ELPS-TELPAS
Proficiency Level Descriptors

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors
Grades K–12 Listening

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
Beginning English learners (ELs) have little or no ability to understand spoken English used in academic and social settings.	Intermediate ELs have the ability to understand simple, high-frequency spoken English used in routine academic and social settings.	Advanced ELs have the ability to understand, with second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.	Advanced high ELs have the ability to understand, with minimal second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.
These students: • 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) • struggle to identify and distinguish individual words and phrases during social and instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELs • may not seek clarification in English when failing to comprehend the English they hear; frequently remain silent, watching others for cues	These students: • 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) • 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 ELs • 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	These students: • 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 • understand most main points, most important details, and some implicit information during social and basic instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELs • occasionally require/request the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase to clarify the meaning of the English they hear	These students: • 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 • understand main points, important details, and implicit information at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers during social and instructional interactions • rarely require/request the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase to clarify the meaning of the English they hear

Four-Point Speaking Rubric

As part of the TELPAS listening and speaking assessment, rubrics were developed to determine the score points that should be ascribed to a student's response based on their performance on each speaking test item. The rubrics demonstrate the number of score points that a student can achieve based on their performance on each speaking test item. Two different rubrics, a two-point rubric and a four-point rubric, are used to score different types of speaking items on the TELPAS listening and speaking assessment. Both rubrics are derived from the TELPAS proficiency level descriptors (PLDs). The rubrics demonstrate how a student will be assessed for speaking; however, the rubrics should not replace the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) or PLDs and should not be used in isolation.

	(1) A response at score point 1 may	(2) A response at score point 2 may	(3) A response at score point 3 may	(4) A response at score point 4 may
Completeness of Response	• be silent and not attempt to address the task • attempt to address the task, but may be limited to simple, high-frequency words and phrases	• address the task in a limited way by communicating simple, original ideas, using sentences and occasional phrases	• address the task somewhat successfully by generally communicating comfortably on common social and grade-appropriate academic topics	• address the task completely by communicating, with or without elaboration, on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics
Syntax/Sentence Structure, Grammar	• consist of single words, short phrases and/or occasional short sentences • seem memorized, formulaic and/or highly practiced • include many grammar features of another language that inhibit communication	• contain mostly simple sentences in the present tense • include simple English language structures • include grammar errors that limit communication	• generally include the correct verb tense for the task, but have some errors, especially when using irregular or complex tenses • demonstrate overall familiarity using basic grammar features and may include some complex grammatical structures • include grammar errors when using less common language structures, which interfere somewhat with communication	• generally include complex sentences and grammar structures nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers • include grammar errors which rarely interfere with communication
Vocabulary/Word Choice	• be repetitive and not demonstrate an ability to use words to make an original message	• rely mostly on high-frequency or basic vocabulary, but still convey an original message	• include common abstract and academic vocabulary words • include some details on familiar topics	• feature vocabulary at a level nearly comparable to their native English-speaking peers

	(1) A response at score point 1 may	**(2)** A response at score point 2 may	**(3)** A response at score point 3 may	**(4)** A response at score point 4 may
	• be mostly limited to simple, high-frequency words and phrases	• rarely include details because of the student's limited vocabulary		• include idioms or colloquialisms used by native English-speaking peers • include abstract and academic vocabulary with minor, infrequent errors; word choice may occasionally still be awkward or imprecise
Pronunciation and Fluency	• include frequent and long pauses that may indicate that the student is struggling to communicate and/or has given up • include pronunciation that is extremely difficult to understand	• include pauses to search for words • include some pronunciation errors that limit understanding	• include brief pauses when searching for words or attempting to restate or clarify • include pronunciation errors but generally still be understandable	• include few brief pauses • include few pronunciation errors; these errors rarely interfere with understanding
Use of L1	• be entirely or mostly in another language	• include some words in another language		

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors
Grades 2–12 Writing

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
Beginning English learners (ELs) lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.	Intermediate ELs have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a limited way.	Advanced ELs have enough English vocabulary and command of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks, although second language acquisition support is needed.	Advanced high ELs have acquired the English vocabulary and command of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks with minimal second language acquisition support.
These students: • 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 • 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 **Typical writing features at this level:** • ability to label, list, and copy • 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 • present tense used primarily • 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 ELs	**These students:** • 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 • 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 **Typical writing features at this level:** • simple, original messages consisting of short, simple sentences; frequent inaccuracies occur when creating or taking risks beyond familiar English • high-frequency vocabulary; academic writing often has an oral tone • loosely connected text with limited use of cohesive devices or repetitive use, which may cause gaps in meaning • repetition of ideas due to lack of vocabulary and language structures • present tense used most accurately; simple future and past tenses, if attempted, are used inconsistently or with frequent inaccuracies • descriptions, explanations, and narrations lacking detail; difficulty expressing abstract ideas • primary language features and errors associated with second language acquisition may be frequent • some writing may be understood only by individuals accustomed to the writing of ELs; parts of the writing may be hard to understand even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELs	**These students:** • 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 • 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 **Typical writing features at this level:** • grasp of basic verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns; partial grasp of more complex verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns • emerging grade-appropriate vocabulary; academic writing has a more academic tone • use of a variety of common cohesive devices, although some redundancy may occur • 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 • occasional second language acquisition errors • communications are usually understood by individuals not accustomed to the writing of ELs	**These students:** • 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 • know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate, with minimal second language acquisition support, elements of grade-appropriate writing in English **Typical writing features at this level:** • 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 • occasional difficulty with naturalness of phrasing and expression • errors associated with second language acquisition are minor and usually limited to low-frequency words and structures; errors rarely interfere with communication

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors
Grades 2–12 Reading

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
Beginning English learners (ELs) have little or no ability to read and understand English used in academic and social contexts.	Intermediate ELs have the ability to read and understand simple, high-frequency English used in routine academic and social contexts.	Advanced ELs have the ability to read and understand, with second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate English used in academic and social contexts.	Advanced high ELs have the ability to read and understand, with minimal second language acquisition support, grade appropriate English used in academic and social contexts.

These students:
 	
• read and understand the very limited recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar English they have learned; vocabulary predominantly includes
   - environmental print
   - some very high-frequency words
   - concrete words that can be represented by pictures
• read slowly, word by word
• have a very limited sense of English language structures
• comprehend predominantly isolated familiar words and phrases; comprehend some sentences in highly routine contexts or recently practiced, highly familiar text
• are highly dependent on visuals and prior knowledge to derive meaning from text in English
• are able to apply reading comprehension skills in English only when reading texts written for this level
	These students:
	
	• read and understand English vocabulary on a somewhat wider range of topics and with increased depth; vocabulary predominantly includes
	   - everyday oral language
	   - literal meanings of common words
	   - routine academic language and terms
	   - commonly used abstract language such as terms used to describe basic feelings
	• often read slowly and in short phrases; may re-read to clarify meaning
	• have a growing understanding of basic, routinely used English language structures
	• 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
	• struggle to independently read and understand grade-level texts
	• are able to apply basic and some higher-order comprehension skills when reading texts that are linguistically accommodated and/or simplified for this level
		These students:
		
		• read and understand, with second language acquisition support, a variety of grade-appropriate English vocabulary used in social and academic contexts:
		   - with second language acquisition support, read and understand grade-appropriate concrete and abstract vocabulary, but have difficulty with less commonly encountered words
		   - demonstrate an emerging ability to understand words and phrases beyond their literal meaning
		   - understand multiple meanings of commonly used words
		• read longer phrases and simple sentences from familiar text with appropriate rate and speed
		• are developing skill in using their growing familiarity with English language structures to construct meaning of grade-appropriate text
		• 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
			These students:
			
			• 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
			• generally read grade-appropriate, familiar text with appropriate rate, speed, intonation, and expression
			• 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
			• 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