

# English for Speakers of Other Languages Grades 6 to 8

## Summary

The English language learner (ELL) develops English literacy skills while simultaneously gaining content area (mathematics, science, and social studies) knowledge in English. Content area teachers modify the instruction and use a variety of learning strategies to make learning more meaningful and understandable for the ELL. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered at all campuses in Austin ISD. Content area ESL classes are offered at some campuses where large populations of ELLs are enrolled. Instruction in these classes is provided by teachers who are familiar with ESL strategies and who have an ESL endorsement.

Upon the ELL's enrollment, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee evaluates the ELLs to determine the level of English oral language proficiency—Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. The expectations for ELLs are the same as those for all students. (Please refer to the content-area pages in this guide.) Emphasis is placed on acquiring English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and expanding content-area vocabulary.

## All ELLs will:

- Listen and speak actively in a variety of situations.
- Decode and read written English text.
- Use writing as a tool for language acquisition.

## The **Beginning** ELL will:

- Distinguish and produce sounds and intonation patterns and begin to eliminate barriers to effective communication.
- Use decoding skills to recognize words in English and recognize common phonemic and structural patterns in English (sound groups/ prefix, root, suffix).
- Write and recognize letters and words in English.

## The **Intermediate** ELL will:

- Listen critically to analyze and evaluate a speaker's message.
- Begin to read with fluency and understanding while increasing vocabulary and comprehension.
- Compose original text and respond in authentic language.

## The **Advanced** ELL will:

- Share knowledge clearly.
- Read in English with increased fluency and understanding.
- Write and edit in English for a variety of purposes.

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## Tips for Parents

**Listening and Speaking:** The ELL will enrich his/her listening skills by listening to a variety of speakers, including teachers and peers, to gain an increasing level of comprehension and appreciation for newly acquired language. The ELL will enrich his/her speaking ability by speaking for a variety of purposes using developmental vocabulary.

- Ask your child's teachers how his/her instruction is modified.
- Watch an English-language TV program with your child and ask for a translation.
- Listen to an English-language radio program with your child.
- Watch an English-language movie with your child and ask him/her to summarize it.
- Ask your child to compare and contrast both alphabets in sound and print.
- Encourage your child to repeat particular sounds difficult for an ELL (such as b and v, th, ch, sh).
- Encourage your child to play rhyming games with English words.
- Attend story-telling time at the public library near your home.
- Have your child translate for you.
- Monitor your child's English language homework by asking him/her to explain the homework in the family language.
- Ask your child to explain in English the objectives and homework for each class.
- Let your child take care of your correspondence in English.
- Ask your child to share in English his/her favorite recipe.
- Have your child describe an imaginary trip.
- Have your child record a message in English on the telephone answering machine.
- Use a video camera to record family gatherings and have your child narrate the events.
- As the family participates in games, such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Bingo, have your child give the directions in English.
- Use audiotapes to reinforce the development of speaking and listening skills.

**Reading:** The ELL will read a variety of texts for a variety of purposes with an increasing level of comprehension.

- Help your child identify basic English safety vocabulary and signs, such as *Don't walk, Danger, Do Not Enter, Exit*.
- As you drive or ride with your child, have him/her read signs to you.
- Ask your child to identify content-area vocabulary. For example, select an article and have him identify social studies, science, or math words.
- Listen while your child reads to you from science or social studies textbooks.
- Establish a family silent reading time when all family members read.
- Have your child explain captions of pictures in newspapers.
- Ask your child to summarize key points of newspaper or magazine articles.
- Challenge your child to read books in English to younger family members.
- Obtain a free "Star Card" from the Austin Public Library facility near your home.
- Help your child select appropriate native-language reading materials and literature at the public library so that native-language reading skills continue and transfer to English.
- Have your child read a bus schedule.
- Have your child follow a recipe.
- Have your child follow the instructions for assembling something you bought.

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**Writing: The ELL will write in a variety of forms with increasing accuracy to effectively address a specific purpose and audience.**

- Have your child practice writing every day.
- Ask your child to write the alphabet in English and in his/her first language to make comparisons between the two.
- Check your child's ability to write his/her name, address, phone number, and emergency information.
- Have your child copy his/her class schedule, with teachers' names, room numbers, times, and dates and then explain it to you.
- Create with your child a personal survival guide to carry in his/her backpack, including a bus or school schedule, neighborhood information, directions home, and vital phone numbers.
- Have your child translate simple sentences from the first language to English.
- Have your child write a learning journal to share daily.
- Help your child develop a vocabulary book or glossary for each content area class. The native language word could be written in parentheses next to the English word.
- Ask your child to create a story with a math, science, or history theme or topic using drawings or pictures and text.
- Encourage your child to write a letter to a relative describing your neighborhood, a family gathering, or something personal.
- Encourage your child to read and check assignments and papers again before turning them in.
- Assist your child in creating a personal spelling list.
- Show different uses of written language in English or in the family language by collecting samples, such as instructions, letter writing, poetry, menus, posters, and persuasive letters.
- Assist your child with library research.
- Incorporate the use of the telephone, answering machine, video camcorder, or digital camera as learning tools.
- Have your child write about an imaginary or real trip; include a list of the items you must pack, and estimate the costs.
- Encourage your child to write a summary about a family gathering, party, or trip.
- Encourage your child to use a bilingual dictionary as he/she writes in English.
- Encourage your child to use a thesaurus to enhance his/her writing in English.

## **Questions Parents Can Ask Their Child**

- What are you learning in science (or social studies, mathematics, and English)?
- What homework do you have today in mathematics (or English, social studies, science)?
- Please explain your homework to me.
- What new words did you learn today in social studies (science, mathematics, or English)?
- What don't you understand about mathematics (science, social studies, or English)?
- Who were the characters in the television program we just watched together?
- What was the plot in the movie we just saw?
- Restate the news.
- Where and when did the story you read take place?
- What do you think the author was trying to tell the readers in this story?
- Tell me how you solved that mathematics problem.
- What was the result of the science experiment?