

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

English Learners (ELs) may understand ASL concepts even when they are still developing English proficiency. Alternative assessments allow students to demonstrate their learning without unnecessary language barriers while maintaining the same academic expectations and learning objectives.

Expressive ASL Assessments

- Record a signed response instead of writing lengthy English responses.
- Demonstrate vocabulary one-on-one with the teacher.
- Participate in structured ASL conversations.
- Create and present short ASL stories using lesson vocabulary.

Receptive ASL Assessments

- Picture-supported matching activities.
- Multiple-choice receptive quizzes.
- Identify signs from short video clips.
- Vocabulary sorting and categorizing activities.

Performance-Based Assessments

- Demonstrate vocabulary in real-life contexts.
- Participate in role-play activities.
- Complete visual projects using ASL concepts.
- Demonstrate comprehension through teacher-guided conversations.

Flexible Assessment Options

- Present directions in both English and ASL.
- Allow additional processing time.
- Reduce unnecessary English reading when it is not the learning objective.
- Break larger assessments into smaller sections.

Teacher Considerations

- Assess ASL knowledge rather than English proficiency whenever appropriate.
- Maintain the same learning objectives for all students.
- Encourage students to demonstrate learning in multiple ways.
- Recognize that language acquisition takes time and varies from student to student.

★ Key Takeaway

Alternative assessments should measure a student's understanding of ASL—not their English proficiency. When students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning, teachers gain a more accurate picture of their knowledge and skills.