



English Language Proficiency Assessment
for the 21st Century

A background image of a Black woman with curly hair, wearing a blue polka-dot blazer over a white top, writing on a whiteboard with a red marker. The whiteboard has some handwritten text, including "Items = a, b, c", "Items >> are", "Return are", and "END".

Frequently Asked Questions for Educators and District Staff

**English Language Proficiency
Assessment for the 21st Century**

School Year 2025–2026

Frequently Asked Questions

General ELPA21 Questions

1. What is ELPA21?

ELPA21 is an assessment system housed at UCLA CRESST. ELPA21 assessments are aligned with college- and career-ready content standards and backed by psychometrics and research to meet state priorities, peer review, and English learner needs. Assessments include a screener, summative, and an alternate screener and summative for K–12 students.

2. What is the ELPA21 assessment system?

The ELPA21 assessment system consists of two types of assessments: screeners and summative assessments. The ELPA21 Dynamic Screener and the Alt ELPA Screener are taken upon entry into kindergarten (or when a student registers in a new state) and are used to identify students who may benefit from EL services. The ELPA21 Summative and the Alt ELPA Summative are taken annually and are used to measure student progress towards English language proficiency. For more information on the ELPA21's alternate assessments, please see the [Alt ELPA Summative FAQ](#) or the [Alt ELPA Screener FAQ](#).

3. Where can I learn more about ELPA21 assessments?

To learn more about the ELPA21 assessments, please visit elpa21.org/assessments or elpa21.org/resources. Additional assessment information may also be found within your state's Cambium Assessment Portal. If you still have unanswered questions, please contact your state's ELPA21 representative available at elpa21.org/resources, or click here elpa21.org/contact-us to submit an email inquiry.

Test Administration

4. Who takes the ELPA21 assessments?

The ELPA21 Dynamic Screener should be taken by all students who have been identified by the Home Language Survey (or similar document) as having a home language other than English upon entering school. The ELPA21 Summative should be taken by all students who have been identified as English learners.

5. When are the ELPA21 assessments available?

The ELPA21 Dynamic Screener is available year-round to accommodate incoming students. The ELPA21 Summative Assessment testing window is state-specific, but typically extends from early February to late March. State Education Agencies are responsible for determining their own testing windows.

6. How long does it take to administer the ELPA21 assessments?

Information on approximate test administration times for the ELPA21 Summative can be found in the [ELPA21 Summative Test Administration Time Chart](#). Information on approximate test administration times for the Dynamic Screener can be found in the [ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Test Administration Time Chart](#).

7. What is the preferred ratio of test administrators to students?

For the Dynamic Screener, both Step One and the first section of Step Two must be administered individually. Depending on the technology skills of the students, it may be necessary to individually administer all of Steps Two and Three as well.

For the ELPA21 Summative, the preferred ratio of test administrators to students is listed in the table below (see your state's *Test Administration Manual* for more information).

Table 1. Student/Test Administrator Ratio

Grade Band	Number of Students	Number of TAs
Kindergarten (Online)	1–5	1–2
Grade 1 (Online)	1–5	1–2
Grade Band 2–3 (Online)	8	1
Grade Band 4–5 (Online)	10	1
Grade Band 6–8 (Online)	15	1
Grade Band 9–12 (Online)	20	1

8. Are test rubrics available to educators?

There are non-secure rubrics available for hand-scored speaking and writing items and for the ELPA21 practice test. It is up to states to determine if and how rubrics are shared; some states post on their state education agency websites and others share via their testing portals. Please contact your state's ELPA21 representative for more information on accessing rubrics.

9. How can educators best prepare students to take ELPA21 assessments?

Prior to administering the assessment, educators and test administrators should have their students take the ELPA21 practice test (i.e., sample test items, interactive demo). The practice test provides students with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the test format and items prior to taking the actual assessment.

10. How can educators access the ELPA21 practice tests (i.e., sample test items, interactive demo)?

Practice tests are available on each state's Cambium assessment portal. After navigating to the practice test sign-in page, please make sure that the toggle switches for "Guest User" and "Guest Session" are both set to "ON." Then, click the green "Sign In" button at the bottom of the page. From there, you will be able to select a grade level, choose between the ELPA21 and Alt ELPA practice test, select the domain (listening, reading, speaking, or

writing), and identify accessibility options. Once you have finished selecting your options, click the green "Begin Test Now" button at the bottom of the page to start the practice test.

Standards

11. Where can educators find more information about the English Language Proficiency Standards?

Educators are encouraged to review the official *English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards* document for a comprehensive overview of the standards. ELPA21 also offers several resources that summarize the key points of this document:

- [*Standards At-A-Glance*](#)
- [*Standards Overview*](#)
- [*Organization of the ELP Standards*](#)
- [*Alternate Organization of the Standards*](#)
- [*Standards and Scoring for New ELPA21 Educators*](#)

Accessibility and Accommodations

12. What accessibility supports and accommodations are available on the assessments?

For the full list of accessibility supports and accommodations for the ELPA21 assessments, please consult the *ELPA21 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*. Additionally, there is a Braille version of the ELPA21 Summative Assessment available to students who are blind or have low vision. To learn more, please see *Braille Version Information for School District Staff*, located on elpa21.org/resources.

Technology

13. Where can educators find more information about technology requirements for the ELPA21 assessments?

Information on technology requirements can be found in your state's Cambium assessment portal within the *Technology Guide*, most often located under the "Technology Coordinators" tab or icon.

Scoring and Reporting

14. When are test scores available?

For the ELPA21 Summative, the score reporting window begins in late spring and is dependent on your state's testing window. School district staff will have varying permissions to view score reports. Test coordinators are responsible for providing access to staff members each school year. For the Dynamic Screener, the availability of test results may vary depending on the length of a test. If a student is administered only the first two steps of the screener, results typically will be available on the same day the test is finalized and submitted. If a student continues to Step 3, the results generally will be available within two to five calendar days. For states using Step 3 Autoscore, results will generally be available within a day of completing the test.

15. How can educators learn more about what the test scores mean?

ELPA21 offers a variety of resources to assist educators in meaningfully interpreted student scores. These resources include:

- [Quick Guide to Understanding ELPA21 Student Reports for Educators](#)
- [Sample Dynamic Screener Individual Student Report](#)
- [Sample ELPA21 Summative Individual Student Report](#)

16. What are the Achievement Level Descriptors?

The [Achievement Level Descriptors \(ALDs\)](#), also known as Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), describe achievement in terms of skills measured and demonstrated on the assessment, summarizing what students know and can do. The descriptors are organized by domain and grade band, and include scale score ranges for each proficiency level. The ALDs can be used by educators to target instruction for each of the four domains and to inform parents and students of the expectations to be considered proficient in English at a particular grade level or grade band.

17. How can educators communicate scores to parents/guardians?

ELPA21 provides a variety of resources that parents/guardians may use to better understand ELPA21 assessment scores. Please note ELPA21 provides customizable family brochures as well. These resources include:

- [Parent Guide to ELPA21 Student Reports \(English\)](#)
- [Parent Guide to ELPA21 Student Reports \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Customizable ELPA21 Family Brochure \(English\)](#)
- [Customizable ELPA21 Family Brochure \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Customizable ELPA21 Parent Glossary \(English\)](#)

Training

18. How do educators get certified to administer the assessments?

All test administrators must complete annual training, though certification procedures vary by state. Please contact your state's ELPA21 representative to confirm training requirements for your state.

19. What training resources are available for test administrators and coordinators?

Test administrators and coordinators can take the ELPA21 training modules located within the Learning Management System. These modules address best practices and protocols for the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener, the ELPA21 Summative Assessment, the Alt ELPA Screener, and the Alt ELPA Summative Assessment, with topics spanning from initial test preparation to post-administration tasks and score reporting. These LMS modules are updated each year; refresher training should be completed annually by both returning test administrators and coordinators.

20. Does ELPA21 offer any supplemental training resources?

ELPA21 offers additional training modules in partnership with the assessment vendor, Cambium Inc. These optional modules demonstrate how to use the testing platform and elaborate upon components such as Response Entry (RE) (formerly known as the data entry interface or DEI), the reporting system, the test delivery system (TDS), and the test interface distribution engine (TIDE). By taking the Cambium modules, administrators and coordinators can learn how to navigate the different Cambium interfaces and engage with critical components of the testing system. These modules were designed to support test administrators, technology coordinators, and state and district test coordinators.

Instructional Resources and Professional Learning

21. What instructional resources are available for educators?

ELPA21 has partnered with UCLA CRESST for English/Multilingual Learners to provide a variety of instructional resources. These resources include:

- Differentiating Instructions for EL/MLs Flipbook
- Differentiating for EL/MLs Poster
- Formative Assessment Foldable
- English/Multilingual Learner Toolkit
- English/Multilingual learner Toolkit Supplement
- English Language Performance Measure Tasks Volume 3 – Rubrics and Student Sheets

To learn more about these resources, please visit shop.nabe.org.

22. What professional learning workshops are available for educators?

ELPA21 offers the following workshops to support educators and administrators who work with English/multilingual learners:

- ELP Standards, Assessments, and Score Reports: increase familiarity with ELP Standards, use ELP Screener and Summative Assessments to support instruction, and embed ELP Standards into instruction.
- Differentiating Instruction for English/Multilingual Learners Level 1: learn frameworks for planning, delivering, and assessing instruction based on students' ELP levels.
- Differentiating Instruction for English/Multilingual Learners Level 2: learn to scaffold support, apply differentiated strategies to lesson planning, and analyze complex instructional tasks.
- Formative Assessment for English/Multilingual Learners Level 1: learn an effective formative assessment framework and how to use ELPA21 tools to inform instruction.
- Formative Assessment for English/Multilingual Learners Level 2: build on Level 1 formative assessment framework and learn strategies to implement short-cycle formative assessment practices into various instructional contexts.



If a district would like to order a workshop, they can do so by contacting info@elpa21.org. Workshop seats are also available to individual educators and administrators. To purchase an individual workshop seat, please visit shop.nabe.org/products/workshops.