

Writing in the Content Areas and TELPAS

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Session Objectives

- To show close connection between ELPS and TELPAS for the domain of writing for grades 2–12
- To reinforce benefits of incorporating ELPS for writing in content area instruction to teach and assess English language learners (ELLs) effectively throughout the year
- To assist teachers to incorporate writing assignments during content area instruction so there is a smooth transition to gather writing samples for TELPAS

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

- Assesses the progress that ELLs in kindergarten through grade 12 make in acquiring the English language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Measures English acquisition in alignment with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) that are integrated into the state curriculum
- Fulfills state and federal requirements for assessing English language proficiency
- Results used in accountability and performance-based monitoring activities

TELPAS Writing

Assessment Requirements for Grades 2–12

Grades 2–12 Writing Assessment Approach

- Raters assemble a collection of each student's writing from a variety of content areas.
- Raters base the English writing proficiency ratings on the contents of the collections.
- Additional classroom observations are not used.

Assembly Criteria

Each writing collection must contain –

- At least **5 total samples**
 - At least **1 writing sample** that elicits use of past tense
 - At least **2 writing samples** from mathematics, science, or social studies

Writing Collection

Writing samples are to be collected within TEA's designated TELPAS writing collection period. A district deadline for completing writing collections must allow for collections to be verified and rated in order for ratings to be submitted by state established deadlines.

However, the district's deadline should give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their current level of English writing proficiency, especially for those students who are on the border between two proficiency levels.

Some Eligible Types of Writing

- Basic descriptive writing on a personal/familiar topic
- Writing about a familiar process
- Writing that elicits use of past tense
- Personal narratives and reflective pieces
- Expository and other extended writing on a topic from language arts
- Expository or procedural writing from science, mathematics, and social studies

Writing Collections

- TELPAS writing samples to include in the collections should be taken from **authentic classroom activities** grounded in **content area TEKS** and **ELPS**.
- Collections should contain some papers in which students showcase English they know and feel comfortable using.
- Collections should also include papers in which students are stretched and pushed beyond their comfort zone so the collection shows that a student has not yet reached the next level (the student is beginning but not yet intermediate, intermediate but not yet advanced, advanced but not yet advanced high).

Writing Collections

Collections assembled need to help raters determine and justify ratings. The samples in a collection must give you evidence to say, “I know the student is at least at X proficiency level because of these characteristics in his or her writing. I know the student is not yet at the next proficiency level because of these other characteristics in his or her writing.”

Reminder: The characteristics considered must come from the PLDs.

ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors

Grades 2–12 Writing

Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High
Beginning English language learners (ELLs) lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.	Intermediate ELLs have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a limited way.	Advanced ELLs have enough English vocabulary and command of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks, although second language acquisition support is needed.	Advanced high ELLs have acquired the English vocabulary and command of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks with minimal second language acquisition support.
<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have little or no ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction lack the English necessary to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing (e.g., focus and coherence, conventions, organization, voice, and development of ideas) in English <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ability to label, list, and copy high-frequency words/phrases and short, simple sentences (or even short paragraphs) based primarily on recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar material; this type of writing may be quite accurate present tense used primarily frequent primary language features (spelling patterns, word order, literal translations, and words from the student's primary language) and other errors associated with second language acquisition may significantly hinder or prevent understanding, even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a limited ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction are limited in their ability to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English; communicate best when topics are highly familiar and concrete, and require simple, high-frequency English <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple, original messages consisting of short, simple sentences; frequent inaccuracies occur when creating or taking risks beyond familiar English high-frequency vocabulary; academic writing often has an oral tone loosely connected text with limited use of cohesive devices or repetitive use, which may cause gaps in meaning repetition of ideas due to lack of vocabulary and language structures present tense used most accurately; simple future and past tenses, if attempted, are used inconsistently or with frequent inaccuracies descriptions, explanations, and narrations lacking detail; difficulty expressing abstract ideas primary language features and errors associated with second language acquisition may be frequent some writing may be understood only by individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs; parts of the writing may be hard to understand even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are able to use the English language, with second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English, although second language acquisition support is particularly needed when topics are abstract, academically challenging, or unfamiliar <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grasp of basic verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns; partial grasp of more complex verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns emerging grade-appropriate vocabulary; academic writing has a more academic tone use of a variety of common cohesive devices, although some redundancy may occur narrations, explanations, and descriptions developed in some detail with emerging clarity; quality or quantity declines when abstract ideas are expressed, academic demands are high, or low-frequency vocabulary is required occasional second language acquisition errors communications are usually understood by individuals not accustomed to the writing of ELLs 	<p>These students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are able to use the English language, with minimal second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content area instruction know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate, with minimal second language acquisition support, elements of grade-appropriate writing in English <p>Typical writing features at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nearly comparable to writing of native English-speaking peers in clarity and precision with regard to English vocabulary and language structures, with occasional exceptions when writing about academically complex ideas, abstract ideas, or topics requiring low-frequency vocabulary occasional difficulty with naturalness of phrasing and expression errors associated with second language acquisition are minor and usually limited to low-frequency words and structures; errors rarely interfere with communication

Goal in Assembling Writing Collections

To make sure the collections portray the students' overall English writing proficiency levels

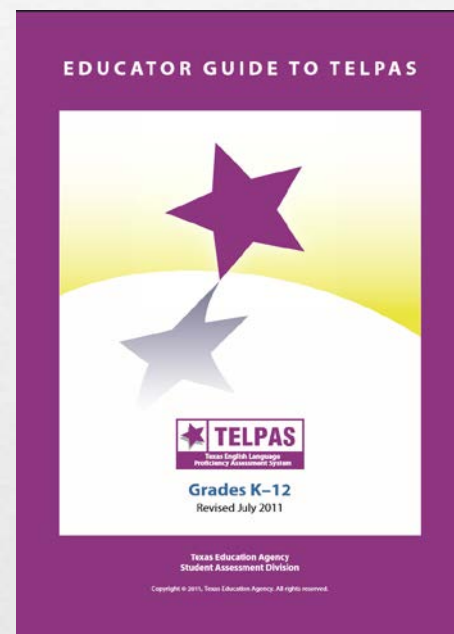


ELPS

Educator Guide to TELPAS

The Educator Guide to TELPAS is being revised and redesigned. The plan is to have the Educator Guide posted early in the school year.

Teachers unfamiliar with the ELPS and/or TELPAS should receive foundational training in the fall as a best practice. The Educator Guide to TELPAS will be useful resource to build educators' knowledge on the ELPS and their connection to TELPAS.



ELPS-TELPAS Connection

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), as required by 19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, Subchapter A, §74.4, outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for English language learners (ELLs).

School districts are required to implement ELPS as an integral part of each subject in the required curriculum. Every teacher who has an ELL in class is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the subject-area TEKS and the ELPS.

(TEA Educator Guide to TELPAS)

ELPS Components

a) Introduction

- Integrate second language instruction with content area instruction to
 - make content comprehensible
 - build academic language proficiency

c) Student Expectations for Second Language Acquisition

- Learning Strategies
- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

b) District Responsibilities

- Linguistically adjust instruction based on student proficiency levels
- Implement strategic interventions for beginning and intermediate students in grade 3 and up

d) Proficiency Level Descriptors for each Language Domain

- Beginning
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Advanced High

ELPS Instructional Components

There are three instructional components of the ELPS:

1. Cross-curricular second language acquisition essential knowledge and skills
2. Proficiency level descriptors (PLDs)
3. Linguistic accommodations

These three instructional components work together to accelerate the rate at which ELLs learn English and subject matter.

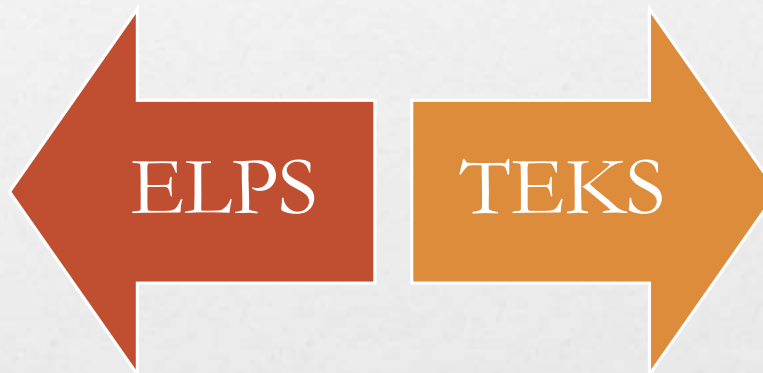
ELPS Student Expectations for Writing

TAC, Chapter 74.4 (b) (5) Cross-curricular second language acquisition/writing. The ELL writes in a **variety of forms** with **increasing accuracy** to **effectively address a specific purpose and audience** in **all content areas**. ELLs may be at the beginning, intermediate, advanced, or advanced high stage of English language acquisition in writing.

- (A) learn **relationships between sounds and letters** of the English language to represent sounds when writing in English;
- (B) write using newly acquired **basic vocabulary** and **content-based grade-level vocabulary**;
- (C) **spell familiar English words** with increasing accuracy, and **employ English spelling patterns and rules** with **increasing accuracy as more English is acquired**;
- (D) **edit writing for standard grammar and usage**, including subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, and appropriate verb tenses commensurate with grade-level expectations as more English is acquired;
- (E) employ increasingly **complex grammatical structures in content area writing** commensurate with grade-level expectations, such as:
- (i) using correct verbs, tenses, and pronouns/antecedents;
 - (ii) using possessive case (apostrophe s) correctly; and
 - (iii) using negatives and contractions correctly;
- (F) write using a **variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences** in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired; and
- (G) **narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs** as more English is acquired.

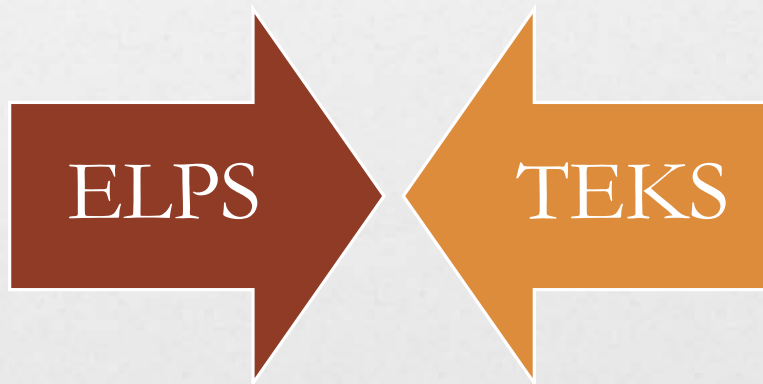
ELPS and TEKS Instruction

Should ELPS and TEKS instruction be considered to be exclusive from each other?



ELPS and TEKS Instruction

The ELPS are required by TAC to be implemented as part of ongoing content area instruction and as such are integrally linked with the content area TEKS. The ELPS help teachers meet the language and subject-matter needs of ELLs simultaneously.

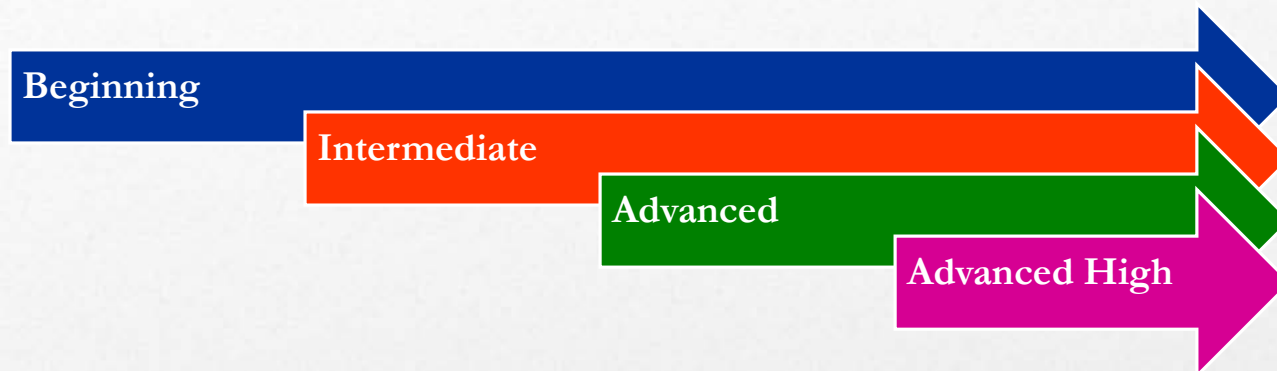


Measuring the ELPS

TELPAS assesses the abilities outlined in the **ELPS student expectations (SEs)** and reports performance in alignment with the **ELPS proficiency level descriptors (PLDs)**.

TELPAS measures the ELPS; the two are integrally aligned.

PLDs and Instruction



The PLDs play an important role in linguistically accommodated instruction. The PLDs describe the degree to which students at each of the four proficiency levels need linguistic supports and accommodations to engage meaningfully in grade-level instruction.

As students progress from one proficiency level to the next, their level of English proficiency increase and their need for linguistic support and accommodations decreases.

PLDs and Instruction

Teachers should use the PLDs throughout the school year as part of ongoing formative assessment to –

- stay attuned to the English language proficiency levels of their students,
- monitor progress, and
- linguistically tailor (accommodate) content area instruction and integrate second language instruction according to the proficiency level needs of their ELLs as the students learn more English.

PLDs and Instruction

Note that for **ongoing formative assessment** in grades 2–12, teachers use classroom observations and interactions in addition to student writing samples to monitor and promote growth in English language writing proficiency.

At the **time of TELPAS**, student writing collections are the sole basis for the assessment of English language writing proficiency. Information from classroom observations and interactions is not used.

Writing in the Content Areas

Mathematics

Elementary Example

TEKS 3 (4) Number and operations.

The student applies mathematical process standards to develop and use strategies and methods for whole number computations in order to solve problems with efficiency and accuracy. The student is expected to: **(G) use strategies and algorithms, including the standard algorithm, to multiply a two-digit number by a one-digit number. Strategies may include mental math, partial products, and the commutative, associative, and distributive properties.**

Example Writing Assignment:

Solve the problem and explain the strategy you used to get your answer.

There were 8 classmates who were planting flowers when 3 more students joined to help. If each student plants 4 flowers, how many flowers did they plant total?

Elementary Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Middle School Example

TEKS 6 (3) Number and operations.

The student applies mathematical process standards to represent addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division while solving problems and justifying solutions. The student is expected to: **(D) add, subtract, multiply, and divide integers fluently;**

Example Writing Assignment:

Solve the problem. Then explain how you solved the problem.

$$96 \div 4^2 + (25 \times 2) - 15$$

Middle School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

High School Example

TEKS Algebra I (2) Linear functions, equations, and inequalities.

The student applies the mathematical process standards when using properties of linear functions to write and represent in multiple ways, with and without technology, linear equations, inequalities, and systems of equations. The student is expected to: **(D) write and solve equations involving direct variation;**

Example Writing Assignment:

Solve the problem and explain the steps taken.

In an electrical circuit, the voltage across a resistor is directly proportional to the current running through the resistor. If a current of 12 amps produces 480 volts across a resistor, how many volts would a current of 1.5 amps produce across an identical resistor?

High School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Writing in the Content Areas

Science

Elementary Example

TEKS 4 (10) Organisms and environments.

The student knows that organisms undergo similar life processes and have structures that help them survive within their environment. The student is expected to: **(B) demonstrate that some likenesses between parents and offspring are inherited, passed from generation to generation such as eye color in humans or shapes of leaves in plants. Other likenesses are learned such as table manners or reading a book and seals balancing balls on their noses;**

Example Writing Assignment:

Explain the difference between inherited and learned likenesses. Give 3 examples of inherited likenesses and 3 examples of learned likenesses you received from your parents.

Elementary Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(E) employ increasingly complex grammatical structures in content area writing commensurate with grade-level expectations, such as:
 - (ii) using possessive case (apostrophe s) correctly
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Middle School Example

TEKS 7 (8) Earth and space.

The student knows that natural events and human activity can impact Earth systems. The student is expected to: **(A) predict and describe how different types of catastrophic events impact ecosystems such as floods, hurricanes, or tornadoes;**

Example Writing Assignment:

Describe 3 types of catastrophic events and how they can impact an ecosystem.

Middle School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

High School Example

TEKS Biology (6) Science concepts.

The student knows the mechanisms of genetics, including the role of nucleic acids and the principles of Mendelian Genetics. The student is expected to:

(F) predict possible outcomes of various genetic combinations such as monohybrid crosses, dihybrid crosses and non-Mendelian inheritance;

Example Writing Assignment:

A pea plant with the genotype Tt for tall stems is crossed with a pea plant with the same genotype Tt. Draw and complete a Punnett square of the parent genotypes then explain and describe all the possible genotypes and phenotypes of the offspring.

High School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(E) employ increasingly complex grammatical structures in content area writing commensurate with grade-level expectations, such as:
 - (i) using correct verbs, tenses, and pronouns/antecedents
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Writing in the Content Areas

Social Studies

Elementary Example

TEKS 5 (15) Government.

The student understands important ideas in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The student is expected to: **(C) explain the reasons for the creation of the Bill of Rights and its importance.**

Example Writing Assignment:

Explain why the Bill of Rights was created and why it is important.

Elementary Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Middle School Example

TEKS 6 (5) Geography.

The student understands how geographic factors influence the economic development, political relationships, and policies of societies. The student is expected to: **(A) identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for the location of economic activities in places and regions;**

Example Writing Assignment:

Describe how geographic factors have affected the economy of 3 different regions around the world.

Middle School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(E) employ increasingly complex grammatical structures in content area writing commensurate with grade-level expectations, such as:
 - (i) using correct verbs, tenses, and pronouns/antecedents
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

High School Example

TEKS World History (3) History.

The student understands the contributions and influence of classical civilizations from 500 BC to AD 600 on subsequent civilizations. The student is expected to: **(B) explain the impact of the fall of Rome on Western Europe;**

Example Writing Assignment:

How did the fall of Rome impact Western Europe?

High School Example

ELPS

- 5(B) write using newly acquired basic vocabulary and content-based grade-level vocabulary
- 5(E) employ increasingly complex grammatical structures in content area writing commensurate with grade-level expectations, such as:
 - (i) using correct verbs, tenses, and pronouns/antecedents
 - (ii) using possessive case (apostrophe s) correctly
- 5(F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired
- 5(G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired

Assembling Writing Collections for TELPAS

Samples Required

- At least **5 total samples** are required in each collection.
- In each collection there must be
 - at least **1 writing sample that elicits use of past tense**
 - at least **2 writing samples from mathematics, science, or social studies**
- In all writing assignments, students should take their time and write in as much detail as they can.
- Include writing assignments that allow students to show what they can do, as well as what students struggle with in second language acquisition to see the full extent of their language abilities.
- Remember to build collections that portray the student's overall ability to communicate in writing in English; avoid including samples in the writing collection that interfere with the ability to rate students effectively.

Types of Writing

Writing that elicits use of past tense

Examples:

- Stories based on something shown in a picture or pictures
- Narratives about something that happened or that you did that was disappointing, unforgettable, surprising, interesting, unexpected, funny, unfair, etc.
- Original stories composed in creative writing activities
- Narratives about what you did this morning, yesterday, last weekend
- Explanation of mathematical concept, scientific process, or historical figure you have learned about

Types of Writing

Expository or procedural writing from science

Examples:

- Explaining a scientific process you have learned about
- Explaining the steps in an experiment or scientific investigation you have done
- Writing about something you are learning in your science class
- Writing about why lab rules are important
- Writing about how to use a certain device or piece of science equipment

Types of Writing

Expository or procedural writing from mathematics

Examples:

- Writing about a way you have used mathematics outside of school
- Explaining the steps you use in a mathematical process
- Writing about something you are learning in your mathematics class
- Writing to reflect the thinking you do to solve a problem

Types of Writing

Expository or procedural writing from social studies

Examples:

- Writing about a historical figure, the person's contributions or significance, etc.
- Writing an expository piece about an important historical or current event
- Writing about something you are learning in your social studies class
- Defending a point of view about a governmental policy or controversial issue
- Writing a persuasive piece to influence a change in policy or law

Newcomers and Beginning Level Students

- The ELPS require ELLs of all proficiency levels to learn to write in English.
- It is expected that the limited English of beginning students will cause some writing to be brief.
- Writing tasks for these students should be adapted to their needs. Their writing in English will likely be formulaic or memorized, include recently practiced vocabulary, lack detail, etc.
- Consider students' English language proficiency levels in determining whether papers are too brief.

Newcomers and Beginning Level Students

Include tasks that show what a student CAN do.

- High frequency words/phrases and short simple sentences
- Frequent primary language features (spelling patterns, word order, words from primary language) and other errors associated with second language



Summing it Up

Writing in the content areas is not only required as part of the ELPS but an integral part of well-rounded classroom instruction.



TELPAS Educator Committees

Input from Texas educators is a critical component of ensuring that the state assessments developed by the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) are valid, reliable, high-quality measures of student achievement.

We are seeking qualified educators from your school or district to serve on statewide committees who will participate and review test items (questions) in a Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Educator Committee meeting.

Eligibility Criteria:

Our process is dependent on educators who are currently working with English language learners (ELLs) and have bilingual/ESL experience. Content area (math, science, and social studies) educators are also eligible. However, they must have bilingual/ESL experience.

TELPAS Educator Committees

Recommendation Process

Eligible educators can be recommended by superintendents, administrators, directors, specialists, department heads, educational diagnosticians, or education service center (ESC) staff. The recommendation must be submitted online by the appropriate district, campus, or ESC staff member.

Online Recommendation Form:

1. Go to: <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/>
2. Click on Student Assessment A-Z Directory.
3. Scroll down and click on Educator Committees.
4. Complete online form.

TELPAS Educator Committee Upcoming Meetings

Reading Educator Committee Meetings (2 days):

Grade 10-12 July 27-28, 2017

Grade 2 August 15-16, 2017

Listening and Speaking Educator Committee Meetings (1 ½ days):

Grade 6-8 July 31- August 1, 2017

Grade 2-3 *August 3-4, 2017 (starts at 1 p.m. August 3)

Grade 9-12 August 17-18, 2017

We look forward to seeing some of Texas' finest educators at our TELPAS educator review meetings!

For any questions about educator committees or the recommendation process, please contact anyone on TEA's TELPAS team at (512) 463-9536.

Contact Information

Call Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536

Send email to ELL Assessments team at
ell.tests@tea.texas.gov

Information on State Assessments for English
Language Learners
<http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/>