

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)

The SOLOM is a rating scale that teachers can use to assess their students' command of oral language on the basis of what they observe on a continual basis in a variety of situations (class discussions, interactions before and after class, and everyday). The teacher matches a student's language performance in listening comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation to descriptions on a five-point scale for each. The scores for individual domains can be considered, or they can be combined into a total score with a range of five through 25, where approximately 19 or 20 can be considered proficient. SOLOM scores represent whether a student can participate in oral language tasks typically expected in the classroom at his or her grade level.

The SOLOM does not require a dedicated testing situation. To complete it, teachers simply need to know the criteria for the various ratings and observe their students' language practices with those criteria in mind.

Directions for Administering the SOLOM:

Based on your observation of the student, indicate with an "X" across the category which best describes the student's abilities.

- The SOLOM should only be administered by persons who themselves score at level "4" or above in all categories in the language being assessed.
- Students scoring at level "1" in all categories can be said to have no proficiency in the language.

Points to Keep in Mind When Using the SOLOM:

- Consider all situations-informal, social, formal and instructional-in which you have observed the youth.
- Consider the most recent and consistent level of ability that you have observed.
- Think of only one category of language ability at a time.
- Think of only oral proficiency; don't let the youth's reading and writing ability come to mind as you rate.
- Remember that level 5 is the level ability expected of a native English-speaking youth who is not bilingual and who is of the same age as the youth you are rating.
- Don't let the levels of ability of other youth in the class influence your rating; i.e., make sure you aren't giving a youth a high score simply because he/she is one of the best students in a class of all lower ability students.
- The SOLOM is based on a five point scale. As with any odd numbered rubric, the tendency is to rate around the midpoint.

SOLOM - STUDENT ORAL LANGUAGE OBSERVATION MATRIX

MODIFIED FOR USE WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Student Name _____ Migrant # _____ Date _____

Language Observed _____ Observer Signature _____

Directions: Based on your observation of the student, indicate with an "X" in each category the level that best describes the student's abilities.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
A. Comprehension	- Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	- Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only "social conversation" spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	- Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	- Understands nearly everything at normal speech, although occasional repetition may be necessary.	- Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions without difficulty.
B. Fluency	- Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	- Usually hesitant: Often forced into silence by language limitations.	- Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression.	- Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	- Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless, approximating that of a native speaker.
C. Vocabulary	- Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	- Misuses words and very limited vocabulary; comprehensive quite difficult.	- Student frequently uses the wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	- Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	- Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
D. Pronunciation	- Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	- Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.	- Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	- Always intelligible, though one is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	- Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
E. Grammar	- Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	- Grammar and word-order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.	- Makes frequent errors of grammar and word-order which occasionally obscure meaning.	- Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word-order errors which do not obscure meaning.	- Grammatical usage and word order approximate that of a native speaker.

- The SOLOM should only be administered by persons who themselves score at level "4" or above in all categories in the language being assessed.

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Directions: Use the SOLOM instrument to assess students' English language proficiency if there are other assessment scores available to you (i.e., Woodcock-Muñoz). This instrument determines students' comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

<p>Basic Information on the SOLOM</p>	<p>The SOLOM is an information instrument that utilizes an interview format to observe language production in English and in other languages.</p>
<p>Testing Conditions</p>	<p>It is important that you do not paraphrase or abbreviate what is being said. Questions and probe examples in English and Spanish are provided on the page to follow. It is not necessary for you to ask all of the questions on these pages, but be sure to ask at least one question from each of the choices in numbers 1-10. You may use similar questions of your choosing to elicit a meaningful language sample. Asking probing/clarifying questions is important to obtain a rich sample. Suggestions for developing additional oral language interview samples:</p> <p>COMPREHENSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have pairs of youth engage in two-way tasks (where each youth only has half the information and the partner has to figure out the task through questioning). • Have youth describe a series of photographs or pictures. <p>FLUENCY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have youth explain a multi-step process to a small group of peers. • Have youth restate what has been said or read. <p>VOCABULARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have youth describe an object, person, or event. • Brainstorm ideas with youth about a topic and have youth create and explain a picture illustrating it. <p>PRONUNCIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have youth maintain a record of his/her speech on MP3 player with audio component. <p>GRAMMAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have youth discuss what they have learned. <p>If the interviewee cannot answer questions from the first three items, discontinue testing and indicate that this student is at Level 1.</p>
<p>Scoring Procedures</p>	<p>Upon completion of the interview, rate the student's production on a scale of 1-5 in each of the five categories. To get an overall score, divide the sum of the five categories by 5. An average score of Level 3 or less indicates that the interviewee's proficiency is limited in that language. Students scoring at Level 1 in all categories can be said to have no proficiency in the language.</p>

Examples of SOLOM Interview Questions in English and Spanish

1. What is your name? How many people are in your family? How are you feeling?	1. ¿Cómo te llamas? ¿Cuántas personas hay en tu familia? ¿Cómo te sientes hoy?
2. What day is today? Where do you live? What are your friends' names?	2. ¿Cuál día es hoy? Díme tu número de teléfono. ¿Cómo se llaman tus amigos?
3. Where were you born? Tell me something about your family? Tell me something about your country?	3. ¿Dónde naciste? Díme algo acerca de tu familia. Díme algo acerca de tu país.
4. What do you like about your job? What do you dislike about your job? How do you get to your job? (...walking, by car, by bus?)	4. ¿Qué te gusta de tu empleo? ¿Qué no te gusta de tu empleo? ¿Cómo llegas a tu empleo? (...¿caminando, en carro, en autobús?)
5. What is your favorite thing to do when you have free time? Why? What is the name of your favorite sport? Why? Who is your favorite famous person? Why?	5. ¿Qué más te gusta hacer cuando tienes tiempo libre? ¿Porqué? ¿Cuál es el deporte que te gusta más? ¿Porqué? ¿Quiénes de las personas famosas te gustan más? ¿Porqué?
6. What happened to you that was an important event in your life? What goals do you have for the future? What would you do or be if you could do or be anyone?	6. Pláticame acerca de un evento importante en tu vida. ¿Cuáles metas tienes para el futuro? ¿Qué harías o qué personas serías si pudieras?
7. What is your favorite game or hobby? What do you do after work?	7. ¿Cuál es tu juego o pasatiempo favorito? ¿Qué haces después de trabajar?
8. What is your favorite store? Tell me about the store. Why do you especially like that store?	8. ¿Cuál es la tienda que te gusta más? Dime algo acerca de la tienda. ¿Porqué te gusta esta tienda?
9. Tell me a story, fairy tale, riddle, or joke.	9. Díme un cuento, cuento folklórico, adivinanza, o chiste.
10. What is your favorite food? How do you make it?	10. ¿Cuál es tu comida favorita? Díme cómo se prepara esta comida.

