

PROPOSED
Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA)
K-12 Performance Level Descriptors
(May 2009)

Grades K-2:

<p><i>Level 1</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level has not yet developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (phonological, syntactic, semantic) consistently interfere with communication, and comprehension is mostly demonstrated either non-verbally or in a language other than English.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes only a few letters of the alphabet and few simple, high-frequency words, with visual and graphic support (R) • writes only a few letters of the alphabet and may attempt a few basic words, but these are seldom comprehensible (W) • speaks using a few basic words with frequent errors; little or no command of isolated vocabulary; responds inappropriately to most questions and is seldom intelligible (S) • recognizes and comprehends only a few basic spoken words with consistent need for repetition and clarification; may demonstrate minimal comprehension of simple speech either non-verbally or in a language other than English (L)
<p><i>Level 2</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level has developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (phonological, syntactic, semantic) often interfere with basic comprehension and communication, although the meaning is sometimes retained. Limited lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features of English are present. Communication may be demonstrated non-verbally.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes many letters of the alphabet; reads and comprehends some simple written words and phrases, often with visual or graphic support; recognize some basic features of English text appropriate for the specified grade, though little awareness of English text conventions (R) • writes some letters of the alphabet, a few basic words, and may attempt phrases or simple sentences, but with little or no control of standard English conventions (W)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks using single words and a few basic phrases; gives short responses to simple questions, often using graphic, visual, or gestural support; performs very basic language functions; word choice is often inappropriate or incorrect; is sometimes intelligible but generally difficult to understand (S) • recognizes some sounds of the English language and comprehends some basic spoken vocabulary, phrases, and some simple questions, with frequent need for repetition and clarification during interpersonal communication (L)
<p><i>Level 3</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level communicates in English and uses the language in the school context. Errors (phonological, syntactic, and semantic) may still impede communication and comprehension; however, the overall meaning is usually retained. A limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features are used, and oral and written communication, although somewhat inconsistent, is usually accurate and understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes most letters of the alphabet, and many common written words including some high-frequency academic language; comprehends the main idea of some grade-level appropriate texts, mostly on familiar topics; is aware of some grade-level appropriate English text conventions (R) • writes words, spelling some familiar words correctly, and may attempt short sentences with a limited range of linguistic complexity relative to what is required for the specified grade level; demonstrates limited control of grade-level appropriate standard English conventions (W) • speaks using common words and phrases, and basic grammar and sentence structure, including some high-frequency academic language of the content area appropriate for a student in that grade; attempts novel sentences and some complex grade-appropriate language structures, with occasional errors and frequent pauses in conversation; is often intelligible (S) • recognizes most sounds of the English language and comprehends most sentences and questions during interpersonal communication, with occasional need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends some academic vocabulary, discourse, and texts read aloud (L)

<p><i>Level 4</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level is moderately fluent in English and uses the language in the school context with few or minor errors. The student usually demonstrates control of many lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, with continued support and assistance as needed; and oral and written communication is mostly accurate and usually understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes a range of common written words and high-frequency academic language appropriate for the grade level in the content area; comprehends most grade-level texts with language of varying linguistic complexity, including main idea and supporting details, on familiar and closely related new topics; is aware of many grade-level appropriate English text conventions (R) • writes short sentences and paragraphs, using novel words and phrases to provide detail; demonstrates modest control of standard English conventions appropriate for a student in the grade level (W) • speaks with occasional errors using mostly grade-level appropriate words, phrases, sentences, and expressions, and demonstrates general control of spoken English conventions, such as vocabulary and grammar; is mostly intelligible (S) • recognizes all sounds of the English language and comprehends most oral communications, including most grade-level appropriate academic discourse with infrequent need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)
<p><i>Level 5 – Reclassification Recommended</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level communicates effectively in English and uses the language in the school context with few errors. The student demonstrates control of most lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, and oral and written communication is accurate and understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehends most grade-level appropriate texts, with language of varying linguistic complexity on both familiar and new topics; cites details and evidence to analyze text; is aware of all grade-level appropriate English text conventions (R) • writes and edits texts as required of a student in the specified grade; demonstrates control of most grade-level appropriate English conventions; uses novel words and phrases to provide detail and fit the audience and purpose (W) • speaks with grade-level appropriate fluency, including technical language of the content area; generates innovative language in social and academic settings, varying speech to fit audience and intent; can sustain

	<p>interpersonal interaction; demonstrates control of most standard spoken English conventions; is almost always intelligible (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends most extended and prolonged oral communication, including grade-level appropriate academic discourse, with little need for clarification or repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)
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Grades 3-12:

<p><i>Level 1</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level has not yet developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (phonological, syntactic, semantic) consistently interfere with communication, and comprehension is mostly demonstrated either non-verbally or in a language other than English.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes only a few simple written words and basic features of written English with graphic or visual support (R) writes only a few simple words, and may attempt a few phrases or short sentences, but these are seldom comprehensible (W) speaks using a few basic words with little or no command of isolated vocabulary; responds inappropriately to most questions and is seldom intelligible (S) recognizes and comprehends only a few basic spoken words and sounds of the English language, with consistent need for repetition and clarification; may demonstrate minimal comprehension of simple speech either non-verbally or in a language other than English (L)
<p><i>Level 2</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level has developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (phonological, syntactic, semantic) often interfere with basic comprehension and communication, although the meaning is sometimes retained. Limited lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features of English are emerging. Communication may be demonstrated non-verbally.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes simple written words and phrases, and some simple sentences; demonstrates an awareness of some English text conventions; comprehends some simple below grade-level texts (R) writes one or more simple sentences with some awareness of purpose and audience; demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions relative to other grade-level students (W)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks using single words and a few basic phrases; gives short responses to simple questions, often using graphic, gestural, or visual support; uses basic vocabulary primarily in the context of social interaction with little use of grade-level appropriate academic language; word choice is often inappropriate or incorrect for the situation or context; is sometimes intelligible, but comprehensibility remains difficult (S) • recognizes some sounds of the English language and comprehends basic spoken vocabulary, phrases, and some simple questions with frequent need for repetition and clarification during interpersonal communication (L)
<p><i>Level 3</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level communicates in English and uses the language in the school context. Errors (phonological, syntactic, and semantic) may still impede communication and comprehension; however, the overall meaning is usually retained. A limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features are used, and oral and written communications, although somewhat inconsistent, are usually accurate and understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and comprehends words and texts of limited linguistic complexity and on familiar topics; recognizes common written words and some high-frequency academic language of the content area; is aware of many English text conventions (R) • writes sentences and short, simple paragraphs with limited detail and linguistic complexity relative to what is required for the specified grade-level; edits and revises to fit an audience; demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions relative to other grade-level students (W) • speaks using common words and phrases, and basic grammar and sentence structure, including some high-frequency academic language of the content area; attempts novel sentences and some complex language structures, with errors and frequent pauses in conversation; is often intelligible (S) • recognizes most sounds of the English language and comprehends most sentences and questions during interpersonal communication, with occasional need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends some academic vocabulary, discourse, and texts read aloud (L)

<p><i>Level 4</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level is nearly fluent in English and uses the language in the school context with few or minor errors. The student usually demonstrates control of many lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, with continued support and assistance as needed; and oral and written communication is mostly accurate and usually understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and comprehends most grade-level texts primarily on familiar topics with some assistance required; recognizes and comprehends most common and academic words; is aware of many English text conventions (R) • writes and edits a variety of sentences and short compositions using novel words and phrases to provide detail and suit the audience and purpose; uses a limited range of high-frequency technical language of the content area; demonstrates moderate control of standard writing conventions relative to other grade-level students with some assistance required (W) • speaks using mostly grade-level appropriate words, phrases, sentences, and expressions, and demonstrates general control of spoken English conventions, such as vocabulary and grammar, with occasional errors; is mostly intelligible (S) • recognizes all sounds of the English language and comprehends most oral communications, including most grade-level appropriate academic discourse with infrequent need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)
<p><i>Level 5 – Reclassification Recommended</i></p>	<p>A student at this performance level communicates effectively in English and uses the language in the school context with few errors. The student demonstrates control of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, and oral and written communication is primarily accurate and understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and comprehends most grade-level texts in both familiar and new contexts, including language of varied linguistic complexity; cites details and evidence to analyze text; is aware of most English text conventions (R) • writes and edits expanded texts (multi-paragraph compositions) of varying lengths, level of detail, and linguistic complexity relative to other grade-level students; accurately uses a range of technical language of the content area; demonstrates control of most standard writing conventions, with only occasional assistance (W) • speaks with grade-level appropriate fluency, including academic language of the content area; generates innovative language in social and

	<p>academic settings, varying speech to fit audience and intent; can sustain interpersonal interactions; demonstrates control of most standard spoken English conventions; is almost always intelligible (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• comprehends spoken language within the context of nearly all extended and prolonged oral communication, including grade-level appropriate academic discourse, with little need for clarification or repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)
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