Pearson

Alignment of the National Reporting System (NRS) to the Global Scale of English – An Overview

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Global Scale of English

Fast-track your progress

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About the GSE

Pearson developed the Global Scale of English (GSE) to provide instructors and learners with a more granular understanding of English language proficiency. It has been designed to build learners' confidence by revealing exactly where they are on their learning journey and setting personalised goals to help them progress.

The GSE is an ecosystem that underpins the Pearson English Journey:

- **GSE Scale:** a proficiency scale from 10 to 90, with clear statements for what a learner can achieve in speaking, listening, reading, and writing at any point on the scale.
- **GSE Learning Objectives:** descriptions of what learners can do at each level of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- **Courseware:** all of Pearson's English language learning courseware is developed using the GSE Learning Objectives.
- **Assessment:** institutions can develop their own assessment materials using the GSE Learning Objectives and Assessment Frameworks or choose one of Pearson's digital assessments which report on the GSE.

The GSE is the result of many years of research with more than 6,000 teachers from over 50 countries. It serves as a standard against which English language courses and assessments worldwide can be benchmarked.

It has been psychometrically aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference or CEFR (see De Jong, Mayor, & Hayes, 2016). The GSE complements and extends the CEFR by adding an extra layer of detail to the CEFR levels and providing thousands of additional learning objectives. This extra information helps learners understand where they are now and offers a step-by-step guide to where they want to go next. Using the GSE, teachers can match a student to course materials to suit their exact level and learning goals.

CEFR level	GSE Scale
Below A1	10–21
A1	22–29
A2	30–35
A2+	36–42
B1	43–50
B1+	51–58
B2	59–66
B2+	67–75
C1	76–84
C2	85–90

Table 1: The relationship between the GSE Scale and the CEFR

To address the specific needs of learners studying English for different purposes, GSE Learning Objectives have been developed for five different learner audiences:

- **adult:** adults studying on a general English course
- **academic:** adults studying academic English
- **professional:** adults studying English for the workplace
- **young learner:** English language learners aged 6–14
- **pre-primary:** English language learners aged 3–5

For more information:

pearson.com/languages/why-pearson/the-global-scale-of-english

About the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS)

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an outcome-based reporting system for the state-administered, federally funded adult education program. NRS began in response to the trend toward greater accountability, for both adult education and employment programs. With a system designed to demonstrate program effectiveness and improve student outcomes, the NRS provides a means of regular evaluation for adult education nationwide—for states, programs, teachers, and students.

The descriptors for English as a second language (ESL) are divided into six levels: Beginning ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL, High Beginning ESL, Low Intermediate ESL, High Intermediate ESL, and Advanced ESL. Those descriptors focus on the key concepts and skills for each level and are not, therefore, a comprehensive outline of all the skills for each level. Lesson planning, instruction and assessment of adult learners should be additionally supported with state-level frameworks and requirements.

The six ESL-related levels are further divided into three modalities: interpretive, productive and interactive. Within each of the modalities, all four languages skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are addressed, providing a holistic view of what English language learners should be able to do as they progress across the levels.

The full NRS standards can be found here: **https://nrsweb.org/**

Alignment Methodology and Results

Each descriptor in the NRS ESL levels was aligned to one or more GSE Learning Objectives. The NRS standard distinguishes three modalities across the six proficiency levels and the alignment of the GSE Learning Objectives was guided by the key abilities outlined for those modalities. As a result, interpretive descriptors were mainly aligned to receptive skills Learning Objectives, productive descriptors to productive Learning Objectives and interactive descriptors to all four skills.

Where possible, complex NRS descriptors were split into its constituent parts to obtain more precision in alignment. Therefore, each statement beginning with '*They can…*' was treated as a separate descriptor.

The sets of GSE Learning Objectives used for this alignment included: General Adult, Mediation, Online Interaction, Professional, Academic as well as Adult Grammar Learning Objectives.

The results of the alignment show progression from simpler to more complex language skills across the NRS levels and across the language skills, reflecting the advancement from the beginner level towards proficiency.

NRS level	GSE
NRS Beginning ESL Literacy (ESL Level 1)	10–22
NRS Low Beginning (ESL Level 2)	23–30
NRS High Beginning (ESL Level 3)	31–37
NRS Low Intermediate (ESL Level 4)	38–45
NRS High Intermediate (ESL Level 5)	46–55
NRS Advanced ESL (ESL Level 6)	56–70

Sample Alignment

The following tables show excerpts from each of the six proficiency levels within the NRS with modalities and descriptors aligned to GSE Learning Objectives.

Full alignment documentation is available upon request via our website: **Educator sales enquiries | Pearson Languages**

Level 1: Beginning ESL Literacy

Modality	NRS Descriptor	GSE Learning Objective	GSE value
Interpretive	ELLs ready to exit this level can, with prompting and support (including context and visual aids), recognize the meaning of a few frequently occurring words and phrases in simple oral presentations and read aloud about familiar topics, experiences, and events.	Can recognise a few familiar everyday words, if delivered slowly and clearly.	10
		Can understand basic sentences introducing someone (e.g. name, age).	18
		Can copy familiar words and short phrases about everyday objects and set phrases.	18
Productive	With support (including context and visual aids), ELLs ready to exit this level are able to recognize and use a small number of frequently occurring nouns and verbs, use a narrow range of vocabulary and syntactically simple sentences, and understand and respond to simple questions.	Can name a few very common everyday objects.	12
		Can ask and answer basic requests for information with 'What's this/that?'	16
		Can ask and answer simple questions about things they have in a limited way.	21

Table 2: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 1: Beginning ESL Literacy.

Modality	NRS Descriptor	GSE Learning Objective	GSE value
Interactive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to, with prompting and support, participate in short, shared research projects, gather information from a few provided sources, and label some key information.	Can list (in Language B) names, numbers, prices and very simple information from texts (in Language A) that are of immediate interest, that are composed in very simple language and contain illustrations.	10
		Can understand very basic common classroom instructions.	16
		Can understand simple language related to prices and quantities.	20

Table 2: Continued.

Level 2: Low Beginning ESL			
Modality	**NRS Descriptor**	**GSE Learning Objective**	**GSE value**
Interpretive	ELLs ready to exit the Low Beginning ESL Level are able to identify a few key words and phrases in oral communications and simple spoken and written texts using a very limited set of strategies.	Can recognise key information (e.g. place, time) about everyday events, if spoken slowly and clearly.	26
		Can recognise familiar key words and phrases in short, basic descriptions (e.g. of objects, places or people), if spoken slowly and clearly.	27
		Can understand basic factual statements relating to pictures or simple texts.	29
Productive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to, with support, use a narrow range of vocabulary and syntactically simple sentences.	Can write simple sentences about someone's life and routines.	28
		Can ask and answer simple questions about people they know in a limited way.	28
		Can write simple sentences about a familiar object.	29
Interactive	[ELLs ready to exit this level are able to actively listen to others.] They can participate in short conversations and written exchanges about familiar topics and in familiar contexts.	Can complete a very simple online purchase or application, providing basic personal information (e.g. name, e-mail or telephone number).	22
		Can identify a caller's name and phone number from a short, simple telephone conversation.	23
		Can greet people, ask how they are and react to news.	24

Table 3: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 2: Low Beginning ESL.

Level 3: High Beginning ESL			
Modality	**NRS Descriptor**	**GSE Learning Objective**	**GSE value**
Interpretive	ELLs ready to exit the High Beginning ESL Level are able to identify the main topic in oral presentations and simple spoken and written texts and retell a few key details using an emerging set of strategies.	Can extract specific information (e.g. facts and numbers) from simple informational texts related to everyday life (e.g. posters, leaflets).	31
		Can understand simple, everyday conversations if conducted slowly and clearly.	33
		Can understand the general meaning of short, simple informational material and descriptions if there is visual support.	34
Productive	They can introduce a familiar topic, experience, or event, give a reason to support a claim, and provide a concluding statement.	Can express their likes and dislikes in relation to familiar topics using simple language.	31
		Can write very short, simple sentences about their feelings.	32
		Can describe people's everyday lives using a short series of simple phrases and sentences.	34
Interactive	[ELLs ready to exit this level are able to, with support, carry out short individual or shared research projects.] They can, with support, gather information from provided print and digital sources, record information in simple notes, and summarize data and information.	Can write a few basic sentences to introduce someone and give basic personal information about them.	31
		Can identify basic personal details about someone on website profiles, business cards etc.	32
		Can describe basic activities or events that are happening at the time of speaking.	33

Table 4: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 3: High Beginning ESL.

Level 4: Low Intermediate ESL			
Modality	**NRS Descriptor**	**GSE Learning Objective**	**GSE value**
Interpretive	ELLs ready to exit the Low Intermediate ESL Level are able to determine a central idea or theme in oral presentations and spoken and written texts, retell key details, answer questions about key details, explain how the theme is developed by specific details in texts, and summarize part of a text using a developing set of strategies.	Can identify specific information in simple letters, brochures and short articles.	37
		Can generally identify the topic of discussion around them when conducted slowly and clearly.	39
		Can understand basic information in a short presentation.	39
Productive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to construct a claim about familiar topics.	Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.	41
		Can write descriptions of everyday personal experiences.	41
		Can make short descriptive online postings about everyday matters, social activities and feelings, with simple key details.	42
Interactive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to, participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about familiar topics, texts, and issues.	Can write a simple email/letter in response to a request for information.	39
		Can make and respond to suggestions.	41
		Can collaborate in simple, shared tasks, provided other participants speak/sign slowly and that one or more of the other participants help them contribute and express their suggestions.	42

Table 5: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 4: Low Intermediate ESL.

Level 5: High Intermediate ESL			
Modality	**NRS Descriptor**	**GSE Learning Objective**	**GSE value**
Interpretive	[ELLs ready to exit the High intermediate ESL Level are able to determine a central idea or theme in oral presentations and spoken and written texts using an increasing range of strategies.] They can analyze the development of the themes/ideas, cite specific details and evidence from texts to support the analysis, and summarize a text.	Can summarise information from a simple academic text.	53
		Can write a simple analysis of a structured text.	54
		Can recognise examples and their relation to the idea they support.	54
Productive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to construct a claim about a variety of topics.	Can express opinions and attitudes using a range of basic expressions and sentences.	52
		Can develop an argument using common fixed expressions.	53
		Can express their thoughts in some detail on cultural topics (e.g. music, films).	55

Table 6: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 5: High Intermediate ESL.

Modality	NRS Descriptor	GSE Learning Objective	GSE value
Interactive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about a range of topics, texts, and issues.	Can use a basic repertoire of conversation strategies to maintain a discussion.	53
		Can support communication across cultures by initiating conversation, showing interest and empathy by asking and answering simple questions, and expressing agreement and understanding.	54
		Can politely interrupt during a formal conversation, using fixed expressions	55

Table 6: Continued.

Level 6: Advanced ESL

Modality	NRS Descriptor	GSE Learning Objective	GSE value
Interpretive	Using context, questioning, and consistent knowledge of English morphology, ELLs ready to exit this level are able to determine the meaning of general academic and content-specific words and phrases, figurative and connotative language, and idiomatic expressions in spoken and written texts about a variety of topics, experiences, or events.	Can recognise the author's use of irony in a simple text, if guided by questions.	62
		Can follow a discussion in which speakers use some idiomatic language.	68
		Can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context in a linguistically complex text.	70

Table 7: Examples of GSE Learning Objectives aligned to the NRS descriptors across the three modalities at Level 6: Advanced ESL.

Modality	NRS Descriptor	GSE Learning Objective	GSE value
Productive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to deliver oral presentations and compose written informational texts about a variety of texts, topics or events.	Can present their ideas in a group and pose questions that invite reactions from other group members' perspectives.	61
		Can express ideas in a discussion or presentation using an appropriate tone and register.	65
		Can represent contrasting points of view in a coherent, well structured text.	70
Interactive	ELLs ready to exit this level are able to participate in conversations, extended discussions, and written exchanges about a range of substantive topics, texts, and issues.	Can identify details that support a point of view when taking part in a general discussion.	59
		Can participate actively in an online discussion, stating and responding to opinions on topics of interest at some length, provided contributors avoid unusual or complex language and allow time for responses.	62
		Can contribute to a conversation fluently and naturally, provided the topic is not too abstract or complex.	66

Table 7: Continued.

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