

K–2 Skills Block: Benchmark Assessment Guidance

We have designed the EL Education Curriculum: Flex 2020–21 program for primary students based on EL Education’s [comprehensive language arts curriculum](#). This resource has been modified and is intended to be used in situations where schools are experiencing a disruption in normal programming to include fully remote and blended remote/in-classroom learning. The Benchmark Assessment Guidance will provide guidance for teachers who are administering the benchmark assessments on a digital platform with students. The chart below indicates the mandatory assessments that teachers should administer to determine a student’s microphase placement at the beginning of the year (BOY), preferably during the first two weeks of school. Guidance for each grade-level path is indicated in the event students need more or less of a challenge based on their assessment scores. Additional resources for remote materials can be found at <https://eled.org/eleducation-flexcurriculum>.

Grade Level	Assessment Type	Components	Suggested Time
Kindergarten	Letter Name and Sound Identification	Student-Facing - Device for viewing the Benchmark Assessments slide deck: Uppercase and Lowercase Letters section Teacher-Facing Letter Name and Sound Identification scoring sheets	15 minutes per student
Grade 1	Spelling	Students - Pencil and paper Teachers - Device for viewing the Benchmark Assessments slide deck: Spelling Lists	10 minutes per student
Grade 2	Spelling	Students - Pencil and paper Teachers - Device for viewing the Benchmark Assessments slide deck: Spelling Lists	10 minutes per student

Kindergarten Assessment Path

Guidance

This digital assessment should be administered individually to students during a 15-minute block of time. Students need access to a computer or tablet screen to see the individual letters as they appear. You will need the [Letter Name and Sound Identification scoring sheets](#) (these are also found in the Benchmark Assessments slide deck).

It will be important for teachers to hear students as they say the sounds of each letter. Where possible, encourage students to find a quiet space to take the assessment to block out any background noise to ensure accurate detection of letter sounds.

As students see each letter flash across the screen, in uppercase and lowercase, ask them to say the letter first, followed by the sound that the letter makes. After recording the student's responses, click on the slide to advance to the next letter until all 52 letters have been shown.

Scoring

To demonstrate proficiency in letter recognition, <Total Letters Known>, students should recognize at least 42 out of 52 letters (of the 26 lowercase and 26 uppercase letters). To demonstrate proficiency of letter-sound identification, <Total Sounds Known>, students should recognize at least 42 out of 52 correct letter-sound correlations. **It is important to note that the Phase Theory research does not identify a specific number of letters or letter sounds a child should be able to name in order to move from one phase to the next.** Therefore, the guidance above is given to reflect that a student knows at least 80 percent of the skills being assessed.

If students meet the guidance above, administer the spelling benchmark assessment, starting with the partial alphabetic word list for spelling and the middle partial alphabetic word list for decoding to determine the highest leverage goals for the students who are ready for more challenges. If students do not master these assessments, don't worry; return to the Late Pre-Alphabetic microphase, which is the phase that begins in the EL Education Curriculum at Kindergarten Module 1, and monitor their growth in letter and sound identification through snapshot assessments.

For students who do not recognize at least 42 combined uppercase and lowercase letters and sounds, you may administer the phonological awareness assessment to identify the discrete skills that need to be learned.

Grade 1 Assessment Path

Guidance

This assessment should be administered individually to students during a 10-minute block of time. Students will need access to technology to be able to hear the teacher reading words and sentences aloud and to be able to show written responses for the teacher to analyze. To adapt the EL Education Reading Foundations benchmark assessment for remote learning, prioritize the spelling portion of the Grade 1 assessment path. Students will not see any slides during this portion; you will read words and sentences that accompany those words from the available word list.

Read the words aloud, and ask the students to write the words on a sheet of paper and then share their spelling of the words after each sentence. Each spelling list contains 12 words. If a student exhibits discomfort or extreme difficulty after spelling five words, consider stopping the assessment and using a list from a lower microphase. The Grade 1 assessment path begins with the partial alphabetic list, which is the first microphase for spelling words. If the partial spelling list is too difficult, the student should be placed in the late Pre-Alphabetic microphase.

Scoring

Number of Words Spelled Correctly	Microphase
0–4	The student is not yet working in this phase and should be reassessed using the list from the phase before this.
5–6	Early
7–8	Middle
9–10	Late
11–12	Administer the next phase of spelling words beyond this microphase.

Grade 2 Assessment Path

Guidance

This assessment should be administered individually to students during a 5-minute block of time. If virtual, students will need access to technology to be able to hear the teacher reading words and sentences aloud and to be able to show written responses for the teacher to analyze. To adapt the EL Education Reading Foundations benchmark assessment for remote learning, prioritize the spelling portion of the Grade 2 assessment path. Students will not see any slides during this portion; you will read words and sentences that accompany those words from the available word list.

Read the words aloud, and ask the students to write the words on a sheet of paper and then share their spelling of the words after each sentence. Each spelling list contains 12 words. If a student exhibits discomfort or extreme difficulty after spelling five words, consider stopping the assessment and using a list from a lower microphase. The second grade assessment path begins with the full alphabetic list. If a student scores 11–12 on the Full Alphabetic list, proceed to the consolidated list.

Scoring

Number of Words Spelled Correctly	Microphase
0–4	The student is not yet working in this phase and should be reassessed using the list from the phase before this.
5–6	Early
7–8	Middle
9–10	Late
11–12	If a student scores 11–12 on the full alphabetic list, move to the consolidated word list to determine the correct microphase. If a student scores 11–12 on the consolidated word list, they are proficient in all of the microphases.

Letter Name and Sound Identification

Scoring Sheet: Uppercase

Student Scoring Sheet				
	Letter Name	Response (if incorrect)	Sound	Response (if incorrect)
A				
Y				
F				
S				
P				
X				
B				
O				
H				
U				
J				
C				
L				
K				
M				
Q				
D				
W				
N				
I				
Z				
E				
R				
G				
T				
V				

Letter Name and Sound Identification

Scoring Sheet: Lowercase

Student Scoring Sheet				
	Letter Name	Response (if incorrect)	Sound	Response (if incorrect)
a				
m				
z				
d				
p				
u				
c				
o				
h				
x				
j				
b				
l				
g				
y				
q				
s				
k				
n				
i				
f				
e				
r				
w				
t				
v				