# English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)

## Overview of the Computer-Based ELPAC English Transcript

Welcome to this overview of the Computer Based English Language Proficiency Assessments for California, or ELPAC, sponsored by the California Department of Education. California has over six million students. About 42% of those students speak a language other than English in their homes. Over 1.1 million of those students are classified as English learners, which is almost 20% of all students. This makes our state one of the most diverse states in the country. As a result, it is important that we are providing students with the opportunities they need to learn English and be successful in school. Therefore, students who need extra help in English must be provided with supports and instruction, based on their level of English proficiency. Let's hear from Jose Franco, an ELD and migrant coordinator.

My family and I got here to the United States when I was nine years old and had to learn English. It was an important and crucial for me to be able to master the language as quickly as possible in order to be able to access the curriculum taught in schools. An exam like the ELPAC helps with that process. It helps identify where an English learner is and where they need assistance so that they can more rapidly master the language.

When new students enroll in a California public school for the first time, parents are asked to complete a home language survey. The survey determines whether a student has a language other than English spoken at home. If so, the school will administer the Initial ELPAC to determine whether a student is an English learner. Students who are identified as English learners are then provided with the necessary supports to learn English. Each student identified as an English learner must be assessed annually with the Summative ELPAC, to know whether a student is making progress toward English proficiency.

The ELPAC is aligned with the 2012 English Language Development Standards, or ELD standards, and classroom instruction reflects those standards. The ELPAC assesses English proficiency in four domains or performance areas. They are: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

For Listening, students can listen to a variety of scenarios including conversations, presentations, and stories, and answer questions about what they heard.

For Speaking, students can speak one-on-one in English for a variety of purposes, to talk about an illustration or scene, support their opinion, retell a story and summarize an academic presentation.

For Reading, students can read a variety of materials and answer questions about what they've read. For Writing, students can write about a variety of topics for different purposes, including giving their opinion, describing a picture, and writing about an experience or academic information.

The Initial ELPAC is shorter than the Summative ELPAC and is given to students only one time within the first 30 days of enrollment in a California school. The Initial ELPAC consists of six grade or grade span tests. By administering the Initial ELPAC, students identified as English learners will receive the extra support they need to learn English. Martha Gomez, director of language services is a perfect illustration of why the Initial ELPAC is necessary.

So looking back at my own experience, when I came in, it took over six months before my English teacher knew that I did not speak English. She thought I was just quiet and because I was a visual learner, I could remember things that she wrote on the board and somehow be able to perform okay in her class. But it took somebody to come in and speak to me and then find out, "Oh my gosh, she doesn't speak English." So I value ELPAC in that it gives us the information on every student so that that information is accessible to all teachers, and then instruction can be designed to help them do well at school.

Within 30 days of enrollment, you will receive your child's Initial ELPAC results in the form of a parent notification letter, which will describe important supports and services that will help your child become proficient in English. The Summative ELPAC is given annually to students who have been identified as English learners. Here again is ELD migrant coordinator Jose Franco.

The purpose of the ELPAC Summative Assessment is to determine the progress of English proficiency for English learners, and to determine when they are ready to be reclassified and exited out of our English learner programs.

So the Summative ELPAC benefits your child by providing your child's teachers with the information they need to continuously tailor supports to each child's needs, showing you where you can help your child improve their English skills, and providing your child's district with information to determine when your child is ready to succeed in class without extra support.

The Summative ELPAC consists of seven grade or grade span tests, kindergarten, grade one, grade two, grades three through five, six through eight, nine and ten, and eleven and twelve.

The Summative ELPAC is given to all students previously identified as English learners, and its administration window is from February 1st through May 31st of each year. How the ELPAC is administered depends on the performance area, task type, and the grade or grade span.

In kindergarten through grade two, all domains are administered one-on-one except for Writing in grade two. In grades three through twelve, Listening, Reading and Writing are administered in a group, and grade two may be administered in small groups of 10 or fewer students. Speaking is administered one-on-one for all grade levels.

California schools are continuing to incorporate technology into their curriculum and assessments to help students gain technological skills needed to succeed in 21st century college and careers.

Therefore, the Summative ELPAC is computer-based. By July 2020, the Initial ELPAC also will be computer-based. Students unfamiliar with testing on computers will get the help they need to navigate both the device and the testing system. An advantage to administering the assessments on computer is that computers offer a wider assortment of accessibility supports. The ELPAC is designed to ensure that every student has the ability to show what they know.

A number of resources are available to the parents and guardians of students who take the ELPAC. A parent guide to understanding the ELPAC is available in English and other languages on the ELPAC website at elpac.org/resources at the bottom of the page. The ELPAC website provides instructional videos that contain more information on subjects like understanding the summative ELPAC score report, and an introduction to the Initial ELPAC for parents. These videos can be found at elpac.org/resources/videos. The CDE website at cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep offers information about the overall ELPAC program, resources and communication materials, test administration, and more.

For even more information about the ELPAC, the California Department of Education in partnership with Educational Testing Service and Smarter Balanced has produced the ELPAC startingsmarter.org website, in order to provide parents more information and resources they can use to help their child succeed. Because you are the expert on your child, Starting Smarter helps you better understand your child's progress and learning English so you have productive conversations with your child's teacher, and can even better support your child's learning at home.

The Starting Smarter website offers you the opportunity review and download a sample score report for both Initial ELPAC and Summative ELPAC. Starting Smarter also offers descriptions of the four performance areas. It even offers sample test questions tailored to your child's grade levels, so you and your child can know what to expect on the test. All this is available along with free resources to help you understand your child's results, prepare for parent teacher conferences, and access practice tests.

Thank you for watching this presentation on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California or ELPAC.