

Guidelines for the Identification and Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students

- Issue Date:** January 5, 2005
- Sources:** Lau Center, Ohio Department of Education; Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education
- Key Words:** Title III Limited English Proficient
- Summary:** Ohio Department of Education's guidelines for the identification and assessment of limited English proficient students. Document includes a copy of district home language survey and other tools to assess limited English proficient students and allowable accommodations.

Overview of School Districts' Requirements in Serving Limited English Proficient Students

In its publication *The Provision of an Equal Education Opportunity to Limited English Proficient Students* (1992), the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, provides guidelines to school districts regarding their legal obligation to language-minority students. The following is a summary of the guidelines.

First, school districts must identify all students whose primary or home language is other than English (PHLOTE). The district then needs to assess all PHLOTE students to determine if they are limited English proficient (LEP) and need special language assistance to effectively participate in the district's instructional program. The Lau Resource Center has published two handbooks to assist school districts to identify and assess LEP students: *Guidelines for the Establishment and Implementation of Entry and Exit Criteria for Bilingual Education Programs* and *Guide to Processes and Instruments for Assessing Limited English Proficient Students*.

After a school district has identified LEP students who need assistance, it must determine what kind of special language service program is to be provided and then implement the program. Ohio does not prescribe a specific type of intervention program. Thus, school districts have the flexibility to decide on the educational approach that best meets the needs of their LEP students. The program, however, must be based on sound theory and best practice. In other words, the program must be one that is likely to be effective in meeting the educational needs of the district's language-minority students. Whatever program is selected, it must provide effective instruction that leads to academic achievement and timely acquisition of proficiency in English. Guidelines and further information about programmatic options for LEP students can be found in the Lau Resource Center publication entitled *Strategies for Developing Language Programs for National Origin Minority Students*.

In implementing programs, school districts must ensure that staff are properly trained and appropriate curricular materials are used. In addition, classroom facilities should be comparable to those used by other students. School districts have the responsibility to effectively notify national origin minority group parents of school activities that are called to the attention of other parents. Such a notice, to be effective, may have to be in a language other than English.

Once a school district implements a special language program for its LEP students, it must monitor student progress on a regular basis and take steps to modify the program if the students are not making reasonable progress.

Focus of This Document

The focus of this document is the initial identification of students whose home/native language is not English and the subsequent assessment of their English communication skills to determine if the students are LEP. The information and guidelines in the following pages are intended to serve as a resource for personnel of school districts serving language-minority students.

Below is a sample form that can be adapted by school districts for documenting the identification of students whose home/native language is not English, the assessment of their English language proficiency and the placement of the students in an appropriate educational program. On the subsequent pages are guidelines for the English language assessment of students whose home/native language is not English.

Home Language Survey

Date: _____

School District: _____

Name Of Student _____
Family Name
First Name
Middle I.

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Place of Birth: _____
Month
Day
Year
City
State
Country

Name of Parent/Guardian _____
Family Name
First Name

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

For Parents/Guardians:

Please answer the following questions:

1. What language did your son/daughter speak when he/she first learned to talk?

2. What language does your son/daughter use most frequently at home?

3. What language do you use most frequently to your son/daughter?

4. What language do the adults at home most often speak?

5. How long has your son/daughter attended school in the United States?

For School District Personnel:

If the answer to any of the first four questions above is a language other than English, indicate the student's native/home language in EMIS Student Data Element (2.1.1.21), and proceed to assess the student's English language proficiency.

Initial English Language Assessment

Communication Skill

Proficiency Level

Listening:	_____ Beginning	_____ Intermediate	_____ Advanced	_____ Proficient
Speaking:	_____ Beginning	_____ Intermediate	_____ Advanced	_____ Proficient
Reading	_____ Beginning	_____ Intermediate	_____ Advanced	_____ Proficient
Writing	_____ Beginning	_____ Intermediate	_____ Advanced	_____ Proficient
Comprehension *	_____ Beginning	_____ Intermediate	_____ Advanced	_____ Proficient

(*note: The comprehension score is calculated by averaging the listening and reading scores)

Assessment instruments used:

Student is LEP? _____ Yes _____ No

Indicate the student's status as LEP or not LEP in EMIS Student Data Element (4.1.1.19)

If student has been in U.S. schools for less than three years, is the student eligible for extended accommodations for statewide academic assessments? Yes _____ No _____

The English Language Assessment of Students Whose Native or Home Language is Not English

Purposes of English Language Assessment:

- To determine if a student is limited English proficient (LEP), that is, the student's level of English proficiency is not sufficient to participate effectively in mainstream classroom settings in which English is the only language of instruction;
- To determine the appropriate support to be provided for those students identified as LEP;
- To help inform instructional decisions relating to the education of LEP students;
- To determine if a student who has been enrolled in United States schools for less than three full school years and may be eligible for additional accommodations when taking certain Ohio statewide assessments;
- To evaluate the progress of LEP students in developing English language proficiency;
- To help determine when a student is no longer LEP and is ready to be exited from the district's LEP program;
- To help evaluate the effectiveness of the district's LEP program.

English Communication Modes to be Assessed:

- **Listening:** How well is the student able to understand spoken English in social and grade-level academic settings?
- **Speaking:** How well is the student able to orally communicate in English in both social and academic settings?
- **Reading:** How well is the student able to read age-appropriate written materials in English for both social and academic purposes?
- **Writing:** How well is the student able to produce writing in English for both social and academic purposes?

Proficiency Levels:

A number of category systems have been developed to indicate the different stages or levels of second/foreign language proficiency. Category systems include **nine levels:** Novice-Low, Novice-Mid, Novice-High, Intermediate-Low, Intermediate-Mid, Intermediate-High, Advanced, Advanced-Plus, and Superior (American Council of Teachers Foreign Languages); **six levels:** No English, Receptive English Only, Survival English, Intermediate English, Proficient English I, and Proficient English II (*Bilingual Syntax Measure*, The Psychological Corporation) and **five levels:** Beginner Proficiency Level, Elementary Proficiency Level, Low Intermediate Proficiency Level, High Intermediate Proficiency Level, and Advanced Proficiency Level (*Secondary Level English Proficiency Test*, Educational Testing Service).

For the purpose of this guide, four levels are used to categorize LEP students at different stages of English language proficiency: *Beginning*, *Intermediate*, *Advanced* and *Proficient/Trial Mainstream*. It should be recognized that within each of these levels, students will represent a certain range of proficiencies (low, mid, high).

On the next page is a description of the four levels of English language proficiency of LEP students. Following the description of the proficiency levels is a chart indicating different English proficiency levels for each of the four communication modes: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Students learning a new language proceed through different stages or levels of proficiency. Ohio has established four proficiency levels to categorize LEP students at different stages of their English language development:

- Beginning
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Proficient/Trial-Mainstream.

The first three of these levels are the same as those identified by the professional organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL, Inc.) in its publication *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students* (1997). A fourth level has been added to represent those students who have demonstrated sufficient competencies in all language domains to transition on a trial basis to classrooms not designed to meet the special needs of LEP students. During this transition stage, students' progress is carefully monitored and additional support is provided on an "as-needed" basis. It should be recognized that within each of these levels, students represent a certain range of proficiencies (low, mid, high). The following are summary descriptions of the four proficiency levels.

Beginning

At this level, students initially have limited or no understanding of English. They rarely use English for communication. They respond non-verbally to simple commands, statements and questions. As their oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases and begin to use English spontaneously.

At the earliest stage, these learners construct meaning from text primarily through non-print features (e.g., illustrations, graphs, maps, tables). They gradually construct more meaning from the words themselves, but the construction is often incomplete. They are able to generate simple texts that reflect their knowledge level of syntax. These texts may include a significant amount of non-conventional features, such as invented spelling, some grammatical inaccuracies, pictorial representations, surface features and rhetorical patterns of the native language (i.e., ways of structuring text from native cultural and language).

Intermediate

At this level, students understand more complex speech, but still may require some repetition. They acquire a vocabulary of stock words and phrases covering many daily situations. They use English spontaneously, but may have difficulty expressing all their thoughts due to a restricted vocabulary and a limited command of language structure. Students at this level speak in simple sentences, which are comprehensible and appropriate, but which are frequently marked by grammatical errors. They may have some trouble comprehending and producing complex structures and academic language.

Proficiency in reading may vary considerably depending upon the learner's familiarity and prior experience with themes, concepts, genre, characters, etc. They are most successful constructing meaning from texts for which they have background knowledge upon which to build. They are able to generate more complex texts, a wider variety of texts and more coherent texts than beginners. Texts still have considerable numbers of non-conventional features.

Advanced

At this level, students' language skills are adequate for most day-to-day communication needs. Occasional structural and lexical errors occur. Students may have difficulty understanding and using some idioms, figures of speech, and words with multiple meanings. They communicate in English in new or unfamiliar settings, but have occasional difficulty with complex structures and abstract academic concepts.

Students at this level may read with considerable fluency and are able to locate and identify the specific facts with the text. However, they may not understand texts in which the concepts are presented in a decontextualized manner, the sentence structure is complex, or the vocabulary is abstract. They can read independently, but may have occasional comprehension problems. They produce texts independently for personal and academic purposes. Structures, vocabulary and overall organization approximate the writing of native speakers of English. However, errors may persist in one or more of these domains.

Source of the above proficiency level descriptions: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc., 1997, pp. 20-21

Proficient/Trial-Mainstream

At this final stage, students usually can participate in academic topical conversations without difficulty. In most cases, they can follow complex and multi-level directions without assistance and they can understand oral information provided via electronic audio and video media. Students at this level usually speak English fluently in social and grade-level academic settings and they control age-appropriate syntax and vocabulary in their speech.

Generally, students read and understand factual information in non-technical prose as well as discussions on concrete topics related to special events. They comprehend standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, correspondence reports and technical materials. At this level, they can write short papers and clearly express statements of position, points of view and arguments. In their writing, they usually show control of varied sentence structures, spelling, and vocabulary, expressing well-developed thoughts.

Criteria for Exiting LEP Program

In order to be exited from LEP programs in Ohio, students need to demonstrate the ability to understand, speak, read and write the English language at a level in which they are able to a) achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is in English, b) meaningfully participate in academic assessments in English, and c) participate fully in society in the United States. The following criteria will be used to indicate that a student has attained the required level of English proficiency to be exited from a district's LEP program:

1. Achievement at the proficient level in Ohio's approved English language proficiency test in all language domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing and comprehension, **and**;
2. Two years of successful participation in classrooms where the language of instruction is in English (this is referred to as the "trial mainstream" period, which begins after the student has met the first exit criteria above), **and**;
3. Attainment of proficient or above for two years in the State's Language Arts assessment (Reading and Writing) during the student's trial mainstream period.

English Proficiency Levels—Descriptions

Levels – Modes of Communication	<u>Level One</u> LEP Beginning Level Proficiency	<u>Level Two</u> LEP Intermediate Level Proficiency	<u>Level Three</u> LEP Advanced Level Proficiency	<u>Level Four</u> LEP Proficient/Trial Mainstream
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has zero to very limited ability in understanding spoken English ➤ Has difficulty following simple directions ➤ Often needs explanations repeated or with non-verbal cues ➤ Prefers oral information in native language ➤ Frequently appears confused when spoken to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shows understanding simple questions and statements on familiar topics ➤ Often requires restatements in graphic terms or at a lower rate ➤ Can follow many simple directions ➤ Shows appropriate responses when read or told a story (example – laughs at humor) ➤ Has difficulty comprehending academic-related discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understands most questions and conversations on familiar topics spoken distinctively at normal speed. Comprehends lectures on familiar topics with some difficulty ➤ May ask for clarification on oral information related to academic content ➤ Usually can follow complex or multi-step directions ➤ May misinterpret idiomatic expressions or figures of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shows understanding of academic topical conversations without difficulty ➤ Can follow complex and multi-level directions without difficulty ➤ Shows understanding of oral information provided via electronic audio and video media
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has zero to very limited ability in speaking English ➤ Rarely participates in discussions in English ➤ May produce some common English words and phrases ➤ May be able to repeat short sentences or questions ➤ Can not retell a simple story or event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can communicate ideas and feelings in English, but with some difficulty ➤ Speaks coherently, but with hesitations and with grammatical and syntactic errors ➤ Can retell a simple story, but detail may be lacking ➤ Can respond appropriately to many questions, but with errors in grammar and vocabulary ➤ May participate effectively, although hesitantly in social conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speaks in coherent, fluent sentences, but with occasional errors in vocabulary and syntax ➤ Can retell a story or event with details, but may have hesitations and digressions ➤ Has little difficulty communicating personal ideas and feeling in English ➤ Can respond appropriately to many questions in classroom settings, but makes some errors in more complex grammatical structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speaks English fluently in social and grade-level academic settings ➤ Produces speech that include a variety of adverbs and transitional signals ➤ Participates in classroom discussions without difficulty ➤ Demonstrates control of age-appropriate syntax and vocabulary when speaking ➤ Can retell a story or event with appropriate detail and coherency
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has zero to very limited ability in reading English ➤ Has little or no sight vocabulary ➤ Does not use details to extract meaning ➤ Does not grasp the main idea ➤ Can not explain what he/she reads ➤ Has difficulty predicting cause and effect relationships ➤ Has difficulty understanding figurative language in poems ➤ Can not use context to assist in making sense of unknown words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reads simple printed material within a familiar context ➤ Understands simple material (messages, greetings, popular advertising, letters, and invitations). Understands short discourse on familiar topics. ➤ Has limited sight vocabulary ➤ Partially uses details to extract meaning ➤ Partially perceives the feeling and tone in a poem or story ➤ Has some weaknesses in predicting from details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can identify main idea of many reading passages ➤ Occasionally has some difficulty interpreting meaning of specific details ➤ May have some difficulty applying reading to practical, real-life situations ➤ Demonstrates understanding of many sight words ➤ Able to identify most specific facts within a text ➤ May have some difficulty using details to make predictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reads and understands factual information in non-technical prose as well as discussion on concrete topics related to special events ➤ Comprehends standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, correspondence reports and technical materials ➤ Has an adequate sight vocabulary ➤ Shows understanding of the main idea ➤ Understands figurative language in a poem



**Center for Students, Families & Communities
Exceptional Children- Lau Resource Center**

Levels – Modes of Communi- cation	Level One LEP Beginning Level Proficiency	Level Two LEP Intermediate Level Proficiency	Level Three LEP Advanced Level Proficiency	Level Four LEP Proficient/Trial Mainstream
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has zero to very limited ability in writing English ➤ Copies isolated words or short phrases ➤ Frequently misspells words. ➤ Produces writing that fails to respond to the topic ➤ Produces writing that contains few complete thoughts ➤ Uses vocabulary and syntax that are not adequate for his/her grade level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Composes short paragraphs that are mostly intelligible ➤ Takes simple notes on very familiar topics ➤ Produces writing that contains some complete thoughts ➤ Shows some knowledge of basic sentence construction though errors frequently occur ➤ Produces writing with limited range of vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Writes simple social correspondence with some errors in spelling and punctuation ➤ Has some difficulty in producing complex sentences ➤ Produces writing that generally addresses given topic ➤ Produces writing that is generally intelligible but lacking grade-level quality ➤ Produces writing that generally expresses complete thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Writes short papers and clearly expresses statements of position, points of view and arguments ➤ Shows good control of sentence structure, spelling, and vocabulary ➤ Produces writing that expresses complete thoughts ➤ Produces writing that is comparable to grade-level quality and quantity ➤ Produces writing with wide range of vocabulary

Sources: North Carolina Department of Education, 1999; Iowa Department of Education, 2000; IDEA Reading and Writing Proficiency Tests, Examiner’s Manual, 1993, Ballard and Tighe

Tools for Assessing Language Proficiency

Both commercial and noncommercial tests may be used to assess the language proficiency of students whose home/native language is not English. It is recommended that the assessment be based on more than one source of information, including a standardized test along with ongoing performance-based tests that focus on academic language used in grade-level classrooms.

A number of commercial test have been developed to assess the language proficiency of students whose home/native language is not English. Some these tests are listed on the following pages. Please note that this list is provided as a resource only should not be taken as an endorsement by the Ohio Department of Education. School district personnel should carefully review a test instrument before selecting it to ensure that it meets the needs of the program or school. The following sources may be consulted for a more extensive listing and critique of language proficiency tests.

Foreign Language Assessment in Grades K-8: An Annotated Bibliography of Assessment Instruments, compiled by Lynn Thompson prepared for publication by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics, and the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center; published by Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems (1997)

Guide to Processes and Instruments for Assessing Limited English Proficient Students, published by Ohio Department of Education (1993)

Handbook of English Language Proficiency Tests, by Ann del Vecchio and Manuel Guerrero; published by Evaluation Assistance Center-Western Region, New Mexico Highland University, Albuquerque, New Mexico (1995)

Reviews of English Language Proficiency Tests, edited by J. C. Alderson, et al., published by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (1987).

Commercial Tests:

Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL)

Grade Levels: K-12

Communication Modes: Listening and Speaking

Languages: Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Chinese, Creole, Dutch, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hmong, Ilokano, Inpuiaq, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Navajo, Filipino, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Taiwanese, Tagalog, Toishnese, Ukranian, Vietnamese and Yugoslavian

Contact: CHECKpoint Systems, Inc. 1520 North Waterman Ave. San Bernardino, CA 92404, Tel. (800)-635-1235

Bilingual Oral Language Tests

Grade Levels: 4-12

Communication Modes: Listening and Speaking

Languages: English, Spanish

Contact: Bilingual Media Productions, P.O. Box 9337, North Berkeley, CA 94709

Bilingual Syntax Measure

Grade Levels: K-12

Communication Modes: Listening and Speaking



Languages: English, Spanish

Contact: Harcourt Educational Measurement, 19500 Bulverde Road, San Antonio, TX 78259, Tel: 1-800-211-8378

Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests (BVAT)

Grade Levels: Ages 5-adult

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking

Languages: Arabic, Chinese (traditional and simplified), English, French, German, Haitian-Creole, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Contact: Riverside Publishing Co.8420 Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60631 Tel: (800) 323-9540

IDEA Proficiency Tests (IPT)

Grade Levels: K-12

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Language: English

Contact: Ballard & Tighe Publishers, 480 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621 Tel. (800) 321-4332

Language Assessment Battery (LAB)

Grade levels: K-12

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Languages: English, Spanish

Contact: New York City Board of Education, Document Scan Center, 4436 Vernon Blvd., Room 207, Long Island City, New York, 11101, Tel. (718) 349-5600; FAX (718) 349-5642

Language Assessment Scales

Grade Levels: K-12

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Languages: English, Spanish

Contact: CTB/McGraw Hill, 20 Ryan Ranch Road, Monterey, CA 93940 Tel: (800) 538-9547

Maculaitis Test of English Language Proficiency - II (MAC II)

Grade Levels: K-12 (Reading: 4-12)

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Language: English

Contact: TASA, P.O. Box 382, Brewster, NY 10509 Tel: (800) 800-2598

Secondary Level English Proficiency Test (SLEP)

Grade Levels: 9-12

Communication Modes: Listening, Reading

Language: English

Contact: Educational Testing Service/SLEP, Order Service Section LO2, P.O.Box 6158, Princeton, NJ, 08541-6158 Tel. (604) 771-7245

Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey

Grade Levels: Ages 3-adult

Communication Modes: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

Language: English, Spanish

Contact: Riverside Publishing Company, 8420 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago, IL 50531
Tel: (800) 323-9540

Noncommercial, Performance-Based Tests:

Questions/Commands That Elicit Non-Verbal Responses

Have the student respond non-verbally to commands or questions typically used in classroom settings. For example: "Open your book to page 27." "Point to the second paragraph." "Point to the picture of _____."

Communication Mode: Listening

Informal Interview

Talk to the student about a familiar topic. For example, plans for the weekend, what the student did during recess, what topics were discussed in a particular class today, favorite foods.

Communication Modes: Listening, speaking

Story/Article Retelling

Read an age-appropriate, grade-level story or article to the student, and then ask the student to retell or summarize the story/article.

Communication Modes: Listening, speaking

Oral Reading Sample

Have the student read aloud a passage from an age-appropriate, grade-level book or magazine. Note if the student pauses at the right places, self corrects when making an error, and seems to read for comprehension. After the student reads the passage, ask several comprehension questions regarding the passage and ask the student to define several key vocabulary words.

Communication Modes: Reading, speaking

Silent Reading

Have the student silently read a passage from an age-appropriate, grade-level book or magazine. After the student completes the reading, have the student answer several written comprehension questions about the passage.

Communication Mode: Reading

Dictation Sample

Have the student write down a dictated passage from an age-appropriate, grade-level book or magazine.

Communication Modes: Listening, writing

Free Writing

Have the student write a short composition about a familiar topic.

Communication Mode: Writing