

English Learner Proficiency Levels & Classroom Supports



NEBRASKA
**ENGLISH
LEARNER**
PROGRAMS

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SECONDARY ENGLISH LEARNER WORKING GROUP



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English Language Proficiency (ELP) Levels

Proficiency Determinations

Emerging	• Levels 1 and 2 in all domains
Progressing	• Mostly levels 2 and 3 (maybe some 4s) in all domains.
Nearly Proficiency (not a score on ELPA21)	• Mostly levels 3 and 4 in all domains (maybe some 5s).
Proficient Student no longer in EL status but may need support in content-area classes.	• Levels 4 and 5 in all domains.

Definitions for Domain Performance Levels 1-5

Proficiency Level Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening	Performance Expectations at that Level
Level 1: Beginning	Student displays few grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 2: Early Intermediate	Presents evidence of developing grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 3: Intermediate	Applies some grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 4: Early Advanced	Demonstrates English language skills required for engagement with grade-level academic content instruction at a level comparable to non-ELs.
Level 5: Advanced	Exhibits superior English language skills, as measured by ELPA21

Emerging Students

General Student Characteristics include:

- Students are working on tasks related to ELP levels 1-2.
 - Students are just beginning to develop grade-level English language skills.
 - Students have minimal to limited comprehension in English without support.
 - Students may understand some words and simple sentences but production is limited.
 - Students may be in the “silent period” when they are minimally communicating but understand what is going on around them.
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Suggested Supports for Emerging Students

Reading Supports

- Use visuals and/or gestures to explain topics, concepts, ideas, vocabulary words, etc.
- Have students respond to questions nonverbally (pointing, drawing) or with short responses (one-two words).
- Provide sentence starters or sentence frames for student responses (orally and written).
- Have students demonstrate knowledge in a different way.
- Provide additional teacher modeling, samples, examples, anchor charts, lists of important words, etc.

Writing Supports

- Provide anchor charts with important content-specific information (e.g. parts of speech, transition words, etc.).
- Use sentence starters and sentence frames.
- Build background knowledge (use graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas).
- Have students demonstrate knowledge in different ways. Examples:
 - o student illustrates response
 - o point to response
 - o order responses correctly
- Use color coding system to organize content specific information. Examples:
 - o main idea/ details
 - o examples/non examples
 - o claim/evidence

Speaking/Listening Supports

- Provide anchor charts with important content-specific information (e.g. parts of speech, transition words, etc.).
- Use sentence starters and sentence frames.
- Build background knowledge (use graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas).
- Have students demonstrate knowledge in different ways. Examples:
 - o student illustrates response
 - o point to response
 - o order responses correctly

Math Supports

- Support vocabulary development by providing word lists, charts, walls with pictures.
- Provide scaffolds such as manipulatives, visuals, calculators, realia, and formulas.
- Provide opportunities to practice the language of math.
- Have students demonstrate understanding with non-verbal cues.
- Provide extra time for assignments and guided practice.
- Modify assignments (reduce # of tasks).
- Use color coding to identify steps/words.
- Pair students with a peer.
- Provide bilingual support when available.

Progressing Students

General Student Characteristics include:

- Students are working on tasks related to ELP levels 2-3 (maybe some 4s).
 - Students are developing grade-level English language skills.
 - Students have fair to good comprehension in English without support.
 - Students understand and produce accurate English but may make errors.
 - Students are working towards producing complex English structures in writing or speaking.
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Suggested Supports for Progressing Students

Reading Supports

- Provide sentence starters or sentence frames for student responses (orally and written).
- Provide word bank or chart of important content features/structures (i.e. transition words, characteristics of nonfiction or fiction text, grammar structures, etc.).
- Provide multiple opportunities to read and interact with text.
- Provide opportunities to reflect and discuss before responding to text.
- Work with a partner to complete activity.

Writing Supports

- Provide opportunities to build background knowledge and discuss ideas before writing.
- Provide sentence starters/sentence frames and transition words.
- Have student practice skills before writing with sample texts or graphic organizers.
- Provide anchor charts/lists/word bank (with content specific vocabulary).

Speaking/Listening Supports

- Provide supports like sentence frames, connecting words, sentences starters, etc.
- Have students respond in simple sentences.
- Utilize familiar topics and/or build background knowledge.
- Practice with a partner or teacher before responding.
- Repeat, rephrase, and model directions/instructions.

Math Supports

- Provide word lists and identify vocabulary with multiple meanings.
- Provide multiple opportunities to practice the language of math.
- Provide sentence frames and sentence starters.
- Pair students with a peer.
- Provide additional models, manipulatives, examples, and skeleton notes.
- Use color coding to identify steps and/or words.
- Give students a formula chart or help them use an interactive notebook.
- Provide additional time to practice before turning in an assignment.
- Modify assignment.

Nearly Proficient Students

General Student Characteristics include:

- Students are working on tasks related to ELP levels 3-4 (mostly 4's).
- Students are nearing grade-level English language skills.
- Students have strong comprehension in English without support.
- Students understand and produce accurate English with few errors.
- Students are mostly producing complex academic language skills.

Note: Students at this level are considering “progressing” on the ELPA21. These characteristics and appropriate supports might be similar for students who are newly proficient.

Suggested Supports for Nearly Proficient Students

(These supports may also be appropriate for former English learners who scored proficient on ELPA21.)

Reading Supports

- Provide opportunities to reflect, discuss, and elaborate before responding to text (provide sentences frames if needed).
- Provide word bank or chart of content features and structures.

Writing Supports

- Build background knowledge around the topic.
- Provide time to discuss and brainstorm ideas before writing.
- Provide anchor charts/lists/word bank (with content specific vocabulary).

Speaking/Listening Supports

- Provide resources to students to complete assignments:
 - word bank
 - sentence stems/sentence frames
 - graphic organizer
 - bilingual dictionary (if student has literacy in first language)
- Build background language.
- Provide exemplars of expected outcome.
- Have student practice before responding.

Math Supports

- Help students create vocabulary list or provide word lists with important terms.
- Provide bilingual dictionary/word list.
- Emphasize the use of key vocabulary in complex sentences to help students answer questions.
- Provide sentence frames/sentence starters.
- Engage students in academic conversations to develop problem-solving skills.
- Provide opportunities to talk about math thinking using cooperative learning structures.
- Use color coding to identify academic language.
- Provide scaffolds such as manipulatives, calculators, and graphic organizers.
- Partner student with a peer.
- Build background knowledge.
- Provide more opportunities for students to create his/her own problems and explain reasoning.
- Encourage students to create visual models to represent what's happening in the problem.