

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) Overview Video Transcript

(graphic): ELPAC LOGO

JOSE FRANCO, ELD/Migrant Coordinator (JOSE): My family and I got here to the United States when I was nine years old and had to learn English. It was 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.

OCN: Welcome to this overview of the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California or "ELPAC". This video covers...

- (graphics)**
- **Laws and regulations guiding the ELPAC**
 - **Purposes of the ELPAC**
 - **Elements of the ELPAC**
 - **How the ELPAC is administered**
 - **Available tools, supports, and resources**

Let's start with some background. California adopted three sets of standards:

(graphics/VO) California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects;

California Common Core State Standards for Mathematics; and

Next Generation Science Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve

OCN: In addition, in 2012 California adopted the English Language Development Standards or ELD Standards to support English learners so that they can access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content. The 2012 ELD Standards correspond to the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy and are designed to apply to English language and literacy skills across all academic content areas.

CRISTINA BURKHART, Teacher on Special Assignment (CRISTINA): Our students are being measured against English-only speakers and they need to rise to the occasion. Common Core State Standards will help our students meet those requirements. It would help them be critical thinkers. It would help them create. It'll help them synthesize information in a creative way.

OCN: This ensures that all students gain the necessary knowledge and skills in language arts and literacy, science, and mathematics required for success in college, career, and life.

CRISTINA: The ELPAC is aligned to the ELD Common Core Standards, which is extremely beneficial because they're a lot higher-order thinking. They require a lot of critical thinking, a lot of synthesis, a lot of creating. So being aligned to our present-day standards is a big plus.

JOSE: It integrates multiple subjects, so you have charts, you have graphs, so it allows students to use what they've learned in other classes not just English class such as math, science.

CAROL, ELD Curriculum Specialist (CAROL): The goal of learning language is that these children be academically competitive with their English-only peers.

Graphic and OCN/VO: What does this test mean to English Learners?

MARTHA GOMEZ, Director, Language Services and Student Programs (MARTHA): 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 O.K. 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 'em do well at school.

CRISTINA: In California we have about six million students, 1.4 million of them are English learners. We have about 70 languages. In my district we have a huge number of Middle Eastern students, a lot of them are Farsi, Dari and Arabic speakers - which are totally new demographics which we're glad to accommodate and happy to have the huge diversity in our district.

CAROL: In my own district, the majority of English learners are Spanish speakers, but we do have several other languages spoken. A lot of the children are born here in California and have family that speak a language other than English. So they enter school with some English quite frequently, but not fluent enough in English for academic success.

Graphic: California shape comes out of US Map with 30%

OCN: California has over 30 percent of the nation's English learners and is proud to be a diverse state educating students from around the world.

OCN: The ELPAC assesses knowledge and skills in the four language domains.

Graphic: ELPAC Domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

MARTHA: ELPAC contains four different areas of testing and they call them domains. It has listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of those domains have to do with language and it focuses on academic language.

CAROL: The ELPAC is given in transitional kinder and kindergarten, in first, second, in grades three through five, grade six through eight, grades nine and 10, and grades 11, 12.

- (graphic)**
- **Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten**
 - **Grade 1**
 - **Grade 2**
 - **Grades 3 through 5**
 - **Grades 6 through 8**
 - **Grades 9 and 10**
 - **Grades 11 and 12**

(graphics): test materials on the screen

OCN: Within a grade or grade span, all the test materials are identical. For example, all students tested in grades three through five take the same test, which is different from the test taken by students in grades six through eight. Additionally, there are separate scale scores for each grade or grade span that represent student performance.

MARIA NADDEO, Parent (MARIA): I think the purpose of the ELPAC is to inform parents and teachers how well their kids are doing English so that they can have the proper tools to assist them and help them progress.

OCN: Now let's examine the two types of assessments that comprise the ELPAC: The Initial Assessment and the Summative Assessment.

(graphic): Initial Assessment

OCN: The purpose of the ELPAC Initial Assessment is to identify whether a student is Initially Fluent English Proficient or is an English learner

CRISTINA: Based on the results of the home language survey, we identify which students speak another language at home, and we use that data to test mostly kindergarteners and newcomers to California.

JOSE: The ELPAC does not have any negative consequences for a student's education. On the contrary, everything that comes from the ELPAC is positive because it allows schools to more accurately tailor instruction to meet the needs of that student.

ELISA AYALA, ELD Resource Teacher (ELISA): Questions I get from parents are, "What do they need to study to pass a test?" So oftentimes, it's important for me to tell them that there is no pass or fail. It's not designed that way. Nobody, none of

the children are failing even if they don't speak any English, it's just gauging their language ability in English.

(graphic): The Initial Assessment - who takes the IA?

OCN/VO: The Initial Assessment - who takes the IA?

INGRID, Student: So when I get here, they test me first, then they put me in a special class, and my teachers know how to help me 'cause they know that our first language is not English. So they help us more and they know how to deal with ELD students.

OCN: The Initial Assessment is given after a student who speaks another language enrolls for the first time in a California public school. Most students who take the Initial Assessment will be entering kindergarten or transitional kindergarten. The remainder of students taking the assessment will be students coming from outside of California or the United States. These students may represent any grade or grade span.

MARTHA: There is a saying that we evaluate what we value, and we value the student's English Language and we know the importance of knowing where they're at, so that we can help them and we can provide the services that they need.

(graphic): Summative Assessment Administration Window: February 1 to May 31 Each Year

OCN/VO: The Summative Assessment administration window is from February 1 through May 31 of each year and is given to all students who have previously been identified as English learners.

JOSE: The purpose of the ELPAC summative assessment is to determine the progress of English proficiency for English learners and to determine when they're ready to be reclassified and exited out of our English learner programs.

OCN: The purposes of the ELPAC Summative Assessment are to...

- annually assess the English language proficiency of English learners in a manner consistent with the current federal accountability requirements, and
- identify English learners who have successfully achieved English proficiency and are ready to be considered for reclassification.

OCN: Now we will describe the administration of the ELPAC. Kindergarten and grade one assessments are administered in a one-on-one setting for all domains. At grades two through twelve, the Speaking domain is the only domain administered individually, and the Listening, Reading, and Writing are administered to students in groups.

MARIA: So if you're nervous that your kid's gonna take the ELPAC, there's nothing to be worried about because it's like a regular test they take in the classroom.

OCN: The test is administered by trained Test Examiners. Test Examiners are proficient speakers of English, and they speak only English when administering the assessment.

MOSES, Specialist, Student Testing Branch (MOSES): We know that the test needs to be administered by an employee of our district that is proficient in English. And in our district, we've tried to go a bit above and beyond that by wanting to have the classroom teacher be the one that administers it, so that they who are the ones that work with the students on a day-to-day basis are the ones that get the clear picture of where exactly the students are with regards to their English Language development.

OCN/VO: Is the ELPAC a timed test?

JOSE: The ELPAC isn't actually timed, there is no timeframe; students get as much time as they need to complete the test. The goal is for them to do it as well as possible.

(graphics) SHOTS OF EXAMINER'S MANUAL

OCN/VO: The ELPAC uses a variety of test materials. For each grade span, there is an Examiner's Manual that includes specific directions for administering the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing domains. The manuals provide specific details of each domain for group and individual administration, how to mark an answer, when to stop testing, and materials needed for local scoring.

(graphic): ANSWER BOOK AND TEST BOOKS

OCN/VO: For Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2, students will have an Answer Book and for Grades 3 through 12, they'll have an Answer Book and a Test Book specific to their grade level.

SHOTS OF EXAMINER LOCKING MATERIALS IN LOCKER.

OCN: The security of the ELPAC materials is extremely important. All testing materials are to be kept in a secure place when not in use, and students cannot have access to the test material prior to test administration. This ensures that all students are tested fairly and that the results are valid.

(graphics): Scoring Process for the Summative Assessment

LEA's send their completed test materials to ETS for Official Scoring.

Scoring takes an average of six to eight weeks.

Once they are returned, results are sent to parents within 30 days.

Initial Assessment Scoring is done at the local level.

OCN/VO: Local Educational Agencies or LEA's send their completed Summative Assessment test materials to ETS for official scoring. Once received, it takes an average of six to eight weeks for the contractor to score the assessments and return the results to the LEAs. LEAs must then send individual official ELPAC results to parents or guardians within 30 calendar days. Initial Assessment Scoring is done at the local level.

(graphics): Student Score Report

OCN: Parents or guardians receive a Student Score Report that summarizes their student's test results.

MARIA: That's the great part, we really get to see the results, they are mailed to us. We get to receive all the results of the four domains, the reading, writing, listening, speaking, and we can see how well they are progressing.

OCN/VO: The ELPAC contains some exciting new features. Many of the test items included in the ELPAC model effective instructional practices such as shared reading and writing for young students and notetaking for older students.

The entire Writing domain is assessed using open-ended constructed response questions, which provide more accurate information on performance.

For grades three through twelve, the ELPAC Listening domain consists of audio tracks in which the student hears academic information or a conversation. This authentic language production imitates what students hear in the real world. This also ensures that students throughout the state of California will hear the Listening questions asked in the exact same way.

The ELPAC Speaking items assess both everyday, or informal English, and academic English. Academic English refers to the language used in school to help students develop content knowledge and is the language students are expected to use to convey their understanding of this knowledge.

ELISA: That is students who were often born in California or in the United States and are second or third generation- their conversational English is typically excellent. But in some cases, they may be struggling with that academic English...

CRISTINA: So, academic English is a big deal because it will help you in every content area in history and science and math and any academic class. And it's something that is very difficult to acquire especially when you're an English learner, because you have your primary language that you need to acquire. So you have two languages, and that was my personal difficulty. I was born in the United States, but I was also an English learner. My grandmother watched me and she only spoke Spanish to me. I knew conversational Spanish and I knew conversational English, but I didn't know either academics. And I felt like I was always having to work harder to keep up with the class because I felt like I didn't have the vocabulary. And if I didn't put that extra effort into it, I wasn't going to obtain it.

ELISA: That's not something that you can find out by just chatting with the student and it's easy for teachers to say, "Oh, but that student speaks English really well. How can they be an English learner?" So, the ELPAC is a great tool to help distinguish which students might actually be lacking in those academic language skills which are, as research shows, an important key to success for students.

CRISTINA: So, I think academic English is a big deal, a big deal, and it's essential for us to be successful.

(graphics): [cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/
elpac.org/resources/practicetests/](http://cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/elpac.org/resources/practicetests/)

OCN/VO: Practice Tests organized by grade, grade span and domain are available on the California Department of Education and Elpac.org Web site at these addresses.

Each question is provided along with the English Language Development Standard or Standards addressed, the domain, the scoring method used, and information on student performance.

(graphic): elpac.org/resources/

OCN/VO: Resources for the ELPAC can be found at the ELPAC Web site, at the URL shown here. The Resources section provides helpful resources for Local Educational Agency personnel who administer the ELPAC.

(graphic): cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/

OCN/VO: You can also find additional information about the ELPAC at the California Department of Education ELPAC Web site at the URL shown here.

MOSES: What it's testing and what it's assessing really provides our teachers with a realistic measure of the skills that our students need to be successful.

OCN/VO: This concludes the ELPAC Overview. And thank you for joining us today.

(graphic): **ELPAC LOGO**