

Parent Guide to Accessing the Practice and Training Test Site

Introduction

This document provides a brief explanation of how to access the student Practice and Training Test Site at home using either the DeSSA Secure Browser or a supported browser. Information on which browser to use is provided, as well as download and installation instructions.

About the Practice and Training Test Site

The student Practice and Training Test Site provides opportunities for students and guest users to become familiar with the online testing environment before students take an actual online assessment. The practice test environment looks and feels like the regular online testing environment. The practice and training tests are not intended to be used as a predictor of success on the Smarter and DCAS Assessments.

Practice Tests

Practice tests are a snapshot of the assessed content standards; not all standards that are assessed on the Smarter and DCAS Assessments are represented in a practice test. Practice tests exist for the following grades and subjects:

- Grades 3–8 – Smarter ELA/Literacy and Mathematics
- Grades 5, 8, and 10 Science

Training Tests

Students may select a Smarter Training Test to see examples of different item types administered. The following Training Tests are available:

- Grade 3–8 – Smarter ELA/Literacy and Mathematics

Student Test Settings

Students who have specific online test accommodations or supports, such as a larger print size, alternate background color, or Text-to-Speech (TTS) can also use these accommodations on the Practice and Training Test site. There are two ways access accommodations/supports:

- First, students who have any of the above accommodations identified in the DeSSA system can simply log in to the Practice and Training Test Site using their first name and Secure Student Identifier (SSID). The accommodations/ supports identified for a student will become available if identified in the DeSSA system.
- Second, guest users can change the accommodations and supports during the login process to experience the functionality.

Accessing Text-to-Speech


The text-to-speech (TTS) functionality is **only available when using the DeSSA Secure Browser**. Therefore, students who have a TTS accommodation or guest users should use the DeSSA Secure Browser to become familiar with TTS in the online testing environment.

- To access TTS, students and guest users must log in to a guest session.
- Students with a TTS accommodation may log in to either a proctored session or a guest session.

DeSSA Secure Browser – Information and Installation

AIR develops the DeSSA Secure Browser that students must use for online testing. All schools must install the secure browser on computers that students use for testing.

AIR updates the DeSSA Secure Browser each year to allow enhancements to be made. As a result, a new secure browser must be downloaded and installed each year.

	Using the DeSSA Secure Browser to connect to the Practice and Training Site requires that all other applications be closed (e.g., Microsoft Word, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, etc.). Otherwise, the student will not be able to log in to a practice test.
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The secure browser is available from the DeSSA portal (<http://de.portal.airast.org>), and anyone may download and install it. As with most software, the correct version must be installed on your computer. Please refer to the updated DeSSA Secure Browser information listed below.

Supported Operating Systems

The following table contains information about operating systems and secure browser requirements.

*For information about implementing the related requirements, refer to the *Technical Specifications Manual for Online Testing* and the [Secure Browser Installation Manual](#).

Downloading and Installing the DeSSA Secure Browser

Instructions are available for downloading and installing the DeSSA Secure Browser on the DeSSA portal, on the secure browsers page (<http://de.portal.airast.org/browsers/default.html>). You can download and print the PDF instructions for each operating system to have as a handy reference, or simply refer to the on-screen instructions.

To download the appropriate secure browser onto your home computer:

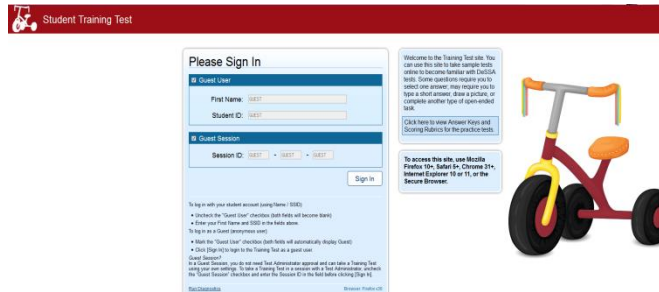
1. Click the tab with the name of the operating system (Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, etc.).
2. Click the [Download Browser] link.
3. Depending on your operating system, you will be prompted to either “Run” or “Save” the file. Follow the on-screen instructions on the secure browsers page to complete the download and installation process.
4. When the DeSSA Secure Browser has been installed, you will see the DeSSA Secure Browser icon on your desktop. As with any other software program, you can double-click on the icon to launch it.

Accessing the Practice and Training Test Site

As stated earlier, either a supported web browser or the DeSSA Secure Browser is required to access the Practice and Training Test Site.

Web Browser:

1. Open the web browser and navigate to the DeSSA portal (<http://de.portal.airast.org>).
2. Click the [Students and Families] card.
3. Click the [Practice and Training Tests] card.



DeSSA Secure Browser (enables use of Text-to-Speech accommodation):

1. Open the DeSSA Secure Browser.
2. Click the link for the Practice and Training Test Site. The login page will load.