

Phonak

Resource

Accommodation in K-12 education

2019 - This resource was created by the first Phonak Teen Advisory Board

This list of accommodations is meant to be a guide for students currently in K-12 classes. Depending on your listening challenges, individual education goals, and state funding, you may or may not use all these resources at a particular time.

However, if you think you may need these solutions when you move to college or university, getting them when you're in high school, improves your chances of securing these accommodations in college. As many Offices of Disability will refer to the accommodations you had in high school.

Sitting in the front of the classroom (preferential seating)

Sitting in the front of the classroom can help students to better focus on the teacher and hear what they are saying. Especially for those who rely on lip-reading, it gives them the ability to use this skill. Furthermore, students can ask to sit up front to hear the speaker at school assemblies to allow them to receive information like their peers.

FM / Roger™ systems

This allows students to better hear the teachers while minimizing some of the extra background noise from the environment around them. Depending on the age of the student and the FM / Roger™ system being used, this can also help to better hear your group when breaking into smaller groups for discussions, projects, etc.

Closed Captions

Having captions on videos and movies can help to follow along and better understand the content of the video. A student may be able to hear and understand the voice in the video, but may not be comprehending the information. Likewise, if it's an animated video and one relies on lip-reading and facial cues, that element is taken away but can help to be filled in with closed captions.

Transcripts

In the absence of closed captioning, there's frequently an option to access a transcript or a typed out version of what's about to be said on-screen. This gives the student insight as to what's about to be said and what the people on-screen are saying. While this isn't always optimal, it is almost certainly better than nothing. These can be accessed through a printed copy that the teacher would print out before class or through digital means (like a tablet or computer). Additionally, students can ask for a transcript of the announcements over the PA system at their school.

Print out notes or student note takers

When classes are more lecture based with the students taking notes, looking down while taking notes, instead of focusing one's listening / lip-reading energy on the presenter can become challenging. Phonak Teen Advisors report that it's hard for them to do both at once. When they are taking notes, they find they are so focused on remembering what the teacher has said when they write that they miss the next part of the lecture. Being provided with notes helps to focus on one thing at a time.

Restate questions asked by students

Having the teacher restate questions and comments asked by students can be extremely helpful. Often times peer comments and questions can result in the class discussion being changed or guided into a different topic. Not understanding this change in discussion or not knowing what the discussion has moved onto can prove to be very challenging. In addition to this, teachers should also clarify with the student which assignments are due. Many students will miss when the teacher mentions homework as the bell rings and people shuffle out of the classroom.

Extended time during standardized testing

Often, students with hearing loss will have some form of listening or processing fatigue that could impede their ability to perform as well as their peers. Additionally, a student can also have it in their IEP that they must have their equipment (hearing aids, CIs, etc.) checked during the instruction portion of the test. If the student were to receive extended time, they often get a quiet room to themselves which helps them focus.

Live human reader for foreign language standardized tests

If the student is taking a foreign language, they can ask for a live human reader to read them the same passage that they would hear from the computer. This allows the student to have access to the same information, but without the background noise. Often language listening standardized tests have some component of background noise that makes it very difficult for the student with hearing loss. Having a live human reader minimizes this.

ASL interpreters

Some students may request an interpreter if listening access isn't enough to receive the same information. Typically there would be a team of interpreters that would follow the student around to their classes and sign for them at the front of the room. The information would come at a delay but it would also help the student fill in gaps that they missed when the teacher was speaking if the student prefers to listen and watch the interpreter.

Moving a group into a quieter environment

Often, when the teacher has their class do small group work, the classroom can get exceedingly loud (research shows up to 70 db, which is as loud as a running vacuum) and disruptive for the student due to the background noise and inability to differentiate between the students in a different group and students in their own group. The student with hearing loss can ask to move their group into the hallway, smaller adjacent room, media center, etc. This allows the student to focus on their group without the added struggle of background noise.

One-on-one testing

Often students in elementary school will have one on one testing with their teachers for spelling, although this can be used for any subject, to hear them, see them (to lip read) or ask them to repeat the word with more clarity. This often prolongs the testing which is the mentality behind having a one on one test with the teacher.

Emergency preparedness

While this is not an educational accommodation, it would go on an IEP/504. It's a conversation that should be had with the teachers or administration at a school in the event that something were to happen. For example, what would the procedure be if the fire alarm went off and the student was in the bathroom? Plans should be made to ensure that the student is safe, no matter what situation may arise.

Self-Advocacy

This is often a goal stated on a student's IEP or 504. The ability to understand our limitations and ask others help us overcome them, is a skill set required of all individuals. However, for those of us with hearing loss, its particularly important. The teachers, administrators, coaches, friends, and many family members in our lives are normal hearing. And while most genuinely want to help us succeed, they often don't have a good sense of what our barriers are. Learning how to understand what makes you unique; the ways you need help; and developing the confidence to speak to that is important. Working with your DHHT, Hearing Itinerant and/or Educational Audiologist is a good step to figure out how to customize this to your specific situation.