

# English Language Learner Proficiency Standards



Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, UT  
84114-42000

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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# Utah's Academic English Language Proficiency Standards

## K-12

### Introduction

The goal in developing Utah's English Language Proficiency Standards is to provide support for English language learners. The English Language Proficiency Standards provide guidance in the following ways: (1) Define the academic English proficiency, by grade band, for students to access the Utah Core Curricula objectives; (2) Establish criteria for Utah's Academic English Language Proficiency Assessment (UALPA).

The continuing challenge for educators is how to provide all students with an excellent and accessible education. The challenge of learning is intensified for the more than 52,000 Utah English language learners (ELLs) who must meet the core academic standards while still only having emerging academic English language skills. The English Language Proficiency Standards articulate the English language skills necessary to be successful in school.

It is important to note these expectations do not limit, but provide a range of academic pathways to achieve proficiency, and apply regardless of the grade level at which students enter Utah schools. The standards identify listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills across the proficiency levels of pre-emergent, emergent, intermediate, advanced, and fluent.

The English Language Proficiency Standards are not specific to a single type of English language instruction educational program or classroom setting (e.g., Mainstream English, English Immersion, Dual Language, Early Transition-Bilingual, and Late Transition Bilingual). Each student should receive instruction reflecting his/her proficiency in English, with meaningful access to grade-level academic content. Utah's English Language Proficiency Assessment standards do not replace the Core Curriculum. It identifies the levels of academic language acquisition of a student. However, the standards provide information about the skill level at which students can access the core curriculum. Students should have access to the general curriculum in addition to language acquisition instruction, regardless of language proficiency level. The ELL assessment standards, objectives, and expectations help the classroom teacher identify the basic skills that ELLs (as identified by their proficiency level [P, E, I, A, F]) need to access the state curriculum. These language domains/modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) should be used to guide instruction for the core curriculum. Districts will determine the instructional services provided for each ELL.

## **English Language Proficiency Levels**

**Pre-Emergent (P) Level:** The student has limited or no understanding of oral or written English, and therefore will be participating by listening. The student may demonstrate comprehension by using a few isolated words or expressions of speech. The student typically draws, copies, or responds verbally in his/her native language to simple commands, statements, and questions. The student may begin to understand language in the realm of basic communication. Reading and writing are significantly below grade level. The student is identified at the P level on the UALPA.

**Emergent (E) Level:** The student understands and responds to basic social conventions, simple questions, simple directions, and appropriate-level text. In general, the student speaks, reads, and writes using single phrases or sentences with support. The student may begin to use minimal academic vocabulary with support and participate in classroom routines. The student is identified at the E level on the UALPA.

**Intermediate (I) Level:** The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty. The student is developing reading comprehension and writing skills, with support. The student's English literacy skills allow for demonstration of academic knowledge. The student reads and writes independently for personal and academic purposes, with some persistent errors. The student is identified at the I level on the UALPA.

**Advanced (A) Level:** The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English language. The student demonstrates reading comprehension and writing skills, but may need continued support when engaged in complex academic tasks that require increasingly academic language. The student is identified at the A level on the UALPA, but is not proficient on the ELA CRT. The student continues to be assessed annually on the UALPA and CRT.

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**Fluent with Monitoring (F) Level:** The student is identified at the A level on the UALPA and proficient on grade level ELA CRT (district literacy assessment K-1). The student is exited from the ELL program, having achieved fluency, and is monitored for up to two years after exit. For the purpose of calculating AYP, the student scores are counted in the ELL subgroup for two years after exit. The student no longer receives federal funds. During the two-year monitoring period, the school may reevaluate student to change proficiency level as appropriate. At the conclusion of the two years, the F designation is removed.

## Language Proficiency Modality Level Descriptors

| Proficiency Level: | Pre-Emergent  | Emergent   | Intermediate   | Advanced  | Fluent  |
|--------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Language Domain:   |   |  |  |   |   |
| <b>Listening</b>   | Participates by listening, with limited or no understanding.                            | Participates in classroom routines, showing understanding of phrases and short sentences with support.   | Understands more complex speech and formal language, but still needs some support and repetition. Understands and participates with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty. | Has developed proficiency in academic English language.   | Participates fully in listening activities. Students at this level are functioning effectively in an environment with native English speaking peers; therefore, this proficiency level reflects achieved competence in the expectation as required of all students. |
| <b>Speaking</b>    | May respond using a few isolated words or expressions of speech.                        | Typically has minimal expressive vocabulary, but may respond with single words, short phrases, or simple sentences with support. Uses minimal academic vocabulary. | Participates actively in most social and classroom tasks using simple sentences, with some grammatical errors and limited specialized content language.                  | Participates actively in social and academic tasks.   | Has achieved English language fluency. Students at this level are functioning effectively in an environment with native English speaking peers; therefore, this proficiency level reflects achieved competence in the expectation as required of all students.      |
| <b>Reading</b>     | May construct meaning from text using non-print features (e.g., illustrations, tables). | Begins to locate specific, predictable information in simple everyday or environmental print.  | With some support, reads about various topics using different genres.  | Has developed proficiency in English language literacy skills.  | Participates by using grade-level text. Students at this level are functioning effectively in an environment with native English speaking peers; therefore, this proficiency level reflects achieved competence in the expectation as required of all students.     |
| <b>Writing</b>     | Typically draws and/or copies, or responds verbally using his/her native language.      | Writes single words and short phrases using appropriate-level text with support.   | Writes using different genres for a variety of audiences with persistent errors. Writes independently for personal and academic purposes with persistent errors.         | May need continued support when engaged in complex academic tasks that require increased academic language. | Writes classroom assignments correctly. Students at this level are functioning effectively in an environment with native English speaking peers; therefore, this proficiency level reflects achieved competence in the expectation as required of all students.     |

**Grades 3-6**

**Standard I: Listening – Comprehend and interpret the spoken language of others.**

**Objective 1: Identify specific purposes for listening and respond appropriately.**

| <b>Expectations</b>   | <b>P</b>   | <b>E</b>   | <b>I</b>  | <b>A</b>   | <b>F</b>  |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Listen to others to gain information.  | Recognize and match words to a picture.                                      | Listen to and identify a pattern or description in a story.  | Identify main idea in a word problem posed in math, science, or language arts (e.g., hypotheses, theory, or paragraph) from choices with extra support. | Make inferences from oral speeches and classroom lectures.   | Make inferences from an academic (e.g., math, science, language arts) text or classroom discussion. |
| 2. Listen and make comparisons and/or inferences from statements or questions expressed orally. | Listen to, compare, and make inferences about words in a picture dictionary. | Listen to, comprehend, make inferences about, and compare similarities and differences in a story or text. | Interpret and make inferences from an academic text (e.g., math, science, and language arts) read orally.   | Interpret, infer, and compare similarities and differences in an academic (e.g., math, science, and language arts) text read orally. | Interpret, question, and make inferences while participating in academic discussions.               |
| 3. Respond to commands and directions.  | Respond to commands and directions supported by visuals and modeling.        | Respond to one-step oral classroom directions (e.g., go to the board, open your book, stand in line).      | Listen and follow at least two-step classroom directions.   | Follow the sequences in verbal directions with limited teacher or peer support.  | Respond to classroom instructions and follow teacher's and peers' directions.                       |

**Grades 3-6**

**Standard I: Listening – Comprehend and interpret the spoken language of others.**

**Objective 2: Listen to others to clarify, question, and extend.**

| <b>Expectations</b>                                    | <b>P</b>  | <b>E</b>  | <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b>  | <b>F</b>   |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Listen to the words and ideas of others.            | Listen to and understand a few words in small group discussions.  | Listen to others in discussions and respond in one or two words.  | Comprehend familiar and unfamiliar topics with some visual support.                          | Listen critically and understand the purpose of listening (e.g., to obtain information, to solve problems).               | Comprehend and interpret subtle nuances and inferences in spoken language.   |
| 2. Seek and weigh evidence before drawing conclusions. | Listen to and understand a few words describing evidence.   | Create a picture or mark a correct response that shows comprehension of evidence or conclusions in a selection. | Mark or write a response that shows comprehension of evidence or conclusions in a selection. | Identify the main evidence points of a text that is read aloud by drawing conclusions.                                    | Identify the main points of texts that are read aloud, and respond to the evidence and conclusions drawn from selected information.  |
| 3. Clarify information and express opinions.           | Respond to basic questions for clarifying information (e.g., “Is this correct?”) with modeling and support. | Respond to statements of opinion in basic conversations (e.g., Finish this: “I like ... and I dislike ...”).    | Ask and answer factual questions in complete sentences to clarify information.               | Ask and answer questions using social and classroom academic language in complete simple sentences to express an opinion. | Restate in simple form the main idea of an academic text for clarifying information and express an opinion using subject matter content (math, science, and language arts) language. |

## Grades 3-6

### Standard II: Speaking – Formulate and communicate ideas effectively to others.

#### Objective 1: Use academic language to express ideas coherently and clearly to others.

| <b>Expectations</b>  | <b>P</b>   | <b>E</b>  | <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b>  | <b>F</b>  |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1. Use academic vocabulary to describe concepts. (e.g., infer, control, temperature, misconception, distance, product, factors, variable, perimeter, environment predict, consequences, compare, flexibility, muscle, fat, heart, pulse, fitness, illness, disease). | Use gestures and one-word responses to express understanding or lack of understanding. | Use familiar academic concepts in short phrases (e.g., size, color, shape, location, water cycle, addition and subtraction) individually or in a short presentation (e.g., small groups, scripted presentations, pictures). | Use and classify academic concepts (e.g., number sentences, community, measurements, and story elements).                | Converse and describe academic concepts with academic content language in compound sentences.         | Converse in social and academic classroom discussions using expanded academic language with idiomatic expressions, descriptive words, and paraphrasing. |
| 2. Generate and respond to questions about objects, events, and processes.   | Use gestures and one-word responses to answer questions.                               | Ask questions of peers or teachers using single words or short phrases and content academic language.   | Ask and respond to questions using phrases and/or simple sentences and content academic language.                        | Ask and respond to questions using complete sentences and content academic language.                  | Ask questions related to what is read or spoken in the classroom, using complex ideas and content academic language.                                    |
| 3. Explain and justify reasoning and conclusions.  | Use gestures and one-word responses to participate in a simple conversation.           | Demonstrate reasoning by orally using phrases or short sentences.   | Use subject-related information and academic content language to justify reasoning in short phrases or simple sentences. | Draw conclusions about past experiences using descriptive words, academic language, and paraphrasing. | Explain past experiences using expanded academic language by paraphrasing to build a persuasive speech.   |

**Grades 3-6**

**Standard II: Speaking – Formulate and communicate ideas effectively to others.**

**Objective 2: Speak in a variety of situations for various purposes and audiences.**

| <b>Expectations</b>                     | <b>P</b>   | <b>E</b>  | <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b>   | <b>F</b>   |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Engage in conversations with others. | Repeat words and phrases in simple conversations.                                  | Respond to social greetings and in classroom interactions using one or two words. | Formulate ideas in social and academic interactions using short sentences and phrases. | Discuss content topics/concepts using academic and social language with peers and others to formulate ideas for a variety of purposes and audiences. | Engage audiences in discussions relating to social and academic concepts (e.g., presentations, questions, demonstrations). |
| 2. Express needs, feelings, or ideas.   | Produce gestures, sounds, and words to communicate basic needs in social settings. | Answer yes/no questions about needs, feelings, and ideas.                         | Express feelings and ideas in social and academic interactions.                        | Express needs, feelings, and ideas in complete sentences.  | Relate feelings about an experience by telling a story.  |
| 3. Support positions with evidence.     | Does not apply to Pre-Emergent 3-6 level.  | Ask and answer in a few words factual questions (e.g., what, where, when, why).   | Demonstrate understanding of the difference between positions and provide evidence.    | Make statements taking a position from a content topic and supporting it with evidence.  | Speak in a variety of situations supporting positions by expanding evidence using academic content language.               |

## Grades 3-6

### Standard III: Reading – Comprehend and develop word knowledge and concepts from text.

#### Objective 1: Decode and spell words with increased vocabulary knowledge and appropriate usage.

| <b>Expectations</b>   | <b>P</b>   | <b>E</b>  | <b>I</b>  | <b>A</b>   | <b>F</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 1. Phonetically decode print.   | Recognize letters and sounds.  | Recognize and sound out simple written words.   | Match spoken words with print, demonstrating comprehension of phonics and decoding.   | Decode, read and interpret academic written language.  | Comprehend concrete and abstract academic text about familiar content using phonics, and decoding.  |
| 2. Use structural analysis to support decoding. (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, roots, syllables). | Recognize word structure by pointing to a word or word part (e.g., roots, suffixes, and prefixes). | Demonstrate knowledge of consonants, consonant blends, and syllable structure to determine meanings of words. | Decode words using word parts (e.g., syllables, word parts).  | Demonstrate knowledge of syllable structure by using roots, suffixes, and prefixes.  | Use structural analysis to read and comprehend unfamiliar words.  |
| 3. Identify and read symbols and numerals in text.  | Distinguish between numerals and other symbols.  | Locate the answers to simple, factual questions using academic content language, symbols, and numerals.       | Locate specific information in advertisements, timetables, and menus (e.g., \$, 3:00, N.,) and isolate the information required for an academic task (e.g., What time should I catch the bus to school?). | Determine the content and relevance of academic text by using numerals and other symbols to locate specific information or to fulfill a specific task (e.g., In math, isolating the numbers needed for solving a problem). | Identify the purpose, content, and relevance of details (e.g., what needs to be included on a map) using numerals and other symbols in an academic text to locate specific information or to fulfill a specific task. |

## Grades 3-6

### Standard III: Reading – Comprehend and develop word knowledge and concepts from text.

#### Objective 2: Comprehend academic language and text with understanding.

| Expectations                                      | P  | E  | I   | A  | F   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Comprehend information in a variety of genres. | Understand content of simple material or short story with visual support.            | Use background knowledge to comprehend information contained in a variety of texts using pictures. | Demonstrate understanding of content in short descriptions from academic text with pictures.  | Demonstrate interpretation and correct analysis of literature by identifying different characters, settings, and plot in simple literary text. | Interpret and produce literary and technical text using academic content language (e.g., identify finer points of details, including attitudes and implied or stated opinions). |
| 2. Comprehend vocabulary and correct usage.       | Demonstrate comprehension of simple content language by matching pictures and words. | Use modeled reading strategies to demonstrate comprehension of content language.                   | Demonstrate comprehension of academic content language (e.g., headings, titles, and schedules) related to vocabulary used in meaningful academic context.       | Demonstrate understanding of academic content language in short summaries.   | Use resources (e.g., illustrations, diagrams) in grade-level text to draw conclusions and make inferences and generalizations.  |
| 3. Make inferences based upon text.               | Recognize inferences in text with support.   | Ask and answer simple questions to clarify understanding of inferences.                            | Recognize the format differences (e.g., narrative, expository, chronological) in academic content language texts and make inferences based on this recognition. | Read and make inferences using grade-level academic content language in texts (e.g., math, science, language arts).                            | Rephrase, explain, revise, and expand information from grade-level text to check comprehension.   |

**Grades 3-6**

**Standard IV: Writing – Compose and communicate ideas through writing.**

**Objective 1: Create and use representations to organize and communicate ideas.**

| <b>Expectations</b>   | <b>P</b>  | <b>E</b>   | <b>I</b>  | <b>A</b>   | <b>F</b>   |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Prepare to write by gathering and organizing ideas.  | Develop ideas for writing by selecting pictures, charts, and graphs.          | Identify and label procedures organizing them for writing.   | Use strategies (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines) to organize information before writing. | Use strategies (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines) to organize information, main ideas, and supporting details for writing.             | Use planning, gathering, organizing, and strategies (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines) to prepare information and ideas for written grade-level presentations. |
| 2. Use reference materials to gather and write information (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, Internet resources).                                    | Use graphic organizers or charts to record information with teacher modeling. | Use prior knowledge to locate and interpret information using glossaries, indexes, and Internet resources. | Write simple explanations across all content areas using reference material.                | Write stories, letters, simple explanations, and reports across all content areas, using references and proper grammatical construction. | Use available technology to write stories, letters, explanations, and reports across all content areas, using references and proper grammatical construction.    |
| 3. Report observations from assigned academic tasks (e.g., choose the main idea, compare and contrast, sequence information) and communicate ideas through writing. | Use pictures to record and interpret observations.                            | Write simple observations to convey information with assistance.   | Write simple observations to convey information.  | Summarize observations in writing on content topics and identify the main idea and some supporting details.                              | Summarize observations in writing and identify the main idea with some supporting details and key academic concepts of subject matter content.                   |

**Grades 3-6**

**Standard IV: Writing – Compose and communicate ideas through writing.**

**Objective 2: Express ideas to others through written language.**

| <b>Expectations</b>                             | <b>P</b>   | <b>E</b>  | <b>I</b>   | <b>A</b>  | <b>F</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1. Develop clear ideas with supporting details. | Does not apply to Pre-Emergent 3-6 level.                              | Focus on a central idea, and organize information for writing with support. | Use a graphic organizer to show the relationship between the main idea and the supporting details identified by the student. | Show a central idea and develop a plan for writing and organizing ideas with a topic and purpose.                             | Show a central idea, develop a plan for writing with supporting details, and revise writing for clarity.                |
| 2. Write narrative and expository text.         | Write words or phrases based on illustrations or other visual support. | Combine sentences to create a simple narrative text with support.           | Write a simple narrative or expository text.   | Write stories, letters, simple explanations, and short reports across content areas, adding conventions and transition words. | Write stories, letters, simple explanations, and short reports across content areas, using complex sentence structures. |