



Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

Grades 4–12

Eligible Proficiency Level Descriptors for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 Holistically Rated Assessments

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, all the 2024 English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), including the new Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs), must be implemented in instruction. This document includes the 2024 general PLDs for listening, speaking, and writing for grades 4–12 and their alignment to the proficiency levels in the 2007 PLDs.

Emergent bilingual (EB) students in grades 2–12 who are eligible for a special administration are rated holistically through the observational assessment of the listening, speaking, and writing language domains and are assessed in reading through a paper administration. During the 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 school years, only the 2024 PLDs that overlap with the 2007 PLDs will be used when holistically rating students who meet eligibility criteria. Any PLD text that is crossed out in this document is not eligible to be used for the TELPAS grades 4–12 holistic assessment during that two-year period.

TELPAS Grades 4–12 PLDs for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 Assessments

Listening, Beginning Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Beginning EB students have little or no ability to understand spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their listening English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Pre-Production</i> or <i>Beginning</i> should be rated Beginning in 2027 and 2028 for the listening domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Pre-Production Level 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.</p> <p>Listening Descriptors for Pre-Production With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize and mimic differences in sounds and sound patterns • match pre-taught content-area vocabulary presented orally with concepts, images, and print • follow simple oral directions by observing and imitating others • demonstrate an understanding of single words or simple language structures with repetition • demonstrate an understanding of spoken words or simple sentences by responding with gestures or using pictures or images <p>General Definition of Beginning Level 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.</p> <p>Listening Descriptors for Beginning With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize and mimic differences in sounds and intonation

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use pictorial models, cognates, or Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, or roots to understand spoken content-area vocabulary • follow simple oral directions with the support of repeated instructions or visual supports • demonstrate an understanding of patterned oral language structures with repetitive words; [or] phrases; or simple sentences • demonstrate an understanding of spoken words or sentences or simple conversations from a variety of sources by responding in simple words or phrases

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Listening, Intermediate Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Intermediate EB students have the ability to understand simple, high-frequency spoken English used in routine academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their listening English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Intermediate</i> should be rated Intermediate in 2027 and 2028 for the listening domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Intermediate Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Listening Descriptors for Intermediate</p> <p>With moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify when sounds or intonation are changed within spoken words • use explicitly taught content-area vocabulary, cognates, or Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, or roots to comprehend oral classroom instruction and interactions • follow multi-step oral directions with repetition or instructions in familiar contexts • demonstrate an understanding of high-frequency and familiar language structures heard in classroom interactions • 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

Listening, Advanced Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced EB students have the ability to understand, with second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their listening English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the 2024 PLDs column for <i>High Intermediate</i> should be rated Advanced in 2027 and 2028 for the listening domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of High Intermediate Level 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.</p> <p>Listening Descriptors for High Intermediate With minimally scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize sounds or intonation in familiar multisyllabic words • demonstrate comprehension of familiar content-area vocabulary heard in the classroom by responding orally or in writing with increasing accuracy • follow multi-step oral directions by identifying key details, deadlines, requirements, or expectations in familiar and unfamiliar contexts with increasing accuracy • demonstrate an understanding of informal language structures heard in familiar and unfamiliar listening contexts • 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

Listening, Advanced High Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced High EB students have the ability to understand, with minimal second language acquisition support, grade-appropriate spoken English used in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their listening English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Advanced</i> should be rated Advanced High in 2027 and 2028 for the listening domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Advanced Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Listening Descriptors for Advanced</p> <p>With little or no scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize sounds or intonation in familiar and unfamiliar newly acquired multisyllabic words within complex discourse • demonstrate comprehension of familiar and unfamiliar content-area vocabulary heard in the classroom by responding orally or in writing with accuracy • follow or restate multi-step oral directions by identifying key details, deadlines, requirements, or expectations in unfamiliar contexts with accuracy • demonstrate an understanding of formal and informal language structures heard in a variety of listening contexts • 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

Speaking, Beginning Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Beginning EB students have little or no ability to speak English in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their speaking English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Pre-Production</i> and <i>Beginning</i> should be rated Beginning in 2027 and 2028 for the speaking domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Pre-Production Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Speaking Descriptors for Pre-Production</p> <p>With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imitate English pronunciation, sounds, and words • repeat academic vocabulary • repeat high-frequency question words • recite modeled content-area words, including cognates • use nonverbal responses or gestures to communicate • communicate ideas, feelings, or opinions through gestures or visuals • communicate ideas through gestures and a few isolated words • respond with gestures or mimic simple, modeled responses • respond with gestures • repeat high-frequency question words orally <p>General Definition of Beginning Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Speaking Descriptors for Beginning</p> <p>With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p>

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce some sounds and words with accuracy • name familiar objects used in everyday routines and activities • speak in single word and short phrases of practiced or memorized words for basic communication during formal and informal classroom interactions • recite high-frequency, content-area words, including cognates and Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots • speak using isolated words with some visuals or gestures • adjust speech structure, form, vocabulary, and register to specific audiences and purposes occasionally • communicate ideas, feelings, or opinions orally using single words consisting of recently practiced, memorized, repeated, or highly familiar vocabulary • describe ideas and reasoning orally using isolated words and vocabulary • repeat orally some key words or details about an academic topic • respond appropriately to the comments of others orally using single words • ask a question orally using high-frequency words or use gestures

Speaking, Intermediate Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Intermediate EB students have the ability to speak in a simple manner using English commonly heard in routine academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their speaking English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Intermediate</i> should be rated Intermediate in 2027 and 2028 for the speaking domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Intermediate Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Speaking Descriptors for Intermediate</p> <p>With moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce some sounds, words, and phrases with accuracy and fluency • speak using high-frequency and general content-area words and phrases, including vocabulary terms and cognates • speak in phrases using some high-frequency vocabulary, including key words and expressions needed for basic communication during formal and informal classroom interactions • speak in simple phrases using high-frequency, content-area words with support from cognates and Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots • speak in short phrases using high-frequency social language structures encountered in classroom interactions • adjust speech structure, form, vocabulary, and register to specific audiences and purposes with increasing frequency • convey ideas, feelings, or opinions orally using high-frequency words, including expressions and phrases • express an opinion with evidence orally using phrases

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions orally about a topic with short response, including some detail • respond orally with newly acquired vocabulary • ask questions orally about content-area topics using opinion words and phrases

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Speaking, Advanced Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced EB students have the ability to speak using grade-appropriate English, with second language acquisition support, in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their speaking English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>High Intermediate</i> should be rated Advanced in 2027 and 2028 for the speaking domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of High Intermediate Level 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.</p> <p>Speaking Descriptors for High Intermediate With minimally scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce sounds, words, and phrases with increasing accuracy and fluency • speak using terms and collocations that can have multiple meanings across general academic content areas • speak in sentences using some high-frequency vocabulary, including key words and expressions needed for communication during formal and informal classroom interactions • speak in simple sentences using content-area vocabulary with support from cognates and Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots • speak using high-frequency social and academic language structures encountered in classroom interactions • adjust speech structure, form, vocabulary, and register to specific audiences and purposes often • participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of sources in which the student may restate, self-correct, repeat, or search for words and phrases to clarify meaning using connecting words to link ideas, feelings, or opinions in sentences

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express an opinion with evidence orally using sentences • retell or describe information about an academic topic orally with some key words and details in sentences • respond orally with newly acquired vocabulary in sentences • ask questions orally about content-area topics using question words in simple sentences

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Speaking, Advanced High Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced High EB students have the ability to speak using grade-appropriate English, with minimal second language acquisition support, in academic and social settings.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their speaking English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Advanced</i> should be rated Advanced High in 2027 and 2028 for the speaking domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Advanced Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Speaking Descriptors for Advanced</p> <p>With little or no scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce sounds, words, phrases, and sentences with accuracy and fluency • speak using academic language and collocations with occasional re-phrasing to express intended meaning • share information and ask content-relevant questions using concrete and abstract words during formal and informal classroom interactions • speak in increasingly complex sentences using content-area vocabulary with support from cognates and Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots • speak with academic language structures frequently used in content-area discourse • adjust speech structure, form, vocabulary, and register to specific audiences and purposes • engage in elaborate conversations and discussions on a variety of sources using connecting words to extend ideas, feelings, or opinions in a variety of sentence types • speak using complex sentences to evaluate or analyze ideas, reasoning, and arguments • describe an academic topic orally with elaboration using abstract vocabulary and in a variety of sentence types • respond orally with newly acquired vocabulary appropriate for grade level using a variety of sentence types

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ask simple and complex questions orally about content-area topics

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Writing, Beginning Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Beginning EB students lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their writing English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Pre-Production</i> or <i>Beginning</i> should be rated Beginning in 2027 and 2028 for the writing domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Pre-Production Level 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.</p> <p>Writing Descriptors for Pre-Production With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draw pictures and copy words to connect oral language to print • copy or trace information • illustrate or copy print to show understanding of content-area vocabulary in either primary language or English • draw pictures, label, list, and copy words • copy words following capitalization and punctuation conventions • copy English print to show understanding of academic content • copy English print to show descriptive language <p>General Definition of Beginning Level 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.</p> <p>Writing Descriptors for Beginning With highly scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copy to write phonetically spelled words • connect sounds to letters by relying on phonetic patterns

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write using a combination of primary language and English high-frequency words to show understanding of content-area vocabulary • write using simple phrases or patterns that may convey ideas or information • write words that use uppercase and lowercase letters, including personal information such as first and last names • write using a combination of primary language, illustrations and English text to narrate, describe, explain, or justify • write descriptive words to add details and evidence to written texts or pictures

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Writing, Intermediate Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Intermediate EB students have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a limited way.</p> <p>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their writing English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Intermediate</i> should be rated Intermediate in 2027 and 2028 for the writing domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Intermediate Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Writing Descriptors for Intermediate</p> <p>With moderately scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● match sounds to letters or combinations of letters to spell with increasing accuracy ● write phrases that may include invented spelling ● connect sounds to letters, including letter clusters and different syllable patterns, with increasing consistency ● write phrases by using high-frequency words, cognates, or content-area vocabulary ● write phrases that convey ideas or information ● write phrases using standard English conventions ● write using frequently modeled content-area language to narrate, describe, explain, or justify understanding of ideas ● write an idea with specific and relevant details and evidence using descriptive phrases

Writing, Advanced Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced EB students 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>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their writing English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>High Intermediate</i> should be rated Advanced in 2027 and 2028 for the writing domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of High Intermediate Level 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.</p> <p>Writing Descriptors for High Intermediate With minimally scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encode words while writing and sounding out phonemes or letter clusters • spell content-area words with increasing accuracy • write sentences using content-area vocabulary, including cognates, with increasing accuracy • write sentences using transition words that convey ideas or information with increasing accuracy • write questions using the words <i>who, what, when, where, why, or how</i> with increasing accuracy • write sentences using standard English conventions with increasing accuracy • write using language common to content-area to narrate; [or] describe, explain, or justify • write to explain an idea with specific and relevant details and evidence using simple sentences with increasing accuracy

Writing, Advanced High Level

2007 PLDs	2024 PLDs (To be implemented in 2026–2027)
<p>Advanced High EB students 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>EB students who most consistently demonstrate their writing English proficiency in ways that align to the descriptors in the <i>2024 PLDs</i> column for <i>Advanced</i> should be rated Advanced High in 2027 and 2028 for the writing domain. Text that is crossed out should not be considered when determining proficiency.</p>	<p>General Definition of Advanced Level</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Writing Descriptors for Advanced</p> <p>With little or no scaffolded instruction and linguistic support, the EB student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write unfamiliar words applying syllable patterns • spell content-area words accurately • write sentences using content-area vocabulary with accuracy • write sentences using content-compatible academic terms such as <i>estimate</i>, <i>value</i>, and <i>speculate</i> • write sentences using transition words that convey ideas or information with accuracy • write questions using the words <i>who</i>, <i>what</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>where</i>, <i>why</i>, or <i>how</i> accurately • write a variety of sentence types using standard English conventions with increasing accuracy • write using precise content-area language to narrate, describe, explain, or justify • write to explain an idea with specific and relevant details and evidence using a variety of sentence types • write using descriptive, literal, or figurative language to compose text