

## Beginning ESL Literacy

| Summary of NRS Level   | MCAEL Descriptors  |   | Program Level Exercises: Where are the learners in your program?   |
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| <p><b>Listening and Speaking:</b> Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.</p> <p><b>Basic Reading and Writing:</b> Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.</p> <p><b>Functional and Workplace Skills</b><br/>Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.</p> | <p>A person at this level often:</p> <p>Demonstrates minimal oral and, most importantly for this level, <b>very limited reading and writing skills: it is the lack of reading and writing skills that distinguish the learner at this level</b>—speaking and listening skills may be much higher than reading and writing skills;</p> <p>Typically a literacy-level student has had six or fewer years of formal education in his or her native country, so learning basic school skills such as what goes on in a class and even manipulating paper and pencil will be important;</p> <p>A student at this level may be new to the country, lived in the United States for years and anywhere in between;</p> <p>A learner at this level would likely experience difficulty in an English-speaking work environment, but could do well in a workplace where co-workers and/or supervisors spoke the same language (e.g., service industries, construction).</p> | <p><b>Instruction:</b> Learners at this level typically would be working on basics<br/>- sight-sound correspondence of alphabet, reading and writing for simple personal identification forms<br/>- in lifeskills contexts in addition to communicative activities such as conversation grid, pair dictation, line dialogue, picture story, and language experience approach (LEA) story.</p> <p><b>Effective Materials:</b> Picture dictionaries, teacher- and learner-made materials (such as index card pictorial vocabulary and lists, paper-plate clocks, conversation grids, language experience approach (LEA) texts); many publishers have available textbooks or reading books at this level.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Depending on personal factors—such as linguistic and educational background, age, health, time in the United States—and program factors—such as hours of instruction per week, focus of instruction—it may take some learners at this level many months (or longer) to become proficient enough and comfortable enough to move to a higher level.</p> <p><b>Exiting the level or program:</b> To</p> | <p>1. Currently, our program places learners into levels using the following tests or procedures: _____</p> <p>2. Our program serves learners at this level.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">yes                      no                      sometimes</p> <p>3. In our program students at this level are in the _____ class(es).</p> <p>4. The number of hours of instruction available for a learner at this level per session or semester is _____.</p> <p>5. In our program, learners at this level engage in the following learning activities:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>6. Students use the following materials and resources (published or teacher- and learner-made):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |

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| <p><b>CASAS Reading scale scores:</b></p> <p>Reading: 180 and below</p> <p>Listening: 180 and below</p> <p><b>BEST Plus:</b> 400 and below (SPL 0-1)</p> <p><b>BEST Literacy:</b> 0-20 (SPL 0-1)</p> <p><b>TABE CLAS-E scale scores:</b></p> <p>Total Reading and Writing: 225-394</p> <p>Total Listening and Speaking: 230-407</p> | <p><b>TIPS: 1.</b> Even within this one level, there may be many differences among learners. For example, a student from El Salvador will likely have an easier time learning to read and write in English than a person who comes from a linguistic background that uses a different alphabet or a non-alphabetic language.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Because an individual does not initially appear to be able to communicate in English, don't automatically expect that student to also have no reading, writing, and school skills; investigate further, especially when the learner is more accustomed to and comfortable with class.</p> <p><b>3.</b> Even though reading and writing skills may be limited, speaking and listening are likely to be paramount concerns for the learners at this level.</p> <p><b>4.</b> Especially in smaller programs, beginning literacy learners may be in the same class as other beginning students. It's important for the teacher to identify who has what skills and offer targeted instruction, especially for the literacy level learners (e.g., work on alphabet, phonics, sight reading, helping learners understand about and feel comfortable in a classroom situation)</p> | <p>move to a beginner level, a literacy-level learner should be able understand and use the alphabet for very simple reading and writing (such as being able to read and write name, address, names of family), understand important sight words (such as traffic and safety signs), understand what is expected of him or her in a school situation and feel confident and willing to move on to new challenges.</p> <p><b>Cultural/Demographic Notes:</b> Montgomery County, Maryland has a very large immigrant population (26.7% of residents according to the 2000 Census), but it also significant is that 90.3% of residents ages 25+ have a high school diploma and 54.6% of residents ages 25+ have a bachelor's or above degree (both from 2000 Census; see U.S. Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts at <a href="http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24/24031.htm">http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24/24031.htm</a>)</p> <p><b>Background Resources:</b> <i>Working with Literacy-Level Adult English Language Learners</i> at <a href="http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html">www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html</a>;</p> <p><i>What Non-Readers or Beginning Readers Need to Know: Performance-Based ESL Adult Literacy</i> at <a href="http://www.springinstitute.org/Files/whatnonreaders2.pdf">www.springinstitute.org/Files/whatnonreaders2.pdf</a></p> | <p>7. Currently our program decides a person at this level is ready for the next level or a different program when:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
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