

COMPASS ESL Proficiency Level	COMPASS ESL Grammar/Usage Proficiency Description	ESL course with these <i>prerequisite</i> skills
Pre-Level 1 (1–41)	Although students scoring at Pre-Level 1 may have some limited knowledge of English grammar and usage, they have provided insufficient evidence that they possess the skills typical of Level 1 students.	
Level 1 (42–62)	Students at Level 1 typically can recognize simple present tense, plurals, correct word order in simple sentences, and simple pronominal references.	
Level 2 (63–83)	Students at Level 2 typically can recognize correct structuring of simple sentences using a variety of tenses including simple past and present, future, past and present continuous, and high-frequency irregular verbs. They also typically can recognize correct word order in statements, imperatives, simple yes-no questions, some Wh-questions, and sentences with simple relative clauses. Level 2 students know many of the conventions of capitalization and punctuation. They recognize correct uses of the basic auxiliary system, time markers, and appropriate end-of-sentence punctuation.	
Level 3 (84–93)	Students at Level 3 typically can recognize high-frequency uses of the present perfect and past perfect tenses and correct uses of most regular and irregular verbs, simple modal verbs, passive verbs, and participial adjectives. They can select correctly structured compound sentences as well as complex sentences using subordinating conjunctions. They can correct the punctuation in many run-on sentences or sentence fragments within a context. They can often recognize correct uses of gerunds, infinitives, and conditional clauses. Level 3 students can select appropriate transition words to join clauses and sentences, and they can recognize unnecessary shifts in construction and lack of parallelism at the word and phrase level. They can select correct uses of subordinate clauses, and they can recognize and correct some errors in more abstract kinds of writing, including prose intended for academic or occupational needs.	
Level 4 (94–99)	Students at Level 4 typically can select correct uses of nearly all the verb forms of English. They can recognize unnecessary shifts in construction at the clause level. They can recognize accurate relationships among clauses and correctly formed interactions among verb tenses in related clauses. They can recognize correct word order, agreement, and the complex relationships between and among clauses at a near-native level, including correct uses of coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions, appropriate transition words, and various other cohesive devices at the level of discourse, not just at the clause or sentence level. They can select correct punctuation related to meaning. Level 4 students recognize formal and informal registers, know when language is appropriate for a given context or situation, and understand how meaning can change with context. Low-frequency uses of language may still cause problems even for these advanced students.	

COMPASS ESL proficiency level	COMPASS ESL Reading Proficiency Description	ESL course with these prerequisite skills
Pre-Level 1 (1–37)	Although students scoring at Pre-Level 1 may have some limited reading skills in English, they have provided insufficient evidence that they possess the skills typical of Level 1 students.	
Level 1 (38–64)	Students at Level 1 typically recognize most letters of the English alphabet and recognize a few sight words, especially those from the environment, such as common signs and words, phrases, or short sentences supported by pictures.	
Level 2 (65–79)	Students at Level 2 typically are able to read brief prose composed of short, simple sentences related to everyday needs (e.g., numbers, street signs, short informational signs, simple instructions). They can understand high-frequency structures, such as present, simple past, and simple future tenses. They usually understand some of the more common idioms and colloquial expressions. Level 2 students can compare facts to make choices (e.g., making a purchase), and they may draw simple conclusions from their reading.	
Level 3 (80–91)	Students at Level 3 typically can comprehend prose of several paragraphs on subjects within a familiar framework and with a clear underlying structure, and they can understand some main ideas in limited occupational or academic materials. Level 3 students can read news items, basic business letters, simple technical materials, classified ads, school bulletins, and academic text excerpts, and they can comprehend multi-step directions. They can use the reading strategies of skimming, scanning, and predicting to locate information and to help structure their reading for a variety of purposes. They can also use a variety of textual clues such as sentence connectors, transitions, and pronoun reference to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text. Level 3 students sometimes understand the meanings of new words from context, sometimes distinguish between main and supporting ideas, and understand some common cultural references. They can make some inferences and generalizations from what they read, though complex inferences may still be difficult for them to make. However, they can often read texts equal in difficulty to those read by students at a more advanced level, though with less consistent comprehension. They possess some awareness of style and register.	
Level 4 (92–99)	Students at Level 4 typically can read for many purposes at a relatively normal rate with increasing comprehension, and they can read materials that are increasingly abstract and grammatically complex. They understand some hypothesis, argument, and opinion and can differentiate between fact and opinion in academic, as well as general, materials; they can interpret, make inferences and generalizations, relate ideas, and identify an author's prejudices or biases, tone, or mood. They can paraphrase an author's implicit meaning or main points. Level 4 students have an emerging awareness of literary style. Materials they read accurately may include more complex newspaper articles, as well as some periodicals, academic texts, technical materials, and library reference materials. Their reading exhibits a near-native speaker proficiency, but with less flexibility and a slower rate of comprehension. Even these advanced students will experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures, with low-frequency idioms or colloquial language, and with obscure cultural references.	

COMPASS ESL proficiency level	COMPASS ESL Listening Proficiency Description	ESL course with these prerequisite skills
Pre-Level 1 (1–41)	Although students scoring at Pre-Level 1 may have some limited listening skills in English, they have provided insufficient evidence that they possess the skills typical of Level 1 students.	
Level 1 (42–66)	The understanding of students at Level 1 typically is limited to simple common words and learned phrases related to immediate needs (e.g., greetings). They have little ability to comprehend even short utterances.	
Level 2 (67–81)	Students at Level 2 typically have the ability to understand brief questions and answers relating to personal information, the immediate setting, or predictable areas of everyday need. They understand short conversations supported by context, but usually require careful or slowed speech, repetitions or rephrasing. Comprehension of main idea and details is still incomplete. They can distinguish common time forms, some question forms (wh-, yes/no, tag questions), most common word-order patterns, and most simple contractions but may have difficulty with tense shifts and more complex sentence structures.	
Level 3 (82–91)	Students at Level 3 typically are able to understand most discourse about personal situations and other everyday experiences, including conversations with basic academic and/or occupational subject matter. Students at Level 3 typically can understand most exchanges which occur at a near-normal to normal conversational rate; main ideas and details are generally grasped, although comprehension is sometimes affected by length, topic familiarity, or cultural knowledge. Level 3 students are able to understand different time frames and usually understand utterances using the perfect tenses, conditionals, modals, passives; they are aware of cohesive devices but may be unable to utilize them to enhance comprehension. Colloquial speech may cause difficulty. The student is able to detect emotional overtones but cannot interpret mood, tone, or intent reliably.	
Level 4 (92–99)	Students at Level 4 are able to understand linguistically complex discussions, including academic lectures and factual reports. Though there may be occasional trouble with colloquialisms, idiomatic language, or rapid native speech, they are able to use context clues to aid comprehension and have acquired an understanding of most discourse markers. They have acquired the ability to comprehend implications, inferences, emotional overtones, differences in style, and shifts in register. Level 4 students understand almost all reductions, elisions, and blends in the spoken language.	

ESL e-WRITE score range	ESL e-WRITE Proficiency Description	ESL course with these prerequisite skills
2 - 3	<p>Development: Development is severely limited, and writing may be partially unrelated to the topic.</p> <p>Focus: Focus cannot be judged due to the brevity of the response.</p> <p>Organization: Little or no organizational structure is apparent.</p> <p>Language Use: Sentences demonstrate little understanding of English word order, and word choice is often inaccurate. There are numerous errors in grammar and usage that frequently impede understanding.</p> <p>Mechanics: Errors are frequently severe and obscure meaning, or mechanics cannot be judged due to the brevity of the response.</p>	
4 - 5	<p>Development: Development is limited and may include excessive repetition of prompt ideas and/or consistently simple ideas.</p> <p>Focus: Focus may be difficult to judge due to the brevity of the response; any digressions generally do not lead back to the task.</p> <p>Organization: The essay shows an understanding of the need for organization. Transitional words are rarely if ever used. There is minimal evidence of a beginning, middle and end to the essay.</p> <p>Language Use: Sentence structure is simple, with some errors evident in word order. Word choice is usually accurate but simple. Language control is inconsistent or weak, with many errors in grammar and usage, often making understanding difficult.</p> <p>Mechanics: Errors often distract and/or frequently interfere with meaning, or mechanics may be difficult to judge due to the brevity of the response.</p>	
6 - 7	<p>Development: The topic is developed using very few examples, which may be general and somewhat repetitious, but they are usually relevant to the topic.</p> <p>Focus: Focus is usually maintained on the main idea(s); any digressions usually lead back to the task.</p> <p>Organization: Some organization may be evident. Transitions, if used, are generally simple and predictable. The introduction and conclusion, if present, may be undeveloped.</p> <p>Language Use: Most sentences are complete although some may not be correct or clear. Word choice is sometimes appropriate. Although a few errors may impede understanding, basic language control is evident and meaning is sometimes clear.</p> <p>Mechanics: Errors sometimes distract and they occasionally interfere with meaning.</p>	
8 - 9	<p>Development: The topic is developed using reasons supported by a few examples and details.</p> <p>Focus: Focus is adequately maintained on the main idea(s); any minor digressions lead back to the task.</p> <p>Organization: The essay demonstrates little evidence of the logical sequencing of ideas, but there is an adequate organizational structure and some transitions are used. There is an underdeveloped introduction and there may be no conclusion.</p> <p>Language Use: Some sentence variety is present, but some sentences may not be entirely correct or clear. Word choice is appropriate and varied. Although errors may be frequent, language control is adequate and meaning is usually clear.</p> <p>Mechanics: Errors usually do not distract or interfere with meaning.</p>	

ESL e-WRITE score range	ESL e-WRITE Proficiency Description	ESL course with these prerequisite skills
10 - 11	<p>Development: The topic is developed using reasons supported by some specific examples and details. Evidence of critical thinking and/or insight may be displayed.</p> <p>Focus: Focus is maintained clearly on the main idea(s).</p> <p>Organization: The essay demonstrates sequencing of ideas that is mostly logical, and appropriate transitions are used to show relationships among ideas. There is a somewhat developed introduction and there may be a brief conclusion.</p> <p>Language Use: A variety of kinds of sentences are present and are usually correct. Word choice is varied and occasionally specific. Overall, language control is good and meaning is clear.</p> <p>Mechanics: Some errors are evident but they do not distract or interfere with meaning.</p>	
12	<p>Development: The topic is developed using sound reasoning, supported by interesting, specific examples and details in a full, balanced response. Evidence of critical thinking and/or insight may be displayed. Opposing viewpoints may be considered and/or refuted.</p> <p>Focus: A sharp focus is maintained consistently on the main idea(s).</p> <p>Organization: The essay demonstrates logical sequencing of ideas, and transitions are used effectively to show relationships among ideas. There is a well-developed introduction and the essay may have a brief but clear conclusion.</p> <p>Language Use: A wide variety of kinds of sentences are present and usually correct. Word choice is varied and specific. Although there may be a few minor errors, language control is competent and meaning is clear.</p> <p>Mechanics: Only minor errors, if any, are present and they do not distract or interfere with meaning.</p>	