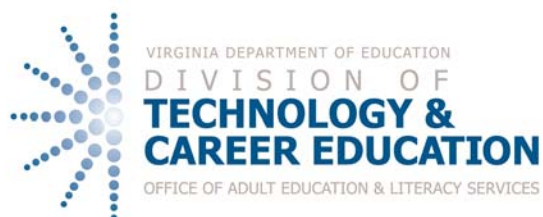




ADULT EDUCATION  
CONTENT STANDARDS  
FOR  
ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER  
LANGUAGES INSTRUCTION



# Speaking Standards

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The Adult ESOL Speaking Team included ESOL adult education teachers, administrators, and field experts. To help set high expectations for writing the speaking standard, benchmarks, and indicators, the team conducted an extensive review of information, theory, and research related to oral language production (Arlington Education and Employment Program, 2003; ACTFL, BEST Test; Brown, 1994; Cunningham Florez, 1999; Cunningham Florez, 1998; Morley, 1999; Morley, 1994). These key documents helped to formulate key concepts for the main speaking standard and its benchmarks and indicators.

The speaking standard, benchmarks, and indicators describe what an adult English language learner should be able to do upon exit of that particular level. Sample tasks described at one level may also be adapted for use at another level. For example, a verbal invitation at a lower level would be shorter, more personal, and spoken to a more familiar audience. At a higher level, a verbal invitation might be more detailed and formal. As the adult English language learner progresses through the levels, he or she develops the ability to know when and how to use a range of strategies to accomplish varied speaking purposes.

Speaking skills that are acquired at lower levels of instruction become part of a student's oral language ability at higher levels of instruction, and oral language production becomes more complex as students become active partners in conversation. From the beginning literacy to advanced levels, there should be a progression in the following areas:

- familiar to less familiar contexts (e.g., from classroom settings to the community),
- more controlled to more spontaneous and independent speech with emerging degrees of fluency,
- lower to higher levels of intelligibility, and
- smaller to greater variety of vocabulary and complexity of language structures.

## Organization of Benchmarks/Indicators

The speaking team identified four general areas around which the benchmarks and indicators are organized:

- **Purpose and context (benchmarks indicated with .1):** Purpose is the reason for participation in communication. Context is the situation and register in which the communication occurs.
- **Audience (benchmarks indicated with .2):** the receiver(s) of spoken communication in formal and informal settings
- **Accuracy (benchmarks indicated with .3):** grammar/grammatical structure, appropriateness, word choice, and pronunciation as they relate to speaking
- **Discourse (benchmarks indicated with .4):** elaboration/fluency, organization, cohesion, and length of speech in oral communication

**ESOL Speaking Standard:** Adult English language learners communicate in spoken English for a range of purposes, contexts, and audiences using appropriate levels of **fluency** and **accuracy** to participate actively in **discourse** relevant to their **life roles**.

## **Exit Benchmarks**

**ESL Beginning Literacy—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S1.1 Speak about basic needs using simple learned phrases.

S1.2 Speak with emerging communication strategies and vocabulary to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.

S1.3 Begin to produce survival vocabulary and phrases when given highly familiar cues.

S1.4 Produce limited basic information using learned vocabulary.

**ESL Low Beginning —To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S2.1 Speak using simple learned phrases and sentences.

S2.2 Speak with basic communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.

S2.3 Produce limited learned phrases with simple grammatical structures.

S2.4 Produce some information, with minimal elaboration, using learned vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences.

**ESL High Beginning—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S3.1 Express basic survival and/or immediate needs in order to meet routine social demands.

S3.2 Speak with “beyond basic” communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.

S3.3 Control some basic grammar and limited vocabulary.

S3.4 Produce information using familiar vocabulary, strings of phrases, and simple sentences; provide some elaboration.

**ESL Low Intermediate —To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S4.1 Converse on familiar topics primarily related to self and community and on unfamiliar topics using familiar vocabulary.

S4.2 Speak with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.

S4.3 Control some basic grammar and pronunciation features in a structured setting.

S4.4 Express basic ideas and clarify meaning with strings of sentences; begin to elaborate.

**ESL High Intermediate—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S5.1 Converse on familiar topics in life role interactions in person and/or by phone.

S5.2 Speak easily with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.

S5.3 Control basic grammar, some complex grammatical structures, word choice, and some basic pronunciation features.

S5.4 Express and support ideas with some organization and cohesiveness using examples, explanations, and descriptions; use strategies to monitor and enhance communication.

**ESL Advanced—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

S6.1 Converse effectively in life role interactions.

S6.2 Speak fluently with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on a wide range of topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.

S6.3 Control complex grammatical structures and pronunciation features.

S6.4 Develop and support ideas using examples, explanations, and descriptions that are often organized and cohesive; use multiple strategies to monitor and enhance communication.

**ESOL Speaking Standard:** Adult English language learners communicate in spoken English for a range of purposes, contexts, and audiences using appropriate levels of **fluency** and **accuracy** to participate actively in **discourse** relevant to their **life roles**.

## **Exit Benchmarks with Progress Indicators**

**Beginning Literacy—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S1.1 Speak about basic needs using simple learned phrases.**

- a) Produce **simple** learned phrases that are understood in the ESOL classroom (e.g., by ESOL teachers, classmates).
- b) Make a **simple** request (e.g., “Open the door.”, “Call me.”).
- c) Reply to a simple request or question using simple learned phrases.

**S1.2 Speak with emerging communication strategies and vocabulary to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- a) Greet others and give personal information using **simple** learned phrases that are understood in the ESOL classroom (e.g., state name, age, address, country of origin, native language).
- b) Answer basic questions with two to four words (e.g., “My name is... I am from...”).

**S1.3 Begin to produce survival vocabulary and phrases when given highly familiar cues.**

- a) Use **lifeskill** nouns, subject pronouns, and verbs (e.g., “family,” “I,” “you...shop”).
- b) Attempt subject + verb combinations (e.g., “I go.”).
- c) Recognize and use initial consonants in basic survival vocabulary.
- d) Imitate **rhythm** patterns in basic survival phrases (e.g., WHAT’S your NAME? WHERE are you FROM?).
- e) Recite the letters of the alphabet and numbers with 80-90 percent accuracy.

**S1.4 Produce limited basic information using learned vocabulary.**

- a) Attempt to respond to speaker by repeating speaker’s words.
- b) Express basic needs with **simple** learned phrases.
- c) Speak with two- to three-word responses without hesitations or pauses.
- d) Use **simple** strategies to relay message (e.g., gestures, **echoing**).

**ESL Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S2.1 Speak using simple learned phrases and sentences.**

- a) Identify self and give basic information in classroom situations and controlled settings (e.g., shopping, work).
- b) Participate in conversations in routine classroom situations using learned phrases and **simple** sentences (e.g., greetings, asking for information).
- c) Attempt to participate in conversations in non-routine social situations.

**S2.2 Speak with basic communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- a) Produce **simple** sentences and dialogues that are understood in the ESOL classroom and sometimes understood by sympathetic listeners outside the classroom.
- b) Begin to use appropriate informal (social) language in classroom settings (e.g., greetings and asking **simple** information).

**S2.3 Produce limited learned phrases with simple grammatical structures.**

- a) Produce appropriate prepositions of location/time and produce responses to WH-questions.
- b) Control some subject + verb affirmative and negative combinations in statements and questions.
- c) Begin to use the intended intonation for WH- and yes/no questions.
- d) Apply **stress** in new two- and three-syllable words (e.g., BEDroom, underSTAND).
- e) Recognize and imitate /s/ endings on nouns and verbs.
- f) Recall oral vocabulary through **word domains**.

**S2.4 Produce some information with minimal elaboration, using learned vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences.**

- a) Give minimal explanations using one word and/or **simple** phrases.
- b) Provide a brief response to an open-ended question on familiar topics.
- c) Use **simple** strategies to enhance communication (e.g., gestures, repeating).

**ESL High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S3.1 Express basic survival and/or immediate needs in order to meet routine social demands.**

- a) Use appropriate language in routine, predictable face-to-face situations (e.g., extending an invitation, responding to a request for basic information to complete a form).
- b) Participate in routine social conversations in familiar contexts (e.g., shopping, employment) with sympathetic listeners.
- c) Communicate on the phone in survival situations (e.g., 911, doctor’s office, children’s school), repeating information as necessary.
- d) Use **simple** expressions of satisfaction/dissatisfaction and agreement/disagreement.

**S3.2 Speak with “beyond basic” communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- Produce speech that is usually understood by the sympathetic listener (e.g. ESOL teachers, close neighbors).
- Use appropriate language in predictable informal situations (e.g., asking for information at the school bus stop with other parents, extending an invitation).

**S3.3 Control some basic grammar and limited vocabulary.**

- a) Use **simple** present, past, and present progressive tenses with some consistency (e.g., “walk,” “walked,” “is walking”).
- b) Use sentences with subject + verb + complement; may attempt **compound sentences** with “and.”
- c) Recognize and produce end-of-question and statement intonation in controlled situations; self-correct grammatical word endings when cued (e.g., “-s,” “-ing”); produce final consonants in routine taught vocabulary.
- d) Use appropriate words when discussing familiar topics (e.g., transportation, shopping, community activities).

**S3.4 Produce information using familiar vocabulary, strings of phrases, and simple sentences; provide some elaboration.**

- a) Provide **simple** descriptions and explanations with direct prompting.
- b) Speak with longer phrases on the same topic, connected by strategic pauses.
- c) Use **simple** strategies to monitor and enhance communication (e.g., spell **simple** words, seek assistance from a more fluent speaker).

**ESL Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S4.1 Converse on familiar topics primarily related to self and community and on unfamiliar topics using familiar vocabulary.**

- a) Initiate conversation in informal situations and a few predictable formal settings (e.g., discussing the weather, introducing self to school personnel, requesting an application).
- b) Generate dialogues describing a person, place, or event.
- c) Give **directions** to a specific location and verify listener understood the speaker's **directions**.
- d) Demonstrate and explain how to do or make something familiar (e.g., a hobby, cooking).

**S4.2 Speak with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- a) Produce speech that is sometimes understood by the general listener (e.g., school personnel, co-workers).
- b) Use appropriate language in informal situations and a few predictable formal settings (e.g., introduction of self to school personnel, requesting an application).

**S4.3 Control some basic grammar and pronunciation features in a structured setting.**

- a) Control the present progressive, **simple** present, future, regular past, and some irregular past tenses.
- b) Use pronouns, prepositions, and modifiers (e.g., some articles, adjectives, possessive adjectives).
- c) Produce end-of-question and statement intonation; stress differences in two-syllable words; begin to control “-s” and “-ed” endings; group words that go together into **chunks**.
- d) Contrast and produce short and long vowel sounds (based on learner needs).
- e) Begin to control **collocation** (e.g., “cup of coffee,” “loaf of bread,” “movie theatre”).

**S4.4 Express basic ideas and clarify meaning with strings of sentences; begin to elaborate.**

- a) Provide descriptions and explanations.
- b) Give two- and three-step instructions on how to do something.
- c) Speak with ease on known subjects, but may hesitate and pause when searching for vocabulary and/or language structures.
- d) Use strategies to monitor and enhance communication. (e.g., repeat, re-word).



**ESL High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S5.1 Converse on familiar topics in life role interactions in person and/or by phone.**

- a) Initiate, sustain, and conclude an oral exchange about a familiar topic in both informal and **simple** formal situations.
- b) Request and relay specific information (e.g., services, orders, appointments).
- c) Report pertinent information (e.g., regarding an event, accident, change in procedure).
- d) State facts and opinions (e.g., weather, politics).

**S5.2 Speak easily with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on everyday topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- a) Produce speech that is usually understood by the general listener (e.g., service worker, employer).
- b) Use appropriate language in informal situations and **simple** formal situations (e.g., sports event, wedding reception).

**S5.3 Control basic grammar, some complex grammatical structures, word choice, and some basic pronunciation features.**

- a) Control present, past (most irregular verbs), future, present and past progressive, and present perfect tenses.
- a) Use compound and some complex grammatical structures (e.g., coordinators, **causal** phrases, and **adverbial** time **clauses**).
- b) Use **rhythm**, word **stress**, and **intonation**; pause between phrases in semi-controlled speaking situations.
- c) Contrast, produce, and distinguish between consonant sounds and **clusters** (e.g., rock/lock; think/sink; pay/play).
- d) Use vocabulary for targeted topics (e.g., health, own child's education).

**S5.4 Express and support ideas with some organization and cohesiveness using examples, explanations, and descriptions; use strategies to monitor and enhance communication.**

- a) Elaborate with details and anecdotes from personal experience.
- b) Extend conversation by asking questions and expressing ideas/feelings.
- c) Demonstrate basic conversation-management techniques (e.g., turn taking, politely interrupting speech, asking targeted questions to confirm listener comprehension).

**ESL Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**S6.1 Converse effectively in life role interactions.**

- a) Initiate, sustain, and conclude an oral exchange in person or by phone (e.g., addressing a passerby, requesting an explanation for an issue with a bill).
- b) Give multi-step **directions** (e.g., training an employee, orienting a new neighbor).
- c) Provide appropriate and complete responses to interview questions (e.g., workplace, hospital).
- d) Express opinions and elaborate on various topics (e.g., religion, immigration).

**S6.2 Speak fluently with common general communication strategies and vocabulary on a wide variety of topics to be understood by a listener not familiar with non-native English speakers.**

- a) Adjust formal and informal **register** appropriate to the situation (e.g., protocol-driven events, meeting friends at a restaurant).
- b) Apply appropriate nonverbal communication strategies (e.g., eye contact, distance between speakers).

**S6.3 Control complex grammatical structures and pronunciation features.**

- a) Control an increasing variety of verbs, **modals**, and tenses.
- b) Use complex grammatical structures (e.g., **adverbial, conditional, and relative clauses**).
- c) Apply appropriate **rhythm**, word **stress**, and **intonation**.
- d) Phrase words in **chunks** and pause between phrases in spontaneous situations.
- e) Use **idiomatic** and **slang** expressions in appropriate settings.

**S6.4 Develop and support ideas using examples, explanations, and descriptions that are often organized and cohesive; use multiple strategies to monitor and enhance communication.**

- a) Interject and/or respond to a prompt and/or a conversation with appropriate and extensive elaboration.
- b) Organize, summarize, **paraphrase**, and explain for clarification (e.g., review/report on cultural event and/or newscast, talk show).
- c) Demonstrate effective conversation-management techniques (e.g., monitoring through self-correction, rephrasing).

# Listening Standards

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Although the skill of listening is difficult to measure and sometimes difficult to teach, it is important because it is usually the first skill to be developed by adult language learners, who often will listen to the spoken language before they can produce it. It is a receptive skill rather than a productive one.

Listening is closely related to speaking because it involves oral language, but its processes are actually more similar to reading, another receptive skill. Listening is also important because we spend more time listening than we do talking. According to Van Duzer (1997), “Through the normal course of a day, listening is used nearly twice as much as speaking and four to five times as much as reading and writing.”

The listening team took these points into consideration when creating the listening standard, benchmarks, and indicators. Teachers will need to select listening tasks based on their context (e.g., workplace, family, community, correctional) and the expressed needs of each learner. Teachers and administrators should also keep in mind that the listening standard, benchmark, and indicators describe a student’s ability upon exiting a particular level.

From the beginning literacy to advanced levels, there should be a steady progression in understanding spoken English. To exit each level, there should be an increase in:

- learner confidence in understanding the meaning of spoken English,
- understanding a wider variety of spoken vocabulary and phrases in context, and
- understanding streams of speech progressing from simple to more complex phraseology.

## Organization of Benchmarks/Indicators

The listening team identified four general areas around which the benchmarks and indicators are organized:

• **General comprehension (benchmarks indicated with .1):** Comprehend spoken language from a variety of sources (e.g., face-to-face, radio broadcast) with a variety in degree of complexity (e.g., familiar or unfamiliar vocabulary) and at different rates of speech.

• **Main idea (benchmarks indicated with .2):** Comprehend directions, instructions, questions, and commands as well as, at a higher level, identify topic and purpose from streams of speech. Identify the gist of a conversation.

• **Detail (benchmarks indicated with .3):** Listen with a purpose for specific information. Listen for specific details such as the status of a flight over an airport loudspeaker.

• **Listening strategies (benchmarks indicated with .4):** Use strategies to overcome barriers to communication (e.g., recognize tone, register, appropriateness) and use clarification phrases.

**ESOL Listening Standard:** Adult English language learners understand English spoken at normal speed, enabling them to function effectively in **everyday** life, social, and workplace situations relevant to their needs.

## **Exit Benchmarks**

**Beginning Literacy ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L1.1 Demonstrate comprehension of very simple learned phrases using familiar vocabulary spoken slowly in familiar face-to-face situations.

L1.2 Respond appropriately to simple learned directions/instructions and questions in familiar face-to-face situations.

L1.3 Recognize proper names and familiar vocabulary.

L1.4 Recognize the need to ask for and respond appropriately to simple requests for repetition.

**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L2.1 Demonstrate comprehension of simple learned phrases and short sentences using familiar survival vocabulary spoken slowly.

L2.2 Respond appropriately to simple commands, instructions, and questions in some familiar situations with little repetition.

L2.3 Identify letters, numbers, learned vocabulary, and phrases related to immediate needs within familiar contexts.

L2.4 Recognize the need for and respond appropriately to simple requests for clarification.

**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L3.1 Demonstrate comprehension of learned phrases using familiar survival vocabulary spoken slowly.

L3.2 Respond appropriately to commands, requests, and questions in a variety of familiar situations.

L3.3 Identify vocabulary and phrases related to immediate needs within familiar contexts.

L3.4 Use emerging listening strategies to overcome barriers to communication.

**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L4.1 Demonstrate comprehension of learned and some new phrases and sentences spoken slowly.

L4.2 Identify topic and purpose in simple conversations in familiar situations.

L4.3 Identify specific information relevant to needs in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.

L4.4 Use an increasing number of listening strategies to overcome barriers to communication.

**High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L5.1 Demonstrate comprehension of English with some unfamiliar vocabulary spoken at a slower speed in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.

L5.2 Identify topic and purpose in simple conversations and short connected oral discourse in familiar situations.

L5.3 Identify specific information relevant to the learner's needs in simple conversations and short connected discourse.

L5.4 Use a variety of listening strategies to effectively overcome barriers to communication.

**Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

L6.1 Demonstrate comprehension of English spoken at normal speed from a variety of sources in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.

L6.2 Identify main idea, topic, and purpose in conversations and connected oral discourse in familiar and some unfamiliar situations.

L6.3 Identify specific information in conversations and connected discourse.

L6.4 Use a wide variety of listening strategies to effectively and consistently overcome barriers to communication in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.

**ESOL Listening Standard:** Adult English language learners understand English spoken at normal speed, enabling them to function effectively in **everyday** life, social, and workplace situations relevant to their needs.

## **Exit Benchmarks with Progress Indicators**

**Beginning Literacy ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L1.1 Demonstrate comprehension of very simple learned phrases using familiar vocabulary spoken slowly in familiar face-to-face situations.**

- a) Comprehend emergency and personal information vocabulary (e.g., “911,” “help,” “telephone number”).
- b) Comprehend learned phrases, sentences, and questions with basic English grammatical forms in familiar face-to-face situations (e.g., “Open your books,” “Can I help you?”).
- c) Respond to **simple** social greetings and polite expressions appropriately, verbally or nonverbally.

**L1.2 Respond appropriately to simple learned directions/instructions and questions in familiar face-to-face situations.**

- a) Follow one-step **directions** (e.g., “Turn left”) and **instructions** (e.g., “Close your book”) with model.
- b) Respond to very **simple** yes/no questions in familiar contexts.
- c) Respond to very **simple** information questions in familiar contexts (e.g., “Where are you from?”).
- d) Predict what should be said using prior knowledge of common expressions (e.g., “What is your name?”, “Hello”) in familiar contexts (e.g., school, workplace, doctor’s office).

**L1.3 Recognize proper names and familiar vocabulary.**

- a) Recognize spoken letters of the alphabet in a face-to-face situation.
- b) Recognize some spoken cardinal (1–100) and ordinal numbers (e.g., first to twelfth grade).
- c) Distinguish familiar names and limited vocabulary from a **stream of speech** (e.g., public health department, Social Security office).

**L1.4 Recognize the need to ask for and respond appropriately to simple requests for repetition.**

- a) Use **verbal strategies** to demonstrate lack of comprehension (e.g., asking the speaker to repeat).

- b) Use **nonverbal strategies** to demonstrate lack of comprehension (e.g., shrugging and shaking head).
- c) Repeat when repetition is requested (e.g., in response to “What?”).

**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L2.1 Demonstrate comprehension of simple learned phrases and short sentences using familiar survival vocabulary spoken slowly.**

- a) Respond appropriately (verbally or nonverbally) to **simple** learned phrases that contain familiar survival vocabulary (e.g., “boss,” “post office,” “clinic”).
- b) Respond appropriately (verbally or nonverbally) to **simple** learned phrases, questions, and sentences in a face-to-face situation (e.g., “What is your phone number?”).
- c) Respond to basic greetings and polite expressions appropriately (verbally or nonverbally).

**L2.2 Respond appropriately to simple commands, instructions, and questions in some familiar situations with little repetition.**

- a) Follow one-step instructions and commands (e.g., “Turn on the light”).
- b) Respond to **simple** yes/no questions in familiar contexts.
- c) Respond to an open-ended question in familiar contexts (e.g., “Where do you work?”, “How many children do you have?”).

**L2.3 Identify letters, numbers, learned vocabulary, and phrases related to immediate needs within familiar contexts.**

- a) Recognize letters of familiar vocabulary (e.g., the learner’s name) when spelled or dictated in the classroom.
- b) Recognize spoken cardinal and ordinal numbers (e.g., days of the month, first to thirty-first).
- c) Distinguish familiar phrases from a **stream of speech** (e.g., name of Metro stop).

**L2.4 Recognize the need for and respond appropriately to simple requests for clarification.**

- a) Recognize **simple** clarification phrases when spoken to in order to respond correctly (e.g., “What do you mean?”).
- b) Acknowledge to the speaker that there has been a misunderstanding.

**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L3.1 Demonstrate comprehension of learned phrases using familiar survival vocabulary spoken slowly.**

- a) Respond appropriately to short phrases, questions, and sentences in face-to-face situations (e.g., “Your appointment is at 2 o’clock. Is that OK?”).
- b) Respond to **simple** conversation in familiar contexts with familiar vocabulary (e.g., small talk with a co-worker or neighbor).

**L3.2 Respond appropriately to commands, requests, and questions in a variety of familiar situations.**

- a) Follow two-step **directions, instructions**, and commands (e.g., “Go straight one block, and turn left.”, “Open your books. Turn to page 14.”).
- b) Respond appropriately to questions with familiar vocabulary and short learned phrases (e.g., “Paper or plastic [bag]?”, “How long have you worked there?”).
- c) Respond appropriately to requests with familiar vocabulary and learned phrases (e.g., “Help me please.”).

**L3.3 Identify vocabulary and phrases related to immediate needs within familiar contexts.**

- a) Recognize familiar words when spelled or dictated in familiar contexts beyond the classroom (e.g., at a doctor’s office or hospital, in an accident).
- b) Identify some specific details relevant to immediate needs in **simple** face-to-face conversations (e.g., understanding a child’s performance as spoken in a parent/teacher conference).
- c) Listen with a purpose for specific information in familiar non-face-to-face contexts (e.g., listening to weather closing announcements on TV).

**L3.4 Use emerging listening strategies to overcome barriers to communication.**

- a) Recognize some contractions in spoken speech (e.g., “don’t”, “I’m”).
- b) Interpret meaning of sentence **stress** and **intonation** (e.g., “Do **this** now” versus “Do this **now**”).
- c) Begin to apply prior knowledge and contextual cues to understand some information in a conversation (e.g., recognizing **cognates**, recognize familiar proper names such as stores).



**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L4.1 Demonstrate comprehension of learned and some new phrases and sentences spoken slowly.**

- a) Begin to predict the meaning of vocabulary used in familiar and some **unfamiliar** contexts (e.g., new duties in a job).
- b) Comprehend some short phrases and sentences in non-face-to-face situations (e.g., TV, radio, telephone).
- c) Respond to a short social conversation that contains some **unfamiliar** vocabulary in familiar contexts (e.g., shopping, employment, school).
- d) Comprehend faster speech with familiar topics but may need slower speech with **unfamiliar** topics.

**L4.2 Identify topic and purpose in simple conversations in familiar situations.**

- a) Follow **simple** two- and three-step **directions, instructions**, and commands (e.g., at the DMV: “Take a number. Fill out this form. Wait to be called.”).
- b) Use **context clues** (e.g., listening for repeated words, keywords, and familiar vocabulary) to identify the topic of **simple** conversations.
- c) Guess the topic using prior knowledge in familiar and some **unfamiliar** contexts.
- d) Use verbal (e.g., tone, intonation) and nonverbal (e.g., body language) context clues to identify purpose in **simple** conversations (e.g., apology, complaint, command).

**L4.3 Identify specific information relevant to needs in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.**

- a) Identify key information/details in a description (e.g., place, person, event).
- b) Identify some details in **simple**, non-face-to-face situations (e.g., TV, radio, recorded information).
- c) Listen with a purpose for specific information in familiar and some **unfamiliar** contexts (e.g., bus or Metro schedule).
- d) Distinguish tense or time markers (e.g., present or past tense).

**L4.4 Use an increasing number of listening strategies to overcome barriers to communication.**

- a) Distinguish differences in **register** (e.g., informal versus formal English).
- b) Recognize **conventions of speech** (e.g., reduced speech such as “wanna” and “gonna”).
- c) Apply prior knowledge and contextual cues to understand some information in a conversation (e.g., recognize **cognates**, recognize familiar proper names such as stores).
- d) Respond to **simple** requests for elaboration (e.g., “Can you tell me more about your last job?”).

**High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L5.1 Demonstrate comprehension of English with some unfamiliar vocabulary spoken at a slower speed in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.**

- a) Recognize some common **idiomatic expressions**.
- b) Respond appropriately to statements, questions, **directions**, and commands in a variety of familiar situations.
- c) Demonstrate comprehension of complex information on **simple** topics (e.g., a news report, movie).
- d) Comprehend conversations in a variety of contexts (e.g., in person, on the telephone, in announcements).

**L5.2 Identify topic and purpose in simple conversations and short connected oral discourse in familiar situations.**

- a) Follow three- and four-step **directions, instructions**, and commands.
- b) Identify the topic in **simple** conversations and short **connected oral discourse** (e.g., academic lectures).
- c) Identify purpose (e.g., praise, criticism, suggestion) in **simple** conversations and short **connected oral discourse**.

**L5.3 Identify specific information relevant to the learner’s needs in simple conversations and short connected discourse.**

- a) Distinguish between facts and opinion in conversations on familiar topics.
- b) Identify some details in short **connected oral discourse** (e.g., presentation on workplace benefits).
- c) Listen with a purpose for specific information in familiar and **unfamiliar** contexts.

**L5.4 Use a variety of listening strategies to effectively overcome barriers to communication.**

- a) Distinguish tone (e.g., anger, humor) in a variety of situations.
- b) Restate in response to targeted requests for clarification (e.g., “You want to do what?”).
- c) Recognize and respond appropriately to requests for more information (e.g., “Compare the educational system in your country to the one in Virginia.”).
- d) Discriminate between essential and non-essential information in **simple** conversations and short connected **discourse**.

**Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**L6.1 Demonstrate comprehension of English spoken at normal speed from a variety of sources in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.**

- a) Comprehend extensive vocabulary on a wide range of topics.
- b) Demonstrate comprehension of information from various sources (e.g., telephone, speeches, broadcasts, presentations) on complex topics (e.g., politics, current events).
- c) Respond appropriately to **complex polite expressions** (e.g., “Would you mind...?”, “I was wondering if...”).
- d) Respond appropriately during extended conversations (e.g., interviews, job reviews, evaluations, committee meetings).

**L6.2 Identify main idea, topic, and purpose in conversations and connected oral discourse in familiar and some unfamiliar situations.**

- a) Follow multi-step **directions, instructions**, and commands.
- b) Identify the topic and main idea of conversations and **connected oral discourse**.
- c) Establish the purpose (e.g., inform or persuade) of conversations and **connected oral discourse**.

**L6.3 Identify specific information in conversations and connected discourse.**

- a) Ascertain specific information in conversations (e.g., post-surgical instructions).
- b) Obtain detailed information from connected **discourse** (e.g., listening to a traffic report, network news reports).
- c) Select appropriate responses from a choice of items in **unfamiliar** contexts (e.g., telephone menu).
- d) Recognize common **slang** and **colloquialisms** (e.g., “tags” is commonly used in Virginia for “license plates”).

**L6.4 Use a wide variety of listening strategies to effectively and consistently overcome barriers to communication in everyday life, social, and workplace situations.**

- a) Recognize more complex requests for opinion versus factual information (e.g., “That was a great movie, wasn’t it?”).
- b) Comprehend transitional phrases (e.g., “by the way,” “on the other hand”).
- c) Determine when it is appropriate to interject or respond in a conversation (e.g., “I agree, but...”, “I don’t mean to interrupt, but...”).
- d) Recognize how to show interest in a conversation by using verbal and nonverbal prompts (e.g., nodding of the head, “Oh really?”, “Unh-huh”).

# Reading Standards

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The Adult ESOL Reading Team members were conversant with the *Report of the National Reading Panel*, in which an expert panel reviewed research in reading and concluded that reading instruction should consist of alphabetic (phonemic awareness and phonics), vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). The description of fluent reading proposed by the National Reading Panel, however, describes the native reader of English. The panel asserts that “fluent readers can read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (p. 3-1). Such abilities are not fully reflected in the National Reporting System descriptors or in the Adult ESOL Reading Standards because they are unrealistic for developing readers of English.

The Adult ESOL Reading Team also considered essential factors that influence reading ability, including motivation, metalinguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the conventions of language), metacognitive knowledge (i.e., knowledge about how to approach reading and how to learn), and intensity of instruction. Creating standards that include these factors was not feasible because even though they affect how ESOL students learn to read in English, they apply to the reading ability rather than dictate its outcome. Similarly, the panel believed that reading strategies are critical for reading success but did not include direct references to them in the standards because they are not generally measurable.

Bloom’s taxonomy influenced the writing of the standards because the panel determined that as learners improve in reading ability, they move from understanding to interpretation to comprehension and beyond. Bloom’s taxonomy reflects this developmental pattern in its classification of the hierarchy of learning as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The reading team used adverbs of frequency to describe the amount of understanding that learners demonstrate at different levels. The general definition used for these adverbs includes: occasionally or inconsistently = approximately 25% or less; frequently = approximately 50%; and, usually or consistently = approximately 90%.

The reading standard, benchmarks, and indicators describe what learners should be able to do when exiting a particular class level.

## Organization of Benchmarks/Indicators

The reading team identified three general areas around which the benchmarks and indicators are organized:

- **General comprehension (benchmarks indicated with .1):** Comprehend text on familiar and unfamiliar topics that present new vocabulary or material related to everyday life.
- **Vocabulary and syntax (benchmarks indicated with .2):** Understand and, at higher levels, interpret text with emerging understanding of English vocabulary, syntax, sentence pattern, and purpose (e.g., narrative, descriptive, rhetorical).
- **Main idea/details (benchmarks indicated with .3):** Identify key vocabulary, main ideas, and supporting details in reading materials.

**ESOL Reading Standard:** Adult English language learners read **authentic materials** on **everyday** topics and consistently and fully comprehend most **connected text** related to **life roles**.

## **Exit Benchmarks**

**Beginning ESL Literacy Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R1.1 Recognize letters of the alphabet, numbers 1–100, common sight words, previously learned phrases, and the directionality of English written language.

R1.2 Use familiar or previously learned vocabulary and syntax to understand simple text.

R1.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with real-world knowledge to recall vocabulary and recognize previously learned phrases.

**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R2.1 Comprehend simple sentences using familiar vocabulary, contexts, and previously learned sentence patterns.

R2.2 Understand simple authentic or simplified materials using familiar vocabulary and syntax in previously encountered formats.

R2.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with real-world knowledge to understand new vocabulary and phrases.

**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R3.1 Comprehend simple authentic material on familiar topics.

R3.2 Interpret simplified materials on familiar topics in connected text containing previously learned vocabulary, syntax, and sentence patterns.

R3.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with linguistic context and real-world knowledge to comprehend short, simplified connected text on unfamiliar topics.

**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R4.1 Comprehend authentic materials on familiar topics that have a simple and clear underlying structure.

R4.2 Interpret a variety of simplified materials in narrative and descriptive text.

R4.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to identify main ideas and supporting details in a variety of materials.

**High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R5.1 Comprehend most authentic materials on everyday topics related to life roles.

R5.2 Interpret simplified connected text employing some higher-order rhetorical structures on familiar topics.

R5.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to identify vocabulary, main ideas, and supporting details and to make inferences from familiar materials.

**Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

R6.1 Comprehend authentic materials on everyday topics related to life roles.

R6.2 Interpret connected text on familiar topics consistently and fully.

R6.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar materials.

**ESOL Reading Standard:** Adult English language learners read **authentic materials** on **everyday** topics and consistently and fully comprehend most **connected text** related to **life roles**.

## **Exit Benchmarks with Progress Indicators**

**Beginning ESL Literacy Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**R1.1 Recognize letters of the alphabet, numbers 1–100, common sight words, previously learned phrases, and the directionality of English written language.**

- a) Read from left to right, top to bottom, and front to back.
- b) Identify uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet and numbers 1–100.
- c) Recognize conventional use of numbers, symbols, and letters (e.g., dates, analog/digital clock times, coins/currency, prices, measurements).
- d) Apply sound/symbol relationships to decode letters of the alphabet, consonant blends, and common **sight words** (e.g., personal identification information, **environmental print**, contractions, words that are not easily sounded out).
- e) Sight read (recognize) previously learned phrases (e.g., “What’s your name?”).

**R1.2 Use familiar or previously learned vocabulary and syntax to understand simple text.**

- a) Sight read previously learned **text** (e.g., dialogues practiced orally, **simplified** personal identification forms).
- b) Recognize **text** related to immediate needs (e.g., medicine labels, work schedules, clothing care labels, school notices).

**R1.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with real-world knowledge to recall vocabulary and recognize previously learned phrases.**

- a) Identify previously learned vocabulary and phrases when prompted (with **realia**, visuals, miming, sound, or other aid).
- b) Make connections between **real-world knowledge** and **text** to construct meaning.
- c) Use prior knowledge to interpret pictures in order to predict **text**.

**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**R2.1 Comprehend simple sentences using familiar vocabulary, contexts, and previously learned sentence patterns.**

- a) Understand **simple directions** in **authentic text** using the imperative (e.g., “Sign here,” “Do not enter,” “Turn here”).
- b) Understand **simple** two- and three-step written instructions (e.g., recipes, medicine dosage, work orders, clothing labels, test directions).
- c) Interpret a map to follow **directions** (e.g., street names, landmarks, towns).
- d) Understand a short **simple** paragraph on a single topic with familiar vocabulary (e.g., a description of a person, place, thing, or activity).

**R2.2 Understand simple authentic or simplified materials using familiar vocabulary and syntax in previously encountered formats.**

- a) Scan for specific information in **authentic** documents or formats (e.g., utility bills, pay stubs, computer screens, websites, diagrams, menus, receipts).
- b) Understand familiar or previously learned vocabulary that has been combined in new ways to achieve different meanings at a similar level of simplicity (e.g., “birthdate” versus “date of birth”).
- c) Recognize abbreviations of familiar vocabulary (e.g., abbreviations for date of birth, Social Security number, days of the week, months of the year, addresses, **directions**).
- d) Interpret signs and symbols encountered in **everyday** life (e.g., international symbols for driving, push, pull, exit).

**R2.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with real-world knowledge to understand new vocabulary and phrases.**

- a) Use **decoding** skills (e.g., applying phonics, word attack skills, using knowledge of word families) to associate new vocabulary and phrases with their written forms.
- b) Use **realia** or visuals to understand new vocabulary (e.g., captions, picture dictionaries, **environmental print**, circulars).



**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**R3.1 Comprehend simple authentic material on familiar topics.**

- a) Scan **simple authentic materials** (e.g., weather reports, want ads, supermarket ads) for specific information.
- b) Understand written instructions that may include more than three steps or some **unfamiliar** vocabulary (e.g., recipes, medical instructions, sending a fax, telephone calling card, ATM instructions).
- c) Understand **connected text** on a single topic with some **unfamiliar** vocabulary that is not essential for comprehension of the meaning (e.g., thank you note, invitation, phone message).

**R3.2 Interpret simplified materials on familiar topics in connected text containing previously learned vocabulary, syntax, and sentence patterns.**

- a) Understand **connected text** (e.g., **descriptive** or sequential) of two to three paragraphs on a familiar topic.
- b) Comprehend a story or description containing familiar vocabulary (e.g., use pictures and titles to make predictions and confirm through reading to reach conclusions).

**R3.3 Use visuals or other aids in combination with linguistic context and real-world knowledge to comprehend short, simplified connected text on unfamiliar topics.**

- a) Use visuals or other aids (e.g., tables, charts, boldface) and **real-world knowledge** to predict content or draw logical conclusions about **text**.
- b) Use **linguistic context** (e.g., some adverbs of sequence and frequency, verb tenses, pronouns) to understand **text**.

**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**R4.1 Comprehend authentic materials on familiar topics that have a simple and clear underlying structure.**

- a) Scan **authentic materials** for specific information (e.g., job applications, classified ads, phone book, dictionary, brochures, school field trip form).
- b) Understand most instructions with some **unfamiliar** vocabulary required to perform a task (e.g., completing an insurance claim form, operating a DVD player).
- c) Understand **authentic connected text** on a single topic with some **unfamiliar** vocabulary (e.g., job announcement, **simple** newspaper articles, messages from school, public information notices, children’s storybooks and nursery rhymes for family literacy classes).

#### **R4.2 Interpret a variety of simplified materials in narrative and descriptive text.**

- a) Identify the main ideas and supporting details in **simplified** texts (e.g., passages from newspapers like *Easy English News* and **level-appropriate texts**).
- b) Make sensible guesses about the main idea and supporting details in texts about familiar and some **unfamiliar** topics.

#### **R4.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to identify main ideas and supporting details in a variety of materials.**

- a) Use **linguistic clues** (e.g., transitions: “therefore,” “in conclusion,” “hence,” “as a result,” “so”; adverbs of emotion: “unfortunately,” “regrettably,” “hopefully”; and conditionals: “if...then”) to understand the main idea and supporting details in a text.
- b) Use **real-world knowledge** to make sensible guesses to identify main ideas and supporting details in a variety of texts (e.g., health-related texts, disaster-related texts).

### **High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

#### **R5.1 Comprehend most authentic materials on everyday topics related to life roles.**

- a) Understand the content of an **authentic text** sufficiently to distinguish what is important and construct the meaning of a **narrative** or **descriptive text** (e.g., passages from newspapers, periodicals, reference materials such as websites).
- b) Comprehend **texts** (e.g., charts, graphs, dictionaries) for problem-solving tasks.

#### **R5.2 Interpret simplified connected text employing some higher-order rhetorical structures on familiar topics.**

- a) Comprehend short **narratives** and descriptions (e.g., passages from **simplified** newspapers like *Easy English News* and level-appropriate texts).
- b) Comprehend **simplified connected text** that addresses multiple aspects of a topic (e.g., an article on childcare that discusses costs, safety, and discipline issues).
- c) Identify the main ideas and supporting details in **text** using the **rhetorical structures** of cause and effect or comparison and contrast (e.g., a reading on global warming that discusses its causes and effect or a reading on the same topic that compares global changes in climate over eras [comparison and contrast]).

#### **R5.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to identify vocabulary, main ideas, and supporting details and to make inferences from familiar materials.**

- a) Use **morphological linguistic context** (**affixes**, root words) to identify new vocabulary in texts (e.g., identify > identification; hope > hopeless; connect > disconnect).

- b) Use **syntactical linguistic context** (e.g., verb tense, **clauses**, pronoun references) to identify main ideas and supporting details in texts (e.g., first paragraph in past tense, second paragraph in present tense signaling change in ideas; a topic sentence introduces a subject, the next sentence begins with “this,” and the reader associates “this” with the idea in the topic sentence).
- c) Use **linguistic context** (e.g., “In my opinion, some people think that . . .”) and **real-world knowledge** to identify new meaning for vocabulary, main ideas, and supporting details in texts.
- d) Distinguish and discern fact from opinion (e.g., “Mr. X. has said that he wants change. I second that.”; “First and foremost is the idea that change must come. Everything else is irrelevant.”).

## **Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

### **R6.1 Comprehend authentic materials on everyday topics related to life roles.**

- a) Understand the content of an **authentic text** (e.g., warranties, how-to manuals, song lyrics, reading materials related to personal interests such as short novels, biographies, or magazine articles) sufficiently to distinguish what is important.
- b) Evaluate **text** (e.g., junk mail, **simple** periodical advertisements, electronic “pop-up” ads) to differentiate factual statements from non-factual claims, exaggerations, or opinions.

### **R6.2 Interpret connected text on familiar topics consistently and fully.**

- a) Evaluate **texts** (e.g., reading materials related to personal interests and level-appropriate **texts**) to agree/disagree, argue for/against, and relate to personal experience and knowledge.
- b) Recognize the **rhetorical structure** of problem/solution and employ it to analyze **text** to identify the main ideas and supporting details (e.g., an article on how to eradicate polio).
- c) Make inferences about an author’s point of view (e.g., letters to the editor, movie reviews).

### **R6.3 Use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar materials.**

- a) Use **linguistic clues** (e.g., shift in verb tense, **cohesive** words or phrases) to understand a **text** that employs the **rhetorical structure** of problem/solution (e.g., an article on how to eradicate polio).
- b) Recognize figurative language (e.g., idioms, analogies, similes, metaphors, personification) to determine the meaning of **unfamiliar** vocabulary or **text**.

# Writing Standards

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In a highly literate society like the United States, competency in writing English is a recognized measure for academic and employment advancement. A quote attributed to the writer William Faulkner emphasizes the pressures associated with expressing oneself in writing: “Writing is easy. Just slit your wrist and watch the blood flow onto the page.” The adult ESOL writing standard in this document does not represent native-English writing fluency. Instead, it represents the skills and abilities in writing that are recognized by the National Reporting System as sufficient for learners to exit a basic ESOL program. The standard is not intended to limit the scope of adult instructional programs; instead, it represents a framework for developing programs, curricula, and lesson plans to meet the needs of adult learners.

The writing benchmarks represent the writing skills and abilities that learners need to master to move to the next highest level. The benchmarks reflect a progression from:

- more familiar to less familiar contexts;
- less to more confidence, ease, and independence;
- less to more control of English structure;
- fewer to more complex language structures; and,
- a greater to a smaller number of mechanical errors.

In addition, adult English language learners at higher levels will write more extensively and develop the ability to know when and how to use a range of strategies to accomplish varied writing purposes.

The writing performance indicators serve as illustrative examples of the benchmarks. They illustrate the kinds of writing tasks learners need to be able to accomplish to exit a particular level. The indicators are not meant to be prescriptive of what to teach at a level. All the indicators do not need to be accomplished to satisfy a benchmark, nor do they need to be accomplished in order. Teachers will need to select writing tasks based on their instructional context (e.g., workplace, family, correctional) and the expressed needs of their learners.

Sample writing tasks at one level may also be adapted for use at another level. For example, a thank-you note can be adapted for use with learners at a wide variety of levels. At a lower level, a thank-you note would be shorter, more personal, and written to a more familiar audience. At a higher level, a letter might be longer, more formal, and for a less familiar audience.

As learners progress through the levels, the knowledge and skills acquired in previous levels are assumed at the higher levels. Adult English language learners are expected to use appropriate technology where available.

## Organization of Benchmarks

The writing team identified four general areas around which the benchmarks and indicators are organized:

- **Purposes, contexts, and audiences (benchmarks indicated with .1):** the range of contexts (e.g., familiar, unfamiliar, family, school, academic) and audiences (familiar or unfamiliar) that a writer is able to address.

- **Organization and development (benchmarks indicated with .2):** the extent to which the writer is able to organize and develop types of text

- **Mechanics (benchmarks indicated with .3):** the degree of control that the writer displays vis-à-vis spelling, punctuation, and structure

- **Planning, editing, and revising (benchmarks indicated with .4):** the extent to which the writer can plan, edit, and revise writing

**ESOL Writing Standard:** Adult English language learners write to communicate for a range of purposes, contexts, and audiences using appropriate organization, development, structure, and **mechanics**.

## **Exit Benchmarks**

**Beginning Literacy ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W1.1 Write basic information to communicate ideas for purposes in very familiar contexts.

W1.2 Organize and complete simple written tasks following a model.

W1.3 Write numbers, words, phrases, and simple learned sentences legibly, although not without errors.

W1.4 With guidance, plan basic writing.

**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W2.1 Write to communicate ideas in familiar contexts, demonstrating some awareness of audience.

W2.2 Organize and complete simple written tasks focused on one topic following a model.

W2.3 Write statements, questions, and commands with limited control of basic English language structures and use of basic mechanics, although not without errors.

W2.4 Plan and edit writing, with guidance.

**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W3.1 Write to communicate ideas in familiar contexts and for familiar purposes, demonstrating awareness of audience.

W3.2 Organize simple texts with connected ideas that address a particular writing task with some development, details, and vocabulary following a model.

W3.3 Write simple texts with some control of basic English language structures and use of mechanics.

W3.4 With guidance, plan, revise, and edit writing.

**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W4.1 Write at some length to communicate ideas in familiar contexts, demonstrating some sense of purpose and engagement.

W4.2 With guidance, organize texts that use some development, details, and vocabulary that are appropriate to the writing task.

W4.3 Write texts with control of simple verb tenses, some control of complex structures, and consistent use of mechanics that do not distract from meaning.

W4.4 Plan, revise, and edit writing with guidance and feedback.

**High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W5.1 Write at length to communicate ideas for a range of purposes in less familiar contexts to an intended audience.

W5.2 Organize and develop writing to address a range of written tasks, with support.

W5.3 Use a variety of English language structures and mechanics with few errors.

W5.4 Select and use planning, revising, and editing strategies, with support.

**Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

W6.1 Write to communicate ideas effectively and authoritatively for a wide range of purposes in less familiar and more formal contexts, tailored to the intended audience.

W6.2 Organize clear, well-developed texts.

W6.3 Use syntactic variety with few or no grammatical errors and appropriate mechanics, including basic source citations.

W6.4 Select and use appropriate strategies to plan, revise, and edit writing.

**ESOL Writing Standard:** Adult English language learners write to communicate for a range of purposes, contexts, and audiences using appropriate organization, development, structure, and **mechanics**.

## **Exit Benchmarks with Progress Indicators**

**Beginning Literacy ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W1.1 Write basic information to communicate ideas for purposes in very familiar contexts.**

- a) Complete personal information (e.g., names, addresses, phone numbers) on **simplified** forms (e.g., sign-in sheet, registration form).
- b) Write numbers (e.g., dates, money amounts, digital clock times).

**W1.2 Organize and complete simple written tasks following a model.**

- a) Write **simple** learned sentences (e.g., “My name is Yvonne.”, “Today is hot.”, “I live in Virginia.”).
- b) Organize personal information related to personal needs (e.g., envelopes, money orders, checks).

**W1.3 Write numbers, words, phrases, and simple learned sentences legibly, although not without errors.**

- a) Use periods with **simple** learned sentences.
- b) Use upper and lowercase letter conventions (e.g. “Tom” vs. “tOm”).
- c) Write numbers using conventions (e.g., 703-666-9999, \$24.92, 04/09/07).
- d) Use page conventions (i.e., left to right, top to bottom, and front to back).

**W1.4 With guidance, plan basic writing.**

- a) Copy **simple text** (e.g., vocabulary and sentences related to tasks, phone numbers, words and numbers from grocery ads and other **realia**).
- b) Use **manipulatives** to spell words, write words and numbers, and sequence words in sentences related to relevant tasks.
- c) List (e.g., names of children).



**Low Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W2.1 Write to communicate ideas in familiar contexts, demonstrating some awareness of audience.**

- a) Write short descriptions (e.g., job duties, family).
- b) Request information or permission (e.g., time off from school or work).
- c) Complete personal information on **simplified** forms (e.g. job applications, health and school forms).

**W2.2 Organize and complete simple written tasks focused on one topic following a model.**

- a) Write a series of sentences on one topic related to personal experiences and **everyday** life (e.g., family members, job duties).
- b) Organize personal information in written form (e.g. job applications, health and school forms, daily schedule).

**W2.3 Write statements, questions, and commands with limited control of basic English language structures and use of basic mechanics, although not without errors.**

- a) Use subject-verb order, **simple** present tense, and adjective-noun order.
- b) Use periods, question marks, and capitalization.
- c) Spell basic words (e.g., “job,” “family,” “am,” “is”).

**W2.4 Plan and edit writing, with guidance.**

- a) Select words (e.g., from a picture dictionary) appropriate for a given task.
- b) Organize ideas and information appropriate to a given task, alphabetically or chronologically (e.g., timeline of daily activities, alphabetized list of family members).
- c) **Edit** end punctuation (e.g., “Is she sick.” to “Is she sick?”) and spelling of basic words (e.g. “job,” “am”).
- d) Identify irrelevant sentences (e.g. “My child is sick. She has a fever. *I like hamburgers.* Please excuse my child from school.”)

**High Beginning ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W3.1 Write to communicate ideas in familiar contexts and for familiar purposes, demonstrating awareness of audience.**

- a) Write for a variety of purposes:
  - Inform (e.g., about self, work, family).
  - Request information or permission (e.g., request time off).
  - Organize daily tasks (e.g., make a shopping list and a daily schedule).
  - Express likes and dislikes (e.g., favorite foods, colors, places) and feelings (e.g., angry, tired, thankful).
  - Express courtesy (e.g., thank-you notes, get well cards).
- b) Write to school authority (e.g., teacher, principal), employer, coworker, and classmate briefly for one of the purposes above.

**W3.2 Organize simple texts with connected ideas that address a particular writing task with limited development, details, and vocabulary following a model.**

- a) Write short paragraphs, notes, and messages related to familiar contexts and purposes (e.g., “My Country,” get well card, work report).
- b) Develop writing using chronological order.
- c) Use guided questions to develop details and vocabulary (e.g., who, what, when, where, why).

**W3.3 Write simple texts with some control of basic English language structures and use of mechanics.**

- a) Use “because” **clauses** (e.g., “I like my school because I learn a lot.”) and conjunctions such as “and,” “or,” and “but” (e.g., “I like pizza and ice cream.”).
- b) Use **simple** past (e.g., “He came last week.”).
- c) Use place and directional prepositions (e.g., “in,” “on,” “at”) and transition words (e.g., “first,” “next,” “finally”).
- d) Use salutations (e.g., “Dear Dr. Barns,” “Hi, Jose”) and commas for conjunctions (e.g., “We went to the museum, the park, and the restaurant.”)
- e) Spell familiar words, although not without errors.

**W3.4 With guidance, plan, revise, and edit writing.**

- a) Plan by brainstorming vocabulary and content and answering guided written questions.
- b) Make a few **simple** content revisions (e.g., add content included in the model).
- c) Make a few **simple** edits of **subject-verb agreement**; **simple** present and past tenses (e.g., “He eat yesterday.” to “He ate yesterday.”); spelling; punctuation; and, capitalization.

**Low Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W4.1 Write at some length to communicate ideas in familiar contexts, demonstrating some sense of purpose and engagement.**

- a) Write for a variety of purposes in work, school, social, and community contexts:
  - Inform and describe (e.g., about customs in native countries and personal life experiences, on a **simplified** medical history form, on a resumé).
  - Request and respond to information (e.g., a favor, telephone and e-mail messages).
  - Complain and compliment (e.g., report a problem to the landlord, thank someone for a favor).
- b) Write to school authority, employer, coworker, and classmate briefly for one of the purposes above.

**W4.2 With guidance, organize texts that use some development, details, and vocabulary that are appropriate to the writing task.**

- a) Write connected paragraphs (e.g., letters, essays, e-mails).
- b) Use details for support and illustration (e.g., examples, reasons, contrasts).
- c) Sequence ideas (e.g., organize paragraphs by verb tense—past, present, future).
- d) Develop and clarify ideas with descriptive vocabulary, personalization, opinion, and explanations.
- e) Connect ideas with compound and **complex sentences**.

**W4.3 Write texts with control of simple verb tenses, some control of complex structures, and consistent use of mechanics that do not distract from meaning.**

- a) Use **compound sentences** with “and,” “or,” “but,” and “so” (e.g., “He lives in Winchester, but he works in Fairfax.”) and **complex sentences** with “when,” “after,” “before,” “while,” and “if” (e.g., “If it snows, we will cancel the party.”).
- b) Use **simple** present, **simple** past, and future.
- c) Use mostly conventional spelling and commas.

**W4.4 Plan, revise, and edit writing with guidance and feedback.**

- a) Develop a **simple** outline, brainstorm ideas for the topic, and cluster ideas to plan writing.
- b) Make some content revisions (e.g., add details, use different vocabulary, reorganize sequence).
- c) Make focused edits of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- d) Use a **simple** checklist, peer and teacher feedback, and spell check to improve writing.

**High Intermediate ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W5.1 Write at length to communicate ideas for a range of purposes in less familiar contexts to an intended audience.**

- a) Write for a variety of purposes:
  - Inform, describe, and persuade (e.g., compare and contrast customs, personal life and community experiences; job applications, **simple** cover letter, resumé; job, education, and life goals).
  - Summarize and evaluate (e.g. articles, books, films).
  - Express self (e.g., poetry, journals).
  - Complete work, social, or community functions, with a directed model (e.g., e-mail, memo, business letter).
- b) Write in varied contexts (e.g., work, family, school, social, community, civic) with growing independence and emerging personal style.
- c) Tailor writing to a specific audience with support such as an instructional model (i.e., example for learners to follow; e.g., notes to a child’s teacher, thank-you letters, personal or business letters to an employer or local government officials).

**W5.2 Organize and develop writing to address a range of written tasks, with support.**

- a) Write well-developed and sequenced paragraphs with introductory and concluding sentences.
- b) Connect sentences and ideas with transitions and connectors (e.g., “first,” “next,” “then,” “as a result,” “in addition”) and connectors (e.g., “and,” “but,” “if,” “because”).
- c) Develop clarity and style through vocabulary choice and self-expression (e.g., poetry, journaling).

**W5.3 Use a variety of English language structures and mechanics with few errors.**

- a) Use a variety of syntactic structures and verb tenses, including passive voice (e.g., “I was asked to submit a report.”) and present tenses (e.g., “I have been here for 10 years.”).
- b) Use punctuation for a variety of syntactic structures (e.g., compound and **complex sentences**, transition phrases).

**W5.4 Select and use planning, revising, and editing strategies, with support.**

- a) Develop an outline, brainstorm ideas, and connect ideas with transition words and phrases (e.g. “however,” “therefore,” “on the other hand”).
- b) **Revise** with teacher guidance at the word, sentence, and basic paragraph levels (e.g., main idea and topic sentences are supported; paragraphs and sentences are connected.).
- c) Independently use a multi-item editing checklist (e.g., check verb tenses, **subject-verb agreement**, singular and plural nouns, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling using a computer-based spelling and grammar check, a dictionary, or a bilingual dictionary).

**Advanced ESL Exit Benchmarks—To exit this level, learners will be able to:**

**W6.1 Write to communicate ideas effectively and authoritatively for a wide range of purposes in less familiar and more formal contexts, tailored to the intended audience.**

- a) Write for a variety of purposes:
  - Inform, describe, and persuade (e.g., formal resumé and cover letter, personal statements for college and job applications, opinion letter).
  - Compare and contrast (e.g., research about current events or a debate).
  - Summarize and evaluate (e.g., current events; police, accident, or insurance report).
  - Express self (e.g., autobiography, creative writing)
- b) Write in multiple contexts (e.g., work, civic, and academic—higher education, GED<sup>®</sup>, vocational education).
- c) Engage multiple audiences (e.g., elected officials, civic authorities, health care providers, academic authorities, employers).

**W6.2 Organize clear, well-developed texts.**

- a) Write multi-paragraph texts with clear introduction, sequential and logical development of ideas, and appropriate conclusion.
- b) Develop a resumé according to current conventions.
- c) Use a wide range of word choices including synonyms, antonyms, and idiomatic/**slang** expressions appropriate to the text.

**W6.3 Use syntactic variety with few or no grammatical errors and appropriate mechanics, including basic source citations.**

- a) Use syntactic structures and verb tenses as appropriate to the text and task.
- b) Use basic source citations (e.g. MLA).

**W6.4 Select and use appropriate strategies to plan, revise, and edit writing.**

- a) Use **process writing steps**—plan, draft, review, **revise**, and **edit**.
- b) Use multiple planning strategies (e.g., research, idea webs, outlining, brainstorming).
- c) **Revise** writing to enhance meaning, clarity, and consistency using peer and teacher feedback.
- d) With guidance, review peer texts and provide feedback.
- e) Use a variety of tools (e.g., English-English dictionaries, thesaurus, grammar guides, multi-item editing checklists) to **edit** writing.