

# Welcome to CASAS STEPS!

## What Teachers Need to Know

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# Agenda

- FY25 NRS Tests: What is Changing & Why
- CASAS Reading STEPS & Listening STEPS
  - What's on the tests?  
Blueprints
  - What do the test items look like?  
Sample Items
  - What can the tests tell me about my students' skills?  
Reports

This presentation does not prepare you to administer or proctor CASAS tests. It provides general information for instructors.

# **What current tests are changing?**

# **What are the new tests?**

FAQs about the Illinois FY25 Assessment Transition are continually updated and available on the [Excellence in Adult Education website](#).

# New FY25 Tests

## English Language Acquisition

FY24 Tests	Will be replaced by...
<b>CASAS Life &amp; Work Reading</b> <i>including Beginning Literacy</i> <i>Forms 27 and 28</i>	<b>CASAS Reading STEPS*</b>
	<b>CASAS Listening STEPS*</b>
<b>BEST Literacy</b>	<b>BEST Literacy 2.0</b>
<b>BEST Plus 2.0</b>	<b>BEST PLUS 3.0</b>
<b>CASAS Math GOALS</b>	<b>CASAS Math GOALS 2</b>
<b>ABE/ASE Tests NOT Changing for FY25</b> <b>TABE 11/12 (Reading and Math)</b> <b>CASAS Reading GOALS</b>	

*\*Programs may choose to administer one or both CASAS STEPS tests.*

# **Why are the tests changing?**

# NRS Educational Functioning Levels

## EFLs

The NRS describes 6 levels of adult language learners.

The standardized tests that students take place them in one of the 6 levels.

When students move from one level to the next after post-testing, they earn a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG).

**Beginning ESL Literacy - NRS Level 1**

**Low Beginning ESL - NRS Level 2**

**High Beginning ESL - NRS Level 3**

**Low Intermediate ESL - NRS Level 4**

**High Intermediate ESL - NRS Level 5**

**Advanced ESL - NRS Level 6**

For FY25, there are new EFL descriptors & new assessments to measure them.

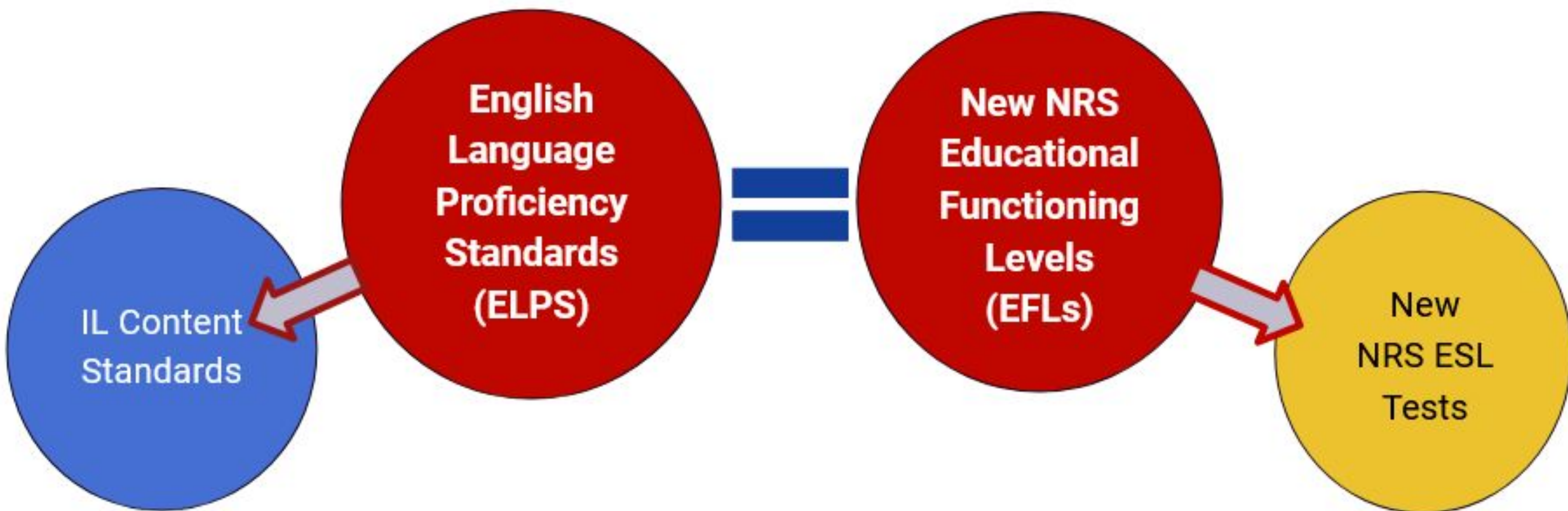
# The tests are changing because...

## All New ELA Tests

- Are aligned with the federal *English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education* (ELPS)
- Assess new NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL) descriptors

The ELPS were released in 2016, but the pandemic delayed the development and federal approval of new assessments until now.

The goal of the ELPS is to assist adult English learners to achieve competency in **English language acquisition** and **rigorous academic content** to facilitate transition to post-secondary education, job training, or employment.





Illinois Content  
Standards  
for English Language  
Acquisition  
*2024 Update*



Illinois Content Standards  
for English Language  
Acquisition

Dr. Brian Durham  
Executive Director  
Illinois Community College Board

Whitney Thompson  
Deputy Director for Workforce Education  
Illinois Community College Board

Dr. Kathy Olesen-Tracey  
Senior Director for Adult Education and Literacy  
Illinois Community College Board

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Director for English Language Acquisition  
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Britt Garton Pisto  
Director for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education  
Illinois Community College Board



Updated 2024

# IL Standards Prepare Students for STEPS

## English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)

- **10 Anchor Standards:** the same across all 6 NRS levels
- **Student Performance Targets** for each Anchor Standard. Targets are different at each level.
- **Examples** of how students might demonstrate the targets

Find the standards on the [Excellence in Adult Education](#) website (scroll to “English Language Acquisition Standards”)

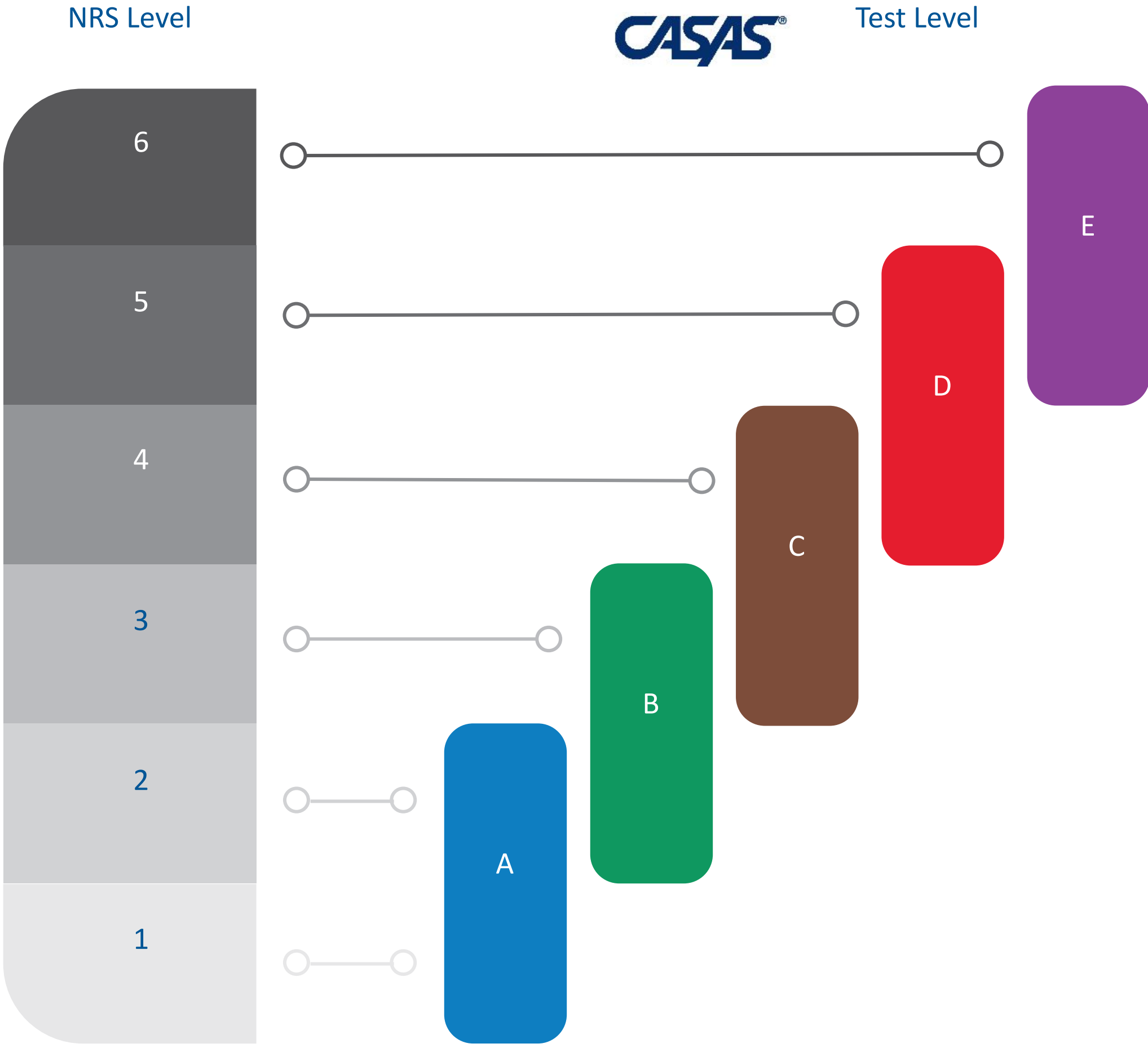
# CASAS Reading STEPS

- About the Test
- Blueprints
- Sample Items
- Reports

# Reading STEPS

5 Levels, A - E

Each assesses 2 NRS levels



Adapted from CASAS with permission. Adult Learning Resource Center 3/1/24.

# Reading STEPS: What is tested?

## Content Standards

*Skills from ELP Standards*

- Vocabulary
- Details
- Main idea
- Inference
- Point of view
- Supporting evidence

## Task Areas

*The format of the test items*

- Forms
- Charts, tables, graphs
- Texts, emails, articles, narratives
- Signs, ads, labels
- Diagrams, measurement scales

## Competency Areas

*The topics of the test items*

- Basic communication
- Consumer economics
- Community resources
- Health
- Employment
- Government & law

There are Blueprints & Reports for each category.

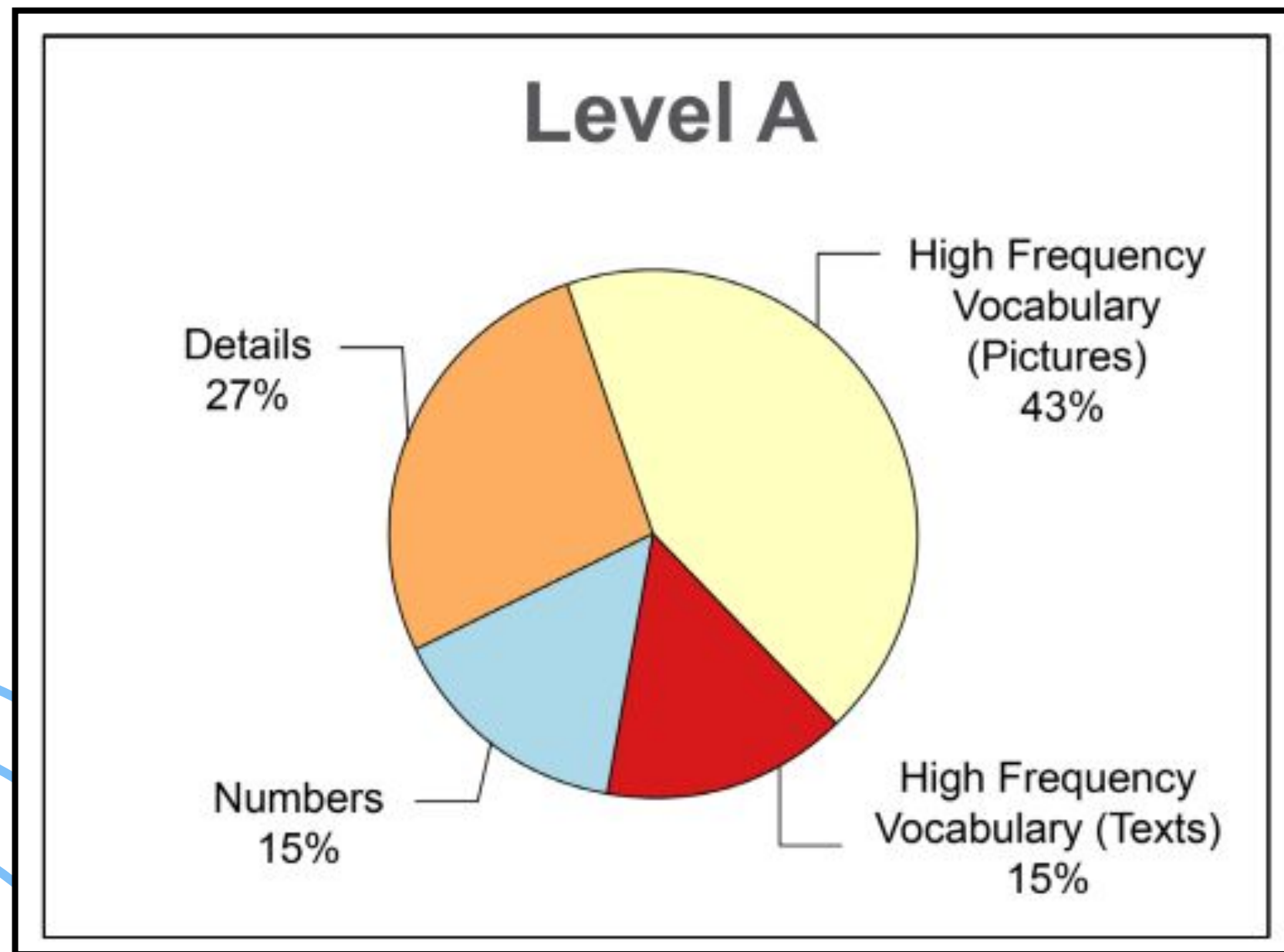
# Test Blueprints

What are they?  
How can they help?



# Reading STEPS

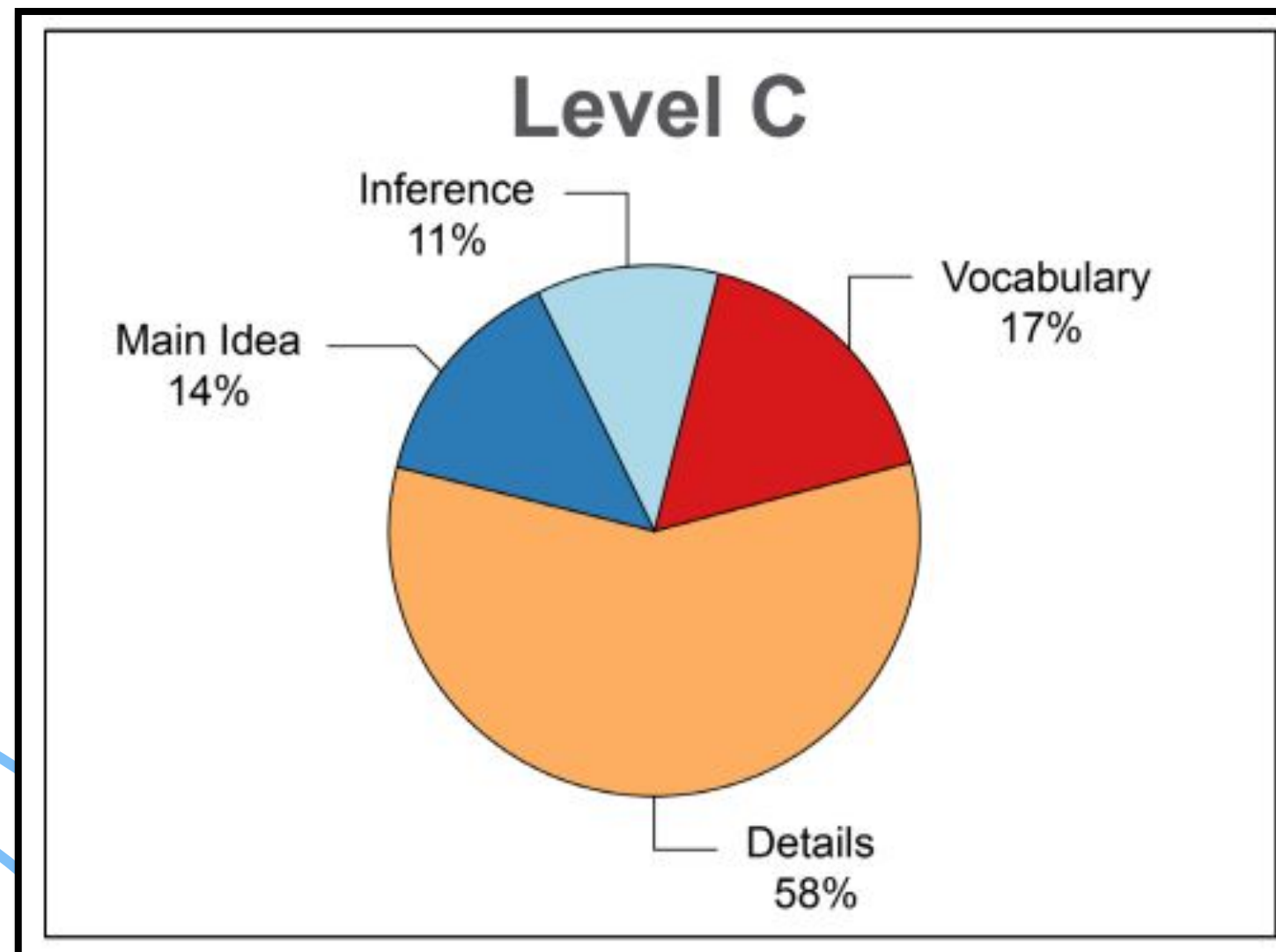
## Content Standard Blueprint: Level A



NRS Educational Functioning Levels Levels 1 and 2		English Language Proficiency Standards Level 1	
Content Areas	ELP Standard	% of test items	
<b>High-frequency Vocabulary (Pictures)</b> Photos Symbols	8	43%	
<b>High-frequency Vocabulary (Texts)</b> Words on forms Abbreviations	8	15%	
<b>Numbers</b> Time Number words Money and prices Number formatting	8	15%	
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	27%	

# Reading STEPS

## Content Standard Blueprint: Level C

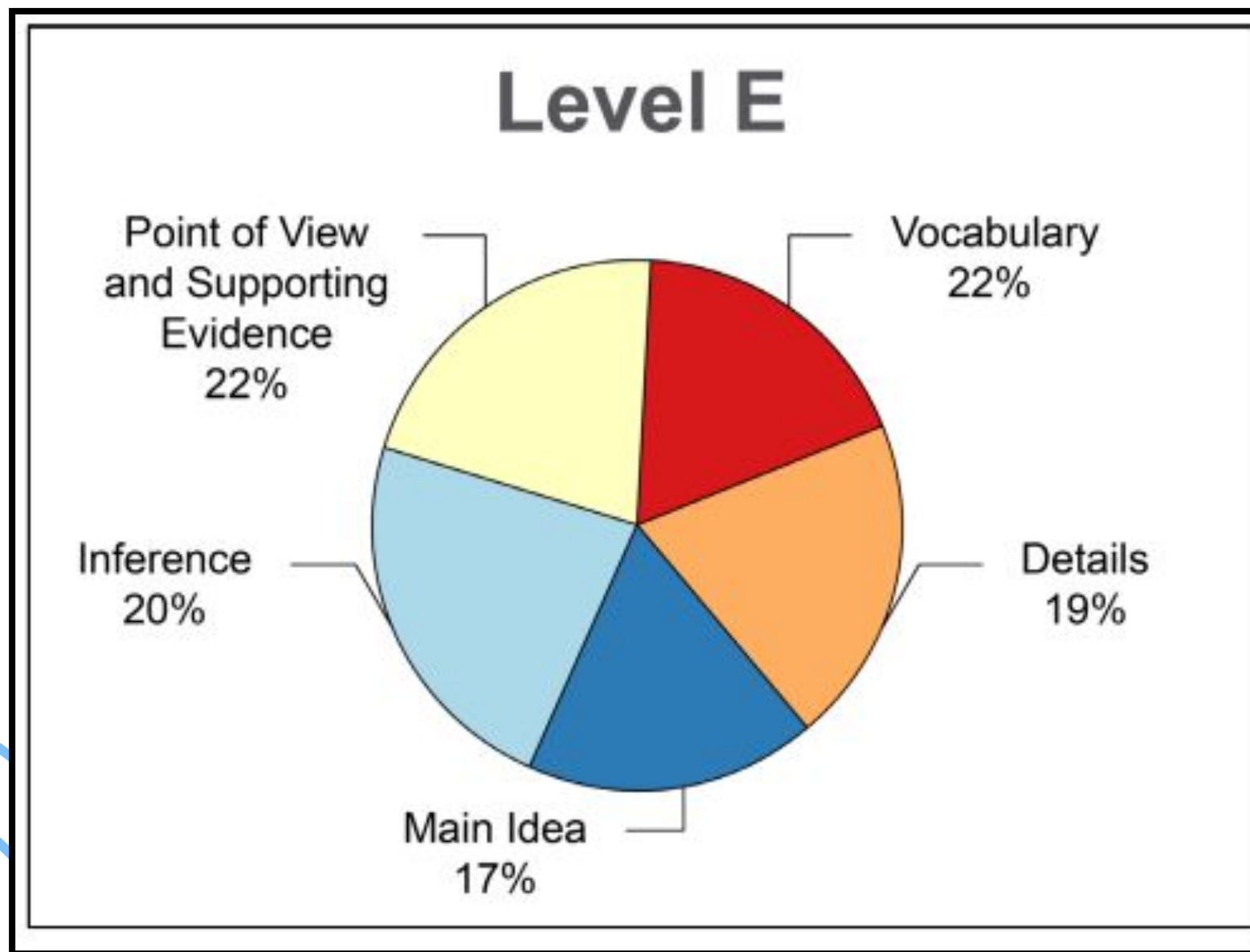


NRS Educational Functioning Levels Levels 3 and 4		English Language Proficiency Standards Levels 2 and 3	
Content Areas	ELP Standard	% of test items	
<b>Vocabulary</b> Understand high-frequency words Understand academic vocabulary	8	17%	
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	58%	
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic Identify an author's purpose	1	14%	
<b>Inference</b> Infer/Draw conclusions	1	11%	



# Reading STEPS

## Content Standard Blueprint: Level E



NRS Educational Functioning Levels Levels 5 and 6		English Language Proficiency Standards Levels 4 and 5	
Content Areas		ELP Standard	% of test items
<b>Vocabulary</b> Understand academic vocabulary Understand words with multiple meanings		8	22%
<b>Details</b> Retell key details Locate/Compare details		1	19%
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic Identify an author's purpose		1	17%
<b>Inference</b> Infer/Draw conclusions		1	20%
<b>Point of View and Supporting Evidence</b> Identify an author's point of view Identify supporting evidence		6	22%

# Reading STEPS

Multiple choice, like CASAS Life and Work Reading.

This sample item: **NRS Level 1, Beginning ESL Literacy.**

High frequency vocabulary (pictures)



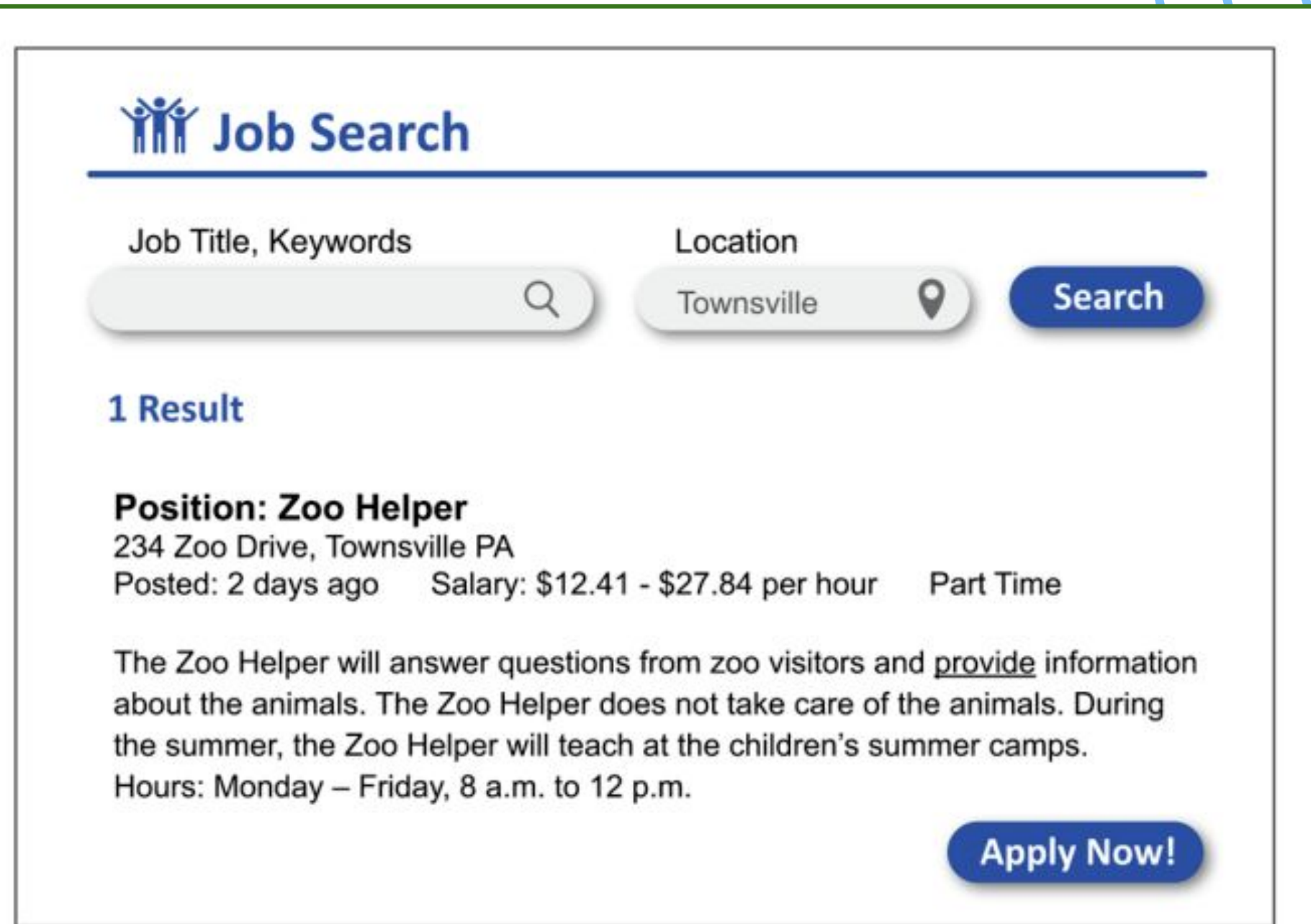
- A. shirts
- B. shoes
- C. shorts
- D. socks

# Reading STEPS

This sample item:

**NRS Level 4,  
Low Intermediate ESL**

Main idea



The screenshot shows a job search interface. At the top, there is a logo with three stylized figures and the text "Job Search". Below this, there are two input fields: "Job Title, Keywords" and "Location". The "Location" field contains "Townsville". To the right of the "Location" field is a blue button labeled "Search". Below the search fields, it says "1 Result". The result is for a "Zoo Helper" position at "234 Zoo Drive, Townsville PA". It also lists "Posted: 2 days ago", "Salary: \$12.41 - \$27.84 per hour", and "Part Time". The job description states: "The Zoo Helper will answer questions from zoo visitors and provide information about the animals. The Zoo Helper does not take care of the animals. During the summer, the Zoo Helper will teach at the children's summer camps. Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m." At the bottom right of the job listing, there is a blue button labeled "Apply Now!".

What is this information about?

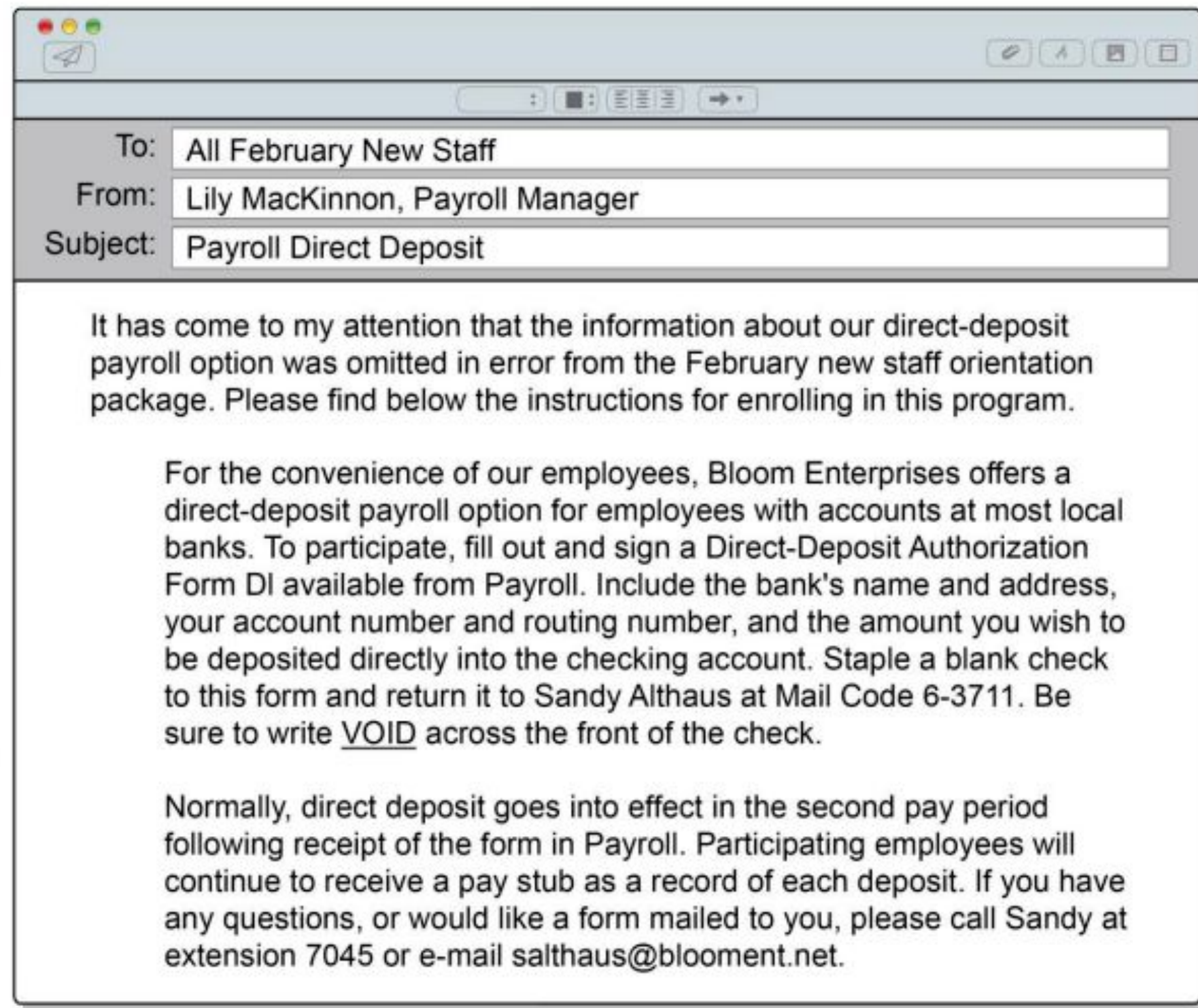
- A. a new job
- B. new summer camps
- C. the zoo hours
- D. a zoo program

# Reading STEPS

This sample item:

**NRS Level 6,  
Advanced ESL**

Main idea



The screenshot shows an email window with the following header information:

To: All February New Staff  
From: Lily MacKinnon, Payroll Manager  
Subject: Payroll Direct Deposit

The body of the email contains the following text:

1 It has come to my attention that the information about our direct-deposit  
2 payroll option was omitted in error from the February new staff orientation  
3 package. Please find below the instructions for enrolling in this program.  
4  
5 For the convenience of our employees, Bloom Enterprises offers a  
6 direct-deposit payroll option for employees with accounts at most local  
7 banks. To participate, fill out and sign a Direct-Deposit Authorization  
8 Form D1 available from Payroll. Include the bank's name and address,  
9 your account number and routing number, and the amount you wish to  
10 be deposited directly into the checking account. Staple a blank check  
11 to this form and return it to Sandy Althaus at Mail Code 6-3711. Be  
12 sure to write VOID across the front of the check.  
13  
14 Normally, direct deposit goes into effect in the second pay period  
15 following receipt of the form in Payroll. Participating employees will  
16 continue to receive a pay stub as a record of each deposit. If you have  
17 any questions, or would like a form mailed to you, please call Sandy at  
18 extension 7045 or e-mail [salthaus@blooment.net](mailto:salthaus@blooment.net).

What is the purpose of this e-mail?

- A. to correct wrong information in the staff orientation package
- B. to give Payroll enough time to process each employee's Form D1
- C. to provide information left out of the staff orientation package
- D. to explain the benefits of the company's direct-deposit payroll system

# More Reading STEPS Sample Items

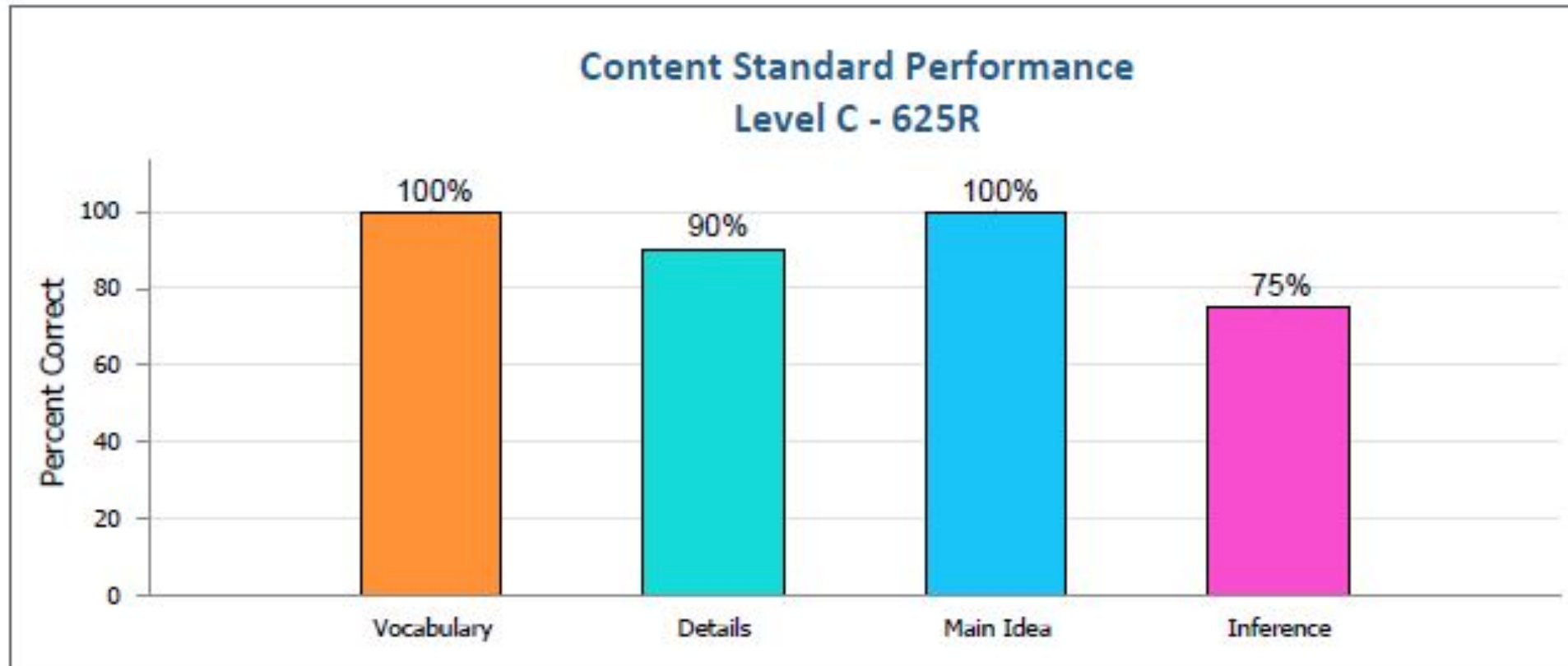
More sample items as PDFs

**CASAS Reading STEPS Sample Items**

More sample items as eTests

**CASAS Reading STEPS Sample Items**

Agency:	1000 - Trinity County Office of Education	Form:	625R - Reading STEPS Level C
Site:		Level Scale:	CASAS STEPS Reading
Class:	N/A	Form Level:	C
Teacher:	N/A	Student:	Rios, Michael A
			006012018



Content Areas	ELP Standard	N	% Correct
<b>Vocabulary</b> Understand high-frequency words Understand academic vocabulary	8	6	100 %
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	21	90 %
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic Identify an author's purpose	1	5	100 %
<b>Inference</b> Infer/Draw conclusions	1	4	75 %

# Reading STEPS

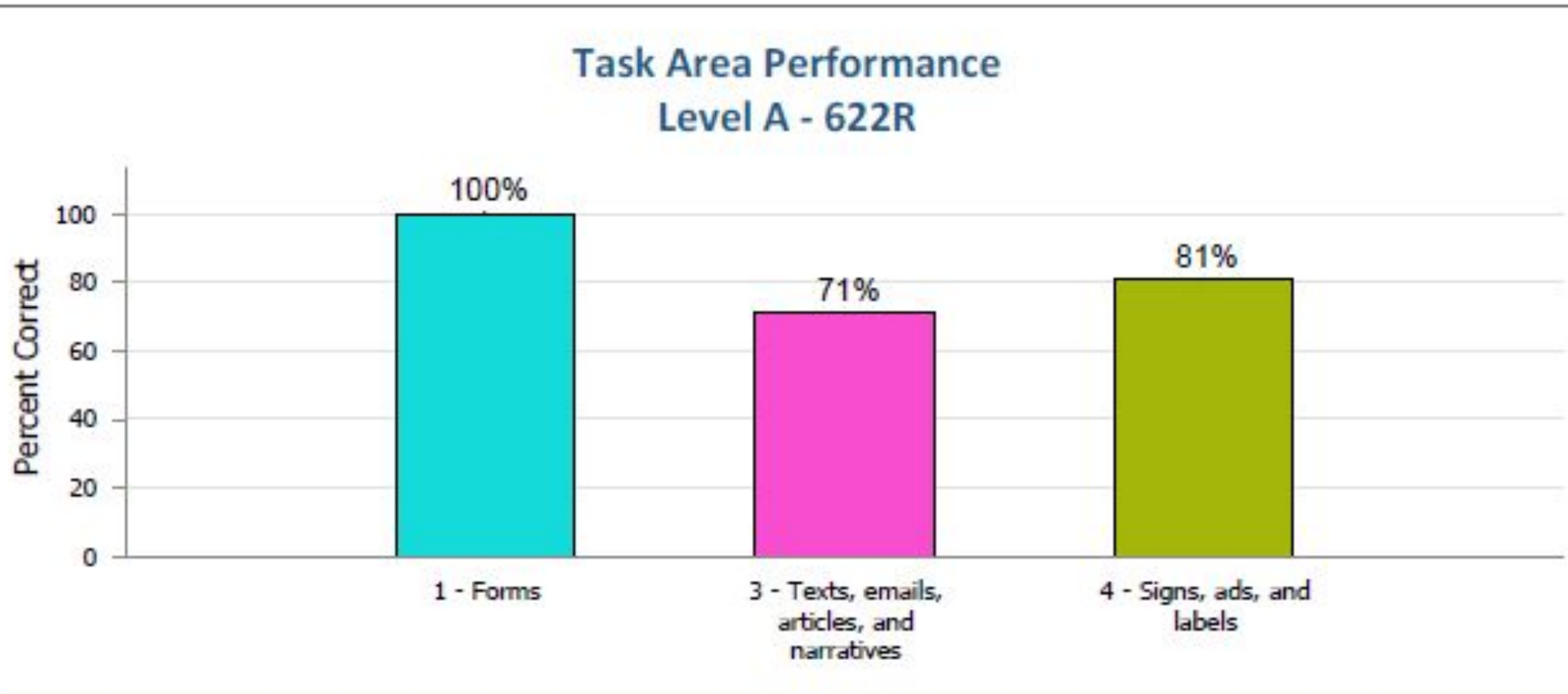
## Content Standard Report

Individual student reports are available when students take computer-based eTests.

Ask your program how to obtain them for your students.

# Reading STEPS

## Task Area Performance Report



Task Areas	N	% Correct
1 - Forms	5	100%
3 - Texts, emails, articles, and narratives	7	71%
4 - Signs, ads, and labels	21	81%

Individual student reports are available when students take computer-based eTests.

Ask your program how to obtain them for your students.

# Want to Learn More About Reading STEPS?

There is a wealth of information on the [CASAS website](#) including:

- Sample Test Items
- Content Standard Blueprints
- Competency Blueprints
- Task Area Blueprints
- Sample Reports
- And More!



# CASAS Listening STEPS

- About the Test
- Blueprints
- Sample Items
- Reports

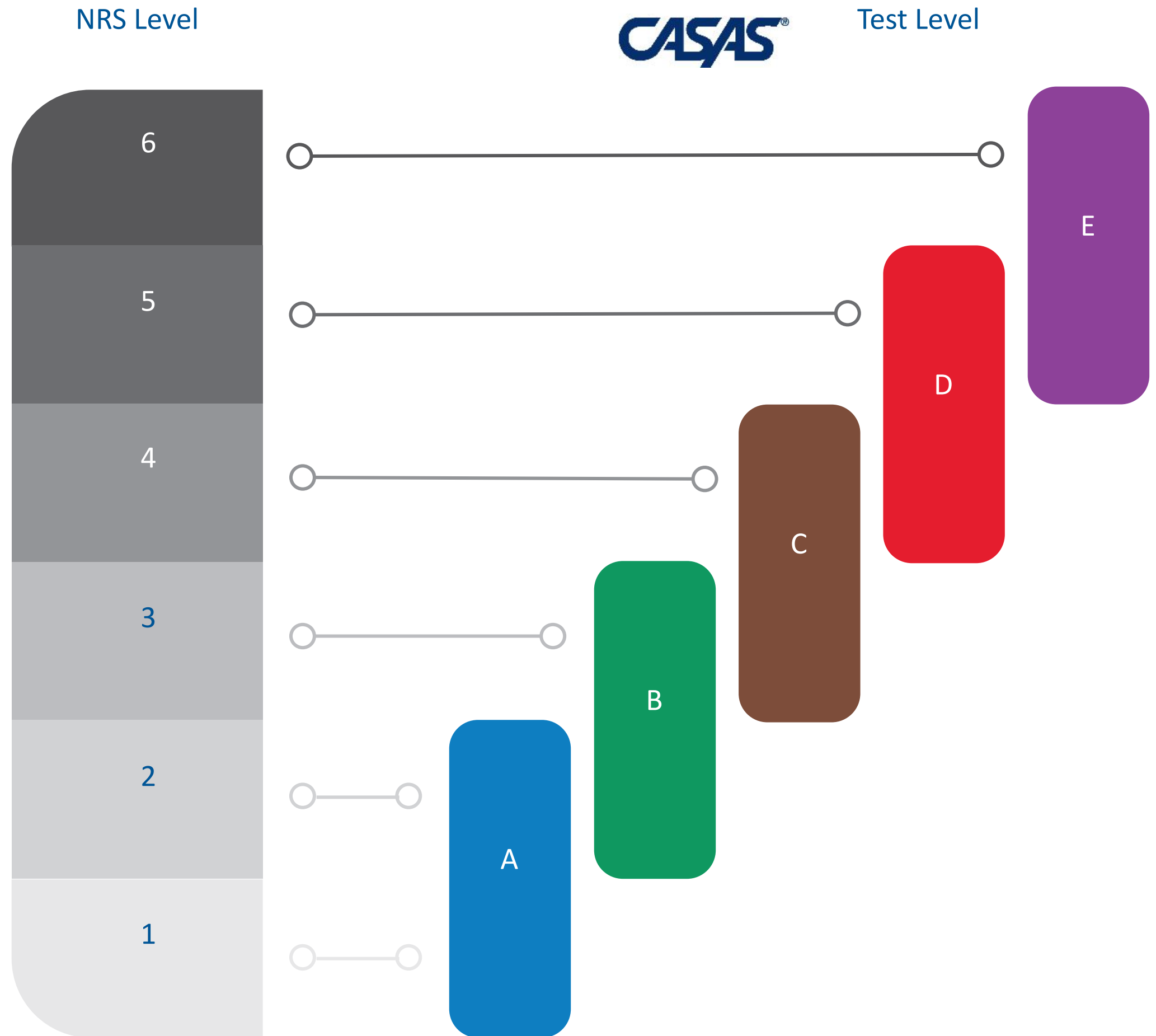
# Why might your program give Listening STEPS in FY25?

- Listening STEPS can be administered along **with Reading STEPS** to provide a more accurate picture of a student's overall language proficiency than a reading test alone.
- Listening STEPS can be administered to students who meet exit criteria on Reading STEPS to see if they are still in need of ELA instruction for aural/oral skills before transitioning to ABE or workforce instruction.

# Listening STEPS

5 Levels, A - E

Each assesses 2 NRS levels



# Listening STEPS: What is tested?

## **Content Standards**

*Skills from ELP Standards*

- Retell key details
- Continue the conversation
- Identify the main topic

## **Task Areas**

*The format of the test items*

- Details
- Dialogue
- Vocabulary
- Main Idea
- Summary

## **Competency Areas**

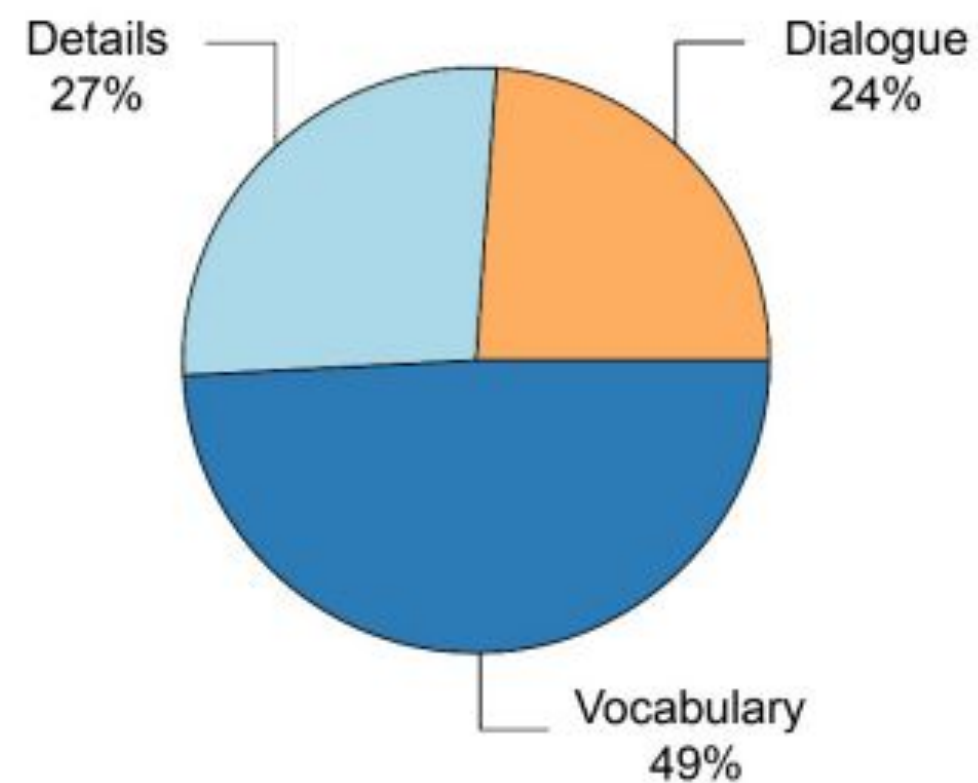
*The topics of the test items*

- Basic communication
- Consumer economics
- Community resources
- Health
- Employment
- Government & law

# Listening STEPS

## Content Standard Blueprint: Level A

### Level A



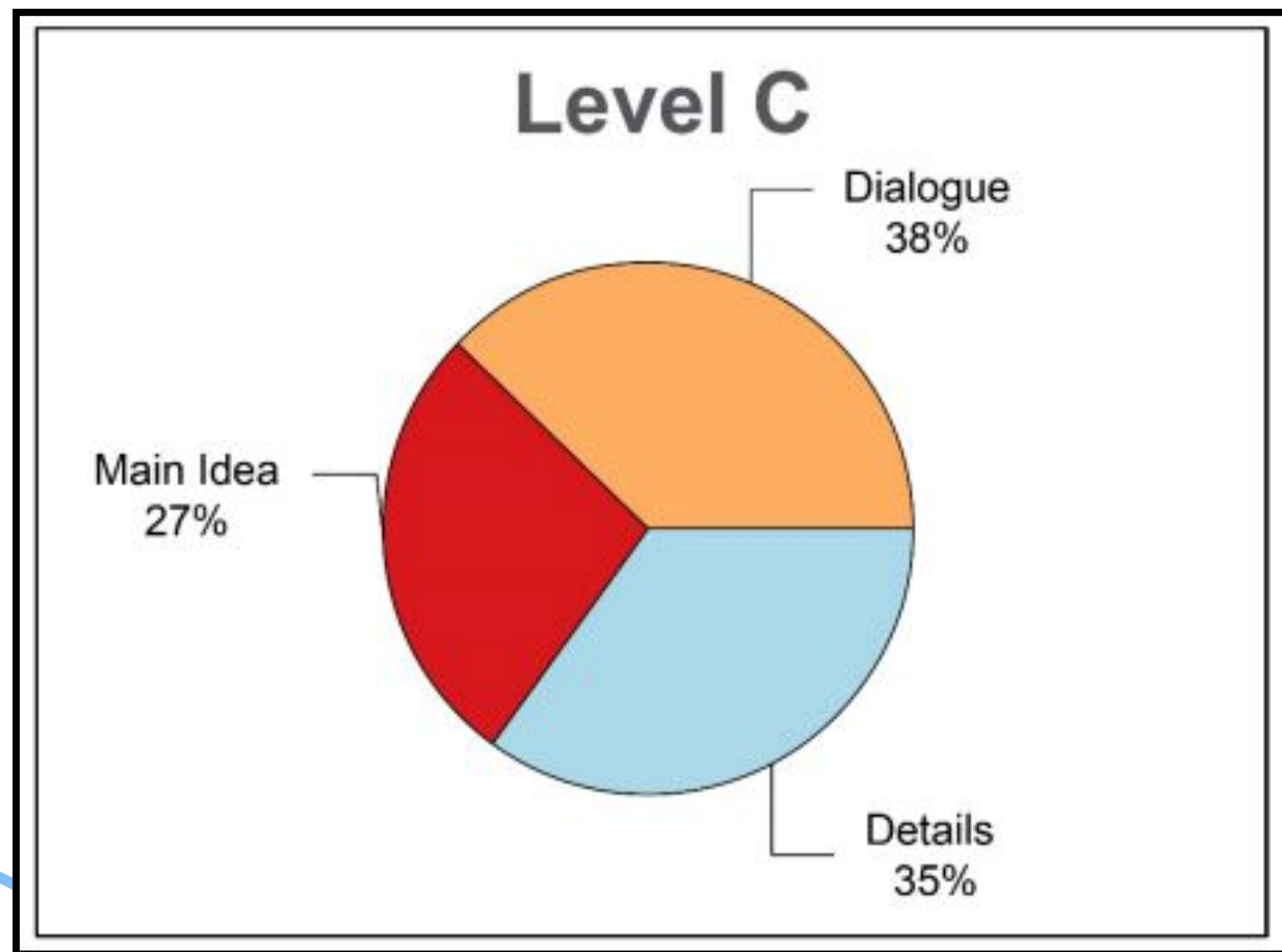
*NRS Educational Functioning Levels*  
Levels 1 and 2

*English Language Proficiency Standards*  
Level 1

Content Areas	ELP Standard	% of test items
<b>Dialogue</b> Continue the conversation	2	24%
<b>Vocabulary</b> Understand high-frequency words	1	49%
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	27%

# Listening STEPS

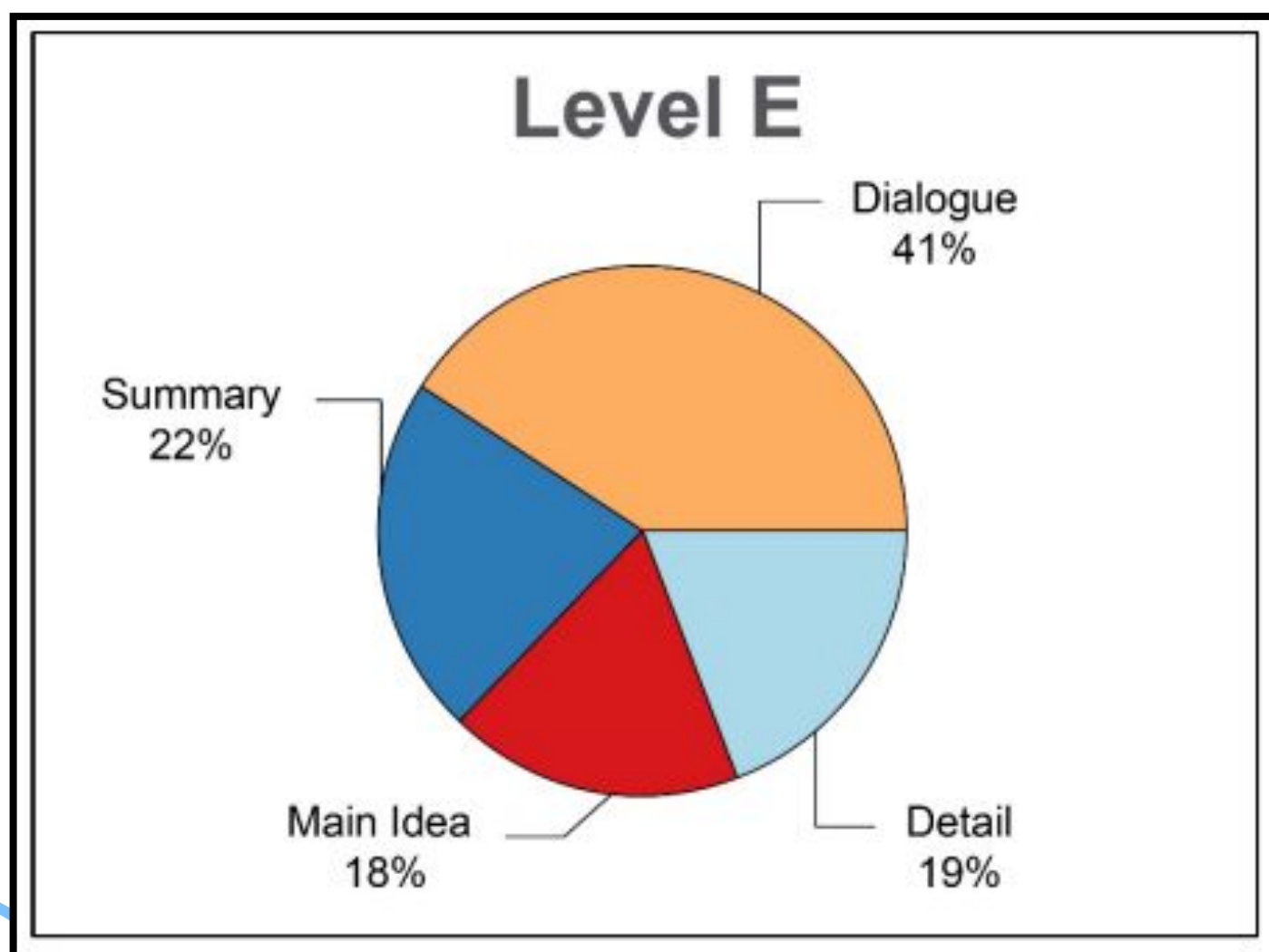
## Content Standard Blueprint: Level C



<i>NRS Educational Functioning Levels</i> Levels 3 and 4		<i>English Language Proficiency Standards</i> Level 2 and 3	
Content Areas	ELP Standard	% of test items	
<b>Dialogue</b> Continue the conversation	2	38%	
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	35%	
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic Summarize	1	27%	

# Listening STEPS

## Content Standard Blueprint: Level E



<i>NRS Educational Functioning Levels</i> Levels 5 and 6		<i>English Language Proficiency Standards</i> Levels 4 and 5	
Content Areas	ELP Standard	% of test items	
<b>Dialogue</b> Continue the conversation	2	41%	
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	19%	
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic	1	18%	
<b>Summary</b> Summarize	1	22%	

# 3 Item Types

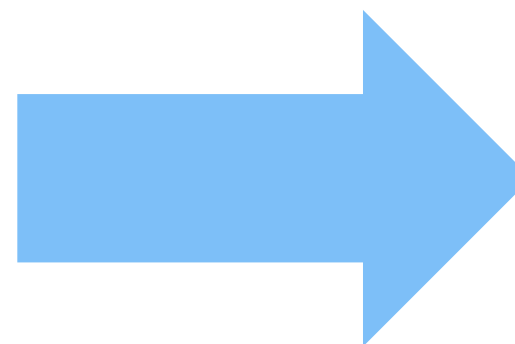
Photos



Comprehension  
Questions



Next Response  
(Continue the Conversation)





# Listening STEPS

This sample item:  
**NRS Level 1,**  
**Beginning ESL Literacy**



## Umbrella

A.



B.



C.



# Listening STEPS

This sample item:  
**NRS Level 3,**  
**High Beginning ESL**



**Where will the friends go on Saturday?**

**M:** Let's go see a movie on Saturday.

**F:** The weather should be nice. What about the park instead?

**M:** Or, we could go to a baseball game.

**F:** Good idea! Let's do that.

**Where will the friends go on Saturday?**

**A.** a movie

**B.** a park

**C.** a baseball game

Note: Students do not see this transcript; for training purposes only.

# Listening STEPS

This sample item:  
**NRS Level 6,**  
**Advanced ESL**



**F:** I didn't know that you spoke Portuguese.

**M:** I don't really. But I can understand quite a bit.

**F:** Is that because Spanish is your native language?

**M:** Yeah. Many native Spanish speakers can speak and understand some Portuguese, and the reverse is true too.

**F:**

**A.** I'm surprised you think Portuguese is easier than Spanish.

**B.** It must've been hard not understanding Spanish.

**C.** I didn't realize the languages were so much alike.

Note: Students do not see this transcript; for training purposes only.

# More Listening STEPS Sample Items

More sample items as PDFs

**CASAS Listening STEPS Sample Items**

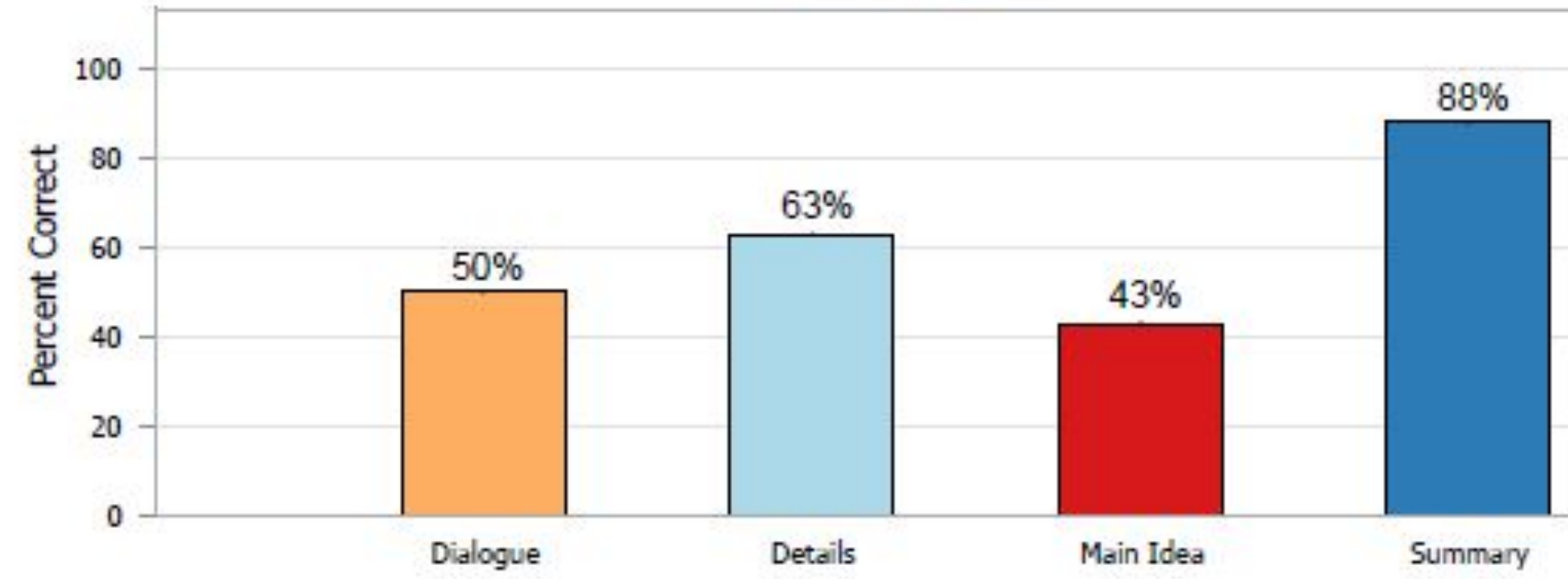
Audio files for the sample items (Zip folder)

**CASAS Listening STEPS Audio Sample Items**

The CASAS eTests Sampler has not yet been updated for Listening STEPS. However, the [CASAS Life and Work Listening eTest](#) has a very similar format: **Sample Items**

Agency:	4908 - Rolling Hills Adult School (RHAS)	Level Scale:	CASAS STEPS Listening	
Site:	1 - 1	Form Level:	E	
Class:	N/A	Student:	Last name, First Name	12120
Teacher:	N/A	Raw Score:	23	Scale Score: 222
Form:	629L - Listening STEPS Level E			

**Content Standard Performance  
Level E - 629L**



# Listening STEPS

## Content Standard Report

Individual student reports are available when students take computer-based eTests.  
Ask your program how to obtain them for your students.

English Language Proficiency Standards Listening Content Areas	ELP Standard	N	% Correct
<b>Dialogue</b> Continue the conversation	2	16	50 %
<b>Details</b> Retell key details	1	8	63 %
<b>Main Idea</b> Identify the main topic	1	7	43 %
<b>Summary</b> Summarize	1	8	88 %

*Adapted from CASAS with permission. Adult Learning Resource Center 3/1/24.*

# Want to Learn More About Listening STEPS?

There is a wealth of information on the [CASAS website](#) including:

- Sample Test Items
- Content Standard Blueprints
- Competency Blueprints
- Sample Reports
- And More!

# Core Series Aligned to the ELPS

Current editions of these core series are aligned with the ELP Standards

- Stand Out
- Step Forward
- Future
- Ventures
- Burlington English



# New Training Coming in FY25!

## **CASAS STEPS Tools for Teachers**

*Learn how to:*

- Use the [STEPS Blueprints](#) to plan standards-based instruction
- Analyze [STEPS Student Reports](#) to maximize gains

Subscribe to the [PDN Pulse](#) for announcements!