



Quick Guide: Grading English Learners (ELs)

Key Principle: Grade Knowledge, Not Language

The fundamental rule is to grade what **EL students know and can do** in the content, **not** their level of English proficiency. **Expectations are the same** as for non-ELs.

Actionable Grading Rules for Teachers

- **Use Accommodations:** Grades **must reflect instructional and testing accommodations** appropriate to the student's English Language Proficiency (ELP) level. Grade based on **alternative assignments** if necessary.
- **Do Not Penalize for EL Pullouts:** You **cannot penalize** an EL student for work missed while they are pulled out for EL services. Only grade them on components they were **present for** and had the **ability to access**.
- **Focus on Standards:** Grades should be based on student work that shows **evidence of meeting content benchmarks or standards**, not just English fluency.
- **Use the Standard Report Card:** ELs must receive the **same report card** as general education students.

New Arrivals Exception

- For **newly arrived students** at the lowest ELP level, you may assign **N/A** (Not Applicable) for a **limited time** (one grading period) if they genuinely cannot demonstrate knowledge and their program is focused strictly on initial language development.

In short: **Accommodate, don't penalize, and focus the grade on content mastery.**