

ELPA21 Frequently Asked Questions:

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Summative General Questions:

K-1 Writing Booklets

Is there a paper-pencil portion of the test?

Yes, for some grade levels. For the regular ELPA21 administration there is a specific paper-pencil portion of the writing domain that is part of the testing experience for all Kindergarten and 1st grade students. Grades 2-12 have no hand-written portion of the regular test. Paper-pencil options are available as an accommodation for students with IEP or 504 plans.

Resource: To request paper/pencil tests for student with IEPs or 504, please contact the help desk at AIR (wahelpdesk@air.org or 844-560-7366).

Is there an option to choose the writing test on the computer for kindergarten students? We receive the writing test in the mail to complete paper/pencil with kindergarteners. Do we just ignore the on-line option to take the writing test?

The writing test for kindergarten and first grade students includes both online and paper/pencil components. Students in these grades will need to complete both the online and the hand-written components.

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How are proficiency levels determined?

Proficiency determinations on the ELPA21 summative assessments are determined by the domain scores.

- Students with results on all four domains that are all ≤ 1 or 2 are “Emerging;”
- Students with results on all four domains that are all ≥ 4 or 5 are “Proficient;”
- Students whose results do not meet the criteria for “Emerging” or “Proficient” are “Progressing.”

Speaking Test Questions

We have students who are scoring low on the speaking domain, and I think this is due, in part, to their discomfort with speaking and using a microphone. How can we prepare them for this portion of the test?

OSPI does not endorse any particular software or app; however, we have heard from districts about different strategies they are using to help students become more confident in speaking generally and speaking with a microphone. Below are some of the tools/apps districts have reported using to allow students to record/review themselves speaking.

- Vocaroo
- Voki
- Voxopop
- iMovie
- MovieMaker

Some teachers have reported using these for regular/weekly correspondence with ELs to check-in (e.g., dialog journals, feedback, reflections.), others have used them for projects like narrating a book review, personal timeline, or research project. The key seems to be having students get regular access to the opportunity to record and review their own voices. Presenting in this way (e.g., videos or PowerPoint presentations) sometimes adds motivation for higher quality of recording and more attention paid to the clarity of the voice.

Is there any benefit to students taking the practice test?

Yes. Feedback indicates that students were much more successful and experienced less frustration if they participated in a practice session a few days before testing. This was not the case for students who did a practice session just before taking the test. Frustration also seems to be minimized for test administrators if a practice session is available before the day of testing.

How do I ensure headsets work correctly before testing?

On the practice test (and on the screen where you enter test session numbers) there is an option to “run diagnostics.” Clicking on this option will allow you to check the functioning of both the microphone and speakers on the headset.



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Reading Level

For grade bands such as 6-8, what grade level are the reading passages?

The texts used in the assessment are designed to assess the lower grade in the band. For example, in grade band 6-8 the reading stimuli are leveled at grade 6. Then, the cut scores themselves distinguish a 6th grade proficiency in reading from a 7th or 8th grade proficiency.

Testing Time and Planning

If a student enrolls in our school district during the ELPA21 testing window, do we have to test them?

OSPI guidelines stipulate that all identified ELs must be assessed annually (within 12 months) regardless of enrollment date. If they enroll and are identified during the testing window, they will need to be tested.

What is the timeframe for administering the ELPA21 annual assessment?

The test is administered in the early spring, generally February and March. Specific dates can be found each year on the OSPI website.

Resource: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StateTesting/timelines-calendars.aspx#ELPA21>

How many days should I plan to test my students?

It is recommended that students have a break between subtests, but OSPI does not recommend any specific testing schedule. The most appropriate testing schedule will depend on student and local variables.

How long will it take to test each domain?

Times will vary depending on grade level and language proficiency, but the table below will show average testing times for the different grade bands. Please note, these times indicate the time students spend in the test. This does not include logging in, settling in, receiving instructions or other pre and post testing activities.

Grade or Grade Band	Subtest Times	Total
Kindergarten and 1	20 minutes	1 hour 20 minutes
2-3	25 minutes	1 hour 40 minutes
4-5	25 minutes	1 hour 40 minutes
6-8	30 minutes	2 hours
9-12	30 minutes	2 hours

Do students have to start and finish each segment in the same day?

No. Although the vendor recommends starting and finishing a given test segment (e.g., listening) in the same day, in the event students don't finish in one day, they will be able to resume the segment the following day with the ability to return to previously marked responses.

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Do we need to test in a specific order?

The recommended order for testing is Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking. At this point, districts can adjust this order if necessary; however, keeping the recommended order is preferred.

[TIDE/ORS/WAMS](#)

Where can I find updated ELPA21 2017 results in WAMS?

WAMS > Assessment Operations > Files Downloads > 2017 Administration

We have a student who has no tests available in TIDE, but should have. How do we activate the tests?

For technical issues such as this, please contact Assessment Operations at OSPI.
Assessment@k12.wa.us

[Scores and Score Reporting](#)

When can we anticipate receiving ELPA21 scores this year?

OSPI is projecting an electronic format of ELPA21 scores to be released to districts by late May.

Will student growth be provided on the score report? Will there be additional guidance in using the score report?

2017-2018 score reporting will not include information on growth in language proficiency. The data, and approaches related to student growth determinations, are still being considered through the ELPA21 consortium collaboration. More information on the plan and the elements of growth with respect to English language proficiency will be shared with districts in the coming months.

Washington is working alongside other ELPA21 consortium states to determine appropriate measures of growth and growth expectations. Because ELPA21 is a profile view of a student's English language proficiency and emphasizes performance within each of the four domains, growth could be defined in many ways. The consortium is considering various options with regard to a growth measure. Decisions made on the growth measures will be communicated to the field quickly to facilitate the use of students' scores and reporting.

Translated Documents

Where can I find cover letters to accompany score reports in other languages?

OSPI provides cover letters in ten common languages at <http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/ELPA21Assessment.aspx>

Will score reports be offered in other languages this year?

Individual score reports will be available in the following languages:

- Arabic
- Cambodian
- Chinese (Simplified)
- Korean
- Punjabi
- Russian
- S'Gaw Karen
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese

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Exemption/Refusal Questions

Is there a student exemption from the ELPA21 for a student who has just moved to the US and has zero English language skills?

No. While the outcomes of this initial assessment may be predictable, testing at this stage is necessary for establishing a benchmark of knowledge from which progress can be measured.

Resource: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice Dear Colleague letter (page 10):
<http://k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/January7MeaningfulParticipationDearColleagueLetter.pdf>

Some examples of when the Departments have identified compliance issues in the areas of EL student identification and assessment include when school districts: (1) do not have a process in

place to initially identify the primary or home language of all enrolled students; (2) use a method of identification, such as an inadequate [Home Language Survey] (HLS), that fails to identify significant numbers of potential EL students; (3) do not test the English language proficiency of all Primary/Home-Language-Other-Than-English (PHLOTE) students, resulting in the under-identification of EL students; (4) delay the assessment of incoming PHLOTE students in a manner that results in a denial of language assistance services; or (5) do not assess the proficiency of PHLOTE students in all four language domains (e.g., assessing the students in only the listening and speaking domains and as a result missing large numbers of EL students).

School districts must have procedures in place to accurately and timely identify PHLOTE students and determine if they are EL students through a valid and reliable ELP assessment. ELP assessments must assess the proficiency of students in all four domains of English (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

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Can we exempt some LifeSkills students from all language domains?

No. Use of the domain exemption process should not apply to the whole assessment. Students with IEP-identified alternate assessment accommodations can be tested using the alternate assessment (WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs). Within the WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment, there is stopping guidance for administrators that will preclude the need to exempt a child from any domain on this test. However, if a child is taking the ELPA21 assessment (with or without accommodations) domain exemptions may be appropriate depending on the needs of the child.

Resource: Additional information can be found at: (Dear Colleague letter)

<http://k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/January7MeaningfulParticipationDearColleagueLetter.pdf>

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We have a first grader who has broken her arm and is restricted from any writing by a doctor's note. Do we just exempt her from the writing domain or is there another solution?

The answer will be different depending on the injury and expected recovery. If the student is anticipated to be able to write during the testing window, then we may be able to postpone the writing domain assessment for this student. This would only apply for first grade and kindergarten students who have a required hand writing component of the test. Have the student complete the computer-based portion of the assessment and complete the hand-written portion once s/he is able. If the student's injury will not allow for the completion of the assessment within the testing window, then this student should be exempted from the writing domain.

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We have a student who has been refusing to participate in ELPA21. The student isn't refusing to test in the "opt-out" sense; it is more related to oppositional defiant behavior. Would we mark this as a student refusal?

Yes. This student would be marked as a refusal if the IEP team and test administrator are not successful in their efforts to provide appropriate accommodation/access to the test.

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Accommodation/Support Questions

How do we accommodate a student with an uncommon disability (e.g., a student with facial paralysis (speaking) or a K-1 student unable to hold a pencil (writing supplement).

OSPI has a non-standard accommodation request process just for students with identified disabilities that are not addressed in the [GTSA](#). The [Non-standard Accommodation Request form](#) can be used to request accommodations that are not included in the GTSA but could help students access the test and perform at the level they are capable. Be aware that there are early deadlines for this process.

Resource: [Non-Standard Accommodation or Designated Support Request](#)

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Can students with a 504 for speech (not an IEP) be exempt from the speaking domain of ELPA21?

For assessment purposes, OSPI considers 504s as it considers IEPs. So if a student's inability to speak is documented in a 504 plan, then s/he can be exempted from the speaking domain of ELPA21. However, if the student struggles with speaking or experiences difficulty with speaking (e.g., has a stutter or lisp, struggles to articulate, or displays other difficulties), the student should not be given an exemption to the speaking domain of ELPA21. It is possible for a "familiar listener" to "transcribe" speaking responses for students with severe hurdles to speaking (e.g., facial paralysis) although this would require submission of the Non-Standard Accommodation form.

Resource: [Non-Standard Accommodation or Designated Support Request](#). This form can also be found in appendix L of the GTSA.

Resource: Domain Exemption Language (slides 41 and 42) from Assessment Webinar (2/14/2017) <http://wa.portal.airast.org/resources/?section=3>

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Can directions be given in ASL if that is the only way a student can access the directions for testing? What about “listening” prompts for deaf and hard of hearing students?

Directions can be given using ASL for students who cannot hear directions given orally. Prompts should not be signed for the listening portion of the test. Students who are unable to hear with amplification can be exempted from the listening domain of the assessment, as well as speaking if the student is unable to speak.

Resource: Domain Exemption Language (slide 41) from Assessment Webinar <http://wa.portal.airast.org/resources/?section=3> (Choose “Modules” in the Assessment Update Webinars Overview section, choose 2/14/2017 from the list of Historical Webinars) (2/14/2017).

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ELPA Screener Questions

Training & Resources

How can I access training to administer the ELPA21 screener?

The ELPA21 screener training is available [here](#). You can also access it through the ELPA21 tile on the WCAP portal.

To access information that will help you administer the ELPA21 annual assessment or screener, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/default.aspx> and click on WCAP Portal (left side)
2. Choose the English Language Proficiency Assessment of the 21st Century tile (left side)
3. Choose ELPA21 Resources tile
4. Then choose the appropriate folder:

General Information

- Coordinator Information
 - Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)
 - Translated ALDs
 - Bring Your Own Device Guidance
 - Communication and Resources Overview (Family Communication links)
 - Technology skills Checklist
 - Test Administration Time Chart
 - Tool Button Sheet for ELPA21
- Coordinator Forms and Reports
 - Non-Standards Accommodation /Designated Support Request
 - Test Question Ambiguity
 - Irregularity Reports
 - Security Reports
 - Testing Irregularity Log

- Training Log for State Assessments
- TA Testing Location Supports
 - Scratch Paper Log
 - Tool Button Sheet

User Guides and Manuals

- Administration Manuals and Documents
 - Screener DEI – Data Entry interface
 - TA User Guide
 - Screener Online TAM (TA Scripts in Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese)
- Applications and System User Guides
 - ORS – Online Reporting System
 - TIDE – Test Information Distribution Engine
- Guidelines
 - [GTSA](#) – Guidelines on Tools, supports, and Accommodations for State Assessments
 - ELPA21 Screener Supplement to the GTSA

Modules

- Applications and Systems
 - DEI – Data Entry Interface
 - ELPA21 TDS/ORS Training
 - ORS – Online Reporting System
 - TDS – TA/Student Interface
 - Screener: Administration Training for Online Testing
 - Screener: DEI Paper Administration
 - Screener: ORS – Online Reporting System
 - Screener: TIDE – Test Information Distribution Engine
- Coordinator, Administrator, and Staff
 - ELPA21 Test Administration Training Overview
 - ELPA21 Webinar Series Overview
- Test Materials
 - Test Material Processing Module

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Do we have to use the ELPA screener for testing incoming Kindergarteners?

Yes. The ELPA21 screener is the only language proficiency screener approved for use in Washington State. As of October 1, 2017 no previous placement tests can be used.

What accommodations are available on the screener for students with an IEP or a 504 plan?

Available accommodations and supports align with those available for the ELPA21 summative assessment and can be found in the [GTSA](#).

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Non-responsive Students

How do we screen a student who will not or cannot participate?

For students who are not responsive to the items, for screening in 2017-18 school year only, the TA will need to answer one question on step 2 of the test and submit the test. A score report is the document that determines eligibility for English language development services. There is currently no way to generate a score report without answering at least one question.

If the TA answers one question to generate a score report, please indicate that by including a note in the student's file.

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Paper-Pencil tests

We received a small number of paper/pencil ELPA21 screener tests at our district. What are these for?

The ELPA21 screener offers a paper/pencil testing option for students whose IEP or 504 plan requires this accommodation. The tests are securely stored at districts in order to accommodate the 10-day requirement for placing eligible students for ELD services. If your district runs short on paper/pencil screeners for one or more grade levels, contact the AIR help desk (wahelpdesk@air.org or 844-560-7366) for additional booklets. OSPI estimates that each district would have between one and three copies at each grade level.

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Testing Timeframe

What is the timeframe I have to screen students? I hear 10 days and 3 days and 30 days, please clarify.

Washington State requires that potential ELs be screened and, if eligible, placed for services within [10 days of enrollment](#) (WAC 392-160-015). With the new screener, our vendor is committed to completing scoring within no more than 7 days, leaving approximately 3 days for districts to test students using the ELPA21 screener. Please ensure that you are budgeting for scoring days when you plan for compliance with the 10 day WAC requirements.

The 30 day timeframes is a federal regulation for the beginning of the school year that is superseded by our state-level 10-day requirement.

Future administrations of the screener may see adjustments to procedures that would lessen the time required for scoring leaving additional days for schools to test students. More information on the updates made to the screener will be communicated through the ELPA21 list serve. You can register to receive these updates in the blue box on [this page](#).

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When can we begin testing kindergarten student for the following year's enrollment?

Early testing of kindergarten students can begin on May 1 for enrollment in the next school year.

Do you have suggestions for how to lessen the time the screener takes and the personnel hours to administer it?

OSPI has no specific recommendations around this, but districts have reported using the following strategies:

Test potential ELs 1:1 through Step 1 (as required). For students who need continued 1:1 administration through Steps 2 and 3, complete their testing later that day or the next (build a schedule for these students). For students who can test on their own, pull them back in for testing as a group the following morning with one test administrator.

Once the students' computer skills are evaluated, and they have had a chance to use practice question types from each domain, skip to the end of Step 1. Many districts have reported that students are done with testing (burnt out) by the time they reach Step 2, so they are working to make Step 1 shorter since this section is not scored.

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[CEDARS & Students' Files](#)

How do I report scale scores in CEDARS for the ELPA21 screener?

A scale score on the screener (placement test) is required for CEDARS reporting. Since a scale score is not provided nor applicable for the ELPA21 screener, domain scores should be used for the scale score in CEDARS reporting.

Each of the four domains receives a score between 1 and 5. Report these domain scores as the "scale score" into your SIS in this order: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing. Here is an example:

A student scores the following:

Listening = 3
Reading = 3
Speaking = 2
Writing = 1

Scale Score for CEDARS reporting = 3321

What assessment information do I need to keep in my students' files?

For language proficiency screening with the ELPA21 screener, maintain a print-out of the student's score report from ORS in the student's cumulative file. Please see the [Secretary of State's Records Retention Guidelines for School Districts and LEAs](#), page 49.

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Students from Private Schools

How do we screen students from private schools if they do not have an SSID?

Private school students can have SSIDs issued for them if they do not yet have one; the steps to do so are the same for any student. SSIDs can be issued whether or not a student is actively enrolled and reported to CEDARS. For more information, consult the "assessing new and non-enrolled students" section of the "Student Record Management for Assessment and Accountability" document on the WCAP portal:

<http://wa.portal.airast.org/wp-content/uploads/Student-Record-Management-for-Assessment-Accountability.pdf>

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Off-grade screening

There are various factors that will impact whether a student will need to re-test when s/he has been re-assigned to a different grade. The four scenarios below illustrate the current policy. If your situation does not align with one of these, please contact the ELPA21 coordinator (elpa21@k12.wa.us)

1. If the student tests out of program/tested ineligible for services at a higher grade level, then that students should not be retested at the lower grade level. Accept the off-grade test scores.

A 9 year old was placed in 4th grade, took the screener and received a proficiency status of "Proficient." After taking the screener, the student's mother notices that the student's birth year was incorrect and the child is actually 8. The school moves the student to third grade. This student does not need to re-test and does not qualify for ELD services.

2. If a student tested in the same grade band (e.g., 6-8 or 2-3), then look at the score against the appropriate grade's cut scores and determine eligibility. This is only for grade bands using the same test for the grade the student was initially in and the one s/he is subsequently placed in.

A student arrives in middle school and is placed in 6th grade. After completing the ELPA21 screener, it is determined that this student should actually be

considered a 7th grade student. Using the breakdown of cut scores, [located here](#), determine the student's eligibility based on the cut scores of the accurate grade placement.

3. If a student is crossing grade bands and was initially eligible at the higher grade band, contact the AIR help desk to have the screener removed/revoked and retest the student at the lower grade level.

A student arrives in 4th grade and tests eligible for services, but is subsequently reassigned to 3rd grade. The student must retest to determine eligibility.

4. If the student is crossing grade bands, and the student is, subsequent to testing, in a higher grade, but the student was eligible for services at the lower grade in which s/he tests, then the student is eligible for ELD services.

A student was inadvertently tested as a first grader, but is actually a second grader. S/he tested eligible with the first grade test and is eligible for services as a second grader. This student would not be retested and would receive services.

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2018 Screener Revisions

How will the screener for 2018-19 differ from this year's screener?

The revised screener will be available in August. Our intent is to provide detailed information to inform district decision-making around early kindergarten testing. The following information is what we know about the next version of the ELPA21 screener.

Step 1: Step 1 of the screener will be significantly shorter next year. The current version includes an average of 16 questions. Next year's version will include approximately 8 questions. This section will continue to be administered 1:1 without exception.

Step 2: Step two, in the new version, will be split into two sections, 2a and 2b. 2a will consist of approximately 5 speaking questions. These questions will be scored by the TA as the student tests. These questions will require 1:1 test administration. Section 2b will include select response questions from the other three language domains. Step 2 is approximately the same length next year as this year.

Step 3: Step 3 will remain approximately the same length as it is this year. However, students whose test responses in step 2 indicate that they will not score proficient will not enter Step 3.

1:1 Administration: In the new screener version, Step 1 and Step 2 section A will require 1:1 administration. Similar to this year, the TA will decide if continued 1:1 administration is necessary for Step 2 section b and Step 3.

Test Completion: In the current year, all students complete all steps of the screener. In the next version of the screener, all students complete Step 1 and both sections of Step 2. If students are not on a path to reach proficient status, they will exit the test session at the end of Step 2. Only students who may be proficient will enter Step 3 of the screener.

Overall Test Duration: Due to the abbreviated Step 1 and the early decision at the end of Step 2, many students will have a testing experience that will take significantly less time than the current version. Those who take all three steps of the test will have a shorter experience than this year, but it will not be as significant a cut in the time.

Scoring: Section 2a is comprised of approximately speaking items. TAs will be scoring these items as the student tests. The student's testing experience is momentarily stopped while the TA enters the scores for 2a. (Training and more information will be provided prior to the screener opening in August). The remainder of Step 2 (2b) is scored by machine. Step 3 has hand scoring items that are scored centrally through the vendor.

Turnaround Time: This year, our vendor committed to a 7 day turnaround. In reality, the vast majority of screeners were returned within 4 days. Our vendor continues to commit to a 7 day turnaround for all tests needing hand scoring. However, tests that are ended after Step 2 will receive scores within 24 hours.

It is our intention in providing this information to allow districts planning for kindergarten screening to have the most current information to make an informed decision. In August, the screener will open no later than August 13. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Huff (leslie.huff@k12.wa.us) in the Select Assessments Office.