

# **ELPS-TELPAS**

## **Proficiency Level**

### **Descriptors**

**Permission to copy the ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors is hereby extended to Texas school officials and their agents for their exclusive use in determining the English language proficiency ratings of their limited English proficient students.**

## ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades K–12 Listening

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced High</b>
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to understand spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>struggle to understand simple conversations and simple discussions even when the topics are familiar and the speaker uses linguistic supports (e.g., visuals, slower speech and other verbal cues, gestures)</li> <li>struggle to identify and distinguish individual words and phrases during social and instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELLs</li> <li>may not seek clarification in English when failing to comprehend the English they hear; frequently remain silent, watching others for cues</li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have the ability to understand simple, high-frequency spoken English used in routine academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually understand simple or routine directions, as well as short, simple conversations and short, simple discussions on familiar topics; when topics are unfamiliar, require extensive linguistic supports and adaptations (e.g., visuals, slower speech and other verbal cues, simplified language, gestures, preteaching to preview or build topic-related vocabulary)</li> <li>often identify and distinguish key words and phrases necessary to understand the general meaning (gist) during social and basic instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELLs</li> <li>have the ability to seek clarification in English when failing to comprehend the English they hear by requiring/requesting the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase speech</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to understand, with second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually understand longer, more elaborated directions, conversations, and discussions on familiar and some unfamiliar topics, but sometimes need processing time and sometimes depend on visuals, verbal cues, and gestures to support understanding</li> <li>understand most main points, most important details, and some implicit information during social and basic instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELLs</li> <li>occasionally require/request the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase to clarify the meaning of the English they hear</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have the ability to understand, with minimal second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand longer, elaborated directions, conversations, and discussions on familiar and unfamiliar topics with only occasional need for processing time and with little dependence on visuals, verbal cues, and gestures; some exceptions when complex academic or highly specialized language is used</li> <li>understand main points, important details, and implicit information at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers during social and instructional interactions</li> <li>rarely require/request the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase to clarify the meaning of the English they hear</li> </ul>

## ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades K–12 Speaking

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to speak English in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mainly speak using single words and short phrases consisting of recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar material to get immediate needs met; may be hesitant to speak and often give up in their attempts to communicate</li> <li>speak using a very limited bank of high-frequency, high-need, concrete vocabulary, including key words and expressions needed for basic communication in academic and social contexts</li> <li>lack the knowledge of English grammar necessary to connect ideas and speak in sentences; can sometimes produce sentences using recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar material</li> <li>exhibit second language acquisition errors that may hinder overall communication, particularly when trying to convey information beyond memorized, practiced, or highly familiar material</li> <li>typically use pronunciation that significantly inhibits communication</li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have the ability to speak in a simple manner using English commonly heard in routine academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are able to express simple, original messages, speak using sentences, and participate in short conversations and classroom interactions; may hesitate frequently and for long periods to think about how to communicate desired meaning</li> <li>speak simply using basic vocabulary needed in everyday social interactions and routine academic contexts; rarely have vocabulary to speak in detail</li> <li>exhibit an emerging awareness of English grammar and speak using mostly simple sentence structures and simple tenses; are most comfortable speaking in present tense</li> <li>exhibit second language acquisition errors that may hinder overall communication when trying to use complex or less familiar English</li> <li>use pronunciation that can usually be understood by people accustomed to interacting with ELLs</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to speak using grade-appropriate English, with second language acquisition support, in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are able to participate comfortably in most conversations and academic discussions on familiar topics, with some pauses to restate, repeat, or search for words and phrases to clarify meaning</li> <li>discuss familiar academic topics using content-based terms and common abstract vocabulary; can usually speak in some detail on familiar topics</li> <li>have a grasp of basic grammar features, including a basic ability to narrate and describe in present, past, and future tenses; have an emerging ability to use complex sentences and complex grammar features</li> <li>make errors that interfere somewhat with communication when using complex grammar structures, long sentences, and less familiar words and expressions</li> <li>may mispronounce words, but use pronunciation that can usually be understood by people not accustomed to interacting with ELLs</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have the ability to speak using grade-appropriate English, with minimal second language acquisition support, in academic and social settings.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are able to participate in extended discussions on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics with only occasional disruptions, hesitations, or pauses</li> <li>communicate effectively using abstract and content-based vocabulary during classroom instructional tasks, with some exceptions when low-frequency or academically demanding vocabulary is needed; use many of the same idioms and colloquialisms as their native English-speaking peers</li> <li>can use English grammar structures and complex sentences to narrate and describe at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers</li> <li>make few second language acquisition errors that interfere with overall communication</li> <li>may mispronounce words, but rarely use pronunciation that interferes with overall communication</li> </ul>

## ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades K–1 Writing

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced High</b>
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to use the English language to build foundational writing skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are unable to use English to explain self-generated writing (e.g., stories they have created or other personal expressions), including emergent forms of writing (pictures, letter-like forms, mock words, scribbling, etc.)</li> <li>know too little English to participate meaningfully in grade-appropriate shared writing activities using the English language</li> <li>cannot express themselves meaningfully in self-generated, connected written text in English beyond the level of high-frequency, concrete words, phrases, or short sentences that have been recently practiced/memorized *</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no awareness of English print conventions</li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have a limited ability to use the English language to build foundational writing skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>know enough English to explain briefly and simply self-generated writing, including emergent forms of writing, as long as the topic is highly familiar and concrete and requires very high-frequency English</li> <li>can participate meaningfully in grade-appropriate shared writing activities using the English language only when the writing topic is highly familiar and concrete and requires very high-frequency English</li> <li>express themselves meaningfully in self-generated, connected written text in English when their writing is limited to short sentences featuring simple, concrete English used frequently in class *</li> <li>frequently exhibit features of their primary language when writing in English (e.g., primary language words, spelling patterns, word order, literal translating) *</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to use the English language to build, with second language acquisition support, foundational writing skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use predominantly grade-appropriate English to explain, in some detail, most self-generated writing, including emergent forms of writing</li> <li>can participate meaningfully, with second language acquisition support, in most grade-appropriate shared writing activities using the English language</li> <li>although second language acquisition support is needed, have an emerging ability to express themselves in self-generated, connected written text in English in a grade-appropriate manner *</li> <li>occasionally exhibit second language acquisition errors when writing in English *</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have the ability to use the English language to build, with minimal second language acquisition support, foundational writing skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use English at a level of complexity and detail nearly comparable to that of native English-speaking peers when explaining self-generated writing, including emergent forms of writing</li> <li>can participate meaningfully in most grade-appropriate shared writing activities using the English language</li> <li>although minimal second language acquisition support may be needed, express themselves in self-generated, connected written text in English in a manner nearly comparable to their native English-speaking peers *</li> </ul>

\* These descriptors apply only to students who are at the developmental stage of generating original written text using a standard writing system.

## ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades 2–12 Writing

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced High</b>
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have little or no ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction</li> <li>• lack the English necessary to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing (e.g., focus and coherence, conventions, organization, voice, and development of ideas) in English</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical writing features at this level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to label, list, and copy</li> <li>• high-frequency words/phrases and short, simple sentences (or even short paragraphs) based primarily on recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar material; this type of writing may be quite accurate</li> <li>• present tense used primarily</li> <li>• frequent primary language features (spelling patterns, word order, literal translations, and words from the student's primary language) and other errors associated with second language acquisition may significantly hinder or prevent understanding, even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs</li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a limited way.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a limited ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction</li> <li>• are limited in their ability to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English; communicate best when topics are highly familiar and concrete, and require simple, high-frequency English</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical writing features at this level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple, original messages consisting of short, simple sentences; frequent inaccuracies occur when creating or taking risks beyond familiar English</li> <li>• high-frequency vocabulary; academic writing often has an oral tone</li> <li>• loosely connected text with limited use of cohesive devices or repetitive use, which may cause gaps in meaning</li> <li>• repetition of ideas due to lack of vocabulary and language structures</li> <li>• present tense used most accurately; simple future and past tenses, if attempted, are used inconsistently or with frequent inaccuracies</li> <li>• descriptions, explanations, and narrations lacking detail; difficulty expressing abstract ideas</li> <li>• primary language features and errors associated with second language acquisition may be frequent</li> <li>• some writing may be understood only by individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs; parts of the writing may be hard to understand even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have enough English vocabulary and command of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks, although second language acquisition support is needed.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are able to use the English language, with second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction</li> <li>• know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English, although second language acquisition support is particularly needed when topics are abstract, academically challenging, or unfamiliar</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical writing features at this level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grasp of basic verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns; partial grasp of more complex verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns</li> <li>• emerging grade-appropriate vocabulary; academic writing has a more academic tone</li> <li>• use of a variety of common cohesive devices, although some redundancy may occur</li> <li>• narrations, explanations, and descriptions developed in some detail with emerging clarity; quality or quantity declines when abstract ideas are expressed, academic demands are high, or low-frequency vocabulary is required</li> <li>• occasional second language acquisition errors</li> <li>• communications are usually understood by individuals not accustomed to the writing of ELLs</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have acquired the English vocabulary and command of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks with minimal second language acquisition support.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are able to use the English language, with minimal second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction</li> <li>• know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate, with minimal second language acquisition support, elements of grade-appropriate writing in English</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical writing features at this level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nearly comparable to writing of native English-speaking peers in clarity and precision with regard to English vocabulary and language structures, with occasional exceptions when writing about academically complex ideas, abstract ideas, or topics requiring low-frequency vocabulary</li> <li>• occasional difficulty with naturalness of phrasing and expression</li> <li>• errors associated with second language acquisition are minor and usually limited to low-frequency words and structures; errors rarely interfere with communication</li> </ul>

## ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades K–1 Reading

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to use the English language to build foundational reading skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• derive little or no meaning from grade-appropriate stories read aloud in English, unless the stories are               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– read in short “chunks”</li> <li>– controlled to include the little English they know such as language that is high-frequency, concrete, and recently practiced</li> <li>– accompanied by ample visual supports such as illustrations, gestures, pantomime, and objects and by linguistic supports such as careful enunciation and slower speech</li> </ul> </li> <li>• begin to recognize and understand environmental print in English (e.g., signs, labeled items, names of peers, logos)</li> <li>• have difficulty decoding most grade-appropriate English text because they *               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– understand the meaning of very few words in English</li> <li>– struggle significantly with sounds in spoken English words and with sound-symbol relationships due to differences between their primary language and English</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have a limited ability to use the English language to build foundational reading skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate limited comprehension (key words and general meaning) of grade-appropriate stories read aloud in English, unless the stories include               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– predictable story lines</li> <li>– highly familiar topics</li> <li>– primarily high-frequency, concrete vocabulary</li> <li>– short, simple sentences</li> <li>– visual and linguistic supports</li> </ul> </li> <li>• regularly recognize and understand common environmental print in English (e.g., signs, labeled items, names of peers, logos)</li> <li>• have difficulty decoding grade-appropriate English text because they *               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– understand the meaning of only those English words they hear frequently</li> <li>– struggle with some sounds in English words and some sound-symbol relationships due to differences between their primary language and English</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to use the English language, with second language acquisition support, to build foundational reading skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate comprehension of most main points and most supporting ideas in grade-appropriate stories read aloud in English, although they may still depend on visual and linguistic supports to gain or confirm meaning</li> <li>• recognize some basic English vocabulary and high-frequency words in isolated print</li> <li>• with second language acquisition support, are able to decode most grade-appropriate English text because they *               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– understand the meaning of most grade-appropriate English words</li> <li>– have little difficulty with English sounds and sound-symbol relationships that result from differences between their primary language and English</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have the ability to use the English language, with minimal second language acquisition support, to build foundational reading skills.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate, with minimal second language acquisition support and at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers, comprehension of main points and supporting ideas (explicit and implicit) in grade-appropriate stories read aloud in English</li> <li>• with some exceptions, recognize sight vocabulary and high-frequency words to a degree nearly comparable to that of native English-speaking peers</li> <li>• with minimal second language acquisition support, have an ability to decode and understand grade-appropriate English text at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers *</li> </ul>

\* The last descriptor applies only to students who are at the developmental stage of decoding written text (i.e., they have “cracked the code” necessary for learning to read).

**ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors**  
**Grades 2–12 Reading**

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced High</b>
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to read and understand English used in academic and social contexts.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and understand the very limited recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar English they have learned; vocabulary predominantly includes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- environmental print</li> <li>- some very high-frequency words</li> <li>- concrete words that can be represented by pictures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• read slowly, word by word</li> <li>• have a very limited sense of English language structures</li> <li>• comprehend predominantly isolated familiar words and phrases; comprehend some sentences in highly routine contexts or recently practiced, highly familiar text</li> <li>• are highly dependent on visuals and prior knowledge to derive meaning from text in English</li> <li>• are able to apply reading comprehension skills in English only when reading texts written for this level</li> </ul>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have the ability to read and understand simple, high-frequency English used in routine academic and social contexts.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and understand English vocabulary on a somewhat wider range of topics and with increased depth; vocabulary predominantly includes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- everyday oral language</li> <li>- literal meanings of common words</li> <li>- routine academic language and terms</li> </ul> </li> <li>- commonly used abstract language such as terms used to describe basic feelings</li> <li>• often read slowly and in short phrases; may re-read to clarify meaning</li> <li>• have a growing understanding of basic, routinely used English language structures</li> <li>• understand simple sentences in short, connected texts, but are dependent on visual cues, topic familiarity, prior knowledge, pretaught topic-related vocabulary, story predictability, and teacher/peer assistance to sustain comprehension</li> <li>• struggle to independently read and understand grade-level texts</li> <li>• are able to apply basic and some higher-order comprehension skills when reading texts that are linguistically accommodated and/or simplified for this level</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to read and understand, with second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate English used in academic and social contexts.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and understand, with second language acquisition support, a variety of grade-appropriate English vocabulary used in social and academic contexts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with second language acquisition support, read and understand grade-appropriate concrete and abstract vocabulary, but have difficulty with less commonly encountered words</li> <li>- demonstrate an emerging ability to understand words and phrases beyond their literal meaning</li> <li>- understand multiple meanings of commonly used words</li> </ul> </li> <li>• read longer phrases and simple sentences from familiar text with appropriate rate and speed</li> <li>• are developing skill in using their growing familiarity with English language structures to construct meaning of grade-appropriate text</li> <li>• are able to apply basic and higher-order comprehension skills when reading grade-appropriate text, but are still occasionally dependent on visuals, teacher/peer assistance, and other linguistically accommodated text features to determine or clarify meaning, particularly with unfamiliar topics</li> </ul>	<p>Advanced high ELLs have the ability to read and understand, with minimal second language acquisition support, grade appropriate English used in academic and social contexts.</p> <p><b>These students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and understand vocabulary at a level nearly comparable to that of their native English-speaking peers, with some exceptions when low-frequency or specialized vocabulary is used</li> <li>• generally read grade-appropriate, familiar text with appropriate rate, speed, intonation, and expression</li> <li>• are able to, at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers, use their familiarity with English language structures to construct meaning of grade-appropriate text</li> <li>• are able to apply, with minimal second language acquisition support and at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers, basic and higher-order comprehension skills when reading grade-appropriate text</li> </ul>