

Questions and Answers About the California English Language Development Test

What is the purpose of the CELDT?

State law (*Education Code* sections 313 and 60810) and federal law (Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]) require that school districts administer a state test of English language proficiency (1) to newly enrolled students whose primary language is not English and (2) to students who are English learners as an annual assessment. For California public school students, this test is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).

The CELDT (instituted by *Education Code* sections 313 and 60810[d]) has three purposes:

- To identify students who are limited English proficient
- To determine the level of English language proficiency of students who are limited English proficient
- To assess the progress of limited English proficient students in acquiring the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English.

Who must take the CELDT?

Education Code Section 52164.1[a] requires that all students (in kindergarten through grade twelve) whose primary language is not English, based on the Home Language Survey (HLS), take the CELDT within 30 calendar days after they are enrolled in a California public school for the first time to determine if they are English learners. The HLS is completed by parents or guardians when they first register their children for school. The CELDT must be given to students identified as English learners once a year as per the school district's evaluation process until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP).

Who is an English learner?

An English learner, also known as a limited English Proficient (LEP) student, is a student who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English (as per *Education Code* Section 306[a]).

Do English learners with disabilities take the CELDT?

Yes. English learners with disabilities are tested. Students with disabilities who participate in the CELDT may use variations, accommodations, and/or modifications as specified in their individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans. A list of allowable variations, accommodations, and modifications is outlined in “Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007),” which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) CELDT Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp>. Students with disabilities may take an alternate assessment if their IEP team determines that they are unable to take one or more parts of the CELDT even with variations, accommodations, and/or modifications.

Are parents and guardians informed when their children must take the CELDT?

Section 3302 of Title III of the ESEA requires school districts receiving Title III funds, to inform parents or guardians of:

- The reasons for their student’s identification as an English learner
- The need for placement in the specified program

This notification is to occur no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year or within two weeks of a student’s placement in a language instruction program after the beginning of the school year,

Parents or guardians of English learners with an IEP must be notified how the recommended placement will help their children meet the objectives of the IEP.

What does the CELDT assess?

Beginning in 2009–10, the CELDT assesses students in grades kindergarten through twelve for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The CELDT is aligned to the English Language Development (ELD) standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE), which are available on the CDE Content Standards Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>. The CELDT domains and test components are as follows:

Listening

- Strategies and applications

Speaking

- Strategies and applications

What types of questions are used on the CELDT?

Reading

- Word analysis
- Fluency and systematic vocabulary development
- Reading comprehension
- Literary response and analysis

Writing

- Strategies and applications
- English–language conventions

The following types of questions are used:

Listening

- Following oral directions
- Extended listening comprehension (passage)
- Rhyming
- Listening comprehension (short, school situation)

Speaking

- Oral vocabulary
- Speech functions
- Choosing and giving reasons
- Four-picture narrative

Reading

- Alphabet recognition
- Word analysis
- Fluency and systematic vocabulary development
- Reading comprehension
- Literary analysis

Writing

- Writing words
- Grammar and structure
- Writing sentences
- Writing a short composition

Released test questions from past CELDT administrations are available on the CDE CELDT Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp>.

Which CELDT tests are the students in kindergarten and grade one required to take?

Beginning July 1, 2009, students in kindergarten and grade one (K–1) are being assessed in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. California’s *Education Code* Section 60810 was amended in 2007 to authorize the development of this new early literacy test, which includes reading and writing questions. The new test complies with requirements of Title III of the ESEA. Prior to the 2009–10 school year, students in K–1 only were tested in listening and speaking.

How long does it take for students in K–1 to complete the CELDT now that reading and writing have been added?

The estimated time for administering the listening, reading, and writing domains of the CELDT to students in K–1 is approximately 15 to 30 minutes per domain. The speaking part of the test is administered individually and takes about 10 minutes for each student to complete.

How long does it take for students in grades two through twelve to complete the CELDT?

The CELDT is an untimed test. The speaking part of the test is administered individually and takes about 10 minutes for each student to complete. The listening, reading, and writing parts are administered as a group and take about two hours to complete.

Who gives the CELDT?

Only test examiners who are employees of the school district, are proficient in English, and have received formal CELDT training may administer the CELDT.

How are test questions selected for use on the CELDT?

Currently, California educators are trained by the CELDT contractor and the CDE to write questions based on the ELD Standards. Questions go through a quality review process to ensure alignment to the ELD standards and content appropriateness. After field testing, the questions that meet a rigorous set of statistical criteria may be selected for a future operational test form.

When and how do parents or guardians receive their students’ CELDT results?

School districts must send individual CELDT results to parents or guardians within 30 calendar days after they are received by the school district. It takes an average of eight weeks to score the tests and return results to school districts after they are received by the test contractor.

What information is provided on the CELDT results reported for individual students?

The CELDT results for individual students are provided in the CELDT Student Performance Level Report. This report shows the level of performance students have attained as they progress toward English language proficiency. The CELDT results are not used to measure academic achievement. There are five levels of performance: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced. The 2009–10 CELDT report for each student provides the following:

- An overall performance level and scale score for all domains of the test combined
- A scale score and a performance level for each domain tested (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- A comprehension score that is an average of the scale scores for listening and reading

Note: Reading and writing domains in K–1 will not be reported as scale scores or performance levels in 2009–10. Only raw scores will be reported. Scores for listening and speaking will be used to calculate the student’s overall performance level (50 percent listening and 50 percent speaking) in K–1 in 2009–10.

What does a domain performance level represent?

Scale score ranges for each of the five performance levels are identified for listening, speaking, reading, and writing for each grade tested. These ranges incorporate the performance level cut scores approved by the SBE. The scale score ranges for identifying a student’s performance level for each domain tested and the overall performance level can be found in Appendix B on pages V-5 through V-7. Performance level descriptors can be found in Appendix C on page V-8.

How is the overall performance level calculated?

The overall scale score is calculated by weighting the domain scale scores as follows: 25 percent for listening, 25 percent for speaking, 25 percent for reading, and 25 percent for writing.

Who sees the CELDT results for individual students?

Only authorized school district personnel, the student, and parents or guardians see individual students’ CELDT results.

How are results of the CELDT used?

CELDT results for newly enrolled students are used to initially identify students as English learners who need to develop their skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Results also are used to identify students who are Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP).

Annual assessment results are used to see how well English learners are acquiring English. Annual results also are one of four criteria used to determine if English learners possibly are ready to be reclassified as RFEP based on the reclassification process developed by the local school board in accordance with state law. The “Guidelines for Reclassification of English Learners” can be found on pages III-3 and III-4.

How do parents or guardians find out more about the CELDT or their student’s results?

Parents or guardians may contact their student’s teacher(s) and/or the school office. They also may request a conference to review the CELDT results or to attend one of the information meetings scheduled by the school or school district. Additional information and assistance materials for communicating with parents or guardians about their student’s CELDT results are available on the CDE CELDT Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp>.

Can CELDT results for 2009–10 be compared with CELDT results of previous years?

The 2009–10 results can be compared to the 2008–09, 2007–08, and 2006–07 results using the new common scale but cannot be compared with earlier CELDT results. However, CELDT results from past years are available on the CDE CELDT Reporting Web page at <http://celdt.cde.ca.gov/>.

How do school districts use CELDT results for reclassifying English learners as fluent English proficient?

Reclassification is a local decision to be established by the local school board in accordance with state law (*Education Code* Section 313). School districts must use individual CELDT results as one of four criteria when considering reclassifying English learners. Additional measures that must be considered are the comparison of the student’s performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient students of the same age, teacher evaluation, and parent or guardian opinion and consultation. The “Guidelines for Reclassification of English Learners” document, approved by the SBE, is located on pages III-3 and III-4. This document provides guidance for using the four required criteria in the development of the local reclassification policy.

Must students keep taking the CELDT annually until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient?

Yes. All English learners are required to take the CELDT annually until they are reclassified based on criteria established by the local school board.

When and how will summary results be released for the 2009–10 annual CELDT administration?

The 2009–10 annual CELDT results for schools, school districts, counties, and the state will be posted on the CDE CELDT Reporting Web site at <http://celdt.cde.ca.gov/> in spring 2010. Results of the initial assessment (administered from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010) and the combined initial and annual assessments summary results will be posted in fall 2010.

What will the 2009–10 CELDT Internet reports include?

The annual 2009–10 summary reports posted on the Internet will include the number of and percentage of students at each grade achieving each of the five performance levels for overall English language performance and for each domain tested. The 2009–10 summary reports also will include the number and percentage of students meeting the CELDT criterion for English language proficiency.

More Information about the CELDT

Additional information about the CELDT is available on the CDE CELDT Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp> or at the CELDT Office in the Statewide Assessment Division of the CDE by phone at 916-319-0784, by fax at 916-319-0967, or by e-mail at CELDT@cde.ca.gov.