

DESCRIPTION OF THE NYSESLAT ASSESSMENTS

The NYSESLAT assessments reflect the *New York State Learning Standards for English as a Second Language*. The assessments have the following features.

There are five grade-level assessments.

- PK-1
- 2-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-12

All four language modalities are assessed at each grade level.

- Speaking
- Writing
- Listening
- Reading

Features of the Assessments for Grades 2-12

Test	Administration	Estimated Timing*	Basic Format
SPEAKING	To individual students	15 minutes	Students speak in response to questions and stimuli that are read by the teacher and printed in their test books.
WRITING	To a group of students	50 minutes	Students write and perform writing exercises in response to questions and stimuli printed in their test books.
LISTENING	To a group of students	35 minutes	Students listen to audio-taped stimuli and answer questions that are printed in their test books.
READING	To a group of students	50 minutes	Students answer multiple-choice and constructed-response questions based on reading passages printed in their test books.

*These times include not only the time for the students to take the test but also the time for the teacher to give the students their instructions.

Description of the Assessments for Grades 2-12

Speaking

Students will demonstrate their command of spoken English for everyday and academic purposes.

- In grades 5-12, students are asked to perform a variety of cognitive tasks: narrate a brief story based on a picture sequence; make predictions; describe and explain something based on personal experience; give directions or describe a process; express an opinion and/or persuade an audience; and interpret visual material such as a graph, chart, or diagram.
- In grades 2-4 some descriptive tasks are based on picture stimuli. Each student response will be scored on two separate 3-2-1-0 scales, one scale for control of content and the other for use of language.

Writing

Each Writing assessment for grades 2-12 presents three exercises: prewriting; writing an essay or story; and editing. The students perform and are evaluated on different parts of “the writing process” as indicated in the *New York State Learning Standards for English as a Second Language*.

- In the prewriting exercise, students plan a story or essay by writing ideas and notes in a graphic organizer. The exercise is scored on a 3-2-1-0 scale, based on how completely and thoughtfully the student develops the information in the graphic organizer.
- In the essay- or story-writing exercise, each student composes the imaginative story or personal essay that was planned for in the prewriting exercise. The exercise is evaluated on two separate 3-2-1-0 scales, one scale for the content and development of the response and one for the use of language within the response.
- In the editing exercise, the student corrects errors in a writing sample. The score is based on the number of correct revisions.

Listening

For grades 5-12, the Listening assessments present four types of listening activities.

- In the first, students look at photographs while they listen to four statements, only one of which accurately describes what the photograph shows (length of stimulus about 40 seconds).
- In the second, students listen for details in everyday conversation or in a brief talk (length of stimulus about 10 seconds).
- In the third, students answer questions based on what is said or implied in conversations about everyday topics (length of stimulus about 1 minute)
- In the fourth, students respond to questions based on conversations about general and academic subjects (length of stimulus about 1 minute).

For grades 2-4, the students answer questions based on photographs, answer questions they hear that have pictures as the answer choices, and listen to a short story and respond to questions that have pictures as the answer choices.

Reading

Each Reading assessment for grades 2-12 contains six reading passages with multiple-choice and constructed-response questions.

- The passages offer a range of content that includes: everyday topics and language; examples of social communication; literature texts for children; texts based on maps, charts, schedules, and calendars; and academic subject matter.
- Both the multiple-choice and the constructed-response questions assess cognitive and analytical proficiencies stressed in the standards. The questions focus on main ideas, facts, inferences, vocabulary, sequences of events, interpretation of non-fiction and literary texts, and social communication.
- The constructed-response questions for the Reading assessment may be factual or interpretive, and they are scored for content only on a 2-1-0 scale.

Features of the Assessments for Grades PK-1

Test	Administration	Basic Format
SPEAKING	To individual students	The assessment is mostly picture-based, and it includes tasks of description, comparison/contrast, and giving an opinion.
WRITING	To a group of students	The teacher asks the students to write single words, short dictated sentences, and a short description of a picture they see.
LISTENING	To a group of students	The assessment is read to the students by the teacher. All the questions are multiple-choice, with pictures for the options. The students circle the answers in their test books. The tasks range from simple identification of pertinent information to understanding elements of a brief story.
READING	To a group of students	The teacher reads a script to guide the students through the PK-1 Reading assessment. All questions are multiple-choice, with single letters, words, and pictures for the options. The tasks range from identification of letters and sounds to choosing answers to questions about stories of a few sentences. The students circle answers in their test books.

How the NYSESLAT Test Questions Were Developed

Using the *New York State Learning Standards for English as a Second Language*, teachers from New York state drafted the initial pools of questions for the assessments. Educational Testing Service staff worked with teachers from New York to expand the pools. ETS staff completed the development work and assembled the NYSESLAT Field Tests.

When the Assessments Will Be Given

- Field Tests - Fall 2002
- Operational Assessments - May 2003