



Introductory Training on the PLDs Grades 2–12

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ELPS



TELPAS

Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)

- The PLDs are the rubrics teachers use to determine students' English language proficiency for ongoing formative assessment and the spring TELPAS administration.
- Originally developed for TELPAS, the PLDs were incorporated into the Texas English language proficiency standards (ELPS) in the 2007–2008 school year to reinforce their use in instruction.



6 Sets of PLDs

- **Listening** **Grades K–12**

- **Speaking** **Grades K–12**

- **Reading** **Grades K–1**
Grades 2–12

- **Writing** **Grades K–1**
Grades 2–12



Key Features of Each Proficiency Level

- **Beginning**
 - Little or no English ability
- **Intermediate**
 - Limited ability, simple language structures, high-frequency vocabulary, routine contexts
- **Advanced**
 - Grade appropriate, with second language acquisition support
- **Advanced High**
 - Grade appropriate, with minimal second language acquisition support

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades K–12 Listening

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
<p>Beginning English language learners (ELLs) have little or no ability to understand spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p>	<p>Intermediate ELLs have the ability to understand simple, high-frequency spoken English used in routine academic and social settings.</p>	<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>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>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs • may not seek clarification in English when failing to comprehend the English they hear; frequently remain silent, watching others for cues 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs • 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 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs • occasionally require/request the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase to clarify the meaning of the English they hear 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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



Reflect on how well the student understands the English he or she hears during activities such as:

- Reacting to oral presentations
- Responding to text read aloud
- Following directions
- Cooperative group work
- Informal interactions with peers
- Large-group and small-group instructional interactions
- One-on-one interviews
- Individual student conferences

Listening



Nonacademic Listening Sample

What Might a Beginning Listener Understand?

I have some exciting news for you **today**. **We are going** to be going on a field trip next week. On **Thursday** after the announcements, we will load the **buses** and be gone the entire **day**. In order to be permitted to **go**, you must have your **parents** read and sign this permission slip. If your **parents** would **like** to chaperone, there is a place on the form for them to volunteer. **Please** put this in your **backpack** to take **home** tonight. Remember, you have to bring it back signed or you will not be able to **go** with us.

Text in **bold, red** print represents text that might be understood.



In Other Words

... today. We are going ... Thursday ... buses ...
day ... go ... parents ... parents ... like ... Please ...
backpack ... home ... go ...



Nonacademic Listening Sample

What Might an Intermediate Listener Understand?

I have some exciting news for you today. We are going to be going on a field trip next week. On Thursday after the announcements, we will load the buses and be gone the entire day. In order to be permitted to go, you must have your parents read and sign this permission slip. If your parents would like to chaperone, there is a place on the form for them to volunteer. Please put this in your backpack to take home tonight. Remember, you have to bring it back signed or you will not be able to go with us.



In Other Words

I have ... you today. We are going ... field trip next week. On Thursday ... we will ... the buses ... day ... to go ... parents read and sign this ... parents ... like to ... Please put this in your backpack ... take home tonight. Remember ... bring it ... go with us.



Nonacademic Listening Sample

What Might an Advanced Listener Understand?

I have some exciting news for you today. We are going to be going on a field trip next week. On **Thursday** after the announcements, **we will load the buses and be gone** the entire **day**. In order to be permitted **to go**, you must **have your parents read and sign this permission slip**. If your parents would like to chaperone, **there is a place on the form** for them to volunteer. **Please put this in your backpack to take home tonight. Remember**, you have to **bring it** back signed **or you will not** be able to **go with us**.



In Other Words

I have some exciting news for you today. We are going to be going on a field trip next week. On Thursday ... we will load the buses and be gone ... day ... to go, you ... have your parents read and sign this permission slip. If your parents would like ... there is a place on the form ... Please put this in your backpack ... take home tonight. Remember ... bring it ... or you will not ... go with us.



Nonacademic Listening Sample

What Might an Advanced High Listener Understand?

I have some exciting news for you today. We are going to be going on a field trip next week. On Thursday after the announcements, we will load the buses and be gone the entire day. In order to be permitted to go, you must have your parents read and sign this permission slip. If your parents would like to chaperone, there is a place on the form for them to volunteer. Please put this in your backpack to take home tonight. Remember, you have to bring it back signed or you will not be able to go with us.



Academic Listening Sample

What Might a Beginning Listener Understand?

Good morning, class. **Today** we are going to study something brand new. It's difficult, so I'm going to need everyone's undivided attention. **Open your books to page one** hundred seventy-two. At the **top** of the **page** is the word "net." **Today's** lesson is about net. As it says in the definition in your **book**, in **math**, net is a **two**-dimensional model. The net of a cylinder is shown in your text**book**. Does everyone see the **rectangle** and **two circles**? That's the net of the cylinder.



In Other Words

Good morning ... Today ... Open your books to
page one ... top ... page ... Today's ... book ...
math ... two ... book ... rectangle ... two circles
...



Academic Listening Sample

What Might an Intermediate Listener Understand?

Good morning, class. Today we are going to study something brand new. It's difficult, so I'm going to need everyone's undivided attention. Open your books to page one hundred seventy-two. At the top of the page is the word "net." Today's lesson is about net. As it says in the definition in your book, in math, net is a two-dimensional model. The net of a cylinder is shown in your textbook. Does everyone see the rectangle and two circles? That's the net of the cylinder.



In Other Words

Good morning, class. Today we are going to study ... It's difficult ... going to need everyone's ... Open your books to page one hundred ... top of the page ... Today's lesson ... your book, in math ... two ... cylinder ... book ... rectangle and two circles ... cylinder.



Academic Listening Sample

What Might an Advanced Listener Understand?

Good morning, class. Today we are going to study something brand new. It's difficult, so I'm going to need everyone's undivided attention. Open your books to page one hundred seventy-two. At the top of the page is the word "net." Today's lesson is about net. As it says in the definition in your book, in math, net is a two-dimensional model. The net of a cylinder is shown in your textbook. Does everyone see the rectangle and two circles? That's the net of the cylinder.



In Other Words

Good morning, class. Today we are going to study something ... new. It's difficult, so I'm going to need everyone's ... Open your books to page one hundred seventy-two. At the top of the page is the word ... Today's lesson is ... definition in your book, in math, net is a two ... a cylinder is ... in your textbook. Does everyone see the rectangle and two circles? ... cylinder.



Academic Listening Sample

What Might an Advanced High Listener Understand?

Good morning, class. Today we are going to study something **brand** new. It's difficult, so I'm going to need everyone's undivided attention. Open your books to page one hundred seventy-two. At the top of the page is the word "net." Today's lesson is about net. As it says in the definition in your book, in math, net is a two-dimensional model. The net of a cylinder is shown in your textbook. Does everyone see the rectangle and two circles? That's the net of the cylinder.

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>Intermediate ELLs have the ability to speak in a simple manner using English commonly heard in routine academic and social settings.</p>	<p>Advanced ELLs have the ability to speak using grade-appropriate English, with second language acquisition support, in academic and social settings.</p>	<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>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 • 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 • exhibit second language acquisition errors that may hinder overall communication, particularly when trying to convey information beyond memorized, practiced, or highly familiar material • typically use pronunciation that significantly inhibits communication 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • speak simply using basic vocabulary needed in everyday social interactions and routine academic contexts; rarely have vocabulary to speak in detail • exhibit an emerging awareness of English grammar and speak using mostly simple sentence structures and simple tenses; are most comfortable speaking in present tense • exhibit second language acquisition errors that may hinder overall communication when trying to use complex or less familiar English • use pronunciation that can usually be understood by people accustomed to interacting with ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • discuss familiar academic topics using content-based terms and common abstract vocabulary; can usually speak in some detail on familiar topics • 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 • make errors that interfere somewhat with communication when using complex grammar structures, long sentences, and less familiar words and expressions • may mispronounce words, but use pronunciation that can usually be understood by people not accustomed to interacting with ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are able to participate in extended discussions on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics with only occasional disruptions, hesitations, or pauses • 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 • can use English grammar structures and complex sentences to narrate and describe at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers • make few second language acquisition errors that interfere with overall communication • may mispronounce words, but rarely use pronunciation that interferes with overall communication



Reflect on how well the student speaks English during activities such as:

- Cooperative group work
- Oral presentations
- Informal interactions with peers
- Large-group and small-group instructional interactions
- One-on-one interviews
- Classroom discussions
- Articulation of problem-solving strategies
- Individual student conferences

speaking



Beginning Speaker (Grade 8)

Tell me about yourself.

My name is An. I am 13 year old from Korea. I hair is long. I tall, thin ... have black eye. Favorite color yellow, pink, blue. Favorite food chicken ... Favorite sport volleyball and basketball. I like read romance book ... I like go my mom supermarket.



Beginning Speaker, Continued

Tell me about your school.

My school name An. I am good student. My project is math. Helper me ... interesting. I have new teachers, new friends. My teacher is nice. I happy at school. I read two or three books. That very good.



Beginning Speaker, Continued

Tell me what you have learned about earthquakes.

Earthquakes is important. Is shake Earth ... energy
very faster. Earthquake came is ten or fifteen
minute. People not know come. ... People ... die.
Houses is ... fire. Cars go ... road cut... one half. ...
Earthquakes very bad.



Beginning Speaker, Continued

What did you learn today about Christopher Columbus?

Christopher not happy because ... no more food.
Christopher cry ... he do the sail. Queen Elizabeth
say Christopher... name important... Christopher
went on bowl when is sail ... Thirty-one day come
Christopher ... America.



Intermediate Speaker (Grade 5)

Tell me about yourself and your family.

My name is Lorenzo. I have two sisters. The name of my sister are Marisa and Ariana. I have my mother and father. I am the baby of family. Now later my mom her ... other baby 7 months. I want boy because for play video games. I have a cat. The name is Michi and play of running in the house. My colored favorite is black because my friend he weared all black. I like everybody but one girl. When I grow, I want capitán of army. The army is good for me because I want fly over the state.



Intermediate Speaker, Continued

Tell me about a place where you used to live.

I born in Puerto Rico. Close my house is a river. The name is a arroyo. I go swimming to river with my cousin and friends for 3 hours. After, everybody go to house. In the morning I go to school at 7:30. This is what I make every day.



Intermediate Speaker, Continued

Tell me what you see in this picture.

The man hunting ducks with rifle. He has hat up on the hair and has jacket of square black and white. The man looks the duck what is swimming in a lake. The others duck is flying. The ducks looking the man with gun. The ducks on the lake said, “No, no kill my family. Please no, no, no.”



Intermediate Speaker, Continued

Tell me about the rock cycle you have drawn.

The magma has 1000°. Is very hot. When the volcano ... erosion, the magma is go outside ... and the name is lava with rocks. The lava and the rocks called igneous rock. After ... the earth is erosion. Also after ... phase ... then also the period sedimentary rock. When continue, pressure and heat is when the earth ... water and ice pressure the rocks...



Advanced Speaker (Grade 2)

How are you and your friend alike and different?

My friend is tall and I am short. I have long hair and she has short hair. I have curly hair and she has thin hair. My tooth fell but hers didn't ... I have one bracelets but she has much more. I bring a sweater to school but she does not bring one. I don't collect stickers but she does.

We have alike because we are girls and have brown eyes. We both like to play a lot. Both have the same friends. We always come to school and always bring our homework. That's how we are different and alike.



Advanced Speaker, Continued

Tell me something you did that was fun.

This weekend it was raining and my cousins came at my house. We couldn't do nothing. My cousin told me, "Ask your mom if we can play in the rain and in the mud." I went and ask my mom and she said yes but not with that clothes, so I changed my clothes and my mom looked for old clothes for my cousins. Outside was wet and slippery. First we got on my trampoline. We were slipping a lot. Then we got down and were playing with the mud. My cousin drop me on the mud and I said, "Help me up." He helped me, then I drop him. He said that felt so good and we were laughing...



Advanced Speaker, Continued

What have you learned about tepees?

The tepee is a little house that is made of bricks, and it has like brown paper around ... but it is the buffalo skin. The Indians live in the tepee. They kill the buffalo and use the skin to make clothes ... and more things. The Indians have pictures around the buffalo skin. The Indians have to live just with two beds. Their beds are made of buffalo skin and are not the same like our beds.



Advanced High Speaker (Grade 6)

Tell what you have learned about dinosaurs.

Most male dinosaurs mostly ate other dinosaurs to feed the female dinosaurs. I learned that their babies didn't have to learn how to walk. This is a difference of other baby animals. Most flying dinosaurs got food in the water and ate only fish. They dive down in the water and then went back up. Most female dinosaurs picked some leaves to keep them warm over the night. The same as most animals, they got on top of their eggs so the eggs can stay warm and hatch faster. They had to hatch fast because other animals will eat them. That is why most female dinosaurs stayed most of their time on top of their eggs. Dinosaurs lived good until the humans came and started killing them. Now scientist find skeletons....



Advanced High Speaker, Continued

Tell me about something that was difficult for you.

Well, I have plenty of problems to get up in the morning really early...Then when I go to school I have reading for my first period, but reading is the only subject I don't get. I don't get it because of the coding and going back and finding the answers. It takes a long time to read the whole story three times. The only thing I scored low on the test last year was on the reading. I got a 75 because I read it one time and I got an answer but I read it two more times and I get two more different answers. I couldn't decide what answer to pick. That happened in almost all the stories. But I'm learning more about reading and now I am getting high scores. I hope I get a better grade than what I got last year.



Advanced High Speaker, Continued

Tell me what you think of the school rules.

Well, at our school we have a lot of rules. Most rules are not fair. For example, people run to the lunch line because it gets full really fast. Some people come out of the restroom with their shirts tucked out, and if a teacher sees you, you have to do jump squads. Well, sometimes students are uncomfortable having their shirts tucked. Also, you have to watch yourself because if you get 16 tallies you won't go on a field trip. If you get that much tallies, you can get a detention. If you get a referral, you don't get to go on the field trip for the nine weeks. If you get in ISS, you have to sit and just do work. Most people like to get that because they don't want to go to class and do homework. Some people think it is fun but it's not.

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors Grades 2–12 Writing

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
<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>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>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>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>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs; parts of the writing may be hard to understand even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Writing in Grades 2–12

Remember that the writing ratings of students in grades 2–12 are based on collections of their writing from a variety of content areas.

Grades 2–12
Writing

Writing and Speaking

Remember that incorporating appropriate writing and speaking activities in subject matter instruction helps ELLs **internalize** new English vocabulary and language structures.

This helps them –

- improve their command of academic English and
- learn the content taught in their classes.

Writing in Content Areas

Sample ELPS Student Expectations

Narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired (c)(5)(G)

In science, this expectation can be addressed through writing assignments in which students, for example, observe, describe, and compare physical properties.

Write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content based grade-level vocabulary (c)(5)(B)

In math, this expectation can be addressed by having students, for example, write about the shapes they are studying and name items at home that are the same shapes.



STAAR Writing vs. TELPAS Writing

- STAAR measures how well students compose, revise, and edit texts as required by the TEKS language arts standards. STAAR measures the ability to compose texts with clear, controlling ideas, coherent organization, sufficient development, and appropriate word choice, style, and mechanics.
- TELPAS measures how well ELLs are able to use English to express their ideas in order to learn the writing skills above and fulfill grade-appropriate writing assignments in all their classes.



Introductory Resources for Writing

Several resources support introductory training for this domain:

- **Grades 2–12 Writing Collection Overview PowerPoint**
Explains how to assemble writing collections that portray the overall English language proficiency of ELLs
- **Annotated Examples of Student Writing**
6 writing collections representing a variety of grade levels and English language proficiency levels; each collection includes detailed rating annotations
- **Educator Guide to TELPAS**
Chapter 8 on writing for grades 2–12 contains several annotated writing samples
Available from TEA's Student Assessment website

Spring Web-based TELPAS rater training provides in-depth practice.