

English Language Learning (ELL) at Sentinel Secondary School



Who are English Language Learning (ELL) Students?

The BC Ministry of Education defines English Language Learner (ELL) students as “those whose primary language, or languages, in the home is/are other than English, and who may therefore require additional services in order to develop their individual potential within British Columbia’s school system.”

- [English Language Learning Policy and Guidelines](#)



What is the English Language Learning (ELL) Program?

In the West Vancouver School District, ELL is an additional service that enables English Language Learners (ELLs) to **succeed in the regular classroom**. The ELL program in West Vancouver has three main goals:

1. To develop the **students' social language** required to learn and communicate appropriately with peers and adults.
2. To develop the **students' academic language** required to learn and communicate the skills and knowledge covered in all subjects.
3. To preserve and develop a **pride of heritage**, and to develop an **understanding of Canadian culture**.

SD45 ELL Resources:



WV District ELL Website:

<https://westvancouver.schools.ca/resources/students/english-language-learners-ell>

WV District ELL Brochure:

<http://westvancouver.schools.ca/ecole-sentinel-secondary/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2020/11/WV-District-ELL-Brochure.pdf>

The ELL Program at Sentinel

At Sentinel, ELL students enrol in a number of **core language adapted courses** depending on their English Language proficiency. Language adapted courses at Sentinel include **English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science** (course offerings vary depending on a student's grade level).



What are Language Adapted (LA) Courses?



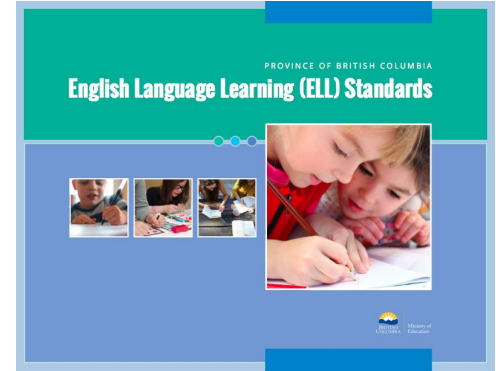
- Language adapted courses **retain the same learning outcomes as the regular curriculum**, but with **English-language adaptations***.

***Adaptations could include** graphic organizers to assist with classroom presentations, extended time to complete assignments or tests, support to develop and practice study skills, frontloading of key vocabulary or concepts, multiple exposure to materials, etc.

- A **smaller class size** allows the teacher more time to work with each student. An **accessible pace and workload** provides a more welcoming environment for ELL students to grasp content and skills. Language adapted courses are **full-credit courses**.

The English Language Learning (ELL) Standards

- ELL students are assessed using the **English Language Learning (ELL) Standards**, descriptions of characteristics that English language learners typically exhibit at the end of various stages of their language acquisition process.
- The ELL Standards are organized into three core skills:
 - **Reading**
 - **Writing**
 - **Oral Language** (speaking and listening)



[ELL Standards \(PDF\)](#)



At Sentinel, the ELL Standards are used to:

- Make **placement decisions** and determine service requirements.
- **Plan explicit language instruction** and collaboratively **set goals** for individuals and classes.
- **Monitor, evaluate, and report** on individual **student performance**.



ELL Standards (Snapshot of each Level)

BEGINNING:

Student is a true beginner with little English language proficiency in given area.

DEVELOPING:

Student is able to understand and use basic English words and phrases in given area.

EXPANDING:

Student is able to understand and use an expanding amount of conversational English in given area.

CONSOLIDATING:

Student is able to understand and use varying amounts of conversational English, and some academic language, in given area.

BRIDGING:

Student is approaching grade-level proficiency in given area. They may need support with nuances of language.

ELL Standards (Detailed Overview)

DESCRIPTOR	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Consolidating	Bridging
Snapshot of Level	Student is a true beginner with little English language proficiency in given area.	Student is able to understand and use basic English words and phrases in given area.	Student is able to understand and use an expanding amount of conversational English in given area.	Student is able to understand and use varying amounts of conversational English, and some academic language, in given area.	Student is approaching grade-level proficiency in given area. They may need support with nuances of language.
Oral Language (Listening/Speaking)	The student may understand basic statements with repetition and gestures. Student is silent, or their speech is halted and fragmented.	The student can understand and respond to simple statements and questions in familiar situations.	The student can participate in a conversation on everyday topics using simple structures.	The student can participate more fluently in conversations about familiar topics and some academic content.	The student can participate in conversations on a range of academic topics with greater fluency.
Reading	The student may recognize symbol/sound relationships. Student derives understanding mainly from visuals.	The student recognizes common words and phrases and begins to make meaning of text.	The student can read, understand, and make personal connections to simple text.	The student can understand more challenging texts and make predictions, inferences, and connections with support.	The student can understand a wider range of academic texts and increasingly complex words.
Writing	The student uses basic letter grouping or simple words. Student has little or no awareness of conventions of spelling, capitalization or punctuation.	The student uses simple vocabulary and/or repetitive phrases to communicate. Errors often impede meaning.	The student uses basic vocabulary and sentence structure to create simple sentences or a paragraph. Errors may impede meaning.	The student uses a range of vocabulary with some descriptive words to create sentences and paragraphs and communicate ideas. Errors can distract.	The student uses a wide range of descriptive, subject-specific, and academic vocabulary to make connections and communicate ideas in multi-paragraph compositions.

How is a Student's ELL level determined?

New Students (Initial Entry)

- New students who may benefit from English language support take a **standardized reading assessment**, a **written assessment**, and **engage in an informal oral discussion**.
- Based on the results of these assessments, course recommendations for that student will be made by the **ELL Coordinator** in conjunction with counsellors and administrators.



How is a Student's ELL level determined? (CONT)

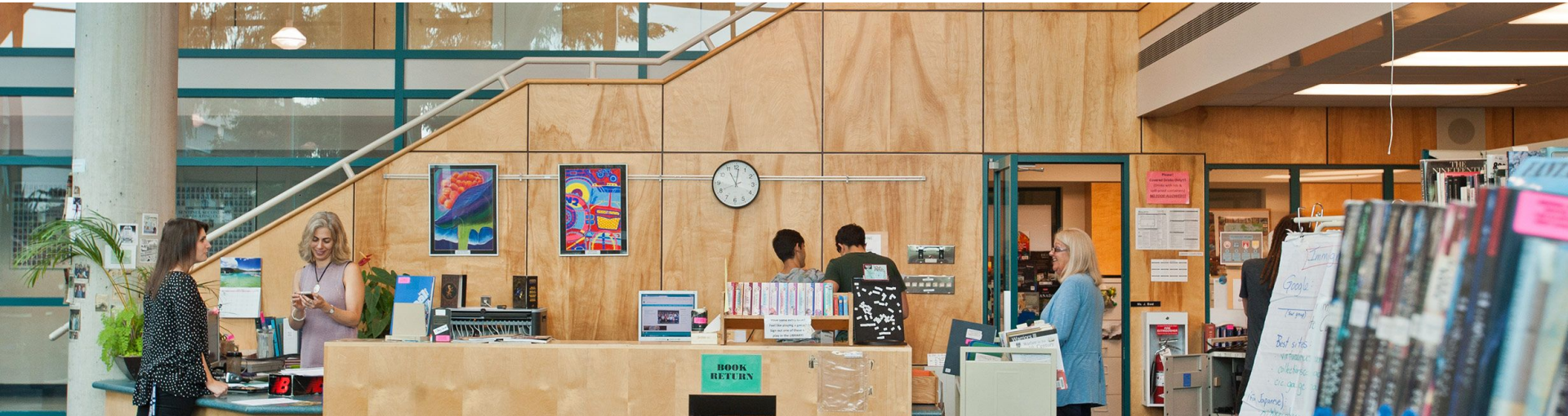
Returning Students (Ongoing Assessment)

- An ELL learner's English language proficiency will be assessed by their ELL classroom teachers on an **ongoing basis throughout the year**.
- In addition, all students taking ELL courses at Sentinel will participate in a **Yearly Assessment** which will consist of a **standardized reading assessment** and a **writing assessment** that is marked by a team of ELL teachers.
- Any potential **changes to a student's enrolment in the ELL program** will be made based on **recommendations** from a student's ELL teachers.

NOTE: ELL course recommendations are **holistic**, meaning a team of teachers considers more than just test scores alone - we also consider a student's continued work effort and commitment to learning English.

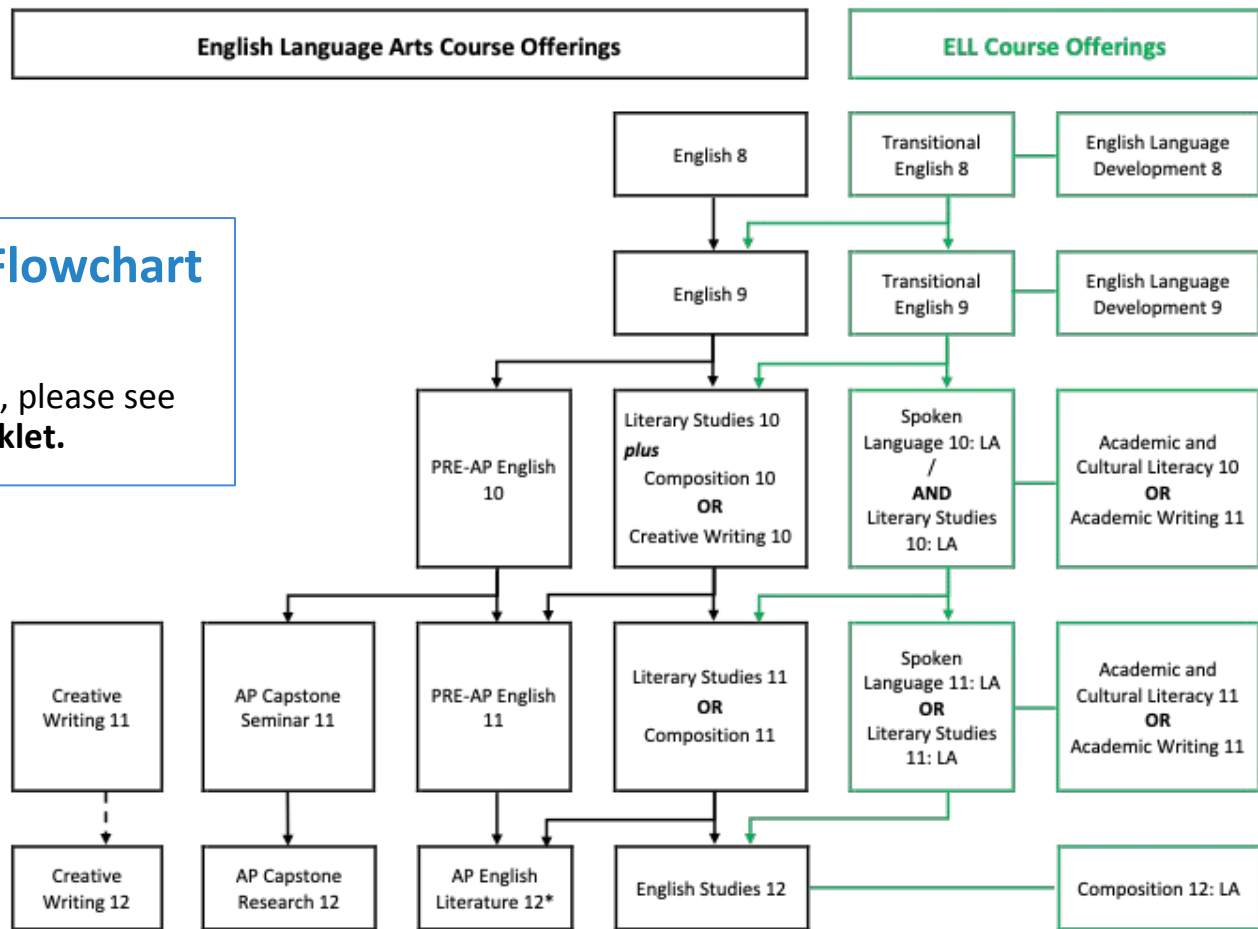
ELL Course Offerings at Sentinel Secondary

2020-2021 School Year



Sentinel English Course Flowchart (ELL Courses in Green)

For detailed ELL course descriptions, please see the **Sentinel Secondary Course Booklet**.



*Must be taken with AP English Language 12

Sentinel ELL Course Offerings (2019-2020)

A student assessed as needing ELL support will be enrolled into **all of the corresponding ELL classes available at their grade level.**

	Beginning / Developing / Expanding	Consolidating / Bridging	Mainstream
Grade 8/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TREN 8/9 (<i>BEG</i>) - ELD 8/9 (<i>BEG</i>) - SS 8/9: LA - SC 8/9: LA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TREN 8/9 (<i>INT</i>) - ELD 8/9 (<i>INT</i>) - SS 8/9: LA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELA 8/9 - ELD 8/9 (<i>INT</i>) (<i>If Needed</i>)
Grade 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TREN 10 (0) - LCL 10 (4) - SS 10: LA (4) - SC 10: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literary Studies 10: LA/Spoken Language 10: LA (4) - AW 11 (<i>JUNIOR</i>) (4) - SS 10: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELA 10 (4) - AW 11 (<i>JUNIOR</i>) (4) (<i>If Needed</i>)
Grade 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELA 11 (4) - AW 11 (<i>SENIOR</i>) (4) - Explorations in SS 11: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELA 11 (4) - AW 11 (<i>SENIOR</i>) (4) - Explorations in SS 11: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELA 11 (4) - AW 11 (<i>SENIOR</i>) (4) (<i>If Needed</i>)
Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Studies 12 (4) - Composition 12: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Studies 12 (4) - Composition 12: LA (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Studies 12 (4) - Composition 12: LA (4) (<i>If Needed</i>)
Course Title Abbreviations		Course Section Abbreviations	
AW – Academic Writing (English language support class) ELA – English Language Arts ELD – English Language Development (English language support class) LCL – Language and Cultural Literacy (English language support class) SC – Science SS – Social Studies TREN – Transitional English Language Arts (language adapted ELA class)		LA – Language adapted course BEG – Beginner section of course INT – Intermediate section of course JUNIOR – Grade 10 section of course SENIOR – Grade 11 section of course	



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)

How long will a student be a member of the ELL program?

The time a student may spend as a member of the ELL program **varies based on many factors** (see **Figure 1**). Language learning is a complex and gradual process; **progress varies in pace** and can include apparent regression as well as improvement. It is **NOT possible to compress the time** it takes to improve in language proficiency simply by devoting more hours to study. **Language learning takes time** (see the **Language Learning Iceberg** on the following slide).

Therefore, we recommend a student take advantage of ELL course offerings at Sentinel for **as long as they may need it**.

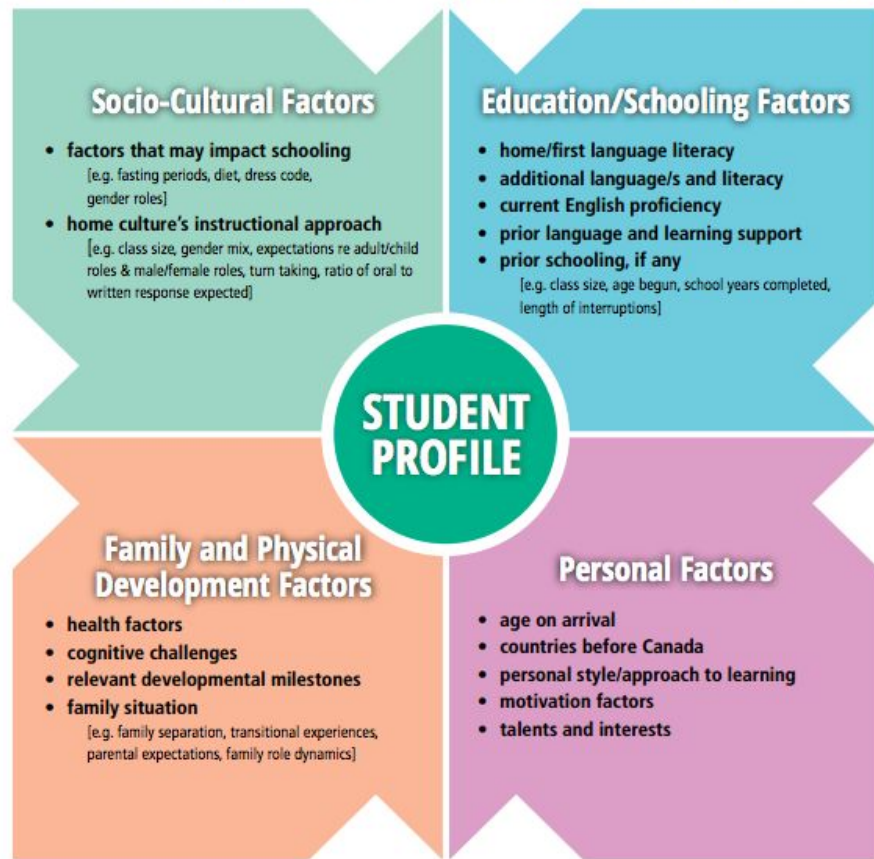
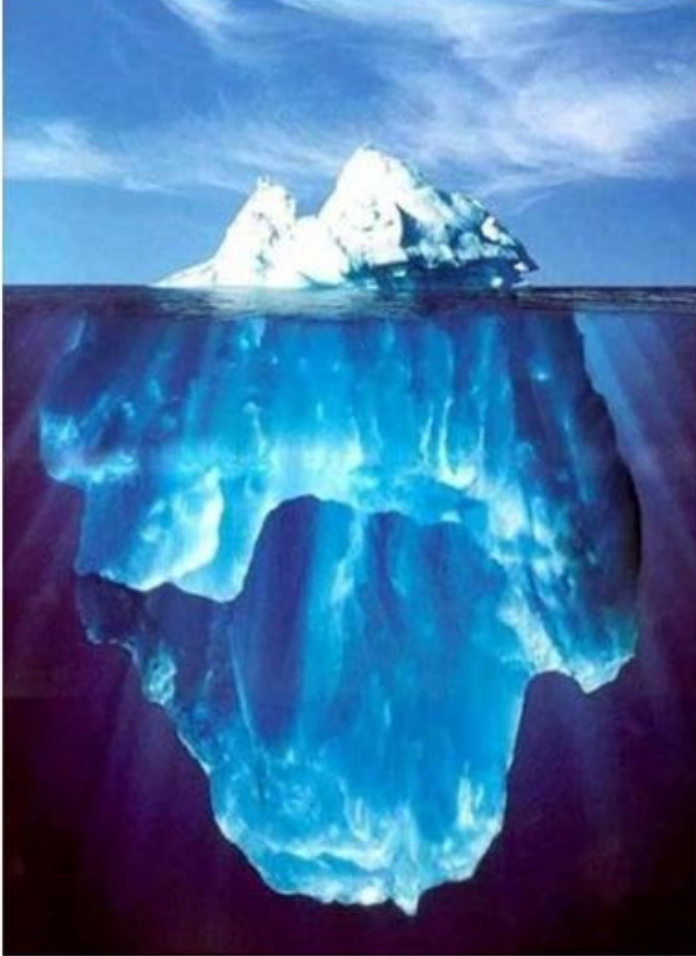


Figure 1: Know your ELL student

Language Learning Iceberg



BICS (1-2 years)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

- Surface level – Here and Now
- Familiar Content
- Face to Face Conversation
- High Frequency Vocabulary – 2000 words
- Simple Sentence Structure
- Low Pressure

CALP (5 or more years)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

- Experience and exposure to culture
- Lectures, formal, written text, specialized terminology, humour, culture, idioms, textbook language, social appropriateness, non-verbal communications
- Limited Interaction (textbook)
- More Abstract
- Less familiar content
- Decontextualized
- Low frequency Vocabulary
- High Stakes (lots of pressure)

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



If a student can communicate socially in English, why do they need ELL support?

Many students are able to communicate **socially** within 1-2 years of learning English, but there is a large **divide** between a grasp of **social language** and the ability to effectively use **academic language** (see the **Language Learning Iceberg** on the previous slide). Academic language is harder to grasp and takes longer to learn (5-7 years). So while **a student may be fluent in a social context, they may still need continued ELL support to develop their academic language.**

As ELL professor Jim Cummins puts it, "**ELLs are trying to catch up to a moving target.**" In other words, native English speakers are not standing still waiting for ELL students to catch up. Since the **English-language demands of students drastically increases with each grade**, ELL courses serve to specifically support students in attaining both social and academic language, and to help them "catch up" to this moving target.

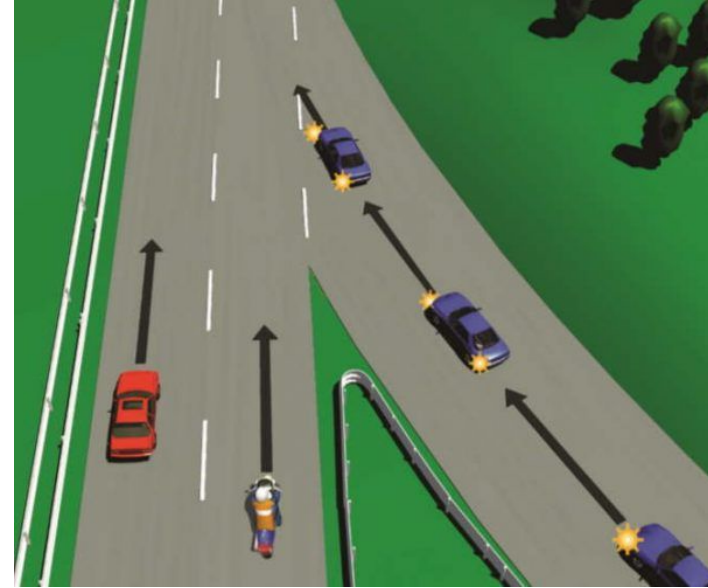
FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Will taking Language Adapted (LA) courses impede my progress in high school?

No! LA courses are specifically designed to help ELL students catch up to a **moving target** - to develop their **English language skills** at the same time they are learning the **BC curriculum for their grade level** (think of this process like accelerating to merge onto a highway).

With this goal in mind, LA courses help ELL students **“accelerate”** to meet this moving target through **targeted language instruction**. And to this end, Sentinel’s LA courses are designed (and timetabled) so that students can seamlessly **“merge”** into the **mainstream versions** of those courses once they have successfully reached **English-language proficiency**.



FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Do you accept third-party language test scores as proof of a student's English-language proficiency?

While **language exams/tests** may motivate a student to practice English - and develop their English-language ability as an effect - **we cannot accept external test scores as proof of a student's English-language ability.**

Sentinel uses an English language assessment developed within West Vancouver in order to gain a first-hand account of a student's English language ability.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)



Do students receive credit for taking ELL courses?

Yes! All Language Adapted (LA) courses are full-credit courses. Language Adapted courses adapt the curriculum for ELL learners, but students still **receive the same number of credits as students in mainstream classes.**

How do the ELL standards relate to a student's grade in Language Adapted (LA) course?

The ELL standards are used to **exclusively evaluate a student's English language proficiency**, **not** their ability to demonstrate the skills and content of the **provincial curriculum** for that specific course. Students will still receive a grade in a LA course.

What does a student's grade in a Language Adapted (LA) course reflect?

A student's grade in a Language Adapted (LA) course reflects their ability to demonstrate the skills and content of the **provincial curriculum** for that specific course with appropriate adaptations.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)



Can students retake the ELL assessment throughout the year?

At Sentinel, ELL students undergo a formal English-language assessment once a year, in the spring. **We do not retest ELL students** outside of this Spring Assessment, and this policy is consistent across the three high schools.

Why don't we retest?

While a test can provide a helpful snapshot of a student's English-language ability, it is simply one small piece of evidence that teachers consider when making course recommendations. **A student's continued performance and effort in class is a much more significant and influential factor** in determining a student's course placement (as well as being more representative of a student's English-language ability).

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)



Why are ELL students enrolled in two English courses? What is the purpose of each course?

Depending on their grade and language abilities, an ELL student will generally be enrolled in two English classes each year: one focused on **English Language Arts** as a *subject* (i.e. literature analysis and response) and one on **English as a language** (i.e. English language development, grammar, vocabulary, etc.).

ELL students are traditionally **enrolled in both types of courses simultaneously** to provide them with a **comprehensive education in literacy and language** as well as providing them with additional exposure to English.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)



Why are there more ELL options in Social Studies than in Science?

Social Studies is offered for both **Beginner** and **Intermediate** ELL students in grades 8-11, while Science is only offered for **Beginner** ELL students in grades 8-10.

This decision is based on **past student experience** and the **nature** of the courses themselves.

Science is often a visual and hands-on course, as well as being cross-curricular (using skills and concepts from Math, which many ELL students have background knowledge in), which tends to make Science the **more accessible** course.

In comparison, **Social Studies** is a **heavily language-based** course, typically demanding a lot of reading and more demanding written output than in Science. Furthermore, the Canadian context of Social Studies may be entirely new territory for many ELL students, leading to a steep learning curve.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Do ELL courses limit a student's opportunity to learn an additional language in high school?

No! While developing *English language* skills is of priority, ELL students will have opportunities to enrol in those language classes that offer **introductory courses**. While we do not offer introductory French courses at Sentinel, ELL students will have opportunities to study **Spanish**, **Mandarin**, and/or **Japanese** as additional languages, therefore meeting university additional language requirements.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Does taking ELL courses limit the number of electives a student can take in high school?

While taking an English-language support class will occupy one block on a student's schedule, **these courses are the most essential courses for a English language learner to take**, especially if they plan to study or work in an English-speaking setting in the future.

If students are worried about not being able to take a specific elective, there are various **options to maximize the number of courses** they can take in their high school career (ex. blended courses, summer learning, etc.).

In addition, many electives offer **entry-level courses available** at a range of grade levels, giving students several opportunities to take a specific elective. If a student has a specific elective or career-path in mind, they are recommended to speak to their counsellor for more information.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Do ELL courses limit a student's chances of attending university?

No! The ELL program at Sentinel is designed to support student learning, and taking ELL courses does not limit a student's chances of attending university. In fact, **ELL courses are the most essential courses in an ELL student's timetable** in order to prepare them for attending English speaking universities, where they will be intensively reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English.

Will ELL courses be listed on transcripts sent to post-secondary institutions?

No! While the term "Language Adapted" appears on student timetables and report cards at Sentinel, **this term will NOT appear on a student's official ministry transcript.**

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Will the number of English courses on a student's transcript affect their eligibility for university?

No! Universities do not care if a student has more than one English course on their high school transcript. As long as a student **meets the English language requirements for the university**, admissions is only concerned with how a student performs in their high school English classes, not how many English classes they have. For more information on post-secondary English language requirements, please check with individual universities:

- **SFU English Language Requirement (2020-21):** "Completion of the last three years of full-time secondary school education in English in Canada" and "a minimum grade of 70% in senior level English is required."

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/admission/admission-requirements/english-language-requirement.html>

- **UBC English language competency (2020-21):** "Complete four or more consecutive years of recognized, full-time education in English within Canada immediately prior to attending UBC. Mark in English Studies 12 varies by faculty."

<https://you.ubc.ca/applying-ubc/english-language-competency/#requirements>

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



How can I support my child in their English language acquisition?

There are many activities and strategies that an English language learner can undertake to improve their English language skills. The **table on the next slide** lists **ways to support your child in their English language acquisition** based on their current level of English language ability in our three skill areas (Oral language, Reading, and Writing).

For additional, specific suggestions for how to support your child in his/her English language development, please **contact your child's ELL teachers directly**.

Ways to Support ELL Students in their English Language Acquisition

DESCRIPTOR	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Consolidating	Bridging
Oral Language (Listening/Speaking)	Listen carefully to instructions and directions and ask for clarification when necessary. Watch English language media with subtitles in student's first language.	Watch English language media with subtitles in student's first language. Practice asking questions and giving directions in real-life situations.	Practice speaking English in social situations. Listen to audiobooks which model English speaking. Watch English language media with English subtitles.	Begin using academic vocabulary in classroom discussion. Listen to audiobooks which model English speaking.	Use academic vocabulary in classroom discussion. Listen to subject-specific podcasts and audio programs.
Reading	Read bilingual books. Read graphic novels and leveled readers from library selection. Use a bilingual dictionary and thesaurus.	Create and update a journal of new vocabulary words. Read graphic novels and leveled readers from library selection. Ask child to talk about what they are reading in and out of class.	Begin to apply reading strategies (access background knowledge, make inferences, make connections). Read at home daily.	Use reading strategies with greater purpose. Read a variety of texts and text types to develop awareness of cultural references. Read at home daily.	Read at home daily. Read a greater variety of texts and text types to further develop awareness of cultural references.
Writing	Provide opportunities for student to practice writing words and simple sentences in English (ex. grocery lists, labels, emails to family and friends).	Use a greater variety of sentence types and structures through regular journal writing. Review work before submitting.	Write with greater variety in vocabulary and sentence structures. Write with greater detail. Begin to apply strategies of the writing process.	Use subject-specific language in writing. Consider audience, purpose, and genre in writing. Continue to apply strategies of the writing process, with a focus on revising and editing.	Focus on unity and coherence in writing. Consistently apply strategies of the writing process.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) (CONT)



Who can I contact if I have other questions regarding Sentinel's ELL program?

If you have any further questions regarding Sentinel's ELL program, please feel free to contact Sentinel's **ELL Specialist Teacher**, Tucker McLean (tmclean@wvschools.ca).