



Global Scale of English Learning Objectives



“

What I value most about this Pre-Primary set of objectives is that it helps you to notice and recognise the worth of all the seemingly small steps which go towards the gradual acquisition of language. It's both reassuring and inspirational.”

*Jeanne Perret,
ELT author and publishing professional*

Global Scale of English Learning Objectives: making learning more effective

This document introduces the Global Scale of English (GSE) Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners. These Learning Objectives have been developed by Pearson English in collaboration with teachers, ELT authors and language experts from around the world. They form the backbone of our mission to ensure that our products and services have a positive and measurable impact on learners' lives.

In order to learn English as effectively and efficiently as possible, a learner (and their parents or carers) need to know three things:

- What level is my English?
- Am I making progress?
- What should I aim to learn next to meet my long-term goals?

To answer these three questions, learners and teachers need the following as part of an overall English learning ecosystem:

- A clear and precise definition of what it means to be at a particular 'level' of proficiency
- English teaching and learning materials which are aligned to the 'level' definitions
- An assessment tool designed to profile a learner's proficiency across all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening

The GSE Learning Objectives form part of the first point above: providing an accurate definition of what it means to be at a particular 'level' on a scale of English language proficiency.



The Global Scale of English represents the most significant advance in performance-based approaches to language learning, teaching and assessment since the development of the Common European Framework of Reference.”

David Nunan Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Applied Linguistics, University of Hong Kong

Five sets of GSE Learning Objectives have been developed to meet the needs of specific audiences: Pre-Primary (aged under 6 years old), Young Learners (6-14), General Adult Learners, learners of Academic English and Professional English. For more information about our work in this field, please visit pearsonenglish.com/gse.

We welcome feedback from teachers and ELT practitioners who have experience of working with pre-primary learners. Please let us know your thoughts here: pearson.com/english/contact-us.

The Global Scale of English

The Global Scale of English (GSE) is a standardised, granular scale which measures English language proficiency. Unlike some other frameworks which describe attainment in broad bands, the Global Scale of English identifies what a learner can do at each point on the scale across speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

The scale is designed to motivate learners by giving more granular insight into learning progress.

The Global Scale of English serves as a standard against which English language courses and assessments worldwide can be benchmarked, offering a truly global and shared understanding of proficiency levels.

The GSE Learning Objectives are mapped to the Global Scale of English and describe what a learner can do at different levels of proficiency on the scale. Using the Global Scale of English, teachers can match a student to the right course materials to suit their exact level and learning goals.

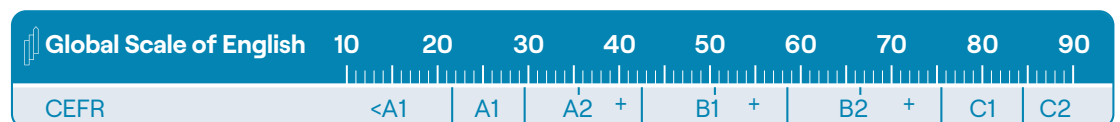
For more information about how using the Global Scale of English can support planning and teaching, assessment of your learners, and in creating additional materials to supplement your core programme please go to pearsonenglish.com/gse.

Extending the CEFR to Pre-Primary Learners

The project to develop GSE Learning Objectives builds upon the research carried out by Brian North (North, 2000) and the Council of Europe in creating the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). This research targeted adult and young adult learners and provides a solid framework for extending the set of learning objectives to include additional learning objectives (Can Do statements) specific to particular adult audiences. As part of the GSE project, we have developed additional GSE Learning Objectives for both Academic and Professional English.

The CEFR, however, was never created with the youngest learners in mind, although many have tried to adapt it with varying degrees of success. This is why we at Pearson English have carried out new research, following the model of the CEFR, to create a similar proficiency framework that specifically targets learners aged 3–5.

The Global Scale of English itself has been aligned to the CEFR following the psychometric principles and procedures used in developing the CEFR – and all new GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners are given a GSE value on this same scale. In this way, learners can chart their proficiency and progress across ages and stages of development – from pre-primary school to higher education and learning in the workplace.



In developing the GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners, we have created learning objectives that support a granular definition of language proficiency – enabling teachers to establish clear learning goals for their students, parents to understand more clearly what their children are learning, and perhaps most importantly, ensuring that learners are aware of the small increases being made in their proficiency. All students – and especially young learners – are much more motivated when they can see that progress is being made.

Creating a Proficiency Framework for Pre-Primary Learners

The research project to create a proficiency framework for pre-primary learners has focused on the age group 3–5 learning English as a second language in the classroom environment. This document outlines our findings to date and forms part of an ongoing research project.

We are aware that many tasks are inaccessible to pre-primary learners not only until they reach a certain level of English but also until they reach a certain stage of cognitive development. Moreover, there isn't a simple correspondence between chronological age and stage of cognitive development – it varies from individual to individual. The current findings reported in this document do not take into account cognitive development in pre-primary learners. Our initial research, however, suggests a high degree of correlation between the difficulty of a learning objective on the Global Scale of English and the age at which teachers think that children can perform the task. This makes intuitive sense, given that cognitive development largely equates with greater ability to think in an abstract and symbolic way, and that the higher-level descriptors are usually related to abstract and symbolic, rather than concrete tasks. This is, however, an area that still requires further research.



This new Pre-Primary set of learning objectives is an extremely valuable resource for different stakeholders in the language teaching community. It can help teachers plan and organise lessons, it provides useful guidelines for materials developers as well as useful and relevant information for all members of the educational community.”

Leonor Corradi, Lecturer in English Language Education at the IES en Lenguas Vivas Juan Ramón Fernández and ISP Joaquín V. González, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pre-primary and young learners: similarities and differences

The GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners are aimed at learners of English aged 3–5 who are studying English as a foreign language and/or using English as a medium of instruction in the preschool environment. They are generic, in the sense that they are applicable to all learners in the domain of pre-primary education, whether the learners are studying English as a subject in itself or as a general medium of instruction for other subjects.

The GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners are similar to the GSE Learning Objectives for Young Learners in that they cover the emerging language skills. For that reason, both sets in the CEFR ranges of below A1, A1 and A2 often focus on specific and limited language activities, giving learners many opportunities to move forward in their learning journey by properly mastering the fundamentals of the English language in a step-by-step manner.

The two GSE Learning Objective sets differ in that the Pre-Primary one further divides some of the objectives into even smaller steps, scaffolding the learning to adjust it to the pre-primary pace. While other GSE Learning Objectives may remain similar across the sets, the Pre-Primary one is also considerably smaller and spans fewer CEFR levels.

It is also important to emphasise that not all learners will aim for the same GSE Learning Objectives at the same time. The Pre-Primary set is generic and designed to delineate the most likely path for very young learners who are also expected to continue learning English at the next stages of their education, with the use of the remaining sets of the GSE Learning Objectives. As a result, some educators may find that not all Pre-Primary Learning Objectives fit their curriculum; for example, some of the Reading or Writing objectives may not be used in those parts of the world where children only learn to read and write at the primary school level. In such cases, the Pre-Primary GSE Learning Objectives covering Listening and Speaking can still be used successfully to support teaching and assessment.

Finally, it is worth reiterating how both the Pre-Primary and Young Learner GSE Learning Objectives differ from the three sets of GSE Learning Objectives for Adults:

1. Both sets of younger learners are developing intellectually and cognitively at the same time as they are learning English, unlike adult learners, who have already reached full cognitive development when they start.
2. Whilst adults can use English in the same contexts as they use their native languages (work, travel, socialising, entertainment, etc.), younger children mainly use English in the classroom – particularly if they are studying in a country where English is not widely spoken, and their parents do not speak English.

Context of use: classroom v. real world

Following the intentions of the CEFR, two practical assumptions guided the creation of the GSE Learning Objectives for adult learners:

- i. that learners generally have goals for their language learning and aim to apply their skills in the real world, even though these skills may be acquired in a classroom, and
- ii. that the development of the ability to function effectively in an English-speaking setting is one of learners' main underlying motivations – if not their only motivation.

This means that for adult learners the classroom setting can be treated for both instruction and assessment purposes as a surrogate for the real world. Adults already have all the extra-linguistic knowledge, experience and skills needed to perform a wide range of real-world tasks; they just have to 'graft on' the necessary second language skills.

For young learners, however, the classroom does not function as a surrogate for real-world language use, at least initially, and is generally the main context in which they use English. Classroom activities like games and songs form a large part of the initial curriculum for the youngest learners (before they move on to more real-world surrogate activities), and teachers often look at their pupils' performance in these when assessing their progress.

Early language development and ‘scaffolding’

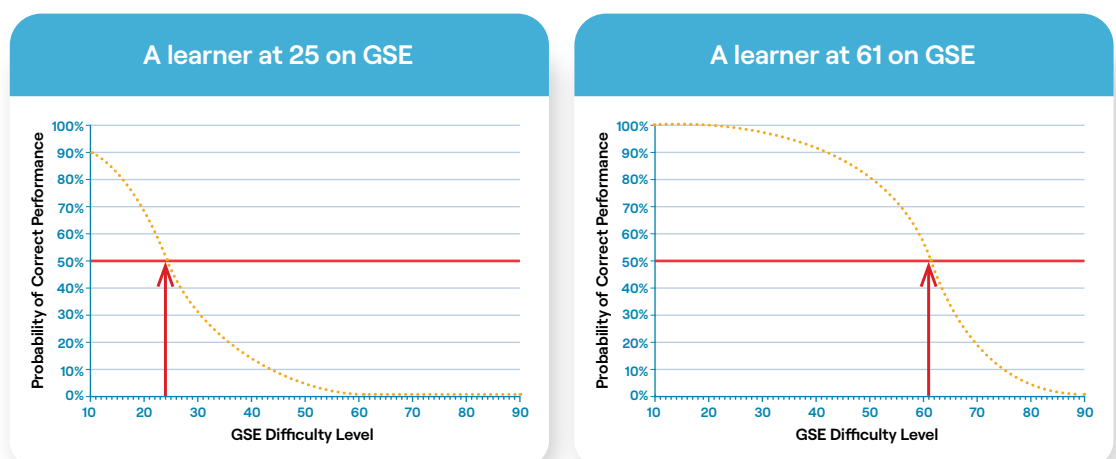
It has been widely accepted since the days of Vygotsky (1978) and Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976) that children require active support and engagement from adults in order to develop in terms of language and cognition. Teachers will generally ‘scaffold’ tasks for younger children; creating structures and frameworks around them which are progressively removed or loosened as the child grows in proficiency. This detailed support, which pre-primary learners need and which adults can generally do without, is reflected in the GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners.

This support can take many forms, according to the child’s age and level of English and the nature of the language task; for example, step-by-step prompts to support a short, simple dialogue. We have avoided using generic terms like ‘support’ and ‘scaffolding’ in the descriptors, choosing instead to specify the support involved (e.g. “if provided with pictures”, “given a model”). The degree and nature of support becomes a factor in assessing the difficulty of the task and hence the level of English required to perform it. The same task may occur several times, with several different degrees of ‘support’. This accurately reflects the way in which young learners progressively acquire mastery of English.

What it means to be at a level

Learning a language is not like learning mathematics or electrical engineering, where each topic builds upon a previous one in a sequence. Language learning is not necessarily sequential, and a learner might be strong in one area, where they have had a lot of practice or a particular need or motivation, but quite weak in another.

For that reason, to say that a learner is ‘at’ a certain level on the Global Scale of English does not mean they have necessarily mastered every GSE Learning Objective for every skill up to that point. Neither does it mean that they have mastered none at a higher GSE level. If a student is assessed as being at 61 on the scale, **it means s/he has a 50% probability of being able to perform GSE Learning Objectives at that level**, a greater probability of being able to perform GSE Learning Objectives at a lower level, and a lower probability of being able to perform GSE Learning Objectives at a higher level. Language learning is unique to every individual.



Informing teaching materials

Authors, editors and teachers are increasingly aware of the need to be learner-focused and to create syllabuses and courses that reflect learner needs and expectations. The GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners constitute a detailed and graded model of student target performance across a range of skills and domains.

Pearson content writers are using the GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners as the foundation for the development of all new teaching and learning materials. The GSE range of the learning objectives used to create the core book content is shown on the back of the coursebooks.

In the example below, taken from My Disney Stars and Friends (Level 1), the Pre-Primary GSE Learning Objective used to guide Lesson 4 is *Can use cardinal numbers up to ten.*

Lesson 4 • Numbers

Four

Lesson aims

- to recognize and count *four*
- to review *one, two, and three*

Target language

- four

Recycled language

- one, two, three

Main GSE Learning Objective

- Can use cardinal numbers up to ten.

Future Skills

- Persistence and growth

Materials

- Number Cards
- Mickey Mouse puppet

Extra resources

- four each of several different items, e.g., four blocks, crayons, books, pencils, etc.
- four toy tenpins or plastic bottles
- a ball

Lesson 4 • Numbers
Four

1 2 3

4

1 7.7 Listen and say. 2 7.8 Numbers Cheat and move. 3 Climb. 4 Reading Play.

Lesson 4 • Numbers
Four

4

1 Point and say. 2 Trace. 3 Mark four. 4 Color.

7.7

One, two, three, four!
Four.

One, two, three, four!
Four.

One, two, three, four!
Four.

One, two, three, four!
Four.

7.8 Numbers

Four, four, number four!
Four, four, number four!
Four, four, number four!
Four balls!
Four teddy bears!
Four blocks!
One, two, three, FOUR!

GSE Summary Descriptions

The following summary descriptions describe what a pre-primary learner can be expected to know at different levels on the GSE. These descriptions were used to support teachers who were rating new GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners.

GSE 10–21 (below A1)

The Global Scale of English 10–21 is equivalent to the pre-A1 level on the CEFR. At this stage, learners are developing awareness of the sound system of English as distinct from the sound system of their first language; of sound-symbol relationships in English; of the alphabet and print conventions in English (e.g. capitalisation and basic punctuation) and spelling of simple words. They need extensive support in the form of simplified input, slow clearly articulated speech, repetition, and help with meaning, e.g. pictures, objects, gestures or translation.

At this level, learners

- Can understand basic familiar words related to their immediate surroundings and classroom instructions if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures or gestures.
- Can repeat one- and two-syllable words correctly.
- Can use a few basic words and phrases to show politeness.
- Can write the letters of the alphabet in upper and lower case.

GSE 22–29 (A1)

The Global Scale of English 22–29 is equivalent to the A1 level on the CEFR. At this stage, learners begin to generate basic language independently, rather than relying solely on memorised chunks. They have a basic repertoire of mostly concrete words describing objects around them, simple phrases and functional language related to personal details, routine everyday situations, and very familiar topics, including topics related to school subjects. As Basic users, they are dependent on simplified input, clear, slow speech and structured support e.g. visuals, cues, prompts, written models etc.

At this level, learners

- Can follow slow, clearly articulated speech, with pausing and repetition by the other person.
- Can understand most of what is said if delivered clearly, slowly and directly in simple routine everyday exchanges.
- Can communicate using simple phrases, basic sentence patterns and fixed expressions.
- Can answer simple questions on familiar topics using a few words or short sentences.
- Can write phrases and simple isolated sentences

GSE 30–35 (A2)

The Global Scale of English 30–35 is equivalent to the A2 level on the CEFR. As Basic users, learners still need simplified language input and structured support as they broaden their knowledge and understanding of English. They continue to be mostly dependent on the other speaker modifying their speech in terms of speed and clarity in order to make comprehension and meaningful interaction possible, but show increasing control and confidence. This level may not be a goal for many Pre-Primary learners but may be taken as a stretch for high achievers. We provide a limited set of GSE Learning Objectives at this level, assuming that students will continue their learning at the primary school level with the GSE Learning Objectives for Young Learners.

At this level, learners

- Can follow short, simple social exchanges spoken slowly and clearly.
- Can communicate limited information related to everyday situations.
- Can understand the descriptions of people, places and possessions in simple terms.
- Can read common words with irregular spelling.

Sources and origins of the Learning Objectives

The communicative descriptors that make up the GSE Learning Objectives for Pre-Primary Learners were created for this project, following the model of descriptors contained in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). For the purposes of copyright, all descriptors are coded:

(P) Pearson descriptor

GSE Learning Objectives

Reading

GSE 10–21/Below A1: Reading

- 14 Can recognise a few high-frequency upper case letters of the alphabet. (P)
- 15 Can recognise a few high-frequency lower case letters of the alphabet. (P)
- 18 Can recognise a few high-frequency initial consonant sounds in familiar words (e.g. /s/ in 'sun'; /p/ in 'pencil'). (P)
- 20 Can recognise initial short vowel sounds in familiar written words (e.g. /a/ in 'apple', /e/ in 'egg'). (P)
-

GSE 22–29/A1: Reading

- 22 Can read some simple high frequency words from their spelling, if supported by pictures (e.g. 'brother', 'mum'). (P)
- Can recognise single, familiar everyday words if supported by pictures. (P)
- 25 Can read some simple high frequency function words in a sentence (e.g. 'This', 'is', 'my' in the sentence 'This is my brother.'). (P)
- 27 Can recognise words for common shapes. (P)
- 28 Can understand basic sentences naming familiar everyday items, if supported by pictures. (P)
-

GSE 30–35/A2: Reading

- 31 Can read some common words that have irregular spellings. (P)
-

Listening

GSE 10–21/Below A1: Listening

-
- 10 Can recognise cardinal numbers up to five if they also have them written as numbers (e.g. '1', '2', '3'). (P)
Can understand basic fixed expressions for greeting and leave-taking (e.g. 'Hello', 'Goodbye'). (P)
-
- 12 Can understand some basic polite expressions (e.g. 'please', 'thank you', 'sorry', 'excuse me'). (P)
-
- 13 Can recognise cardinal numbers from six to ten if they also have them written as numbers (e.g. '6', '7', '8'). (P)
Can recognise the names of a few letters of the alphabet. (P)
Can follow short basic classroom instructions addressed slowly and clearly, if supported by pictures or gestures (e.g. 'Come in', 'Sit down'). (P)
Can understand some basic expressions of praise (e.g. 'Very good', 'Well done'). (P)
-
- 18 Can recognise a few high-frequency initial consonant sounds in familiar words (e.g. /s/ in 'sun'; /p/ in 'pencil'). (P)
-
- 19 Can understand some basic, familiar words related to their immediate surroundings if spoken slowly and clearly and given visual support. (P)
Can recognise the names of the letters of the alphabet. (P)
-
- 20 Can understand short, simple questions about things that are in their immediate surroundings, if addressed slowly and clearly (e.g. 'What's this/that?'). (P)
-
- 21 Can recognise the relationship between the name of a letter and its sound, with support. (P)
Can understand cardinal numbers up to 20. (P)
Can understand short simple questions about personal information if spoken slowly and clearly (e.g. 'What's your name?', 'How old are you?'). (P)
-

GSE 22–29/A1: Listening

-
- 22 Can recognise the sounds of the letters of the alphabet. (P)
Can follow basic classroom instructions. (P)
Can understand basic action words (e.g. 'clap', 'stamp', 'jump', 'walk'). (P)
-
- 23 Can understand a limited range of short basic phrases and sentences about things in their immediate surroundings. (P)
Can recognise initial consonant sounds in familiar words. (P)
Can recognise isolated words related to familiar topics, if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures or gestures. (P)
-
- 24 Can recognise familiar words and phrases in short, simple songs or stories, given visual support and some repetition. (P)
Can recognise short vowel sounds in familiar one-syllable words (e.g. /a/ in 'dad', /e/ in 'pen'). (P)
-
- 25 Can recognise familiar words in short phrases and sentences spoken slowly and clearly, if supported by pictures or gestures. (P)
Can recognise the basic intonation pattern for commands. (P)
-
- 26 Can identify a few familiar words in short, simple dialogues, if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
Can understand basic questions about what things are in their immediate surroundings or in pictures (e.g. 'What's this?'). (P)
-

-
- 27 Can recognise familiar key words and phrases in short, basic descriptions (e.g. of 'objects', 'people' or 'animals'), if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
-
- Can recognise familiar words and phrases in short, simple songs or chants. (P)
-
- Can understand simple phrases about likes and dislikes. (P)
-
- 28 Can understand basic information about familiar topics if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures. (P)
-
- Can get the gist of a simple song, if supported by pictures or gestures. (P)
-
- Can understand a few basic words and phrases in a story that is read aloud to them. (P)
-
- Can recognise the intonation pattern of simple wh questions (e.g. 'What's your name?'). (P)
-
- Can understand the main information when people introduce themselves (e.g. 'name', 'age', 'where they are from'). (P)
-
- 29 Can understand familiar words and phrases in short, simple descriptions of objects or people, if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
-
- Can recognise two-consonant clusters at the beginning of short, familiar words (e.g. br in 'bread', bl in 'blue'). (P)
-
- Can recognise the intonation pattern of simple yes/no questions (e.g. 'Is that your book?'). (P)
-
- Can recognise the intonation pattern of short phrases, yes/no and wh questions. (P)
-
- Can identify everyday objects, people or animals in their immediate surroundings or in pictures from short, basic descriptions (e.g. 'colour', 'size'), if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
-

GSE 30–35/A2: Listening

- 30 Can understand basic information about someone's immediate family, if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures or gestures. (P)
-
- Can understand basic statements about where things or people are, if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures or gestures. (P)
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- Can understand basic phrases about the weather, if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
-
- 31 Can recognise the intonation pattern of individual words and short phrases (e.g. 'I have two sisters'). (P)
-
- 32 Can identify people in their immediate surroundings or in pictures from a short, simple description of their physical appearance and clothes. (P)
-
- Can understand basic information about someone's house or flat (e.g. 'rooms', 'furniture'), if spoken slowly and clearly and supported by pictures. (P)
-

Speaking

GSE 10–21/Below A1: Speaking

10	Can repeat one-syllable words correctly. (P)
11	Can repeat single words if spoken slowly and clearly. (P)
14	Can use cardinal numbers up to ten. (P) Can pronounce a few high-frequency initial consonant sounds (e.g. /m/, /n/, /p/, /t/). (P)
15	Can use a few basic words and phrases to show politeness (e.g. 'please', 'thank you'). (P) Can repeat two-syllable words correctly. (P)
17	Can pronounce some familiar individual words when given prompts. (P) Can name a few high-frequency letters of the alphabet. (P) Can pronounce simple one or two syllable words correctly, with support and some repetition. (P) Can name a few everyday objects. (P)
19	Can introduce themselves using a basic phrase (e.g. 'My name's ...'). (P)
20	Can pronounce some simple combinations of letters accurately (e.g. ch, sh, th). (P)
21	Can use cardinal numbers up to twenty. (P)

GSE 22–29/A1: Speaking

22	Can pronounce familiar, individual words with the correct stress when given prompts. (P) Can sing a simple song, if supported by pictures. (P)
23	Can pronounce most consonants at the beginning and in the middle of familiar words. (P)
24	Can use simple expressions to react to situations (e.g. 'Look!', 'Wow!', 'Great!'). (P) Can say short phrases and sentences with the correct intonation, (e.g. 'I like apples.', 'I'm six.'). (P) Can repeat simple expressions with appropriate intonation. (P) Can say how they feel, using a limited range of common adjectives (e.g. 'happy', 'cold'). (P)
25	Can make a few basic requests related to immediate personal needs (e.g. 'Can I go to the toilet?', 'Can I have a pen, please?'). (P)
26	Can answer simple questions about very familiar topics, if delivered slowly and clearly. (P) Can use simple contractions (e.g. 'I'm six.', 'He's my brother.'). (P)
27	Can express immediate needs using simple language (e.g. 'I want a drink', 'I need a pen'). (P)
29	Can express likes and dislikes in relation to familiar topics in a basic way. (P)

Writing

GSE 10–21/Below A1: Writing

-
- | | |
|----|---|
| 10 | Can trace straight and wavy lines and shapes. (P) |
| | Can copy straight and wavy lines and shapes. (P) |
| | Can trace the upper case letters of the alphabet. (P) |
| | Can trace the lower case letters of the alphabet. (P) |
| | Can copy lower case letters of the alphabet. (P) |
| 11 | Can copy upper case letters of the alphabet. (P) |
| 12 | Can write their name with the correct spelling. (P) |
| 13 | Can write individual letters. (P) |
| 14 | Can write the letters of the alphabet in upper case. (P) |
| | Can trace familiar words. (P) |
| | Can write 1 - 10 as numbers. (P) |
| 16 | Can write the letters of the alphabet in lower case. (P) |
| | Can trace simple words and phrases in upper and lower case. (P) |
| 17 | Can write 1 - 20 as numbers. (P) |
| 21 | Can write words in the correct order from left to right. (P) |
-

GSE 22–29/A1: Writing

-
- | | |
|----|---|
| 22 | Can use a capital letter when writing a short sentence. (P) |
| 25 | Can write short sentences leaving appropriate spaces between words. (P) |
| | Can use a full stop when writing a short sentence. (P) |
| | Can write 1 - 100 as numbers. (P) |
-

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in English.**