

Questions and Answers Pertaining to the Assessment

1. *Who is the assessment for?* This assessment is designed to identify English learners of three proficiency levels—beginning, intermediate and advanced.
2. *Why do I need to use this assessment?* Once teachers are able to identify the English proficiency levels of their students, they are able to figure out how to shape their mathematics instruction to their students' needs and ability levels in English.
3. *How do I give the assessment?* You will need to give the assessment individually to your students.
4. *How long does the assessment take?* It should not take more than 10 minutes of your time. (Note: This does not include the time it takes the student to do task 3, the independent writing task.)
5. *Do I need to give the assessment to all of my English learners?* It is probably best if you do. However, you need not. If you are concerned about specific students, give it to those students specifically.
6. *When is it best to use this assessment?* A good time to assess students' language proficiency levels is at the beginning of the school year. However, students can be assessed at any time.
7. *How often can I give the assessment to the same students?* Ideally, students' English language proficiency levels should be assessed regularly, about every six months.
8. *Can someone else assess my students for me?* That is possible, but it is better for you to assess your students, as it will familiarize you with their language needs.
9. *What if I have a large class of English learners?* In this case, you may want others help you give the assessment or you may decide only to assess some of the students in the class, particularly those you believe are having the most difficulty understanding your instruction and participating in the class.
10. *Why not just use CELDT scores?* CELDT scores are dated. Since students can change proficiency levels fairly quickly, CELDT scores may not be valid. Also, the CELDT is not designed to help teachers provide effective instruction to learners of only three English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced).
11. *What do I do with the results after I receive them?* Use the results to remember the students who need instruction to understand your lessons and participate in them. Use the results to benefit from the *Language Booklet* suggestions (see the Preparing for Success in Algebra CaMSP web site).

THE 10-MINUTE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Some words of caution:

1. Just because students are able to communicate orally does not mean that they have acquired enough English to succeed in your mathematics class. Most English learners acquire oral language proficiency before they acquire the ability to read and write.
2. When you talk to intermediate-level English learners, it is easy to treat them as though they have mastered English, when they have not. Once students of an intermediate language proficiency are able to convey everything they want in informal, social situations, their need for more language instruction can be disguised by their fast speech, friendly attitude in class, hard work, short answers, and body gestures—including head nodding and smiling. Don't be fooled. These students need language instruction if they are to succeed in your mathematics class.
3. Students of a beginning proficiency level who have lived in the United States for over two years are **not** making normal progress acquiring English. Discussing these students with your school's ESL Coach and reading specialists should be on the top of your to-do list.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT FOR MATHEMATICS:
AN ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED LEVEL ENGLISH
LEARNERS**

Beginning – Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency may have few or no receptive or productive English skills. They can only understand a few concrete details during unmodified mathematics instruction. They may be able to respond to some communication and learning demands, but they make many errors. Oral and written production is usually limited to a few words and memorized statements and questions. Their sentences often consist of less than a few words. Frequent errors make communication with these learners difficult.

Intermediate – Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency use their English-language skills to meet most of their informal communication demands. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details and some major abstract concepts in their mathematics classrooms. They are able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands. These students may have strong conversational English but often lack a command of the language features necessary to master math content. They lack knowledge of academic and content-specific language. Their oral and written production usually includes sentences, paragraphs, and original statements and questions. Errors prevent them from communicating in school contexts effectively.

Advanced – Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and learning demands. In order for students at this level to attain the English-proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are still necessary. They are still in the process of learning academic and content-specific words, grammatical structures, and discourse features. Students at this level are able to identify and summarize concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in all content areas. Their oral and written production often reflects discourse appropriate for content areas. Errors are infrequent and normally do not interfere with communication.

TASKS:

Note: Before giving the assessment, please review the Scoring Rubric to understand what behaviors signal various proficiency levels, as well as to know what aspects of the student's performance to consider (e.g., speaking and listening). During the assessment, you will circle one level (Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced) per task (page 1 of Scoring Rubric). After giving the assessment, you will complete page 2 of the Scoring Rubric, circling one level under each section, based on your overall impression of the student's responses.

1. GENERAL DISCUSSION (*up to 6 minutes*)

Ask the student to tell you what s/he knows about math. Ask: What do you know about math? If the student has difficulty answering this question, follow up with one or more of these questions:

- What topics did you study in mathematics last year (or semester)? Multiplication, division, adding, or something else? What topics did you like best? Why?
- In what situations do you use the mathematics that you have learned in your classes?
- Do you like mathematics? Why?

2. TALKING THROUGH A PROBLEM (*4 minutes*)

Choose a word problem that you think most students in the class could solve successfully. (It should be an easy problem, slightly below the students' current grade level. See next 2 pages for examples.) Ask the student to read the word problem aloud to you and explain the problem.

3. WRITING SAMPLE

Ask the student to write a paragraph of at least three sentences in length describing what s/he learned in the mathematics classes that s/he has taken. Ask: What have you learned in the mathematics classes that you have taken? State: Answer this question in writing. Write a paragraph of at least three sentences. (Note: This task can be completed independently by the student in a quiet place. This writing is not part of the 10 minutes the teacher spends with students.)

WORD PROBLEMS

Fifth Graders

Choose one problem.

1. A year has 365 days, and a day has 24 hours. How many hours are in 365 days?

- A 2190
- B 7440
- C 7679
- D 8760

2. The total length of a vehicle is 205.83 inches. What is the length of the vehicle rounded to the nearest whole number?

- A 200 inches
- B 205 inches
- C 206 inches
- D 210 inches

Sixth Graders

Choose one problem.

1. In a parking lot, 1 out of every 8 cars is blue. What percentage of the cars in this lot is blue?

- A 1.25%
- B 7%
- C 9%
- D 12.5%

2. Robert wants to buy 3 notebooks that cost \$1.25 each. How much do the notebooks cost all together, without tax?

- A \$1.28
- B \$2.40
- C \$3.75
- D \$4.25

Seventh Graders

Choose one problem.

1. The original price of a new bicycle is \$138.00. If the bicycle is marked down 15%, what is the new price?

- A \$20.70
- B \$117.30
- C \$123.00
- D \$ 153.00

2. A group of hikers climbed from Salt Flat (elevation: -55 feet) to Talon Bluff (elevation: 620 feet). What is the difference in elevation between Talon Bluff and Salt Flats?

- A 565 feet
- B 575 feet
- C 665 feet
- D 675 feet

Eighth Graders

Choose one problem.

1. Marl borrowed \$200 at 12% simple interest for one year. If he makes no payments that year, how much interest will he owe at the end of the year?

- A \$6.00
- B \$12.00
- C \$22.40
- D \$24.00

2. Tamika works in a shoe store and is paid 12% commission on her sales. In January her total commission earned was \$37.40. To the nearest dollar, how much did Tamika sell in January?

- A \$312
- B \$449
- C \$3291
- D \$4189

Scoring Rubric for Assessing English Learners' English Proficiency

Task 1: Speaking/Listening [Circle the level that applies, based on your general impression.]

Speaking/Listening		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Communicates basic ideas in short sentences with high frequency, basic words (like <i>big</i>) or is unable to answer questions; uses speech characterized by a lack of fluency and many pauses; has difficulty understanding the conversation; the teacher has to repeat herself or himself several times	Communicate basic ideas about mathematics; is unable to switch between verb tenses effectively; deletes word endings (e.g., the –s ending on noun plurals-like <i>pencils</i> , the -ed endings on verbs-like <i>painted</i> and the –er endings on adjectives-like <i>heavier</i>); uses basic, high frequency words instead of content-specific words; speaks fluently with few hesitations; understands most of the conversation	Communicates ideas with few grammatical and lexical errors; understands everything the teacher says, except for a few content-specific words

Task 2: Reading [Circle the level that applies, based on your general impression. Focus on the student's ability to read with understanding.]

Reading		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Has difficulty reading even the most basic sentences in English or is unable to read the word problem and understand it	Is able to read the word problem but does not understand all words; may misunderstand sentence structures and fail to notice logical connections (<i>because, but, since, however</i>) between words; language issues prevent the student from recognizing the critical information in word problems	Is able to read the word problem and understand all but the most difficult mathematics words; has difficulty understanding subtle meanings in word problems.

Task 3: Writing [Circle the level that applies, based on your general impression.]

Writing		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Writes short, incomplete sentences with basic words or is not able to complete task or do it	Is able to convey many basic ideas; Writes basic sentences and/or paragraphs but makes many errors (e.g., deletes the –s ending on noun plurals-like <i>squares</i> , and the -ed endings on verbs-like <i>talked</i> and the –er ending on adjectives-like <i>shorter</i>); uses basic, high frequency words (like <i>big</i>); does not use many (if any) academic words or mathematics words	Is able to communicate everything s/he wants to write with few grammatical and lexical errors; uses some academic words and mathematics words

[Circle the student's overall score. This score represents a composite of previous scores and is based on your general impression of the student's global English proficiency.]

TOTAL: OVERALL SCORE - ALL THREE TASKS		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced

Scoring Rubric for Assessing Specific Aspects of Student's English Proficiency

Use the rubric below to record more detailed information about the student's English proficiency.
[Circle the level that applies in each category, based on your general impression.]

Vocabulary		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Knows some basic words (such as <i>school</i>, <i>student</i> and <i>car</i>); lacks sufficient knowledge of basic words to participate in conversations and complete writing assignments fluently; lacks knowledge of commonly used idioms, academic words and grade-appropriate content specific mathematics words (like <i>rate</i>, <i>proportion</i>, and <i>associative property</i>)</p>	<p>Has sufficient knowledge of basic words but lacks knowledge of academic words and grade-appropriate content-specific mathematics words (like <i>rate</i>, <i>proportion</i>, and <i>associative property</i>); uses mostly basic, high frequency words (like <i>big</i>); does not use many (if any) academic words or mathematics words</p>	<p>Uses some academic words and mathematics words</p>
Morphology/Grammar		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Has limited knowledge of English morphology (e.g., word endings); Is unable to use most verbs in the past tense</p>	<p>Is unable to switch between verb tenses effectively; deletes many word endings (e.g., the <i>-s</i> ending on noun plurals-like <i>fences</i>, and the <i>-ed</i> endings on verbs-like <i>talked</i> and <i>-est</i> endings on adjectives-like <i>tallest</i>)</p>	<p>Is able to switch between verb tenses; infrequently deletes word endings, e.g., the <i>-s</i> ending on noun plurals—like <i>fences</i>, the <i>-ed</i> endings on verbs—like <i>painted</i> and the <i>-ed</i> endings on the <i>-ed</i> endings on adjectives—like <i>embarrassed</i></p>
Grammatical Errors		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Makes many grammatical mistakes that interfere with communication</p>	<p>Makes many grammatical mistakes, but these do not interfere with the student's ability to communicate in basic, everyday English; deletes word endings; e.g., the <i>-s</i> endings on nouns that indicate plurality and the <i>-s</i> endings on verbs indicating third person subject-verb agreement (<i>He walks slowly</i>) and the <i>-ed</i> endings on verbs indicating the past tense (<i>He walked slowly</i>).</p>	<p>Makes some grammar mistakes when using English in academic situations, e.g., to discuss complex ideas about mathematics like <i>rate</i> and <i>proportion</i></p>
Sentence Structure		
Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Does not use complex sentences such as sentences with relative clauses—The answer is the triangle <i>that has a right angle</i>; uses incomplete sentences or sentences that are memorized or short—just a few words (or less) in length</p>	<p>Generally uses sentences that are more than a word or two in length; does not use many grammatically complex sentences that contain relative clauses—beginning with <i>that</i>, <i>which</i> or <i>who</i> or conditional clauses—beginning with <i>if</i>, mostly strings sentences together with <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, and <i>or</i> or an occasional 'cuz or <i>because</i>.'</p>	<p>Is able to use lengthy sentences and complex sentences (containing an independent clause and a dependent clause) accurately. Examples of complex sentences include: <i>Although a gallon of gasoline is a lot of gasoline</i> (dependent clause), <i>it is not enough to get to San Francisco</i> (independent clause).</p>