



# STEP

Steps to English Proficiency

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## English Language Learners (ELLs)

More than 20% of Ontario students arrive in English-language schools as English language learners (ELLs), i.e., students who are learning the language of instruction at the same time as they are learning the curriculum. Furthermore, it is expected that, by 2017, immigrants will comprise 30% of the total population of Ontario, and the number of ELLs is expected to increase.

English language learners are students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario's schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.

These students may be Canadian born or recently arrived from other countries. They come from diverse backgrounds and school experiences, and have a wide variety of strengths and needs.

Many English language learners were born in Canada and raised in families or communities in which languages other than English are spoken. They may include, for example:

- Aboriginal students whose first language is a language other than English;
- children who were born in communities that have maintained a distinct cultural and linguistic tradition, who have a first language that is not English, and who attend English language schools; and
- children who were born in immigrant communities in which languages other than English are primarily spoken.

Newcomers arrive from countries around the world at various stages in their educational careers. They may arrive in their pre-school years or at any point between Kindergarten and Grade 12. They may arrive at the beginning of the school year or at any time during the school year.

Depending on their age and country of origin, they may have had varying educational experiences prior to their arrival in Canada, and consequently will require different levels of support in order to succeed in the classroom.

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. (1.2)*

## Support Programs for ELLs

ESL or ELD describes the support programs that enable ELLs to acquire English. For their first few years in Ontario schools, many English language learners receive support in one of two distinct programs designed to meet their language learning needs:

**English as a Second Language (ESL) programs**, which are for students whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools. Students in these programs have had educational opportunities to develop age-appropriate first-language literacy skills.

**English Literacy Development (ELD) programs**, which are for students whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools. Students in these programs are most often from countries in which their access to education has been limited, and they have had limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in any language. Schooling in their countries of origin has been inconsistent, disrupted, or even completely unavailable throughout the years that these children would otherwise have been in school. As a result, they arrive in Ontario schools with significant gaps in their education.

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. (2.5.1)*

## Successful Outcomes for English Language Learners

The development of the STEP materials was guided by a “vision of the successful English language learner” developed by educators from across the province. Successful English language learners can:

- use English to communicate effectively in a variety of social settings;
- use English to achieve academically in all content areas;
- take ownership of their own learning, independently and in groups;
- use effective learning strategies;
- integrate confidently into classrooms or courses;
- use English effectively to advocate for themselves;
- be successful in their chosen post-secondary destination;
- function effectively in an information- and technology-based society;
- use critical-literacy and critical-thinking skills to interpret the world around them;
- participate in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of their own communities and of Canada.

The goal of an instructional program for English language learners should be to encourage students to value and maintain their own linguistic and cultural identities so they can participate in and contribute to the multilingual Canadian community.

## English Language Learners with Special Needs

School boards will develop a protocol for identifying English language learners who may also have special education needs. (2.3.3)

If information from the student's home country, from initial assessment, or from early teacher observation indicates that the student may have special education needs, the student will be referred to the appropriate school team. (2.3.4)

Where special education needs have been identified, either in the initial assessment or through later assessments, students are eligible for ESL or ELD services and special education services simultaneously.

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007.*

Some English language learners have special education needs. They are as likely as any other student to be intellectually gifted, to have a learning disability or a behavioural disorder, or even to have multiple exceptionalities.

Many countries around the world have identification and support protocols in place that closely parallel those of Ontario. Others do not. As a result, not all students who have Special Education needs will come with documents similar to psychological assessment reports and/or IEPs, and, even if they do, families may not understand when or how to share these with the school.

English is an international language, and many varieties of English – sometimes referred to as dialects – are spoken around the world. Standard English is the variety of English that is used as the language of education, law, and government in English-speaking countries. Some varieties of English are very different – not only in pronunciation or accent but also in vocabulary and sentence structure – from the English required for success in Ontario schools. Some varieties are so different from Standard English that many linguistics consider them to languages in their own right.

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. (1.2)*

## Background

STEP was developed out of a growing need for accountability with respect to English language learners. This accountability is clearly expressed in the *English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007* (referred to as the ELL Policy) and in the *Auditor General's Annual Report, 2005*.

## The ELL Policy (2007)

School boards will develop protocols to define procedures and practices for welcoming English language learners and their families and providing them with appropriate orientation to the Ontario school system, in the first language of the students and their families whenever possible. The protocol will include procedures for the admission of students in all grades, including Kindergarten – regardless of level of English proficiency or prior schooling – who arrive and need to begin school in Ontario at any time during the school year. (2.2.1)

School boards will assign staff to assess the English language proficiency of all English language learners. The assessment procedure will include:

- a structured interview to assess oral communication skills, i.e., listening and speaking;
- an assessment of reading comprehension;
- an assessment of student writing;
- an assessment of mathematical knowledge and skills. (2.3.1)

If initial assessment indicates that an English language learner has had limited prior schooling, the board will provide additional support to the student. (2.3.2)

The assessment should provide information about the type and amount of support the student will need to develop English language skills and bridge the gap to learning.

Additional support should be provided through an intensive program designed to accelerate the student's acquisition of proficiency in everyday and academic English and the appropriate knowledge and skill of literacy and numeracy.

A student's level of proficiency in English will not influence the choice of grade placement. (2.4.2)

In elementary schools, English language learner will placed what an age-appropriate group. (2.4.2a)

In secondary schools, placement in a grade or in specific subjects will depend upon the student's prior education, background in specific subject areas, and aspirations. (2.4.2b)

The school board will establish procedures for ensuring ongoing assessment of the development of proficiency in English and the academic progress of each English language learner. Progress will be reported to parents on a regular basis. (2.8.1)

Information on each English language learner's level of English language acquisition will be summarized and included in the Ontario Student Record at least once in each school year. (2.8.4)

English language learners who are under the age of 18 and are otherwise entitled to be admitted to school in Ontario will be admitted to school whether or not their parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada (see Policy/Program Memorandum No. 136, "Clarification of Section 49.1 of the Education Act: Education of Persons Unlawfully in Canada" [2004], for further details).

Immigrants/refugees coming from regions of instability may need additional supports to address issues related to trauma and stress.

Clear direction should be given to school staff to register all students of eligible school age, whether or not an ESL or ELD program is already in place, or to assist students to find an appropriate and accessible school placement where their needs as English language learners will be met.

*English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. p.16.*

## Limited Prior Schooling

Students with limited prior schooling are most often from situations in which their access to education has been limited, and they have had limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in any language. Schooling in their communities of origin has been inconsistent, disrupted, or even completely unavailable throughout the years that these children would have otherwise been in school. As a result, they arrive in Ontario schools with significant gaps in education.

Initial assessment is a critical process in identifying ELLs with limited prior schooling to determine starting points for instruction.

Information gathered during the initial family interview and in subsequent parent and student conversations are critical for identifying limited prior schooling experience. This information along with literacy and mathematics initial assessments will determine the need for ELD support, and placement on the ELD continua. An in-depth first language (L1) assessment is strongly recommended as a key part of the initial assessment for students with limited prior schooling.

## The Auditor General's Report (2005)

In the fall of 2005, the Auditor General for Ontario reported on an audit of ESL and ELD programs in Ontario schools. The report observed that “teachers need tools for measuring the English proficiency of [English language learners] on a periodic basis” and made the following recommendation: “To help ensure that decisions about the types and amount of services and supports provided to [English language learners] are based on proper monitoring of their progress, the Ministry should develop tools that teachers can use to periodically measure students’ English proficiency...”

*Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2005. p. 156.*

In response to the Auditor General’s report, and to many other reports and position papers submitted to the Ministry, the Ministry commissioned research to examine and report on existing language assessment from across Canada, the United States, Australia, and Europe. Although various tools for English language acquisition have been developed, this research determined that it would be appropriate to develop assessment tools specifically for use in Ontario schools.

## What is STEP?

*Steps to English Proficiency (STEP)* is a framework for assessing and monitoring the language acquisition and literacy development of English language learners across the Ontario curriculum.

The STEP resource is one in a series written to assist teachers in supporting a growing demographic of English language learners in Ontario schools.

To achieve the goal of having English language learners attain the high levels of literacy that are expected of all Ontario students, teachers need a means of assessing and tracking their progress over time. STEP is an assessment framework that teachers can use to determine language acquisition and literacy development of students who are learning English as a second or additional language.

The STEP continua are intended to guide classroom-based assessment. ESL/ELD and classroom teachers can use the STEP continua to assess and record evidence of students’ progress gathered through day-to-day classroom learning experiences. Information from STEP, gathered **over time** and in **various learning contexts**, will be useful for administrators, teachers, students, and parents in supporting teaching and learning.

As ELLs progress towards higher proficiency steps, linguistic demands increase. STEP does not assume that the goal of ELLs’ English proficiency development is to approximate English native speakers, which means that STEP is not referenced to any external norm. Rather, STEP is referenced to a mastery criterion by which an individual ELL is assessed independently with reference to the STEP language developmental continua.

## Context for STEP

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Board and school administrators work in partnership with staff, parents, and students to ensure that every student has the best possible educational experience. School administrators, classroom teachers, ESL/ELD teachers, parents, and students all have a role to play. Educators may find the following information useful in supporting ELLs.

### Supervisory Officers

To support the work of school administrators, consideration should be given to:

- ensuring the Board's vision for reception, orientation, and assessment is shared and understood;
- demonstrating a commitment to an inclusive, respectful, equitable environment for ELLs by allocating and monitoring financial and human resources;
- developing a Board culture that promotes shared knowledge and shared responsibility for outcomes by assisting principals in recognizing and articulating the learning their staff needs to support ELLs.

### Administrators

Principals and Vice Principals may wish to consider the following ways the STEP resource can be used in their schools.

School administrators can use the STEP initial assessment to:

- support the implementation of Board policies for programming/placement, monitoring, and tracking ELLs' language acquisition and literacy development;
- provide data to focus discussion among staff on student-specific needs;
- facilitate discussion about teacher learning needs to support ELLs in language acquisition and literacy development;
- establish the use of common language regarding second language acquisition;
- facilitate decision making and focussed support for at-risk ELLs;
- make informed decisions when planning programs and resources to support English language learners;
- facilitate accommodations on EQAO and other large-scale assessments;
- evaluate the effectiveness of ESL/ELD support and of the school as a language learning environment.

### Classroom/Subject Teachers

As classroom/subject teachers begin to gather information about the students they teach, so they can know the learners, they refer to the Ontario School Record (OSR). Students new to Canada will have very little in their OSRs to inform a teacher's practice. In the OSR teachers find information about a student's background and their level of language acquisition and literacy development which is included in the OSR at least once in each school year. Teachers might also find STEP a useful resource to assess and monitor ELLs' language acquisition and literacy development.

Classroom/subject teachers can use information from STEP to:

- guide their language assessment procedures and programming recommendations for English language learners when they first arrive at a school;
- guide their instructional practice, using the STEP Continua to identify accommodations and modifications to curriculum expectations;
- facilitate the discussion of language acquisition and literacy development with parents and other professionals;
- guide the selection of resources for English language learners in their classrooms
- facilitate the design of modified assessments, rubrics, and checklists that use the STEP Continua;
- enable targeted, focussed assessment *for* and *as* learning;
- work with an English language learner to set personalized, appropriate learning goals;
- monitor the ongoing progress of individual English language learners in all areas of the curriculum;
- determine the targeted support needed to scaffold the learning for the student;

## Context for STEP

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- identify, as early as possible, those students whose learning trajectory differs significantly from that of other ELLs and who may require other kinds of assessment and support in addition to language assessment, e.g., ELLs who may have special education needs.

### ESL/ELD Teachers

ESL/ELD teachers could be itinerant, or they could be assigned to a school. Their role may be as a resource to the school or they may deliver a specific program or course.

ESL/ELD teachers can use the STEP resource to:

- provide a common language describing language assessment, facilitating collaboration and communication;
- monitor the student's language acquisition and literacy development;
- collaborate with colleagues in developing linguistically appropriate teaching strategies;
- discuss students, supporting colleagues in the use of STEP, and helping colleagues understand second language acquisition;
- provide language acquisition data that could be used in identifying appropriate interventions for English language learners;
- guide instructional practice, using the STEP Continua to identify areas for accommodations and modifications, planning instruction, and selecting resources for English language learners;
- determine and monitor the level of support that ELLs need;
- identify, as early as possible, those students whose learning trajectory differs significantly from that of other ELLs and who may require other kinds of assessment and support in addition to language assessment, e.g., ELLs who may have special education needs;
- facilitate discussions with parents about their child's language acquisition and literacy development.

### Students

STEP enables students to develop assessment *as* learning, a process of supporting their metacognition. Assessment *as* learning is focussed on the role of the learners and the interactive process by which students reflect on and make meaning of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning.

Students can use information from STEP to:

- understand their level of language acquisition and literacy development and to develop next steps;
- monitor their learning and use feedback to guide their learning;
- critically analyse their own learning;
- reflect on their learning and set personal goals;
- understand that language acquisition and literacy development is an ongoing process;
- guide them in compiling a portfolio of evidence to share with teachers and parents.

### Parents

STEP enables parents to develop an increased understanding of schooling in Ontario and the support that is provided to their children as English language learners.

Parents can use information from STEP to:

- gain an accurate indication of their child's level of English language acquisition and literacy development;
- assist with goal-setting in partnership with their child and the school;
- use consistent and common terms for discussing their child's learning as he/she progresses through grades, divisions, and school;
- understand how their child demonstrates learning in various subject areas and academic tasks;
- understand language acquisition and literacy development as a long-term process that continues with different types of support.

## Initial Assessment

The initial assessment is an important first step in getting to know the English language learner. It is an opportunity to develop a profile of the student that includes their educational, cultural, and personal background.

Where possible, at least part of the initial assessment should be conducted in the student's first or dominant language (e.g., the language previously used for schooling) to allow a broader view of his or her linguistic development and academic background. The administration and interpretation of language assessments should be linguistically appropriate.

*English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. p.18.*

School boards will assign staff to assess the English language proficiency of all English language learners. The assessment will include:

- a structured interview to assess oral communication skills (i.e., listening and speaking);
- an assessment of reading comprehension;
- an assessment of student writing;
- an assessment of mathematical knowledge and skills.

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007. (2.3.1)*

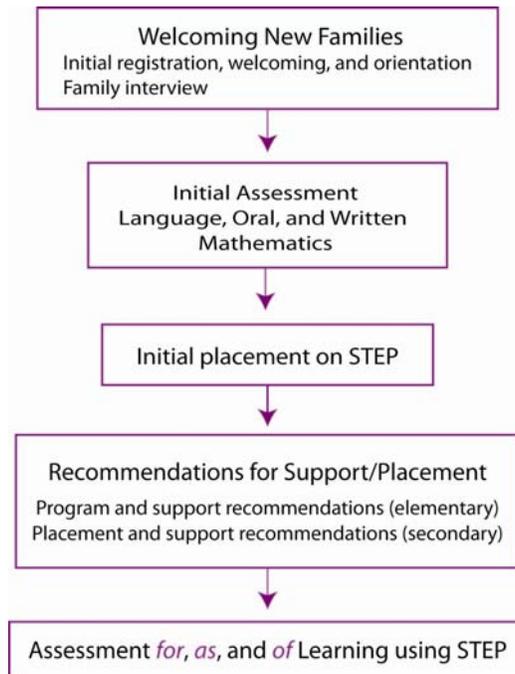
The initial welcoming and assessment has these major components:

- **Reception and Orientation:** to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for English language learners and their families
- **Initial Assessment:** to determine the student's educational background, and level of proficiency in English and mathematics
- **Support and Placement:**
  - Elementary: to determine program and support
  - Secondary: to determine placement and support

The initial assessment could occur shortly after the student's arrival in Canada. As a result, the student might be coping with a variety of changes that could affect performance on the assessment tasks.

# STEP Assessment Process

## Assessing English Language Learners



### Considerations

- An initial assessment can be conducted in many ways. Some boards have centralized facilities where all newcomer students and families go to obtain orientation information regarding schools in Ontario and where the assessment takes place over the span of one day. In other boards, initial assessment is conducted at the school level and can be spread over a period of days.
- The initial assessment is an important first step in getting to know the English language learner. It is an opportunity to get a clear picture of the students' educational, cultural, and personal backgrounds, including their individual learning styles and interests and Special Education needs.
- The initial assessment provides a first indication of the ELL's language proficiency and literacy development.
- Initial assessment results need to be recorded and used as a starting point to inform further assessments and programming for the student. The results need to be communicated to the student, parents, and all staff working with the English language learner.

The English language proficiency assessment includes the three modalities:

#### Oral Communication

- an oral interview with the student, using a familiar picture and early literacy tasks (e.g., identification of colours, alphabet names, basic printing, writing of their own name, and basic everyday objects).

#### Reading

- pre-reading/activating prior knowledge
- reading of selected material to confirm suitability of level
- comprehension and vocabulary tasks

#### Writing

- a one- or two-question writing task responding to the text the student has read

# STEP Assessment Process

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## First Language Writing Sample

Although teachers cannot be expected to assess first language writing, they are asked to request a first language writing sample.

Writing samples used for assessment should be in all languages in which the student can write, and should be collected over a period of several days or weeks, to obtain a student's best effort. Suggested topics: a description of a school attended, or a description of the plane ride and arrival in Canada.

The Mathematics assessment identifies a student's mathematical knowledge and skills.

## **What does the initial assessment identify?**

The procedures and assessment materials found in STEP assist teachers in identifying students who:

- will benefit from ESL support and whose progress in learning English should be monitored and tracked using the STEP continua for ESL
- will benefit from ELD support and whose progress in learning English should be monitored and tracked using the STEP continua for ELD
- do not need either ESL or ELD support

## **STEP Tracking Forms – ESL/ELD**

After the initial assessment, the teacher records the student's proficiency in oral communication, reading, and writing on the STEP Tracking Form.

Information on each English Language learner's level of English language acquisition will be summarized and included in the Ontario Student Record at least once in each school year. (2.8.4)

*English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007.*

The STEP Tracking Form:

- is started during the initial assessment;
- enables teachers to observe and document students' language acquisition through their participation in the classroom and their engagement with the curriculum;
- reflects the most consistent observable evidence;
- is updated at least once during each school year and included in the OSR.

Teachers should follow the school and/or school board procedures for organizing and sharing STEP assessment data and Tracking Form, as students move from grade to grade, or transition between schools.

# STEP Assessment Process

## Steps to English Proficiency Tracking Form – ESL

In the appropriate Step, record the date (month/year) along with the name of the teacher. Indicate the student’s grade or course.

Student Name		Date of Birth					
Element	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	
<b>Oral</b>							
Listening							
Speaking							
<b>Reading</b>							
Meaning							
Form and Style							
Fluency							
<b>Writing</b>							
Developing and Organizing Content							
Form and Style							
Language Conventions							

# STEP Assessment Process

## Steps to English Proficiency Tracking Form – ELD

In the appropriate Step, record the date (month/year) along with the name of the teacher. Indicate the student’s grade or course.

Student Name		Date of Birth				
Element	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<b>Oral</b>						
Listening						
Speaking						
<b>Reading</b>						
Meaning						
Form and Style						
Fluency						
<b>Writing</b>						
Developing and Organizing Content						
Form and Style						
Language Conventions						

## About the Observable Language Behaviours Continua

The Observable Language Behaviours Continua serves as the primary assessment and tracking tool of the STEP framework. The continua support the progress of English language acquisition and inform programming decisions English language learners. Descriptors in these assessment continua are intended to capture distinct language behaviours that can be observable across curriculum through daily instructional activities.

**Element** – Names and describes language concepts or skills that make a connection to Ontario curriculum.

**Observable Language Behaviours** – Statements capture distinct language behaviours that can be observed across curriculum through daily instructional activities. Information within a cell is called a descriptor.

### Sample Chart

Element	Curriculum Connection	Examples of Evidence					
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<b>Meaning</b> Understand and respond to texts, using strategies	Makes connections	relates content in read-alouds to personal experiences, using drawings, English words and phrases, and L1	relates details of a daily personal routine to those of a character in a story, using teacher prompts, English, or L1	explains how a character in a simple text is like or unlike themselves, using pre-taught vocabulary and a graphic organizer	compares the characteristics of heroes in fiction and non-fiction texts, following teacher modelling	compares buildings in early settlements with buildings in the community, after guided reading of authentic texts	compares aspects of early settlers' daily life with life today, using a Venn diagram
	Recognizes point of view	illustrates the main character's point of view in a simple text, using visuals, English, and L1	describes a character's point of view, using English and L1	describes the main character's point of view, using phrases and simple sentences from an adapted text	describes the point of view of two characters in a fairy tale, using a teacher-selected graphic organizer	describes two characters' points of view in a graphic text, using key vocabulary	describes how a familiar fairy tale would be different if presented from the point of view of a minor character

The similarity of descriptors between the different grade clusters (in a single modality) highlights that language develops through systematic and predictable developmental stages (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006; Pinennemann, Johnston & Brindley, 1988). Curriculum-specific examples are provided, where necessary, to make descriptors relevant to students' grade levels and cognitive maturity.

The language development of each student is unique, and the rate of growth may vary according to teachers' instructional emphasis. Teachers may observe their students exhibit skill development across adjacent Steps. This is an expected and normal developmental process. When teachers record students' STEP assessment results, they can consider the Step that shows the most distinct language behaviours consistently. Other wise, teachers should record the lowest Step when a student exhibits skill development across multiple Steps.

The Observable Language Behaviours continua assesses ELLs English proficiency development in three broad strands - writing, reading, and oral - which best reflect core language skills in the Ontario curriculum. Each strand is guided by curricular expectations as well as theoretical definitions. For example, the writing strand emphasizes the view of writing as process, progressing from prewriting, organization of ideas, writing, revising, and editing. The oral strand, defined in terms of listening and speaking skills, is operationalized in terms of communicative competence comprised of linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic components (Canale & Swain, 1980; Coelho, 2003)

## About the Examples of Evidence Continua

The Examples of Evidence continua provide concrete and curriculum-specific examples of evidence that illustrate learning behaviours specific to oral, reading, and writing modalities. These continua provide teachers with more detailed information about the observed behaviours. Each continuum consists of four components:

- Profile** – Statements provide an overview of students’ language proficiency at the end of each Step
- Element** – Names and describes language concepts or skills that make a connection to Ontario curriculum
- Curriculum Connection** – Statement of observable behaviours that reflect language acquisition and literacy development for that Element. Statements are the same for all grades in each Step
- Examples of Evidence** – Examples of evidence that ELLs can demonstrate by the end of a particular Step, presented in grade clusters

The four components together help determine where ELLs are and where they are going in their acquisition of English and literacy concepts and skills.

### Sample Chart

Profile – Step 1 – Reading					
Students read and understand simple graphic texts and highly visual informational and literary texts that relate to personal and classroom experiences. They read and understand familiar and pre-taught vocabulary and use cueing systems to decode unfamiliar words in simple sentences. Students bring age-appropriate understanding of language concepts in their first language (L1) to reading in English. They begin to understand that different text forms are used for different purposes and audiences. Students reflect on their growth as readers.					
Element	Curriculum Connection	Examples of Evidence			
		Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12
Meaning Understand and respond to texts, using strategies	Makes connections	relates content in read-alouds to personal experiences, using drawings, English words and phrases, and L1	compares home country and Canadian celebrations in dual-language picture books, using drawings, English words and phrases, and L1	describes how people impact the environment, using key vocabulary from a highly illustrated text and L1	relates prior knowledge to information from a short, adapted text, using visuals, English, and L1

### Elements and Curriculum Connections

- Are aligned with the Language curriculum (Grades 1-8) and the English curriculum (Grades 9-12).
- Are the same for all Steps and all grade clusters to provide consistency across and throughout the Continua.

### Examples of Evidence

- Provide **one** example of what an ELL might demonstrate as evidence of learning at the end of each Step within a grade cluster.
- Are **one** demonstration of what student learning might ‘look like’ or ‘sound like.’ Teachers will need to gather many examples of evidence based on their observations, discussions, and student productions to determine the student’s level of achievement.
- Evidence of student learning for most Curriculum Connections can be observed through a cross-curricular and subject-specific lens. Some examples of evidence that are provided are subject-specific. Teachers should be able to use the statement stems from these Examples of Evidence and apply them to other subject areas, concepts, and topics.
- Evidence of student learning for some Curriculum Connections can be observed primarily through the lens of the Language and English curricula.
- For each Step, the key language describing English proficiency in the Examples of Evidence must be considered across all Curriculum Connections.
- Teachers should identify evidence of student learning for each Curriculum Connection and provide support in areas that need development (e.g., student may show evidence of learning grammatical structures, but need further instruction and practice with word choice).

# STEP Assessment Process

## Considerations

- The Continua represent learning that the students can demonstrate at the end of each Step.
- Students are “on Step” when they are developing the language and literacy skills described in that Step.
- Students may show evidence of learning on different Steps across Oral Communication, Reading, and Writing.
- Decisions about which Step(s) the student is (are) on should be made on the basis of the student’s most recent and consistent performance.
- Students who have little or no previous exposure to English will start on Step 1. Students may demonstrate only one or two of the Curriculum Connections at first, but as they progress, teachers will be able to see evidence of additional Curriculum Connections.

## ESL Examples of Evidence Continua

The ESL Continua have six Steps that reflect progress from a beginner level (Step 1) towards performance that approximates the proficiency of peers who have been speaking English all their lives (Step 6).

## ELD Examples of Evidence Continua

The ELD Continua reflect the literacy development of students who have varying levels of first language literacy. The Oral Communication continua are the same for ESL and ELD. ELD continua are provided for Reading and for Writing. The ELD Continua are organized into four Steps to describe the progress of students who are preparing for transition to the ESL Continua.

ELD instruction alone is not sufficient to enable students to catch up to English-speaking peers. Students on the ELD Continua need intensive support to enable them to catch up in other key areas of the curriculum. Due to the intensive support that is required, and because these students are usually present in very small numbers in a school, some school boards provide congregated programs in designated schools.

## A Comparison Chart

ESL Continua	ELD Continua
The ESL Continua reflect the developmental progress of ELLs who have had age-appropriate opportunities for schooling in their first language.	The ELD Continua reflect the developmental progress of ELLs who are not yet ready for the ESL Continua because they have not had age-appropriate opportunities for schooling in their own language.
These students can build on their existing language and literacy skills in their first language as they learn English.	Students do not have age-appropriate, first-language literacy skills to build on. Some never had an opportunity to learn to read or write in any language.
The ESL Continua take as a starting point in Step 1 the needs of beginning students of English, and end at Step 6 with a level of proficiency approaching that of successful English-speaking students.	The ELD Continua begin on Step 1 with the needs of beginning students of English who cannot read and write in any language. Students transfer to the ESL Continua when they have acquired a level of language and literacy development that will enable them to be successful in school as long as they continue to receive support in an ESL program.
Not all students begin on Step 1. Students will begin on the Step that reflects their proficiency at the time of the first assessment.	Not all students begin on Step 1. Students will begin on the Step that reflects their proficiency at the time of the first assessment.
There are four ESL Grade Clusters: 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12.	There is only one ELD Grade Cluster: 1-12.
The ESL Continua reflect the progress of ELLs who are working to catch up to their English-speaking age peers.	The ELD Continua reflect the progress of ELLs with limited literacy skills in their first language who are working to close the gap between themselves and their age peers.
Students move through each Step at varying rates	Students move through each Step at varying rates. Since ELD students are developing foundational literacy skills in addition to learning a new language, they may require more intensive support and take longer to move through the Steps.

# STEP Assessment Process

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## Assessment *for* and *as* Learning

Assessment is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both “assessment *for* learning” and “assessment *as* learning.” As part of assessment *for* learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment *as* learning by helping all students to develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.

Teachers will obtain assessment information through a variety of means, which may include formal and informal observations, discussions, learning conversations, questioning, conferences, homework tasks done in groups, demonstrations, projects, portfolios, developmental continua, performances, peer and self-assessments, self-reflections, essays, and tests.

As essential steps in assessment *for* learning and *as* learning, teachers need to:

- plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction;
- share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses;
- gather information about student learning before, during, and at or near the end of a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tools;
- use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals;
- analyse and interpret evidence of learning;
- give and receive specific and timely descriptive feedback about student learning;
- help students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment.

## Assessment *of* Learning

Assessment *of* learning has a summative purpose and uses a collection of evidence to evaluate each student's achievement of curriculum expectations. It is used for reporting to students and parents.

Assessment *of* learning for ELLs should:

- be based on clear statement of expectations;
- take into account the cultural and linguistic background of the student;
- include clear guidelines for programming monitoring;
- reflect appropriate program adaptations.

Assessment of English language learners should:

- focus on improving student learning;
- be linked directly to curriculum expectations (as modified for each ELL's degree of English language proficiency);
- recognize linguistic and academic progress, while taking into account realistic and varying rates of second-language learning;
- incorporate student self-assessment;
- actively involve students and parents.

To determine if their assessment procedures for ELL's are appropriate, teachers should consider:

- Do assessments reflect appropriate program adaptations?
- Are assessments based on clear statements of expectations?
- Do assessments take into account the student's developing understanding of English?
- Do assessments take into account the cultural and linguistic background of the student?
- Do assessments allow for the use of the student's first language, as appropriate?
- Do assessments include clear guidelines for program monitoring?

# STEP Assessment Process

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## Assessment Tools

Assessment tools used for the ongoing assessment, monitoring, and tracking of learners can include teacher observation; cumulative checklists; true/false listening quizzes; role plays; cloze exercises; matching exercises; sequence exercises; draw and label tasks; dialogue journals; oral responses; problem solving; and/or making booklets, response journals, portfolios for writing, reading, or collections of student work from all subject areas. It is important to remember that the same assessment tool may not be appropriate for every student at any one time.

We can observe a great deal from children's ability to read and write in their first language. Although we may not understand the first language, we can listen to children read and know whether they read fluently or haltingly; whether they use pictures or other strategies to tackle words that they do not know; whether they attend to print on the page; or whether they have book knowledge, such as holding the book or turning pages. These can all be determined during a reading and writing conference – a powerful opportunity of assessment *for* learning in action.

## Portfolios

Collecting and maintaining a portfolio of student work is an excellent way to record and demonstrate a student's progress over time. Portfolios allow students to see various stages of work in progress and help them begin to recognize quality work. Writing portfolios can offer students insight into the process of writing. If students work closely with their teachers to develop various forms of portfolio assessments, they will learn to evaluate their own work and the work of others. As well, this information is easily shared with parents to demonstrate student progress.

# STEP Learning Environment

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English language learners achieve success in language acquisition and literacy development when they are learning in supportive environments. Below are brief descriptions of supportive environments for learning in each of the language modalities.

## Oral Communication

English language learners make progress in a supportive environment that values linguistic and cultural diversity. Beginning students require extra time to process language. Teachers need to listen attentively, and speak slowly and clearly, using gestures, prompts, rephrasing, and repetition. Students benefit from listening centres, language buddies, partner talk, and small-group work. It is important to allow beginners time to gain confidence in their ability to speak in English. Teachers should recognize that some students may pass through a silent period.

As students begin to take risks and produce more language, they require opportunities to experiment with a wider range of grammatical forms and vocabulary. They benefit from using their first language at school and at home, as well as from frequent interactions with peers in English. Teachers should provide students with extra time to respond as they produce language.

All students need scaffolding, teacher modelling, and explicit instruction to understand and use subject-specific vocabulary and language structure to express concepts or ideas.

## Reading

English language learners make progress in a supportive, print-rich environment where they explore and read a variety of texts. Reading materials should be carefully selected to support their developing language and literacy skills. Students need access to illustrated texts and dictionaries, predictable texts, dual-language texts, and high interest/low vocabulary informational, literary, and media texts.

Scaffolding and modelled, shared, and guided reading are critical across all subject areas to help students understand and communicate their thinking about text. Students require frequent opportunities to be read to and to reread texts. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to build background knowledge and connect texts to their personal experiences and interests. There should be explicit instruction before, during, and after reading and frequent opportunities for discussion and critical response to literacy experiences. Students require time to process new language and concepts in text of increasing structural complexity and length. Students benefit from opportunities to reflect on their learning and growth as readers.

## Writing

English language learners make progress in a supportive environment where they have opportunities to generate ideas, clarify thinking, and organize thoughts orally through discussion before they write in English. Students benefit from a wide variety of classroom resources, including illustrated and dual-language dictionaries, word walls, co-constructed anchor charts, and media resources.

Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to build background knowledge and connect their writing to personal experiences and interests and to their reading. They need intensive scaffolding including modelled, shared, and guided writing in an increasing number of text forms. There should be explicit instruction throughout the writing process, and frequent opportunities for discussion and student-teacher conferences. Students benefit from opportunities to create and share their writing portfolios and reflect on their learning and growth as writers.

## Key Instructional Considerations

Teachers should consider these instructional strategies as they support ELLs in language acquisition and literacy development. While they are good instructional practice for working with all learners, they are critical for supporting English language learners.

- Modify curriculum expectations to enable successful learning.
- Model all learning for students.
- Check frequently for understanding.
- Encourage and support the use of L1.
- Provide clear and explicit instructions supported by non-verbal clues, visuals, and simple language and sentence structures.
- Repeat, rephrase, or paraphrase key concepts and instructions to support understanding.
- Integrate listening, speaking, reading, writing, and curriculum content.
- Develop learning tasks that are cognitively slightly above the student's level of development while adapting the language to the level of language proficiency.
- Provide students with extra time to complete tasks.
- Allow "wait time" for students to formulate their ideas.
- Explicitly teach co-operative group learning skills and provide many opportunities for interaction in varied groupings (e.g., partner, small groups).
- Make frequent use of a variety of concrete and visual supports.
- Make connections between students prior knowledge and experiences and new learning.
- Provide many opportunities for student to rehearse presentations in a variety of settings.
- Incorporate role play as a strategy to demonstrate and clarify meaning.
- Teach reading strategies explicitly during modelled, shared, and guided reading.
- Teach language structures, using a variety of strategies within meaningful contexts.
- Teach and model the steps in the writing process.
- Allow students to demonstrate their understanding of a concept in alternative ways (e.g., demonstrations, orally, drawings).
- Provide a rich print environment including student work, co-constructed word walls, anchor charts, and a variety of reference and resource materials.
- Incorporate many opportunities for shared, guided, and independent reading and writing.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary and word knowledge are critical to communicating effectively in all modalities. In supporting ELLs in language acquisition and literacy development, teachers must focus on explicitly teaching vocabulary within meaningful contexts.

- Simplify vocabulary and sentence structure according to level of comprehension.
- Monitor the use of idioms, cultural references, jokes, colloquial forms, figurative language, and slang according to level of comprehension.
- Explicitly teach unfamiliar and subject-specific vocabulary before a lesson.
- Explicitly teach how language is used in specific subject areas to assist students with acquiring specialized vocabulary and language skills.
- Teach new vocabulary in context and create opportunities for authentic practice.
- Provide opportunities for students to access vocabulary through listening and reading, and then practise through speaking and writing.
- Reintroduce new words in a different context or use recently learned words to expand a concept.
- Use literature circles to reinforce vocabulary and provide opportunities for students to talk and share their connections to a text.
- Create word walls related to specific concepts or themes and to reinforce topic-specific vocabulary.
- Provide writing scaffolds, such as cloze procedure, to help students learn and use new words and phrases.
- Teach transition and linking words in authentic contexts.
- Have students highlight, underline, or note words or phrases they don't understand for discussion with peers and/or teacher.
- Select and cover key words in shared- or guided-reading texts and have students predict the unknown word, using context clues (e.g., prepositions or adjectives).
- Use visuals and real objects to introduce vocabulary and illustrate key concepts.
- Teach essential vocabulary, using a variety of supports, such as anchor charts, models, diagrams, pictures, photos, word cards, picture books, posters, banners, and manipulatives.
- Encourage students to keep a vocabulary notebook for topics or units of work and to spend a few minutes reviewing their new words at home every night.
- Use strategies, such as interviews, videos, field trips, and language experience to build oral vocabulary.

# STEP Strategies

## Oral Communication, Reading, and Writing Strategies

In presenting strategies to support ELL’s language acquisition and literacy development across the modalities, some strategies are identified as critical supports for students on Steps 1 and 2. Other strategies are suggested as more appropriate for students on Steps 3-6.

Oral Communication	Reading	Writing
Steps 1 and 2	Steps 1 and 2	Steps 1 and 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give clear one- or two-step instructions.</li> <li>• Have students retell instructions or directions.</li> <li>• Allow students to respond in a variety of ways, such as communicating with gestures, and providing yes/no responses.</li> <li>• Provide non-verbal cues such as objects, visuals, videos, demonstrations, and movement.</li> <li>• Provide structured overviews of discussions for listening.</li> <li>• Provide daily opportunities for students to listen and talk in a variety of groupings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach the English alphabet, using a variety of strategies, such as picture alphabet charts.</li> <li>• Use a variety of texts, to introduce concepts of print, such as directionality, upper and lower case letters, and features of text.</li> <li>• Build on prior knowledge with much pre-reading discussion.</li> <li>• Use graphic organizers before, during, and after reading.</li> <li>• Scaffold comprehension of texts by previewing with students and discussing text features prior to reading.</li> <li>• Include daily read-alouds and think-alouds, using literary, information, and media texts.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to make predictions and discuss text features during shared reading.</li> <li>• Introduce musical chants and poems that reinforce everyday expressions and patterned speech.</li> <li>• Explicitly teach semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cueing systems.</li> <li>• Create language experience texts.</li> <li>• Create compilations of familiar texts, such as illustrated language-experience charts, poems, chants, etc., for student re-reading.</li> <li>• Encourage students to read first language or dual-language books.</li> <li>• Provide age-appropriate, subject-specific, and cross-curricular reading materials that are accessible to students at varying reading levels.</li> <li>• Provide time for students to read every day.</li> <li>• Assist students in making appropriate choices for independent reading.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to work in large and small groups with English-speaking peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly teach the English alphabet to students whose first language uses a different alphabet.</li> <li>• Explicitly teach concepts of print such as sound-symbol relationships and directionality.</li> <li>• Provide students with many opportunities to talk in English or L1 with a language buddy before writing.</li> <li>• Model how to identify a purpose and audience for writing.</li> <li>• Model how to use graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams, T-charts, word webs and story maps, to organize ideas for writing.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of first language (L1) in journal writing, personal dictionaries, word lists, prewriting activities, and when preparing outlines or drafts.</li> <li>• Allow students to respond in drawings, words, phrases, simple sentences, and L1.</li> <li>• Have students write on topics that are culturally relevant to their lives.</li> <li>• Act as a scribe, using the language experience approach to record student ideas.</li> <li>• Provide students with writing prompts and sentence starters.</li> <li>• Provide students with dual-language and illustrated dictionaries.</li> <li>• Encourage students to keep an editing checklist for reference.</li> <li>• Model and provide opportunities for shared writing with partners and in small groups.</li> <li>• Provide students with ongoing support through regular teacher and peer conferences.</li> </ul>

# STEP Strategies

Oral Communication	Reading	Writing
Steps 3-6	Steps 3-6	Steps 3-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use strategies, such as KWL, Four Corners and Inside/ Outside Circle to allow for discussion and to activate prior knowledge.</li> <li>• Use dictogloss to develop listening skills.</li> <li>• Use information extraction tasks to develop listening for key information skills.</li> <li>• Use listening tapes for building knowledge of a topic.</li> <li>• Paraphrase correct forms of speech rather than correcting errors.</li> <li>• Teach students to identify purpose and audience for oral presentations.</li> <li>• Use co-operative learning strategies, such as partner-talk and small-group discussions.</li> <li>• Provide multiple opportunities for authentic speaking tasks, such as debates, readers’ theatre, author’s chair, partner and small-group problem solving, and group science investigations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly teach semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cueing systems.</li> <li>• Model how to skim and scan texts as a pre-reading activity.</li> <li>• Use anticipation guides to examine and respond to a series of teacher-generated statements that may reflect pre-reading beliefs and knowledge about topic, specific concepts, texts, and themes.</li> <li>• Ask students to predict, based on a shared reading of first sentence or first paragraph of a text or key illustrations.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for jigsaw reading, so that each student becomes an expert on a section of a text and then shares information in the home group.</li> <li>• Use literature circles to provide opportunities for students to talk about a book in depth and share their connections to the text.</li> <li>• Ask students to adopt the roles of different characters, while reading a readers’ theatre text.</li> <li>• Help students to deepen understanding of texts by taking on the role of a character in the Hot Seat.</li> <li>• Have students create a story map or timeline as a visual representation of the main features of a story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for students to select personally relevant topics for writing.</li> <li>• Encourage students to write in a variety of text forms and presentation formats.</li> <li>• Model writing and thinking aloud on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Provide frequent writer’s workshop mini-lessons focusing on a specific skill or concept.</li> <li>• Develop background knowledge of a topic for writing through listening and speaking activities, reading, information gathering, and note-taking.</li> <li>• Use pre-writing strategies, such as KWL, Four Corners and Inside/Outside Circle to allow for discussion and activation of prior knowledge.</li> <li>• Provide students with dual-language and illustrated dictionaries, thesauri, dictionaries of idioms and glossaries.</li> <li>• Model how to revise and edit at all stages of the writing process and co-construct editing checklists and task-based rubrics.</li> <li>• Have students create and maintain a writing portfolio that includes ideas for writing and samples of their writing.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to participate in teacher and peer conferences.</li> <li>• Use student-teacher or peer dialogue journals.</li> </ul>

# Glossary

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**anchor charts** Charts designed by the class or by the teacher that list steps, procedures, or processes for a particular activity (e.g., the stages of the writing process, procedures for a literature circle) or lists reference items (e.g., examples of capitalization, parts of speech, reading/thinking strategies).

**choral reading** A group recitation of a story or poem, intended to help students gain confidence in reading.

**cloze passage** A passage of text with some words omitted (e.g., Canada's mineral resources include nickel, copper, and \_\_\_\_\_). Students complete cloze passages to demonstrate reading comprehension, knowledge of the subject matter, and proficiency with specific items of grammar, vocabulary, or spelling.

**comprehensible input** Language that is made comprehensible to the learner through the use of visual aids, familiar content, rephrasing, repetition, and so on.

**concepts of print** Concepts related to the way language is conveyed in print. Print concepts include directionality (English-language text is read from left to right and from top to bottom), the difference between letters and words (letters are symbols that represent sounds; words are made up of letters; there are spaces between words), the use of capitalization and punctuation, and the common characteristics of books (title, author, front/back).

**cueing systems** Cues or clues that effective readers use in combination to read unfamiliar words, phrases, and sentences and construct meaning from print. Semantic (meaning) cues help readers guess or predict the meaning of words, phrases, or sentences on the basis of context and prior knowledge. Semantic cues may include visuals. Syntactic (structural) cues help readers make sense of text using knowledge of the patterned ways in which words in a language are combined into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Graphophonic (phonological and graphic) cues help readers to decode unknown words, using knowledge of letter or sound relationships, word patterns, and words recognized by sight.

**dictogloss** An activity in which a short text is read aloud at normal speed to students. The students take down the keywords and then attempt to reconstruct the passage from their general understanding of the gist of the text and from their notes. The task of reconstructing the text in their own words requires students to focus consciously on their knowledge of the content and the relationship between ideas and words. The activity also involves small-group interaction wherein students pool their key words and understanding to complete the task.

**dual-language dictionary** A two-language translation dictionary in which the learner can look up a word in one language and find its equivalent in the other.

**explicit teaching** Direct, purposeful teaching of specific knowledge, skills, or strategies. In explicit teaching, the teacher: explains what the knowledge, skill, or strategy is, why it is used, and when to use it; models how to use it; guides and coaches students as they practise it (e.g., in shared reading and then in guided reading sessions); and then asks them to demonstrate their learning independently.

**fishbone map** A graphic organizer that uses framing questions to show the causal relationships involved in a complex event. Framing questions might include: What are the factors that cause X? How do they relate to one another?

**5Ws and H** The six basic questions (who? what? where? when? why? and how?) that provide a framework for recounting personal or factual experiences and retelling stories or events.

**hot seat** Students research a role, position, or topic assigned by the teacher and become experts on their topic with the support of one or two peer partners. Students individually field questions posed by their classmates in order to provide information on a topic or insight and perspective on a character or issue.

**intonation** The rise and fall of the pitch of the voice in speaking. Intonation is used to communicate information additional to the meaning conveyed by words alone (e.g., a rising intonation at the end of a sentence indicates a question).

**jigsaw reading** A collaborative learning activity in which individuals or groups of students read or listen to specific sections of a text and then come together to share their information.

# Glossary

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**K-W-L** A learning activity that helps students draw on background knowledge before reading and focus on and retain specific information during and after reading. Prior to reading about a topic, with teacher assistance, students identify what they know about the topic and what they want to know and record the information in the first two columns of a chart. After reading about the topic, students record what they learned in the third column of the chart.

**language pattern** A particular arrangement of words that helps the reader determine meaning by providing a certain level of predictability; for example, inversion of subject and verb in interrogative sentences.

**language-experience approach** A method of promoting reading in which the teacher begins with the experiences the students bring to class (or have together) and then works with the students to compose stories in the students' own words. The stories may then be used in a variety of ways to develop reading and oral skills.

**literary (or stylistic) device** A particular pattern of words, a figure of speech, or a technique used in literature to produce a specific effect. Examples include rhyme, parallel structure, analogy, comparison, contrast, irony, foreshadowing, allusion, juxtaposition, simile, metaphor, personification, pun, hyperbole, oxymoron, symbolism.

**literature circle** A book discussion format designed to promote reading. In a literature circle, students independently read the same book (or different titles by the same author or books with a common theme) and then come together to discuss elements of the book(s).

**modelling** A demonstration by the teacher of how to perform a task or use a strategy. Students copy the teacher in order to learn the modelled processes and skills. Modelling may include thinking aloud, to help students become aware of the processes and skills involved.

**non-verbal communication (non-verbal cues)** Communication by the use of gestures, eye contact, body movement, facial expressions, physical proximity, touching, and pauses during speech.

**pattern book** A book that contains text with predictable and/or repetitive language patterns.

**phonemic awareness** The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes (the smallest units of spoken language) in spoken words.

**prior knowledge** The background experience and knowledge that a student brings to classroom learning. Instruction builds on prior knowledge in order to introduce new learning. Since students come to school with a wide variety of prior knowledge, teachers need to be aware of their students' backgrounds in planning lessons.

**readers' theatre** An instructional activity in which students adopt the roles of different characters and of a narrator to read a text; or develop scripts based on familiar texts, practise their parts, and then present their rehearsed reading to others.

**reading fluency** The ability to read with sufficient ease and accuracy to focus the reader's or listener's attention on the meaning and message of a text. Reading fluency involves not only the automatic identification of words but also qualities, such as rhythm, intonation, and phrasing at the phrase, sentence, and text levels, as well as anticipation of what comes next in a text.

**register** A style of language (e.g., formal, colloquial) appropriate to a specific audience, purpose, or situation. Register is determined by the level of formality in a particular social setting, the relationship among the individuals involved in the communication, and the purpose of the interaction.

**rhythm** The pattern of sound created by the stressed syllables in a sentence.

**role play** A dramatic technique in which participants act the part of another character, usually in order to explore the character's thoughts, feelings, and values.

**scaffolding** Instruction that helps students build on their prior knowledge and experiences in order to reach higher levels of learning and proficiency. Teachers provide temporary support until students develop the ability to apply newly learned skills and knowledge independently.

**sentence starters** The first few words of a sentence that the teacher provides to help students structure their written or oral response and which allow students to use constructions that are slightly more complex than their current proficiency level.

# Glossary

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**stress** Emphasis on specific syllables in a word or specific words in a sentence when speaking. Stress is an important component of pronunciation and contributes to meaning.

**style** A manner of writing or speaking or performing. In a literary work, style usually refers to distinctive characteristics of the diction, figurative language, literary devices, language patterns, and sentence structures of the work.

**subject-specific vocabulary** Vocabulary specific to, or most often used in, the context of a particular school subject (e.g., *equation*, *axis*, and *correlate* belong to the subject-specific vocabulary of mathematics).

**text** A means of communication that uses words, graphics, sounds, and/or images, in print, oral, visual, or electronic form, to present information and ideas to an audience.

**text features** The physical or design characteristics of a text that clarify and/or give support to the meaning in the text (e.g., title, headings, subheadings, bold and italic fonts, illustrations).

**text form** A category or type of text that has certain defining characteristics. The concept of text forms provides a way for readers and writers to think about the purpose of a text and its intended audience.

**think/pair/share** An instructional strategy in which students individually consider an issue or problem and then discuss their ideas with a partner.

**think-aloud** An activity in which the teacher (or sometimes a student) describes aloud the thinking process as he or she reads, writes, or solves problems.

**tone** A manner of speaking, writing, or creating that reveals the speaker's, author's, or producer's attitude towards a subject and/or audience.

**transition words and phrases** Words and phrases that link and/or signal relationships between clauses, sentences, or paragraphs. For example, *afterwards* and *in the meantime* show relationships with respect to time; *in comparison* and *on the other hand* show relationships of similarity and difference.

**Venn diagram** A graphic organizer in which sets are represented as circles, with the shared characteristics of the sets located in the area where the circles overlap.

**word wall** A list of words, grouped alphabetically and prominently displayed in the classroom, to help students become familiar with high-frequency words.

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