab of the PNP in Kite Educator Portal.  See Appendix for details.	Students dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate. The scribe must be trained and qualified and must follow the administration guidelines.	Students who have motor or processing difficulties or have other impairments that prevent them from utilizing the Kite platform.	Math & ELA*
<b>Separate Setting</b>	Test location is altered so that the student is tested in a setting different from what is available for most students.	Students who are easily distracted or may distract other students.	Math & ELA
<b>Simplified Test Directions</b>	The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions contained in the Test Administration Manual.	Students who have simplified test directions noted in their IEP.	Math & ELA
<b>Translated Test Directions</b>	PDF of directions translated in each of the languages currently supported. An adult can read these to a student. Directions are available on the <a href="#">MAST Program Portal</a> .	Students who are English language learners.	Math

\*Does not apply to ELA performance tasks.

## Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during MAST assessments. Accommodations yield valid scores that count as participation in assessments that meet the requirements of ESSA when used in a manner consistent with the guidelines. **Accommodations must be documented in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.**

If a needed accommodation is not listed, or an emergency need has risen, requests for **non-routine accommodations** must be submitted to the OPI from the System Test Coordinator (STC) through the [MontCAS Application > Non-Routine Request Process](#) at least 2 weeks prior to planned testing. The OPI must approve all non-routine accommodations used in the state assessments before a student can receive them, as any accommodation not listed has the risk to change what is being measured and may make the student score invalid.

Accommodations should be used in instruction and assessment throughout the year and at least 3 months prior to the assessment. Accommodations that are provided on state assessments must be familiar to the student and must match those supports and accommodations provided for classroom instruction and assessment throughout the school year. Parents/guardians must be knowledgeable about the supports and accommodations planned for their child so they are aware of the conditions under which their child will participate in the assessment.

Decisions about accommodations are made by the IEP or 504 teams. These teams provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan.

The IEP team is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is created and kept updated in the Student Information System (SIS). The district's STC or designated users with the roles "Building Test Coordinator," "Building User," "District Test Coordinator," or "District User" are responsible for making sure that the accommodations and supports in the IEP or the 504 plan are entered into the PNP settings in the Kite Educator Portal.

**A student without a documented IEP/504 in EDUCATE (IC) is unable to have any accommodations turned on for them in the Kite Educator Portal.**



**NOTE:** Accommodations do not automatically transfer from EDUCATE (IC) to Kite. School districts are responsible for ensuring that the test settings are properly configured prior to testing.

Any embedded test setting modification **MUST** be turned on in the Kite Educator Portal PNP settings module for it to appear in the student testing interface  
Embedded Accommodations

The accommodations listed below are available to students in the Kite Student Portal. For detailed descriptions of tool functionality, see the *Designated Supports & Accommodations* section of the Kite Student Portal Manual.

Tool Name	Description	Recommended Use	Subject
<b>American Sign Language (ASL)</b>	<p><b>ELA:</b> A video displays ASL interpretation of the <u>audio</u> content in an ELA video presentation within the assessment platform.</p> <p><b>Math:</b> A video displays ASL interpretation for <b>all</b> Math content within the assessment platform.</p>	Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and regularly use ASL.	Math & ELA
<b>Speech to Text</b>	Embedded voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer to dictate responses.	Students who have motor or processing disabilities or an impairment that prevents them from typing a response in Kite.	ELA perf. tasks
<b>Text to Speech: Non-Visual</b>	A synthetic voice reads assessment content including instructions, response options, explanations of visuals like pictures and graphs, <u>and ELA passages</u> . Voice reads the language in which the form is written.	This accommodation is appropriate for a limited number of students, and its usage must be explicitly stated in a student's IEP or 504 plan. Students utilizing text to speech will require headphones.	ELA

## Non-Embedded Accommodations

The accommodations listed below are available to students outside of the Kite Student Portal.

Tool Name	Description	Recommended Use	Subject
<b>100s Table</b>	A paper-based table listing numbers from 1–100.	Students with visual processing or spatial perception.	Math
<b>Abacus</b>	This tool may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus.	Students with visual or processing impairments.	Math
<b>Alternate Response Options</b>	Alternate response options include but are not limited to adapted keyboards, large keyboards, sticky keys, mouse keys, filter keys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches.	Students with physical disabilities (including both fine motor and gross motor skills).	Math & ELA
<b>ASL Interpreter</b>	A human ASL interpreter is provided to the student to interpret items and responses.	Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and regularly use ASL.	For ELA items
<b>Braille Form</b>	A form of the testlets will be available for districts to request. Requests must be approved by OPI through the <a href="#">MontCAS application</a> .	Students who are blind or visually impaired and who regularly use braille.	Math & ELA
<b>Color Contrast on Paper Form</b>	Test content of online items may be printed using different colors.	Students with visual impairments or print disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Color Overlay on Paper Form</b>	Color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment.	Students with visual impairments or print disabilities.	Math & ELA
<b>Multiplication Table</b>	A paper-based multiplication table with the numbers 1–12.	For students with this accommodation in their IEP.	Math
<b>Paper Form: Large Print</b>	Paper forms are available for all testlets. Requests must be made by directly contacting the OPI Assessment Help Desk (1-844-867-2569). <i>Please don't share any student's personal identifiable information via email or voicemail.</i> The form would need to be printed in a larger size by the district.	For students with this accommodation in their IEP or 504 plan.	Math & ELA

<b>Paper Form: Regular</b>	Paper forms are available for all testlets. Requests must be made by directly contacting the OPI Assessment Help Desk (1-844-867-2569). <i>Please don't share any student's personal identifiable information via email or voicemail.</i>	For students with this accommodation in their IEP or 504 plan.	Math & ELA
<b>Paper Form: Spanish</b>	Spanish paper forms are available for all math testlets. Requests must be made by directly contacting the OPI Assessment Help Desk (1-844-867-2569). <i>Please don't share any student's personal identifiable information via email or voicemail.</i>	For students with this accommodation in their IEP or 504 plan.	Math
<b>Read Aloud: Items &amp; ELA Passages</b>	Test is read aloud via an external screen reader or by a trained human reader.	Students with learning disabilities who may or may not also have comprehension difficulties.	ELA
<b>Scribe: Items &amp; ELA Performance Tasks</b>	Students may dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate.	Students who have motor or processing disabilities or an impairment that prevents them from typing a response in Kite.	ELA perf. tasks
<b>Specialized Calculator</b>	Non-embedded, standalone tool for students needing a specialized calculator, such as a braille or talking calculator currently unavailable within the assessment platform.	Students who are unable to use the calculator in Kite for calculator-allowed items need another version such as a braille or talking calculator. Test administrators should ensure that the calculator is available only for designated calculator items.	Select math testlets in grades 6–8



<b>Word Prediction Software</b>	<p>Word prediction allows students to begin to write a word and then choose from a list of words predicted from word frequency and syntax rules.</p> <p>Word prediction is delivered via a non-embedded software program. The program must use only single-word prediction. Functionality such as phrase prediction, predict ahead, or next word must be deactivated. The program must have settings that allow only a basic dictionary. Expanded dictionaries, such as topic dictionaries and word banks, must be deactivated.</p> <p>Phonetic spelling functionality or speech output may be built into the program and will read back the information the student has written.</p> <p>If further supports are needed for speech output, see the text to speech or read-aloud policies. Students who use word prediction in conjunction with speech output will need headphones, unless tested individually in a separate setting. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.</p>	<p>Students with motor or orthopedic impairments that severely impair their ability to provide written or typed responses without the use of assistive technology may use word prediction.</p> <p>Students with moderate to severe learning disabilities that prevent them from recalling, processing, or expressing written language may also use word prediction.</p>	<b>ELA</b>
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## Appendix: Scribing Protocol for MAST Performance Task

A scribe is an adult who records what a student dictates. Various formats scribes use to record student responses include American Sign Language (ASL), braille, the use of speech, or the use of an assistive communication device. The main goal of scribing is to ensure that a student can access and respond to test content. Scribes are permitted for MAST assessments as a documented accommodation for performance tasks in ELA.

### Qualifications For Scribes:

- The scribe should be an adult, such as a teacher or teaching assistant, who knows the student well and usually handles scribing during instruction and assessments.
- Scribes must possess relevant knowledge and experience in the subject for which they are providing scribing support.
- Scribes must be trained in the administration of MAST assessments and have a solid understanding of security policies and procedures regarding the administration of the MAST assessment.

### Preparation:

- The scribe should be an adult, such as a teacher or teaching assistant, who knows the student well and usually handles scribing during instruction and assessments.
- Scribes must possess relevant knowledge and experience in the subject for which they are providing scribing support.
- Scribes must be trained in the administration of MAST assessments and have a solid understanding of security policies and procedures regarding the administration of the MAST assessment.
- Scribes should familiarize themselves with the test format before the test session. This will enhance their ability to accurately record student responses.
- Scribes need to be aware of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan for any student with a disability to ensure that all necessary designated supports and accommodations are in place.
- It is recommended that scribes review the scribing guidelines and practice the scribing process with the student at least once before the test session.

## General Guidelines:

- Scribing must be conducted in a way that ensures that the interaction between the scribe and the student does not disturb other test takers or unintentionally disclose the student's answers.
- In computer-based assessments, scribes must input student responses directly into the test interface and utilize embedded and non-embedded tools available for that item and student.
- Scribes should adhere to student requests for all features in the test session.
- Scribes may answer procedural questions from the student, such as those about test directions or navigation within the test interface.
- Scribes cannot respond to student inquiries about test items if their answers would compromise the test's validity. Students should not be prompted, reminded, or otherwise assisted in formulating their responses during or after dictation. Scribes may request that students restate words or phrases as needed, but such requests should not imply that the student should change or correct their response.
- Scribes must not question or correct student choices, point out errors, or influence students in any way that could affect the integrity of the student's responses.
- Scribes cannot edit or alter student work and must record exactly what the student dictates.
- Students must have the opportunity to review and edit what the scribe has written. If necessary, a student can ask the scribe to read aloud the completed text for final approval.

### Performance Task-Specific Guidelines:

- Scribes are expected to follow student directions regarding screen and test navigation as well as the use of platform features available for each item.
- The scribe will record student responses digitally or verbatim in a manner that ensures the student's answers are not visible to others.
- The scribe will accurately spell all words exactly as dictated.
- The scribe will verbally confirm the spelling of homonyms and commonly confused homophones such as "than" and "then" or "to," "two," and "too."
- The scribe will not capitalize words or add punctuation not requested by the student.
  - ✓ The student is responsible for proofreading to add punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and any other edits.
- Scribes should ask for clarification from the student regarding capitalization, punctuation, and spelling and must allow the student to review, edit, and approve what has been recorded.
- The scribe will make any changes requested by the student, even if those changes are incorrect.