

English Language Development (ELD) Standards

◆ ELD Proficiency Level Descriptions

Acquiring another language is a developmental process. Consequently, the standards display patterns of language development which range from the student's initial contact with formal instruction in English to the point at which his or her use of English is comparable to that of native English-speaking peers. In order to be aligned with what is known about the acquisition of a second language and to underscore the developmental nature of this process, the standards are organized by language proficiency level, then by grade span. Because limited English proficient (LEP) students enter California schools and begin the process of learning English at any grade level, there are distinctions in the activities indicative of ELD progress according to grade spans.

The ELD Standards are designed to develop communicative competence in English. Note that each proficiency level description includes many aspects of language proficiency (such as grammar, fluency, function, pronunciation, and syntax), which contribute to overall language proficiency.

English Language Learner Proficiency Levels Reference Sheet

◆ Beginning Proficiency Level (Level One)

LEP students at the Beginning level of English language proficiency demonstrate dramatic growth. They progress from having no receptive or productive English skills to possessing a basic use of English. Students at the Beginning level are able to comprehend high-frequency words and basic phrases in immediate physical concrete surroundings; produce learned words and phrases and use gestures to communicate basic needs; interact with frequently used English print in a limited fashion and demonstrate initial English print awareness; write familiar words and phrases; demonstrate understanding of familiar words, phrases, and questions drawn from content areas, and follow classroom routines and schedules; express basic personal and safety needs and respond to questions with one-or-two word answers and gestures; and demonstrate and use basic social conventions.

◆ Early–Intermediate Proficiency Level (Level Two)

LEP students at the Early–Intermediate level of English language proficiency start to respond to more varied communication tasks with learned material and increasing ease. Students at the Early–Intermediate level are able to comprehend a sequence of information on familiar topics as presented through stories and face-to-face conversations; produce basic statements and ask questions in direct informational exchanges on familiar and routine subjects; interact with a variety of familiar print as part of a group and recognize words and phrases from previously learned material; write basic personal information and short responses within structured contexts; use high-frequency vocabulary drawn from other content areas; express basic personal and safety needs, and respond to questions and simple phrases; and participate in simple, face-to-face conversations with peers and others.

◆ Intermediate Proficiency Level (Level Three)

LEP students at the Intermediate level of English language proficiency begin to refashion learned material to meet their immediate communication and learning needs. Students at the Intermediate level are able to comprehend information on familiar topics in contextualized

settings; produce sustained conversation with others on an expanding variety of general topics; interact independently with a variety of simplified print; write basic information and expanded responses in contextualized settings; comprehend main ideas and basic concepts in content areas; express a variety of personal and safety needs and respond to questions using short sentences; and initiate simple conversations with English speakers outside of school.

◆ **Early–Advanced Proficiency Level (Level Four)**

LEP students at the Early–Advanced level of English language proficiency begin creative use of the English language in more complex, cognitively demanding situations and are able to use English as a means for learning in other academic areas. Students at the Early–Advanced level are able to comprehend detailed information with fewer contextual clues on unfamiliar topics; produce, initiate, and sustain spontaneous language interactions using circumlocution when necessary; interact with increasingly complex written material while relying on context and prior knowledge to obtain meaning from print; write to satisfy limited social and academic needs through the recombination of learned vocabulary and structures; participate actively in all content areas; express more complex feelings, needs, and opinions using extended oral and written production; and participate actively in non-academic settings requiring English.

◆ **Advanced Proficiency Level (Level Five)**

LEP students at the Advanced level of English language proficiency communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and academic demands. In order to attain the English proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are necessary. Students at the Advanced level are able to comprehend concrete and abstract topics and to recognize language subtleties in a variety of communicative settings; produce, initiate, and sustain extended interactions tailored to specific purposes and audiences; read, with a limited number of comprehension difficulties, grade-level written material; write to meet most social needs and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences; participate fully in all content areas at grade level; express and satisfy personal and safety needs in a wide variety of settings; and participate fully in non-academic settings requiring English.