

English Language Acquisition (ELA)* Required Testing

All customers must be pre- and post-tested in order to document educational gains. Educational gains are advancement from one functioning level to the next. The two state-approved English Language Acquisition (ELA)¹ tests are the CASAS Reading STEPS and the CASAS Listening STEPS.

Reading STEPS: The following approved CASAS Reading STEPS tests are administered to assess reading in life and work contexts through a multiple-choice format: 621R, 622R, 623R, 624R, 625R, 626R, 627R, 628R, 629R, and 630R. Level selection for customers should comply with test publisher guidelines. The tests may be administered in a paper-and-pencil format or an electronic format (the eTest). For the paper-and-pencil format, the 30-minute Appraisal identifies the correct pre-test level and form to give initially, while the pre-test score identifies the correct post-test to administer. The eTest moves seamlessly from a computer-adaptive locator into the correct pre-test level and form and identifies the correct post-test to administer. Both the paper and eTest formats range from 30-75 minutes to administer, depending on the test form.

Listening STEPS: The following approved CASAS Listening STEPS tests are administered to assess listening comprehension skills in life and work contexts through a multiple-choice format: 621L, 622L, 623L, 624L, 625L, 626L, 627L, 628L, 629L, and 630L. Level selection for customers should comply with test publisher guidelines. While the tests may be administered in a paper format using CDs, this is very cumbersome. Therefore the electronic format (the eTest) is strongly recommended, with students wearing headsets. The eTest moves seamlessly from a computer-adaptive locator into the correct pre-test level and form and identifies the correct post-test to administer. The eTest format ranges from 28-56 minutes to administer, depending on the test form.

***Please note: Some Title II students may be administered a BEST Plus 3.0, BEST Literacy 2.0, or TABE CLAS-E assessment in their adult education programs, but these tests will not be administered by Title I programs, as they do not result in grade level equivalencies.**

In compliance with WIOA and Illinois Policy, ELA customers must be pre-tested using one of the state-approved ELA tests. Customers must be post-tested with a different form of the same test to document progress in the ELA course.

Customer scores used for placement and National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) purposes must be entered in the data collection system. Answer sheets and scores from any of the tests must be kept in each customer's file.

¹ ICCB has replaced the term "English as a Second Language" with "English Language Acquisition" to more accurately describe the diversity of English learners in Illinois.

ELA Tests and NRS Levels

Summary of ELA Testing

NRS Levels	CASAS Reading STEPS*	CASAS Listening STEPS**	Grade Level
Beginning Literacy ESL Level 1	183 and Below	181 and Below	K
Low Beginning ESL Level 2	184-196	182-191	K-1
High Beginning ESL Level 3	197-206	192-201	1
Low Intermediate ESL Level 4	207-216	202-211	2-3
High Intermediate ESL Level 5	217-227	212-221	4-5
Advanced ESL Level 6	228-238	222-231	6-8
Exit Criteria	Above 238	Above 231	9+

Customers should be pre- and post-tested with the same assessment series with one exception: If the customer's pre-test score on a CASAS STEPS test places them in the Exit Criteria range, they should either be administered another ELA assessment that reflects the need for ELA services or be transitioned to ABE, ASE, or post-secondary as appropriate. Post-testing with the assessment that resulted in a score in the Exit Criteria range is not necessary because the second assessment will reflect the customer's level.