Module 3: SOPA Tracks and Tasks

What are the goals of this module?

In this module, you will learn about:

- how to select the appropriate SOPA track for your students
- the SOPA tasks; and
- how to develop scripts using the SOPA task templates.

Part 1: Selecting the SOPA Track

What are the SOPA tracks?
There are two tracks that you can select for the SOPA to provide an appropriate level of difficulty and length of test for your students. The SOPA tracks indicate the sequence of tasks that will be administered.

Track 1 is recommended for students expected to perform at or below the Intermediate Mid proficiency level and/or for students enrolled in traditional world language programs, such as Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) programs. Track 2 is recommended for students expected to perform above the Intermediate Mid proficiency level and/or students enrolled in dual language or immersion programs. These tracks differ in both the total number of tasks administered and the highest level of proficiency, or "ceiling," that the tasks probe. The ceiling for Track 1 is Intermediate Mid and the ceiling for Track 2 is Advanced High.

What tasks are included in the SOPA tracks?
The SOPA has a numbered series of tasks that increase gradually in difficulty. To put students at ease, the SOPA begins with a Warm Up and ends with a Wind Down, neither of which are rated. These unrated tasks are designed to set a positive tone for students during the assessment so that they start the SOPA knowing what they will need to do and end with an easier activity that they can complete successfully.

The full list of SOPA tasks for Track 1 is:

- Warm Up
- Task 1: The Magic Bag
- Task 2: All About You
- Task 3: Describe a Scene
- Wind Down

The full list of SOPA tasks for Track 2 is:

- Warm Up
- Task 1: The Magic Bag
- Task 2: All About You
- Task 3: Describe a Topic
- Task 4: Story Retelling

- Task 5: School Rules
- Wind Down

What does Track 1 look like?
In addition to the unrated Warm up and Wind Down activities, Track 1 includes three tasks.

Following the Warm up, Task 1: The Magic Bag elicits speech at the Novice Low to Novice High proficiency levels. Students progress to Task 2: All About You, which targets the Novice Mid to Intermediate Low levels, then Task 3: Describe a Scene, which targets Novice High to Intermediate Mid. When Task 3 is complete, students do the Wind Down to end the assessment with a simple and enjoyable activity.

What does Track 2 look like?
In addition to the unrated Warm up and Wind Down, Track 2 includes five tasks. The first two tasks are the same as for Track 1.

Following the Warm up, Task 1: The Magic Bag elicits speech at the Novice Low to Novice High proficiency levels. Students progress to Task 2: All About You, which targets the Novice Mid to Intermediate Low levels. Students then move on to Task 3: Describe a Topic, which targets Novice High to Intermediate Mid, Task 4: Story Retelling, which targets Intermediate High to Advanced Mid, and Task 5: School Rules, which targets Advanced Low to Advanced High. The administrator may end the assessment after Task 3, Task 4, or Task 5 based on the level of student responses. When the last task is complete, students do the Wind Down to end the assessment with a simple and enjoyable activity.

When administering Track 2, you may choose to end the assessment early after Task 3 or 4 for younger learners, or if you observe that students are struggling with the current task. In the task template for Tasks 3 and 4 of Track 2, you can find instructions about ending the assessment early in the "Next Task" section.

When do I select the track?
You need to select the SOPA track in advance because the track dictates the sequence of tasks to be administered during the assessment. Selecting the SOPA track before the start of SOPA administration allows you to organize the scripts and materials for that set of tasks and helps make the assessment appropriately challenging for students while offering them the opportunity to show what they can do with the language.

Within your program, it may be appropriate to administer both Track 1 and Track 2 to different pairs of students based on their expected proficiency levels. In these cases, it is important to pair students of similar levels, and you must still select the SOPA track for each pair before beginning the assessment. See Module 4 for more information about pairing students.

How do I select the track?
To select the appropriate SOPA track, think about your students' developmental and proficiency levels as well as your program type. In looking at all of these factors, we recommend that you prioritize proficiency level over program type. For example, if you are working with students in a dual language program, but you expect them to perform below the Intermediate Mid proficiency level, Track 1 may be more appropriate than Track 2.

If you are not sure which track to use, follow the guidelines in this chart.

First, ask yourself, "Do I expect my students to perform above the Intermediate Mid proficiency level?" This level of performance may be more common for students in dual language or immersion programs, but the estimated or previously assessed proficiency level of individual students is a more important factor than your program type. If the answer is yes, select Track 2.

If you do not expect students to perform above the Intermediate Mid proficiency level, think about your classroom activities. Do you have your students describe academic topics, narrate stories, or express and defend their opinions? Choose Track 2 if your students have worked on and shown their ability to use these language functions. If not, choose Track 1.

Part 2: SOPA Tasks

What do the SOPA tasks look like?
Click on each box to see a description of each task in each track and information about the task purpose and language expectations for students.

- Warm Up – The administrator greets the students and explains what they will do during the assessment.
  - Purpose: Establish instructions and a positive tone.
  - Language expectations: Does not target specific language and is not rated.
- Task 1: The Magic Bag – The administrator shares a bag of related objects and asks students to interact with and answer questions about the objects.
  - Purpose: Follow basic commands and respond to questions.
  - Language expectations: Single words or short phrases using familiar vocabulary.
- Task 2: All About You – The administrator asks students a series of informal questions about themselves. An alternate template for Task 2 uses extra visuals and a puppet to ask the questions in order to engage younger learners.
  - Purpose: Respond to questions on familiar topics.
  - Language expectations: Words, phrases, and short sentences using familiar vocabulary.
- Task 3: Describe a Scene – The administrator shares a scene with objects or people that can be moved around and asks students to interact with and describe the scene.
  - Purpose: Follow and give basic commands and describe.
  - Language expectations: Phrases and sentences.
- Wind Down – The administrator engages students in a simple and fun activity, thanks them, and provides a small reward for participating.
  - Purpose: End with students feeling positive and comfortable.
  - Language expectations: Does not target specific language and is not rated.
- Warm Up – The administrator greets the students and explains what they will do during the assessment.
  - Purpose: Establish instructions and a positive tone.
  - Language expectations: Does not target specific language and is not rated.
- Task 1: The Magic Bag – The administrator shares a bag of related objects and asks students to interact with and answer questions about the objects.
  - Purpose: Follow basic commands and respond to questions.

- Language expectations: Single words or short phrases using familiar vocabulary.
- Task 2: All About You – The administrator asks students a series of informal questions about themselves. An alternate template for Task 2 uses extra visuals and a puppet to ask the questions in order to engage younger learners.
  - Purpose: Respond to questions on familiar topics.
  - Language expectations: Words, phrases, and short sentences using familiar vocabulary.
- Task 3: Describe a Topic – The administrator shares images of an academic topic and asks students to describe what is shown in the images.
  - Purpose: Describe an academic topic.
  - Language expectations: Phrases and sentences.
- Task 4: Story Retelling – The administrator shares a picture book that depicts a familiar story and asks students to take turns telling the story.
  - Purpose: Narrate actions in the past.
  - Language expectations: Connected sentences or paragraph-level speech.
- Task 5: School Rules – The administrator shares three school rules and asks students to present their opinion of one rule and explain their reasons.
  - Purpose: Express and support an opinion.
  - Language expectations: Paragraph-level speech with organized and detailed language.
- Wind Down – The administrator engages students in a simple and fun activity, thanks them, and provides a small reward for participating.
  - Purpose: End with students feeling positive and comfortable.
  - Language expectations: Does not target specific language and is not rated.

What is included in the SOPA task templates?

This training program includes templates for all SOPA tasks so that you can develop your own SOPA scripts that are adapted for your students and teaching context. You can access these templates in the Resource Library.

The SOPA task templates provide the following information:

- Purpose – Describes how students are asked to demonstrate their listening comprehension and oral fluency through the task.
- Language Functions – Describes what students need to do with the language in order to successfully complete the task.
- Proficiency Level(s) – Describes the range of proficiency levels targeted by the task in terms of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.
- Language expectations – Describes the length and complexity of language that students are anticipated to produce in response to the task.
- Materials – Describes all required and optional materials such as pictures and manipulatives used to administer the task.
- Length of time –Describes approximately how long the task will take to administer.
- Administration Tips – Provide guidance on how to select and prepare materials, choose among options in the template, and script questions for your students.
- Instructions – Provides detailed information about what you should do and say throughout the task, including optional follow-up questions.

- Next Task – Names the next task to administer in the selected track, including instructions for how to select the next task based on student responses for Track 2, Tasks 3 and 4.

Check for learning

Complete the following check for learning to see what you have learned in this part of the module.

1. True or False: You can decide which SOPA track to use during administration based on students' responses.
2. What is included in the SOPA task templates? Select all that apply.
3. Why are the Warm Up and Wind Down tasks not rated?

Part 3: Developing Scripts for SOPA Tasks

What is the relationship between the SOPA task templates and the SOPA task scripts?
We provide a SOPA task template in English that you can then take and adapt into a script for your program. The script is everything you will say written out in the target language and is tailored to your program and your students. You create the script from the SOPA task template. It is important to use scripts to standardize administration of the SOPA and ensure the reliability of the assessment.

How do I use SOPA task templates to develop scripts?
The SOPA task templates include all information that you need to develop scripts in the target language that are appropriate for your classroom and the students to be assessed. The first page of each template provides general information about the task and guidance for administration. The Instructions section on the second page of the template is where you will write your task script.

In this section, black text provides context for what to do during each part of task administration. Blue text indicates the instructions and questions you need to script in the target language and say aloud to your students. Red text provides samples of questions to use in the script, including follow-up questions to elicit additional language if needed based on student responses.

Use the SOPA task templates to script everything you will say and do during the task, then confirm your script is complete and aligned to the template. You can create multiple scripts for a task to address different materials and topics that interest your students. For example, you may have multiple scripts for Task 1: The Magic Bag that reference different types of objects. After your scripts are developed, try them out with a colleague to make sure the scripts work as expected and ask for suggestions for improvement.

Click here to see example scripts for SOPA tasks. These scripts are for assessments conducted in English; remember that the blue text is always written in the target language.

The template for Task 2: All About You requires you to select two topics and script three questions to ask the students for both topics. The topics and questions can be taken from the samples shown in red, or you can write your own. In this script for Task 2, the teacher has chosen colors and pets as topics that are familiar and interesting for the students being assessed. The script shows the three specific questions to ask each student in order, first about colors and then about pets.

The template for Task 4: Story Retelling requires you to select eight pages in a picture book that is familiar to students. While the questions to ask students about each page are already scripted, there are

also sample follow-up questions to elicit additional language. In this script for Task 4, the teacher has selected Goldilocks and the Three Bears as the book to share with students. The script also specifies two characters that may be named in the follow-up questions to ask how the little girl and the bear felt when different things happened in the story.

What should I think about when developing scripts?
To develop scripts that give your students their best chance to show what they are capable of doing in the target language, think about the characteristics of your students, the content and materials they have encountered in your classroom, and what is practical for test administration.

As you develop scripts, consider the following questions:

- What are your students' ages and developmental levels?
- What are your students' backgrounds and connections to the culture(s) associated with the target language?
- What topics or concepts are your students familiar with?
- What materials and resources are available to you?
- What linguistic and cultural elements do you want to include?

How can I adapt the SOPA tasks for younger learners?
It is important to make sure that SOPA tasks are engaging and positive for students in early elementary grades.

Overall, use your scripts to create a fun and positive experience that will help younger learners give their best performances. Think about what topics your students will most enjoy talking about and which materials they will most enjoy interacting with.

Use age-appropriate manipulatives and materials that students are familiar with to put them at ease and encourage interaction with the administrator. You may wish to use additional visuals to make questions more interesting for younger learners and support their understanding of the tasks. Visit the SOPA Resource Library on the main website and see the alternate template for Task 2: All About You in the SOPA task templates for a model of using puppets to engage these students.

How can I adapt the SOPA tasks for dual language/immersion programs?
Dual language and immersion programs incorporate both language and content instruction. When using the SOPA in these programs, you can script tasks to address specific content-area topics and language that have been covered in the classroom. For example, if students receive instruction in science in the target language, choose topics and materials that align with science topics they have learned about. This may be particularly relevant in creating scripts for Task 3: Describe a Topic and Task 4: Story Retelling. These tasks are part of Track 2, and as shared in the first part of this module, it may be appropriate to select Track 2 to administer the SOPA to students in dual language or immersion programs.

How can I adapt the SOPA tasks for LCTL, Indigenous, or heritage language programs?
It is important to make sure that SOPA tasks reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of your students. When using the SOPA in less commonly taught, Indigenous, or heritage language programs, you may want to script tasks to ensure that the topics, materials, and resources being used reflect different language varieties and the unique cultural perspectives associated with the language being taught. It is

also important to think about students' backgrounds and experiences related to the language and culture when adapting tasks to ensure that all learners have an equitable and positive experience during the assessment.

Reflection/Discussion

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on what you have learned in this module.

The questions for reflection and discussion are:

- Which SOPA track would you select for your students? Why?
- What information about student backgrounds and practical concerns should you consider in adapting the SOPA to meet the needs of your program?
- What considerations (e.g., student age, cultural background) will you take into account when developing SOPA scripts?

Conclusion

What did we cover in this module?

As a reminder, in this module you learned about:

- how to select the appropriate SOPA track for your students
- the SOPA tasks; and
- how to develop scripts using the SOPA task templates.

What should I do now?

Now that you have completed Module 3, you should think about which SOPA track would be most appropriate for the students in your program, review the SOPA task templates, think about what will be important in your context when developing scripts, and consider ways in which you might want to adapt the tasks to meet the needs of your students and your program.

Visit the SOPA Resource Library on the main website to download information to help with selecting SOPA track and using SOPA task templates under the "Resources for SOPA tasks" section. You will also find sample SOPA task scripts in English, Spanish, and Chinese there.

When you are ready, complete the Check for Learning for this module and then move onto the next module, Module 4: Administering the SOPA. While we recommend that everyone review this module, if you are only going to be rating the SOPA, you may choose to skip ahead to Module 5: Rating the SOPA

Check for learning

Complete the following check for learning to see what you have learned in this part of the module.

1. What should you consider when creating scripts for SOPA tasks? Select all that apply.
2. Lucy teaches first grade students in a Korean dual language program. She has observed that most of her students are performing around the Novice High level. Which SOPA track should she use to assess this class?
3. Which of the following supports can help make SOPA tasks interesting and engaging for young learners? Select all that apply.