

English Placement Test
University of Denver
Administered by the English Language Center at DU

The English Placement Test consists of two, two-hour sessions and is conducted by the faculty of the DU English Language Center (ELC). Students do not need to study in advance for the test because of the style of testing used.

How is the reading/writing portion of the English Placement Test administered?

During a two-hour segment, all students are asked to:

- read an academic text about a general topic of interest to all students,
- briefly describe the main idea of the article in their own words,
- write a reaction essay in response to the article.

The reading and essay are completed using paper and pencil without dictionaries, cell phones or any other electronic devices.

Each essay is reviewed by two ELC instructors to assess the student's ability to clearly state the main idea of the article and respond to it in an essay that can be easily understood by a native speaker of English. The components that the instructors look for are:

- ability to organize thoughts in a general academic essay style
- ability to develop and support ideas and thoughts
- ability to reference the source text appropriately – paraphrasing, quoting, etc.
- ability to use word forms, vocabulary, and complex sentence structures at a reasonable level of sophistication appropriate for university study
- ability to use correct sentence structure, word order, grammar, punctuation, sentence variety, and transitions. We do not hold students accountable for more superficial errors such as comma use, minor spelling errors, etc.

How is the speaking portion of the English Placement Test administered?

During a two-hour segment, students are divided into groups of 12-15 students with an ELC instructor and complete the tasks below.

- The group of 12-15 students is divided into smaller groups of 3-5 students
- Each smaller group of 3-5 students read a Case Study about an academic or classroom culture issue centered on topics such as plagiarism, communication with professors, etc.
- The members of the group discuss the case study with the other students in the small group using guided questions provided by the instructor
- As a group, the students decide how to present the case study to the other 8-10 students in the larger group – each member of the smaller group must have a specific role in presenting
- The students present the case study to the other students who have all read different case studies and do not know the topic

As the students read, discuss and present, the instructor assesses each student's speaking fluency, pronunciation, comprehensibility, ability to participate in a discussion group, ability to understand the other students and the instructor, and their ability to ask and answer questions.

Why do students need to test?

The results of the English Placement Test are used for:

- possible referral to the English Language Center to complete further English language studies before continuing at DU
- **or** placement into a supplemental English language support course (ENGG 1191-Advanced Writing for International Students) and/or a specialized First Year Seminar Course.

What is the Advanced Writing for International Students Course (ENGG 1191)?

This course aims to equip students with the necessary writing, reading, critical thinking and speaking skills they need in order to succeed in their studies at the University of Denver and beyond. The content of the course includes readings and discussions about the U.S., education, and academic cultural issues as a springboard for various writing tasks aimed to improve students' ability to adequately express themselves in writing.