

How do I assess an EAL student?

The purpose of your assessment is to measure the skills and/or understanding of a student in a topic of learning. Keeping to the school assessment procedure of FDSE, there are various ways in which you may carry out this assessment of an EAL student. Below are some suggestions.

1. Ideally the student will sit the same assessment task as the rest of the class. When feedback is given, support should be given to enable the student, as a DIRT task, to correct/improve some of their answers. Some of the ways listed below (a cloze passage, multiple choice, matching or sorting and sentence starters) for a student who is less confident in English may be applied to a DIRT task.
2. If a student is going to be unable to access the task, more support will be required to enable them to show some understanding of content and, perhaps, skills. You might give them a differentiated assessment task in the form of a cloze passage, multiple choice, matching or sorting and sentence starters.
3. An alternative option is to provide a translation of the task and the student responds in their own language. You might request the help of a Sixth Former in your subject who is willing to translate the answer for you. Or the Sixth Former might work as translator whilst the assessment is being carried out and the student writes in their language. The DIRT task could be to translate some key words into English and write some simple sentences in English.

The more support the student has received, the lower they would be placed in FDSE. If a student writes answers in a home language and shows a more secure understanding of the content of the subject, arguably, they might be placed higher up the FDSE scale according to the department mark scheme.

With regard to GCSE, if a student is unable to access the task in English, please, again, support their understanding of the question, the task and how to answer the question. Assessment should be made constructive to the student, adapting resources and task where appropriate and scaffolding the task to enable the student to develop through the process of learning and applying understanding and skill to your subject. Suggestions for KS3 assessment may also be applied at GCSE for those of low ability English Language. GCSE Grades should be awarded according to the mark scheme.

Please store and share your assessments for EAL students in your department resources.