

HOLISTIC ESL ORAL DESCRIPTORS

The proficiency indicators described below are designed to provide a quick, effective and holistic scoring of oral proficiency. It is intended for instructor and tutor use as a general indicator of student verbal communication skills and as a feedback tool. "Basic language structures" refer to subject-verb agreement, verb tense usage, pronoun usage, noun-adjective agreement, sentence negation, word order, question formation, article usage, and noun usage. In evaluating student speaking ability, please take into consideration the amount that a listener must intervene in the conversation in order to elicit responses from the speaker.

Pre-Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responses barely comprehensible. Contains long pauses or incomplete utterances. ▪ Pronunciation interferes with communication. ▪ Extremely limited vocabulary. Requires nonverbal cues to support communication. ▪ Little or no evidence of correct basic grammar structures/word order. ▪ Requires repeated clarification. Little or no ability to understand spoken English.
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responses minimally comprehensible. Response may include very few words. ▪ Pronunciation affected by first language, inhibiting communication. ▪ May frequently repeat words and phrases. ▪ Limited use of basic language structures. ▪ Requires frequent repetition/clarification to comprehend spoken English.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responses comprehensible with repetition and/or clarification. Responses lack fluency. Often pauses to search for words. ▪ Pronunciation often affects communication. ▪ Uses a minimal variety of vocabulary. ▪ Uses basic structures appropriately about half the time. ▪ Demonstrates comprehension of simple words/phrases from learned topics.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responses mostly comprehensible. Requires interpretation on the listener's part. ▪ Speech is choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses. Few or no incomplete thought expressions. ▪ Pronunciation occasionally interferes with communication. ▪ Vocabulary too basic for fluent usage. Emerging use of basic language structures. ▪ Comprehends familiar information in standard situations.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally comprehensible responses. May require elaboration. ▪ Pronunciation rarely inhibits communication. ▪ Able to express nearly all thoughts but has some pauses. ▪ Uses a variety of vocabulary and high frequency expressions. ▪ Uses basic language structure appropriately about 75% of the time. ▪ Can comprehend implications beyond surface meaning (e.g. mood)
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensible responses. Requires minimal listener interpretation. ▪ Some hesitation but continues and completes thoughts. ▪ Pronunciation does not interfere with communication. ▪ Adequate and accurate use of vocabulary.
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responses easily comprehensible. Requires no interpretation on the part of the listener. ▪ Speech is continuous with few pauses or hesitation. ▪ Pronunciation does not interfere with communication. ▪ Rich, varied vocabulary use. Attempts at elaboration. ▪ Control of basic language structures. ▪ Demonstrates comprehension of conversation with native speakers.