

ELL Tips for Teachers - Level 1

Student _____

This means the student:

- Understands very little English
- May not talk at all; “silent period”
- May speak only in primary language
- Is learning to understand basic conversation and instructions such as “hello, how are you, sit down, line up, color, cut, paste”, etc.
- Is beginning to speak in one and two word phrases
- Is beginning to learn about American culture

The Teacher can:

- Use visual clues as much as possible, such as pictures, gestures, pointing
- Teach basic survival English, such as “bathroom”, “lunch”, “home”
- Help the student to learn the classroom routines
- Use a student buddy, if possible someone with the same language
- Label objects around the room
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Provide books on tape
- Provide books with patterned sentence structure and pictures
- Be patient, give the student a few weeks or months to adjust
- Learn what you can about the student’s culture

ELL Tips for Teachers - Level 2

Student _____

This means the student:

- Understands most basic directions
- Can respond with one or two word answers
- Uses English vocabulary that is still very limited
- Probably understands more than he/she can express
- Continues to learn about American culture

The Teacher can:

- Use visual clues as much as possible, such as pictures, gestures, pointing
 - Use a student buddy, if possible someone with the same language
 - Teach phonemic rules and skills
 - **Model** correct usage, don't over-correct
 - Expect reading skills to come slowly. If the student has learned to read in his native language, this will probably help him to transfer reading skills to English. However, the student may be pronouncing words, but not really understanding the content of the reading.
 - Ask literal questions – who, when, where, what, etc.
 - Provide books with patterned sentence structure and pictures
 - Label objects around the room
 - Use a student buddy, if possible someone with the same language
 - Provide books on tape
- Writing Strategies:
- Allow the student to verbalize or write what he wants to say and the teacher can correct grammar and spelling later.
 - Student speaks a few words and teacher puts it into a simple sentence.
 - Give the student a picture story without words and provide him with some basic vocabulary that goes with this story. (Example – Pancakes for Breakfast by Thomy dePaola) Ask him to write a sentence or so to describe each picture, which then makes a story. After the first draft, you can ask him to add more details.

ELL Tips for Teachers - Level 3

Student _____

This means the student:

- Understands most conversational English vocabulary
- May not understand complicated spoken English
- May not understand many idioms and homonyms
- May not grasp underlying meanings in a story because of vocabulary
- Speaks in simple sentences and has some incorrect grammar usage
- Has reading and writing skills below those of native English speaking students
- May still have limited knowledge of American culture

The Teacher can:

- Check for understanding of vocabulary in language arts and content areas. Don't assume the student understands the words in reading selections.
- Help with writing skills, especially grammatical structure
- Check the student's reading skills; Phonemic rules and skills may have to be taught
- **Model** correct usage, don't over-correct
- Explain idioms
- If possible, get reading selections on tape, so students can listen and read along. (School volunteers are a good source for making tapes.)
- When the student is at the point where they can handle the classroom assignments, it may be necessary to make modifications to simplify assignments.
- Give the student a list of target words for each unit of study.
- Since parents may not be able to help with homework assignments, encourage student to get help at school.

ELL Tips for Teachers - Levels 4 & 5

Student _____

This means the student:

- Understands most conversational English
- Has limited understanding of less commonly used words
- Speaks in fluent sentences using standard grammar
- May have reading and writing skills below those of native English speaking students
- May not understand some idioms and homonyms
- May not grasp underlying subtle meanings in a story because of vocabulary
- May have difficulty understanding content-area materials above 2nd grade level
- May still have cultural conflicts or misunderstandings

The Teacher can:

- Check for understanding of vocabulary used in curriculum materials, whether used verbally or written
- Help with writing skills. They will need assistance with self-editing, especially syntax and word usage.
- Make modifications to simplify assignments and tests so the student will not be overwhelmed while they continue to acquire English.
- Give the student a list of target words for each unit of study.
- Since parents may not be able to help with homework assignments, encourage student to get help at school