

ESL Levels: General Descriptions

Grades 4-6

Level 1 - Beginning

Listening: Relies on visuals, gestures and demonstrations to understand familiar social and classroom routines.

Speaking: Communicates with friends and teachers socially and during classroom discussions, with support and prompts. Speaks with errors and omissions.

Reading: Understands and decodes sight words and familiar words. Reads texts word by word.

Writing: Uses familiar words and present tense when writing original text. Writes with error and omissions.

Level 2 - Developing

Listening: Relies on visuals to understand familiar topics and to learn new words and concepts.

Speaking: Communicates with friends and teachers in social and classroom situations. Speaks with some agreement errors and tense errors.

Reading: Understands some descriptive and subject-specific words. Reads with some phrasing. Comprehends the literal meaning of texts.

Writing: Creates simple detailed sentences, using familiar descriptive and academic words. Writes with usage errors.

Level 3 - Expanding

Listening: Understands main ideas and some details of unfamiliar topics.

Speaking: Participates in class discussions, shares ideas, and asks and answers questions. Speaks with some word usage errors.

Reading: Understands more descriptive, subject-specific and academic words. Reads with some expression. Comprehends the purpose of different genres of text.

Writing: Creates simple paragraphs, using adjectives and adverbs. Writes with more control of word order, plurals and tenses.

Level 4 - Bridging

Listening: Understands specific details of unfamiliar topics.

Speaking: Interacts with peers and teachers, makes connections and asks questions to gather more information. Speaks with occasional errors.

Reading: Understands a range of synonyms, antonyms and words with multiple meanings. Reads with expression, attends to punctuation, and makes meaningful substitutions. Comprehends figurative language.

Writing: Creates detailed paragraphs, using a range of vocabulary. Writes with more control of subject-verb agreement.

Level 5 - Extending

Listening: Understands academic explanations.

Speaking: Engages in conversations by elaborating, restating, commenting and asking and answering questions. Speaks with increasing accuracy.

Reading: Understands a broad range of synonyms, antonyms and words with multiple meanings. Reads with expression and self corrects. Comprehends cultural references.

Writing: Creates cohesive, well-developed text with supporting detail, using a broad range of vocabulary and cohesive devices. Writes with increasing accuracy.

Adapted from:

<https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/documents/ESL%20Benchmarks%20Division%20Levels%20Summary%20Gr%204-6.pdf>