



Level 1	At this level of proficiency students may: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- be self-conscious and confused- smile hesitantly- benefit from support of peer buddies- observe surroundings carefully- be silent for periods of the school day- use one- or two-word utterances in English- use pictures and gestures to support communication- rely on first language- read or write limited number of high-frequency utility words (e.g., exit, open, a bus #, etc.)- need support for writing- copy without understanding.
Level 2	At this level of proficiency students may: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- begin to understand social norms such as eye contact and personal space- understand basic classroom activities with visual support- increase confidence in familiar classroom situations- respond to yes/no questions- label and use pictures to communicate- increase use of high-frequency utility words- begin to compile words and phrases for daily living (e.g., food, clothing)- know some subject-specific words and phrases- name letters and know most corresponding sounds- imitate and copy phrase and sentence patterns- increase sight word vocabulary- begin to write short sentences independently- use some writing conventions such as capital letters and periods.
Level 3	At this level of proficiency students may: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- be confident enough to initiate conversations with English-speaking peers- begin to act as buddies to others- communicate competently in the classroom environment- respond to basic questions using simple sentences- use vocabulary competently for daily living- increase subject-specific vocabulary- experiment with synonyms and antonyms*- write simple sentences with minimal errors- experiment with longer sentences and basic paragraphs*- begin writing for academic purposes*- improve their use of writing conventions- be more comfortable expanding friendships beyond peers who speak their first language- understand most social conversations without support.

Level 4	<p>At this level of proficiency students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adjust language depending on the communication context - be more comfortable expanding friendships beyond peers who speak their first language - understand most social conversations without support - understand most academic language with some support - contribute information on a variety of topics - respond to hypothetical questions - use subject-specific vocabulary in context - use specialized vocabulary associated with the subject area* - write a variety of texts independently* - experiment with sentence variety to develop personal style and voice* - use conventions more accurately.
Level 5	<p>At this level of proficiency students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be confident and competent when communicating with teachers and peers - use English language to self-advocate - use English confidently and competently for academic purposes and to solve problems - may fluently switch between their first language and English - have fluent speech, which may be influenced by first language - transfer subject-specific vocabulary to a variety of contexts* - understand humour and figurative language* - write a variety of well-organized and unified texts* - vary sentence structure and use complex sentences to achieve a variety of purposes* - establish voice and style in writing* - use conventions consistently and with minimal errors - select specific words to achieve purpose.



* Characteristics of students of junior/senior high age.

The strategies presented throughout the rest of this chapter can be used to differentiate instruction and support English language learners as they move through these stages.

English as a second language proficiency benchmarks

Alberta Education has developed proficiency benchmarks for English as a second language. The benchmarks provide:

- the foundation for developing a common understanding of English language proficiency levels and English as a second language programming needs across the province
- descriptions of the English language abilities that students typically demonstrate at each of the five proficiency levels: Kindergarten, grades 1–3, grades 4–6, grades 7–9 and grades 10–12.

The benchmarks help teachers:

- support the initial identification of language proficiency levels
- guide appropriate programming for English language learners