

October 2023

The Alt ELPA Test Questions

Introduction

The Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment (Alt ELPA) is an English language proficiency assessment created through the Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) grant. The assessment was designed specifically for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who do not participate in general assessments in order to measure their progress toward the attainment of English language proficiency in the four recognized language domains (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). The purpose of the assessment is to meet requirements for reporting student achievement of English language proficiency under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Test results also identify students in need of EL services and allow schools and teachers to appropriately support students' English language needs.

Purpose of Difficult Test Questions

The purpose of the Alt ELPA items (i.e., test questions) is to measure students' English language proficiency and progress over time in the four language domains so that parents and educators have a meaningful way of knowing what their students know and can do in the English language. Understanding what students know and can do helps inform decision making for English language instruction and services. Students who demonstrate proficiency on the Alt ELPA should be able to access material in their content-area classes.

An assessment should contain test questions with varying degrees of difficulty. For some students, the Alt ELPA test questions will be too hard, while for other students, the questions will be easy. Every question will not be easy for every student. By including challenging test questions, the Alt ELPA can more effectively measure what students know and can do in the English language.

Development of the Test Questions

The Alt ELPA was created by a large team of experts. The list below describes the contributors and steps taken in order to create the Alt ELPA test questions.

- Test questions were first developed by assessment experts with extensive background knowledge of students with disabilities.
- Educators in participating states who have experience with English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities then reviewed the difficulty and accessibility of the test questions.
- A selection of test questions was tried out on a small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as part of a "student cognitive interview." The purpose of the cognitive interview was to find out whether the questions were accessible to the students, whether students understood the questions, and whether the questions addressed intended language processes.

- A larger set of test questions was then tried out in a field test with larger numbers of students, which provided additional information about each question’s uses and appropriateness.



- After the field test, the data were analyzed and reviewed. Researchers and assessment experts then examined each test question’s “performance” (i.e., the question’s ability to measure its intended target, how difficult it is for the students, and how well it distinguishes between students with higher levels of English language proficiency and students with lower levels of English language proficiency).
- The test data also helps reveal potential question biases, which are questions that favor one group over another based on specific background or demographic characteristics. All of this information

helps determine which test questions make it to the final test form. Questions that do not “survive” the review may be revised for a future field test.

- Only after the test questions have undergone multiple reviews from educators, state personnel, and assessment researchers and have been tested out in the field with the targeted student population are they included in the administration of Alt ELPA.

What to Expect

The Alt ELPA is administered online and can be accessed through your state’s online assessment platform. To learn more about how the Alt ELPA is administered, including accessibility features and accommodations available to students, please see the [Alt ELPA FAQ](#).

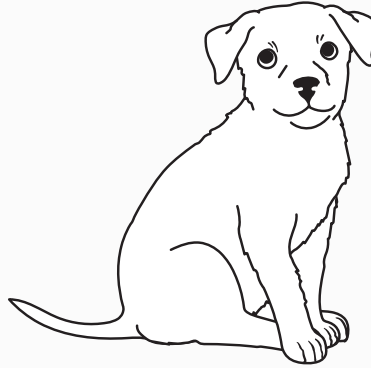
To gain familiarity with the assessment and its components, teachers and students may use the Alt ELPA online practice tests. The practice tests give test administrators and students the opportunity to experience the Alt ELPA testing procedures, technology, training, and item types prior to the test’s administration. The online practice tests are available through each state’s online testing platform.

Warm-Up Item

The example below shows a writing question for Grade Band 2–3.

Item ID: 166

Listen as I read about puppies. Then answer the question.



This is a picture of a puppy. Puppies can be fun. You can play outside with them and teach them tricks. Puppies can be a lot of work, too. You need to feed them and keep them safe.

Puppies are a lot of work. Do you agree? Why or why not? Please answer in English.

- Ⓐ Based on item scoring rubric, student receives 3 points.
- Ⓑ Based on item scoring rubric, student receives 2 points
- Ⓒ Based on item scoring rubric, student receives 1 points
- Ⓓ Based on item scoring rubric, student receives 0 points

Although a majority of the Alt ELPA test questions are machine-scored, some questions are locally scored and use a question-specific scoring rubric. The example below shows a scoring rubric.

RUBRIC

Score: 3

The student demonstrates a controlled or full understanding of the English language by accurately communicating information that is **related** to the question, topic, or text.

Exemplar:

- Yes, puppies are a lot of work. They eat too much.
- No, puppies are not a lot of work. They go outside.

(or variations of the above sentences)

Score: 2

The student demonstrates a limited or developing understanding of the English language by accurately communicating information that is **somewhat related** to the question, topic, or text.

Exemplar:

provides a partial response appropriate to context or a response somewhat related, such as

- Yes puppies are work.
- No, puppies are not work.
- I like/do not like puppies.

(or variations of the above sentences)

Score: 1

The student demonstrates little to no understanding of the English language by communicating information that is unrelated to the question, topic, or text.

Exemplar:

provides responses, such as

- scribbling
- random letters
- words unrelated to the topic or text

Score: 0

The student does not respond or does not communicate in any form.

Exemplar:

N/A