



BEST Literacy Test Usage Policy

BEST Literacy is a reading and writing assessment of adult English literacy skills developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), a nonprofit organization located in Washington, D.C. The aim of the BEST Literacy test usage policy is to delineate the purpose, intended audience, appropriate uses, reasonable accommodations, training requirements, and score interpretation of the current version of BEST Literacy.

If your proposed use of BEST Literacy does not comply with this test usage policy, you should contact the Adult ESL Assessment Team at CAL. You can also contact us to request information on the feasibility and cost of adapting BEST Literacy for specific purposes or audiences, interpreting BEST Literacy scores through a system other than those described here, or developing a test to meet your specific needs.

This test usage policy is intended to provide general guidance only. CAL reserves the right to modify and update this policy at any time.

Assessment Purpose and Intended Audience

BEST Literacy is an individually- or group-administered competency-based assessment that uses a variety of functional literacy tasks to measure adult English language learners' ability to read and write in English.

Assessment Uses

BEST Literacy is appropriately used in the following ways:

- **With adults in the United States.** All BEST Literacy test items and graphics were developed for adult English language learners in the United States. BEST Plus is not designed for and should not be used with learners outside of the United States or who are under the age of 16.
- **For educational purposes.** BEST Literacy is intended to be used in educational settings. BEST Literacy is designed to provide standardized assessment for placement decisions, instructional planning, and measuring the progress of adult English language learners enrolled in an instructional program in the United States. BEST Literacy can also provide supporting evidence of the effectiveness of an instructional program based on pretesting and posttesting results.
- **To measure reading and writing skills.** BEST Literacy is intended to measure adult English language learners' functional reading and writing skills in English, such as reading dates on a calendar, words and abbreviations on a train schedule, and prices in advertisements; finding phone numbers in a list; writing a check; and composing short written communications.
- **For interpreting learners' proficiency levels.** Based on the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Levels or the Student Performance Levels (SPLs). BEST Literacy is aligned with the NRS and SPL levels, BEST Literacy scores are not aligned with any other set of proficiency-level descriptors or other assessments. (See the Score Interpretations section of this policy.)

Reasonable Accommodations

Laws such as the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and other related federal, state, and local laws were enacted to guarantee equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, including those in educational programs. Programs administering BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy are responsible for providing accessible services and for ensuring that requests for accommodations are considered and handled in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Program and test administrators may provide and allow accommodations in test administration procedures or in the testing environment for individuals with disabilities, provided that the accommodations do not compromise the purpose or results of the test.

Permissible accommodations related to test administration procedures for BEST Literacy include the use of eyeglasses or magnifying glasses, earplugs, color overlays, or rulers. Testing environment accommodations might include frequent breaks or individual administrations.

It is not an appropriate accommodation for someone to read the test questions to an examinee with sight impairment, as *BEST Literacy* is a test of reading, not listening.

Pre- and Posttesting Guidance

CAL recommends re-testing students at the end of their period of instruction, with 60 hours minimum (80-100 hours recommended) of instruction prior to re-testing. In instances where a student does not have 60 hours, programs should follow state assessment policies, NRS Guidelines, or funding guidelines when re-testing at the end of the instructional period. If students receive more than 60 hours of instruction, CAL does not recommend re-testing students at the 60 hour mark; rather students should be tested at the end of the instructional period to avoid over-testing.

In the event of external events such as noise (e.g., a fire alarm), power loss, or illness of the student or test administrator, the test should be stopped and the examinee's session rescheduled for another time. It is strongly advised, however, that programs limit their retesting of students to within the ascribed instructional hours in order to accurately measure gain, limit test exposure, and reduce testing fatigue in students.

For more detailed information about pre- and posttesting requirements, consult your program's or state's assessment policy. Note that for programs reporting to the NRS, posttesting cannot occur until after 12 hours of service. (See U.S. Department of Education, 2016, Chapter II.)

Training Requirements

To ensure the accurate use and scoring of BEST Literacy as a standardized assessment, all test administrators should read and follow the instructions in the BEST Literacy Test Manual (2008). While CAL does not require training in order to administer and score BEST Literacy, some states and programs may have internal training requirements for test administrators or scorers.

Score Interpretation

BEST Literacy scores have been aligned with both the Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and the National Reporting System ESL Educational Functioning Levels (NRS Levels). Therefore, the NRS and SPL descriptors are the only ones that can be used to interpret BEST Literacy scores. (For more detailed information on score interpretation and NRS and SPL alignment, see the BEST Literacy Test Manual (June 2008), pages 53-60). BEST Literacy scores are not currently aligned with any other descriptors such as job functions, duties, or tasks, and should not be used for employment screening or other purposes that fall outside the purview of educational uses.

Questions: Email CAL at aea@cal.org.

Website: www.cal.org/aea

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CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
www.cal.org