

What is the purpose of this guide?

This parent guide has two purposes:

1. to give parents basic information about TELPAS Alternate, and
2. to provide parents with a short summary of each proficiency rating so that they can better understand the progress their child is making in learning English.



What is TELPAS Alternate?

To understand TELPAS Alternate, you must first understand TELPAS. The letters in TELPAS stand for the **T**exas **E**nglish **L**anguage **P**roficiency **A**ssessment **S**ystem. **TELPAS** is an assessment program for students in Texas public schools who are learning the English language. TELPAS annually assesses the English language proficiency of students who have been identified as English learners (ELs) in four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

TELPAS Alternate is an assessment program for students who are learning the English language just like TELPAS. However, it is designed to assess ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general TELPAS assessment, even with allowable accommodations. As with TELPAS, TELPAS Alternate assesses the progress that ELs are making in learning English in the same four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, TELPAS Alternate is not a traditional test in which students answer questions. Instead, teachers use their knowledge and observations of students to measure their ability to understand and use English to engage in academic and social learning environments.

Who takes TELPAS Alternate?

Students in grades 2–12 will be assessed with TELPAS Alternate if they are

- identified as limited English proficient (LEP/EL),
- receiving special education services, and
- identified with a significant cognitive disability.

Participation requirements for TELPAS Alternate can be found on the [TELPAS Alternate Resources](#) webpage.

English learners with disabilities in kindergarten and grade 1 will take TELPAS with or without accommodations.



How is TELPAS Alternate related to what my child learns in school?

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) are the curriculum standards that support second language acquisition for English learners. The ELPS represent the skills that English learners need to acquire to become proficient in English within the academic setting. Every teacher who has an English learner in class is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) state-required curriculum as well as the ELPS.

The TELPAS Alternate assessment is directly aligned to the ELPS. TELPAS Alternate measures students' progress in learning English in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing within the context of their academic instruction. Students who are being assessed with TELPAS Alternate are learning English that is aligned with grade-level TEKS, but at an appropriate instructional level.



My student receives accommodations in the classroom. Can these accommodations be used on TELPAS Alternate?

Yes. Accommodations that are used in the classroom and are indicated in a student's individualized education program (IEP) are allowed on TELPAS Alternate.

Accommodations may include alternate response modes for English learners who use sign language, braille, or another method of communication as a substitute for traditional English. It is allowable for a student to respond by pointing or circling as a substitute for traditional writing. Students may respond with the assistance of an augmentative communication device as a substitute for traditional speaking. There are many more allowable response modes that serve as appropriate substitutes for the traditional listening, speaking, reading, and writing modes of communication. If an allowable response mode is used during classroom instruction, it would be an appropriate way for a student to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.



What do TELPAS Alternate results tell me about my child?

The TELPAS Alternate Report Card provides results using five proficiency ratings — Awareness, Imitation, Early Independence, Developing Independence, Basic Fluency — to show the progress students make in learning English from year to year. For students to reach their full academic potential, it is important for them to make steady progress in learning English. Students who do not make steady progress may require additional assistance at school. For more information about the TELPAS Alternate Report Card, visit the [Texas Assessment](#) website.

The following brief descriptions will help you understand the characteristics generally demonstrated by students at the five English proficiency levels. These five proficiency levels were created to address the specific needs of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

Awareness	Students who receive this rating may be aware of English sounds or print; however, they have little or no functional ability to participate in communication activities in English.
Imitation	Students who receive this rating match, imitate, or approximate some English in their environment; however, they are not able to independently understand or produce English. They participate in routine communication activities in a familiar environment when the activities are significantly linguistically accommodated.
Early Independence	Students who receive this rating understand short, simple messages and produce messages of one or two high-need, high-frequency words (e.g., book, cafeteria, teacher). They are starting to participate in linguistically accommodated communication activities in English in familiar environments.
Developing Independence	Students who receive this rating understand longer messages of multiple sentences in English and produce simple, descriptive, original messages by combining two or more words (e.g., new red bike, big fast truck). They participate meaningfully in linguistically accommodated communication activities in English in familiar environments.
Basic Fluency	Students who receive this rating understand and produce more detailed, complex, and elaborate messages with multiple sentences in English. These students participate independently in communication activities in English in familiar environments.

For additional questions, please contact your child's school. Additional resources can be found on the [TELPAS Alternate Resources](#) webpage. You may also contact the Texas Education Agency's Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 for support.