

Questions to Ask about English Learners

- What is the student's first language? What other languages does the student speak?
- How long has the student been in the United States?
- How many years of schooling did the student have before coming to the United States? What was the language of instruction?
- Is the student literate in his or her first language(s)?
- Is there an assessment available to assess the student's L1 reading and writing skills (i.e. EDL in Spanish)?
- If the student has taken the LAS Links, what is the student's level in each modality (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)?
- Did the student receive services in his or her home country for special needs?
- How was the student's home country school system different from the American school system? Was corporal punishment allowed? Were schools co-ed? Was group work common? Did students take standardized tests?
- Is the student a resettled refugee?
- What is the student's learning style (visual, kinesthetic, etc.)?
- What special talents or knowledge might the student share with the class?
- What L1 resources are available in the school or in the community to support the student's second language acquisition (peers who speak the same L1, library resources, tutors, non-profit organizations, etc.)?
- Can the child's parents or guardians understand phone calls and notices sent home? Do they need translation or interpretation services?
- What insights can parents or guardians offer about the student's strengths and weaknesses?

Adapted from Mendoza, J.L. & Stevens, M. (2010). Questions mainstream teachers should ask about ELLs in their classrooms. Retrieved from <http://tatatscsu.wix.com/supporting-els#!tesol-resources/c7tg>

