



Assessment Preparation Program
Based on Respected Research
and Literature

Introduction

Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials is a research-based, standards-aligned solution designed to help California's English learners (ELs) succeed on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). This program demystifies the test for both students and educators, offers systematic practice across all four tested domains—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing—and equips teachers with the instructional strategies they need to support multilingual learners at all proficiency levels.

More than just a test prep tool, this resource is grounded in principles of language development, culturally responsive pedagogy, and actionable insight into ELPAC success. The program helps districts move beyond compliance and toward meaningful language proficiency gains that lead to lasting student achievement.



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The Logic Model

This logic model illustrates how *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* is designed to help districts achieve measurable language development outcomes for English learners. The goal of this table is to visualize how implementing *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* can support and contribute to achieving district goals through structured instructional inputs and test-aligned activities.

Figure 1—Logic Model

Problem Statement: There is a need for targeted, research-aligned preparation to support English learners in meeting the linguistic and cognitive demands of the ELPAC. Without explicit, domain-specific instruction and exposure to test-aligned task types, too many students remain below proficiency thresholds—limiting access to reclassification, academic advancement, and broader educational equity.					
Outcome/Goal: To increase English learners' readiness for the ELPAC by strengthening their academic language proficiency, reducing test-related barriers, and supporting reclassification through scaffolded, standards-aligned instruction.					
Theory of Action					
Educators are committed to improving ELPAC outcomes.	Districts provide educators with access to the ELPAC Essentials program.	Teachers implement structured test-aligned instruction.	K–8 students engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice using ELPAC-style formats.	K–8 students will be prepared for ELPAC task types and demonstrate improved language production.	Students will become confident communicators within the four language domains.
Logic Model					
Assumptions	Resources/Inputs	Activities	Outputs/Metrics	Outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools recognize the importance of structured preparation. Teachers can deliver test-aligned instruction. Reclassification is a meaningful equity milestone for English learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Best Practices Guide</i> with test-aligned strategies <i>Teacher's Guide</i> <i>Student Books</i> Digital audio & ebooks Read-aloud texts California ELD Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured task-type practice across four language domains Explicit instruction on academic language use Use of real ELPAC-style item formats Scaffolds and models for student support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students experience all tested task types. Teachers deliver targeted ELD instruction. Students engage in listening, oral, written, and comprehension tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved familiarity with ELPAC format and expectations Increased use of academic language in class Reduced test anxiety and better student confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher ELPAC performance Increased reclassification rates Greater access to advanced coursework Enhanced student engagement and achievement

Guiding Principles

The design of *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* reflects both practical test preparation needs and broader commitments to educational equity, inclusion, and excellence. At its core, the product is grounded in five foundational principles. Together, these principles ensure that test preparation does not become an isolated experience but rather an embedded and empowering component of every student's language journey.

★ **Language is the foundation of academic success.**

Mastery of academic English is essential for success across all content areas. This resource ensures students have frequent, structured opportunities to engage with grade-level language tasks in meaningful ways.

★ **Effective ELPAC preparation supports—not replaces—strong language instruction.**

The activities within this program strengthen students' core English language development by providing repeated, scaffolded exposure to test-aligned language demands.

★ **Students thrive when assessment is transparent and familiar.**

Anxiety and uncertainty are reduced when students know what to expect. This product offers clear explanations, repeated exposure to ELPAC task types, and strategies that build student confidence.

★ **Culturally responsive practice honors the full linguistic repertoire of multilingual learners.**

The program encourages educators to build on students' home language knowledge and cultural experiences as assets in the classroom.

★ **Teachers play a central role in students' language success.**

The included *Best Practices Guide* equips educators with the tools, insight, and professional language they need to identify common barriers, provide targeted feedback, and support students at every stage of proficiency.



The Foundations of Language Development

Language development is a complex, dynamic process influenced by cognitive, social, and cultural factors. For multilingual learners, acquiring English requires more than exposure—it calls for intentional, structured, and meaningful engagement with language across all domains.

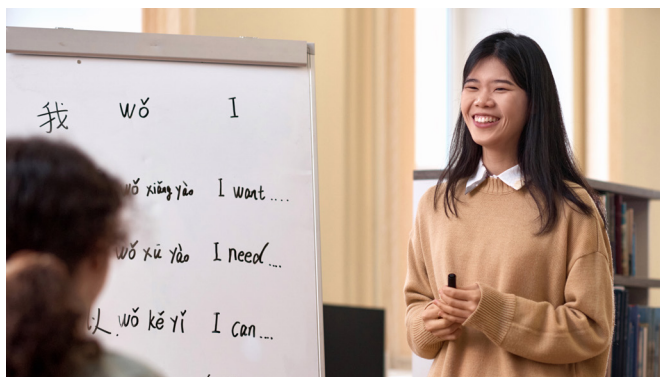
Students enter the classroom with rich linguistic backgrounds. Many have already acquired conversational fluency in their home languages and bring a wide range of communication strategies. These skills form a powerful foundation for learning English. Research consistently shows that strong development in a student's first language supports English language acquisition—particularly in reading and writing.

However, learning English in an academic setting involves more than everyday conversation. Students must learn to process and produce structured oral and written responses, understand abstract and content-specific vocabulary, and navigate complex grammar and discourse patterns. These demands can make English acquisition a multiyear journey, especially for students with limited access to rich language models or formal schooling.

Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials supports this developmental process by:

- Providing **comprehensible input** through modeled and scaffolded instruction.
- Encouraging **authentic language output** through writing, speaking, and peer interaction.
- Targeting the **three dimensions of language**—word/phrase, sentence, and discourse—found in the California ELD Standards.
- Offering **multiple exposures to academic vocabulary** and opportunities to use it in context.
- Integrating **visual and oral supports** to reinforce meaning and aid in retention.

By blending foundational language theory with practical instructional design, this resource supports every student's journey from emerging speaker to confident communicator.



Essential ELPAC Knowledge

Understanding the structure and scoring of the ELPAC is essential for ensuring that students are prepared to demonstrate their language proficiency accurately (California Department of Education 2023). The ELPAC is California's statewide system for evaluating the English skills of students whose primary language is not English. The summative version of the assessment is administered annually to measure student progress in the four language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

One of the most critical components for educators is interpreting **ELPAC rubrics** (Saguilan 2026). These rubrics determine student scores on performance tasks and evaluate students across multiple dimensions, such as:

- **Language Use and Vocabulary:** Are responses precise, contextually appropriate, and varied?
- **Organization and Cohesion:** Do students connect ideas in a logical and clear manner?
- **Comprehensibility and Fluency:** Can students be understood without excessive hesitation or grammatical interference?

To support accurate scoring and instruction, *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* helps teachers internalize these criteria by integrating scoring language into teacher-facing guidance. For example, speaking prompts include model responses and guidance on how students can expand or revise their answers to improve fluency, structure, and vocabulary.

Additionally, the program identifies **common performance barriers**, such as underdeveloped academic vocabulary or lack of practice with formal sentence structures and provides scaffolds to help teachers guide students toward stronger responses. This demystifies what “well developed” looks like and ensures that formative feedback is aligned with the expectations of the ELPAC rubrics.



The Importance of the ELPAC

For English learners in California, the ELPAC is more than a test—it is a gateway to equitable access, academic advancement, and long-term educational success. Achieving a high score on the summative ELPAC allows students to **reclassify** as Fluent English Proficient (RFEP), which, in turn, opens doors to a full spectrum of academic courses, including electives and advanced placement tracks.

Conversely, students who remain in Designated ELD for too long—especially beyond elementary school—are more likely to miss opportunities for enrichment, elective participation, and deeper engagement with grade-level content. These students often fall into the category of **Long-Term English Learners (LTELs)**, who face increased risks of academic underperformance and lower graduation rates (Menken et al. 2012).

According to recent state data, more than 85 percent of ELs in California are still scoring in levels 1–3 on the ELPAC, with fewer than 15 percent reaching the highest level of proficiency (CAASPP 2025). This persistent gap underscores the need for strategic, research-based preparation that goes beyond passive exposure to English and instead equips students with the skills and confidence needed to succeed on this high-stakes exam.

The ELPAC is also closely tied to broader accountability systems. Districts are evaluated in part based on EL performance and progress indicators, meaning that reclassification rates directly impact district funding, status under state and federal accountability measures, and perceived program effectiveness.

By providing a structured, test-aligned approach to preparation, *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* ensures that the ELPAC becomes not a barrier but a stepping stone toward college and career readiness for every multilingual student.



What Is on the ELPAC?

The ELPAC assesses English language proficiency through tasks that reflect real classroom expectations in the four language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The test is administered annually to all identified English learners in California and is aligned to the 2012 California English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Each domain includes multiple task types that measure students' abilities to understand and use English in various academic contexts.

While the number and format of tasks vary slightly by grade level, each section consistently emphasizes academic language, language functions, and comprehension across different levels of linguistic complexity.

Listening Tasks

Listening tasks measure how well students understand spoken English in academic and social settings. Students may be asked to:

- Identify key details from a short fictional story.
- Follow a brief classroom conversation.
- Respond to oral presentations by summarizing or answering questions.

For example, in the *Listen to a Story* task, students hear a fictional narrative accompanied by visuals and then answer comprehension questions focused on character actions and the sequence of events.

Speaking Tasks

Speaking tasks assess students' ability to express ideas clearly and appropriately using oral English. These tasks include:

- Describing a scene or picture.
- Supporting an opinion.
- Retelling a narrative with key details.

Responses are scored using domain-specific rubrics that emphasize completeness, vocabulary use, fluency, and organization. For instance, in the *Talk About a Scene* task, students describe a classroom image and respond to open-ended prompts with complete sentences.

Reading Tasks

Reading tasks evaluate students' ability to comprehend written English. Students interact with:

- Short informational and literary passages.
- Student-written texts.
- Visual supports, such as charts or illustrations.

They may be asked to choose a sentence that matches a picture, determine the main idea, or analyze details from a text.

Writing Tasks

Writing tasks ask students to construct written responses that demonstrate command of language forms and functions. Tasks include:

- Writing about a personal experience.
- Composing a paragraph based on academic information.
- Justifying an opinion in writing.

Students are expected to write in complete sentences and use domain-appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Rubrics assess organization, language use, and clarity.

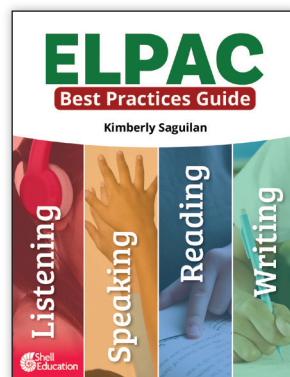
Each domain presents multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate progress through increasingly challenging prompts. By integrating practice with every one of these task types, *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* builds familiarity, confidence, and skill across the full range of tested constructs—ensuring students are prepared not just to take the test but to succeed on it.



Research to Practice

Every level of *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* includes a copy of *ELPAC: Best Practices Guide*, which helps clarify all aspects of the ELPAC by:

- Demystifying the ELPAC through clear test structure explanations.
- Providing teachers with a deep understanding of the ELPAC's four language domains and scoring rubrics, ensuring instructional alignment with test expectations.
- Guiding teachers in interpreting ELPAC rubrics.
- Offering unpacked scoring criteria and student sample responses to help educators internalize what constitutes a high-level performance and provide aligned feedback.
- Building knowledge of academic language demands by highlighting the linguistic forms, functions, and vocabulary required for each task type.



Preparing Students for the ELPAC

Preparation for the ELPAC should never feel like “teaching to the test.” Instead, it should serve as an opportunity to strengthen students’ academic language, boost their confidence, and clarify expectations in a structured, supportive environment. When implemented intentionally, ELPAC preparation accelerates language development and supports students on the path toward reclassification—a critical milestone that opens the door to advanced coursework, full access to the core curriculum, and long-term academic success.

Instructional Strategies for ELPAC Success

Research underscores the importance of structured, interactive, and scaffolded instruction in helping English learners demonstrate what they know (Avila and Breña-Naranjo 2023; Nugky Permatasari et al. 2024). *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* is designed to help educators integrate these strategies into daily instruction in meaningful ways. The program supports test readiness through the following strategies:

- Explicit instruction on task types and response formats
- Modeling and sentence frames that support student responses in speaking and writing
- Partner and group work to promote oral language development
- Frequent exposure to academic vocabulary across all content areas
- Guided, supported practice for each tested task type before students attempt independent work
- Visual and auditory supports to strengthen listening and reading comprehension
- Built-in feedback prompts that help teachers provide timely corrections and clarifications

These strategies reduce cognitive load during the assessment, allowing students to focus on clearly and confidently showcasing their language skills.

Built-In Supports for Diverse Learners

Every student comes to the test with a different language profile. Long-Term English Learners (LTELs), students with interrupted formal education, and newcomers all require slightly different approaches to support. *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* addresses this through:

- ➔ Differentiated guidance for teachers on common barriers and effective responses.
- ➔ Culturally sustaining content and relatable visuals.
- ➔ Scaffolds that gradually fade, allowing students to gain independence.
- ➔ Opportunities to review, rehearse, and revise oral and written responses.

These design features are not only instructional supports—they are equity tools that help ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Pacing and Preparation Structure

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Task Type Practice					
Week 1	Read-Aloud Activity Remy's Magic Day	Listen to a Story	Listen to a Story (cont.)	Talk About a Scene	Read-Along Story with Scaffolding
Week 2	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding (cont.)	Listen to a Short Exchange	Support an Opinion	Read-Along Word with Scaffolding
Week 3	Read-Aloud Activity Your World: Short	Read-Along Information	Label a Picture—Word with Scaffolding	Listen to an Oral Presentation	Summarize an Academic Presentation
Week 4	Summarize an Academic Presentation (cont.)	Label a Picture—Word with Scaffolding	Support an Opinion	Support an Opinion (cont.)	Listen to a Short Exchange
Week 5	Retell a Narrative	Retell a Narrative (cont.)	Read-Along Word with Scaffolding	Read-Along Word with Scaffolding (cont.)	Talk About a Scene
Week 6	Talk About a Scene (cont.)	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding (cont.)	Retell a Narrative	Retell a Narrative (cont.)
Test Practice					
Week 7	Listen to a Short Exchange	Listen to a Short Exchange (cont.)	Listen to a Short Exchange (cont.)	Listen to a Story	Listen to a Story (cont.)
Week 8	Listen to an Oral Presentation	Listen to an Oral Presentation (cont.)	Talk About a Scene	Talk About a Scene (cont.)	Talk About a Scene (cont.)
Week 9	Support an Opinion	Retell a Narrative	Retell a Narrative	Summarize an Academic Presentation	Summarize an Academic Presentation (cont.)
Week 10	Read-Along Word with Scaffolding	Read-Along Word with Scaffolding	Read-Along Story with Scaffolding	Read-Along Story with Scaffolding (cont.)	Read-Along Information
Week 11	Label a Picture—Word with Scaffolding	Label a Picture—Word with Scaffolding	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding	Write a Story Together with Scaffolding (cont.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Task Type Practice					
Week 1	Read-Aloud Activity I Wish I Up with a Superpower	Listen to a Story	Listen to a Story (cont.)	Talk About a Scene	Talk About a Scene (cont.)
Week 2	Write About an Experience	Write About an Experience (cont.)	Read and Choose a Sentence	Listen to a Short Exchange	Support an Opinion
Week 3	Read-Aloud Activity Natural Disasters	Read a Short Informational Passage	Write About Academic Information	Listen to an Oral Presentation	Listen to an Oral Presentation (cont.)
Week 4	Summarize an Academic Presentation	Listen to a Short Exchange	Retell a Narrative	Read an Informational Passage	Read an Informational Passage (cont.)
Week 5	Describe a Picture	Retell a Narrative	Speech Functions	Read a Literary Passage	Justify an Opinion
Week 6	Justify an Opinion (cont.)	Support an Opinion	Listen to a Classroom Conversation	Read a Student Essay	Read a Student Essay (cont.)
Test Practice					
Week 7	Listen to a Short Exchange	Listen to a Classroom Conversation	Listen to a Story	Listen to an Oral Presentation	Listen to an Oral Presentation
Week 8	Talk About a Scene	Talk About a Scene	Speech Functions	Speech Functions	Support an Opinion
Week 9	Retell a Narrative	Summarize an Academic Presentation	Read and Choose a Sentence	Read a Short Informational Passage	Read a Student Essay
Week 10	Read a Literary	Read an Informational Passage	Read an Informational Passage	Describe a Picture	Write About an Experience
Week 11	Write About an Experience (cont.)	Justify an Opinion	Justify an Opinion (cont.)	Write About Academic Information	Write About Academic Information (cont.)

The program includes flexible 11-week pacing plans that align with most ELD instructional blocks and can be adapted to support:

- ➔ 20-minute daily prep over two to three months.
- ➔ Intensive test bootcamps during designated intervention periods.
- ➔ Ongoing integration into designated ELD time.

The first half of the student book focuses on task-specific practice, while the second half offers test-like practice sessions to build stamina and familiarity.

Educators can use the embedded pacing calendar or adapt it to meet school site needs. Digital resources such as listening audio, read-aloud ebooks, and fillable PDFs further support varied implementation models.

Reducing Test Anxiety and Building Confidence

ELPAC testing can provoke anxiety—especially for students unfamiliar with formal academic tasks. This program helps mitigate those effects by:

- Allowing students to preview and practice every task type before the actual test.
- Embedding encouraging language and supportive prompts.
- Ensuring students feel successful during rehearsal, which boosts confidence on test day.
- Modeling self-monitoring strategies, such as rereading and restating answers.

The tone throughout the materials is warm, student-centered, and aligned with the goal of building long-term communication skills—not just test performance.

Pathways to Reclassification

The ultimate goal of preparation is reclassification. Students who demonstrate proficiency on the ELPAC may be eligible for reclassification as Fluent English Proficient (RFEP), provided they meet additional criteria such as teacher evaluation and academic performance. *Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials* supports this pathway by:

- Increasing the number of students who reach Level 4 on the ELPAC.
- Strengthening the academic language needed to meet grade-level standards.
- Providing documentation of student performance and progress that can support teacher evaluations and family consultations.
- Reducing the number of students designated as At Risk of LTEL by targeting skill gaps early.

When students reclassify, they gain access to new opportunities: electives, advanced coursework, enrichment programs, and full participation in the mainstream curriculum. For districts, improved reclassification rates also signal stronger ELD programming and contribute to positive performance on California's English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI).



Building Proficiency

Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials is intentionally designed to build proficiency across all four language domains tested on the ELPAC—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Each component of the program is aligned with the skills, task types, and cognitive demands of the Summative ELPAC. But more than that, it supports real-world language development, helping students express themselves with greater clarity, confidence, and accuracy—during the test and beyond.

Below is a domain-by-domain breakdown of how the product supports students in mastering the linguistic skills and strategies they need to perform well and make measurable progress toward reclassification.

Listening

Listening tasks on the ELPAC require students to extract meaning from oral texts, including stories, presentations, and conversations. These tasks build receptive language skills and test students' ability to follow sequences, infer meaning, and identify key ideas.

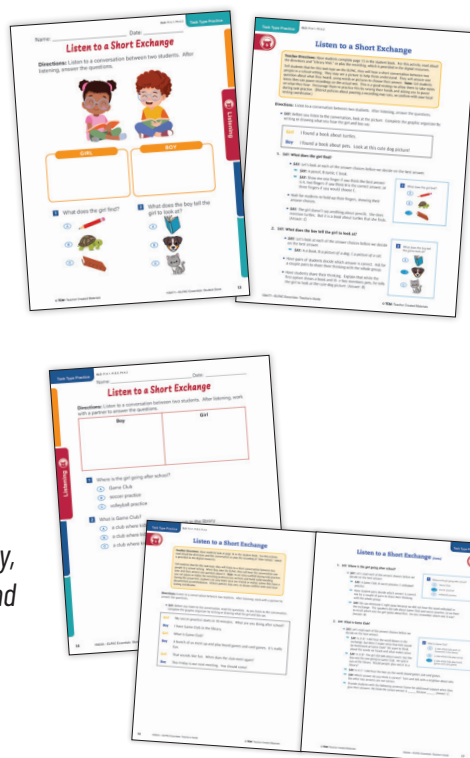


Research to Practice

Audio-based practice mirrors test conditions using age-appropriate, engaging content.

- Prelistening discussion prompts activate background knowledge to increase comprehension.
- Guided listening tasks help students learn how to focus on details and anticipate questions.
- Visuals paired with listening items provide context and support understanding.
- Follow-up questions promote discussion, retelling, and analysis—deepening both listening and speaking skills.

Result: Students build stamina, improve comprehension accuracy, and increase listening confidence, which reduces test anxiety and enhances performance in both Listening and Speaking domains.



Speaking

Speaking is one of the most complex domains, requiring students to organize their thoughts, use appropriate academic language, and speak fluently in response to prompts. The ELPAC assesses everything from picture descriptions to personal narratives and opinion support.



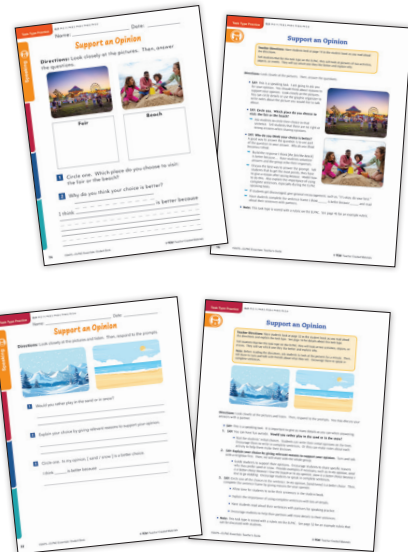
Integrate oral and written English language instruction into daily teaching.



Research to Practice

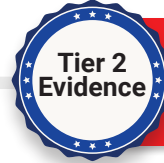
- Scripted prompts and sentence frames guide students in forming complete, coherent responses.
- Multiple opportunities to rehearse each task type, including Retelling a Narrative, Justifying an Opinion, and Speech Functions.
- Sample responses and modeled speaking provide benchmarks for fluency and vocabulary usage.
- Peer discussion tasks build oral fluency and lower the affective filter through collaborative practice.
- Score sheets and rubrics help teachers provide targeted, rubric-aligned feedback.

Result: Students become more comfortable thinking aloud, supporting opinions, and using structured academic language in oral responses—all key elements of a Level 4 score.



Reading

The Reading domain measures students' ability to comprehend literary and informational texts, identify central ideas, and analyze language use. Students are expected to demonstrate close reading skills and a growing command of academic vocabulary.



Ensure students read connected texts to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

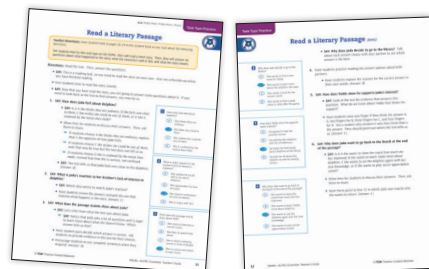
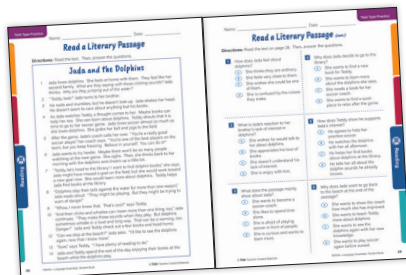


Research to Practice

- Academic vocabulary is introduced and practiced during each reading task.
- Texts and question formats replicate actual ELPAC items to ensure familiarity and reduce cognitive friction.
- Reading comprehension strategies (e.g., finding key details, comparing and contrasting) are built into teacher guidance and student prompts.
- Text-dependent questions encourage close reading and promote deeper engagement with text structure and meaning.
- Integrated visuals and scaffolds make reading accessible for students at varying proficiency levels.



Result: Students improve their ability to extract meaning from grade-level texts, respond to multiple-choice and open-ended questions, and demonstrate growth in both general and content-specific vocabulary.



Writing

The Writing domain includes both narrative and academic writing tasks. Students are expected to write in complete sentences, use discipline-appropriate vocabulary, and organize ideas clearly and logically.



Teach students to analyze ideas and write and recognize words.



Research to Practice

- Step-by-step writing scaffolds help students generate ideas, organize their responses, and revise for clarity.
- Graphic organizers and writing frames support structure and coherence in student writing.
- Sample paragraphs and guided modeling make academic writing more approachable.
- Editing checklists promote self-monitoring of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary use.
- Sentence-level supports (e.g., transitions, sentence stems) help students move from phrase-based to fluent writing.

Result: Students learn to produce writing that meets the ELPAC rubric expectations for development, cohesion, and language accuracy—essential for reaching reclassification benchmarks.



Cross-Domain Integration

Beyond supporting each domain in isolation, the program also reinforces cross-domain connections:

- ➔ Read-aloud books provide context for tasks across Listening, Reading, and Writing.
- ➔ Thematic vocabulary is reused and revisited across domains to reinforce learning.
- ➔ Domain-specific strategies (e.g., oral rehearsal before writing) help students internalize and transfer language skills across tasks.

Each feature of the program is designed to support authentic language use, foster metacognition, and equip students with strategies they can use independently on test day—and far beyond it.

Conclusion

The path to reclassification is one of the most important journeys an English learner can take. It represents far more than a score—it is a gateway to opportunity, access, and full participation in academic life at school. Yet for too many students, this path is slowed by uncertainty, inconsistent support, and a lack of targeted, test-aligned practice.

Practicing for Success: ELPAC Essentials was built to change that. It provides students with a structured and supportive environment in which they can learn the language of the ELPAC—while also strengthening the skills they need to succeed in every subject. With explicit modeling, engaging practice, and flexible implementation options, the program demystifies the test for both students and educators.

For teachers, it is a trusted guide for delivering instruction that is aligned, purposeful, and grounded in research. For students, it is a scaffolded pathway toward confidence, clarity, and growth. For administrators, it is a strategic investment in improving reclassification rates, advancing equity, and raising the bar for English learner achievement.

The stakes are high. But the potential is higher.

By preparing students not only to take the ELPAC but to succeed on it, this program ensures that multilingual learners can fully demonstrate their knowledge, chart a path to reclassification, and thrive in classrooms that honor and develop their full linguistic potential.



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