
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) and English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS)

General

1. Who is an English Learner (EL)?

- Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be considered English Learners (ELs).
- To identify if a student is an EL:
 - The school system should provide a Home Language Survey (HLS) to all parents as part of the registration process.
 - If a language other than English is listed on the HLS, the school system should administer the [English Language Proficiency Screener \(ELPS\)](#) within 30 days of enrollment. The screener will determine if the student is proficient in English.
 - If the student is not proficient in English, parents should receive a notification letter from the school that indicates the student's EL status. This student will be identified as EL until s/he exits the program.
- Reference the [EL Identification Flowchart](#) for an overview of the process of identifying a student as EL.

2. A student did not score proficient on the [ELPS](#) and is considered EL. What do we do next?

Within 30 days of a student registering, the school must assess and inform the student's parent/guardian(s) of the details of the program in which the student is, or will be participating, as described in [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). A sample [parental notification form](#) can be found in the [English Learner Library](#).

3. How often should parents/guardians be notified of a student's EL status?

Schools are required to notify parents of their child's EL status annually within 30 days of the start of school. Parents should be notified using a letter that explains the student's status, their scores on either ELPT or ELPS (if a newly enrolled student) and a description of the type of services the student will receive. Parents should also be given the opportunity to deny permission for their child to receive EL services, but if they do, an EL specialist should advise them that their child will still be required to take ELPT each year until they meet the exit criteria.

4. Do EL students take state assessments?

- All EL students must take the appropriate state assessments for their enrolled grade and shall take the [ELPT](#) annually.
- EL students may qualify for [accommodations](#) provided they are used in students' regular classroom instruction and assessments.

5. How will LEAP and ELPT assessment scores be included in SPS (School Performance Scores)?

LEAP 2025 Academic Assessment Scores

- For EL students who have been enrolled in a US school less than 2 years, their scores will count as follows:
 - In Year 1, student academic assessment results are excluded entirely from SPS
 - In Year 2, student academic assessment results are included in progress index only
 - In Year 3, student academic assessment results are included in the assessment and progress indices of SPS

Schools with at least 10 EL students are eligible to earn a performance score for the EL subgroup. Performance equivalent to an “F” for two consecutive years will result in “urgent intervention required” label and districts must submit an improvement plan.

ELPT Scores

- EL students take ELPT the same school year they are identified as an EL with ELPS. These scores will count as follows:
 - Year 1-establishes baseline; individual performance goals are set
 - Year 2 and onward-progress is measured related to the student’s individualized goals

More information may be found in the [Accountability Library](#).

6. Are there funds and/or other resources available to assist with EL services?

- If a school system meets eligibility requirements, they may qualify for Title III funding. Title III funding is a federal grant used to improve student achievement among students who are learning English as a second language. More information can be found in the or at [LDOE Federal Grants document](#).
- Title I funds may be used for instructional programs, materials, supplies, and activities required for serving EL students.
- Additional resources to assist with provision of EL services:
 - [LEP Fact Sheet \(Office of Civil Rights\)](#)
 - [Sample Home Language Survey](#)
 - [EL Accommodation Checklist](#)

For more information about EL and/or Title III funding, contact Melanie Mayeux at the Louisiana Department of Education: melanie.mayeux@la.gov.

7. Can an EL student qualify for Special Education or 504 services?

Of course! Being identified as an EL does not exempt or prevent that student from receiving an IEP or 504 Plan. An EL can be screened for these services through the same process a school system uses to screen a non-EL. Refer to [Bulletin 1508](#) for more information.

8. How can I access ELPS/ELPT scores from another district?

If the student is transferring from another school system within Louisiana and has already taken ELPS/ELPT, the DTC can access those scores in the [EL Portal](#) under current student scores once the student is added into TIDE. For instructions on how to add students into TIDE, reference the [TIDE User Guide](#) on page 30.

ELPS

1. What is ELPS?

ELPS is the English Language Proficiency Screener, a standardized assessment used to measure a student’s English language proficiency and to determine if the student is eligible for additional language supports in content classrooms. All schools are required to use [ELPS](#) as their EL screening assessment. Additional ELPS guidance can be found in the [ELPS Guidance](#).

2. Who takes ELPS?

[ELPS](#) is a mandatory screener available for newly registering students in grades K through 12 who indicate a language other than English on the Home Language Survey (HLS). Revisit question number 1 under “General” for specific information.

Reference the [EL Identification Flowchart](#) for an overview of the process of identifying a student as EL.

3. Do transfer students need to take ELPS if they have been screened elsewhere?

If a student is transferring from another Louisiana school, every effort should be made to locate any ELPT or screener scores from the previous school system. Scores for students who took ELPT or ELPS can also be accessed through the [ELPT Portal](#). The student must first be entered into TIDE with their initially assigned LASID before scores can be accessed. Please see the [Reporting User Guide](#) for more information.

4. When should a student take ELPS?

Newly registering students who are required to take the ELPS should be given the screener within 30 days of enrollment.

5. How is ELPS administered?

The [ELPS](#) is a computer-based assessment that will be taken in the ELPT Portal, the same testing system used for the English Learner Proficiency Test (ELPT). Prior to testing, the [CAI Secure Browser](#) must be installed on computers. Reference the [Resources for Technology Coordinators](#) for detailed directions.

The screener has three steps: an initial orientation and practice step, called Step 1; a component that identifies emerging and most progressing students, called Step 2, and a final Step 3 that distinguishes between students who are proficient and those who are nearly proficient but would still benefit from EL services.

6. Do students need a microphone or headset for the screener?

Students taking the ELPS will need headphones (with microphones) for interacting with the online platform. Specifications for headsets are located in the [Assessment Technology Specifications](#).

7. What happens if a student scores proficient?

If a student achieves a minimum of Level 4 in all 4 domains, the student is considered proficient and is not eligible for EL services. School systems should then update SIS to show that the

student is no longer EL. This must be done by October 1.

8. What if a parent refuses EL services for an identified EL?

Parents/Guardians should be notified with a letter if their child qualifies for EL services. The letter should describe the student's performance level and the type of services available at the school. Examples of this letter can be found in the [English Learner Library](#). Parents do have the right to refuse EL services for their child. If they do, the school should contact the parent and explain what services the child will receive, and that refusal does not exempt the student from taking the yearly EL summative until they meet the criteria to exit.

9. If a student comes from out of state and has scores from another English language proficiency test (i.e. LAS Links, WIDA/ACCESS) do we still need to administer a screener?

Yes, Louisiana requires school systems to administer our statewide screener, ELPS, to any potential EL regardless of whether or not they have scores from another state.

ELPS Reporting

1. When will the reports be available?

For students who stop screening after Step 2, reports will be available within hours of screening. For students who continue screening through Step 3, score reports will be available within 7 days of screening. School test coordinators will be able to access the individual report of each ELPS tester. Reports will be divided into the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

2. How can the reports be accessed?

ELPS results can be accessed in the [CAI Reporting System](#).

3. How will the scores be used?

A student who does not score proficient on the ELPS should be classified as an English learner (EL). Within 30 days of a student enrolling, the school must assess and inform the student's parent/guardian(s) of student's program eligibility, as described in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A sample parental notification form can be found in the [English Learner Library](#).

The student should receive high quality core instruction with appropriate language supports that differentiate to address language needs. An [English Learner Accommodations Checklist](#) should be developed for each eligible student. This plan lists the accommodations and modifications available to an EL in content classes to assist in acquiring the English Language and to access statewide assessments.

ELPS and Kindergarteners

1. Why does the proficiency rate appear to be so low for Kindergarten students being screened compared to the off-the-shelf commercial screeners we have been using?

Unlike prior screeners, the ELPS provides an assessment of language skills in which reporting of student performance is consistent with that of the ELPT, and Unlike many English language proficiency screeners, students taking the ELPS screener must demonstrate proficiency in all four language domains rather than score "proficient" on an overall composite score, which could otherwise mask a language domain need.

The LA Connectors for ELs were adopted in 2017; some commercial screener versions are older, prior to linkages to the language proficiency needed to succeed on updated content standards. Some screeners have reset their scale scores, but they still do not align to updated standards. The ELPS is aligned to the LA Connectors for ELs, and the cut scores for K–12 (other than the Future Kindergarten version) match those required on ELPT.

ELPS is deliberately rigorous to ensure that the correct group of students is identified and receives the assistance needed. An assessment such as ELPS is a snapshot of a student’s performance on a given day; even the best designed test will not provide a 100% accurate measure of all of the student’s language abilities on that day.

2. Is the Kindergarten ELPS over-identifying students as ELs?

Keep in mind that this group of students has not necessarily attended school prior to being screened; therefore, any student registering for Kindergarten for the first time would still be gaining those initial pieces of academic language skills in English. Essentially, most entering Kindergarteners are still developing language, and while they may not necessarily be “English learners” per se, they are in fact at the beginning of their language and literacy development.

Per the US Department of Education, a statewide screener (ELPS) is required to assess potential ELs in the four language domains of listening, reading, writing, and speaking, and the student must be measured as proficient in all four domains in order to not be identified as an EL. Since Kindergarten students are generally considered pre-literate, this could lead to identifying any incoming Kindergarten student as an EL.

A completed [Home Language Survey](#) is the first potential identifier of an EL. The families of incoming students complete a HLS and indicate the languages the child has been exposed to in a variety of contexts. Since the population of incoming students is largest in Kindergarten, it might benefit a district to also include the use of the [Family Interview](#) to better identify potential ELs at this level.

3. What about the use of technology? Kindergarten students probably are not proficient with the technology required for the test.

The ELPS design and its administration procedures are designed so that factors such as comfort and familiarity with technology do not adversely affect student performance. The ELPS begins with a practice segment to allow the student to become familiar with the test format. In addition, the test is not timed, and test administrators may provide technological assistance during the operational portion of the test or it can be administered one-on-one.

ELPT

1. What is ELPT?

ELPT stands for the **English Language Proficiency Test**. It is a computer-based assessment that draws upon emerging technologies and innovative methods to assess a student’s language ability. The ELPT will be administered in the spring of each school year. Additional information about the test can be found in the [ELPT Assessment Guide](#).

2. Who takes ELPT?

Students who take ELPT are those who are enrolled in K-12 and have been identified as an English Learners (EL). All EL students must take ELPT even if they have chosen to refuse services from their school's EL specialist.

Students take the ELPT until they achieve proficiency and are eligible for reclassification.

3. Are students with disabilities who are also English Learners required to take ELPT?

Yes, students with disabilities who have been identified as English Learners will take ELPT and will receive any non-EL-related accommodations while testing. These accommodations should be requested no later than 30 days before testing begins.

4. What grades are tested?

Students are tested by grade band. Grade bands include K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

5. What domains are tested?

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are tested in **all** grades.

Domain exemptions are available for students who demonstrate a specific disability (i.e. hearing impaired). These should be requested by sending the [ELPT Request for Exemption Form](#) to assessment@la.gov no later than 30 days before testing begins.

6. What exactly does the assessment measure?

The ELPT measures a student's language proficiency relative to the [Louisiana Connectors for English Learners](#). The test presents students with a variety of performance tasks and questions in each of the language domains.

7. How is proficiency determined?

After taking the ELPT, a student receives scores in the four tested domains. Each language domain score equates to a performance level. The performance levels create a profile which is used to determine if the student is **Emerging, Progressing** or **Proficient**.

To achieve "Proficient" students should receive Level 4s and/or Level 5s in each of their domains. More information about performance levels and proficiency can be found in the [Performance Level Descriptors ELPT K-12](#).

8. How is the test administered?

Students taking the ELPT utilize an online platform to interact with content and to submit their answers. The way each answer is entered depends on the item type (e.g., selected response, drag and drop, spoken response, etc.). Each domain is tested separately, and all sessions are untimed.

Tests are administered according to grade band and domains: listening, reading, writing, speaking. A school may choose to administer one or two domains a day to a group of students. More information will be available in the [ELPT Test Administrator Manual](#).

9. Will the student be able to receive accommodations on the ELPT?

This depends on the kind of accommodations. Accommodations are a change in the test administration environment, timing, scheduling, presentation format, and/or method of response to the assessment. Accommodations are for students for whom there is documentation of need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan, so that these students show what they know and can do on the ELPT.

Test accommodations provided to students on other statewide assessments due to limited English proficiency are **not allowed** on ELPT. Such accommodations would subvert the purpose of ELPT to measure the student's proficiency in English. More information is available in the [ELPS/ELPT Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#).

10. Do students need a microphone or headset for the test?

Students taking the ELPT will need headphones (with microphones) for interacting with the online platform. Specifications for headsets are located in the [Assessment Technology Specifications](#).

11. Where can students practice navigating the online testing platform?

Students can use the Online Tools Training (OTT) in the [ELPT Portal](#) for practice with the testing platform.

ELPT Reporting

1. When will the reports be available?

Reports will be available by mid-May through [Reporting](#). This can be accessed through the [ELPT Portal](#).

2. How can the reports be accessed?

ELPT results can be accessed in the [Reporting](#). The User Guide is posted to the [ELPT Portal](#) with directions for accessing ELPT testing data and student reports.

3. What do the reports contain?

The student reports contain domain performance levels, proficiency determinators as well as state and district comparisons. More information can be found in the [Parent Guide to ELPT Student Reports](#).

4. How will the scores be used?

The domain scores will be used to determine the area (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and the types of supports the student will need to be successful in his/her content classes.

Additionally, domain scores will be compiled into a profile. The profile is used to determine overall English language proficiency of either Emerging, Progressing, or Proficient. More information about these levels can be found in the [ELPT Performance Level Descriptors](#).

5. Who should see ELPT reports?

ELPT reports should be shared with parents along with the [Parent Guide to the ELPT Student Reports](#). This report is also available in [Arabic](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Content teachers should have access to the reports or at least the scores. LEAs may want to provide professional development on how to read and use the reports for making instructional decisions.

6. How can students exit from EL services?

A student will be eligible for reclassification once he/she scores a profile of Proficient (Level 4 or 5) in all tested domains. The student will then be reclassified as a “monitored” student and will no longer need to take ELPT. Monitoring will take place for 2 years.

LEAs **must** update the student’s EL status in SIS to reflect this change. If proficient students are not updated in SIS by October 1, the student will need to take ELPT or the school will receive a zero for accountability purposes.

After four years, students with disabilities may exit before achieving Proficient on ELPT if the IEP team and/or SBLC has determined that the student is unable to make adequate progress in their language acquisition because of their disability. The IEP team/SBLC has the ability to exit EL students with significant cognitive disabilities sooner.

ELs and Distance Learning

1. How do we identify new ELs when school facilities are closed?

Since ELPS cannot be administered virtually, LDOE has created guidance on how to conduct a [Provisional EL Identification](#) for newly enrolled ELs. This identification will be used to determine if a student should receive language support services until ELPS can be administered.

2. How should a school system provide EL services through distance learning?

School systems are still required to provide language support services to all identified ELs. Schools should consult with EL Specialists to determine what level of support an EL needs and devise a plan to give them access to content even in a distance learning environment. See the [Supporting ELs During School Closures/Distance Learning](#) document for more guidance.