



Building Self-Advocacy Skills

A Classroom Guide for Using Accommodations

Purpose & Overview

The purpose of this worksheet is to support students in understanding, accessing, and independently using their accommodations while providing teachers with a clear, practical guide for reinforcing self-advocacy skills in the classroom.

This tool is designed to bridge the gap between accommodation implementation and student independence by helping students:

- Recognize which supports help them learn
- Know when and how to use their accommodations
- Communicate their needs appropriately
- Reflect on the effectiveness of supports

At the same time, it provides teachers with a structured, low-burden framework to promote consistency, compliance, and skill development across general and special education settings.

Who This Tool Is For & How It's Designed to Be Used

This tool is designed for general education teachers, special education teachers, and support staff working with students who have accommodations through an IEP or 504 plan.

It is intended to be used as a teacher-guided, student-driven support, meaning:

- Teachers introduce, model, and reinforce self-advocacy skills
- Students actively participate in understanding and using their accommodations
- Responsibility gradually shifts from teacher prompts to student independence

This tool is not meant to be completed once, but revisited regularly to support consistency, reflection, and growth over time.

Implementation Guide: Step-by-Step Support with Examples

Step	What the Teacher Does	Student-Focused Example
1. Introduce the Purpose	Explain that accommodations are tools that help students access learning, not lower expectations. Review the worksheet together with the student.	“These supports help you show what you know. Let’s talk about which ones help you the most.”
2. Identify Accommodations	Review the student’s IEP or 504 plan and name the accommodations the student is expected to use.	“I have text-to-speech and extended time.”
3. Connect to Classroom Situations	Help the student identify when and where each accommodation should be used (classwork, assessments, reading, writing).	“I use text-to-speech when reading long passages.”
4. Model Self-Advocacy Language	Model appropriate and respectful ways to request or use accommodations.	“Can I use my graphic organizer for this assignment?”
5. Practice Using Supports	Provide structured opportunities for the student to use accommodations with guidance and feedback.	Student uses a checklist during independent work after a reminder.
6. Encourage Independent Use	Gradually reduce prompts and reminders as the student gains confidence.	Student independently begins using accommodations without teacher cues.
7. Reflect on Effectiveness	Guide the student in reflecting on which supports were helpful and why.	“Using speech-to-text helped me write more ideas.”
8. Monitor and Adjust	Use student responses and observations to determine effectiveness and make adjustments if needed.	Teacher notes improved engagement and reduced frustration during tasks.



Self-Advocacy Implementation Checklist

(Teacher-Guided | Student-Driven)

Use this checklist to support students in building self-advocacy skills while ensuring accommodations are implemented consistently and appropriately.

Student Self-Advocacy Checklist

(Complete with teacher guidance, then gradually transition to independent use)

- I can name the accommodations that help me learn
- I understand what each accommodation is used for
- I know when I should use my accommodations (classwork, tests, reading, writing)
- I know how to ask for my accommodations respectfully
- I use my accommodations when I need them
- I try the task before asking for help
- I can explain how my accommodation helps me
- I reflect on whether the accommodation helped me today

Student Reflection Prompt:

One support that helped me today was: _____

Teacher Quick-Check Checklist

(For monitoring and instructional planning)

- Accommodations were explicitly reviewed with the student
- Student demonstrated understanding of their accommodations
- Student attempted to self-advocate appropriately
- Prompts were provided as needed
- Prompts were gradually reduced to support independence
- Student reflected on accommodation use
- Notes were recorded for progress monitoring or IEP documentation



Teacher Notes (Optional):

When to Use This Checklist

- At the beginning of the school year
- When accommodations are newly introduced or adjusted
- Before assessments or major assignments
- During IEP progress monitoring or student check-ins