TELPAS

Educator Guide



TELPAS
Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

2026–2027

Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the Student Assessment website.

Texas Educator Committees

The Texas Education Agency encourages highly qualified educators to apply to participate in educator committees for the Texas Assessment Program. Click the link or scan the QR code for more information.

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Overview

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is an English language proficiency assessment designed to assess the progress that emergent bilingual (EB) students make in learning the English language. TELPAS is aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and fulfills the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires that all EB students be assessed annually until they are determined to be proficient in the English language.

TELPAS assesses second language development in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Online assessments are used to assess all domains in grades 2–12. For students in kindergarten through grade 1, holistically rated assessments based on ongoing classroom observations and written student work are used.

All students enrolled in Texas public schools and open-enrollment charter schools, including virtual schools, are required by federal and state law to participate in the Texas Assessment Program. EB students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not over the age of 21 are required to be assessed annually with an English language proficiency assessment until they are determined to be proficient by meeting the EB student reclassification criteria available on the Bilingual Education: Bilingual and English as a Second Language Education Programs web page. This includes students classified as emergent bilingual (EB)/English learner (EL) in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) whose parents have declined bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) program services (PEIMS code C). Refer to the *LPAC Decisions Educator Guide* on the Assessments for Special Populations web page for more information.

In rare circumstances a student receiving special education services may not be required to participate in one or more TELPAS language domains for reasons associated with the student's particular disability. The reason for not assessing the student must be determined by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee in collaboration with the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) and must be well supported by documentation in the student's individualized education program (IEP) by the ARD committee and in the student's permanent record file by the LPAC. Participation decisions must be considered individually for each student on a domain-by-domain basis.

In 2024 the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted new ELPS that became effective in classrooms during the 2026–27 school year. The 2026–27 and 2027–28 school years will serve as a transition period to support the implementation of these new standards and a new assessment in 2028–29. In addition to providing an overview of TELPAS and how the new ELPS support a student's second language acquisition as part of classroom instruction, this guide provides information regarding the TELPAS transition-year assessments for 2026–27 and 2027–28.

Test Design

Online Assessments

For grades 2–12, TELPAS consists of online assessments for listening and speaking and for reading and writing. Students taking TELPAS online assessments will respond to test questions from all proficiency levels. TELPAS assessed curriculum documents and test blueprints for each assessment are available on the TELPAS Resources web page.

Listening and Speaking Assessments

Listening and speaking are tested together on one assessment that includes a variety of question types designed to give EB students the opportunity to show their comprehension and communication skills in various ways.

- Listening test questions include passage-based and non-passage-based questions, picture-based questions, and drag-and-drop questions, among others.
- Listening passages may focus on social interactions or academic content and are accompanied by passage-based listening comprehension questions. Stand-alone listening questions might be accompanied by a prompt asking the student to click an object in a picture, identify the picture that matches the prompt, or put a number of pictures in order according to a story.
- Speaking test questions include a variety of picture-, passage-, and text-based speaking prompts.
- Speaking responses require a range of vocabulary encompassing informal (social) and formal (academic) language. For example, students may be shown a map and prompted to explain how to get from one location to another. They may be prompted to tell a story, describe a picture, or compare two pictures. Students are encouraged to speak as much as they can when responding to speaking prompts.
- Students use audio capture functionality to record their responses to speaking questions and listen back to them, and they can delete and rerecord the responses if they are not satisfied with their first response. Students should speak in complete sentences and use their best English vocabulary when responding.
- Some speaking prompts are intended to solicit shorter responses; others are intended to solicit longer responses. For simple prompts, students have 45 seconds to respond; for more complex, open-ended prompts, students have 90 seconds. Students can listen to the recorded prompt as many times as needed before responding. Students may plan their response on scratch paper or using the Notepad in the test application before recording their response.
- Because students' responses to the prompts determine their proficiency levels, they should speak as much as possible in each of their speaking responses to effectively demonstrate their current speaking proficiency.

Reading and Writing Assessments

Reading and writing are tested together in one assessment.

- A variety of narrative and informational reading passages are included. Passages span a wide variety of purposes, such as reading for enjoyment and literary appreciation, reading to engage in core subject-area instruction, and reading for everyday, practical purposes.
- The tests consist primarily of reading passages and test questions. Some questions are not associated with a reading passage but with illustrations, a short text, or both. These questions may use a cloze (fill-in-the-blank) format, a multiple-choice format, a selectable text functionality, or a drag-and-drop functionality to test vocabulary.
- Writing questions consist of multiple-choice, text entry, multistep text entry, and constructed-response questions. Constructed-response prompts provide a variety of stimuli including pictures or questions. Students are asked to respond in writing to these prompts using as much detail as possible.
- Some writing questions ask students to identify and correct misused words and rewrite sentences to be grammatically accurate.

Released Tests

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) releases previously administered TELPAS online assessments on the Practice Test Site. The online practice tests provide students with opportunities to interact with the online testing platform, locate and use the available tools, and respond to the various types of test questions that appear on TELPAS. District personnel should use these online practice tests to familiarize their students with the testing platform prior to the TELPAS administration.

In addition, small sets of test questions are available as sample sets. These sample sets are typically used to introduce students to new types of test questions.

Holistically Rated Assessments

A holistically rated assessment process is used for kindergarten and grade 1 for all four language domains. District testing personnel assign raters to conduct the assessment. TELPAS raters engage EB students in performance-based activities to determine a student's proficiency level for each domain.

TELPAS raters must have trained and calibrated successfully before rating students. The training that TELPAS raters receive supports the administration of TELPAS and provides teachers with ongoing professional development to support effective implementation of the ELPS. TELPAS assessments are administered in the spring, but educators who are trained as TELPAS raters become adept at using the holistic assessment process in formative ways throughout the year to identify and respond to the needs of their EB students. Detailed information about the TELPAS rater training process can be accessed on the TELPAS Resources web page.

Special Administrations

For grades 2–12, a holistic administration of the listening, speaking, or writing assessment or a paper administration of the reading assessment is available only for eligible students. For information on eligibility requirements, refer to the Special Administration of an Assessment page of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources*.

Alignment with State Curriculum

TELPAS assesses English language proficiency in direct alignment with the ELPS. The ELPS are second language acquisition curriculum standards that support EB students' ability to learn the academic English they need for meaningful engagement in grade-appropriate subject-area instruction. The second language acquisition knowledge and skills in the ELPS are the means for helping EB students learn English simultaneously with academic subject matter. The ELPS and TELPAS work together to provide formative and summative assessment opportunities that support teaching and learning.

The ELPS

TELPAS assesses the ELPS, which district personnel are required to implement as an integral part of ongoing subject-area instruction in each foundation and enrichment subject of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) state-required curriculum. The ELPS outline student expectations (SEs) and proficiency level descriptors (PLDs) for EB students in English and are organized across four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Applying the ELPS in Instruction

Beginning with the 2026–27 school year, the ELPS are organized across two grade bands: kindergarten–grade 3 and grades 4–12. The ELPS do not vary by subject or between grades within the same grade band. Despite their uniformity, they fully support and align with the learning of subject-specific and grade-specific English, and subject-area teachers are required to use the ELPS to build the English language skills that enable EB students to understand and use grade-appropriate English in class.

As set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §120, Subchapter B, the ELPS are published along with the TEKS for each subject. The ELPS for kindergarten through grade 3 can be found in TAC §120.20, and TAC §120.21 includes the ELPS for grades 4–12. Every teacher of an EB student is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the subject-area TEKS and the ELPS.

The ELPS have two instructional components:

- **Cross-curricular English language acquisition SEs**

  Cross-curricular second language acquisition curriculum standards represent what EB students need to learn to become proficient in English in the context of academic instruction. The knowledge and skills are stated as SEs and are divided into four sections: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- **PLDs**

  TELPAS measures the ELPS SEs in accordance with various stages of second language acquisition. These stages are defined in PLDs, which describe how well EB students at each proficiency level can understand and use English to engage in grade-appropriate academic instruction. PLDs focus on two areas: General PLDs, available for each of the four domains assessed on TELPAS, include the level of scaffolded and linguistic support a student may require at each stage of language acquisition, and content-area PLDs

include discipline-specific learning in mathematics, English language arts and reading, science, and social studies.

These two instructional components work together to accelerate the rate at which EB students learn English and academic subject matter.

Cross-Curricular English Language Acquisition Student Expectations

The second language acquisition knowledge and skills in the ELPS are the means for helping EB students learn English simultaneously with academic subject matter.

Language Domains

The ELPS include SEs for the second language acquisition domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ELPS for these domains outline what EB students must know and be able to do to become proficient in academic English. For assessment purposes, the four domains are defined in the following table.

Listening	The ability to understand spoken language, comprehend and extract information, and follow social and instructional discourse through which information is provided
Speaking	The ability to use spoken language appropriately and effectively in learning activities and social interactions
Reading	The ability to comprehend and interpret written text at the grade-appropriate level
Writing	The ability to produce written text with content and format to fulfill grade-appropriate classroom assignments

The definitions are not directly tied to academic achievement but to the communication skills that EB students need when using the English language as an effective medium for academic instruction.

An SE from each of the four sections of the ELPS for each grade band is provided in the following chart.

Examples of Cross-Curricular English Language Acquisition Student Expectations, TAC §120.20 and §120.21

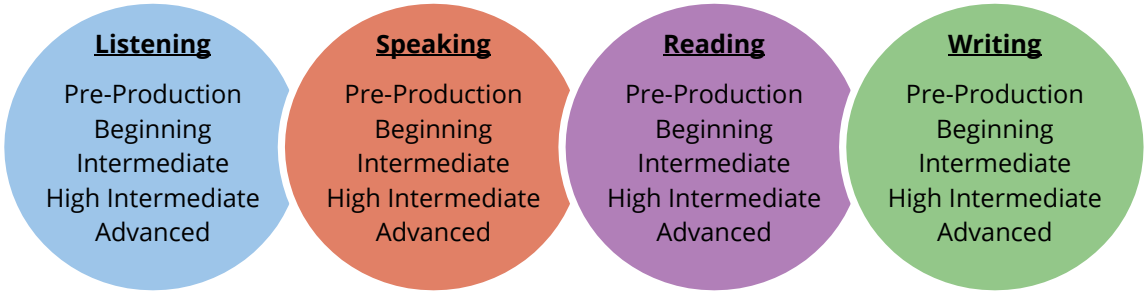
Effective implementation of the ELPS in the context of grade-appropriate subject-area instruction supports the learning of both the English language and academic subject matter.

	Grades K–3 TAC §120.20(d)	Grades 4–12 TAC §120.21(d)
Listening	(1)(E) demonstrate listening comprehension from information presented orally during formal and informal classroom interactions by recalling, retelling, responding, or asking for clarification or additional details	(1)(E) demonstrate listening comprehension from information presented orally during formal and informal classroom interactions by restating, responding, paraphrasing, summarizing, or asking for clarification or additional details
Speaking	(2)(E) narrate, describe, or explain information or persuade orally with increasing specificity and detail during formal and informal classroom interactions	(2)(E) narrate, describe, explain, justify, discuss, elaborate, or evaluate orally with increasing specificity and detail in academic context or discourse
Reading	(3)(C) use high-frequency words, cognates, and content-area vocabulary to comprehend written classroom materials	(3)(C) use high-frequency words, contextual factors, and word analysis such as Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots and cognates to comprehend content-area vocabulary in text
Writing	(4)(D) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and types and connecting words	(4)(D) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths and types and transition words

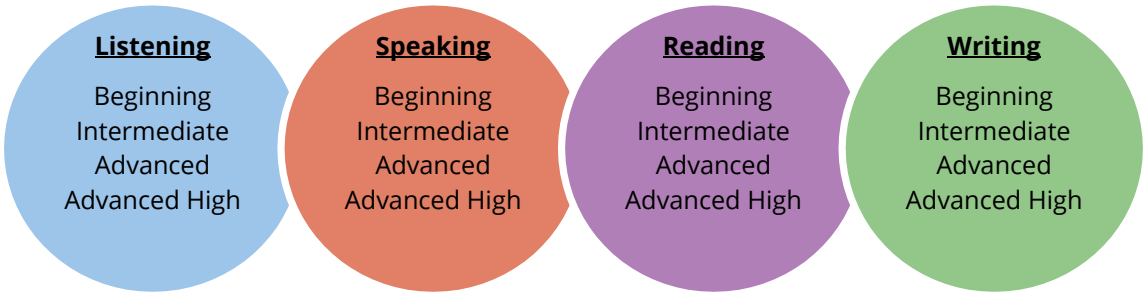
PLDs

The ELPS PLDs present the major characteristics of each language proficiency level for each language domain. The 2024 standards introduced for use in instruction in the 2026–27 school year include five proficiency levels: Pre-Production, Beginning, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced. Although the 2024 standards are now used in instruction, the 2007 proficiency levels—Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High—are being used for assessment during the transition years. More information about the assessed curriculum documents for these transition-year assessments and the alignment between the 2007 and 2024 PLDs is available in the TELPAS Transition-Year Assessments (2026–27 and 2027–28) section of this guide.

2024 Proficiency Levels—Used for Instruction



2007 Proficiency Levels—Used for Assessment



The PLDs are organized into general PLDs and content-area PLDs at each grade band. General PLDs are descriptions of a broad scope of student behaviors that can be observed in a variety of educational settings and across content areas. Content-area PLDs describe student behaviors and language associated with discipline-specific learning in mathematics, reading language arts (RLA), science, and social studies.

The PLDs for kindergarten through grade 3 and for grades 4–12 are available as attachments in TAC §120.20(e)(2) and TAC §120.21(e)(2), respectively.

NOTE: These attachments include the full set of standards that are currently in place for instruction. With respect to assessment, these standards will not be eligible for use until the 2028–29 school year and should therefore serve primarily as a reference, as only the overlapping standards listed in the holistic rating documents on the TELPAS Resources web page will be eligible for assessment during the transition years.

The general definitions summarize how well EB students can understand and/or use English in formal (academic) and informal (social) settings at each proficiency level. The definition of each proficiency level is a general definition that covers all four language domains. The table below outlines the general definitions of the proficiency levels and their key features.

Definitions of the Proficiency Levels	Key Features
Pre-Production The Pre-Production level, also known as the silent period, is the early stage of English language acquisition when receptive language is developing. Students develop comprehension when highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support are provided. Student responses are mostly non-verbal.	Mostly nonverbal responses; highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support needed
Beginning The Beginning level is characterized by speech emergence (expressive language) using one word or two-to-three-word phrases. Students at this level require highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support. Students at this level begin to consistently use present tense verbs and repeat keywords and familiar phrases when engaging in formal and informal interactions.	Speech emergence; highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support needed; use of keywords and familiar phrases during interactions
Intermediate The Intermediate level is characterized by the ability to use receptive and expressive language with demonstrated literal comprehension. Students at this level need moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support. Additional visual and linguistic support is needed to understand unfamiliar or abstract concepts such as figurative language, humor, and cultural or societal references. Students at this level begin to consistently use short phrases and simple sentences or ask short questions to demonstrate comprehension during formal and informal interactions.	Receptive and expressive language; moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support needed; consistent use of short phrases and simple sentences during interactions
High Intermediate Students at the High Intermediate level begin to consistently use a variety of sentence types, express opinions, share thoughts, and ask for clarification. Students at this level have an increased level of literal and abstract comprehension. Students may need minimal scaffolded instruction and linguistic support to engage in formal and informal classroom interactions.	Expression of opinions and thoughts; increased literal and abstract comprehension; minimal scaffolded instruction and linguistic support needed

Definitions of the Proficiency Levels	Key Features
Advanced The Advanced level is characterized by the ability of students to engage in formal and informal classroom interactions with little to no linguistic support. Students at this level engage in discourse using content-area vocabulary and a variety of grammatical structures with increasing accuracy.	Use of a variety of content-area vocabulary and sentence structures; little to no linguistic support needed

The following excerpts from TAC §120.21(e)(2) provide examples of both general and content-area PLDs. Figure 1 shows general PLDs for listening for grades 4–12. Figure 2 shows mathematics-specific PLDs for listening for grades 4–12.

Figure 1. Grades 4–12 General PLDs for Listening

ELPS Listening: General

Emergent bilingual (EB) students may be at the pre-production, beginning, intermediate, high intermediate, or advanced level of English language development in listening. The following proficiency level descriptors describe observable student behaviors in the listening domain when provided linguistically accommodated instruction in each content area.

	Grades 4–12 Proficiency Level Descriptors: Proficiency level descriptors describe the continuum of language acquisition as a student moves from the silent period to discourse.				
Language Patterns	**PRE-PRODUCTION** With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student may:	**BEGINNING** With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**INTERMEDIATE** With moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**HIGH INTERMEDIATE** With minimally scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**ADVANCED** With little or no scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:
Phonology	recognize and mimic differences in sounds and sound patterns	recognize and mimic differences in sounds and intonation	identify when sounds or intonation are changed within spoken words	recognize sounds or intonation in familiar multisyllabic words	recognize sounds or intonation in familiar and unfamiliar newly acquired multisyllabic words within complex discourse
Vocabulary	match pre-taught content-area vocabulary presented orally with concepts, images, and print	use pictorial models, cognates, or Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, or roots to understand spoken content-area vocabulary	use explicitly taught content-area vocabulary, cognates, or Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, or roots to comprehend oral classroom instruction and interactions	demonstrate comprehension of familiar content-area vocabulary heard in the classroom by responding orally or in writing with increasing accuracy	demonstrate comprehension of familiar and unfamiliar content-area vocabulary heard in the classroom by responding orally or in writing with accuracy
Following Directions	follow simple oral directions by observing and imitating others	follow simple oral directions with the support of repeated instructions or visual supports	follow multi-step oral directions with repetition or instructions in familiar contexts	follow multi-step oral directions by identifying key details, deadlines, requirements, or expectations in familiar and unfamiliar contexts with increasing accuracy	follow or restate multi-step oral directions by identifying key details, deadlines, requirements, or expectations in unfamiliar contexts with accuracy
Language Structures /Pragmatics	demonstrate an understanding of single words or simple language structures with repetition	demonstrate an understanding of patterned oral language structures with repetitive words, phrases, or simple sentences	demonstrate an understanding of high-frequency and familiar language structures heard in classroom interactions	demonstrate an understanding of informal language structures heard in familiar and unfamiliar listening contexts	demonstrate an understanding of formal and informal language structures heard in a variety of listening contexts
Comprehension	demonstrate an understanding of spoken words or simple sentences by responding with gestures or using pictures or images	demonstrate an understanding of spoken words or sentences or simple conversations from a variety of sources by responding in simple words or phrases	demonstrate an understanding of short conversations or multiple, related sentences from a variety of sources by restating, retelling, asking clarifying questions, or asking to restate	demonstrate an understanding of a series of extended sentences or oral discourse from a variety of sources by restating, retelling, or asking clarifying questions with increasing accuracy	demonstrate an understanding of a series of extended sentences or oral discourse from a variety of sources by restating, retelling, or asking clarifying questions with accuracy

Figure 2. Grades 4–12 Mathematics-specific PLDs for Listening

ELPS Listening: Mathematics Emergent bilingual (EB) students may be at the pre-production, beginning, intermediate, high intermediate, or advanced level of English language development in listening. The following proficiency level descriptors describe observable student behaviors in the listening domain when provided linguistically accommodated instruction in mathematics.					
	Grades 4–12 Proficiency Level Descriptors: Proficiency level descriptors describe the continuum of language acquisition as a student moves from the silent period to discourse.				
Language Patterns	**PRE-PRODUCTION** With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student may:	**BEGINNING** With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**INTERMEDIATE** With moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**HIGH INTERMEDIATE** With minimally scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:	**ADVANCED** With little or no scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:
Vocabulary	match pre-taught mathematical vocabulary presented orally with images and concepts such as numbers, mathematical operations, symbols, and shapes	use pictorial models to understand spoken vocabulary for mathematical processes and concepts such as numbers, mathematical operations, symbols, and shapes	use pre-taught and highly practiced mathematical vocabulary, cognates, or Greek and Latin roots to comprehend mathematical information, processes, and concepts presented orally	demonstrate comprehension of familiar mathematical concepts presented orally by incorporating key vocabulary in responses with increasing accuracy	demonstrate comprehension of familiar and unfamiliar mathematical concepts presented orally by incorporating key vocabulary in responses with accuracy
Following Directions	participate in a simple mathematical process provided orally by observing and imitating others	follow a simple step-by-step process provided orally to complete a mathematical investigation or solve a problem with the support of repeated instructions or visual supports such as pictorial models or manipulatives	follow a simple step-by-step process provided orally with visual support and repeated instruction to complete a mathematical investigation or solve a problem	follow a multi-step process provided orally to complete a mathematical investigation or solve a problem with increasing accuracy	follow or restate a multi-step process provided orally to complete a mathematical investigation or solve a problem with accuracy
Language Structures/ Pragmatics	respond to new mathematical ideas or reasoning heard during math lessons by gesturing, pointing, matching, or choosing objects	use concrete or pictorial representations to comprehend common language structures such as compare/contrast (less than, greater than, equal to); descriptions (attributes); sequence (order of operations); and operations (plus and minus) presented orally	respond to questions with or repeat common mathematical language structures modeled orally in the classroom to compare or describe objects, attributes, and operations and represent mathematical ideas	participate in and summarize mathematical discussions using familiar language structures heard such as comparative, descriptive, sequential, and operational structures	participate in mathematical discussions using unfamiliar and familiar language structures such as comparative, descriptive, sequential, and operational structures modeled orally in the classroom
Comprehension	use gestures, concrete objects, visuals, or primary language support to respond to mathematical information or ideas presented orally	represent, model, or label key mathematical information, concepts, or relationships presented orally	recall and represent key mathematical information, ideas, concepts, or relationships presented orally	retell and ask clarifying questions about mathematical information, ideas, concepts, or relationships presented orally	explain or justify and ask clarifying questions about mathematical ideas or reasoning presented orally

Scaffolded Instruction and Linguistic Support

The PLDs play an important role in meeting the linguistic needs of EB students. By describing the degree to which students at each of the proficiency levels need scaffolded instruction and linguistic support to engage meaningfully in grade-level instruction, the PLDs are a key resource for determining the kinds of linguistic accommodations to provide to students. As students progress from one proficiency level to the next, they gain more facility with English and require less scaffolded instruction and linguistic support.

Teachers who internalize the meaning of the PLDs are better able to understand what a student can currently comprehend and communicate in English as well as which communication skills are associated with the next proficiency level. This knowledge helps teachers adjust content-area instruction to make it comprehensible at the student's current proficiency level. Teachers can also better sequence and scaffold instruction to help the student acquire the English communication abilities of the next proficiency level. Using the PLDs as a formative assessment tool leads to linguistically accommodated instruction that helps students progress in both subject-matter instruction and in learning English.

Fundamentals of Second Language Acquisition

Learning a second language is different from learning a first language. Individuals may begin learning a second language at any age and in a variety of different contexts (e.g., social, school, work). Second languages are learned along a continuum that can be divided into stages or proficiency levels.

TELPAS reports progress from one proficiency level to the next rather than using passing scores because proceeding from little or no English to full English language proficiency generally takes place over a number of school years. EB students in U.S. school systems are a diverse group of students who differ widely in their educational backgrounds, sociocultural experiences, and knowledge of English. Some are born in the United States and are educated here from the beginning, while others are immigrants who may be in any grade when they arrive in the United States. All of these factors affect how long it takes EB students to learn English.

It is difficult to learn and advance academically without the ability to fully understand the language of instruction. In bilingual education programs, students receive native language support as they learn English and grade-level academic skills. In ESL programs, students face the challenge of learning rigorous academic subject matter in English, a language they may struggle to understand.

Informal (Social) Versus Formal (Academic) Language Proficiency

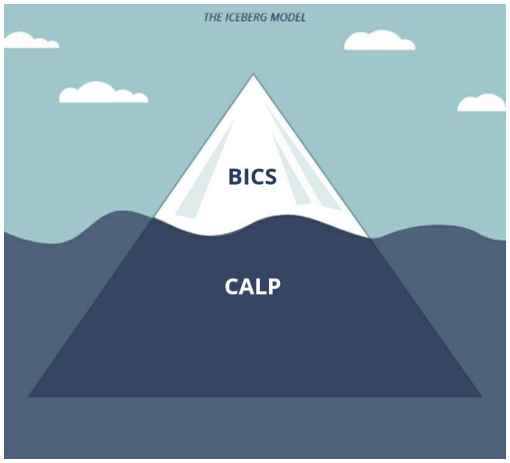
Two types of second language acquisition are important for success in school: informal (social) language and formal (academic) language. Informal (social) language consists of the English needed to effectively interact, exchange ideas, and engage in various settings and contexts. Formal (academic) language consists of oral and written language used to build knowledge, participate in content-specific discourse, and process complex academic material found in formal school settings and interactions.

Students must be able to understand and use the informal English of everyday social and routine classroom interactions as well as the formal English needed for accessing and negotiating learning, processing cognitively demanding information, and building conceptual understanding. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are terms used to describe these types of language proficiency that are based on research done in the 1980s by professor Jim Cummins.

BICS	Informal (social) language; the everyday language students need for daily social and routine classroom interactions
CALP	Formal (academic) language; the language students need in order to think critically, understand and learn new concepts, cognitively process complex academic material, and interact and communicate in academic contexts

As shown in the following graphic, Cummins used an iceberg model to explain that BICS are often acquired more quickly and easy to observe (as is the part of the iceberg above the water),

while CALP (the submerged part) has more depth, takes longer to acquire, and may require probing in order to be observed and evaluated.



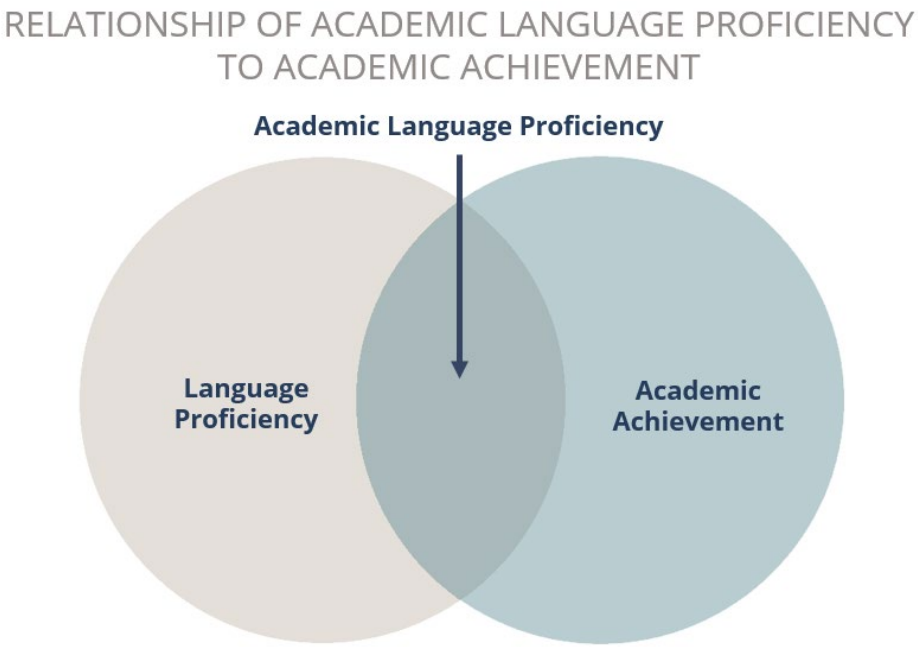
The following table provides examples of BICS and CALP by language domain.

Domains	Examples of BICS	Examples of CALP
Listening and Speaking	Highly routine classroom interactions; interacting informally with friends and classmates	Participating in class discussions to build and demonstrate conceptual understanding; listening to presentations or educational multimedia; understanding language used in cognitively demanding explanations; presenting information to others
Reading and Writing Grades K–1	Reading environmental print; making a short note (for students who have learned to read and write)	Learning to read; listening to and interpreting stories read aloud; reading stories; learning to write; participating in shared writing activities; reading and writing to complete class assignments; writing stories
Reading and Writing Grades 2–12	Reading a note from a friend; composing or reading casual letters, emails, and text messages; reading bulletin boards, announcements, blogs, and other basic environmental print; making to-do lists	Reading a book or article to gain information; reading literature; writing an essay, explanation, or story; building conceptual knowledge through reading classroom materials

Formal (Academic) Language Proficiency Versus Academic Achievement

Formal (academic) language proficiency is not the same as academic achievement, but it is an essential enabling component of academic achievement. EB students who have formal (academic) language proficiency understand the English that makes the learning of academic concepts and skills fully accessible. Formal (academic) language proficiency, therefore, provides the foundation for and access to academic achievement. Language proficiency encompasses both social language proficiency (BICS) and academic language proficiency (CALP).

The graphic below helps show the relationship between language proficiency as a whole, academic achievement as a whole, and the area where those two overlap: formal (academic) language proficiency.



Language Proficiency	Formal (Academic) Language Proficiency	Academic Achievement
• Incorporates both BICS and CALP • Language of social interaction • Language acquisition often outside of school • Tied to everyday life • Evaluated using English language proficiency standards	• Language of content-based instruction • Language acquisition mainly within school • Tied to school life • Provides foundation for academic achievement • Evaluated using English language proficiency standards	• Concepts of content-based instruction • Conceptual development • Tied to curriculum in specific subject areas • Determined by evaluating students against academic standards

Assessing the Reading Domain Versus Academic RLA

TELPAS reading assessments differ from academic RLA assessments in two ways:

- TELPAS reading assessments measure more specifically the ability to read in mathematics, science, and social studies contexts.
- TELPAS reading assessments are designed around the stages of second language acquisition, while academic RLA assessments are designed around grade-level reading expectations. Non-EB students are assumed to have had the same amount of time as other non-EB students at the same grade level to learn English and meet grade-level reading expectations. Because EB students may begin learning English at any age, assumptions cannot be made about how much English they can be expected to understand and read at a given grade level. Some reading material on TELPAS includes texts similar to those encountered in grade-level instruction, because this is the stage at which students need minimal second language acquisition support to read grade-level material. The assessments also, however, include reading material designed to assess the stages of second language acquisition that lead up to the highest level of English language proficiency.

It is important to keep in mind that EB students who struggle to read grade-level English do not necessarily struggle to read in their native language.

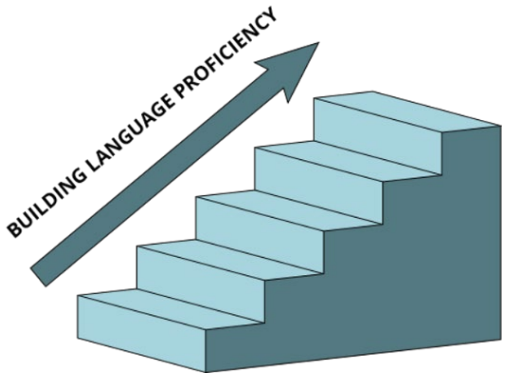
English Language Proficiency Versus Academic Achievement

High academic achievement is not a prerequisite of English language proficiency. Students at the highest level of English language proficiency exhibit a range of academic achievement, just as native English speakers do.

High academic achievement is the goal of all schooling and is demonstrated through subject-area assessments. English language proficiency supports the ability of EB students to achieve academically but is not sufficient to guarantee it. An EB student at the highest level of English language proficiency who is not demonstrating high academic achievement needs interventions related to the subject matter taught, not second language acquisition.

Building Language Proficiency

The stair-shaped model below depicts the cumulative and building nature of second language learning. The language skills associated with one proficiency level are a prerequisite to the broader range of skills at the next level. The arrow indicates that language continues to develop beyond the highest proficiency levels. The highest proficiency level on TELPAS is not intended to equal the English language proficiency of a student whose first language is English. Over time, EB students at this level will acquire more familiarity with the nuances of English meaning and grammar, use more natural phrasing, and learn low-frequency words, idioms, sayings, etc., that are typically familiar to individuals whose first language is English.



Students move through the proficiency levels at different rates depending on factors such as age, language facility, and instructional variables. Such factors may cause some students to progress more quickly in certain domains than others. In addition, students may move through certain levels more quickly or slowly than other levels. Without appropriate instruction, for example, some learners may plateau at the intermediate levels. These students need targeted linguistic support to progress academically.

Each proficiency level encompasses a range of growth and has an early, a middle, and a late stage. Students in the late stages of a level demonstrate language that peaks into the next level. Students in the early stages of a new level occasionally demonstrate language that spikes down to the previous level. Students progress to a new level when they perform most consistently at that level. If a student is near the border between two levels, raters will need to determine the level at which the student performs most consistently.

Building Communication Skills Through Classroom Instruction

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are at the core of all academic learning. The ELPS require essential knowledge and skills for second language acquisition to be taught in conjunction with all subject-area TEKS. To achieve this, teachers must provide EB students with frequent opportunities to communicate at grade-appropriate levels and to practice new English

vocabulary and language structures through all four language domains. Providing students with speaking and writing opportunities gives EB students the time to practice the content they are learning. These interactions also help students internalize the informal (social) and formal (academic) English vocabulary and language structures needed to communicate about those concepts. Teachers should not assume that EB students internalize language just by hearing it or seeing it in writing.

The following graphic demonstrates how providing EB students with intentional and targeted practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing can help students build the English communication skills needed to develop and apply critical processing and thinking skills.



TELPAS Transition-Year Assessments (2026–27 and 2027–28)

During the 2026–27 and 2027–28 transition years, all 2024 ELPS must be integrated into instruction, and students will be assessed according to the 2007 proficiency levels (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High). The 2024 ELPS will not be assessed in full until the 2028–29 school year, when five new proficiency levels (Pre-Production, Beginning, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced) will be implemented.

Grades 2–12 Online Assessments and Paper Reading Assessment

Only those 2024 ELPS that overlap with the 2007 ELPS will be assessed in the TELPAS grades 2–12 online assessments during the transition years. The following assessed curriculum documents for these transition-year assessments can be found in the Assessed Curriculum section on the TELPAS Resources web page:

- Grades 2–3 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing
- Grades 4–12 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing

Grades K–1 and Grades 2–12 Holistic Assessments

During the transition years, TELPAS holistic assessments will use only those 2024 PLDs that overlap with the 2007 PLDs. EB students who are assessed holistically through the observational assessment of listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be rated using the transition-year holistic assessment documents found in the Assessed Curriculum for Holistic Assessments section on the TELPAS Resources web page. Raters will use the holistic assessment document appropriate for the grade band of EB students they are rating.

How to Use the Transition-Year PLDs

For statewide consistency during the 2026–27 and 2027–28 transition years, raters will reference the following documents, available in the Assessed Curriculum for Holistic Assessments section of the TELPAS Resources web page:

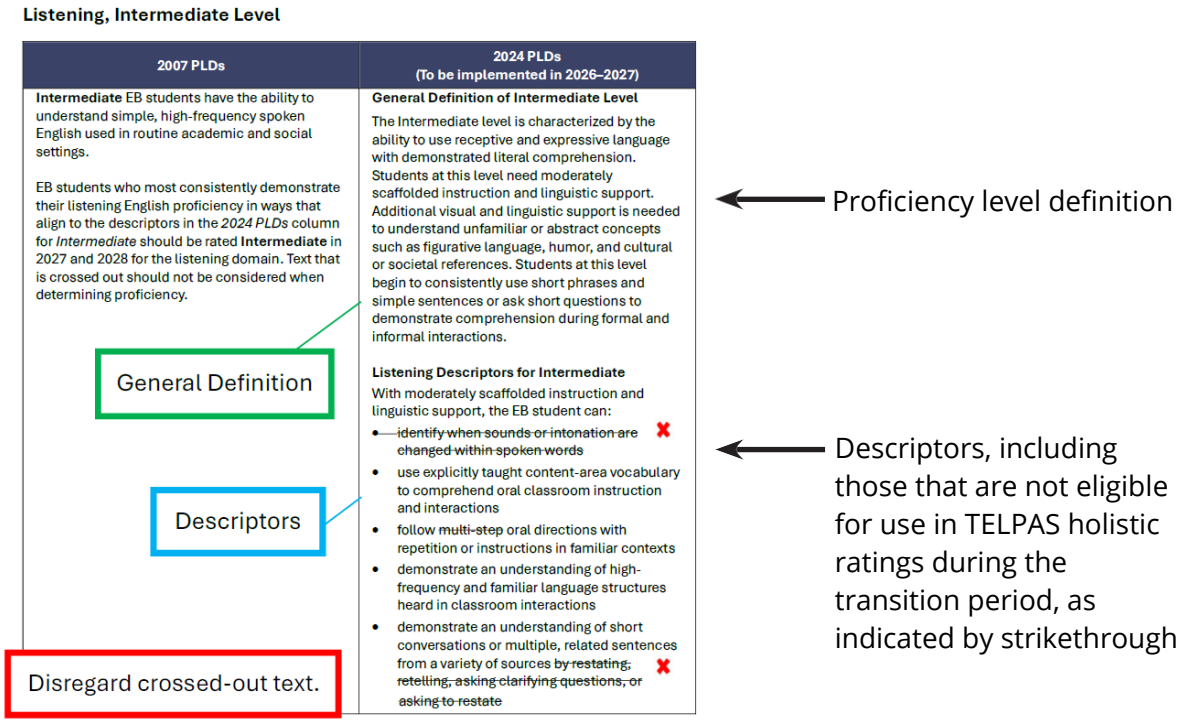
- Grades K–1 Eligible Proficiency Level Descriptors for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 Holistically Rated Assessments
- Grades 2–3 Eligible Proficiency Level Descriptors for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 Holistically Rated Assessments
- Grades 4–12 Eligible Proficiency Level Descriptors for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 Holistically Rated Assessments

These holistic rating documents provide guidance during the transition years to determine which proficiency level to enter as a student's rating based on his or her most consistent

performance. Each document shows the 2007 PLDs alongside the 2024 PLDs for each applicable language domain and includes:

- the four 2007 TELPAS proficiency levels,
- the five 2024 TELPAS proficiency levels and their general definitions,
- the assessment-eligible 2024 domain-specific descriptors for each proficiency level, and
- information showing how the two sets of proficiency levels align during the transition years.

To illustrate how to use the transition-year PLDs, the following graphic provides a sample page from the holistic rating documents. Each page has a heading showing the domain and proficiency level referenced (e.g., listening, intermediate level) and provides information on the PLDs, general definitions, and descriptors.



PLDs

The PLDs ensure that raters evaluate their students using consistent standardized criteria. All raters need to use and interpret the PLDs in the same way. For the transition years, raters will use the applicable grade band document to rate students. The PLDs for the transition years are formatted as illustrated, with two columns on each page separating the 2007 PLDs and the 2024 PLDs.

General Definitions

General definitions summarize how well EB students can understand and/or use English in formal (academic) and informal (social) settings at each proficiency level. As shown, definitions are provided for both the 2007 PLDs and the 2024 PLDs. For 2007, a general definition is

provided for the specific language domain listed at the top of the page. For 2024, the general definition covers the holistically-rated domains of listening, speaking, and writing.

Descriptors

The 2024 column includes specific descriptors for each proficiency level. Raters must use these descriptors to support their evaluation of a student and provide a rating. Any text that is crossed out indicates descriptors that are not eligible for use in the TELPAS assessments during the transition period.

The descriptors are not intended to be exhaustive; however, they are sufficiently comprehensive to support holistic evaluations. They provide domain-specific detail that elaborates on the general PLDs and illustrates the continuum of English language development across proficiency levels.

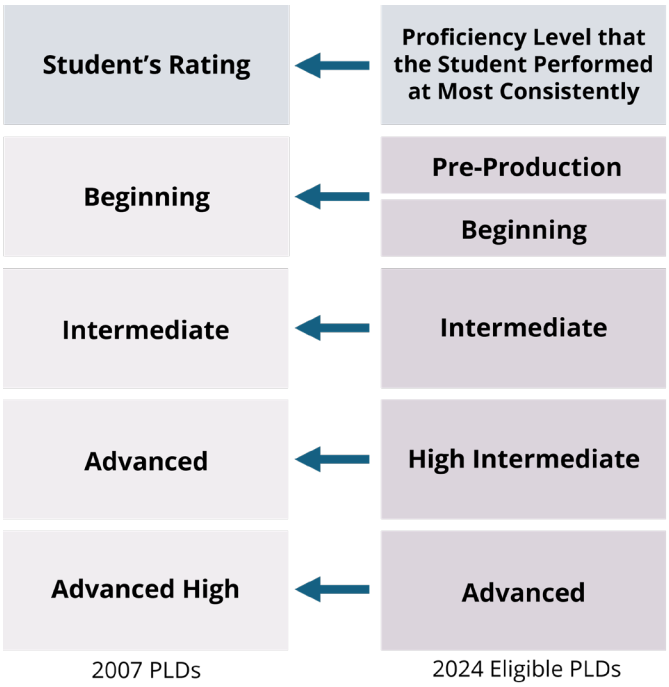
When used together, the general definitions and the descriptors create a complete profile of each proficiency level.

Assigning Proficiency Levels

During the transition years, raters will continue to assign one of the four 2007 proficiency levels—Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High—to students based on which set of descriptors the student displays most consistently. Raters will begin to use the five 2024 proficiency levels—Pre-Production, Beginning, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced—during the 2028–29 school year.

When assigning proficiency levels during the transition years, raters should use the general definitions and the eligible descriptors in the 2024 PLDs column to determine which proficiency level best reflects a student's English language proficiency, then assign the corresponding 2007 proficiency level shown in the 2007 PLDs column. For example, a student whose English language proficiency aligns most consistently with the 2024 Advanced general definition and eligible descriptors (according to the 2024 PLDs column) should be rated as Advanced High (according to the corresponding proficiency level in the 2007 PLDs column).

The following graphic shows the holistic rating process that should be followed during the transition years.



Holistic Ratings

When using the PLDs to assess students, raters must consider student performance holistically and evaluate a student's abilities as a whole rather than as isolated skills. The PLDs should **NOT** be used as a checklist of individual skills. Instead, raters should review the eligible descriptors in the 2024 PLDs column for each proficiency level to determine the level at which the student performs most consistently.

Training

Test administrators and other campus personnel participating in TELPAS administrations are required to be trained in test security and administration procedures. Training should be provided annually to ensure a standardized test administration and the best testing experience for Texas students. Annual training is especially important for understanding and implementing new or updated policies and procedures. It is imperative that all individuals participating in TELPAS administrations preserve the integrity of test content and student data through strict adherence to the instructions and procedures contained in the test administration manual. Lack of annual training typically results in testing incidents that may impact students' test scores, district and campus accountability ratings, and, ultimately, an educator's teaching certificate.

Trainings for TELPAS are posted in the Learning Management System (LMS), which can be accessed via the Educators page of the Texas Assessment website. There are system-specific recorded trainings as well as modules focusing on program overviews, TELPAS rater calibration, and assembling and verifying writing collections. Trainings include:

- Managing Secure Materials for the Texas Assessment Program
- Test Security for the Texas Assessment Program
- The Centralized Reporting System Overview
- TELPAS holistic rating training modules and practice activities

District testing personnel who will administer TELPAS assessments should read not only this guide but also the applicable user guides and other resources listed in the table below to familiarize themselves with current testing systems, guidelines, and procedures.

Title	Audience
Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide	Testing Coordinators
Response Entry (RE) User Guide	Testing Coordinators and Classroom Teachers
Centralized Reporting System (CRS) User Guide	Testing Coordinators and Classroom Teachers

Additional training resources can be found on the TELPAS Resources web page.

Test Results

Educators who have a roster association with students can access results for those students through the Centralized Reporting System (CRS). TELPAS score reports include a student's individual proficiency level ratings (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High) in each of the four language domains assessed (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as composite proficiency ratings.

Composite proficiency ratings provide a single overall English language proficiency level derived from the proficiency ratings in the four language domains. The composite rating weights are 25 percent for each language domain.

Detailed information about TELPAS score reports is provided in CRS.

TELPAS report cards are reports that explain TELPAS results to parents. They are produced in English and Spanish and are available in the Family Portal. Detailed information about TELPAS report cards is provided on the Texas Assessment website.

The Research Portal contains assessment data for all Texas students who participated in statewide test administrations and can be used by educators, researchers, and the public to analyze state assessment results.

TELPAS results are used in the following ways:

- to help parents monitor the progress their children make in learning English
- to inform instructional planning and program exit decisions for individual students
- to report performance to local school boards, school professionals, and the community
- to evaluate programs, resources, and staffing patterns
- to evaluate districts and campuses in a variety of state and federal accountability measures

Appendix

Performance-Based Activities by Language Domain for Holistic Assessments

Performance-based activities provide meaningful opportunities for EB students to develop and demonstrate their English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Educators can use these activities to observe students' language use in a variety of classroom contexts and gather information about a student's developing English language proficiency. As part of the TELPAS holistic assessment process, these observations can help determine the proficiency level at which each student performs most consistently.

Listening

English language proficiency in listening is defined for TELPAS as the ability to understand spoken language, comprehend and extract information, and follow social and instructional discourse. EB students who are English proficient in the domain of listening understand spoken English well enough to participate meaningfully and with minimal second language acquisition support in grade-level academic instruction.

Performance-Based Listening Activities for Kindergarten through Grade 12

The following types of performance-based activities are recommended as ways to develop and gather information about the listening proficiency of students. This list of activities is not exhaustive.

- 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

Speaking

English language proficiency in speaking is defined for TELPAS as the ability to use spoken English appropriately and effectively in learning activities and social interactions. This definition relates specifically to the communication skills that an EB student needs to use English as an effective medium for academic instruction.

Performance-Based Speaking Activities for Kindergarten through Grade 12

The following types of performance-based activities are recommended as ways to develop and gather information about the speaking proficiency of EB students. This list of activities is not exhaustive.

- cooperative group work
- oral presentation
- 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

Reading

English language proficiency in reading is defined for TELPAS as the ability to comprehend and interpret written text at the grade-appropriate level.

Students in kindergarten and grade 1 (EB students and non-EB students) vary in how quickly they learn to decode written text. EB students in kindergarten and grade 1 may be at different developmental stages of emerging literacy regardless of their stage of second language acquisition. As is customary in kindergarten and grade 1 instruction, students build foundational reading skills through texts read aloud as well as through activities that support their emerging ability to read written texts. Throughout the year, teachers monitor and develop the reading proficiency levels of their kindergarten and grade 1 EB students during ongoing classroom instruction as they incorporate the ELPS and subject-area TEKS in daily instruction.

For students in grades 2–12, the definition of reading proficiency is not tied specifically to the language arts discipline but more broadly to the ability to read texts typically encountered during all grade-level instruction.

Performance-Based Reading Activities for Kindergarten and Grade 1

The following types of performance-based activities are recommended as ways to develop and gather information about the reading proficiency of EB students. This list of activities is not exhaustive.

- paired reading
- sing-alongs and read-alongs, including chants and poems

- shared reading with big books, charts, overhead transparencies, and other displays
- guided reading with leveled readers
- reading subject-area texts and related materials
- independent reading
- cooperative group work
- reading-response journals

Writing

English language proficiency in writing is defined for TELPAS as the ability to produce written text with content and format to fulfill grade-appropriate classroom assignments.

Students in kindergarten and grade 1 (EB students and non-EB students) vary in how quickly they learn to write. Kindergarten and grade 1 EB students may be at different developmental stages of learning to write regardless of their English language proficiency. As is customary in kindergarten and grade 1 instruction, students build foundational writing skills through applicable oral prerequisite activities, activities based on emergent forms of writing, and activities that involve self-generated connected written text. Throughout the year, teachers monitor and develop the English language writing proficiency levels of their kindergarten and grade 1 EB students as they incorporate the ELPS and subject-area TEKS in daily instruction.

For students in grades 2–12, the writing proficiency definition relates specifically to the communication skills that an EB student needs to use English as an effective medium for academic instruction. Students should participate in authentic instructional writing activities to support their English writing development.

Performance-Based Writing Activities for Kindergarten and Grade 1

The following types of performance-based activities are recommended as ways to develop and gather information about the writing proficiency of EB students. This list of activities is not exhaustive.

- journal writing for personal reflections
- shared writing for literacy and subject-area development
- language experience dictation
- organization of thoughts and ideas through prewriting strategies
- publishing and presenting
- making lists for specific purposes
- labeling pictures, objects, and items from projects
- cooperative group work
- first drafts

TEXAS ASSESSMENT