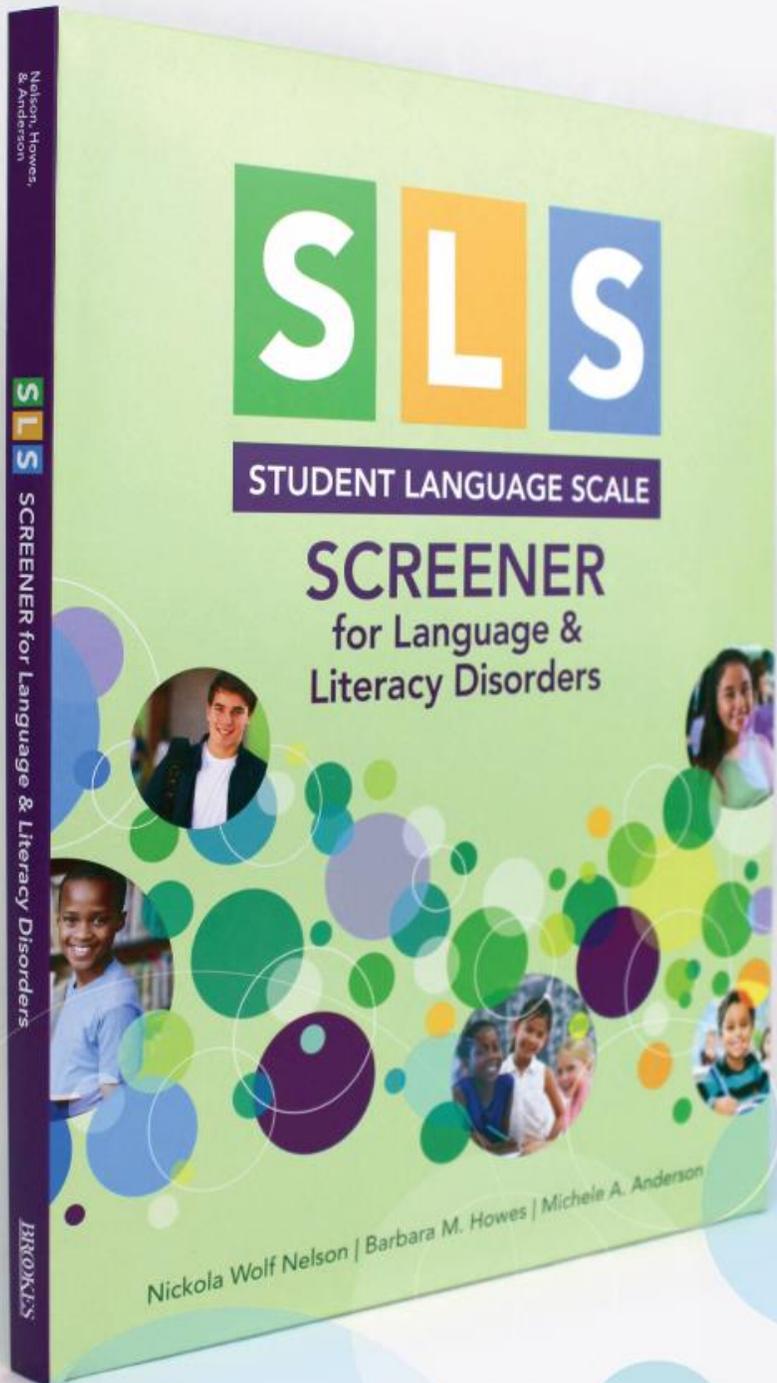


Screen students ages 6–18 years for  
language & literacy disorders, including dyslexia

[LEARN MORE](#)

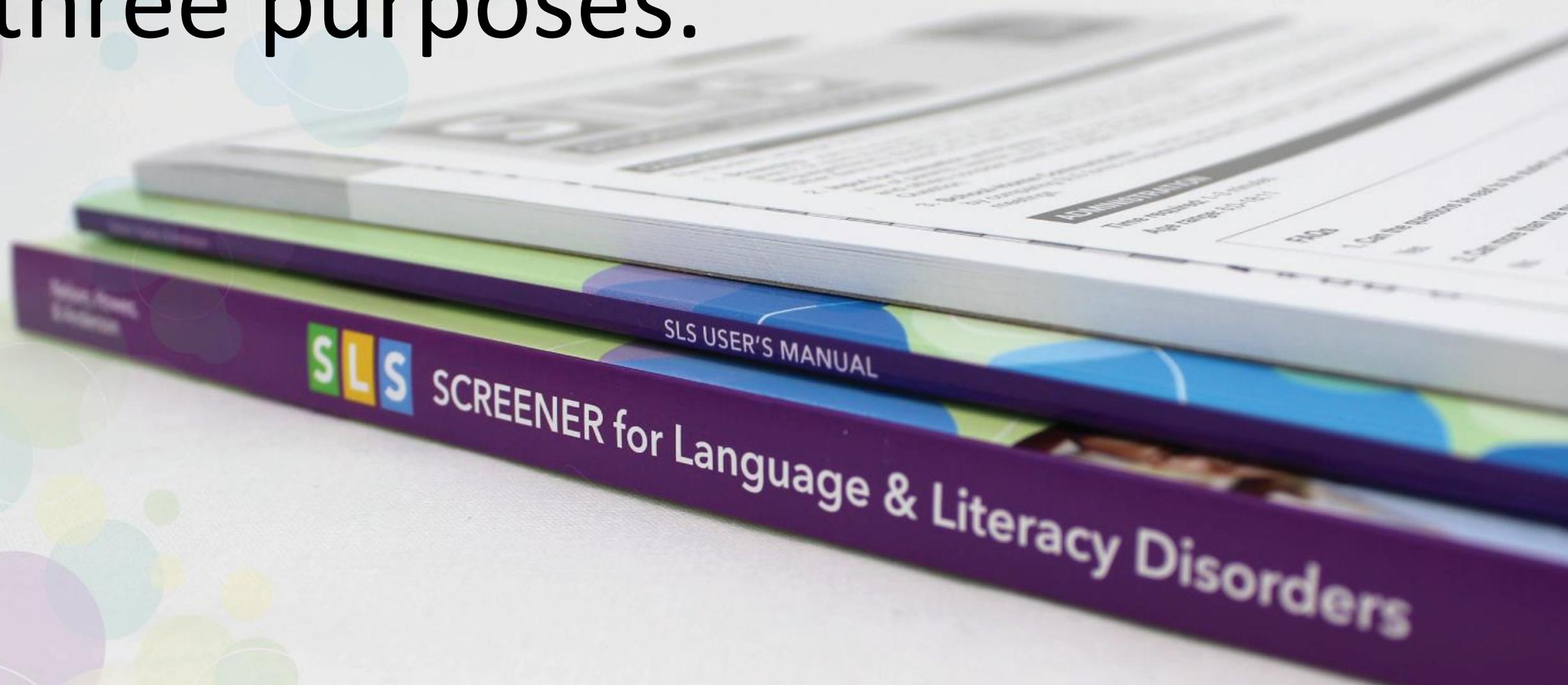
The SLS screener is an evidence-based questionnaire and screener that gathers input about a student's language & literacy skills from parents, teachers, and students.





Used with an entire classroom or with individual students, the SLS gathers valuable information about strengths and needs—so you can plan next steps for students at risk for disorders.

The SLS has been validated for three purposes.





# Screening

The SLS can accurately identify students who should be evaluated further for a language/literacy disorder.

# 1

## Screening

The SLS can accurately identify students who should be evaluated further for a language/literacy disorder.

Sensitivity and specificity for screening with the SLS are strong for ratings made by teachers and parents.

	Sensitivity	Specificity
Teachers	.90	.90
Parents	.85	.83

## CHAPTER 4

# Reliability and Validity of the Student Language Scale

In evaluating assessment instruments, evidence is needed to determine whether a tool is reliable in its consistency and valid for its stated purposes (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014). In this section, we describe evidence that the Student Language Scale (SLS) measures the constructs and content it purports to measure (validity) and does so consistently (reliability).

### SCIENTIFIC METHODS

First, we summarize methods used to evaluate the scientific evidence for reliability and validity of the SLS. According to traditional test theory, establishing validity of an assessment instrument includes procedures for identifying the constructs the tool will measure and the content for doing so (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014).

### Theoretical Models and Expert Consultation

In early planning for the SLS, we considered how to gather information that could be gained from ethnographic interviews of teachers, parents, and students, which could serve as a precursor to curriculum-based language assessment and intervention (Nelson, 2010). We also considered how school social workers use ethnographic interviewing to gain insights into multiple perspectives when interviewing parents and teachers, as contributed by coauthor Barbara Howes, Ph.D., LMSW. In addition, we outlined the key constructs to be rated with the SLS by referring to the language levels-by-modalities model for the co-normed *Test of Integrated Language and Literacy Skills™* (TILLS™; Nelson, Plante, Helm-Estabrooks, & Hotz, 2016a).

The next step was to generate a set of preliminary content items to represent the targeted constructs. To refine early versions of the SLS, we followed this step by consulting a panel of interdisciplinary scientific experts and parents regarding content of the scale (see the Appendix for acknowledgements). This group included experts who could comment on the cultural-linguistic appropriateness of candidate SLS items for a diverse population of students and families.

The quantitative analysis methods were planned in consultation with TILLS co-author Elena Plante, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, and standardization project design and analysis expert E. Brooks Applegate, Ph.D. Many of the analyses described in this chapter were conducted by Dr. Applegate.

17

Excerpted from Student Language Scale (SLS) User's Manual  
by Nickola Wolf Nelson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL, Barbara M. Howes, Ph.D., LMSW, & Michele A. Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP.  
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For more information on the research behind the SLS, download the free technical excerpt.

[bit.ly/sls-validity](https://bit.ly/sls-validity)

Validity	Specificity
	.90
	.83



## **Gather input for evaluation & planning**

The SLS can be used to gather input about a struggling student's strengths and needs from multiple sources.



## 2

# Gather input for evaluation & planning

The SLS can be used to gather input about a struggling student's strengths and needs from multiple sources.

This meets the requirements of IDEA (PL-108-446) to gather parent and teacher input as part of evaluation and planning activities for students with special needs.

# 3

## School-home communication

Professionals can compare SLS forms at meetings such as parent-teacher conferences to enhance school-home communication for students at all ability levels.

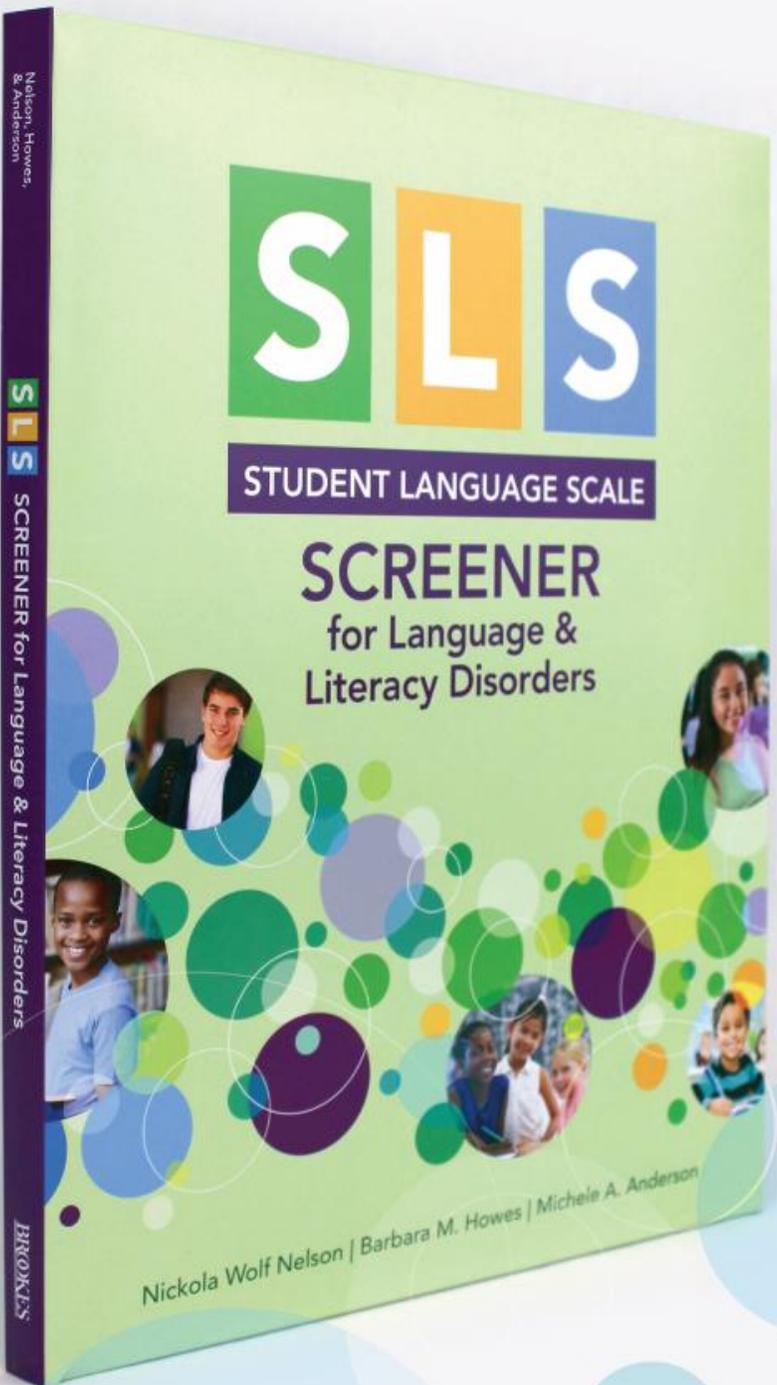




# Fast & easy

Teachers, parents, and students each complete the one-page SLS individually in just 3 minutes or less.

Administration and scoring is simple—a pencil and paper are all you need.

The image shows the box for the SLS Screener Kit. The box is light green with a purple spine. At the top, the letters 'SLS' are displayed in large, colorful blocks (green, orange, blue). Below this, the text 'STUDENT LANGUAGE SCALE' is written in white on a purple background. The main title 'SCREENER for Language & Literacy Disorders' is in a dark blue font. The box features several circular photos of diverse students and a teacher. At the bottom, the authors' names 'Nickola Wolf Nelson | Barbara M. Howes | Michele A. Anderson' are listed. The spine of the box has the 'SLS' logo and the title 'SCREENER for Language & Literacy Disorders' written vertically. The publisher's name 'BROOKLYN' is at the bottom of the spine. The box is shown at an angle, and the background of the slide has decorative overlapping circles in shades of blue, green, and purple.

# The SLS Screener Kit includes:

- One User's Manual
- 50 Student Language Scale forms
- One Quick Start Guide

# Student Language Scale

# SLS



Nickola Wolf Nelson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL  
 Barbara M. Howes, Ph.D., LMSW  
 Michele A. Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

This Student Language Scale may be used with the Test of Integrated Language and Literacy Skills™, other assessment tests, or as a stand-alone measure to gather multiple perspectives on a student's language/literacy abilities and other skills.

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person responding:  General education teacher  Special education teacher  
 Student  Parent/guardian

Demographic information about the student and respondent who is filling out the SLS.

## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good	1	2	3	4	5	6	Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking								
3. Figuring out new words when reading								
4. Spelling words correctly when writing								
5. Understanding a story when listening								
6. Telling a story that makes sense								
7. Understanding a story when reading								
8. Writing a story that makes sense								
9. Following spoken directions								
10. Being organized about schoolwork								
11. Paying attention in school								
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

### Rating scale:

The 12-item rating scale section of the SLS incorporates descriptive statements that informants rate using a 7-point Likert-like scale. The directions are to rate the student on each item, "compared with other students of the same age." This involves circling a number between 1 and 7, with anchors of (1) *Not good* and (7) *Very good*. Items 1–8 represent the eight components of the TILLS model for language/literacy skills, and Items 9–12 represent related cognitive/social skills.

## ABILITY CHECKLIST

Please check the things that you think are **easiest** for this student to do:

Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  Math  Social  Listening  Talking  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Please check the things that you think are **hardest** for this student to do:

Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

### Ability checklist:

This duplicated checklist of skills represents nonlanguage as well as language skill areas. Informants are asked to check the areas that are *easiest* for the student on the first list, and those that are *hardest* for the student from the same set of choices. This allows for input on areas of strength, as well as on the second list on areas of concern.

## PRIORITY QUESTION

What one thing do you think is most important to help this student do better at school?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Priority question:

This question is open ended, allowing a wide variety of responses, which can reflect personal meanings. It also requests the informant to prioritize the area of greatest concern.

# The SLS is made up of 4 sections.

# Student Language Scale

## SLS



Veronica Wolf Nelson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Barbara Hovde, Ph.D., M.Ed.  
Michael A. Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

The Student Language Scale may be used with the Test of Integrated Language and Literacy Skills™. Also, assessment tools in this manual may be used to gather additional information on a student's language skills.

Student's name: Justin Grade: 5th Date: 11/26/15  
Person responding:  General education teacher  Special education teacher  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student  Parent/guardian

### RATE SCALE

Compare with other students of the same age, with the same language skills.

Item	Yes	No
1. Following spoken directions		
2. Being organized about schoolwork		
3. Paying attention in school		
4. Interacting socially with other students		

### ABILITY CHECKLIST

Please check the things that you think are **needed** for the student to do:  
 Reading  Writing  Speaking  Listening  Thinking  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### ABILITY CHECKLIST

Please check the things that you think are **needed** for the student to do:  
 Reading  Writing  Speaking  Listening  Thinking  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### PRIORITY QUESTION

What one thing do you think is most important to help this student do better at school?  
The SLS plus.

Demographic information about the student and respondent who is filling out the SLS.

# Student Language Scale

SLS

TILLS  
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FOR LINGUISTIC LITERACY

## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good							Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking								
3. Figuring out new words when reading								
4. Spelling words correctly when writing								
5. Understanding a story when listening								
6. Telling a story that makes sense								
7. Understanding a story when reading								
8. Writing a story that makes sense								
9. Following spoken directions								
10. Being organized about schoolwork								
11. Paying attention in school						6	7	
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

The 12-item rating scale section incorporates descriptive statements that informants rate using a 7-point Likert-like scale. The directions are to rate the student on each item, “compared with other students of the same age.”

# Student Language Scale

SLS



## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good						Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Figuring out new words when reading							7
4. Spelling words correctly when writing							7
5. Understanding a story when listening							7
6. Telling a story that makes sense							7
7. Understanding a story when reading							7
8. Writing a story that makes sense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Following spoken directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Being organized about schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paying attention in school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Items 1 and 2 ask about using school vocabulary when listening or talking.

# Student Language Scale

SLS



## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good						Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking							7
3. Figuring out new words when reading							7
4. Spelling words correctly when writing							7
5. Understanding a story when listening							7
6. Telling a story that makes sense							7
7. Understanding a story when reading							7
8. Writing a story that makes sense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Following spoken directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Being organized about schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paying attention in school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Items 3 and 4 ask about sound/word level abilities for reading decoding and written spelling.

# Student Language Scale

SLS

TILLS

## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good						Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Figuring out new words when reading							7
4. Spelling words correctly when writing							7
5. Understanding a story when listening							7
6. Telling a story that makes sense							7
7. Understanding a story when reading							7
8. Writing a story that makes sense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Following spoken directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Being organized about schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paying attention in school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Items 5 and 6 ask about listening comprehension and spoken expression of stories.

# Student Language Scale

SLS



## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good							Very good
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. Figuring out new words when reading							7	
4. Spelling words correctly when writing							7	
5. Understanding a story when listening							7	
6. Telling a story that makes sense							7	
7. Understanding a story when reading							7	
8. Writing a story that makes sense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Following spoken directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. Being organized about schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. Paying attention in school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Items 7 and 8 ask about reading comprehension and written formulation of stories.

# Student Language Scale

SLS



## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...

Not good

Very good

1. Understanding school vocabulary words

2. Using school vocabulary words when talking

3. Figuring out new words when reading

4. Spelling words correctly when writing

5. Understanding a story when listening

6. Telling a story that makes sense

7. Understanding a story when reading

8. Writing a story that makes sense

9. Following spoken directions

10. Being organized about schoolwork

11. Paying attention in school

12. Interacting socially with other students

Items 9–12 ask about cognitive and social skills that are closely associated with cognitive-linguistic abilities, executive skills, and academic and social performance.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

# Student Language Scale

SLS



# Screening for Dyslexia

## RATING SCALE

Compared with other students of the same age, circle the number to show how good this student is at...	Not good					Very good	
1. Understanding school vocabulary words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using school vocabulary words when talking							
3. Figuring out new words when reading							
4. Spelling words correctly when writing							
5. Understanding a story when listening							
6. Telling a story that makes sense							
7. Understanding a story when reading							
8. Writing a story that makes sense							
9. Following spoken directions							
10. Being organized about schoolwork							
11. Paying attention in school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Interacting socially with other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Low ratings on items 3 and 4, in conjunction with low ratings on items 7 & 8 (reading comprehension and written expression), signal a particular risk for dyslexia.

Student  
Lang

### ABILITY CHECKLIST

Please check the things that you think are **easiest** for this student to do:

- Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  Math  Social  Listening  Talking  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

*Outdoor / nature education*

Please check the things that you think are **hardest** for this student to do:

- Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  Math  Social  Listening  Talking  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

This duplicated checklist of skills represents nonlanguage as well as language skill areas. Informants are asked to check the areas that are *easiest* for the student on the first list, and those that are *hardest* for the student from the same set of choices. This allows for input on areas of strength, as well as on the second list on areas of concern.

### ABILITY CHECKLIST

Please check the things that you think are **easiest** for this student to do:

- Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  Math  Social  Listening  Talking  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments:

*Outdoor / nature education*

Please check the things that you think are **hardest** for this student to do:

- Art (drawing/painting)  Dance  Music  Mechanical  Sports  Math  Social  Listening  Talking  
 Reading  Writing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments:

*Outdoor / nature education*

### PRIORITY QUESTION

What are things you think are most important to help this student do better at school?  
The 504 plan

# Student Language Scale

SLS

TILLS  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Thomas H. Nelson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Barbara Harris, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Michael A. Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

The Student Language Scale (SLS) is a tool for assessing language skills in students with hearing loss. It is a 100-item scale that is used to measure the student's ability to understand and use language in various situations. The SLS is a valid and reliable measure of language skills in students with hearing loss.

Student's name

Teacher name

## PRIORITY QUESTION

What one thing do you think is most important to help this student do better at school?

His 504 plan.

This question is open ended, allowing a wide variety of responses, which can reflect personal meanings. It also requests the informant to prioritize the area of greatest concern.

### RATING

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = A little
- 3 = Somewhat
- 4 = A great deal

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Understanding oral instructions				
2. Following oral directions				
3. Understanding oral questions				
4. Responding to oral questions				
5. Understanding oral conversations				
6. Responding to oral conversations				
7. Understanding oral presentations				
8. Responding to oral presentations				
9. Understanding oral discussions				
10. Responding to oral discussions				

### ADULT CHECKLIST

How often do you think you think an adult should do the following things for the student to do:

Understanding Oral:  None  Minimal  Some  Much  A great deal

Following Oral: \_\_\_\_\_

Responding Oral: \_\_\_\_\_

Understanding Oral Conversations: \_\_\_\_\_

Responding Oral Conversations: \_\_\_\_\_

Understanding Oral Presentations: \_\_\_\_\_

Responding Oral Presentations: \_\_\_\_\_

Understanding Oral Discussions: \_\_\_\_\_

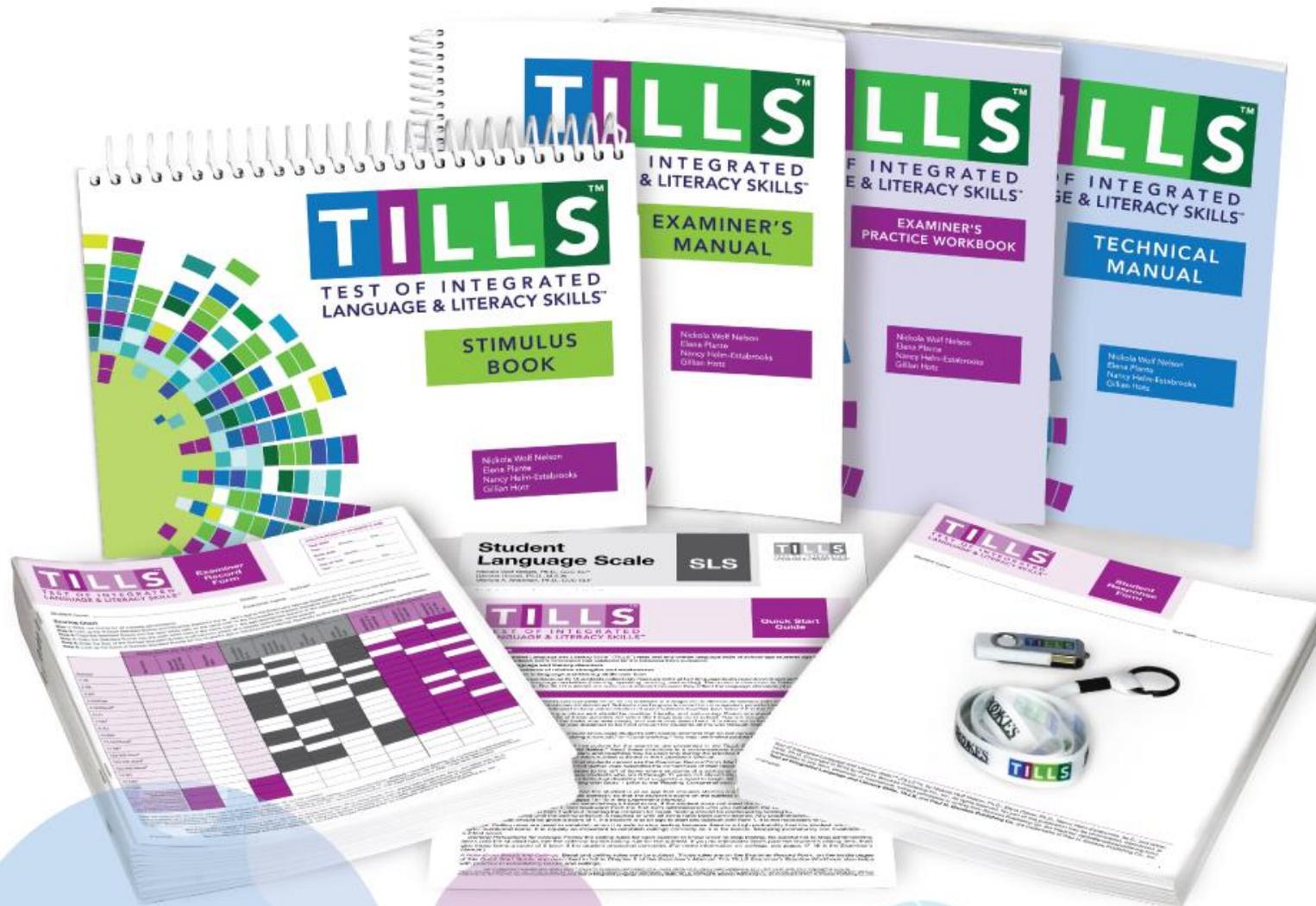
Responding Oral Discussions: \_\_\_\_\_

### PRIORITY QUESTION

What one thing do you think is most important to help this student do better at school?

His 504 plan.

# Perfect for use with TILLS!



The SLS is an ideal companion to the groundbreaking [TILLS test](#).

Start by giving the SLS to your whole class, and if results indicate a student is at risk, follow up with TILLS assessment.



STUDENT LANGUAGE SCALE

**SCREENER**  
for Language &  
Literacy Disorders

For more information, visit  
[www.brookespublishing.com/sls](http://www.brookespublishing.com/sls)