

ESL/TBE

INTRODUCTION TO THE ESL/TBE PROGRAM

The ESL Program

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program is designed for middle school and high school students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of acquiring English. Students in the ESL program study English in order to be able to participate in the regular academic programs of the Middle School and High School. They come to the Amherst schools from a wide range of countries and with a great diversity in educational backgrounds, skills and future expectations. Some have permanently immigrated to the United States. Others are here temporarily and plan to return to their home countries after one or two years. Regardless of background and goals, all students who enroll in the secondary schools whose first language is not English are given a diagnostic placement test in reading, writing, listening comprehension and speaking. Based on the results of these tests, which are evaluated by the ESL/TBE department head, students are enrolled in one of three levels in the ESL program, or they are fully enrolled in the mainstream academic program if they demonstrate proficiency in English. Students who are placed in ESL classes participate in mainstream education classes as well for part of their day, typically studying math, science, physical education, and some of the electives. Bilingual or LAU tutors are hired to assist these students in these mainstream classes. TEAMS tutors from the University of Massachusetts also provide tutorial support for students in their study halls and after school.

The ESL program is designed to be a three-year cycle. A student who tests into the program at Level I will typically be able to exit from the program in three years. However, the speed at which a student moves through the program is dependent on many factors, particularly a student's motivation, hard work, and educational background. Students who have strong reading and writing skills in their first language generally acquire English more quickly than students who have had deficient or interrupted schooling. The ESL program must allow for these variations in the population it serves. At the end of each academic year, all students in the program are retested, and based on these test results, grades, and teacher recommendations, students are either moved up a level or required to remain at their current level. Below is the sequence of course at the Middle School and High School:

Middle School

7 th Grade	Level 1	ESL Oral Communication 7 ESL Literature and Composition 7 ESL Social Studies 7
	Level 2	ESL Literature and Composition 7 ESL Social Studies 7
	Level 3	ESL Study Hall for support

8 th Grade	Level 1	ESL Oral Communication 8 ESL Literature and Composition 8 ESL Social Studies 8
	Level 2	ESL Literature and Composition 8 ESL Social Studies 8
	Level 3	ESL Study Hall for support

ESL teachers at the Middle School work closely with mainstream English and Social Studies teachers to design and coordinate an inclusion curriculum at each grade to the greatest extent possible. As a result, ESL students at the Middle School are often included in the mainstream classroom and are studying similar content and having similar educational experiences as their mainstream peers.

High School

High School ESL classes are multi-grade classes. Level 1 and 2 classes include students in grades 9 through 11. Level 3 classes include students in grades 9-12, except the U.S. History class, which is 10-12. Students in ESL classes may receive up to four credits a year of English credit and four credits a year of Social Studies credit. They receive general credit for the other ESL courses.

Level 1	ESL Oral Communication ESL Literature 1 (which includes geography) ESL Composition 1
Level 2	ESL Literature II ESL Composition II ESL World Civilizations
Level 3	ESL Composition III ESL U.S. History

The goal of Level 1 ESL courses is for students to learn survival English and be reading at the third grade level. In Level 2 and 3 Literature and Composition courses, students are acquiring English skills and vocabulary through the ninth grade level. The curriculum of Levels 2 and 3 parallels the ninth grade curriculum in terms of content and skills as much as possible. As a result, when students exit from the ESL program, they are prepared to study English at the tenth grade level. The ESL Social Studies curriculum parallels the ninth and tenth grade social studies curriculum. Therefore, students who exit from ESL enroll in the eleventh and twelfth grade social studies elective courses. As required by law, students at both the Middle School and the High School are monitored for up to three years after they have exited from the ESL program in order to ensure a successful transition to the mainstream.

The TBE Program

The TBE program at the Middle School and High School is a program for Cambodian students, whose first language is Khmer. The goal of the program is to develop students' literacy skills in their first language while they are learning English as a second language. A secondary goal is to teach Cambodian students about their language, history and culture and to promote understanding and awareness of that

culture throughout the school community. Below are the courses available at the Middle School and High School:

Middle School

Khmer Language I
Khmer Language II

The TBE Khmer teacher has also participated in developing and teaching a unit on Cambodia for the mainstream seventh grade Social Studies course.

High School

Khmer Language I
Khmer Language II
Khmer Literature I
Khmer Literature II
History of Cambodia I
History of Cambodia II

Students in the High School receive Social Studies credit for the Cambodian History courses.