



*By working together, parents, teachers, and students can raise the level of achievement in our schools.*

*For more information, contact the New York State Education Department by e-mail at [emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov).*

*You may also write to us:*

*New York State Education Department  
Office of State Assessment, 7th Floor EBA  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12234*



University of the State of New York  
State Education Department

PEARSON



# ***New York State Testing Program***

The Grades K–12  
New York State  
English as a Second Language  
Achievement Test

**NYSESLAT**

A Parent's Guide

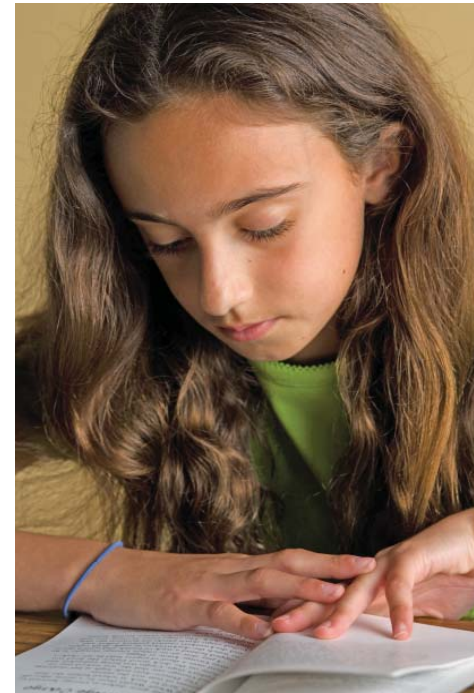


Achieving Excellence in Education

# Achieving Excellence in Education

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The New York State Board of Regents has established language arts standards for all students attending New York State schools, including students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). In compliance with the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), schools must annually assess students' performance in reading or language arts to ensure that students meet established State standards. In addition,



NCLB requires that schools receiving Title III funds annually assess the English proficiency of all LEP students participating in Title III programs. To comply with this requirement, the New York State Education Department has developed and annually administers the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to all LEP students enrolled in grades K–12 in New York State schools.

This informational brochure describes the NYSESLAT and how it measures the progress of LEP students. From this brochure, parents will also learn what they can do to help their students meet the challenges of the NYSESLAT.

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## The NYSESLAT

The NYSESLAT is designed to measure the English language proficiency of students who have been identified as limited English proficient (LEP). The Department has developed this test in partnership with Pearson, a test development company, and with the collaboration of teachers from across the State.

The NYSESLAT is administered annually to all LEP students in grades K–12. Each student’s performance on this test will be the basis for determining whether the student continues to be classified as LEP. Based on the results of the test, the student’s English language proficiency level is classified as beginning, intermediate, advanced, or proficient. Such classification must be used to provide the required amount of language arts instruction prescribed under Part 154 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. Part 154 is the State’s legal mandate that prescribes the requirements for the implementation of instructional programs and services for LEP students in New York State.

The NYSESLAT consists of five grade bands: K–1, 2–4, 5–6, 7–8, and 9–12. Each grade band assesses four language modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The NYSESLAT is an untimed test.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ➤ *Why do we have the NYSESLAT?*

NCLB mandates that all LEP students from kindergarten through grade 12 be assessed every year to measure their English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; NCLB mandates that students be tracked to assess their annual progress toward proficiency. The NYSESLAT helps schools determine which instructional standards they must focus on to ensure their LEP students fully acquire the language proficiency that will prepare them for success in the classroom.

### ➤ *What kinds of responses will students be asked to provide?*

Students will be asked to respond to four different types of questions—multiple-choice, short written response, extended written response, and oral response. The chart below shows the different types of questions in each subtest.

| Subtest   | Types of Questions |                        |                           |               |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
|           | Multiple-Choice    | Short Written Response | Extended Written Response | Oral Response |
| Listening | ✓                  |                        |                           |               |
| Speaking  |                    |                        |                           | ✓             |
| Reading   | ✓                  |                        |                           |               |
| Writing   | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓                         |               |

➤ *When will the test be administered?*

NYSESLAT is administered to students in the spring of every year.

➤ *How do we know that the NYSESLAT is a good measure of the New York State standards?*

Test questions are written by New York State teachers to specifically measure the New York State English as a Second Language (ESL) standards. Each test question is carefully reviewed by several New York State educators. Only those test questions judged to be of acceptable quality and bias-free are approved for inclusion on the test.

Furthermore, all test questions are also field tested in classrooms with LEP students to ensure that the directions are clear and easy to follow, the content is interesting to students, and the questions are reliable indicators of student achievement.

➤ *Who will score the tests?*

Questions on the Speaking subtest and on a portion of the Writing subtest are scored by New York State teachers who receive special training in the rating of students' oral and written responses. The multiple-choice questions on the NYSESLAT are machine scored by Pearson.

➤ *What are the NYSESLAT results used for?*

Test results provide students, teachers, and parents with an objective report of each student's strengths and weaknesses in the English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Results help determine whether these students are making adequate progress toward English language proficiency. Test results also help schools focus on ways to improve instruction so that LEP students become proficient in English. This allows them access to other content-based instructions, such as mathematics and science.

➤ *Are there accommodations for students with disabilities?*

**Testing accommodations are provided based on individual needs.**

During testing, accommodations are provided for students with disabilities. These accommodations are recommended by the Committee on Special Education and are specified in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), or in his or her Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan).

Certain testing accommodations are not permitted for some sections of the tests because these accommodations would change what the test is measuring. For example, reading to a student the portions of the Reading subtest, which is intended to measure a student's reading skills, is not a permissible testing accommodation. Testing accommodations on the NYSESLAT for students who are not identified as students with disabilities are not permitted.

## How Parents Can Help

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Parents can play an important role in helping their children to do well in school and to prepare for these tests.

Here are some things you can do:

■ **Learning begins at home.** Children learn language by hearing, reading, and using the language. The more exposure to English you can provide your child, the quicker the necessary language skills can be acquired.

■ **Talk with your child's teacher.**

Getting to know your child's teacher is an excellent way to stay informed about your child's performance at school. Attending parent-teacher conferences and school events are good ways to maintain regular communication with your child's teacher.

■ **Be supportive throughout the year.**

Make sure your child comes to school ready to learn, attends school regularly, and completes all homework assignments. Ask your child about his or her performance in school, and be generous with praise.

■ **Encourage good work habits.**

You can help your child learn good work habits at home and at school. Explain the importance of carefully following directions, avoiding careless errors, and checking work to make sure it's done correctly.

■ **Present a positive attitude toward the tests.**

Let your child know that you have confidence in his or her abilities. Explain that some of the test questions may be difficult and that it does not matter if other students finish earlier. Let your child know it is okay to proceed at his or her own pace.

■ **Be sure your child is physically prepared on the day of the test.**

Taking a test requires a student's full attention, so your child should have a good night's sleep the night before the test. Make sure your child has a healthy breakfast and a nutritious lunch on test days.

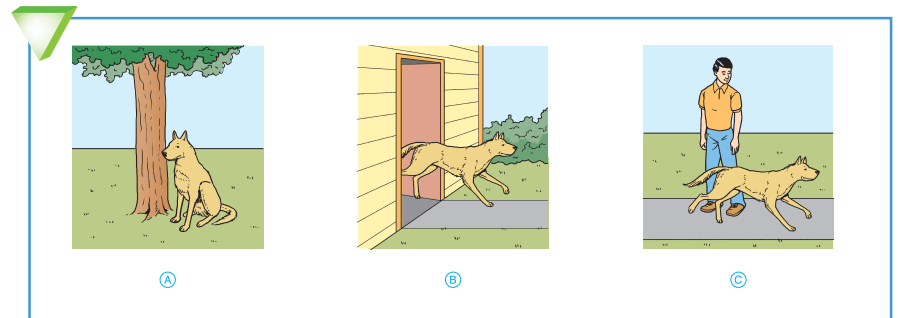
## Sample NYSESLAT Questions

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The following samples exemplify the types of questions that appear across the five grade bands and four subtests of the NYSESLAT. These sample questions are drawn from the NYSESLAT Samplers, which may be used in the classroom before the actual test. The NYSESLAT Samplers and accompanying Teachers Directions are available online at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/sampler07/home.htm>.

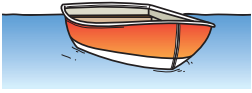
➤ *Grades K–1 Listening*

**Spoken script:** Which picture shows what the dog did first? Now listen. “The dog ran out the door, ran by a man, and then sat under a tree.” Which picture shows what the dog did first?



➤ *Grades K–1 Reading*

What do you see?



bus

A

ball

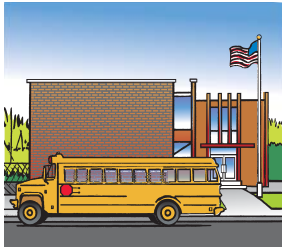
B

boat

C

➤ *Grades K–1 Writing*

**Spoken script:** This is a picture of a school. Write the word “school” on the line.



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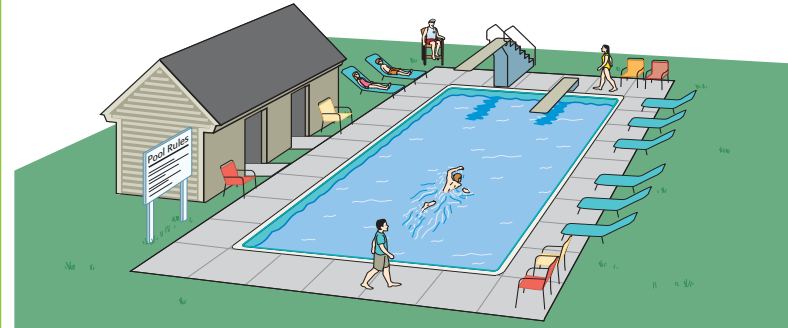
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➤ *Grades 2–4 Listening*

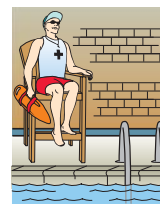
**DIRECTIONS** Listen to the person talking. Read the question and look at the pictures. Fill in the correct circle on your answer sheet.

You and your family are at a park with a pool. The weather is perfect for a picnic and for swimming, too.



**Spoken script:** Where will you go after you talk to your mother? Now listen. “I know that you like to jump off the diving board, but you will need to wait until the lifeguard says it’s OK to go into the deep end of the pool. You can go play on the slide until you are able to go on the diving board.” Where will you go after you talk to your mother?

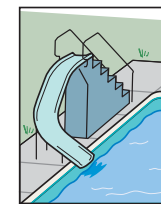
Where will you go after you talk to your mother?



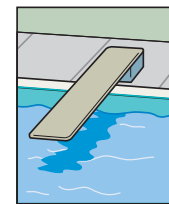
A



B



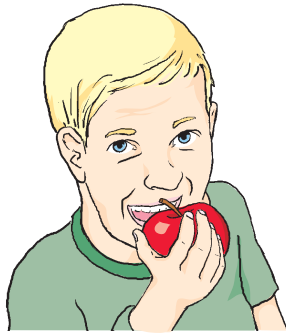
C



D

➤ *Grades 2–4 Speaking*

When Marco is hungry for a snack . . .



➤ *Grades 5–6 Reading*

**DIRECTIONS** Read the poem and each question. Fill in the correct circle on your answer sheet.

**Home**

by Nancy Beaulieu

When my grandmother tells tales of when she was my age,  
her hands wave like the tree branches outside her childhood window, and  
she chatters like the river as it ran past her village.  
But when my grandmother finishes,  
she grows still as a summer's night when she was young.  
So I listen and I see with my grandmother's eyes.  
Then my grandmother starts a new tale about a garden she is growing.  
Her brown eyes are as warm as the earth where she is planting seeds.  
So I listen and I see with my grandmother's eyes.

What can you tell about the grandmother after reading the poem?

- A** She is a patient listener.
- B** She once lived in a large city.
- C** She has detailed memories of her youth.
- D** She does not like to talk much anymore.

Which words from the poem contain a simile?

- A** . . . as it ran past her village.
- B** Then my grandmother starts . . .
- C** When my grandmother tells tales . . .
- D** . . . her hands wave like the tree branches . . .

➤ *Grades 7–8 Listening*

**Spoken script:** Where will you get a map?

- A** From the librarian
- B** From the Internet
- C** From a teacher
- D** From a book

Now listen to the teacher. “Today we’re going to start our research project about explorers. Each group will choose one explorer from the list, and then we’ll go to the library. First, you’ll look for information about the explorer’s life. Next, you need to print a map from the Internet and draw the explorer’s route on it. Finally, you will each write a paragraph about some important discoveries the explorer made.” Where will you get a map?

Where will you get a map?

- A** From the librarian
- B** From the Internet
- C** From a teacher
- D** From a book



➤ *Grades 7–8 Writing*

**DIRECTIONS** Write an essay about how the lessons that young people learn from their peers in school and in sports can help them when they grow up. Make sure your essay is well organized and of sufficient length. You may use your ideas from the Pre-Writing questions to help you write.



➤ *Grades 9–12 Writing*

Since joined the Chess Club, Tracy has improved her game.

Which answer is correct?

- A** joining
- B** to join
- C** join
- D** Correct as is

➤ *Grades 9–12 Speaking*

What is the woman doing, and what might she be thinking?



## Glossary of Testing Terms Used in this Guide

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### **Extended written response**

A task in which students are required to write an in-depth answer to a question, rather than choose from several answer choices.

### **Field test**

A preliminary version of a test, administered to students in order to gather data about the test questions. The test is administered at selected schools.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

An educational plan for a student with disabilities. An IEP is a modification of the standard education program and contains specially designed instructions based on the student's unique academic, social, and behavioral needs.

### **Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students**

Students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English and either understand and speak little or no English, or who score below a state-designated level of proficiency on the state's approved English as a Second Language test.

### **Multiple-choice question**

A test question for which a student chooses, rather than writes, an answer. Students select the correct response from three or four answer choices.

### **New York State Board of Regents**

Established in 1784, the Regents of The University of the State of New York form the oldest continuous state education entity in America. The Regents are responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over The University and the New York State Education Department.

### **New York State Learning Standards for English as a Second Language**

State-prescribed descriptions of the abilities and competencies that LEP students must demonstrate to successfully integrate into the English academic mainstream.

## **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

Federal legislation aimed at improving the quality of education nationally by increasing accountability for states, school districts, and schools. The law requires that all states that receive federal funding must annually assess, in English, students who have been in United States schools for more than one year and requires states to annually assess the English proficiency of all LEP students participating in Title III programs.

## **Short written response**

A task in which students are required to write a short answer to a question rather than choose from several answer choices.

## **Title III**

A section of the 2001 NCLB that addresses language instruction for LEP and immigrant students.

## **For More Information**

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If you want to know more about specific topics related to the NYSESLAT Testing Program, please see the following Web sites:

### **The NYSESLAT Testing Program**

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/home.shtml>

### **Office of State Assessment**

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa>

### **General Information on Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm>