What Is ETLS?

The English Teaching and Learning Study (ETLS) is an international research project designed to provide countries with comparative information on English-language teaching and learning. One of its components will be an adaptive computer-based language assessment to collect information on the ability of students whose primary language is not English to communicate in English through the four different skills — Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking. In addition, it will provide countries with valuable data about students’ opportunities to learn English inside and outside of school, along with information about students’ and educators’ attitudes and beliefs toward English-language learning. Countries will also be able to compare their educational policies and practices to those of others and examine how these factors relate to student proficiency in English.

Innovative Study Design Features

The design of ETLS reflects the following innovative features:

- Completely computer-based, reducing data entry through the use of machine-scoring
- Measurement of both receptive (Reading, Listening) and productive (Writing, Speaking) language skills
- Adaptive design, allowing students across a wide range of proficiency to demonstrate their skills
- Multiple reporting modes, including average scores, description of performance at several ETLS-defined benchmarks, and mapping to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Benefits of Participation

Communicating in English has become increasingly important in today’s world due to increased population mobility and economic globalization. English is often used as a common language in modern communication, such as the media and on the Internet. In many countries, educational policymakers have reacted to these demands by requiring students to learn English in order to prepare them to become global citizens. Results from ETLS will provide important information about the abilities of a country’s students to learn and work using the English language.
Countries that participate in ETLS will obtain reliable data that will allow them to:

- Make valid comparative interpretations about the English-language proficiency of groups of students within their country, as well as between their country and others participating in the study
- Determine students’ English-language abilities for the skills of Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking
- Identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of their educational policies and implemented curricula
- Improve their English-language instruction
- Examine students’ attitudes about the importance of learning English, their beliefs about their abilities, their motivation to increase their English skills, and how these relate to their abilities
- Investigate the relationships between gender, socioeconomic and cultural status, and family background and students’ English skills
- Examine the implementation of English-language instruction, educational requirements for teachers, and educator attitudes toward English-language learning and how these factors are related to English proficiency
- Explore how students’ opportunities to learn English outside of school — including through nonschool-based instructional programs, the media, and the Internet — are related to their English skills

**Participants**

ETLS will collect information from several sources in order to provide both proficiency and background data about English teaching and learning.

**Students:** The target population of ETLS is 10th-grade students, who will be administered both language assessment items and background questions. Testing at one specific grade, rather than after a certain number of years of instruction, will allow countries to compare performance based on a common reference point. Information from the background surveys, such as educational policy and curriculum, can then be used to provide context for the results. ETLS will be administered to all students who are sampled, not just those who have received formal instruction in English. Students may have been exposed to English through the media and material available on the Internet and may be able to demonstrate at least some low-level skills on the language assessment.

Because ETLS will be a computer-based adaptive test, the difficulty of the questions will be tailored in part to students’ ability levels, providing them with a more accessible and engaging assessment experience.

**Educators:** Teachers and school representatives will be administered background surveys to obtain information such as implementation of instruction and curricular and educational requirements for teaching in the schools.

**Policymakers:** Each country will be administered a background survey to collect information about national English-language policy, curricula, and teacher training requirements.

**International Coordination**

**Educational Testing Service**

Study coordination and management, conceptual development, language assessment and background instrument development, computer platform development, marking of open-ended responses, standard setting, scaling, analysis, and reporting

**IEA Data Processing and Research Center**

Sampling, weighting, field procedures, data management and processing

**IEA Secretariat**

Translation verification, quality monitoring

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**Project Highlights**

2014–2015

Framework and instrument development

2016

Field trial

Main Survey preparation

2017

Main Survey Northern Hemisphere

Main Survey Southern Hemisphere

2018–2019

Reporting

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**For country enrollment, contact**

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ETLS will provide a rich data resource on both in-school and out-of-school contexts for English-language teaching and learning.