

Texas Educator Certification Program 

# Preparation Manual

**Texas Assessment of  
Sign Communication™ (TASC™)**

**Texas Assessment of  
Sign Communication—  
American Sign Language™ (TASC-ASL™)**

**072 Texas Assessment of Sign Communication**

**073 Texas Assessment of Sign Communication—  
American Sign Language**

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## Overview

The Texas Assessment of Sign Communication™ (TASC™) and Texas Assessment of Sign Communication–American Sign Language™ (TASC–ASL™) are an extension of the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards™ (TEXES™) program for certification to teach students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and for teachers of ASL as a foreign language, respectively.

- ▶ The TASC assesses sign communication proficiency within one or more of several sign communication systems used in Texas classrooms.
- ▶ The TASC-ASL assesses proficiency in American Sign Language exclusively.
- ▶ The tests use an interview format. While the interviewer conducts a 20-minute, one-on-one conversational interview, you will be video-taped as you respond to signed questions that allow you to demonstrate your proficiency in signed communication.
- ▶ Your signed communication proficiency will be measured against an establish standard of competence.
- ▶ You will not be rated based on the content of your responses, but rather on how well you are able to communicate your ideas and understand the interviewer.

This booklet will familiarize you with the nature, structure, format, and content of the TASC and TASC–ASL. Familiarization with these aspects of the testing program should be a useful component of your preparation. Education faculty and program administrators at Educator Preparation Programs may also find this information useful.

This booklet is divided into three sections designed to help you prepare for taking the TASC and TASC–ASL.

- ▶ Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL
- ▶ Scoring the TASC and TASC–ASL
- ▶ Preparing for the Tests

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## **Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL**

This section provides background information about the testing program, including the test development process, characteristics of the tests, the nature of the communication tasks on which the tests are based, and what you should expect to do during the test session.

### **Test Development Process**

Staff from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and from Texas Education Agency (TEA) Services for the Deaf worked closely with experts in the fields of Deaf education and American Sign Language (ASL) to develop the TASC and TASC–ASL. Many Texas educators, as well as individuals from the Deaf community, participated and provided input during this project through advisory groups and other activities.

The primary content and equity committee providing advice and leadership to the initial test development effort for the TASC was composed of classroom teachers of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and representatives from universities that prepare teachers in this field. A second advisory group consisting of educators and others who are experts in ASL developed assessment requirements for public school teachers of ASL as a foreign language. The TASC–ASL is used for evaluating the ASL communication skills of public school ASL teachers.

A pilot test of the TASC and TASC–ASL was completed during early spring in 1997. The primary content and equity committee met in late spring 1997 to review the responses to the pilot test and to determine the level of sign communication proficiency necessary to teach students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or to teach ASL as a foreign language in Texas public schools. This process resulted in a recommendation to SBEC of passing standards for the TASC and TASC–ASL. SBEC adopted the passing standards for the TASC and TASC–ASL based upon the committee recommendations in the fall of 1997.

### **Characteristics of the Testing Program**

The TASC and TASC–ASL tests are a component of the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) program. The TASC and TASC–ASL are designed to assess the level of proficiency demonstrated in using sign communication rather than the content of the responses provided. The goal of the TASC and TASC–ASL is to provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate competence in sign communication skills through a video-taped interview.

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## Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL (*continued*)

The assessments use an interview format in which the candidate is seated in a room with an interviewer and asked to discuss specified topics of general interest. The interview lasts about 20 minutes and is videotaped for scoring purposes.

During the interview, various topics from five categories of communication tasks will be discussed. The interview is intended to simulate a conversation. The interviewer will ask questions from a prepared set to which you will respond. The interviewer will also ask follow-up questions to further the conversation or explore a response more fully. You, in turn, should feel free to ask the interviewer questions or make any appropriate comments. The prepared set of questions and the interviewer's questioning strategies within the conversation itself are designed to allow you to demonstrate your highest level of signing proficiency within a natural and dynamic conversation. You are expected to demonstrate both expressive and receptive sign communication proficiency.

You may use sign and voice, or no voice. Any voicing you do during the test will not be used in the scoring; scorers will evaluate your proficiency based only on the sign communication recorded and viewed on the videotape. The interviewer will not be using voice.

You should attempt to answer all questions as completely as possible. If you do not understand a question or sign, it is acceptable to ask for clarification during the interview. There are no trick questions or right or wrong answers.

**TASC.** The TASC assesses sign communication in ASL or any of the following signing systems:

- ▶ Contact Sign (CS)
- ▶ Signed English (SE)
- ▶ Signing Exact English (SEE2)
- ▶ Morphemic Sign System (MSS)

During the TASC, you are allowed to use sign language or the sign communication system(s) of your choice in order to best demonstrate your ability to communicate. You are allowed to code-switch among system(s) if you choose. As much as possible, the interviewer will match your signing.

**TASC–ASL.** The TASC–ASL requires the use of ASL exclusively. If you use non-ASL grammatical constructions or vocabulary, the interviewer will not stop the conversation but will continue in order to keep the interview going naturally. It is important that you keep in mind throughout the interview that responses should be only in ASL. Reliance on non-ASL signing,

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## Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL (*continued*)

such as Signed English or Contact Sign vocabulary and syntax, will lower your score on the TASC–ASL.

### Test Format

**Description of communication tasks.** The TASC and TASC–ASL require you to respond to several types of communication tasks (i.e., questions designed to elicit a range of levels of communication). The categories of questions listed below reflect different levels of language use that are required to communicate in informal and formal situations. For example, a person would likely use a higher, more sophisticated level of language to support an opinion than to describe something. By guiding you through these broad levels of communication, the interviewer is providing you with opportunities to demonstrate your best signing skills.

The categories of questions used on the TASC and the TASC–ASL are as follows:

- ▶ **Description.** The purpose of this category is to elicit descriptive conversation from you. Questions ask you to describe to the interviewer familiar activities, events, etc.
- ▶ **Instructions.** This category focuses on “how to” questions. You are asked to tell the interviewer the procedures or steps involved in various activities.
- ▶ **Hypothetical Situations.** For this category, you are asked to project what would happen if a particular event occurred. In responding to questions from this and all categories, you should reflect and be creative when appropriate. Throughout the interview, feel free to ask the interviewer questions that may help you in formulating your response.
- ▶ **Problem Solving.** These questions require you to imagine a situation and communicate how you might solve the problem posed by that situation.
- ▶ **Supported Opinion.** This category requires you to take a position on one or more of a variety of topics and then support that position. The topics are selected to be general and noncontroversial. The goal is to allow you to express and support your opinion. Use your communication skills to be as persuasive as you can.

**IMPORTANT:** Your proficiency will not be rated based on the actual content of your responses, but rather on your ability to communicate your ideas by signing. To give your best performance, it is important that you respond fully to the interviewer’s questions—elaborating, clarifying, and commenting when appropriate, just as you would in regular conversation.

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## Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL (*continued*)

The interviewer has a prepared set of questions for stimulating communication at the appropriate levels. The direction of the interview will, in part, be determined by your responses.

This combination—the prepared set of questions and the interviewer’s questioning strategies within the conversation that occurs—is designed to allow you to demonstrate your highest level of proficiency within a more natural and dynamic conversation. The combination provides the scorers, experts who will evaluate your performance, with information by which to assess your expressive and receptive sign communication proficiency.

The TASC and TASC–ASL are criterion-referenced tests. This means that the rating that you receive is determined according to a fixed set of criteria, or standards, not by how your performance compares to that of other test takers.

### What You Should Expect to Do During the Test Session

The following information about the test session and what you should expect to do during the test session may be helpful to you.

- ▶ **Relax.** The interviewer will welcome you and make some brief comments at the beginning of the test session. The purpose of these comments is to allow you to become familiar and comfortable with the test setting and procedures. This may help you to relax and prepare for the actual test questions.
- ▶ **Follow directions.** At the beginning of the test session and throughout the test, follow all directions carefully. If you do not understand something about the directions, do not hesitate to ask the interviewer before testing begins.
- ▶ **Show what you can do.** Your goal is to demonstrate as fully as possible how well you can communicate using sign communication. When answering each question, sign until you think you have given a thorough answer or until the interviewer stops you by asking another question.
- ▶ Always try to **respond as well and as clearly as you can.**
- ▶ **Sign naturally and appropriately for each communication task.** Sign in a manner appropriate to the context of each question. The interviewer will progress through the five communication tasks, and you must respond appropriately to each task using appropriate sign communication to perform the task. Different situations will require you to respond differently.

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## Description of the TASC and TASC–ASL (*continued*)

- ▶ **Don't worry about finding the "right" answer.** Questions and topics are intended for you to demonstrate your sign communication ability. This includes your fluency, your accuracy of grammar, and the extent of your vocabulary. Questions are not intended to test your knowledge of facts, ideas, or events. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

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## Scoring the TASC and TASC–ASL

This section provides information about how the tests are scored and about the performance characterized by each score point.

The TASC and TASC–ASL have been designed to elicit a representative sample of your sign communication proficiency. The videotapes from the TASC and TASC–ASL will be scored on a five-point scale using a holistic scoring process. The principle underlying the holistic scoring process is that performance during the interview will be evaluated on the basis of overall sign communication proficiency. That is, while you are provided with tasks across a range of communication levels, scorer judgments will be based on how well you communicate overall.

In *holistic scoring*, scorers evaluate the effectiveness of responses in terms of a set of overall descriptions of communication. The scoring process is holistic in that the score assigned to your performance reflects the overall effectiveness of your communication. For the TASC and TASC–ASL, “sign communication proficiency” is defined as the ability to communicate successfully both expressively and receptively.

At least three scorers view each videotape and, working in collaboration, rate your proficiency. Persons selected to be scorers are experts in sign communication. All have extensive experience in the education of the Deaf, ASL instruction, or a related area. Scorers, as well as interviewers, can be individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or hearing.

### The Holistic Rating Scales

Scorers use the TASC and TASC–ASL holistic rating scales to assign an overall score to your performance. The holistic rating scales present the criteria on which your performance is evaluated.

Each scale is a five-point scale, with “E” the lowest rating and “A” the highest. Each point of the scale represents a degree to which effective communication is demonstrated in your performance. The score point descriptions reflect typical levels of performance at each score point. *Although the score assigned corresponds to one of the score points, individual responses may include attributes not specifically mentioned in the rating scale and/or attributes of more than one score point.*

The passing score for the TASC and TASC–ASL (i.e., the minimum level of sign communication proficiency required for an entry-level educator to perform successfully in Texas schools) is set at Level C. The SBEC adopted the passing standards based upon recommendations of committees of Texas

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

educators. Thus, performances rated at Levels A, B, or C are considered to be passing performances on the TASC or TASC–ASL.

**NOTE:** On the TASC–ASL, you must respond only in ASL; use of non-ASL signing, including non-ASL grammar, will hurt your performance and may lower your holistic score.

### The Analytic Feedback Scales

The TASC and TASC–ASL analytic feedback scales (shown on pages 18–20 and pages 21–23, respectively) provide additional information that further defines the criteria for effective sign communication. As a part of the scoring process, candidates who do not pass the test receive feedback on their score report indicating the performance characteristics in which they may need improvement. For the TASC and TASC–ASL, these performance characteristics have been defined as range of communication, comprehension, and intelligibility, as demonstrated through fluency, vocabulary/grammar, and use of space.

### TASC Holistic Rating Scale

#### ***Level A***

**The candidate consistently shows a very high level of proficiency in expressive and receptive communication.**

The candidate demonstrates the communicative ability necessary to discuss a wide range of topics and can perform conversational communication functions, fully elaborated, with ease. The candidate exhibits the communication skills needed to effectively explain in detail, hypothesize at the abstract level, express and support opinions, and persuade. Few or no semantic or pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident.

#### ***Level B***

**The candidate is a full partner in expressive and receptive communication.**

The candidate shows a high level of proficiency and comprehension across a variety of topics. The candidate may describe, narrate, compare, clarify, explain, and/or persuade in smooth and connected discourse, with little circumlocution (the use of an unnecessarily large number of signs or gestures to express an idea). Occasional semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident, but these do not detract from or affect intelligibility or communication.

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

### ***Level C***

**The candidate is generally a partner in expressive and receptive communication.**

The candidate may describe, narrate, compare, and/or clarify regarding routine social and work-related topics and some novel, unusual, or abstract topics. Some lapses in comprehension and/or fluency may occur (such as unnecessary pauses or rephrasing), which do not generally impede communication, and at times circumlocution may occur. Some semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident.

### ***Level D***

**Expressive and/or receptive communication occurs on a limited basis.**

The candidate is able to participate in conversation, although participation may be halting or fragmented, and can describe some familiar topics within social or work contexts. The candidate can ask and answer basic questions and create some utterances, although only a limited range of expression, limited fluency, and/or incomplete comprehension are demonstrated. Frequent semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are distracting.

### ***Level E***

**Expressive and/or receptive communication is very limited or does not occur.**

The candidate is able to participate only in rudimentary conversation. Communication is hindered by a lack of fluency (frequent long pauses, rephrasing, and unfinished ideas) and/or a lack of comprehension. The candidate is able to understand and use only common nouns and basic vocabulary (e.g., food, family members, time). Numerous and severe semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) interfere with communication.

## **TASC–ASL Holistic Rating Scale**

### ***Level A***

**The candidate consistently shows a very high level of proficiency in expressive and receptive communication in ASL.**

The candidate demonstrates the communicative ability necessary to discuss a wide range of topics and can perform conversational communication functions, fully elaborated, with ease. The candidate exhibits the communication skills needed to effectively explain in detail, hypothesize at the abstract level, express and support opinions, and persuade. Few or no semantic or

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident.

### ***Level B***

**The candidate is a full partner in expressive and receptive communication in ASL.**

The candidate shows a high level of proficiency and comprehension across a variety of topics. The candidate may describe, narrate, compare, clarify, explain, and/or persuade in smooth and connected discourse, with little circumlocution (the use of an unnecessarily large number of signs or gestures to express an idea). Occasional semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident, but these do not detract from or affect intelligibility or communication.

### ***Level C***

**The candidate is generally a partner in expressive and receptive communication in ASL.**

The candidate may describe, narrate, compare, and/or clarify regarding routine social and work-related topics and some novel, unusual, or abstract topics. Some lapses in comprehension and/or fluency may occur (such as unnecessary pauses or rephrasing), which do not generally impede communication, and at times circumlocution may occur. Some semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are evident.

### ***Level D***

**Expressive and/or receptive communication occurs on a limited basis in ASL.**

The candidate is able to participate in conversation, although participation may be halting or fragmented, and can describe some familiar topics within social or work contexts. The candidate can ask and answer basic questions and create some utterances, although only a limited range of expression, limited fluency, and/or incomplete comprehension are demonstrated. Frequent semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) are distracting.

### ***Level E***

**Expressive and/or receptive communication is very limited or does not occur in ASL.**

The candidate is able to participate only in rudimentary conversation. Communication is hindered by a lack of fluency (frequent long pauses, rephrasing, and unfinished ideas) and/or a lack of comprehension. The candidate is

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

able to understand and use only common nouns and basic vocabulary (e.g., food, family members, time). Numerous and severe semantic and pronunciation/enunciation errors (such as misused or misformed vocabulary or grammar) interfere with communication.

### Description of the Scoring Process

The scoring process begins with an in-depth orientation. Scorers with relevant professional backgrounds are oriented to score candidates' performances accurately, consistently, fairly, and in accordance with the TASC or TASC–ASL rating scale before scoring actual TASC or TASC–ASL performances. Persons selected to be scorers are experts in sign communication. All have extensive experience in the education of the Deaf, ASL instruction, or a related area. Scorers, as well as interviewers, can be individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or hearing.

Orientation begins with a review of the program and of the rules and procedures provided to the candidates. Scorers then review and discuss the TASC and TASC–ASL Scorer Manual, which includes a description of the tasks, performance levels, score points, and elements typically found in responses at each score point. Scorers also view and discuss marker tapes, which have been chosen by the TASC and TASC–ASL committees as representative of the score points.

During orientation, videotaped performances at each score point are presented. Typically, orientation videotapes include a variety of responses to represent the geographic, gender, and ethnic diversity of Texas. The orientation emphasizes the distinction between score points. Scorers are said to be calibrated and therefore ready to begin the scoring process when their individual scoring judgments are in accordance with the rating scale and consistent with the established marker videotapes for the program.

At least three scorers view each videotape and, working in collaboration, rate the candidate's proficiency.

**NOTE:** Performance at a Level C or higher (Level A or B) is required to pass the TASC and TASC–ASL. See pages 18–20 for the TASC holistic rating scales pages 21–23 for the TASC–ASL holistic rating scales.

### Analytic Scoring and Feedback

Candidate responses that receive a rating below the passing level receive an additional evaluation to provide the candidate with feedback that he or she may use to improve sign communication performance. In this additional round of scoring, called analytic scoring, scorers view candidate responses to

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

determine particular performance characteristics for which improvement is needed. These performance characteristics are reported to the candidate on the score report.

Candidates who do not pass are typically below the passing level in several characteristics. Scorers attempt to determine the categories that are most problematic in the responses so that the candidate can focus efforts in these areas. The TASC and TASC–ASL Analytic Feedback Scales list three categories (range of communication, comprehension, and intelligibility), with the third category comprising three subordinate characteristics (fluency, vocabulary/grammar, and use of space). For “intelligibility,” score reports will contain feedback on these three subordinate characteristics.

If candidates do not pass the test, their score report will indicate one or more of the following areas for improvement in their response.

1. Range of Communication
2. Comprehension
3. Intelligibility, as demonstrated through:
  - a. Fluency
  - b. Vocabulary/Grammar
  - c. Use of Space

To provide candidates with a sense of how they might use the TASC and TASC–ASL Analytic Feedback Scales (shown on pages 18–20 and pages 21–23, respectively) to understand the categories listed above, an expanded interpretation of Levels D and E for each of the categories can be found below.

### **TASC Description of Analytic Categories**

#### **1. Range of Communication**

The candidate has difficulty in achieving the communicative purpose of the communication tasks (i.e., description, instructions, hypothetical situations, problem solving, supported opinion). Significant elements of the response requested in the communication task are left out and/or miscommunicated.

#### **2. Comprehension**

The candidate has limited ability to understand what is being communicated by the interviewer as demonstrated through the needed repetition of questions during the interview. Some clarification of communication may occur in the course of a normal conversation, but the candidate in general should be requesting expansion of the interviewer’s idea rather

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

than asking the interviewer simply to repeat the question as it was initially given.

### 3. **Intelligibility**

The candidate is difficult to understand, if he or she is understandable at all. Intelligibility is determined by looking more specifically at the three categories comprising these characteristics: fluency, vocabulary/grammar, and use of space.

#### a. **Fluency**

The candidate's response is characterized by long pauses, struggles for expression, extreme brevity, and/or even complete linguistic breakdown. Sign speed may be so slow or hesitant that it impedes communication. Signs may be misformed. Fingerspelling may be inaccurate or labored.

#### b. **Vocabulary/Grammar**

The candidate fails to convey meaning because of the absence of needed vocabulary. The message is seriously flawed or even severely unintelligible. The candidate's pronunciation (as demonstrated through misused signs) may interfere with communication. The candidate's lack of vocabulary may impede his or her ability to respond adequately.

#### c. **Use of Space**

The candidate cannot properly make use of space and/or tends to sign outside of the appropriate area. These errors make the intelligibility of the intended message unclear. Signs may be inappropriately sized and placed, thus interfering with intelligibility.

## TASC–ASL Description of Analytic Categories

### 1. **Range of Communication**

The candidate has difficulty communicating in ASL and/or in achieving the communicative purpose of the communication tasks (i.e., description, instructions, hypothetical situations, problem solving, supported opinion). Communication is not exclusively through the use of ASL; significant elements of the response requested in the communication task are left out and/or miscommunicated.

### 2. **Comprehension**

The candidate has limited ability to understand what is being communicated by the interviewer as demonstrated through the needed repetition of questions during the interview. Some clarification of communication may occur in the course of a normal conversation, but the candidate in general should be requesting expansion of the interviewer's idea rather than asking the interviewer simply to repeat the question as it was initially given.

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## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (*continued*)

### 3. Intelligibility

The candidate is difficult to understand, if he or she is understandable at all. Intelligibility is determined by looking more specifically at the three categories comprising these characteristics: fluency, vocabulary/grammar, and use of space.

#### a. Fluency

The candidate's response is characterized by long pauses, struggles for expression, extreme brevity, and/or even complete linguistic breakdown. Sign speed may be so slow or hesitant that it impedes communication. Signs may be misformed. Fingerspelling may be inaccurate or labored.

#### b. Vocabulary/Grammar

The candidate fails to convey meaning because of the absence of needed vocabulary. The message is not communicated using ASL and/or is seriously flawed or even severely unintelligible. The candidate's pronunciation (as demonstrated through misused ASL signs) may interfere with communication. The candidate's lack of ASL vocabulary may impede his or her ability to respond adequately.

#### c. Use of Space

The candidate cannot properly make use of space and/or tends to sign outside of the appropriate area. These errors make the intelligibility of the intended message unclear. Signs may be inappropriately sized and placed, thus interfering with intelligibility.

**NOTE:** On the TASC–ASL, the candidate must communicate only in ASL. Candidates with frequent or extensive use of non-ASL signing and non-ASL grammar may have one or more analytic categories reported on their score report indicating the areas for which they need improvement in ASL.

# Scoring the TASC and TASC–ASL

## TASC Analytic Feedback Scale

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>Range of Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates consistently with very high proficiency</li> <li>▶ Active interaction and turn taking</li> <li>▶ Shows a very high proficiency across a wide range of topics</li> <li>▶ Effectively explains in detail, hypothesizes at the abstract level, expresses/supports opinions, and persuades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates as a full partner</li> <li>▶ Appropriate turn taking</li> <li>▶ Shows a high proficiency across a variety of topics</li> <li>▶ Can describe, narrate, compare, clarify, explain, and/or persuade across topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Can communicate as a partner</li> <li>▶ Initiates conversation and/or topics</li> <li>▶ Some turn taking</li> <li>▶ May describe, narrate, compare, and/or clarify routine topics; can address some novel/abstract topics</li> <li>▶ Spontaneously creates utterances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participation in communication is limited</li> <li>▶ Interviewer elicits most of the conversation</li> <li>▶ Little spontaneous turn taking</li> <li>▶ Some reliance on learned phrases</li> <li>▶ Discusses only familiar (social and work-related) topics</li> <li>▶ Creates some phrases and sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communication is very limited or does not occur</li> <li>▶ Excessive use of memorized signs/phrases</li> <li>▶ Rudimentary conversation</li> <li>▶ Inability to create phrases and/or sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Full comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Good comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ General comprehension</li> <li>▶ In general, interviewer does not need to repeat or rephrase conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does not understand some simple sentences or signs; interviewer may need to repeat some basic conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does not understand many simple sentences or basic signs; interviewer needs to repeat much of the conversation</li> </ul>
<b>Intelligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fully understandable and effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clearly understandable and effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understandable most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basically understandable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Barely understandable</li> </ul>
<b>a. Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates with ease</li> <li>▶ A model others try to emulate</li> <li>▶ Knowledge of and/or use of colloquialisms</li> <li>▶ Creates spontaneous visual embellishments</li> <li>▶ Elegant pronunciation</li> <li>▶ Code-switches appropriately and comfortably</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Occasional hesitation or rephrasing, but not enough to disrupt flow</li> <li>▶ Flows with connected sentences that convey full message</li> <li>▶ Few to no misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Good fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Code-switches as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some pauses, hesitation, and/or rephrasing, but these do not impede meaning</li> <li>▶ Generally conveys message in connected sentences</li> <li>▶ Some misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Some misformed fingerspelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some prolonged pauses and/or hesitation</li> <li>▶ Some fragmented conveyance of ideas</li> <li>▶ Is limited to brief response and utterances</li> <li>▶ Hand “flutters”; extraneous hand movement</li> <li>▶ Some misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Spells letter by letter</li> <li>▶ Some inaccurate fingerspelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Frequent prolonged pauses</li> <li>▶ Much hesitation and/or rephrasing</li> <li>▶ Unfinished and/or fragmented ideas</li> <li>▶ Many misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Inaccurate and/or labored fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Staccato fingerspelling</li> </ul>

## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (continued)

### TASC Analytic Feedback Scale (continued)

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>b. Vocabulary/ Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extensive vocabulary for familiar and unusual topics</li> <li>▶ Semantic accuracy</li> <li>▶ Technical vocabulary/regionalisms (can adapt to geographical differences)</li> <li>▶ Effective and transparent nonlinguistic strategies employed</li> <li>▶ No facial expression errors</li> <li>▶ Virtually no unnecessary fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Appropriate incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Flawless use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Wide vocabulary range in familiar and unfamiliar topics</li> <li>▶ Few semantic errors</li> <li>▶ Little use of circumlocution</li> <li>▶ Few to no inflection errors</li> <li>▶ Excellent use of nonlinguistic strategies</li> <li>▶ Appropriate and effective use of facial expression</li> <li>▶ Few to no misused signs</li> <li>▶ Occasional fingerspelling for uncommon vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Appropriate incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Near flawless use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Adequate vocabulary for familiar topics; some vocabulary for unfamiliar topics</li> <li>▶ General semantic accuracy</li> <li>▶ Some misuse of signs</li> <li>▶ Some circumlocution used</li> <li>▶ Generally inflects signs (duration, intensity, repeated action, distribution, sequencing)</li> <li>▶ Some use of nonlinguistic strategies (acts out, gestures) to facilitate understanding</li> <li>▶ Uses facial expression appropriate for lexical items (thin/thick, tiny/huge), intonation (question, declaration, etc.) discourse markers (agreement, disagreement), and effect</li> <li>▶ Some fingerspelling for uncommon vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Some incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Appropriate use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Resorts to nonlinguistic strategies (acts out, gestures) due to limited vocabulary and/or grammar</li> <li>▶ Some distracting misuses of vocabulary and/or grammar</li> <li>▶ Mouthing used to substitute for vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Switching dominant hand interferes with intelligibility</li> <li>▶ “Erases” mistakes in the air</li> <li>▶ Some fingerspelling for common vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Little incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Limited use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One-sign utterances</li> <li>▶ Common nouns</li> <li>▶ Basic verbs</li> <li>▶ No or little facial expression</li> <li>▶ Frequent and/or severe errors interfere with communication</li> <li>▶ Many misused signs</li> <li>▶ Excessive use of fingerspelling for basic vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Almost no interpretation of number</li> <li>▶ No or little use of classifiers</li> </ul>

## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (continued)

### TASC Analytic Feedback Scale (continued)

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>c. Use of Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Flexible and very effective use of sign space</li> <li>▶ Assumes characterization during dialog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Uses space and sign size well</li> <li>▶ Includes shoulder shifts for dialog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sign space appropriately sized and placed</li> <li>▶ Appropriate use of verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Establishes referents in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fingerspelling out of sign box (high, low, moves away from body)</li> <li>▶ Occasionally sign space is inappropriately sized and spaced</li> <li>▶ Some misuse of space for verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Inconsistently establishes referents in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Signs tend to “float” in front of the body with little body contact</li> <li>▶ Sign space inappropriately sized and placed</li> <li>▶ No or little use of verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Does not establish referents in space</li> </ul>

## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (continued)

### TASC–ASL Analytic Feedback Scale

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>Range of Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates consistently with very high proficiency</li> <li>▶ Active interaction and turn taking</li> <li>▶ Shows a very high proficiency across a wide range of topics</li> <li>▶ Effectively explains in detail, hypothesizes at the abstract level, expresses/supports opinions, and persuades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates as a full partner</li> <li>▶ Appropriate turn taking</li> <li>▶ Shows a high proficiency across a variety of topics</li> <li>▶ Can describe, narrate, compare, clarify, explain, and/or persuade across topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Can communicate as a partner</li> <li>▶ Initiates conversation and/or topics</li> <li>▶ Some turn taking</li> <li>▶ May describe, narrate, compare, and/or clarify routine topics; can address some novel/abstract topics</li> <li>▶ Spontaneously creates utterances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participation in communication is limited</li> <li>▶ Signing is sometimes not in ASL</li> <li>▶ Interviewer elicits most of the conversation</li> <li>▶ Little spontaneous turn taking</li> <li>▶ Some reliance on learned phrases</li> <li>▶ Discusses only familiar (social and work-related) topics</li> <li>▶ Creates some phrases and sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communication is very limited or does not occur</li> <li>▶ Signing is frequently not in ASL</li> <li>▶ Excessive use of memorized signs/phrases</li> <li>▶ Rudimentary conversation</li> <li>▶ Inability to create phrases and/or sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Full comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Good comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ General comprehension</li> <li>▶ In general, interviewer does not need to repeat or rephrase conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does not understand some simple sentences or signs; interviewer may need to repeat some basic conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does not understand many simple sentences or basic signs; interviewer needs to repeat much of the conversation</li> </ul>
<b>Intelligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fully understandable and effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clearly understandable and effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understandable most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basically understandable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Barely understandable</li> </ul>
<b>a. Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicates with ease</li> <li>▶ A model others try to emulate</li> <li>▶ Knowledge of and/or use of colloquialisms</li> <li>▶ Creates spontaneous visual embellishments</li> <li>▶ Elegant pronunciation</li> <li>▶ Code-switches appropriately and comfortably</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Occasional hesitation or rephrasing, but not enough to disrupt flow</li> <li>▶ Flows with connected sentences that convey full message</li> <li>▶ Few to no misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Good fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Code-switches as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some pauses, hesitation, and/or rephrasing, but these do not impede meaning</li> <li>▶ Generally conveys message in connected sentences</li> <li>▶ Some misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Some misformed fingerspelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some prolonged pauses and/or hesitation</li> <li>▶ Some fragmented conveyance of ideas</li> <li>▶ Is limited to brief response and utterances</li> <li>▶ Hand “flutters”; extraneous hand movement</li> <li>▶ Some misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Spells letter by letter</li> <li>▶ Some inaccurate fingerspelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Frequent prolonged pauses</li> <li>▶ Much hesitation and/or rephrasing</li> <li>▶ Unfinished and/or fragmented ideas</li> <li>▶ Many misformed signs</li> <li>▶ Inaccurate and/or labored fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Staccato fingerspelling</li> </ul>

## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (continued)

### TASC–ASL Analytic Feedback Scale (continued)

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>b. Vocabulary/ Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extensive vocabulary for familiar and unusual topics</li> <li>▶ Semantic accuracy</li> <li>▶ Technical vocabulary/regionalisms (can adapt to geographical differences)</li> <li>▶ Effective and transparent nonlinguistic strategies employed</li> <li>▶ No facial expression errors</li> <li>▶ Virtually no unnecessary fingerspelling</li> <li>▶ Appropriate incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Flawless use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Wide vocabulary range in familiar and unfamiliar topics</li> <li>▶ Few semantic errors</li> <li>▶ Little use of circumlocution</li> <li>▶ Few to no inflection errors</li> <li>▶ Excellent use of nonlinguistic strategies</li> <li>▶ Appropriate and effective use of facial expression</li> <li>▶ Few to no misused signs</li> <li>▶ Occasional fingerspelling for uncommon vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Appropriate incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Near flawless use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Adequate vocabulary for familiar topics; some vocabulary for unfamiliar topics</li> <li>▶ General semantic accuracy</li> <li>▶ Some misuse of signs</li> <li>▶ Some circumlocution used</li> <li>▶ Generally inflects signs (duration, intensity, repeated action, distribution, sequencing)</li> <li>▶ Some use of nonlinguistic strategies (acts out, gestures) to facilitate understanding</li> <li>▶ Uses facial expression appropriate for lexical items (thin/thick, tiny/huge), intonation (question, declaration, etc.) discourse markers (agreement, disagreement), and effect</li> <li>▶ Some fingerspelling for uncommon vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Some incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Appropriate use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Resorts to nonlinguistic strategies (acts out, gestures) due to limited vocabulary and/or grammar</li> <li>▶ Some distracting misuses of vocabulary and/or grammar</li> <li>▶ Some use of signing systems other than ASL</li> <li>▶ Mouthing used to substitute for vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Switching dominant hand interferes with intelligibility</li> <li>▶ “Erases” mistakes in the air</li> <li>▶ Some fingerspelling for common vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Little incorporation of number</li> <li>▶ Limited use of classifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One-sign utterances</li> <li>▶ Common nouns</li> <li>▶ Basic verbs</li> <li>▶ No or little facial expression</li> <li>▶ Frequent and/or severe errors interfere with communication</li> <li>▶ Many misused signs</li> <li>▶ Frequent use of signing systems other than ASL</li> <li>▶ Excessive use of fingerspelling for basic vocabulary</li> <li>▶ Almost no interpretation of number</li> <li>▶ No or little use of classifiers</li> </ul>

## Scoring the TASC and the TASC–ASL (continued)

### TASC–ASL Analytic Feedback Scale (continued)

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D	Level E
<b>c. Use of Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Flexible and very effective use of sign space</li> <li>▶ Assumes characterization during dialog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Uses space and sign size well</li> <li>▶ Includes shoulder shifts for dialog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sign space appropriately sized and placed</li> <li>▶ Appropriate use of verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Establishes referents in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fingerspelling out of sign box (high, low, moves away from body)</li> <li>▶ Occasionally sign space is inappropriately sized and spaced</li> <li>▶ Some misuse of space for verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Inconsistently establishes referents in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Signs tend to “float” in front of the body with little body contact</li> <li>▶ Sign space inappropriately sized and placed</li> <li>▶ No or little use of verb directionality</li> <li>▶ Does not establish referents in space</li> </ul>

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## Preparing for the Test

This section offers some ideas on preparing for the tests and some tips to focus on during your preparation for the interview. This study material cannot replace a reasonable background in academic studies and practical experience. Instead, it is intended to provide an overview of the TASC and TASC-ASL.

Sign communication proficiency is acquired over a period of time through continual practice and use of the sign communication system. The purpose of the tests is to allow you to demonstrate your sign communication proficiency in the sign system/language of your choice for the TASC, or in ASL for the TASC-ASL, therefore, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the questions asked.

However, it is to your advantage to know what level of ability you are expected to demonstrate to receive a passing score on the TASC or TASC-ASL and to become familiar with the unique testing format of the TASC and TASC-ASL before you actually take the test.

The information in this section is designed to help you obtain information and practice materials that will assist you in doing your best on the test.

### General Preparation Notes

#### 1. Determine whether you are ready to take the TASC or TASC-ASL.

The following is a description of the level of sign communication proficiency a person who achieves a Level C on the TASC or TASC-ASL is generally expected to demonstrate (performance at Level C or higher is required to pass the TASC or TASC-ASL). Remember, for the TASC-ASL you must sign only in ASL; any sign other than an ASL sign will impact your holistic score.

A candidate who achieves a Level C or higher:

- ▶ Communicates as a partner in a selected sign system/language in a clearly participatory manner.
- ▶ Initiates, sustains, and brings to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including description, instructions, hypothetical situations, problem solving, and supported opinion.
- ▶ Demonstrates comprehension skills in general, understanding most of the interviewer’s signing.
- ▶ Demonstrates fluency in the system/language by appropriately using signs and grammar in an understandable fashion at a pace that does not impede meaning.
- ▶ Demonstrates an adequate vocabulary for familiar topics and enough for unfamiliar topics to communicate with another individual.

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## Preparing for the Test (continued)

- ▶ Uses nonlinguistic cues and facial expressions appropriately in communicating with the interviewer.
- ▶ Uses sign space appropriately, establishing referents in space and using verb directionality.

- 2. Learn about the TASC and TASC–ASL.** The best way to learn about the TASC and TASC–ASL is by carefully reading the TASC/TASC–ASL *Registration Bulletin* and the information on the ETS TExES website at [www.texas.ets.org](http://www.texas.ets.org).
- 3. Conduct a practice videotape interview to help you become more comfortable with the test format.** Ask your preparation program (or a friend with a camera) to videotape you, if possible, in a sign conversation with a teacher or friend. Watch the videotape, paying close attention to how well you are communicating your ideas. Also evaluate how well you are signing (are your signs “technically” correct and clear?). This self-analysis and practice should help you become more at ease during the actual test.
- 4. Enhance your sign communication ability by practicing.** Although you may use a particular sign communication system well, you may also be rusty if you have not used the system in conversation for some period of time. Therefore, if you are out of practice, you will likely want to become accustomed to using the sign communication system that you have selected for the test before you take the test. Some ideas for practicing the signing system include spending time communicating with others who know the system quite well or taking a class in which only the sign communication system will be used.
- 5. Familiarize yourself with the Candidate Tip List for the test you are taking.** See the TASC and TASC–ASL Candidate Tip List on pages 26–27 for information that may be useful as you prepare for the day of the test.

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## Preparing for the Test (continued)

### TASC and TASC–ASL Candidate Tip List

- ▶ **Relax.** You should do whatever helps you to relax and feel confident prior to the interview. It is normal to be nervous. As necessary, stop during the interview for a few seconds to regain composure. You may wish to admit that you are nervous and joke about it; often this is enough to make you comfortable again. During the interview, you will be asked to communicate about a variety of subjects. At times, the interviewer will need to interrupt you to move to another topic or question in order to complete the entire interview; this does not reflect on the quality of your responses.
- ▶ **For TASC, use the signs with which you are most comfortable.** You will want to demonstrate your best signing in the interview; therefore, you should show your best signing within any one or a combination of the systems assessed by the TASC. The interviewer will match the system you use as much as possible.
- ▶ **For TASC–ASL, you must sign only in ASL.** The interviewer will also use only ASL. Be sure to use ASL grammar and syntax.
- ▶ **Sign at a speed that is comfortable for you.** If you know that you have difficulty when you sign fast, plan to sign more slowly so that you can be confident in the interview.
- ▶ **Use both short and long sentences.** Short and long responses are appropriate because both are common in conversation. You are not making a public speech. Short sentences can reduce the chance that you will get lost in the middle of your thought and may help you to relax, giving the impression of ease, confidence, and skill. Long sentences can convey the full meaning of your thoughts. Both lengths of sentences add to the richness of your communication.
- ▶ **Keep signing.** Keep the conversation flowing. You are trying to demonstrate your best performance. Don't stop the conversation about a topic by simply giving a "yes" or "no" response. Expand on your thoughts and give complete responses to questions that are asked. Give details, explain your point(s), develop your thoughts, and make comparisons. Avoid signs whose meanings and usage are not clear to you. If you have difficulty signing exactly what you wish to say, think of another way to say it and keep signing. If you can't think of a sign, use another sign, mime it, or fingerspell it.
- ▶ **Stop. Think.** If you are lost in a long sentence or draw a blank, say something like, "Let me tell you again—it is complicated." Then try again.

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## Preparing for the Test (continued)

- ▶ **Correct your mistakes.** If you know you made a mistake, correct it and continue. Mistakes are expected. Do not worry about what happened. Worrying about a mistake may distract you during the interview. Focus on signing rather than on the content of your response. Don't try to impress the interviewer with your knowledge of a subject. It is not what you know that is of greatest importance, but how well you sign the information you know.
- ▶ **Ask questions.** Ask questions of the interviewer if you need to clarify your understanding. It is not a reflection on your signing ability to ask questions. This is a common practice in conversation. If you think you understand what was asked, respond confidently. If you make a mistake, correct it and continue. Alert your interviewer to anything that may be interfering with your signing. If the air conditioner or lighting bothers you, say so. If you can't see the interviewer clearly, say so. We want you to have the best possible interview conditions.
- ▶ **Monitor your feelings about how the interview is going.** If you feel the interview is too easy, try to sign on a higher level to be sure you are demonstrating your highest level of skill. If you feel the interview is becoming difficult, it is normal: you are near the level where you begin to feel the pressure. The interviewer cannot gauge your highest level unless you are challenged and asked to go beyond it.

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## For More Information

Information about certification requirements, test dates and registration deadlines, registration, payment, admission tickets, and score reporting is in the TASC/TASC-ASL *Registration Bulletin*. The *Registration Bulletin* is available for download free of charge on the ETS TExES website at **[www.texas.etg.org](http://www.texas.etg.org)**.

You may also contact:

ETS—Texas Educator Certification Program  
PO Box 6001  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6001

**Phone:** 1-800-205-2626

**Fax:** 1-973-735-0156 or 1-866-484-5860

**E-mail:** [tasc-asl\\_inquiries@ets.org](mailto:tasc-asl_inquiries@ets.org)