



FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

Heritage Language (HL) Student Self-Assessments

What are the heritage language student self-assessments?

- The self-assessments are a series of forms that students can use to assess their skill in their heritage language. The forms contain descriptors of language skills. Students decide whether they can demonstrate the skills that are listed in the self-assessment forms.

Why are students assessing their own language progress? Isn't this the teacher's role?

- Self-assessment helps students to understand a) what they have learned b) how they learn, and c) where improvements can be made. Teachers provide instruction, guidance and a positive environment for language learning.
- The self-assessment forms focus on what students **can do**, rather than what they **cannot do**. All students can see their progress, even if they only take small steps forward.

How were the self-assessment forms developed?

- The self-assessment forms are based on the [Common Framework of Reference for Languages \(CFR\)](#), an international language scale recommended by the Ministry of Education for additional languages.
- The CFR provides consistent standards and terminology so that all language learners are assessed according to the same criteria. For more information go to www.coe.int/lang-CEFR.

How many self-assessment forms are there in total?

- There are 10 forms for self-assessment, divided into 4 categories:
 - 1 form for **Early Years** – Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten students;
 - 3 forms for **Elementary** – for students in Grades 1 – 5;
 - 3 forms for **Middle Years** – for students in Grades 6 – 9; and
 - 3 forms for **Secondary/Adult** – for students in Grades 10 – 12 and beyond.

How will I know which self-assessment form to give a student in my class?

- First, check the student's grade at school to determine the **category** of forms to select. For instance, if a student is in Grade 3 at school, you will use one of the Elementary assessment forms.
- Next, use observation, anecdotal evidence or informal testing to assess the student's language abilities and *approximate* language level. If the student is a beginner, start with Form A1.1/A1.2. If the student is more fluent in the heritage language, choose the next level, A2.1/A2.2.

How do I find out the student's Ministry of Education Student Number?

- In Saskatchewan, every student in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 has a student number. Parents (or older students) can ask the school principal or secretary to provide this number.

When is a student ready to move to the next level?

- A student can move to the next level when he or she can do more than half of the "I can" statements at that level without help.
- The remaining "I can" statements are not discarded when a student moves to the next level. The student continues to work at each of the skills until these skills can be done without help. There is no time limit for completing skills at each level. However, students should show progress over time.

Can I skip a level for students who speak the language well?

- No. Students move through each level in a consecutive manner. It is natural for students to have some skills that are at a higher level than others. For example, a student may speak a heritage language fluently, but may be at the beginner level with reading and writing skills.

What should I do if a student has not started reading and writing?

- Many language teachers start with listening, speaking and conversation when they work with beginner level (A1.1) students. If students are not yet reading and writing, leave this part of the assessment form blank until these skills are being developed in the classroom.

A student is in Grade 1 at school and has just started to learn a heritage language. Should I use the Elementary series of forms or the Early Years form?

- A student's grade at school determines which forms are to be used. If a student is in Grade 1 at school, you will select from the *Elementary* series of forms. Level A1.1 is always used with beginning language learners.

My Kindergarten and Grade 1 to 3 students have trouble reading the self-assessment forms. What should I do?

- Teachers can help very young students with the self-assessment form. Focus on one or two of the "I can" statements in one session. For example, you might ask a student to name the items in a picture, to sing a song, or to write his/her name. Then the student can check the appropriate box on the self-assessment form, to show whether she or he needed "a lot of help," "a little help," or "no help."

How do I use the self-assessment forms with older students?

- Older students may work individually, with a partner, in small groups or as a whole class.

How do I calculate a student's overall language level?

- On the self-assessment forms, skill areas (listening, conversation, speaking, reading and writing) have several descriptors and a total number under each skill area.
- At the end of the year, count up the numbers from each skill area to determine the student's level. Students must be able to do more than half of the "I can" statements without help to move to the next level.

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| A1.2 Listening 3/4 | A1.2 Conversation 3/4 | A1.2 Speaking 2/4 | A1.2 Reading 1/3 | A1.2 Writing 1/3 | Overall Level: A1.2 10/18 |
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How often should the student self-assessments be done?

- Allow time for self-assessment **at least once during the school year** and then **again at the end of the school year**. The self-assessment forms have space to record information from two separate assessments.

How will I find the time for self-assessment? My language class only meets once a week.

- Your students are learning as they are self-assessing. They have to think about each skill, and perhaps, demonstrate the skill to themselves, other students or their teacher to show they have mastered it. Self-assessment can become part of classroom instructional time. Instructors may also ask volunteers, parents or older students to assist with self-assessment by monitoring each student's language skills and confirming which skills can be done with little or no help.

Can I use the same self-assessment form for more than one year?

- Yes. It may take students more than one year to develop the skills in a particular level. This is why there is space for more than one date beside each descriptor.

Who should keep the completed student self-assessments?

- The completed self-assessment forms belong to the student. Teachers may keep these forms in a file during the year so that the forms are available any time that self-assessment is taking place.