



Alt ELPA Summative Frequently Asked Questions

Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment
School Year 2026–2027



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Frequently Asked Questions: Parents/Guardians and Educators

General Questions

1. Who takes the Alt ELPA Summative assessment?

The Alt ELPA Summative is for eligible students who have a significant cognitive disability and have been identified as English learners. Each participating state has its own eligibility criteria guidance, which can be found on your state’s education department website.

2. When is the Alt ELPA Summative administered?

Each state decides when to administer the Alt ELPA Summative. You can find your state’s Alt ELPA testing window on your state’s education department website or assessment portal.

3. What does the Alt ELPA Summative test?

The Alt ELPA Summative assesses the four language domains: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, as required by federal law. It is designed to measure students’ ability to both understand and use the English language for communication and learning.

4. How is the Alt ELPA Summative administered?

The Alt ELPA Summative is administered on the computer, one-on-one with a test administrator and the student. Ideally, the test administrator should be someone that is familiar to the student.

5. How long is the Alt ELPA Summative?

The Alt ELPA Summative has a total of 40–50 items across the four domains of language. This is about as long as alternate assessments in other content areas like mathematics or English language arts. Different students will need different amounts of time to complete the Alt ELPA Summative.

6. What is the Alt ELPA Summative used for?

The Alt ELPA Summative is designed specifically for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. The test helps determine which students still need English language instruction to fully benefit from challenging academic content delivered in English. A student who scores proficient on the Alt ELPA Summative may no longer need English language services and may be ready to leave English learner status. Some states call this “reclassification.” Refer to your state’s policies for English learner exit criteria.

7. What do the test questions/items look like?

To learn more about the design of the Alt ELPA test questions and scoring rubrics, please see the samples available in the *Alt ELPA Test Questions Brief*. You can find additional sample questions within the practice tests on your state’s testing portal.



Accessibility

8. What accessibility supports are available on the Alt ELPA?

For the full list of accessibility supports available on the Alt ELPA, please consult the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodation Manual*, located on your state's ELPA21 portal.

9. Is there a braille version of the Alt ELPA?

There is no braille version of the Alt ELPA. Students may use their usual assistive technology as described in the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*.

10. Is there a paper-pencil version of the Alt ELPA?

Most students' accessibility needs are better served with computer-based testing. For students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that indicates paper testing, the testing platform's Print on Request feature can securely print test items.

11. Does the Alt ELPA Summative use tactile graphics?

There are no tactile graphics provided for the Alt ELPA Summative. If state policy allows, tactile graphics and manipulatives can be created by test administrators for the Alt ELPA assessments. Any tactile graphics and manipulatives created must be treated like other secure assessment materials and securely destroyed after use.

12. Are manipulatives allowable on the Alt ELPA Summative?

Manipulatives that are noted in a student's IEP are allowable, but not required, for the Alt ELPA Summative. Test administrators should consult the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* for guidance regarding manipulatives.

Scoring and Reporting

13. When will data be provided to schools/districts/charters?

The Alt ELPA Summative reporting window begins in late spring each year, with specific dates varying by state. Please check with your state's alternate assessment coordinator for the opening of the reporting window. Access to summative score reports in the testing reporting portal is based on user roles.

14. Will there be school and district score reports?

School and district score reports will be available and can be used for planning and providing instructional support. Individual student reports will also be available and should be shared and communicated with parents/families.



Frequently Asked Questions: State Leads

Test Design and General Information

1. What Alt ELPA assessments are available?

ELPA21 offers both an alternate screener and an alternate summative assessment. The Alt ELPA Screener is an English language screener designed to identify students who are eligible for English learner services. The Alt ELPA Summative is an English language proficiency assessment administered annually to eligible English learners in Grades K–12 who have a significant cognitive disability.

2. What does the Alt ELPA Summative assess?

The Alt ELPA Summative assesses students' language abilities in the four domains of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, consistent with federal requirements. On the Alt ELPA score reports, domain performance is organized into two modalities: receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing).

3. What are the Alt ELPA performance levels?

The Alt ELPA Policy Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) have three levels: emerging, progressing, and proficient. The Range and Reporting Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) currently have four levels: (1) beginning, (2) intermediate, (3) early advanced, and (4) advanced. Range PLDs have been drafted for the four domains (listening, reading, speaking, writing) covering Grades K–12.

Peer Review Federal Requirements

4. What if member states have questions about the peer review process for the Alt ELPA?

UCLA CRESST will assist the participating states in the peer review process. Please reach out to [Cathryn Still](#), the ELPA21 Executive Director, with questions or concerns.