

About the SOPA: Information for Schools

The Student Oral Proficiency Assessment, or SOPA, assesses the speaking and listening proficiency of language learners in grades PreK-8. SOPA ratings range from Novice Low to Advanced High on a scale based on the 2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

Who can use the SOPA?

The SOPA can be administered in any language and used in traditional world language programs, dual language or immersion programs, heritage language programs, and Indigenous language programs.

SOPA administrators are trained via an online training program to allow students to give their best performances on the assessment and ensure the accuracy and reliability of ratings.

What is the purpose of the SOPA?

The SOPA is conducted entirely in the target language and encourages students to say as much as they can and show what they can really do in the language. It consists of a series of tasks targeted for young learners to elicit social and academic language at varying levels of difficulty. Students receive global ratings in both speaking and listening that reflect the highest proficiency levels they demonstrate at the time of testing.

What is the design of the SOPA?

The SOPA uses an interview format in which an administrator assesses a pair of students of similar proficiency levels in a friendly and conversational environment. Each pair can be assessed in 30 minutes, including 20 minutes for administration and 10 minutes for setup and rating between sessions.

The SOPA has two tracks, or sequenced series of tasks, that begin with an easy activity that students can complete successfully, increase gradually in difficulty, extend just beyond the students' comfort level to check if their highest proficiency levels have been demonstrated, then return to an easier activity at their comfort level to wind down the assessment. Track 2 includes more tasks and can measure a higher level of proficiency than Track 1.

How are SOPA results used?

Results from the SOPA provide an evaluation of student proficiency in speaking and listening and rating justifications for reporting and giving feedback. SOPA results can be used to:

- support placement of students into appropriate classes or programs,
- assess student performance at the end of a unit, class, or program,
- inform curriculum development, instructional planning, and grading,

- evaluate program effectiveness,
- communicate with stakeholders about learning outcomes, and
- comply with accountability reporting requirements.