

Elementary Newcomer Curriculum Guide for Mainstream Teachers

Who are newcomers?

According to the [OKCPS Elementary Placement Guidelines](#), a newcomer has been in country for less than one year, and has WIDA Listening and Speaking scores within the 1.0 to 1.9 range.

What services are available for my student?

Every ELL student in OKCPS is entitled to classroom instruction in English with modifications. In OKCPS, training is offered for the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction) model, which is a series of techniques and strategies to make daily instruction comprehensible to English language learners. Every served ELL in Oklahoma also has a Language Instruction Education Plan (LIEP), which lists modifications to be used in daily classroom instruction.

Elementary newcomers should be served through ESL pull-out programs, where staff is available, for a 60-75 minutes per day. They should also have access to a bilingual paraprofessional, where available, for a portion of each day. Bilingual paraprofessionals should preview content in the student's native language *before* the lesson, and then return afterward to clarify and answer questions. Lessons should not be translated word for word.

What supports are available to me?

We're glad you asked!

- Your [ELL Instructional Facilitator](#) will come to your class to help you in different ways, such as modeling a lesson, troubleshooting issues, planning modifications, modifying assessments, and more. We are here to help! Please feel free to contact us with any questions you might have!
- Your building ELL teacher is a great resource for ideas, questions and materials such as picture dictionaries
- The [LCS staff](#) is also ready and willing to assist parents and families. Let us know how we can help!

Be sure to also check out these resources:

- [LCS Website](#) (See [Teacher Resources](#) and [Vocabulary PPTs](#))
- [LCS Elementary Pinterest Page](#)

What can I expect with a Newcomer student?

The Silent Period

- Normally lasting up to about 6 months, students have a period of listening, when they are taking in language without producing much (speaking).
- Allow students to respond nonverbally (thumbs up/ down, marker boards, yes/no plates or [spoons](#), [How I'm Doing flip rings](#) or [mini flip charts](#), pointing, gestures, etc.)

Stages of Acculturation – anyone moving to a new country on a permanent or semi-permanent basis will experience some stages of acculturation, often in a predictable sequence. Note that sometimes students get stuck in a specific stage and do not move on.

- **Euphoria**/ the honeymoon phase- feelings of euphoria; "I'm happy to be here because it's nice and new!" Have fun in this phase, because...
- **Culture shock**- the student become acutely aware of differences in deep culture and feels alien and alone, begins to miss home and familiar surroundings, this can be mild to severe; it may seem like depression, crying every day, withdrawing, or just feeling sad. Make sure students feel supported; be kind encouraging; don't take

it personally if they begin to withdraw- a kind smile can go a long way. People in this phase seek the familiar; it's an ideal time to make sure they are getting support from other children from the same culture, as much as possible.

- **Culture stress-** The individual becomes more accustomed to new surroundings and begins to stabilize; the student may grapple with identity (retaining home culture vs. wanting to fit in); some things become familiar, while other things still cause stress or discomfort
- **Assimilation or adaptation-** With acculturation, the individual becomes a full part of the new culture, and either drops (assimilation) or retains (biculturalism) the home culture. Other individuals learn to live and function in their new surroundings without ever fully acculturating (adaptation).

What instructional modifications should I make?

A [complete list of classroom modifications](#) is available, but the best strategies to start with include:

- **Visuals:** use pictures, demonstrations, short video clips, and anything that allows students to see to learn; to get you started, OKCPS' Language and Cultural Services department provides a number of [PowerPoint presentations to reinforce Treasures vocabulary](#).
- **Physical movement:** hands-on, real-life objects, physical movement (acting out words, role playing a story) and anything that students can *touch*. Seeing and touching objects is non-linguistic; that is to say, no language is required to understand!
- **Interaction:** Think-pair-share (ask a question and allow students time to think about their response, then share with someone next to them, and then answer out) allows ELL students to practice their language before speaking in front of others. It also lowers the nervous factor. Other cooperative strategies benefit ELL students, including group work, partner reading, etc. If you are worried that ELL students will not get to participate in group work because other students will dominate, give each group member a job (search Teachers Pay Teachers for Role Cards).
- **Support when giving directions,** including showing a finished product, model or template; model actions if the student doesn't understand (such as saying "get out your book" while modeling getting out a book). Do this for the whole class when possible, so the student doesn't feel singled out.
- **Personal Dictionary:** Have the student start a personal vocabulary dictionary, organized by subject. When learning an important new word, ask the student to add the word with an illustration. Note that copying definitions is not an effective way to teach vocabulary.
- **Picture and Word-to-Word Dictionary:** Acquire (from your ELL teacher) an Oxford Picture Dictionary (OPD) and word-to-word (WTW) dictionary for the student. Encourage students to use both on a regular basis. The OPD is an excellent tool for daily vocabulary acquisition. Word-to-word dictionaries provide exact translations of words (bicycle-bicicleta) with no explanations and are useful if students already know a concept and simply need to know the word in English. WTW dictionaries can be used on standardized assessments IF they have been used regularly throughout the year.

What else can I do to help my student?

- Learn his/her name and how to pronounce it correctly. It's important! Please do not give children an "American name". Our names are part of our identity.
- Use the **buddy system**. For the students first days, pair him/her with a bilingual friend to serve as a guide. Be aware that not all students are good helpers; observe how they interact. Also, some students (such as Muslim children) will not be comfortable with a buddy of the opposite gender due to their culture.

- **Seat them strategically.** Research shows that ideal seating for a newcomer would be one native English speaker and one high-achieving bilingual student when possible. Putting all of the bilingual children together will not encourage them to use their English as much.
- **Bienvenido (Welcome)!** Show your student that you value his/her language. Learn a few words to greet him/her. Our native languages are a huge part of our identities and cultures: showing that you care enough to learn a little about the student's language and home country will mean a lot. See Appendix A for basic greetings in a few languages.
- Allow students to use their **native language** in your classroom. The best times are (1) with your paraprofessional before and after lessons, and (2) discussing and clarifying what they have learned with other speakers of that language.
- Use [bilingual classroom labels](#) around your room, and print another set as flash cards to help your students in their first weeks.
- Emphasize predictable daily routines and procedures; knowing what to expect will help your student feel more comfortable. (Ex: we always go to the bathroom to wash our hands before lunch; we always bring back our homework folder on Friday)
- Don't force students to speak. Give them the time they need, and then be encouraging when they do. 😊
- Correct errors by repeating back correctly or paraphrasing: S: "I goed to the bathroom." T: "Oh, you went to the bathroom?"

How can I give my students grades?

Math, Science, and Social Studies

Content should be taught using modifications for ELLs, and ELLs should be provided multiple methods of demonstrating what they have learned, other than a standard assessment. The goal is for ELL students to learn the same content as peers (not watered down), but with simpler language. First year newcomer students should be assessed according to Level 1 of the Can-Do Descriptors:

- [Grades 1-2](#)
- [Grades 3-5](#)
- [Grades 6-8](#)

For example, according to the Can-Do Descriptors, a Level 1 student can label a picture. This might be a good assessment of a science concept. Creating a timeline with simple labels (words or phrases) would be a good way to illustrate some Social Studies concepts.

Language Arts and Spelling

Scale scores given in the ESL classroom may be used to replace Language Arts and Spelling grades in the mainstream classroom, provided that

- The student is still included in and participating with all in-class activities, and is attempting in-class work with modifications in all subject areas
- The student is a newcomer (within his/her first year in US schools, and identified per OKCPS Elementary Placement Guidelines)

There are two main components to the curriculum used for elementary newcomers. Assessments are ongoing. A summary of scale scores will be provided to mainstream teachers on a weekly basis, in a format agreed upon between teachers (email, paper copy, shared Google Drive document, etc.)

- The **ESL strand** includes useful language, vocabulary and grammar. These may replace grades for **Language Arts**.

- The **phonics strand** gives explicit instruction about the rules of reading in English. Scale scores given for phonics may replace **Spelling** grades.

Conversion Table for ESL Newcomers

Scale Score	Meaning	Grade Conversion
4	I can understand and/or demonstrate the skill and can teach it to someone else, or I have an advanced understanding of this skill.	105%
3	I understand and/or can demonstrate the skill with no help.	90%
2	With a little help, I can understand or demonstrate most of the skill.	75%
1	With help, I understand or can partially demonstrate the skill.	60%
0	Even with help, I do not understand or could not demonstrate the skill (but I tried).	50%
N/A	We have not yet tried or assessed this skill.	N/A

Appendix A: Greetings in Other Languages

Arabic

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ityVW2gR0Rs>
- <http://www.transparent.com/learn-arabic/phrases.html>
- <https://www.arabicpod101.com/arabic-word-lists/>
- <http://www.livelingua.com/blog/survival-arabic-phrases/>
- <http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/articles/index.pl?read=854>

Farsi:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Pkdp7Le0cM>

Korean:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5ILFKNP2dk>

Kreyol:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8npvfdtXTg>

Mandarin:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3t8_WisaY

Spanish

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j91m55N7e9I>
- <http://survivalspanishforteachers.com/phrases.html>

Tagalog:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbBquYVFb0o>

Vietnamese

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ityVW2gR0Rs>
- <http://free.lessons.l-ceps.com/learn-vietnamese-free-lesson-1.html>
- <http://www.vietcali.com/qevp>

Cultural expectations

- <http://www.sandiego.edu/esl/cultures/vietnamese/teachingvietnamese.htm>