New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **How is the NYSITELL used?**

   The NYSITELL serves as the State's formal English language proficiency assessment in the process for initially identifying English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in New York State. The NYSITELL must be administered to eligible students within ten school days of their initial enrollment. All public and charter schools must follow the steps outlined in the initial and reentry processes prescribed by Commissioner's Regulations (CR) Part 154-2.3 (d), which includes administering the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) and conducting an individual interview with students who have indicated on the HLQ that a language other than English is spoken at home. Information gathered from the HLQ and the individual interview should be assessed carefully to determine if the student is required to take the NYSITELL. For students with disabilities who enter with an Individualized Education Plan, districts must follow the steps and procedures prescribed by [Commissioner's Regulations Part 154-3](). Please review the [English Language Learner (ELL) Screening, Identification, Placement, Review, and Exit Criteria flow chart]() and the [NYSITELL webpage]() for additional information.

   Religious and Independent schools, though not required to do so, are encouraged to administer the NYSITELL for identifying English Language Learners.

2. **How is the 2018 NYSITELL different from previous versions of the NYSITELL?**

   The 2018 NYSITELL is aligned to the current New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). The previous NYSITELL was aligned to the previous NYSESLAT. However, the test will still cover the same modalities of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

3. **What are the components of the NYSITELL?**

   Just like the NYSESLAT, the NYSITELL consists of four subtests for Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

   There are 8 levels of the NYSITELL, which are aligned to specific grades (see page 3 of the *Guide to the NYSITELL*). The content of each level is aligned with the expectations for an ELL/MLL depending on the grade in which the student is enrolling and when in the school year the new student arrives. [Note that the Level I NYSITELL consists of only Listening and Speaking questions.]

4. **When will the administration of the 2018 NYSITELL begin?**

Level I of the updated NYSITELL will begin administration on June 1, 2018, and Levels II – VIII will begin February 1, 2018. With the exception of Level I, the NYSITELL should be administered during the month of June only to students entering school for the remainder of the current school year and/or students enrolling in a summer school program. The testing of new students who are enrolling in New York State schools in Grade 1 and above for the fall may begin no earlier than July 15. Schools are not permitted to administer Levels II–VIII of the NYSITELL from July 1–July 14.

5. **For students who register during the summer and are eligible to take the NYSITELL, when does the 10-day window for NYSITELL administration begin?**

Students who register during the summer must take the NYSITELL within 10 days of the first day of the school year.

6. **How is the NYSITELL administered?**

For Levels II-VIII, the Listening, Reading, and Writing subtests are contained in one test booklet and may be administered individually or in a group. The Speaking subtest is contained in a separate test booklet and is administered individually. During the Speaking subtest, the student individually answers questions orally. The student's spoken responses are scored at the time of administration. Level I consists of integrated Listening and Speaking questions in one test booklet. The entire Level I test must be individually administered. It is highly recommended that Levels II and III also be individually administered.

7. **Who can administer the NYSITELL?**

In public and charter schools, the staff administering the NYSITELL should be certified teachers or administrators. In religious and independent schools, it is highly recommended that the staff administering the NYSITELL be certified teachers. The qualified personnel (i.e. those who are able to carry out standard examination procedures) selected to administer the NYSITELL should have received special training in administering the NYSITELL and/or NYSESLAT and may include:

- o New York State certified English to Speakers of Other Languages or Bilingual Education teachers
- o New York State certified teachers who have been trained in cultural competency, language development, and the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs)
- o New York State certified teachers

An examiner who has administered the NYSESLAT will be familiar with all question types on the NYSITELL. Nevertheless, to ensure accurate and reliable results, the examiner should read—and become thoroughly familiar with—the procedures outlined in the *Directions for Administration* (DFA) before attempting to administer the NYSITELL. The specific administration instructions for

each subtest (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) should be read thoroughly before administering the NYSITELL.

8. How long does it take to administer the NYSITELL?

The NYSITELL is an untimed test. For estimated administration times for each subtest and level, see page 6 of the *Guide to the NYSITELL*.

9. How will the NYSITELL Speaking and Writing be scored?

Each school is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for scoring the NYSITELL. Individuals scoring the NYSESLAT should be qualified personnel, such as teachers or administrators, who have been specially trained in scoring the NYSITELL or NYSESLAT.

Scoring procedures vary depending on the modality and level of the NYSITELL. Please review the *Guide to the NYSITELL* for a complete description of scoring procedures for each section of the test. To ensure accurate and reliable results, scorers must become familiar with the procedures in the *NYSITELL Speaking and Writing Scoring Guide*(s).

10. Will it be allowable for districts to hand score the NYSITELL?

No. Schools will not be able to hand score the new NYSITELL. NYSED will not be providing scoring overlays. Schools are required to contract with a Regional Information Center (RIC) or a large-city scanning center for machine-scannable answer sheets and examination data processing services for the 2018 edition of the NYSITELL. Scoring of the completed NYSITELL to determine Performance Level will be conducted by the RIC or large-city scanning center with whom the school contracts.

The complete list of RICs and large-city scanning centers is available on the Department's website at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/ric-big5.html. New York City religious and independent schools must contract with a scanning center outside of the city. Questions about the requirement to scan answer sheets should be directed to the Office of State Assessment (OSA) at emscassessinfo@nysed.gov or 518-474-5902. Questions about data collection and reporting services should be directed to the district RIC or large-city scanning center, or to the Office of Information and Reporting Services at 518-474-7965.

11. What should districts and schools do with NYSITELL score reports?

English language proficiency identification assessment results, and any other records generated as part of the identification process and review process, should be maintained as part of the student's permanent record.

12. Where can I find sample NYSITELL questions?

Sample NYSITELL questions for Level II-VIII can be found on pages 28-83 of the *Guide to the NYSITELL*. These items are intended to familiarize NYSITELL administrators with the types of questions on the test and are not to be used for student preparation.

13. **What accommodations are in place for students with disabilities?**

Students with disabilities must be provided with the testing accommodations specified in their IEPs or 504 Plans. For further information on allowable accommodations and test access, please visit NYSED's Office of Special Education (OSE) web site at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed. School personnel may contact OSE via e-mail at speced@nysed.gov if they have any questions about appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

14. **Are there testing accommodations for ELLs/MLLs on the NYSITELL?**

No. The purpose of the NYSITELL is to identify ELLs/MLLs, therefore, accommodations permitted on content assessments are not permitted on the NYSITELL.

15. **Are there are other resources provided by the state to prepare students for the NYSITELL?**

No. The purpose of the NYSITELL is to assess an arriving student's initial English language proficiency so that the student may receive appropriate instruction, support, and services. Therefore, the only preparation for the NYSITELL should be the identification of the student as a potential ELL, through the screening process which consists of the Home Language Questionnaire and an individual interview.

16. **Will NYSED provide trainings to schools and districts for the new version of the NYSITELL?**

NYSED will be releasing support materials, such as a *Guide to the NYSITELL*, a webinar, and PowerPoint slides in early 2018.

17. **How do I order the new NYSITELL?**

The NYSITELL ordering memo is currently online. Schools who placed their NYSITELL orders by December 15, 2017 will receive their materials by February 1, 2018. Your school will be sent the number of test booklets requested, rounded up to the next multiple of 25. For additional information on ordering, please visit http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysitell/.

18. **Can a religious and independent school use an assessment method other than NYSITELL to identify an ELL/MLL student?**

Religious and independent schools are encouraged to administer the NYSITELL for identifying ELLs/MLLs, although they are not required to do so.

19. **We have former versions of the NYSITELL in our possession. How should we dispose of these versions of the NYSITELL?**

The appropriate method of disposing of former versions of the NYSITELL is secure destruction. After February 1, copies of the 2014 Edition of the NYSITELL should be destroyed so as not to become mixed with the new tests.

20. **In the 2014 version of the NYSITELL, Kindergarten students did not write in the test booklet. Is that still the case?**

Kindergarten students taking the Level I test will not be required to write in their test booklets. Kindergarten students taking the Level II test will write their answers in their Listening/Reading/Writing test booklet.

21. **Do foreign exchange students take the NYSITELL?**

No. Foreign exchange students are expected to have sufficient English language proficiency for instruction. NYSED does not identify foreign exchange students as English Language Learners with the NYSITELL. Schools should provide these students with support as needed.

22. **Can my district use a NYSITELL booklet that was ordered by another district?**

We encourage schools to order their own materials from NYSED. Borrowing from another school should only be done in cases when the materials from NYSED will not arrive in a timely manner. If a situation such as this arises, the district should notify NYSED.

23. **For NYSITELL Levels I - III, can the NYSITELL booklet be kept as part of a permanent student record?**

Yes. Each student's proficiency level, along with the date he or she was tested, must be recorded in the student's permanent record. The completed and scored answer sheets and/or test booklets must be retained at the school or district for a minimum of one year.

24. **If a student transfers within New York State to our district after previously receiving English as a New Language (ENL) services at another district, should the student take the NYSITELL again or the NYSESLAT to continue with his/her previous ENL services?**

A student will continue to be designated as an ELL and the district should place the student programmatically based on where the student was when he/she last attended school in New York State. For guidance on re-entry identification see Page 9 of ELL ID Chart Guidance: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/bilingual/ellidchartguidance7.1.15.pdf