

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE EVALUATION SCALE (SLES)

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The *Speech and Language Evaluation Scale (SLES)* was developed to aid in screening, identification, and program planning for children and adolescents with speech and/or language problems in school. The SLES is based on the federal definition of speech impaired (PL 94-142) and the speech and language disorders definition recognized by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Each subscale is associated with one of the most commonly recognized characteristics of speech and language disorders.

The SLES Speech subscales are

- Articulation,
- Voice, and
- Fluency.

The SLES Language subscales are

- Form,
- Content, and
- Pragmatics.

During initial development, the SLES was subjected to rigorous field testing by clinicians and teachers from all grade levels (K-12) which resulted in the 68 items included in the final version of the scale. The SLES was standardized on 4,501 students 4.5 through 18+ years of age distributed evenly across all grade levels. Separate norms are provided for males and females. Demographic characteristics of the standardization sample closely represent national percentages for gender, race, residence, geographic area, and occupation of parents.

Internal consistency of the SLES was .96 for the total scale. Test-retest reliability yielded correlation coefficients which exceeded .86 for each of the six subscales. The total scale inter-rater reliability correlation coefficient of .64 indicates a $p < .01$ degree of reliability. Content validity was established through the initial development process. Diagnostic validity was established by comparing the mean subscale standard scores and mean total quotients of identified speech and/or language impaired students with unimpaired students. The speech and/or language impaired students received scores which were statistically significant ($p < .001$) for most subscales. Item performance correlated positively with total scale performance and further substantiated the internal cohesiveness of the scale as a measure of speech and language problems.

Each item on the SLES is rated on a three-point scale of (0) ALWAYS, (1) OCCASIONALLY, or (2) NEVER. Following administration, four types of scores may be obtained: frequency rating for each item (reflecting the degree of success demonstrated for a communication skill), subscale raw score (the sum of the frequency ratings for each subscale), subscale standard score (a consistent basis for comparing students), and a percentile (a global index of all skills measured within the total scale). Using the subscale standard scores, a profile of the student's level of speech and language functioning across the six subscales may be constructed.

The SLES may be completed in approximately 20 minutes by anyone familiar with the student: classroom teacher, clinical personnel, or other school personnel. The SLES complete kit consists of the *Pre-Referral Speech and Language Checklists*, *Pre-Referral Intervention Strategies Documentation Forms*, *Speech and Language Evaluation Scale rating forms*, *Speech and Language Evaluation Scale Technical Manual*, and the *Speech and Language Classroom Intervention Manual* (252 pages). The SLES Quick Score is a Windows®-compatible program which converts raw scores to standard and percentile scores.

The *Speech and Language Classroom Intervention Manual (SLCIM)* includes goals, objectives, and intervention strategies for the regular education classroom teacher to use in supporting the clinician's intervention program. The SLCIM is particularly useful for pre-referral intervention activities.

The SLES is a valuable tool designed to assist speech and language clinicians in screening, assessment, diagnostic, and programming decisions for speech and/or language impaired children and adolescents. The SLES will significantly improve the screening and referral process of students in need of speech and/or language services, providing clinicians with additional time to balance the demands of assessment and therapy.



H A W T H O R N E
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PRE-REFERRAL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CHECKLIST

Diane R. Fressola and Sandra C. Hoerchler

Date: _____

Name of student: _____ Birthdate: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Observed by: _____

Observer's position: _____ Student known to observer: _____
(from) (to)

Length of time each day with student: _____
(hours) (minutes)

Special education services the student has received: _____

Grade(s) repeated: _____ Reason (if known): _____

How well the student is known by the observer (indicate type of interactions): _____

TO OBSERVER: Check each behavior you have observed the student demonstrate during the past month.

ARTICULATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Substitutes one sound for another sound (e.g., "The ball is wed." for "The ball is red.") | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Demonstrates difficulty sequencing speech sounds in multisyllabic words (e.g., student says "ephelant" instead of "elephant") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Omits a sound in a word (e.g., "Pay the piano." for "Play the piano.") | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Articulation interferes with daily communication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Inserts an extra sound in a word (e.g., "Stit down." for "Sit down.") | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Speech causes unfavorable listener reaction (i.e., substitutions, omissions, insertions, mispronunciations, etc., make it unpleasant to listen to the student) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Distorts or mispronounces words or sounds when speaking (not attributed to dialect or accent) | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Rate of speech is too fast or too slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Demonstrates difficulty imitating speech sounds | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Shows signs of frustration when he/she is frequently misunderstood | |

VOICE

11. Voice quality sounds harsh, breathy, and/or hoarse

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE EVALUATION SCALE

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STUDENT RATING FORM

Name of Student: Thomas Sam A. Age: 10 7 Sex: M
(last) (first) (middle) (years) (months)

School: Benton City: Wheeler State: Colorado

Grade Level: 4 Date(s) of Rating: 10 19 89
(month) (day) (year)

Has Student Ever Received Special Education Services: yes - speech/language

Grade Repeated: 1st Reason (if know): reading difficulties

Rated by: Dee Jones Position: Classroom teacher

Student Known to Rater: 8/89 present Length of Time Each Day With Student: 4 20
(from) (to) (hours) (minutes)

How Well the Student is Known by the Rater (indicate type of interactions): _____

SLES Profile

Standard Scores	SPEECH				SUBSCALE		LANGUAGE		Standard Score	Percentiles	Percentile Rank
	Articulation	Voice	Fluency	Form	Content	Pragmatics					
20	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	20	99	•	
19	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	19	95	•	
18	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	18	90	•	
17	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	17	85	•	
16	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	16	80	•	
15	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	15	75	•	
14	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	14	70	•	
13	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	13	65	•	
12	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	12	60	•	
11	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	55	•	
10	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10	50	•	
9	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9	45	•	
8	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	40	•	
7	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	7	35	•	
6	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	6	30	•	
5	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	5	25	•	
4	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	4	20	•	
3	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	3	15	•	
2	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	2	10	•	
1	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1	5	•	

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Toll-Free number: 1-800-542-1673

TO RATER: Rate each student using the quantifiers (0 - 2) provided.
Every item must be rated. **Do not leave any items blank.**

ALWAYS

0

OCCASIONALLY

1

NEVER

2

2 1. Substitutes one sound for another sound (e.g., “The ball is wed.” for “The ball is red.”)

1 2. A sound is omitted in a word (e.g., “Pay the piano.” for “Play the piano.”)

2 3. An extra sound is inserted in a word (e.g., “Stit down.” for “Sit down.”)

0 4. Distorts or mispronounces words or sounds when speaking (not attributed to dialect or accent)

1 5. Has difficulty imitating speech sounds

2 6. Shows signs of frustration when he/she is frequently misunderstood

1 7. Has difficulty sequencing speech sounds in multisyllabic words (e.g., student says “ephelant” instead of “elephant”)

2 8. Articulation interferes with daily communication

1 9. Speech causes unfavorable listener reaction (i.e., substitutions, omissions, insertions, mispronunciations, etc., make it unpleasant to listen to the student)

1 10. Rate of speech is too fast or too slow

13 **Raw Score**

6 **Subscale Standard Score**

VOICE

2 11. Voice quality sounds harsh, breathy, and/or hoarse

2 12. Voice quality sounds hypernasal (e.g., sounds like the student is talking through his/her nose) or hyponasal (e.g., sounds like the student has a cold)

2 13. Voice is intermittently or completely lost

1 14. Volume is too loud or too soft for the situation

2 15. Pitch is too high or too low for age and sex

2 16. Voice quality interferes with daily communication (i.e., the student is difficult to understand because of voice quality)

2 17. Voice quality causes unfavorable listener reaction (i.e., voice is so harsh, breathy, and/or hoarse as to make it unpleasant to listen to the student)

2 18. Shows signs of frustration because of vocal quality (e.g., becomes anxious, upset, angry, etc.)

15 **Raw Score**

10 **Subscale Standard Score**

FLUENCY

2 19. Flow of speech is interrupted during conversation by “part word repetition” (e.g., student says, “I want some wa-wa-water.”)

2 20. Flow of speech is interrupted during conversation by “whole word repetition” (e.g., student says, “I want-want-some water.”)

2 21. Flow of speech is interrupted during conversation by “prolongations” (e.g., student says, “I want ssssssome water.”)

1 22. Flow of speech is interrupted during conversation by “interjections” (e.g., student says, “I want uh-uh-some water.”)

2 23. Secondary characteristics are present while speaking (e.g., eye blinking, jaw jerking, lip rounding, flaring of nostrils, slapping body or table with hand and/or other jerky body movements, and limited or nonexistent eye contact)

2 24. Dysfluency interferes with daily communication (e.g., dysfluencies make it difficult for the student to be understood)

*SLES
Rating Form*

ALWAYS**0****OCCASIONALLY****1****NEVER****2**

- 2** 10. Dysfluent speech causes unfavorable listener reaction (e.g., dysfluencies make it unpleasant to listen to the student)
- 2** 11. Shows signs of frustration because of dysfluent speech (e.g., becomes anxious, upset, angry, etc.)

15 **Raw Score**10 **Subscale Standard Score****FORM**

- 1** 12. Uses inappropriate subject-verb agreement when speaking (e.g., says, "It don't matter to me." instead of "It doesn't matter to me.")
- 1** 13. Uses sentences which are grammatically incomplete when speaking (e.g., "Ball under the table." instead of "The ball is under the table.")
- 2** 14. Does not form questions appropriately when speaking (e.g., "Billy not here today?")
- 1** 15. Uses incorrect word order when speaking (e.g., "Got me my mom a new bike." instead of "My mom got me a new bike.")
- 1** 16. Uses pronouns incorrectly (e.g., "Me will go home now." instead of "I will go home now.")
- 1** 17. Uses inappropriate verb tenses when speaking (e.g., past, present, future)
- 1** 18. Omits present progressive when speaking (e.g., "Bobby walk to school today." instead of "Bobby is walking to school today.")
- 0** 19. Can only speak in short, simple sentences which lack complexity
- 0** 20. Uses incorrect grammar when writing not due to dialect (If the student is not yet writing, rate this item 0.)
- 0** 21. Composes incomplete sentences or expresses incomplete thoughts when writing (If the student is not yet writing, rate this item 0.)
- 1** 22. Uses negation inappropriately when speaking (e.g., "He no come to my house.")

- 1** 23. Omits function words when speaking (e.g., "He sits on box." instead of "He sits on the box." or "He not here." instead of "He is not here.")
- 1** 24. Uses plurality incorrectly in noun and verb forms (e.g., mans/men, geoses/geese, "The boys is climbing the tree.", etc.)
- 1** 25. Uses incorrect grammar when speaking (not attributed to dialect)
- 0** 26. Can only write simple, short, noncomplex sentences (If the student is not yet writing, rate this item 0.)

12 **Raw Score**2 **Subscale Standard Score****CONTENT**

- 2** 27. Has difficulty grasping concepts involving time, space, quantity, quality, and directionality (e.g., before/after, above/below, most/least, smooth/rough, and left/right)
- 1** 28. Has difficulty understanding directions and/or carrying out instructions and often requires repetition or rephrasing
- 0** 29. Has difficulty comprehending picture and/or verbal absurdities (e.g., cannot explain what is wrong when given a picture or a verbal statement such as "The miniature dog is as big as a horse.")
- 0** 30. Has a limited expressive and/or receptive vocabulary
- 0** 31. Demonstrates inappropriate (or inaccurate) sequencing skills when speaking (e.g., does not relate information in the correct order, including events in a day and/or rote type activities such as counting)
- 0** 32. Expresses incomplete thoughts when speaking (e.g., speaks in incomplete sentences, fails to think of correct words to express ideas, etc.)
- 0** 33. Has difficulty solving math word problems even though his/her computation skills are adequate (If the student is not yet performing math word problems, rate this item 0.)

ALWAYS**0****OCCASIONALLY****1****NEVER****2**

0 10. Has difficulty understanding what he/she reads even though he/she has adequate word attack skills (If the student is not yet reading, rate this item 0.)

0 11. Has difficulty understanding and using synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms (e.g., pretty/beautiful, up/down, and sea/see)

0 12. Has difficulty understanding analogies (e.g., Hot is to cold as up is to down.)

0 13. Has difficulty recognizing and using multiple-meaning words (e.g., "The fly is on the wall." and "I will fly home.")

1 14. Demonstrates difficulty understanding the meaning of words indicating a question (e.g., who, what, when, why, and how)

0 15. Has difficulty describing objects or events across several dimensions including category, function, composition, similarities/differences, and other attributes

1 16. Has difficulty comprehending passive sentence form (e.g., "The boy was being followed by his sister. Was the sister in front?")

0 17. Has difficulty understanding nonliteral forms of speech such as idioms, proverbs, similes, metaphors, jokes, puns, and riddles

4 **Raw Score**

0 **Subscale Standard Score**

PRAGMATICS

2 18. Has difficulty generalizing information from one situation to another (e.g., identifies the word "house" on a flashcard, but is unable to identify it in a sentence; can count by fives, but cannot count nickels; knows that $6 \times 8 = 48$, but cannot understand that $48 \div 6 = 8$; etc.)

2 19. Has difficulty pretending, role-playing, and imagining

1 20. Lacks spontaneity, originality, and/or variety in verbal interactions

1 21. Is slow to respond and/or fails to make relevant responses (e.g., When asked "What is your name?", the student may respond "I'm fine.")

1 22. Uses inappropriate verbal and/or nonverbal language in social situations or interactions with peers and/or adults

1 23. Demonstrates difficulty expressing logical and reasonable responses to questions (e.g., problem solving, making decisions, making inferences)

1 24. Has difficulty expressing opinions, feelings, and/or emotions

1 25. Has difficulty asking for assistance or clarification, when necessary, after receiving directions and/or attempting work independently

2 26. Has difficulty using ritualistic greetings/closings when appropriate (e.g., "Hello," "Good-bye")

1 27. Has difficulty understanding cause-and-effect relationships (e.g., If you oversleep, you will be late for school.)

1 28. Demonstrates difficulty with topic initiation, maintenance, and/or closure including irrelevant, tangential, or associative responses; and/or tends to circumlocute - talking "around" instead of "on" the topic

1 29. Exhibits difficulty using oral language as a tool to obtain desired results

15 **Raw Score**

7 **Subscale Standard Score**

35 **Sum of Subscale Standard Score**

6 **Percentile Score**

GUIDELINES FOR RATING THE STUDENT

- The student should be rated by educators with primary observational opportunities. These persons would usually be teachers or paraprofessionals who work directly with the student.
- Any number of educators may rate the student. Each person rating the student should use a separate rating form.
- Should an educator rating a student have no knowledge of the student's ability to perform a particular item on the scale, it is recommended that another educator be consulted to provide information for that item. Do not leave any items blank.
- Important: Since many items on the scale are developmental in nature, in some cases students will not yet have developed a particular skill. The rating for those items should indicate that the student does not yet have the ability to perform those items (i.e., (0) ALWAYS). Students are only compared to others of their own age group who would also not yet have the same skills or abilities.
- When rating a student, the rater should first read the quantifiers and then the item in considering which quantifier best describes the student's ability. Item number five can serve as an example. The rater should consider: does the student (0) ALWAYS have difficulty imitating speech sounds, (1) OCCASIONALLY have difficulty imitating speech sounds, or (2) NEVER have difficulty imitating speech sounds.
- While no established length of time is necessary to observe a student, ratings should be conducted by educators familiar with the student's abilities. In some instances, it may be possible to become familiar with the student's abilities in as short a time as two weeks. This would more likely be true at the elementary level, while at the secondary level it may take longer to become aware of the student's abilities.
- The SLES may be used to rate a student at intervals throughout the school year. The scale is particularly helpful in identifying abilities at the time of entry into a program and progress made over time. For this purpose, it is recommended that a student be rated each quarter, or more frequently, as appropriate.
- It is not necessary to complete the rating of a student in one sitting. Several days may elapse before the observer is able to complete the scale.
- The SLES is not a test which requires a performance demonstration for each item on the scale. The observer should rely on observations of the student's ability to perform the items on the scale as those behaviors occur naturally in the educational environment.

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IV. Goals, Objectives, and Interventions

1 Substitutes one sound for another sound

Goals:

1. The student will improve his/her articulation skills.
2. The student will improve his/her discrimination of speech sounds.
3. The student will improve his/her production of speech sounds in isolation.
4. The student will improve his/her production of speech sounds in syllables.
5. The student will improve his/her production of speech sounds in words.
6. The student will improve his/her production of speech sounds in sentences.
7. The student will improve his/her production of speech sounds in spontaneous speech.

Objectives:

1. The student will discriminate between correct and incorrect production of the target sound in _____ out of _____ trials.
2. The student will imitate correct production of the target sound in isolation in _____ out of _____ trials.
3. The student will imitate correct production of the target sound in words in _____ out of _____ trials.
4. The student will spontaneously produce the target sound in words in _____ out of _____ trials.
5. The student will spontaneously produce the target sound in sentences in _____ out of _____ trials.
6. The student will spontaneously produce the target sound in conversational speech in _____ out of _____ trials.

Interventions:

1. Have the student's hearing checked if it has not been recently checked.

2. Evaluate the appropriateness of requiring the student to accurately produce certain sounds (e.g., developmentally, certain sounds may not be produced accurately until the age of 8 or 9).

3. Speak to the student to explain what he/she needs to do differently (e.g., use the /r/ sound instead of the /w/ sound). The teacher should be careful to use the sound that is being targeted and not the letter name (e.g., /r/ not /ar/).

4. Reinforce the student for correct productions of the target sound: (a) give the student a tangible reward (e.g., classroom privileges, line leading, passing out materials, five minutes free time, etc.) or (b) give the student an intangible reward (e.g., praise, handshake, smile, etc.). Initially, each correct production may need reinforcement. As the student progresses, more random reinforcement may be adequate.

5. Be sure that the student can hear the difference between the sound as it should be made (target sound) and the way he/she is producing it incorrectly (error sound).

6. Have the student raise a hand or clap hands when he/she hears the target sound produced during a series of isolated sound productions (e.g., /s/, /sh/, /r/, /m/, /r/, /t/, /k/, /r/, /z/, /w/, /n/, /r/, etc.).

7. Use a puppet to produce the target and error sounds. The student earns a sticker for correctly distinguishing a set number of correct/incorrect productions the puppet makes.

8. Have the student stand up each time he/she hears the target sound produced accurately in contrast to the error sound (e.g., /w/, /r/, /r/, /w/, /w/, /w/, /r/, /r/, etc.).

9. Have the student show "thumbs up" each time the target sound is produced accurately when a picture is labeled and "thumbs down" if the target sound is produced inaccurately.