



# Accommodations and Assessment for ELL's

Tips for Teachers in Accommodating  
the Unique Needs of ELL's

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

K-12 ESL Program

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# Know Your Students

- Does your ELL ...
  - Have limited formal schooling?
  - Come from a war-torn country?
  - Have a much different understanding of school?
  - Lack knowledge of everyday activities and practices in the United States?
  - Have family situations that limit parent involvement?
  - Have anxieties about their new country and school?



# Understanding Second Language Learning

- It is difficult to learn a second language at any age.
- Age is usually not a factor in time needed to learn second language.
- Conversational Skills do not indicate Language Proficiency.
- Silence is often a necessary part of the process.
- Errors often indicate progress. Try restating correctly, rather than correcting.



## Where To Begin

- Create a classroom that is warm and inviting.
- Classroom routines should be predictable. Comfort comes from knowing the routine.
- Have high expectations for all students, including ELL's. They should be included in classroom activities even when their language barrier may be a limitation. Give them responsibilities that make them a contributor to the group or class.



## How to Accommodate

- Allow extended time.
- Introduce key vocabulary before the lesson.
- Use flash cards.
- Provide a copy of notes for ELL. More advanced ELL's may be able to use a cloze format for note-taking.
- Provide highlighted text.
- Use visuals.
- Write key words on the board.



## How to Accommodate

- Type handouts. Struggling to read a teacher's handwriting can complicate the process.
- Read aloud *daily*.
- Plan ahead for your ELL's.
- Have a bilingual dictionary available.
- Divide large pieces of information into small chunks.
- Use hands-on activities and manipulatives.

# How to Accommodate

- Put text on tape or CD.
- Number paragraphs in text.
- Allow time for students to work together.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Find high interest, lower level reading material to support your content.





## How to Assess

- Grade only what the student has completed. Do not mark unanswered questions wrong.
- If using the same test as the mainstream students, only require that the key concept questions be answered.
- When using multiple choice, cut four or five choices down to two or three.
- Grade for content, overlook minor language mistakes when overall meaning is there.





## How to Assess

- Work up to more difficult methods of testing (in order):
  - True/False\* or Yes/No
  - Matching in groups less than 10
  - Multiple Choice with 2 choices
  - Fill in the Blank with Word Bank
  - Fill in the Blank
  - Complete sentences
  - Questions and answers
  - Short Paragraphs
  - Essays



# Wording Test Questions

- Research has shown that simplifying test questions so that they avoid unnecessarily complex English is the best way to assess English Language Learners.
- Consider rewording test questions as an accommodation. Remove unnecessary language, multiple meaning words, and simply assess the concept in the most straightforward manner possible.



## Assessment and Grading

*Remember that an English Language Learner cannot fail a course because of a lack of English proficiency.*





# Resources

- Everything ESL
  - [www.everythingsl.net](http://www.everythingsl.net)
- Pennsylvania Dept. Of Education – ESL Department
  - <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/esl>
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
  - <http://www.aiu3.net>