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# OSY ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCREENER

*The OSY English Language Screener is adapted from tools developed by:  
Vermont Migrant Education Program  
New York Migrant Education Program*

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## About the Screener

The OSY English Language Screener (ELS) is a short, easy-to-administer screening tool that can be used with minimal training. The purpose of the screener is to help educators make informed decisions about:

- where to begin English language instruction
- what language skills to focus on during instruction
- what instructional materials to use

Language screeners are designed to make broad, initial decisions about where to begin instruction upon entry into a program. Because screeners are brief and limited in scope, they are not designed to provide detailed information about a student’s academic needs, nor are they designed to provide valid measures of learner progress. For these purposes, a standardized diagnostic assessment should be given.

- The following chart details the major differences between the ELS and standardized assessment instruments:

OSY ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCREENER	STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief</li> <li>➤ <i>Basic English level: 5 minutes</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Beyond a basic English level: 15-20 minutes</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Optional Writing Screener: 15 minutes</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically one hour or longer</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to give and score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be complex and require computers or numerous test booklets to give and score</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not require extensive training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often require in-depth training to give, score, and interpret</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate to high cost</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides <b>general</b> information about where to begin instruction when a student enters a program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide <b>detailed</b> information about a student’s academic needs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used as an informal measure of student progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can provide a valid, formal measure of student progress</li> </ul>

\*Recommended standardized assessments for OSY are found in the document *Standardized Assessment Options for OSY* at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org).



### Parts of the ELS

The ELS screens students for the English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ELS has six (6) parts, shown in the chart below.

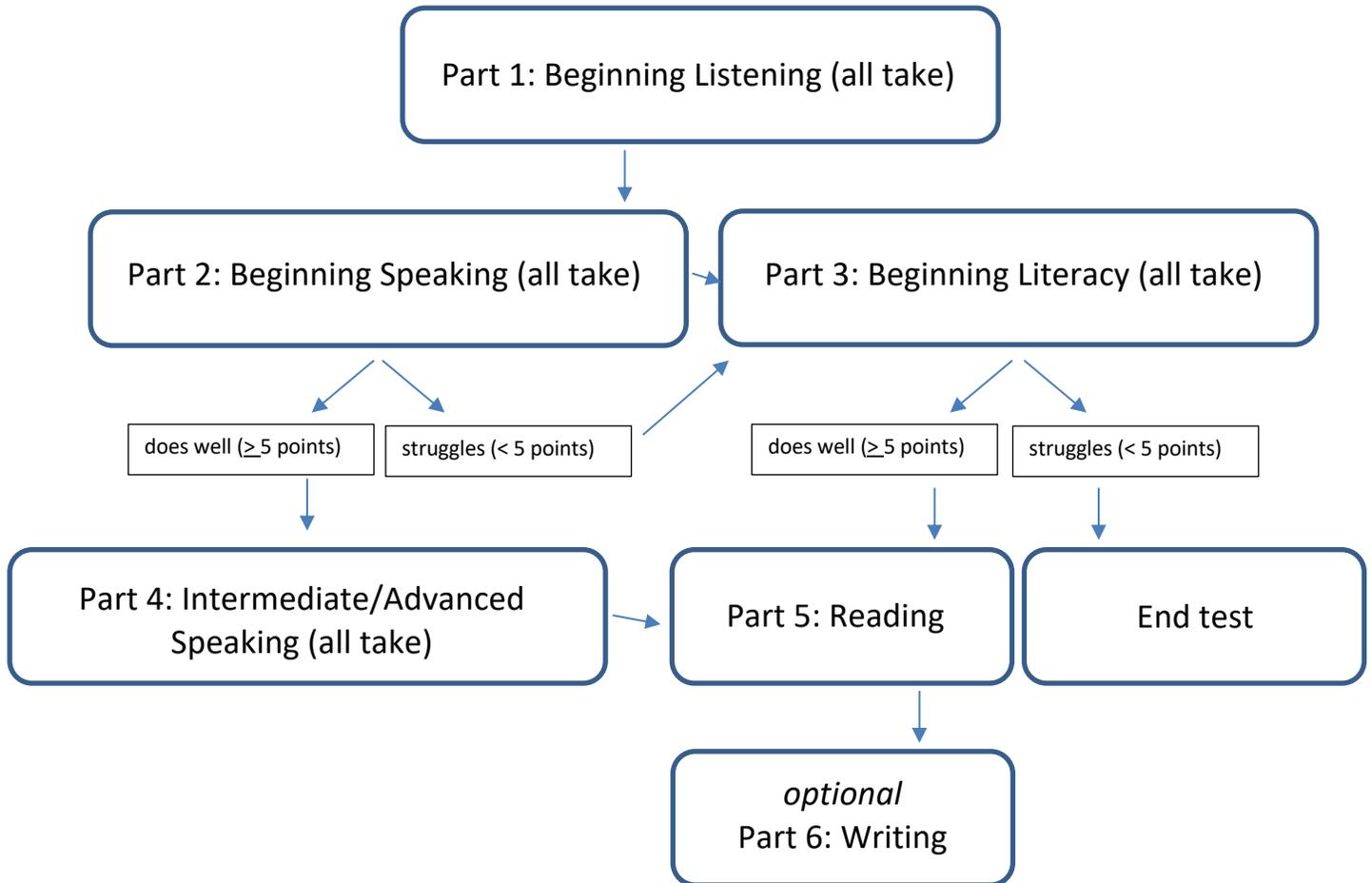
The students' English proficiency determines which parts of the screener they take. All students take Parts 1-3, which test basic listening, speaking, and literacy skills. Students who do well on those parts also take Parts 4 and 5, which screen speaking and reading at a higher level. Part 6 is an optional writing screener for students who are interested in improving their writing skills or preparing for the HSED test. The writing screener can assess either English or Spanish writing skills.

	<b>Parts</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Points</b>
	<b>1 Beginning Listening</b> <i>for all students</i>	Screen for understanding of simple English vocabulary.	6	6
	<b>2 Beginning Speaking</b> <i>for all students</i>	Screen for ability to speak very basic English.	6	6
	<b>3 Beginning Literacy</b> <i>for all students</i>	Screen for recognition of letters, numbers, and high-frequency words.	12	12
	<b>4 Intermediate/Advanced Speaking</b> <i>for students who score 5-6 points in Part 2</i>	Screen for ability to speak English beyond a basic level.	4	8
	<b>5 Reading</b> <i>for students who score 10-12 points in Part 3</i>	Screen for ability to read sentences and paragraphs.	4	4
	<i>Optional</i> <b>6 Intermediate/Advanced Writing</b> English or Spanish <i>for students who want to study for the HSED test in English or Spanish, or who wish to improve their writing</i>	Screen for ability to produce sentences and paragraphs in English or Spanish as an indication for readiness to prepare for the HSED test.	7	14
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				<b>50</b>



### The Screener Process

The following flow chart is a visual representation of the screener process.





## Getting Started

You will need:

- A quiet room with a large desk or table
- Pencils or pens for the tester and the students
- Copies as explained in the chart below

Section of the ELS	Pages	How Many Copies	Notes for the Tester
<b>Tester Packet</b>	7-13	One packet per student	Write directly on these pages as you administer and score the ELS. After testing, complete the Student Score Report (page 13).
<b>Student Worksheets</b> <i>for Parts 5 and 6</i>	14-18	Copy as needed for higher level students	Have copies on hand for higher level students.  Students write their answers directly on these pages.
<b>Visual Cue Pages</b>	19-21	One copy only; reusable	May be reused multiple times.

## Important Guidelines

When giving the ELS, please follow these guidelines:

- **Speak naturally.** Speak English naturally, not unusually slowly or loudly.
- **Do not help the student during the test.** You may repeat each test item one time if necessary, exactly the same way. Do not rephrase test items, translate, or use the student's first language after the test begins.
  - Before the test, it is appropriate to use the student's language to explain the purpose of the screener. There is a sample script on page 7 in the Tester Packet that can be used to explain the purpose.
- **Ask all the items in the parts you give.** To ensure a valid score, you must ask *all* the items from the parts you give, even if a student is struggling or unable to respond. Do not skip test items or end the test early. This is especially important if a program plans to give the ELS a second or third time as an informal measure of progress.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How long does it take to administer the ELS?**

A: It takes approximately 5 minutes to administer and score Parts 1, 2, and 4 for each student. Parts 3 and 5 require an additional 10-15 minutes per student. If you give Part 6 (Writing Skills), allow students 15 minutes to complete the writing sample.

**Q: Can the ELS be given to a group of students at the same time?**

A: Only Parts 5 and 6 (Reading and Writing skills) can be given in a group setting. All other parts of the ELS must be given one-on-one to individual students because these parts screen for listening, speaking, and basic literacy skills.

**Q: Do I have to be a teacher to administer the ELS? Is training necessary?**

A: Volunteers, support staff, or teachers can give the ELS. A training video is available at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org) to assist those new to the screener in learning to administer it and interpret the results.

\*See the *Video Viewers Guide* on pages 22-25 for more information about the training video.

**Q: Can our program give the ELS a second or third time to show that a student is learning English?**

A: The ELS is not designed to be a formal measure of progress in language learning due to its limited scope. However, educators may choose to use the ELS for informal measurement by administering the tool a second time after a student has been attending English classes. For this reason, the Student Score Report has space to record more than one administration.

Scored and dated writing samples from Part 6 can be kept in a student portfolio and used to document progress in writing skills.

Programs needing or desiring a valid tool for measuring learner progress should see the document *Standardized Assessment Options for OSY* at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org).

**Q: If a student is struggling or having a lot of trouble responding, can I stop the test or skip the hard questions?**

A: It is very important to ask all of the items in the parts you give. In order for the ELS to do its job, do not skip items or stop the test. Sometimes students will miss some of the first items but know some of the later ones. Also, if the ELS is being used as an informal measure of student progress, it is essential to ask all of the items in the parts you give.



**Q: What do the student scores mean?**

A: Programs will offer services to students based on their ELS scores and their academic history. The chart below shows four categories of services.

A score of below 39 on the ELS indicates a strong need for basic English language instruction. It is recommended that students scoring over 38 points be assessed with a comprehensive standardized assessment instrument (such as the CASAS or TABE test) to provide additional information about academic skills and needs. Information about recommended standardized assessment instruments for OSY is found in the document *Standardized Assessment Options for OSY* at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org).

**Out-of-School Youth Educational Outcomes Table**

<p>The first step is to assess the OSY's English Proficiency</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The second step is to determine the OSY's last level of formal schooling</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Priority of Educational Outcomes may vary depending on the OSY's personal needs and interests, as well as community services available.</p>	<p>Limited English Proficiency</p>		<p>Higher English Proficiency</p>	
	<p>Score &lt;39 on OSY English Language Screener &amp; Academic History &lt;8 grade</p>	<p>Score &lt;39 on OSY English Language Screener &amp; Academic History ≥8 grade</p>	<p>Score &gt;38 on OSY English Language Screener &amp; Academic History &lt;8 grade</p>	<p>Score &gt;38 on OSY English Language Screener &amp; Academic History ≥8 grade</p>
	<p><b>QUADRANT 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language Proficiency</li> <li>Development of Life Skills</li> <li>Pre HSED Studies in Spanish               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading &amp; Writing Skills</li> <li>Math Skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>QUADRANT 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language Proficiency</li> <li>Mexican Diploma</li> <li>Spanish GED</li> <li>Development of Life Skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>QUADRANT 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre GED Studies in Spanish               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading &amp; Writing Skills</li> <li>Math Skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>Development of Life Skills</li> <li>English Language Proficiency               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading &amp; Writing Skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>GED</li> <li>Vocational Ed. Certificate</li> </ul>	<p><b>QUADRANT 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US High School Diploma</li> <li>GED</li> <li>Vocational Ed. Certificate</li> <li>Development of Life Skills</li> <li>English Language Proficiency               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading &amp; Writing Skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>Post Secondary Education</li> </ul>
	<p>Access to Community Services*</p>	<p>Access to Community Services*</p>	<p>Access to Community Services*</p>	<p>Access to Community Services*</p>

\*Access to Community Services should be offered to all OSY and should be student-need driven. Access to transportation will impact service delivery methods and MEPs will need to plan accordingly.



**STUDENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Make one copy of this packet (pages 7-13) for each student who is screened. Write the student's scores directly on this packet as you administer the test. When the test is complete, copy the scores onto the Student Score Report (page 13).

*Do not show this packet to the student. The student should only see the Visual Cue Pages during the screening process.*

Introduction and Greeting

Directions: Put the student at ease by introducing yourself. Then explain the purpose of the screening by either reading the script below or using your own words. Whenever possible, the purpose of the screener should be explained in the student's native language.

*Este es un examen de inglés corto. Los maestros quieren saber cuánto sabes de inglés. Trata de contestar las preguntas en inglés, pero no te preocupes si no sabes la respuesta.*

*This is a short English test. The teachers want to know how much English you know. Try to answer the questions in English, but don't worry if you don't know the answer.*

**Part 1: Beginning Listening Skills**

Directions: On the *Visual Cue Pages*, point to each row of pictures and ask the questions below in English. Questions may be asked two times, exactly the same way.

Circle 0 or 1:

0 = Student shows no understanding, points to the wrong picture, or names what s/he sees in the pictures instead of answering the question

1 = Student identifies/points to the correct picture

1. Show me a truck.	0	1
2. Show me a hand.	0	1
3. Which one is 6:30?	0	1
4. Show me a person running.	0	1
5. Show me a person reading.	0	1
6. Which one is 40 dollars?	0	1



## Part 2: Beginning Speaking Skills

Directions: Ask the questions below in English. Questions may be asked two times, exactly the same way. For #1 and #2, point to the items on the *Visual Cue Page*.

Circle 0 or 1:

0 = Response is in Spanish, part Spanish, or shows no understanding.

1 = Response is understandable even if there are grammar errors. Correct responses may be a word, a short phrase, or a sentence.

1. <i>What's he doing? Point to #1 (sleeping) on the Visual Cue Page</i>	0	1
2. <i>What's he doing? Point to #2 (eating) on the Visual Cue Page</i>	0	1
Now look at the student and ask the following questions.		
3. <i>Where are you from?</i>	0	1
4. <i>How many years did you go to school?</i>	0	1
5. <i>What's your job?</i>	0	1
6. <i>Where do you buy your food?</i>	0	1

If the student answers 5 or 6 questions correctly, continue with Part 3.

If the student does not answer 5 or 6 questions correctly, go to Part 4.



### Part 3: Beginning Literacy Skills

Directions: On the *Visual Cue Page*, point to each individual letter, number, and word and ask the questions below in English. Questions may be asked two times, exactly the same way.

Circle the correct responses and put an "X" on the incorrect responses. Correct responses must be in English.

<i>What letter is this?</i>	B	C	W	T
<i>What number is this?</i>	5	14	79	357
<i>What word is this?</i>	Go	Out	Food	School

If the student answers 10 - 12 items correctly, continue with Part 5.

If the student does not answer 10 - 12 items correctly, STOP the test.



**Part 4: Intermediate/Advanced Speaking Skills**

*Note: Only for students who answer at least 5 questions correctly in Part 2.*

Directions: Ask the questions below in English. Questions may be asked two times, exactly the same way.

Circle 0, 1, or 2:

0 = Response is either only one word, in Spanish, part Spanish, or shows no understanding of the question.

1 = Response is understandable but has some grammar errors.

2 = Response is understandable and does not have grammar errors. The response does NOT need to be a complete sentence to receive a score of 2 – see sample scoring in box.

Sample scoring of responses to #3:  
*What is your favorite day of the week? Why?*

“jueves” or “WalMart” = 0

“Thursday. Is payday.” = 1

“Thursday, because it’s payday.” = 2

1. <i>What do you like about the United States?</i>	0	1	2
2. <i>Why do you want to learn English?</i>	0	1	2
3. <i>What’s your favorite day of the week? Why?</i>	0	1	2
4. <i>Why did you come to the United States?</i> <i>OR What do you do in your free time? Why?*</i>	0	1	2

\* If the student was born in the United States, use the alternate question for #4.



## Part 5: Reading Skills

Directions: Give the student a copy of *Student Worksheet: Part 5 Reading Skills* (page 14). Use the script below to give the student instructions in English. After 10 minutes, collect the worksheet and circle the scores in the chart below.

*Read this story and write your answers in English on the paper. You have 10 minutes.*

Circle 0 or 1:

0 = Response is in Spanish, part Spanish, shows no understanding of the question, or has spelling or handwriting errors that make it difficult to understand

1 = Response answers the question and is understandable. Correct responses may be a short phrase or a complete sentence. Spelling and handwriting are easy to understand.

Sample Correct Answers (variations are permissible):

1. <i>Mr. Sami</i>	0	1
2. <i>He turns it off and/or He calls his boss.</i>	0	1
3. <i>After dinner</i>	0	1
4. <i>By truck</i>	0	1



**Part 6: Writing Skills**

This section is for students who want to improve their writing skills or for students who want to prepare for the HSED test in English or Spanish. Using visual and written prompts, the student selects the topic of either “Your Job” or “Your Family” and writes as much as possible in 15 minutes.

Directions: Have the student select either Option 1 or Option 2 (page 15 or 16). Use the script below to give the student instructions. After 15 minutes, collect the worksheet.

*This is a writing test. Do you want to write about your family or your job? (Show the student both worksheets and let the student choose.) You will have 15 minutes to write. Try to write as much as you can. Do not use a dictionary, cell phone, or anything else to help you.*

Note: As a test of Spanish literacy skills, or to screen for readiness to prepare for the HSED test in Spanish, use the prompts in Spanish (pages 17 or 8) and the script below.

*Este es un examen escrito. ¿Quiere usted escribir acerca de su familia ó su trabajo? Usted tendrá 15 minutos para escribir. Trate de escribir lo más que pueda.*

If the writing consists of only a few words or only words and phrases, do not score.

If the writing consists of one or more sentences or one or more paragraphs, then score using the rubric below.

Circle 0, 1 or 2:

<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
1. Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?	0	1	2
2. Does each sentence end with punctuation?	0	1	2
3. Are all the words spelled correctly or closely enough to be easy to understand?	0	1	2
<b>Paragraph Content</b>			
4. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence?	0	1	2
5. Does the paragraph have supporting details or examples?	0	1	2
6. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence?	0	1	2
7. Is the meaning of each sentence clear?	0	1	2



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OSY ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCREENER SCORE SHEET

Student Name:

MSIX #:

<b>PART</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>STUDENT'S POINTS</b> Date:	<b>STUDENT'S POINTS</b> Date:
1 Beginning Listening Skills <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6		
2 Beginning Speaking Skills <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6		
3 Beginning Literacy Skills <i>recommended for all students</i>	12	12		
4 Intermediate/Advanced Speaking Skills <i>recommended for students who score 5-6 points in Part 2</i>	4	8		
5 Reading Skills <i>recommended for students who score 10-12 points in Part 3</i>	4	4		
<u>OPTIONAL</u> 6 Intermediate/Advanced Writing Skills <i>recommended for students who want to study for the HSED test in English or Spanish</i>	7	14		
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		50		



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Read the Story

Mr. Sami works on a large farm. He lives in an old house near the farm. One day, the stove in the house stops working. Mr. Sami turns it off and calls his boss. His boss tells him he will come and fix the stove. Mr. Sami asks him when he will come. The boss says he will drive his truck over after dinner.

Write the answers to the questions.

1. Who has a stove that does not work?

---

2. What does Mr. Sami do about the stove?

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3. When will the boss fix the stove?

---

4. How will the boss go to Mr. Sami's house?

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Part 1: Beginning Listening Skills (6 items)

1



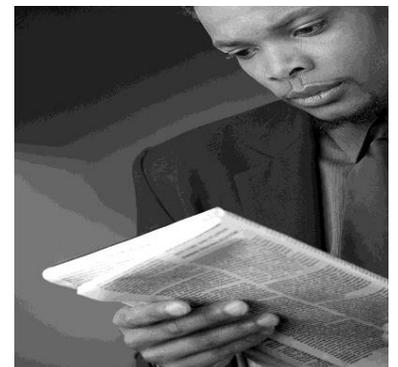
2



3

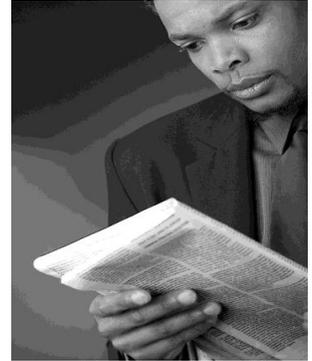


4





5



6 \$30

\$40

\$50

Part 2: Beginning Speaking Skills (2 items)

1



2





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Part 3: Beginning Literacy Skills

**B**

**C**

**W**

**T**

**5**

**14**

**79**

**357**

**Go**

**Out**

**Food**

**School**



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## About the Training Video

A short training video is available at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org) to assist persons in learning how to administer the OSY English Language Screener (ELS) and interpret the results. Volunteers, support staff, or teachers can give the ELS.

The training video has 4 parts:

- Introduction to the ELS & Administration Guidelines
- Demonstration #1: Student with Beginning Level English Skills
- Demonstration #2: Student with Higher Level English Skills
- Interpreting the Scores

## How to Use the Training Video

Here are some ways to use the training video effectively:

1. Before viewing the video, read the complete OSY English Language Screener document (pages 1 – 21 of this document). Pay particular attention to the scoring guidelines for each part of the ELS.
2. If possible, watch the video with one or more colleagues so that you can discuss the video after viewing.
3. On the next two pages are the *Student Score Reports* for the two students who are tested in the video. After viewing the video, review the *Student Score Reports* for each of these students and read the accompanying steps for interpreting the results. It is also helpful to study the scored writing sample on page 25.
4. Before giving the ELS to an incoming student for the first time, it is recommended that you practice giving the screener a few times to become familiar with the material and flow of the test. You can practice on a family member, colleague, or established student.
5. It is recommended that you review the video from time to time, at least once a year, to ensure that you are following the same procedures as other testers who are serving OSY.



## Sample Score Reports & Interpreting Scores

Here is the completed *Student Score Report* for **Student 1** on the video:

Part	Items	Possible Points	Student's Points
<b>1 Beginning Listening Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6	1
<b>2 Beginning Speaking Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6	0
<b>3 Beginning Literacy Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	4	8	N/A
<b>4 Intermediate/Advanced Speaking Skills</b> <i>recommended for students who score 5-6 points in Part 2</i>	12	12	6
<b>5 Reading Skills</b> <i>recommended for students who score 10-12 points in Part 4</i>	4	4	N/A
<i>Optional</i> <b>6 Intermediate /Advanced Writing Skills</b> <i>Circle one: English or Spanish</i>  <i>recommended for students who want to study for the HSED test in English or Spanish</i>	7	14	N/A
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		50	7

### Interpreting This Score Report

**Step 1: Consider the total score.** Total scores of less than 39 points indicate a strong need for English language instruction. Because this student received only 7 out of 50 points, his need for basic English language instruction is very strong. The lower the total score is, the greater the need is for basic English instruction.

**Step 2: Consider the scores for individual parts of the screener.** This student had low scores on each part of the screener, indicating that he needs instruction in all areas: Listening, Speaking, and Literacy.

**Step 3: Consider the student's academic history (greater or less than 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and consult the OSY Educational Outcomes Table for more information (see page 6).**



Here is the completed *Student Score Report* for **Student 2** on the video:

Part	Items	Possible Points	Student's Points
<b>1 Beginning Listening Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6	1
<b>2 Beginning Speaking Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	6	6	6
<b>3 Beginning Literacy Skills</b> <i>recommended for all students</i>	4	8	6
<b>4 Intermediate/Advanced Speaking Skills</b> <i>recommended for students who score 5-6 points in Part 2</i>	12	12	12
<b>5 Reading Skills</b> <i>recommended for students who score 10-12 points in Part 4</i>	4	4	4
<i>Optional</i> <b>6 Intermediate /Advanced Writing Skills</b> <i>Circle one: English or Spanish</i>  <i>recommended for students who want to study for the HSED test in English or Spanish</i>	7	14	7
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		50	41

#### Interpreting This Score Report

**Step 1: Consider the total score.** Total scores of more than 38 points indicate that the student does not need instruction in basic English and is functioning at an intermediate or advanced level. The higher the total score is, the less the need is for basic English instruction.

*Note: It is recommended that students scoring over 38 points be assessed with a more comprehensive standardized test instrument (such as the CASAS or TABE test) to provide additional information about academic skills and needs. Information about recommended standardized assessment instruments for OSY is found in the document Standardized Assessment Options for OSY at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org).*

**Step 2: Consider the scores for individual parts of the screener.** This student has high scores on each part of the screener except the Writing section, indicating that he needs instruction in Writing. He may also need instruction in Reading; additional diagnostic assessment is recommended (see *Note* above).

**Step 3: Consider the student's academic history (greater or less than 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and consult the OSY Educational Outcomes Table for more information (see page 6).**



### Scoring the Writing Screener

Here is the Writing portion of the screener from Student 2 on the video. He chose "Option 2: Your Family."

My family is a little, My mother to work of dishwasher, My sister is Mom of three girls and my brother is cashier in the supermarket but we living for separately, they lives in Kentucky and every year I go of travel visit. I have a family wonderfull and I can say of My father is a men worker and responsable is a good boy.  
My family and I always are in communication.

The student scored 7 out of 14 points:

<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
1. Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?		1	
2. Does each sentence end with punctuation?		1	
3. Are all the words spelled correctly or closely enough to be easy to understand?			2
<b>Paragraph Content</b>			
4. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence?	0		
5. Does the paragraph have supporting details or examples?		1	
6. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence?	0		
7. Is the meaning of each sentence clear?			2

*Notes:* This student has control over spelling. He needs to work on sentence formation (he uses run-on sentences and connects sentences with commas) and paragraph development (topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentence).