

Assessment Tools & Strategies

Language Proficiency Assessment



This resource can be accessed online at:

<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/languageproficiencyassessment.html>

About this Resource

When English language learners arrive for the first time at school, their English language proficiency needs to be assessed to identify student needs and inform planning for instruction. English language learners should also be assessed periodically throughout the year to determine how their language proficiency is developing. Occasionally, individual students may require additional assessment to identify if they have additional learning needs that may be interfering with their acquisition of language skills.

As part of this process, teachers can use the [Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks](#) to establish the English language proficiency levels of each English language learner.

Getting Started

Examine your school's current processes for the language proficiency assessment of English language learners and decide what is working and what can be improved.

See **Reflecting on School Practices: Language Proficiency Assessment** on page 2.

Reflecting on School Practices: Language Proficiency Assessment

<i>1: not evident, 2: emerging, 3: evident</i>	1	2	3
Initial assessment process in place to gather information on the English language proficiency of English language learners new to your school.			
Classroom teachers are able to use the <i>Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks</i> .			
The unique background of each student is considered during the assessment process.			
Assessment materials used align with the developmental age of the students.			
Cultural bias is minimized during the assessment process.			
Processes are in place to gather ongoing information to assess and monitor language proficiency development throughout the school year.			
The language proficiency levels of English language learners are communicated as part of the student’s progress report at each reporting period.			
Processes are in place to gather more in-depth information when additional assessment about language proficiency is required.			
School staff, students, their parents and community stakeholders collaborate to develop plans to support the English language learner.			
School staff is able to understand and interpret diagnostic assessments and use this data to inform classroom instruction and identify supports an individual student may require.			
<i>Notes:</i>			

Considerations for Assessing Language Proficiency

Recognizing Diversity

To be effective, assessment must recognize the diversity of learners and allow for differences in styles and rates of learning. To accurately assess English language learners, variations in students' English language skills, along with the other growth and development variations based on their age, must be considered.

Consider the background information gathered during the initial intake and other important factors that may impact student learning and knowledge; e.g.,

- proficiency and student achievement in first language
- prior schooling experience
- trauma due to war or other factors
- health, physical and other characteristics that may impact learning
- involvement of parents and guardians
- family and cultural values.

Developmentally Appropriate Assessment

Developmentally appropriate assessment calls for the use of a range of assessment strategies because English language learners need a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding. The lower the language proficiency, the more important it is to use assessment techniques beyond pencil and paper tasks. Developmentally appropriate assessment provides opportunities for students to show what they know in an environment in which it is safe to take risks associated with learning.

Latency Effect

Some English language learners who have had prior English instruction may not perform to their true potential on initial assessments for various reasons, such as a difference in dialect or rate of speech. Within one to six months, English language learners who have had prior English instruction may appear to accelerate in their language proficiency as they begin to access their prior English learning more readily. Students with prior English may have the appearance of initial rapid English uptake and then appear to slow down as their prior English reaches its ceiling and the student is learning English at a more gradual rate. Be prepared to reassess within the first few weeks if there appears to be a significant difference between initial assessment proficiency and current proficiency, especially if it impacts course selection or access to specific supports.

Age-appropriate Content and Graphics

It is important to ensure that assessment materials are for the appropriate developmental age of the students. Some English language learners may be at a beginner level and require simplified texts; however, the images and content should be appropriate for the age of the student; e.g.,

- high-interest, low-vocabulary books and nonfiction texts may be options for reading assessments
- when using picture prompts for speaking and writing ensure images are age-appropriate
- when using written prompts ensure topics and supporting images are age-appropriate.

Differences between Receptive and Productive Language Skills

Some English language learners may demonstrate discrepancies between their oral and literacy skills in English depending upon their educational and cultural background. Some students may also understand more English when they listen or read than when they speak or write or vice versa. When completing assessments, follow the procedures and scoring instructions. It may also be helpful to note the students' actual responses in order to analyze their use of language and strategies. This additional information may be helpful for teachers when making decisions on instructional supports.

Transfer of First Language Literacy and Skills

Literacy in any language is an asset to learning English, as students who can read and write in their home language have knowledge of words, concepts, grammatical structures and the understanding of how language can be documented, accessed and interpreted. Students who know how to read in one language typically transfer that knowledge of how certain formations of marks on a page can be read; they must then learn the graphophonemic (sound/symbol) system of English to be able to read. Students who understand a first language with an alphabet and phonemic system similar to English and left to right, top-down reading usually adjust readily to decoding in English. English language learners who read in another language can often decode at a higher level than they can comprehend in English; whereas students whose language experiences were with characters or a different system of reading have to learn an entirely different alphabet and system of reading. Therefore, decoding and comprehension require additional instruction and support. Students who have had limited formal education experiences often require support in understanding about reading as well as skill development in decoding and comprehension strategies.

During assessment it is important to be aware of these considerations when observing what the student can do and where the student requires support. English language learners with prior schooling in their first language have many skills, such as decoding, comprehension strategies, copying, writing, representing understanding through images, graphing, charting, and working in cooperative groups. These skills are transferable across languages and will assist students in acquiring language. It is important to be able to distinguish when a student has a skill and when the student has the English language as well as the skill; e.g., when the student is asked to read words in English, is the student able to understand them or does the student simply have the decoding skill?

Differences between Social and Academic Language

When assessing English language learners note the type of language the student is using to get his or her message across. Many English language learners use familiar and high frequency vocabulary and long simple sentences to demonstrate social language competency. However, more academic and specialized vocabulary and more complex sentences may be required in the classroom setting. At times, a student may be assessed above his or her actual language level as the social language competency may mask the academic language competency.

Addressing Cultural Bias

Cultural bias can occur when language, images or content reflect a particular context that is unfamiliar to a student. Take into account cultural contexts and potential bias when selecting and administering assessments and interpreting results. It may also be helpful to make intentional connections with the student's prior experiences.

Home Language Assessment

Assessment of an English language learner's proficiency in their home language can provide teachers with an understanding of how their home language can be used to support English language development. Assessments developed for many home languages are available commercially. If a home language assessment is conducted, it should be completed within the first few months of a student's arrival. It is important to be aware of gaps in students' home language exposure and instruction when interpreting assessment results. For more information about home language assessment, see [ERGO Provision of First Language/Bilingual Assessment](#).

Translating English assessments into other languages to assess proficiency in a home language is not an effective strategy. These tests have not been designed for translation, and the results would be invalid. Also, it is not good practice to have an interpreter translate into another language as part of the assessment procedure.

Assessment Tools Developed for Native English Speakers

Many assessments have been developed for native English speakers, and great caution must be taken when interpreting results when these assessment are used with English language learners. It is recommended, where possible, to use assessments developed for student populations that include English language learners.

Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency

The purpose of the initial assessment of English language proficiency is to obtain information regarding the student's proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This information can be used to:

- determine instructional starting points
- identify initial language proficiency levels on the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks*
- determine programming and instructional support.

Conducting an Initial Language Proficiency Assessment

It is important to remember that a new student's initial assessment may be influenced by feelings of stress and dislocation. In some cases students may underperform due to anxiety, a lack of confidence, and/or unfamiliarity with the local dialect and rate of speech. In these cases the student will often show a significant improvement in English language proficiency in four to six weeks as the student has become more comfortable, confident and familiar with the environment (see Considerations for Assessing Language Proficiency).

While it may be possible to identify a student as an English language learner based on the results of an assessment of just one language strand (listening, speaking, reading or writing), assessing English language learners on all four language strands provides teachers with a comprehensive language proficiency profile to guide effective instruction that maximizes English language acquisition.

The initial language assessment should be conducted in a quiet and comfortable space in which the teacher can interact with the student one-on-one.

Establishing English Language Proficiency Levels

After initial English language assessment information has been gathered, the English language proficiency of an English language learner can be identified using the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks*. The purpose of the ESL Benchmarks is to establish a baseline proficiency level, guide appropriate programming for English language learners, and monitor language proficiency growth and development. For more information, see [Organizing for Instruction](#).

If the initial assessment reveals concerns regarding student learning or behaviour, **additional assessment** (see page 9) of the English language learner may be required.

Ongoing language proficiency assessment (see page 7) should be conducted throughout the year to assess the language proficiency progress of each English language learner.

Using the ESL Benchmarks for Ongoing Assessment and Reporting

Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks

The *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks* are a language proficiency assessment developed in Alberta as an informal, criterion-based assessment. They were designed for use by teachers of English language learners and can be used to assess language proficiency in the classroom context. In most cases, teachers will only need the ESL Benchmarks and multiple samples of student work to assess language proficiency in the classroom. Some teachers may wish to assess the ESL Benchmarks in reading in conjunction with a reading assessment (see **Additional Assessments for English Language Learners** on page 9).

The ESL Benchmarks:

- provide descriptions of language proficiency for each grade-level division
- support schools in delivering effective instruction and program planning for English language learners by:
 - identifying initial language proficiency levels of students
 - developing consistency in assessment of language proficiency for English language learners
 - promoting collaboration and communication about an English language learner’s progress among all of the student’s teachers
- support teachers in:
 - assessing, monitoring, tracking and reporting language proficiency
 - communicating with students and parents to develop an understanding of language acquisition
 - planning for explicit language instruction within everyday classroom learning.

The ESL Benchmarks are used:

- when English language learners enter the school system in order to establish baseline proficiency and to identify the level and types of instructional supports these learners require to be successful
- on an ongoing basis to monitor language proficiency growth and to inform instructional planning
- at each reporting period to assess students’ current English language proficiency
- at transitions between grades, schools and/or programs.

Ongoing Assessment

Throughout the year, ongoing English language proficiency assessment is required to ensure each English language learner is developing the language skills and knowledge expected based on his or her individual abilities and circumstances. The ESL Benchmarks can be used to establish the English language proficiency levels of students at intervals throughout the school year (e.g., November, March, June) and can be compared to previous results to establish how the English language learner is progressing.

Reporting

At regular reporting periods an English language learner's current language proficiency level should be communicated for each of the strands (listening, speaking, reading, writing), showing the language proficiency level in which the student is currently working. It is also important to show how curriculum marks are impacted by limited English proficiency. Comments should also be included to explain to parents and students what the proficiency levels mean.

For access to the *Alberta K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks* and further information on how to use them for ongoing assessment and reporting, go to [Search ESL Benchmarks](#).

Additional Assessment of English Language Learners

The acquisition and development of English language proficiency is often a gradual process and student progress should be assessed on an individual basis (see **Considerations for Assessing Language Proficiency** on page 3). In some cases, there may be indications that the English language proficiency development of a student is being limited by other factors; e.g., language acquisition difficulty, attention difficulties, learning disability, trauma, memory problem, cognitive disability. An additional type of assessment may be required when a student shows limited progress between benchmark levels (e.g., more than 18 months on one benchmark level).

In these instances, the school may conduct additional language proficiency assessments and in-depth observations to identify factors that may be affecting the rate or way in which the student's English language proficiency is developing. This additional assessment may assist in identifying additional supports and inform instruction for the student.

See page 9 for a list **Additional Assessments for English language Learners**.

Additional Assessments for English Language Learners

In most cases, teachers will need only the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks* and multiple samples of student work to determine the language proficiency of English language learners in the classroom. However, a number of standardized assessments that are appropriate for use with English language learners are available that may provide teachers with more in-depth information about students’ language proficiency and provide additional insights to inform instructional planning.

A number of the assessments are listed below; click the name of each assessment to access a summary.

Standardized English Language Proficiency Assessments Administered by Teachers (Level A)	Grade	Individual (I) or Group (G)	What It Measures			
			Speaking and Listening	Reading	Writing	Vocabulary
OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY						
IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT)	Pre-K–12	I, G	X	X	X	X
Language Proficiency Test Series (LPTS)	K–12	I, G	X	X	X	X
MAC II Test of English Language Proficiency	K–12	G	X	X	X	X
MacArthur–Bates Communicative Development Inventories (CDI)	Pre-K–1	I	X			X
Pre-LAS 2000; and LAS (Language Assessment Scale) I and II (1990)	Pre-K–12	I, G	X	X	X	X
Rigby ELL Assessment Kit	K–5/8	I	X	X	X	X
SLEP (Secondary Level English Proficiency)	7–12	G	X	X		X
Vocabulary						
Lextutor for Kids	K–12	I, G	X	X	X	X
Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)	4–12	I		X		X

Standardized English Language Proficiency Assessment Administered by Teachers with Specialized Training in the Assessment Tool (Level B)	Grade	Individual (I) or Group (G)	What It Measures			
			Speaking and Listening	Reading	Writing	Vocabulary
OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY						
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)	K-12	I	X			
Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey – Revised (WMLS-R)	K-12	I	X	X	X	X

Standardized Cognitive and Behavioural Assessments Administered by Chartered Psychologists (Level C)	Grade	Individual (I) or Group (G)	What It Measures	
			Intelligence	Nonverbal Ability
TONI 3 (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence)	1-12	I	X	
Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability	K-12	I	X	

IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT)

Ballard & Tighe Publishers, 2011

<http://www.ballard-tighe.com/ipt/index.html>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
Pre-K–12	Individual; Group	Level A: Teacher	Oral: 5–25 minutes Reading: 45–70 minutes Writing: 10–30 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: For the assessment of basic language proficiency skills, as well as identification, placement, redesignation, student progress and program evaluation.		
Assessments Included			
Each test focuses on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> oral—syntax, morphological structure, lexical items, phonological structure reading and writing—vocabulary, vocabulary in context, reading for understanding, reading for life skills, language usage, writing conventions 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online IPT is available and it allows for instant electronic scoring of tests and diagnostic report generation in a formatted table. The tests are developed as part of a management package and are referenced to other instructional materials. Built on sound current developmental, learning and language acquisition theories, this assessment tool has been recently updated and normed. Designed specifically for English language learners and widely tested, piloted and normed with English language learners. While it is a very comprehensive battery of assessments, it may be too much for students with special education needs or limited formal schooling. Directions for the oral test are within the student record book, making it easier to administer and score. Reading (vocabulary and comprehension) is multiple choice, and writing is scored holistically using a four-point rubric. Provides useful information for programming and instructional decision making. Useful record sheets to assist in communication with other teachers and parents. Record sheets and alternate forms of the test allow for follow-up assessments. Skill sheets help build and communicate understanding of which competencies the students have acquired or need to acquire. A very wide range of language and cultural groups were involved in the field testing and norming during the development and updating of the instruments. Designed to assess the language proficiency in the United States, not the curriculum, but is appropriate for use in Alberta schools. The reusable nature of the materials could make it costly in a school with large numbers of English language learners; however, because the reading and writing tests can be administered to a group, it is time efficient. 			

Language Proficiency Test Series (LPTS)

Champaign, IL: MetriTech, Inc., 1999, 2000

<http://www.metritech.com>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K-12	Individual; Group	Level A: Teacher	Listening: 15 minutes Speaking: 15 minutes Reading: 60 minutes Writing: 30 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: To provide an accurate gauge of language proficiency of students whose first language is not English. To assess students' annual growth in English language proficiency and to help inform placement decisions and programming.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administration, directions (two forms) • listening/speaking, two parts (vocabulary comprehension, language production) • reading comprehension, four components (fiction, nonfiction) • writing, three parts (story, opinion, report) • scoring directions • conversion tables • proficiency levels, definitions 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the materials were developed and reviewed by a number of bilingual educators from a variety of settings and were piloted with more than 100 language groups. The forms are developed around central themes, are graphics intensive and use developmentally appropriate context and language. Test scores are reported for each of these categories (reading, writing and listening/speaking). • A unique feature of the LPTS is that the literacy tasks are related to overall themes. The results are placed on a vertical or developmental scale, identical across grade levels. In other words, scores from different grade levels are equivalently scaled, so that the results obtained from one test can be compared to those of a later test, regardless of grade level. This provides a standard measure of the child's performance or progress. Alternate forms allow for follow-up assessments within a grade level. • Scoring of the oral assessment is holistic with six-point rubrics, reading is multiple choice and writing is analytic with six-point rubrics. • The proficiency levels vary. Oral has levels I and II; reading and writing has levels I-IV. • Extensive research and field testing has been done, taking into consideration a number of aspects, including child development and readiness, bilingualism and assessment of immigrant children. • Understandable and comprehensive information that could easily be shared with others; provides useful information that could be very informative for placement and instruction. • The material is designed for a wide range of English language learners. Nonetheless, consideration for cultural differences is required. The content reflects mainstream American classrooms, but efforts appear to have been made to consider diversity. • The assessments are more focused on vocabulary and comprehension within the four language strands and not on curriculum. 			

MAC II Test of English Language Proficiency

Brewster, NY: Questar Assessment, Inc.

<http://www.questarai.com>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–12	Group	Level A: Teacher	Times vary by age Speaking: 4–6 minutes Listening: 6–30 minutes Reading: 10–50 minutes Writing: 5–45 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: Assesses the students' ability to speak English and to use English academically in content areas. It can help with identification, placement, instructional programming and planning, review and exiting decisions. The scores can be converted to proficiency levels.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • screen to determine whether or not a new student knows enough English to warrant the MAC II • five colour-coded levels: red (K–1), blue (2–3), orange (4–5), ivory (6–8), tan (9–12) • four test sections: listening, speaking, reading, writing (at each level) • general administration guidelines • scoring the test • cut off points and English competency levels 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easy-to-use comprehensive assessment tool that is broken into five age/grade clusters. It includes four separate tests for speaking, listening, reading and writing. Tests at the red level (K–1) and all speaking tests at all levels are done individually. All other tests may be administered to groups. • The scoring can be done by hand or machine. Scores can be converted to standard scores, English competency levels, stanines, percentile ranks and degree of reading power scores. These scores can help to make program placement decisions, monitor student progress, design instruction, and make program exit decisions. The five English competency levels are a holistic estimate of the students' proficiency in each language strand. • This test is very appropriate for English language learners, but there will still be language and cultural differences that need to be considered and interpreted with caution. • The various levels and forms should make these adaptable to a wide range of students. It would be worthwhile to try a lower level for students with limited formal schooling or some special education concerns. The user may choose to administer only some of the individual tests for specific information. The screening tests also identify when new students are not yet ready for complete language assessment. • Provides understandable and comprehensive information that could easily be shared with others. • Useful information that could be very helpful for placement and instruction. The correlations provide additional information that could be helpful in understanding more about the students. • The questions are designed to focus on content language use and connect generally to programs of study. • Appears to be very cost- and time-effective, and would be a good tool to consider in a school with medium to large numbers of English language learners. 			

MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories (CDI)

Larry Fenson, San Diego State University, Department of Psychology, 2003

<http://www.brookespublishing.com>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
Pre-K-1	Individual	Level A: Teacher	20-40 minutes (each form)
What It Measures	SPEAKING AND LISTENING PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Adaptive Functioning		
Purpose	BASELINE/FORMATIVE: A checklist for parents, teachers or researchers to get a sense of a child's level of early vocabulary acquisition.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> checklists, form A and B and norm tables for boys and girls 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A useful tool for getting a sense of the early stages of vocabulary acquisition for young learners. Offers a "child friendly" approach to assessing children's vocabulary levels. It is done through observing and recording the child's language use in natural everyday contexts. This tool is appropriate for young children learning either their first or second language. Can be adapted/used with young learners of different profiles to determine vocabulary levels. This is a naturalistic approach that uses observation and recording in authentic contexts as a way of getting at vocabulary levels. The CDI is available in a variety of languages. User can revisit the checklist or just keep an ongoing record, week to week or month to month, of what is happening. The CDI was developed for use in England, so some of the culturally specific items would have to be changed or adapted. The same would be true of the other versions since learning a first language in a minority context is different than learning it in the context of the culture in which that language lives. It is free and readily available. 			

Pre-LAS 2000 and LAS (Language Assessment Scale) I and II

Monterey, CA: CTB McGraw–Hill, 1990

<http://www.ctb.com>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
Pre-K–12	Individual; Group	Level A: Teacher	Pre-LAS Oral: 15–20 minutes LAS Oral: 15–20 minutes Reading: 60 minutes Writing: 30 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: To determine a student’s level of language proficiency (e.g., oral, reading, writing) compared to a fluent speaker. It assists with identification, placement and assessing progress in English language proficiency.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation • administration • holistic scoring • test results (calculation, interpretation) • appendices (background, research, training, summary sheets, weightings) 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pre-LAS and LAS assessment measure various aspects of receptive and expressive language. They are comprehensive in nature and allow for a quick, short assessment of listening and speaking (i.e., vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, oral production, letter and number recognition, sight words) as well as longer forms, which assess reading and writing (i.e., vocabulary, mechanics, usage, fluency, reading for information, sentences and essay). • Follow-up re-tests are available at all levels to assess student progress over time. For grades 2–9, there is an optional observation form. • Oral tests are done individually, but reading and writing tests can be administered to groups. The scoring is done using rubrics and multiple choice. • The scoring and interpretation of the results are based on a convergent approach of combining discrete right–wrong subtest scores and holistic subtest scores. • Extensive research and field testing has been done, considering a number of aspects, such as child development and readiness, bilingualism, and assessment of immigrant children. • Very appropriate for English language learners, but there can be language and cultural differences that need to be considered. • Very clear instructions in manual for use and interpretation. Use of picture cues and audiorecordings adds to ease of use. Appropriate and inappropriate responses provided. • Training videos are available. Training is recommended for the holistic scoring component. • Provides understandable and comprehensive information that could easily be shared with others. • Useful information that could be very informative for placement and instruction. • Re-tests and CD–ROMs for data management add to the usefulness. • Depending on the number of students in the school, it would likely be worthwhile to purchase these kits. Because the instrument allows for both a shorter and longer assessment in all areas of English language, it appears to be a very versatile and useful tool. 			

Rigby ELL Assessment Kit

Orlando, FL: Harcourt Achieve Inc.

<http://rigby.hmhco.com>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–5/8	Individual	Level A: Teacher	30 + minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: To evaluate four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and identify students' language stages and literacy levels to assess their English language proficiency in the four content areas of English language arts, science, mathematics and social studies.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general testing guidelines • administering the test and calculating the raw scores, norms and their reliability • practice scoring exercises 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The levels used in this assessment align with Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) standards, Stanford English Language Proficiency Test/California English Language Development Test (SELP/CELDT). • Each student book selection focuses on a different standard based on the content areas of science, social studies, mathematics and language arts. • For targeted area of K–5; however, it could be used in an elementary setting or with students with limited formal schooling. The content books make it appropriate for older students with limited literacy. Listening and speaking mats and cards are also appropriate for students with limited formal schooling. • Assessments reflect a full range of language learners. Students lacking writing skills have alternative ways to express knowledge and understanding through visual representation. • Minimal formal training would be required, especially for teachers not familiar with this type of benchmarking assessment. Teachers with training in DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment), PM Benchmarks, reading recovery, or other similar reading assessments would have little difficulty administering and interpreting results. • Both teacher and student tracking records/portfolios are designed to inform instruction and improve student achievement. • The manual provides a section that includes instructional guidance, so the teachers can help their students move to the next language proficiency stage and toward on-grade-level reading and writing proficiency. • Yields results that are understandable to teachers, who can in turn interpret them to administrators, students, parents, counsellors, psychologists and other people involved in a student's education. • Teachers can track students' progress with the portfolio of student progress and the data management tool. 			

SLEP (Secondary Level English Proficiency)

Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service (ETS)

<http://www.ets.org/slep/about>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
7–12	Group	Level A: Teacher	Listening proficiency: 45 minutes Comprehension: 45 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading		
Purpose	BASELINE/FORMATIVE: To measure English language proficiency in two primary areas, understanding spoken and written English. The results of the test can be helpful in evaluating English proficiency, making placement decisions, making instructional decisions and evaluating teaching programs for English language learners.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listening proficiency reading comprehension 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLEP is a norm-referenced test with 150 multiple-choice questions. Easy to administer and easy to score. During field testing, most English language learners finished the reading comprehension within the allotted time frame. Pictures and spoken text are relevant to school contexts. Comparing the listening test score and reading comprehension scores provides insight into students' oral versus literacy proficiency. Often there is a higher score in the listening test for Canadian-born students. It helps to illustrate how Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) can mask Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and how students may sound good, but may not have the academic proficiency required for success. "Speech bubbles" in the first section of reading are confusing for students, because they often need support on how to complete the task. The fact that the test is norm-referenced makes it easy to compare a cohort amongst themselves, but difficult to make a comparison to age and grade equivalents. If schools used the test often enough, they could develop their own norm references to grades. While some questions reflect mainstream culture, it is designed for English language learners and is, therefore, more appropriate than many others. The maps/driving section is not useful. Designed for classroom-based English language learners within grades 7–12; however, it can be adapted to slightly older or slightly younger students. Provides useful information for instructional planning purposes; however, the listening comprehension is mostly BICS-type communication, and, therefore, it is important to interpret these results with caution. Report sheet can be shared. Additional assessments allow for tracking over time. Over time the school would be able to develop norms and comparisons of student's year-to-year proficiency using this assessment. Designed for a population of English language learners, but does reflect American school contexts; therefore, text selections are to be considered thoughtfully, and results are to be interpreted with caution. Can be informative to English language arts reading and listening curriculum. Cost- and time-effective as a group test that can be administered to many at once and used from year to year. 			

Lextutor for Kids

VP (Vocabulary Profiler) concept: Laufer & Nation; formatted for interactive website delivery by Tom Cobb, McGill University, Dept of Education; word lists used in Lextutor: Stemach & Williams, v. 9, 2011
www.lexutor.ca/vp/kids

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–12	Individual; Group	Level A: Teacher	10–20 minutes
What It Measures	WRITING PROFICIENCY: Speaking; Vocabulary; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE: For profiling the linguistic output of children using either a spoken or written sample. It breaks texts down by word frequencies and divides the words into 10 word bands and an off-list group.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vocabulary tests (five levels) assess students’ oral transcribed and written production 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers input a copy of student-generated written text or transcribed oral text. The tool analyzes the vocabulary of the text. It colour codes the words used at each vocabulary level for easy identification. Teachers can print out a copy of the analysis. Provides information about the high-frequency words currently being used by a child, indicating whether they are over dependent on the first 250 words and whether the remaining words reflect a good distribution of words in the higher-vocabulary bands. First use provides a language profile and baseline data; subsequent uses will provide a measurement of growth. Matches children’s oral or written output against 10 modified lists, each including 250 words generalized from several empirical studies of children’s oral productions. The output analysis indicates the number of total words used, the number of different words used, the t–t ratio (type-to-token ratio), and the distribution of words across the 10 word bands in a summary chart on the first page. Includes 10 word lists of 250 words each arranged in order of frequency of use with List 1 including the most frequently used words by young English speakers and List 10 including less frequently used words. Samples of output from native English speakers’ ages 4y11m, 5y6m, 5y8m and 6y4m are included on the website for comparison purposes. This tool focuses on vocabulary development, but there are other variables that predict reading success, such as phonemic awareness, orthographic knowledge and phonics. There are a variety of response modes, including multiple choice for the vocabulary levels test, or pasting student-generated oral or written text into the vocabulary profiler tool. The site offers a French version. The cloze maker promotes contextual strategy development in the classroom, or could be used as a testing tool. The vocabulary levels tests seem to invite a high level of student and teacher interest, since there is immediate feedback on the score. Users can return to this site as often as they like, input another language sample, profile it and record the data. This tool should not be used alone. It could be used as part of a broad-based approach to assessment. There is no cost, and students can use the site independently. There are time implications; e.g., inputting transcribed narrative data, inputting students’ writing samples. 			

Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)

Paul Nation, 1990

http://www.lexutor.ca/tests/levels/recognition/2_10k/

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
4–12	Individual	Level A: Teacher	10 minutes (varies)
What It Measures	READING PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Reading		
Purpose	BASELINE/FORMATIVE: Used as a quick assessment for placement purposes for adult English language learners. Students can access the tests and do some goal setting or self-monitoring of their English language development over time.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see website 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a discrete-point test, using sentence completion to provide minimal context for filling in the correct word. • Measures vocabulary at five different levels, including academic and lower levels that would reflect Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)-level language. • The tests are available online. Minimal computer skills are needed. Perhaps ‘no formal schooling’ learners and younger learners would not be able to do this test. • The teacher could print a paper copy for students who are not computer literate, or if computers are not available in the classroom. • There is more than one form at each level, allowing for repeated assessment. Although it is multiple-choice or gapped sentence completion, many users find this motivating and fun. • Paul Nation has translated the VLT into a variety of languages. • This tool is straightforward and the score is generated immediately, along with comments about whether or not users need to be working on vocabulary. Users have found this feature very motivating. • The score tells users “where they’re at.” Teachers may need a bit of in-service support to understand the impact of vocabulary on overall language proficiency development and to understand the threshold levels. • International studies show that the core vocabulary of English; i.e., the first 2000 words (especially function words) are pretty stable across groups by over the age of about nine and across English-speaking countries. Content words (nouns) may vary by age and country so use with caution. • It is free, easily accessible online and available in different languages. 			

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)

Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, Updated 2007

<http://pearsonassess.ca>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–12	Individual	Level B: Teacher with Specialized Training in the Assessment Tool	10–12 minutes
What It Measures	SPEAKING AND LISTENING PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: In combination with other assessments, the Peabody can provide information about the student’s receptive English vocabulary and scholastic aptitude. It could be used every six to twelve months using alternative forms.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general testing guidelines • administering the test and calculating the raw scores, norms and their reliability • practice scoring exercises 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a useful tool for getting a sense of the early stages of vocabulary acquisition for young learners, and can be used from ages 2.5 to 40. It is not a test of verbal ability, unless English is the language used in the home. • There are a number of strengths to this assessment tool, but there is also a danger of over-generalizing from this short screen, which only measures hearing vocabulary. It does not look at the other aspects of the complex linguistic and cognitive domains. • While normed on a diverse population, it reflects mainstream culture. • Assesses receptive vocabulary related to a wide variety of aspects of mainstream culture. • While limited in scope, it is a good tool to assess understanding of English and mainstream culture. • The tool was field-tested and normed on a wide variety and number of groups that did not include English language learners. • The test includes clear black and white drawings that represent a wide variety of aspects of mainstream culture. No oral or written responses are required. Two parallel forms are provided for pre-and post-testing. • Includes detailed procedure for administering the test, practice scoring exercises, table of correlations between PPVT scores, intelligence tests and vocabulary tests. However, the examiner must understand the strengths and limitations of the different types of standardized scores and the meaning of errors of measurement. • If used in combination with other assessments, the data can be understandable and informative. It can be correlated with other tests for added information and usefulness. • If the student is reassessed every six to twelve months using alternate forms of the test, scores will suggest a student’s acquisition rate of English vocabulary and knowledge of mainstream culture over time. • While ongoing revisions have tried to adjust for bias, it was not designed for students whose first language is not English. • There are some connections to English language arts curriculum. • It is easy to use and relatively affordable. 			

Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey – Revised (WMLS-R)

Rolling Meadows, IL: Riverside Publishing

<http://www.riverpub.com/products/>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–12	Individual	Level B: Teacher with Specialized Training in the Assessment Tool	25–55 minutes
What It Measures	OVERALL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening; Reading; Writing		
Purpose	BASELINE/DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE/ACHIEVEMENT: To measure proficiency level of English language learners, particularly those language skills that are characterized by Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It can also be used to determine eligibility for English language programs and support services, to plan instruction, to monitor progress and to measure program effectiveness, and for research purposes.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consists primarily of measures of language skills, and includes seven subtests: picture vocabulary, verbal analogies, letter word identification, dictation, understanding directions, story recall and passage comprehension also includes a Language Exposure Questionnaire, a Language Use Questionnaire and a test Session Observation Checklist 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WMLS-R test consists primarily of measures of language skills that are predictive of success in situations characterized by Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) requirements. The WMLS-R provides normative information based on more than 8800 individuals in over 100 geographically diverse communities, obtained during the standardization of the Woodcock-Johnson (WJ III). It includes a quick and easy-to-administer screener of four tests and a more comprehensive seven-test battery, both designed to measure language proficiency of English language learners. The seven subtests measure listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition to the scores, the WMLS-R also helps to gather qualitative information with the Language Exposure Questionnaire, a Language Use Questionnaire, and a test Session Observation Checklist. Useful to establish a baseline of a student’s English language proficiency; therefore, a tool for “assessment for learning.” Errors are then viewed as markers on the path to increased proficiency in English. Can provide information about an English language learner’s program effectiveness. Results can support planning for instructional strategies, with appropriate intervention strategies identified. Teachers can then use a test–teach–test approach. WMLS-R is not a stand-alone assessment tool. It is recommended that it be used as part of a comprehensive language assessment that includes a writing sample and reading comprehension assessment. It can be useful for a deeper look into an English language learner’s English language proficiency when questions and/or concerns arise around the student’s academic progress. Subtest comparisons can be indicative of student strengths and areas of growth. An error analysis can be helpful in designing instructional strategies for an English language learner. Very current and newly revised. Designed specifically for English language learners, although does not currently have Canadian norms. WMLS-R results should be interpreted cautiously for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Some culturally biased questions are presented. WMLS-R is not normed on a Canadian sample group. Scores are currently normed against American students with a Hispanic background. Canadian norms are expected to be available soon. Although it eventually becomes easy to use, it still requires some training and practice. There are very specific instructions and expectations of the test giver and responder. Very useful information about the learner that would be helpful in planning for instruction and decision making. It is a general test of English language proficiency and is not correlated to curriculum. It is a good test to use within a large school or to share amongst several schools. Could be too time-consuming to use with all English language learners. 			

TONI 3 (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence)

L. Brown, R. Sherbenou and S. Johnsen, Austin, TX: Pro-Ed Inc.

<http://www.pearsonassess.ca>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
1–12	Individual	Level C: Chartered Psychologist	30 minutes (less time for younger students)
What It Measures	BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT: Intelligence		
Purpose	FORMATIVE: To measure abstract/figural problem solving without overtly using language.		
Assessments Included			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abstract figural problem solving 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a nonverbal assessment to screen whether or not additional testing may be required to determine a learning disability that is not related to a language delay or lack of English proficiency. Useful for assessing ability range of students who have been in Canada for less than three years and when a Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) would not be appropriate due to lack of English language proficiency. This has been used extensively with English language learners as a screening tool and not for specific placement or diagnosis. It is currently used with English language learners in many districts across Alberta. This intelligence assessment is language-free, with intended culture-neutral symbols. Appropriate for English language learners, those with limited formal schooling and those with special needs. With training, this assessment is very easy to administer and it is easy to interpret results. This is only to be used as a screener to determine whether or not further assessments are required, assuming language is not much of a barrier. It also provides feedback to teachers as to what range of performance to expect from the student. Only psychologists can administer and interpret results to parents, administrators and/or teachers. The report is created by the chartered psychologist and is not computer generated. 			

Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability

New York, NY: PsychCorp
<http://www.pearsonassess.ca>

Grades	Administered	Administration Requirements	Time Required
K–12	Individual	Level C: Chartered Psychologist	30–45 minutes (depending on age of student)
What It Measures	BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT: Intelligence		
Purpose	DIAGNOSTIC/FORMATIVE: Can be used to measure general cognitive functioning in students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are English or non-English speakers • may have language-based learning disabilities • are from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds • are deaf or hard-of-hearing • are being assessed for intellectual giftedness • are being assessed for intellectual disabilities • have an autistic disorder or selective mutism. 		
Assessments Included			
4 years–7 years 11 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all four subtests: matrices, coding, object assembly and recognition. The short battery consists of only two subtests: matrices and recognition. 8 years–21 years and 11 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all four subtests: matrices, coding, spatial span and picture arrangement. The short battery consists of two subtests: matrices and spatial span. 			
Comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a nonverbal cognitive ability assessment tool to be used as a screening tool in determining whether further assessments are required, and to provide teachers with a general sense of ability ranges in isolation of language. • Canadian norm-referenced tool for assessment of nonverbal cognitive ability across several areas: matrices, coding, object assembly, recognition, spatial span and picture arrangement. • Piloted in 2006–07 with English language learners in Edmonton Catholic Schools. It has been administered mostly on young children aged 4–7 years and in only a few cases on older students aged 13–18 years. No English language learners aged 8–13 were administered this nonverbal assessment during the pilot year. It was also used and monitored during the 2007–08 school year, with a greater number of English language learners. • Standardized on a representative sample of various language learners, including Francophones, Anglophones, allophones and immigrants to Canada. • It was found to be one of very few in the current assessment bank of appropriate assessments for English language learners. • Only chartered psychologists can administer and interpret results to parents, administrators and/or other teachers. The report is created by the chartered psychologist and is not computer generated. 			