

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

English Language Learners arrive in our schools at various ages with varying educational backgrounds, some with limited or no prior formal schooling. Some of our students have limited skills in their native language. Other students arrive with well-developed language and academic abilities. Because of these variations in academic experiences, the rate and quality of English language acquisition is different for each student. *For the research-based approximate timeframes of each stage of second language acquisition, and general characteristics and expected outcomes for each stage, click on STAGES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.* Key factors influencing the length of time needed for our students to learn English include the following:

- Quality of previous education
- Prior English learning experiences
- Literacy of the family
- Socioeconomic status
- Mobility
- Family displacement
- Cultural isolation
- Exposure to social unrest or war
- Cultural differences between education systems
- Emotional or psychological state



Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Approx. Time Frame	Language Acquisition Stage/Level	Student Characteristics	Expected Outcomes: Oral Language	Expected Outcomes: Literacy Development
0 to 6 months	Stage 1 Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical response only No speech production, minimal comprehension Up to 500 receptive-word vocabulary Comprehension indicated non-verbally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces no speech Indicates comprehension physically/non-verbally Comprehends single words only Depends heavily on context Responds by pantomiming, pointing, gesturing, drawing Says only yes, no, or single words 	<p>At the emergent literacy level, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition Understand concepts about print Show oral comprehension of vocabulary and basic concepts Understand the alphabetic principle Apply print conventions: directionality, words/spaces, letters, beginning/endings, punctuation Recognize word families and rhyme patterns Grasp main ideas about books Build on prior knowledge to negotiate meaning
6 mos. – 1 yr.	Stage 2 Early Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very limited speech One- or two-word responses only Disconnected speech Very limited listening comprehension Up to 1000 receptive/active word vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces one or two words in isolation Verbalizes key words heard Depends heavily on context Responds with one/two word answers or in phrases Makes errors of omission Mispronounces words 	
1 – 3 years	Stage 3 Speech Emergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple sentence responses Connected speech Fairly good comprehension Up to 3000 receptive/active word vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces whole sentences Often makes pronunciation and basic grammatical errors Discriminates smaller elements of speech Shows good comprehension given rich context Uses language to function on a social level Uses limited vocabulary 	<p>At the intermediate fluency level, students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues Use high frequency words Use predictions and cross-checking Increase ability to read independently Use context to predict unfamiliar words Increase knowledge of conventional spellings
3 – 5 years	Stage 4 Intermediate Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More complex sentence responses Extended speech Increased comprehension Beyond 3000 receptive/active word vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces whole narration Makes complex grammatical errors Hears some subtle elements of speech Shows good comprehension given some context Functions somewhat on an academic level Uses expanded vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read independently from a variety of genre for different purposes Write sentences using appropriate syntax Skim and scan for needed information Summarize information Make inferences and generalizations Understand basic literary elements Write more analytically
5 – 7 years	Stage 5 Advanced Fluency (Transitional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near native level comprehension and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near native-like speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near native-like reading & writing