

## Stage 4: Intermediate Fluency

Excellent comprehension with few grammatical errors

### **Student Characteristics:**

- Gives opinions
- Uses longer sentences and elaborate speech patterns more often
- Makes errors as attempts are made to use new vocabulary and more complex grammatical structures
- Begins to think in the new language rather than translating from the native language
- Justifies views of behaviors
- Negotiates / debates with others
- Defends actions/opinions
- Persuades
- Expresses results of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation

**Approximate Time Frame: 3-5 years**

### **Teacher Strategies:**

- Provide opportunities to use language in comfortable situations
- Engage students in activities that focus on speech production and not grammatical form or absolute correctness
- Provide students opportunities to talk about themselves
- Structured group instruction
- Guide use of reference materials
- Provide more advanced literature
- Ask students to create narratives
- Introduce idiomatic expressions
- Ask "What would happen if...?"

## Stage 5: Advanced Fluency

Near-native English level of speech and able to perform in content area learning. Most have been exited from support programs.

### **Student Characteristics:**

- Begins interacting extensively with native English speakers
- Makes fewer grammatical errors
- Has a high comprehension level but may not be advanced enough to understand all academic classroom language
- Continue to learn new vocabulary
- Produces written and oral language comparable to a native English student
- Mastering academic language or the language of the classroom

**Approximate Time Frame: 4-10 years**

### **Teacher Strategies:**

- Employ thematic units and content-based learning activities
- Implement research papers/activities
- Incorporate oral presentations/debate activities
- Continue the student's development of language integrating language arts and content-areas
- Begin grammar instruction
- Focus instruction on reading and writing skills
- Continue emphasis on vocabulary – extensive vocabulary development is still needed
- Use sheltered English, scaffolding, and cooperative learning techniques
- Relate abstract concepts to the concrete

***Conversational English takes place throughout the first three stages and can often frustrate adults as students may sound fluent orally, but their schoolwork does not reflect this. Faced with this contradiction, false conclusions are made that they have learning disabilities or are poorly motivated.***

# What to Do With a New English Language Learner

This brochure help to identify the stages of language acquisition, the characteristics of each stage, the approximate time each stage lasts, and teacher strategies and suggestions for each stage.

Knowing and understanding the stage of language acquisition and its characteristics are critical for effectively differentiating instruction for your ELL learners.

**Robert Evans, ELL Consultant**  
[evans.robert@sccresa.org](mailto:evans.robert@sccresa.org)

## Stage 1: Pre-Production

Minimal comprehension with no verbal production

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### **Student Characteristics:**

- Nods “Yes” and “No”
- Draws and points and copies
- May appear confused or hesitant
- Recognizes but cannot yet use certain words
- Can move to show understanding
- Can match words and objects

Approximate Time Frame: 0-6 months

### **Teacher Strategies:**

- Pair your new student with a buddy
- Use lots of gestures, quick sketches, act out meaning, and music
- Use Google images, pictures, graphic organizers, and real objects
- Try not to use idioms like “Hold your horses” instead build vocabulary
- Speak slowly and clearly, point
- Take small steps, especially with writing (use sentence frames when possible)
- Provide resources in native language
- Model, model, model, Scaffold, scaffold, scaffold, repetition
- Provide listening opportunities
- Provide clear learning objectives
- Don’t expect or force students to speak until they are ready
- Prompts: “Show me..., Circle the..., Where is...? Who has...?”

## Stage 2: Early Production

Limited comprehension with one/two word responses

### **Student Characteristics:**

- Participates using key words and phrases
- Uses present-tense verbs
- Identifies people, places, and things
- Understands the main idea of the message but may not understand each word
- Repeats memorable/frequently used language
- Lists and categorizes
- Listens with greater understanding
- Uses routine expressions independently
- Mispronounces words (correct only to clarify meaning)

Approximate Time Frame: 6 months – one year

### **Teacher Strategies:**

- Ask yes/no, who, what, and where questions
- Begin a sentence and have the student complete it with a word
- Introduce new vocabulary and continue practicing previous vocabulary (with pictures and charts)
- Implement shared reading with props, and build on student prior knowledge
- Use patterned and predictable books
- Introduce dialogue journals
- Provide rich contextual listening opportunities
- Expect one or two word answers

*Low anxiety, high self-esteem, highly motivated, the affective filter goes down and the students become successful. Language Acquisition takes place.*

## Stage 3: Speech Emergent

Good comprehension and makes simple sentences (with errors)

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### **Student Characteristics:**

- Makes grammar and pronunciation errors – writes in journals
- Frequently misunderstands jokes
- Describes events and people
- Recalls facts
- Improves pronunciation and intonation
- Expands vocabulary using words that are heard often and understood
- Shifts emphasis from language reception to language production
- Explains some academic concepts
- Retells information from texts
- Compares and contrasts
- Summarizes easy stories with support
- Participates in games

Approximate Time Frame: 1-3 years

### **Teacher Strategies:**

- Asks open-ended questions (how and why)
- Introduce rudimentary reading and writing
- Encourage any attempt to speak
- Create a safe classroom that encourages attempts at language
- Model, expand, restate, and enrich student language
- Use patterned and predictable books
- Support the use of content-area texts with retelling, role-playing
- Have students describe personal experiences through language arts
- Ask students to answer how, why or explain