



**LAS Links® Standards Validation Results:
Proficiency Level Cut Score Update for Forms E & F
Spring 2023**



LAS Link® Standards Validation Overview

On January 17–27, 2023, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) sponsored a standards validation for LAS Links®. The purpose of the workshop was to evaluate the current LAS Links® cut scores for each proficiency level, and to determine whether they were valid for continued use in light of recent updates to the test design for Forms E and F. A committee of 42 language educators were engaged in the Bookmark Standard Setting Procedure (Lewis, Mitzel, & Green, 1996) to evaluate the LAS Links® cut scores.

During the online, six-day workshop, educators (a) discussed the expectations for students in each LAS Links® proficiency level and (b) evaluated cut scores for each of the four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Participants worked in five groups of 4–9 participants, and each group focused on a different grade span: kindergarten and Grades 2, 4, 7, and 11.

About LAS Links®

LAS Links® is a comprehensive assessment system designed to measure English language proficiency in students from kindergarten through Grade 12. To provide students with developmentally appropriate language tasks, the test is offered in five different grade spans:

- Kindergarten & Grade 1
- Grades 2–3
- Grades 4–5
- Grades 6–8
- Grades 9–12

The test comprises four domains, each on a common score scale over the grade spans defined above:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

In addition, composite scores are calculated for students as the average of their scale scores in relevant combinations of the four tested domains:

- Overall (the average of the test scores earned by the student in all four domains)
- Oral (the average of the test scores earned by the student in Listening and Speaking)
- Comprehension (the average of the test scores earned by the student in Reading and Listening)
- Literacy (the average of the test scores earned by the student in Reading and Writing)
- Productive (the average of the test scores earned by the student in Writing and Speaking)

LAS Links® is used for several purposes, each of which requires that scores and their interpretations be valid for that purpose:

- Identify students who require English language supports
- Determine student readiness to transition out of English language support programs
- Measure growth in English language acquisition
- Compare student scale scores and proficiency levels for public reporting and accountability systems

What Modifications Were Made to the Test Design for LAS Links®?

Although Forms E and F are aligned to the same English language proficiency standards as Forms C and D, several modifications were made based on feedback from educators:

- The most current guidelines regarding bias, fairness, sensitivity, and accessibility for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) have been applied.
- The test content and graphics have been adjusted to better reflect current EL./ML experiences, and current learning environments.
- The Kindergarten Reading Test was reduced in length by 2 items.
- The format of items on the Writing and Speaking subtests were updated based on educator feedback.

How Does Standards Validation Work?

When test designs are modified, the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education's Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014) require that proficiency level cut scores (also commonly referred to as "standards") be evaluated for the purpose of determining whether or not they are still valid for continued use in defining the proficiency levels that are used to make decisions about students. This is commonly done through an educator workshop, facilitated by experts in standard setting processes. In this case, DRC psychometricians applied the Bookmark procedure (Lewis et al., 1996).

As cut scores define what students should know and be able to do to achieve each level of proficiency, any adjustments that are made to cut scores during standards validation represents a change to how proficiency ranges are defined on the test. Where this occurs, an existing cut score is not validated, and the conclusion is drawn that a new cut score should be applied, effectively changing the scale score ranges that define the proficiency levels. Such changes are grounded in the standards validation participants' careful review and discussion of proficiency level descriptions, conceptions of what a student just entering the next proficiency level knows and can do, and the test items themselves. Participants receive step-by-step training in how to consider each of these elements, and then they vote independently on the most appropriate cut score. As the groups of educators that participate in standards validation workshops are intentionally diverse, group consensus is unlikely to be achieved. Therefore, the median of their individual cut score choices is used to determine the groups' collective recommendations.

LAS Links® Standards Validation Outcome

During DRC’s application of Bookmark procedure (Lewis et al., 1996), educators made strong recommendations to adjust the Proficient and Above Proficient cut scores for kindergarten and Grade 1 Writing. The cut scores for Overall, Literacy, and Productive composites are also adjusted due to their inclusion of student Writing scores.

The following table summarizes the adjustments that will be made to LAS Links® cuts scores for Forms E and F, beginning in the spring of 2023:

Cut Score Adjustments for LAS Links® Forms E/F, Kindergarten and Grade 1 Writing**

Grade	Cut Score	Writing	Overall	Literacy	Productive
Kindergarten	Early Intermediate	347	389	351	388
	Intermediate	417	425	399	439
	Proficient	437	456	429	466
	Above Proficient	452	499	463	501
Grade 1	Early Intermediate	355	394	357	393
	Intermediate	435	433	410	448
	Proficient	470	466	446	483
	Above Proficient	498	512	488	524

*Adjusted cut scores are highlighted in blue. Note: cut scores will not be applied retroactively to spring 2022 results.

**Refer to the Appendix for the entire LAS Links® Forms E/F Cut Score Table.

How Should the Cut Score Adjustments be Interpreted?

Importantly, there have been no changes to the common, domain-level score scales. Score scale ranges, in terms of the lowest and highest obtainable scores, and their interval measurement properties remain the same. The only changes that will be applied are to the kindergarten and Grade 1 Writing scores that mark the beginning of the Proficient and Above Proficient levels, and the composite scores to which Writing scores contribute—Overall, Literacy, and Productive. Also, these cut score adjustments effectively change the score ranges for kindergarten and Grade 1 Writing that define the Early Intermediate, Proficient, and Above Proficient scale score ranges on the LAS Links® Common Score Scale. As the Proficient and Above Proficient cut scores for Forms E and F are now lower than historically, it is reasonable to expect that more students taking these forms in kindergarten and Grade 1 will meet Proficiency and Above Proficiency expectations based on their Writing test scores.

Further, there is an impact to how trends can be interpreted between 2023 and prior years. For example, year-to-year changes in the percent of Early Intermediate, Proficient, and Above Proficient in Writing, Overall, Literacy, and Productive for kindergarten and Grade 1 students are not comparable, so changes in the percent of students in these grade levels and domains should not be interpreted directly.

Appendix: Final Cut Scores for LAS Link®, Forms E and F

Domain/Composite	Grade	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Proficient	Above Proficient
Reading	K	355	381	421	475
Reading	1	360	385	423	479
Reading	2	435	472	499	547
Reading	3	436	474	504	549
Reading	4	468	504	535	588
Reading	5	470	505	536	590
Reading	6	501	529	559	608
Reading	7	502	530	560	608
Reading	8	502	532	561	608
Reading	9	507	545	581	632
Reading	10	508	546	582	633
Reading	11	509	547	583	634
Reading	12	510	548	584	635
Listening	K	426	444	470	520
Listening	1	432	450	476	521
Listening	2	442	462	492	536
Listening	3	447	468	504	546
Listening	4	457	484	525	581
Listening	5	458	490	528	584
Listening	6	462	489	532	586
Listening	7	463	492	533	588
Listening	8	467	498	535	590
Listening	9	471	509	546	625
Listening	10	475	511	550	627
Listening	11	480	516	555	630
Listening	12	481	517	560	633
Speaking	K	430	461	496	550
Speaking	1	432	462	496	551
Speaking	2	443	473	509	557
Speaking	3	443	474	509	558
Speaking	4	449	475	510	559
Speaking	5	449	475	511	559
Speaking	6	451	476	512	560
Speaking	7	451	477	513	560
Speaking	8	451	477	514	560
Speaking	9	452	478	515	560
Speaking	10	452	478	516	560
Speaking	11	452	479	517	560
Speaking	12	452	479	518	560

Domain/Composite	Grade	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Proficient	Above Proficient
Writing	K	347	417	437	452
Writing	1	355	435	470	498
Writing	2	425	475	504	544
Writing	3	428	484	529	560
Writing	4	434	498	533	584
Writing	5	435	499	538	585
Writing	6	447	498	548	591
Writing	7	447	498	548	592
Writing	8	448	499	548	593
Writing	9	449	500	549	594
Writing	10	449	500	549	594
Writing	11	450	501	550	595
Writing	12	451	502	550	596
Overall	K	389	425	456	499
Overall	1	394	433	466	512
Overall	2	436	470	501	546
Overall	3	438	475	511	553
Overall	4	452	490	525	578
Overall	5	453	492	528	579
Overall	6	465	498	537	586
Overall	7	465	499	538	587
Overall	8	467	501	539	587
Overall	9	469	508	547	602
Overall	10	471	508	549	603
Overall	11	472	510	551	604
Overall	12	473	511	553	606
Oral	K	430	461	487	526
Oral	1	432	463	490	530
Oral	2	443	470	495	540
Oral	3	444	471	505	548
Oral	4	450	478	514	575
Oral	5	452	485	516	580
Oral	6	455	481	518	575
Oral	7	460	485	521	580
Oral	8	465	492	525	582
Oral	9	465	490	525	561
Oral	10	468	495	527	566
Oral	11	471	497	530	567
Oral	12	472	500	531	569

Domain/Composite	Grade	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Proficient	Above Proficient
Productive	K	388	439	466	501
Productive	1	393	448	483	524
Productive	2	434	474	506	550
Productive	3	435	479	519	559
Productive	4	441	486	521	571
Productive	5	442	487	524	572
Productive	6	449	487	530	575
Productive	7	449	487	530	576
Productive	8	449	488	531	576
Productive	9	450	489	532	577
Productive	10	450	489	532	577
Productive	11	451	490	533	577
Productive	12	451	490	534	578
Literacy	K	351	399	429	463
Literacy	1	357	410	446	488
Literacy	2	430	473	501	545
Literacy	3	432	479	516	554
Literacy	4	451	501	534	586
Literacy	5	452	502	537	587
Literacy	6	474	513	553	599
Literacy	7	474	514	554	600
Literacy	8	475	515	554	600
Literacy	9	478	522	565	613
Literacy	10	478	523	565	613
Literacy	11	479	524	566	614
Literacy	12	480	525	567	615
Comprehension	K	386	412	449	467
Comprehension	1	390	416	452	486
Comprehension	2	448	473	495	531
Comprehension	3	452	482	500	533
Comprehension	4	485	506	526	563
Comprehension	5	491	509	531	573
Comprehension	6	499	514	540	574
Comprehension	7	500	517	546	576
Comprehension	8	501	519	553	579
Comprehension	9	512	534	567	597
Comprehension	10	514	536	569	606
Comprehension	11	515	540	575	608
Comprehension	12	515	540	575	610

References

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

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