

English Language Assessment Instruments for Adults Learning English

This section provides names, descriptions, and availability information for English language proficiency tests that are designed for adults, including native speakers of Spanish, who are learning English as a second language. The section includes only tests that were in use in the United States at the time this toolkit was first published in 2004. Tests that have fallen out of common use and that are used at the university level are not listed.

The information is divided into two sections. In the first section, Figure IV–1 lists tests that assess oral English proficiency. Figure IV–2 in the second section lists those used to assess reading, writing, and grammar skills.

If a program receives federal funding, a standardized assessment procedure (a test or performance assessment) must be used to measure level gains, but the choice of assessment tool is left up to each state. Adult education and family literacy programs must follow the assessment procedures in place in their states. Some states have chosen one standardized test, but several states allow choices from among a list of approved tests. Most states currently use *BEST Oral Interview*, *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus*, or *CASAS*. These tests are listed first in each section.

If test scores are aligned with student performance levels (SPLs) or the U.S. Department of Education’s National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, that information is provided. Charts with the Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for English listening comprehension and oral communication and with the NRS ESL functioning level descriptors begin on page IV–47. (See *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, page IV–25, for discussion of the assessment requirements of the National Reporting System. See www.nrsweb.org for a description of the purposes and structure of the NRS and the ESL functioning level descriptors.)

If the test is performance-based, that information is provided as well. The following definitions are used to describe performance-based assessments:

- “...language performance in terms of the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations” (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989).
- Language is used in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks (e.g., interacting with another individual in a conversation, writing a text, finding information in a chart or a schedule). Performance is assessed by documenting the successful completion of the task or by using a rubric to assess various dimensions of carrying out the task (e.g., listening comprehension and language complexity in responses to questions in an oral interview) (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Van Duzer and Berdán, 1999).

References

- Alamprese, J.A., & Kay, A. (1993). *Literacy on the cafeteria line: Evaluation of skills enhancement training program*. Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates.
- Buck, K., Byrnes, H., & Thompson, I. (Eds.). (1989). *The ACTFL oral proficiency interview tester training manual*. Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Van Duzer, C., & Berdán, R. (1999). Perspectives on assessment in adult ESOL instruction. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *The annual review of adult learning and literacy*, pp. 200-242. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Figure IV–1: Tests That Assess Oral English Proficiency

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p>Basic English Skills Test—BEST Oral Interview</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the survival listening and speaking ability of non-native speakers of English.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners at the survival- and pre-employment-skills levels.</p> <p>Method and format: Individually administered face-to-face interview with simulated real-life listening and speaking tasks, including personal questions and directions</p> <p>Content: Tasks include telling time, asking for and following directions, counting money to buy items, verifying correct change, and conversing socially. Skill areas tested include communication, fluency, pronunciation, and listening comprehension.</p> <p>Administration time: 15 minutes per student.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Scores are reported as student performance levels (SPLs) 1-7; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL (into but not out of this level). Individual scores are given for each skill area.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: BEST validity and reliability procedures meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The <i>BEST Test Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two</p> <p>Materials available: Interviewer’s booklets, scoring sheets, training video</p> <p>Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 202-362-0700 www.cal.org/BEST/</p>
<p>BEST Plus</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the listening and speaking ability of non-native speakers of English.</p>	<p>Number of forms: The computer-adaptive version delivers different</p>

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p>Target: Adult English language learners from beginning to advanced levels.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews.</p> <p>In the computer-adaptive version, the computer delivers the appropriate sequence of items based on the examinee’s responses as entered by the administrator. In the print-based version, the administrator uses a locator to determine appropriate text level, administers the test, and marks scores in the test booklet.</p> <p>Content: Language used in everyday communication at home, at work, in the community; communicative language functions such as providing information, giving opinions.</p> <p>Administration time: 5-20 minutes per student for computer adaptive version; 10-20 minutes per student for print-based version.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Test scores are reported in terms of a <i>BEST Plus</i> score; student performance levels (SPLs) 0-10; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: <i>BEST Plus</i> has undergone rigorous test development and validation procedures that meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The <i>BEST Plus Technical Report</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.</p>	<p>versions of the test depending on the level of learner responses. The print-based version has three forms.</p> <p>Materials available: Training for test administrators, practice and computer-adaptive test on CD-ROM, semi-adaptive printed test booklet with picture cue book, scoring rubric, administrator’s guide technical manual</p> <p>Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 866-845-BEST (2378) www.cal.org/bestplus</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CASAS ESL Appraisal—Listening</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the English listening comprehension of non-native speakers of English for placement and to identify the appropriate pre-test for progress testing.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners in basic skills programs; must be literate in English.</p> <p>Method and format: The Appraisal is a group-administered 23-item multiple choice test; students listen to a cassette tape and choose from three options for each item.</p> <p>Content: Content includes life skills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy.</p> <p>Administration time: 25 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Scores are reported on a numerical scale. CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed.</p> <p>CASAS 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 www.casas.org</p>

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p>the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). Scores indicate appropriate placement levels.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The <i>CASAS Technical Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability” (publisher’s statement).</p>	
<p>CASAS Life Skills Pre- and Post-tests—ESL Listening</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the development of adult English language learners’ functional listening skills within an instructional level.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners in basic skills programs.</p> <p>Method and format: This assessment is a group-administered 23-item multiple choice test; students listen to a cassette tape and choose from three options for each item. After 80-100 hours of instruction, learners’ progress may be measured with the appropriate post-test.</p> <p>Content: Content includes lifeskills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy.</p> <p>Administration time: 28-40 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Scores are reported on a numerical scale; CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). The post-test gives measurable results after 80-100 hours of instruction.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The <i>CASAS Technical Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p>Number of forms: Pre- and post-test at each level</p> <p>Materials available: Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed.</p> <p>CASAS 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 www.casas.org</p>

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p style="text-align: center;">CASAS Workplace Speaking (Available in late 2004)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the oral proficiency of adult English language learners in workplace contexts.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners in the workplace and in job readiness programs; best for students at intermediate and advanced levels.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; an individually administered face-to-face interview.</p> <p>Content: Content includes workplace vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with learner competencies related to job skills and job information, social language, and workplace security and customer service.</p> <p>Administration time: 10-15 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The interviewer scores responses using a 0-1-2 scoring system.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The <i>CASAS Technical Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: This test is currently being field tested and will be available later in 2004.</p> <p>Training is required for all test administrators. Training is available in the Workplace Speaking Assessment Manual.</p> <p>CASAS 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 www.casas.org</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT COMPASS-ESL Listening Test</p> <p>Purpose: To assess English listening proficiency of non-native English-speaking postsecondary students for placement in higher education courses or intensive English programs.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners.</p> <p>Method and format: Multiple-choice format questions delivered through ACT’s computer-adaptive COMPASS system, running in a Windows environment.</p> <p>Content: The test focuses on language used in everyday situations and in academia. Listening tasks increase in difficulty across multiple proficiency levels with the rate of speech, vocabulary, diction, and use of idiomatic and metaphorical language all increasing at higher levels. As listening stimuli increase in length at the highest levels, students are allowed to take notes as they would in a lecture setting. The intent of the test is to measure listening skills</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Package includes test materials, proficiency descriptors, reporting/data management material</p> <p>ACT 500 ACT Drive P.O. Box 168 Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168 319/337-1053 www.act.org</p>

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p>rather than short-term memory.</p> <p>Administration time: Depends on how the administering institution sets up the test.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The test is designed to assess skills from word-picture correlation to academic inferential listening. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: No information available from publisher.</p>	
<p>Adult Language Assessment Scales—Oral (A-LAS Oral)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess English listening and speaking proficiency of non-native English speakers.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews.</p> <p>Content: The test focuses on language used in everyday situations and on the job. The short form tests vocabulary, conversations, making sentences, newscast story retelling; the long form adds pronunciation, and sounds in words.</p> <p>Administration time: 20-25 minutes for short form; additional 5-10 minutes for long form.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The test is designed to assess skills from no English to entry-level workforce. Skill areas are individually scored to identify areas for targeted instruction; combined scores indicate overall proficiency. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “Developers normed and validated Adult LAS by testing both native English speakers and ESL adults in various employment and educational environments. By measuring proficiency with a 90% accuracy level, Adult LAS has proven to be a valid, reliable adult language assessment” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two</p> <p>Materials available: Administration manual, scoring and interpretation manual, picture cue book, audio cassette, individual student answer books, and profile sheets</p> <p>CTB/McGraw-Hill 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 www.ctb.com/</p>
<p>Adult Rating of Oral English (AROE)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the workplace listening and speaking proficiency of non-native speakers of English.</p> <p>Target: Non-native-English-speaking adults in vocational/life skills programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based.</p> <p>A rater assesses a student based on in-class interaction or on-the-job performance, and completes a matrix based on observations.</p> <p>Content: Items test pronunciation, grammar, general and</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Rater’s handbook, technical manual, training video, individual student response matrices</p>

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
<p>vocational vocabulary, conversation, instructions, explanations, and clarification.</p> <p>Administration time: Observation over 15-30 contact hours.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The matrix divides skills into six levels of proficiency; brief descriptions for each level are provided in the matrix.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: Information on reliability and validity is available in the AROE Technical Manual.</p>	<p>Development Associates 1730 North Lynn Street Arlington, VA 22209 703-276-0677 www.devassoc.com/devassoc/index.html</p>
<p>English as a Second Language Oral Assessment (ESLOA)</p> <p>Purpose: To measure the ability of non-native English speakers to understand and speak English.</p> <p>Target: Adult non-native speakers of English.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews.</p> <p>The test was originally designed to be used in tutor-student situations. It moves through four progressively more difficult levels. At the first level, the administrator asks simple questions and students may respond orally or by pointing; at the fourth level students are asked to respond to hypothetical questions, describe events, and change verb tenses.</p> <p>Content: Level 1: comprehension of specific vocabulary and basic grammatical structures; Level 2: ability to create language using basic vocabulary and grammar; Level 3: ability to use more complex structures and engage in meaningful communication; Level 4: comprehension, fluency, pronunciation.</p> <p>The language used is general and does not reflect specifically work-related topics or vocabulary.</p> <p>Administration time: 10-20 minutes per student.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The test assesses oral communication skills from no English to intermediate level and provides numerical scores correlated to BEST, CASAS, and SPLs.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: No information available from publisher.</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Trainer’s guide, trainer’s audio cassette, student answer sheets</p> <p>ProLiteracy Worldwide</p> <p>New Readers Press 800-448-8878 www.newreaderspress.com/</p>

Figure I–2: Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency Tests

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p>Basic English Skills Test—Literacy BEST</p> <p>Purpose: To test the basic literacy skills of adult non-native speakers of English.</p> <p>Target: Low-literacy-level adult English language learners in survival English programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; group or individual administration.</p> <p>Content: Reading tasks include dates on a calendar, labels on food and clothing, bulletin announcements, and newspaper want ads. Writing tasks include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out an application form, and writing a short biographical passage.</p> <p>Administration time: 1 hour.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: There is one test level. Test scores are reported in terms of student performance levels (SPLs) 0-7; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to Low Advanced ESL (into but not out of this level).</p> <p>Reliability/validity: BEST validity and reliability procedures meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The BEST Test Manual contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two</p> <p>Materials available: Non-reusable test booklets, scoring sheets</p> <p>Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 202-362-0700 www.cal.org/BEST/</p>
<p>CASAS Life Skills Pre- and Post-tests—Reading</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the development of adult learners’ functional reading skills within an instructional level.</p> <p>Target: Adult learners in basic skills programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Group administration; multiple choice questions.</p> <p>Content: Life skills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Pre- and post-test at each level</p> <p>Materials available: Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed.</p> <p>CASAS 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 www.casas.org</p>

<p>Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency</p>	<p>Availability</p>
<p>Administration time: Information not available.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Scores are reported on a numerical scale; CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks. Scaled scores correspond to student performance levels (SPLs) and NRS ESL functioning levels Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL. The post-test gives measurable results after 80-100 hours of instruction.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The <i>CASAS Technical Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability” (publisher’s statement).</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">CASAS ESL Appraisal—Reading</p> <p>Purpose: To assess adult English language learners’ ability to apply reading skills to everyday situations.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners in adult education programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Group administration; 20 multiple choice questions.</p> <p>Content: Material reflects everyday topics and is lifeskills oriented. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy.</p> <p>Administration time: There is no time limit, but allow about 25 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Scores are reported on a numerical scale. CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). Scores indicate appropriate placement levels.</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed.</p> <p>CASAS 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 www.casas.org</p>

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p>Reliability/validity: “All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The <i>CASAS Technical Manual</i> contains detailed information about test validity and reliability” (publisher’s statement).</p>	
<p>Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE)</p> <p>Purpose: To measure the basic reading skills of adult native speakers of English.</p> <p>Target: Low-literacy adult native speakers of English in adult basic education programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Group-administered multiple choice test.</p> <p>Content: The ABLE has separate sections on vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling, and language use. The language is appropriate for adults and reflects everyday situations, but the test is not designed specifically for non-native speakers of English.</p> <p>Administration time: Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The test has three levels, corresponding to skills taught in grades 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Scores can be reported as scale scores, percentiles, stanines, and grade equivalents.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: No information available from publisher.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two at each level, so may be used for pre- and post-testing</p> <p>Materials available: Screening battery, reusable test booklets, answer sheets, administration instructions, group record</p> <p>The Psychological Corporation A division of Harcourt Assessment, Inc. 1950 Bulverde Road San Antonio, TX 78259 800-211-8378</p>
<p>ACT COMPASS-ESL Grammar/Usage and Reading Tests</p> <p>Purpose: To assess English language and reading proficiency of non-native English-speaking postsecondary students for placement in higher education courses or intensive English programs.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners.</p> <p>Method and format: Multiple-choice format questions delivered through ACT’s computer-adaptive COMPASS system, running in a Windows environment.</p>	<p>Number of forms: One</p> <p>Materials available: Package includes test materials, proficiency descriptors, reporting/data management material</p> <p>ACT 500 ACT Drive P.O. Box 168 Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168 319/337-1053 www.act.org</p>

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p>Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar/Usage: The test assesses ability in two main areas: sentence elements, and sentence structure and syntax. The <i>sentence elements</i> addressed include verbs, subjects and objects, modifiers, function words, conventions (punctuation, capitalization, spelling), and word formation. The <i>sentence structure and syntax</i> abilities include word order, relationships between and among clauses, and agreement, as well as how grammar relates to communication beyond the sentence level. Some items use a modified cloze format, with blanks in sentences and choices to fill in the blanks. When students click on an answer, the program places their selection into the blank so it can be read in context. Other items offer a question with four options, based on a reading passage. These items test students' understanding of how words function within a text. • Reading: The test assesses ability in referring (reading explicitly stated material) and reasoning (inferential reading). The content of each area varies on the test according to levels of English proficiency, with more emphasis on referring at the lower levels and more on reasoning at the higher levels. Most materials are passages, ranging in length from several sentences to many paragraphs. Most passages are authentic, although they may be edited, especially at the lower proficiency levels. Students also may be asked to interpret photographs, tables, charts, or graphs, or to follow directions using a map or other diagram. <p>Administration time: Depends on how the administering institution sets up the test.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: The test was designed to assess skills from word-picture correlation to academic inferential listening. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: No information available from publisher.</p>	

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p>Adult Language Assessment Scales—Reading, Writing (A-LAS Reading, Writing)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess the reading and writing skills of adult English language learners.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners in adult education and workforce development programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Group-administered written tests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: reusable test booklets, student answer sheets • Writing: performance-based, student writing books <p>Content: Daily life and on-the-job situations and language, understanding instructions and concepts, writing instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Four sections - vocabulary, fluency, reading for information, grammar, and mechanics • Writing: Two sections- sentences, longer narrative <p>Administration time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: 8-10 minutes for sections 1 & 2; 10-15 minutes for sections 3 & 4 • Writing: 10-15 minutes for section 1; 20-30 minutes for section 2 <p>Levels and scoring: The reading test is available in two levels. Skill areas are individually scored to identify areas for targeted instruction; combined scores indicate overall proficiency.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “Developers normed and validated Adult LAS by testing both native English speakers and ESL adults in various employment and educational environments. By measuring proficiency with a 90% accuracy level, Adult LAS has proven to be a valid, reliable adult language assessment” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two per level</p> <p>Materials available: Administration and scoring manual, reusable test books, answer sheets, student writing books</p> <p>CTB/McGraw-Hill 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 www.ctb.com/</p>
<p>Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess high school, college, and adult non-native speakers of English for program placement.</p> <p>Target: Non-native speakers of English at levels from low beginning through advanced.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two</p> <p>Materials available: Site license required to use materials</p>

<p>Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency</p>	<p>Availability</p>
<p>Method and format: Group administration; multiple choice test, 75 items with 4 choices per item.</p> <p>Items include rational, fixed ratio, and multiple choice forms of cloze.</p> <p>Content: The test has one beginning, one intermediate, and one advanced passage.</p> <p>Administration time: 45 minutes</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Test scores place students into seven levels of proficiency, from low beginning to advanced. Raw scores are converted to percentages and levels. Studies to correlate scores with scores on other tests are underway.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “Researched for reliability (.93), validity, freedom from bias. Reliabilities for C.E.L.S.A. 1 and C.E.L.S.A. 2 are .93, .94 and the forms correlate .90” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p>Association of Classroom Teacher Testers (ACTT) 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 378 Montecito, CA 93108 805-569-0734 www.cappassoc.com/actt/actt.htm</p>
<p>Arlington Education & Employment Program (REEP) Writing Assessment</p> <p>Purpose: To measure adult English language learners’ educational gains in writing.</p> <p>Target: Adult English language learners at low beginning to advanced levels in adult education and workplace skills programs.</p> <p>Method and format: Performance-based; group administration.</p> <p>The protocol includes a warm-up activity and a 30-minute written response to a writing task. Warm-up activities may be group brainstorm, group discussion, or pair work.</p> <p>Content: The assessment measures writing facility across five areas: content and vocabulary, organization and development, structure, mechanics, and voice.</p> <p>Administration time: 40-45 minutes.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Two scorers score each test; the final score is the average of the two. Separate scores on a 0-6 scale are provided for each area.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: No information available from publisher.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two</p> <p>Materials available: REEP writing rubric, guide book, activity sheets, test forms, scoring sheets</p> <p>Certification is required for test scorers; materials are supplied at formal trainings.</p> <p>REEP 2801 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 218 Arlington, VA 22201 703-228-4200 www.sabes.org/assessment/leep.htm</p>

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p style="text-align: center;">Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)</p> <p>Purpose: To assess reading and language (grammar, mechanics, usage) skills in low-literate adult native speakers of English.</p> <p>Target: Adult native speakers of English in adult basic education programs (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) programs; sometimes used with high-level ESL students.</p> <p>Method and format: Group administration; multiple choice questions.</p> <p>Content: The TABE assesses skills taught in grades 1-12. The reading sub-test tests reading ability in life skills and academic contexts, including reading maps, tables, and forms. The language sub-test measures the ability to use language in communication on the job and in daily life. The spelling sub-test separates spelling from reading and vocabulary.</p> <p>Administration time: Reading, 50 minutes; language, 40 minutes; spelling, 10 minutes.</p> <p>The survey form of the test is half the length and takes half the time; it is used for placement.</p> <p>Levels and scoring: Tests are available at five levels corresponding to grade levels: L (limited literacy), E (easy), M (medium), D (difficult), A (advanced). A Locator test is used to determine which test to give each student. Scores are correlated with grade levels. Scale scores are also available.</p> <p>Reliability/validity: “Validity refers to how well a test measures what it is designed to measure. When creating TABE, the CTB/McGraw-Hill developers conducted a comprehensive review of adult curricula and met with experts to determine common educational goals, plus the knowledge and skills emphasized in these curricula. TABE items were then designed to measure this instructional content. TABE has been statistically correlated to the GED tests, and its content has been mapped to the NALS literacy categories and the SCANS competencies. Reliability refers to the consistency of test results. A reliable test produces scores that are similar when the test is administered repeatedly under the same conditions, i.e., standardization conditions.</p>	<p>Number of forms: Two (forms 7 & 8) at each level; newer forms 9 & 10 also available</p> <p>Grade level correspondences on these forms differ from those on the earlier forms, 5 & 6.</p> <p>Materials available: Examiner’s manual, test coordinator’s handbook, technical report, norms book.</p> <p>CTB/McGraw-Hill 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 www.ctb.com/</p>

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
<p>The TABE Survey yields a reliable estimate of an individual’s overall achievement. CTB recommends the TABE Complete Battery be used when accurate scores for individual sub-tests (subject areas) are required, or when it is necessary to demonstrate that an individual has mastered specific objectives. Data related to the standardization, norming, and reliability of TABE can be found in the TABE Technical Report” (publisher’s statement).</p>	

Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Functioning Level Descriptors

The two charts that follow give the descriptors for the 6 National Reporting System (NRS) functioning levels for English language learners in listening and speaking, basic reading and writing, and functional and workplace skills and the 11 Student Performance Levels (SPLs) for listening comprehension and oral communication (0-10). These descriptors provide an interpretation of standardized assessment scale scores used for federal accountability reporting by describing what adult English learners should be able to do at corresponding levels. For example, if a learner is administered the oral English proficiency assessment *BEST Plus* and scores 340, that learner is at SPL 1 and at Beginning ESL Literacy in the NRS scale for speaking and listening. The tests included in the NRS chart are the *BEST* (oral), *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus*, and *CASAS* (reading, listening, and writing).

National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning level descriptors

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Beginning ESL Literacy</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 180 and below Listening: 180 and below Oral BEST: 0–15 (SPL 0–1) BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0–1) BEST Literacy: 0–7 (SPL 0–1)</p>	<p>Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.</p>	<p>Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.</p>	<p>Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.</p>
<p>Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 181–190 Listening: 181–190 Writing: 136–145 Oral BEST 16–28 (SPL 2) BEST Plus: 401–417 (SPL 2) BEST Literacy: 8–35 (SPL 2)</p>	<p>Individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.</p>	<p>Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.</p>
<p>High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 191–200 Listening: 191–200 Writing: 146–200 Oral BEST 29–41 (SPL 3) BEST Plus: 418–438 (SPL 3) BEST Literacy: 36–46 (SPL 3)</p>	<p>Individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individual can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read most sight words, and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.</p> <p>Individual can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization and punctuation and has many spelling errors.</p>	<p>Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.</p>

National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning level descriptors

Outcome Measures Definitions		
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS		
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing
<p>Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 201–210 Listening: 201–210 Writing: 201–225 Oral BEST: 42–50 (SPL 4) BEST Plus: 439–472 (SPL 4) BEST Literacy: 47–53 (SPL 4)</p>	<p>Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p>
<p>High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 211–220 Listening: 211–220 Writing: 226–242 Oral BEST: 51–57 (SPL 5) BEST Plus: 473–506 (SPL 5) BEST Literacy: 54–65 (SPL 5-6)</p>	<p>Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p>
		<p>Functional and Workplace Skills</p> <p>Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).</p>
		<p>Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>

National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning level descriptors

Outcome Measures Definitions		
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS		
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing
<p>Advanced ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 221–235 Listening: 221–235 Writing: 243–260</p> <p>Oral BEST 58–64 (SPL 6) BEST Plus: 507–540 (SPL 6) BEST Literacy: 66 and above (SPL 7)</p> <p>Exit Criteria: CASAS Reading and Listening: 236 and above CASAS Writing: 261 and above Oral BEST 65 and above (SPL 7) BEST Plus: 541 and above (SPL 7)</p>	<p>Individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech.</p>	<p>Individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. Individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.</p>
		<p>Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.</p>

Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for listening and oral communication



	General Language Ability	Listening Comprehension	Oral Communication
Level 0	No ability whatsoever	No ability whatsoever	No ability whatsoever
Level 1	Functions minimally, if at all, in English. Can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral communication, and in which all tasks can be easily demonstrated. A native speaker used to dealing with limited English speakers can rarely communicate with a person at this level except through gestures.	Understands only a few isolated words, and extremely simple learned phrases.	Vocabulary limited to a few isolated words. No control of grammar.
Level 2	Functions in a very limited way in situations related to immediate needs. Can handle only routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral communication, and in which all tasks can be easily demonstrated. A native English speaker used to dealing with limited English speakers will have great difficulty communicating with a person at this level.	Understands a limited number of very simple learned phrases, spoken slowly with frequent repetitions.	Expresses a limited number of immediate survival needs using very simple learned phrases.
Level 3	Functions with some difficulty in situations related to immediate needs. Can handle routine entry-level jobs that involve only the most basic oral communication, and in which all tasks can be demonstrated. A native English speaker used to dealing with limited English speakers will have great difficulty communicating with a person at this level.	Understands simple learned phrases, spoken slowly with frequent repetitions.	Expresses immediate survival needs using simple learned phrases.

**Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors
for listening and oral communication (continued)**



	General Language Ability	Listening Comprehension	Oral Communication
Level 4	Can satisfy basic survival needs and a few very routine social demands. Can handle entry-level jobs that involve some simple oral communication, but in which tasks can be easily demonstrated. A native English speaker used to dealing with limited English speakers will have difficulty communicating with a person at this level.	Understands simple learned phrases easily, and some simple new phrases containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with frequent repetitions.	Expresses basic survival needs including asking and responding to related questions, using both learned and a limited number of new phrases. Participates in basic conversations in a few very routine social situations. Speaks with hesitation and frequent pauses. Some control of basic grammar.
Level 5	Can satisfy basic survival needs and some limited social demands. Can handle jobs and job training that involve following simple oral instructions but in which most tasks can also be demonstrated. A native English speaker used to dealing with limited English speakers will have some difficulty communicating with a person at this level.	Understands learned phrases easily and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with repetition. Has limited ability to understand on the telephone.	Functions independently in most face-to-face basic survival situations but needs some help. Asks and responds to direct questions on familiar and some unfamiliar subjects. Still relies on learned phrases but also uses new phrases (i.e., speaks with some creativity) but with hesitation and pauses. Communicates on the phone to express a limited number of survival needs, but with some difficulty. Participates in basic conversations in a limited number of social situations. Can occasionally clarify general meaning by simple rewording. Increasing, but inconsistent control of basic grammar.

Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for listening and oral communication (continued)



	General Language Ability	Listening Comprehension	Oral Communication
Level 6	<p>Can satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Can handle jobs and job training that involve following simple oral and written instructions and diagrams. A native English speaker not used to dealing with limited English speakers will be able to communicate with a person at this level on familiar topics, but with difficulty and some effort.</p>	<p>Understands conversations containing some unfamiliar vocabulary on many everyday subjects, with a need for repetition, rewording or slower speech. Has some ability to understand without face-to-face contact (e.g. on the telephone, TV).</p>	<p>Functions independently in most survival situations, but needs some help. Relies less on learned phrases; speaks with creativity, but with hesitation. Communicates on the phone on familiar subjects but with some difficulty. Participates with some confidence in social situations when addressed directly. Can sometimes clarify general meaning by rewording. Control of basic grammar evident, but inconsistent; may attempt to use more difficult grammar but with almost no control.</p>
Level 7	<p>Can satisfy survival needs and routine work and social demands. Can handle work that involves following oral and simple written instructions in familiar and some unfamiliar situations. A native English speaker not used to dealing with limited English speakers can generally communicate with a person at this level on familiar topics.</p>	<p>Understands conversations on most everyday subjects at normal speed when addressed directly; may need repetition, rewording, or slower speech. Understands routine work-related conversations. Increasing ability to understand without face-to-face contact (telephone, TV, radio). Has difficulty following conversation between native speakers.</p>	<p>Functions independently in survival and many social and work situations, but may need help occasionally. Communicates on the phone on familiar subjects. Expands on basic ideas in conversation, but still speaks with hesitation while searching for appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Clarifies general meaning easily, and can sometimes convey exact meaning. Controls basic grammar, but not more difficult grammar.</p>

Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for listening and oral communication (continued)



	General Language Ability	Listening Comprehension	Oral Communication
Level 8	Can participate effectively in social and familiar work situations. A native English speaker not used to dealing with limited English speakers can communicate with a person at this level on almost all topics.	Understands general conversation and conversation on technical subjects in own field. Understands without face-to-face contact (telephone, TV, radio); may have difficulty following rapid or colloquial speech. Understands most conversations between native speakers; may miss details if speech is very rapid or colloquial or if subject is unfamiliar.	Participates effectively in practical and social conversation and in technical discussions in own field. Speaks fluently in both familiar and unfamiliar situations; can handle problem situations. Conveys and explains exact meaning of complex ideas. Good control of grammar.
Level 9	Can participate fluently and accurately in practical, social, and work situations. A native English speaker not used to dealing with limited English speakers can communicate easily with a person at this level.	Understands almost all speech in any context. Occasionally confused by highly colloquial or regional speech.	Approximates a native speaker's fluency and ability to convey own ideas precisely, even in unfamiliar situations. Speaks without effort. Excellent control of grammar with no apparent patterns of weakness.
Level 10	Ability equal to that of a native speaker of the same socioeconomic level.	Equal to that of a native speaker of the same socioeconomic level.	Equal to that of a native speaker of the same socioeconomic level.

Drawn from:

Grognet, A. G. (1997). *Performance-based curricula and outcomes: The mainstream English language training project (MELT) Updated for the 1990s and beyond*. Denver, CO: Spring Institute for International Studies.

Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS). (1985). *Competency-based mainstream English language training project (MELT) resource package*. Washington, DC: Author. (Alexandria, VA: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 264 384, 232 pp.)