

## Introduction

In 1997, the New York State Board of Regents approved a proposal to revise high school graduation requirements. These requirements mandate that all students in New York State pass the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English in order to receive a high school diploma. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is committed to building the capacity of the system to ensure that limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELLs) meet all of the learning standards and fulfill all graduation requirements. To assist in the accomplishment of this goal, the New York State Education Department's Office of Bilingual Education, utilizing the collaborative knowledge and guidance of many prominent experts in the field of English language arts (ELA), bilingual education (BE), and English as a second language (ESL), developed ***The Teaching Language of Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: A Resource Guide for All Teachers***.

This document will assist educators in “building the bridge” toward the attainment of the New York State English language arts standards for LEP/ELLs. The key elements of this “bridge” are the development of native language arts (NLA) and English as a second language so that LEP/ELLs will be successful in meeting NYS language arts standards and in passing the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English. Instruction in native language arts and English as a second language supports, enhances, and “bridges the gap” in achieving the levels of performance required by the ELA standards.

In addition, this resource guide will provide educators with useful information to allow them to enhance their classroom practice by incorporating approaches, methodologies, and strategies known to promote both language development and critical thinking skills. In this way, both the content standards and performance indicators can be integrated into learning experiences appropriate to the language proficiency and developmental levels of LEP/ELLs in all language arts classes: native language arts (NLA), English as a second language (ESL), and English language arts (ELA) instruction.

It should be noted that there are many different ways of referring to students who enter our school system speaking little or no English. Both federal and New York State laws and regulations refer to them as limited English proficient (LEP). Many other terms are used to describe these students, such as culturally and linguistically diverse students, second language learners, language minority students, and the term most commonly used today, English language learners. In New York State, these students are referred to as **limited English proficient/English language learners** or **LEP/ELLs**, to reflect both the legal term and the term in common usage.

According to **Part 154 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education for the Education of Pupils with Limited English Proficiency/English language learners** (LEP/ELLs) are defined as “. . . pupils who by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English, and either understand and speak little or no English; or score at or below the 40th percentile, or its equivalent as determined by the commissioner, on an English language assessment instrument approved by the commissioner.” (CR Part 154.2) Although more than

## Purpose

- ◆ To assist educators at all levels in “building the bridge” toward the attainment of the New York State English language arts standards through native language arts and English as a second language instruction.

**Table 1 Ten Most Commonly Spoken Languages of LEP/ELLs in NYS (as of 6/98)**

Language	Percentage
Spanish	65%
Chinese	8%
Russian	4%
Haitian Creole	3%
Korean	2%
Urdu	2%
Arabic	2%
Bengali	2%
Polish	1%
Punjabi	1%
All others	10%

130 languages are spoken by LEP/ELLs in New York State, the ten languages listed in Table 1 are spoken by 87 percent of the students.

In New York State, LEP/ELLs are served in bilingual education or freestanding ESL programs, as specified in CR Part 154. School districts with an enrollment in one building of 20 or more LEP/ELLs of the same grade level and the same language other than English must provide a bilingual education program. Instruction in a bilingual education program may be provided in a self-contained classroom, through pull-out/push-in services, or departmentalized classes. Bilingual education programs must provide language arts instruction in native language arts (NLA), English as a second language (ESL), and English language arts (ELA). Content-area instruction must be provided in both the native language and in English. This instruction must be provided by teachers who hold the appropriate certification with a bilingual education extension.

Districts with fewer than 20 LEP/ELLs of the same grade level and language in a building must provide a freestanding program of English as a second language. Instruction in an English as a second language (ESL) program may be provided in a self-contained classroom, through pull-out/push-in services, or departmentalized classes. ESL programs must provide language arts instruction in English as a second language (ESL) and in English language arts (ELA). Content-area instruction must be provided in English supported by ESL methodologies. This instruction must be provided by teachers who hold the appropriate ESL certification.

The following table (Table 2) is a graphic representation of the instructional components and required units of study in the language arts component for both freestanding English as a second language and bilingual education programs, as amended in CR Part 154 in April 1999.

**Table 2 Instructional Components of Programs and Required Units of Study in Language Arts Under CR Part 154**

<b>Freestanding English as a Second Language Program</b>					
<b>Instructional Components</b>	<b>Required Units of Study – Language Arts Components</b>				
	<b>Level</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Transitional</b>
<b>1. Language Arts Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English as a Second Language (ESL)</li> <li>English Language Arts (ELA)</li> </ul>	Grades K to 8	2 ESL	2 ESL	1 ESL 1 ELA	1 ESL 1 ELA
<b>2. Content-Area Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in English Through ESL Methodology</li> </ul>	Grades 9 to 12	3 ESL	2 ESL	1 ESL 1 ELA	1 ESL 1 ELA
<b>Bilingual Education Program</b>					
<b>Instructional Components</b>	<b>Required Units of Study – Language Arts Components</b>				
	<b>Level</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Transitional</b>
<b>1. Language Arts Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native Language Arts (NLA)</li> <li>English as a Second Language (ESL)</li> <li>English Language Arts (ELA)</li> </ul>	Grades K to 8	1 NLA 2 ESL	1 NLA 2 ESL	1 NLA 1 ESL 1 ELA	1 NLA 1 ESL 1 ELA
<b>2. Content-Area Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in Native Language</li> <li>in English</li> </ul>	Grades 9 to 12	1 NLA 3 ESL	1 NLA 2 ESL	1 NLA 1 ESL 1 ELA	1 NLA 1 ESL 1 ELA

LEP/ELLs represent diverse economic, experiential, and educational, as well as linguistic, backgrounds. Many students enter New York schools with well-developed literacy skills in the primary language and, indeed, some come here already fluent in more than one language. For others, education has been temporarily suspended or unavailable because of political or social unrest, and these students come with less than an age-appropriate level of literacy development in their first language.

For the most part, New York State's LEP/ELLs fall into three broad groups relative to New York State's new testing requirements for graduation:

**1. Those entering in elementary grades:**

LEP/ELLs who enter New York State schools in the elementary grades become English proficient and exit bilingual or ESL programs by the time they enter high school. They comprise the majority of the LEP/ELLs population and take all the required Regents examinations in English with the general population.

**2. Those entering in middle and secondary grades:**

LEP/ELLs who enter the New York State system in the middle or secondary grades with comprehensive/continuous education in their native country usually have the experiential and educational background to enable them to meet the Regents standards in the core subjects. Some may require tutorial assistance to help close curricular gaps that may exist between their home country and New York, and all will require intensive assistance with English. Research and experience show that those with strong literacy skills in the home language will be able to make a smoother and more rapid transition to English.

**3. Those with limited or interrupted formal education:**

LEP/ELLs with limited or interrupted formal education in their native country enter the New York school system at all grade levels. In New York State, students with interrupted formal education are those LEP/ELLs who:

- come from a home where a language other than English is spoken and enter a school in the U.S. after grade 2;
- upon enrollment, have had at least two years' less schooling than their peers, function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and in mathematics; and
- may lack literacy skills in the native language.

Passing the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English will represent a serious challenge for all LEP/ELLs who have studied English in New York for less than six years or who have had limited or interrupted formal education. Consequently, the system must put in place strategies that ensure that LEP/ELLs receive the instruction needed to help them meet that challenge.

The New York State Education Department has undertaken a number of initiatives to assist educators in working with LEP/ELLs who come with limited or interrupted formal schooling. A number of documents addressing the special needs of this population have been developed, such as *Proceedings of the New York State Symposium on the Education of Over-Age Limited English Proficient Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling*. A listing of these documents is provided in Appendix D. Additional information may be found at the bilingual education **Web site address of the New York State Bilingual/ESL/Network, [www.nysben.org](http://www.nysben.org).**

***The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: A Resource Guide for All Teachers*** has been conceptualized as a document in which the rich diversity of students in New York State can be reflected and addressed within the framework of the learning standards and assessment system. Its content has been selected to address important aspects of the teaching and learning process. It is hoped that all stakeholders in the educational communities throughout New York State will benefit from this document.

**Web site address of the  
New York State Bilingual  
ESL Network,**

**[www.nysben.org](http://www.nysben.org)**

## Overview of Chapters:

### Title of Chapter

### Topic Addressed

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#### **CHAPTER 1**

*Overview of Education Reform:  
National and State Initiatives*

Discussion of standards movement as reflected in national and State policies, practices, and NYS initiatives for LEP/ELLs.

#### **CHAPTER 2**

*A Review of Research on  
Language Literacy for LEP/ELLs*

Research on the role of the native language in acquiring English, including pedagogical objectives of native language and ESL instruction.

#### **CHAPTER 3**

*The Teaching and Learning  
of Language Arts*

General principles of language acquisition and language arts development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

*Formal and Informal  
Assessment of LEP/ELLs*

Various forms of assessment including formal statewide system, study and test-taking skills, and informal assessment measures.

#### **CHAPTER 5**

*ELA Standards and LEP/ELLs:  
Applications and Practices*

Considerations for instructional practices which incorporate the standards for ELA in bilingual and ESL classrooms, including examples and descriptions.

#### **CHAPTER 6**

*Learning Experiences*

Teacher-created learning experiences presented in native languages and in ESL for illustrating standards-based instruction.

#### **CHAPTER 7**

*Parent and Family Involvement*

The role of parents as partners; their diverse needs; school-based strategies to promote parental involvement; suggestions for parents in developing literacy at home.