

# National English Program in Basic Education



## Leveling Guide Cycle 1

Academic support for English language teachers

Phase of expansion



**Fomentar la lectura**  
mejora la educación y la cultura

# National English Program in Basic Education

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# Presentation

**T**he regulating principles established by Article third of the Constitution, as well as the educational transformation encouraged by the 2007-2012 *National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo)* and the objectives outlined in the 2007-2012 *Education Sector Program (Prosedu: Programa Sectorial de Educación)* have established the leading basis to provide direction and sense to the actions in public education policies in Mexico for the coming decades.

Within this framework, and based on the attributions granted by the General Law of Education (*Ley General de Educación*), the Secretariat of Public Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*) proposed as one of Prosedu's fundamental objectives to be achieved by 2012 "to raise the quality of education so that students improve their level of educational achievement, have a means of accessing to a better well-being and thus, contribute to the national development".<sup>1</sup> The main strategy for attaining such objective in Basic Education is "to carry out an Integral Reform in Basic Education, focused on the adoption of an educational model based on competencies that corresponds to the developmental needs of Mexico in the XXI century",<sup>2</sup> envisaging a greater articulation and efficiency among preschool, elementary and secondary school.

Prosedu has also established that "the criteria for quality improvement in education must be applied to teacher training, the updating of curricula and syllabuses contents, pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and didactic resources".<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously, Unesco<sup>4</sup> has indicated that educa-

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<sup>1</sup> SEP (2007), *Programa Sectorial de Educación*, México, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> J. Delors et al. (1996), *La educación encierra un tesoro. Informe a la Unesco de la Comisión Internacional sobre la Educación para el siglo XXI*, Madrid, Santillana/Ediciones Unesco, pp. 31 y ss.

tional systems are to prepare students in order to face the new challenges of a globalized world, in which the contact among multiple languages and cultures becomes more and more common every day. In this context, the educational system is compelled to help students understand the diverse cultural expressions in Mexico and the world.

It is from this perspective that the Secretariat of Public Education acknowledges the necessity to incorporate English as a subject to the curricula of pre-school and elementary education, as well as to make suitable adjustments to the English subject curricula in secondary school, with the purpose of articulating the teaching of this foreign language in the three levels of Basic Education. By means of this articulation, it is expected that by the time students complete their secondary education, they will have developed the necessary plurilingual and pluricultural competencies to successfully face the communicative challenges of a globalized world, build a broader vision of the linguistic and cultural diversity at a global level, and thus, respect their own culture as well as that of others.

In order to carry out the actions that enable the articulation of English teaching, the Secretariat of Public Education has implemented the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE, or PNIEB: *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*) from which syllabuses for the three levels of Basic Education are derived. Such syllabuses are devised based on the alignment and standardization of national and international standards, the selection of criteria for teacher training, the establishment of guidelines for the design and evaluation of educational materials, as well as the certification of English language proficiency.

One of the above actions is to organize national academic meetings to strengthen English teachers, in order to provide them with information and technical-pedagogical instructions, aiming at contributing to the necessary measures to be taken for the implementation and generalization of the corresponding four-cycle syllabuses in the National English Program in Basic Education.

**Secretariat of Public Education**

# Introduction

The National English Program for Basic Education<sup>1</sup> incorporates 3<sup>rd</sup> Preschool as well as the 6<sup>th</sup> of Elementary school in its phase of expansion 2010-2011. This means that all students, regardless of the grade in which they incorporate to, will attend the English subject.

This situation represents two different challenges for elementary school teachers. Firstly, they have to generate the proper conditions to operate the NEPBE Syllabuses with equity and quality in all schools in the country. Secondly, they have to make sure that students achieve the purposes of each of the cycles of the NEPBE and the achievement levels established in each grade, despite not having attended the English language subject in the grade(s) prior to the 2010-2011 school period.

For the above reasons, a Leveling Guide for Cycle 1 was designed and included along

with the materials that accompany the implementation of the NEPBE in its in-class testing stage. Its purpose is to offer teachers:

- A list of basic curricular contents designed to be worked in a minimum of one-and-a-half month period, so that it allows students of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to achieve the expected levels established in the NEPBE Syllabuses. It also seeks an earlier introduction to the contents of the syllabuses of the students' grade, in order to guarantee that when finishing Cycle 1, students will have reached the purposes and levels of achievement.
- A set of teaching guidelines and considerations that teachers should take into account when beginning with the teaching of the NEPBE Syllabuses.

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<sup>1</sup> Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (PNIEB).



# Structure of the Leveling Guide

This guide includes five sections: Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 1, Teaching Guidelines, Basic Leveling Contents of 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Elementary school, Basic Leveling Contents of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of Elementary school, and Introduction to the NEPBE, and an Appendix with the planning Format.

“Purpose of English language Teaching for Cycle 1” here to presented correspond to those established in the syllabuses of the NEPBE. Their incorporation has the objective of giving teachers basic foundations, which along with their experience and characteristics of their class, they can decide the order and depth in which contents must be taught. Thus, it is guaranteed that during the first month and a half (15 hours-class) students will get the necessary knowledge to work with the contents of the grade they are in, and consequently reach the achievement levels for Cycle 1 at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Elementary school.

The “Teaching Guidelines” are intended to support the teacher in the teaching of leveling contents through a set of methodological strategies that are characterized for being unrestrictive. Therefore, teachers can use these or the methodology they consider most ap-

propriate, based on the needs, characteristics, and interests of their students.

The “Basic Leveling Contents for 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Elementary school” and “Basic Leveling Contents for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of Elementary school” were defined based on the syllabuses for Cycle 1, its subsequent cycles, and the levels of achievement. As it is aforementioned, its purpose is to teach in a short period of time the contents of the NEPBE not studied in previous grades. Thus, unlike the contents of the NEPBE distributed in social practices of the language, the leveling contents are organized as follows:

- Contents of **listening comprehension and oral production**: listening/speaking.
- Content of **reading comprehension and written production**: reading/writing.
- **Topics for reflection**. These contents are classified into two groups: a) Specific, which correspond to concepts, features, characteristics, and elements of oral and written language of each specific competency; and b) General, which include concepts and features of oral and written texts, common to all Cycle 1 leveling contents.

The leveling contents lack the dynamic aspects of the social practices of the language, since they do not belong to any particular learning environment. Therefore, **examples and teaching hours** to approach the contents of this guide are offered only as **suggestions**; nevertheless, teachers must adapt, change, simplify or expand them according to their planning, characteristics of their students, different variables and conditions that influence the organization of work in class. As a result,

this guide offers a space for teachers to write their own methodological considerations and estimated teaching hours to work with the leveling contents.

Finally, the Contents Regarding the work done with the syllabuses of Cycle 1 are presented in the “Introduction to the NEPBE”; also, a printable planning format is included in the “Appendix” to show a way to plan and organize the class work and contents of this guide.

## Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 1

The purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 1 in Basic Education (3<sup>rd</sup> Preschool, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Elementary school) is to raise students' awareness about the existence of a language different from their mother tongue. Simultaneously, to get them acquainted with English by developing *specific competencies* particular to routine and familiar *social practices of the language*, through the interaction among students and spoken and written texts belonging to various social environments. Therefore, at the end of this cycle students are expected to:

- Acknowledge the existence of other cultures and languages.
- Acquire motivation and a positive attitude towards the English language.
- Begin developing basic communication skills, especially the receptive ones.
- Reflect on how the writing system works.
- Get acquainted with different types of texts.
- Start exploring children's literature.
- Use some linguistic and non-linguistic resources to give information about themselves and their surroundings.

## Teaching Guidelines

To use this guide, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Know the group of students, in order to determine their interests, previous language knowledge, particularly English, as well as other characteristics that may influence their performance during the leveling sessions.
- Check and comprehend the Program of Cycle 1 in order to keep the continuity of this guide. The Syllabuses are the referent for solving doubts about the contents and teaching suggestions included in this guide. It is also convenient to examine the achievements in order to identify what is expected from these leveling sessions, as well as the “doing with the language” and “knowing about the language” that students need to review or study in depth considering the grades where English was not taught.
- Based on the previous information, select the order in which the contents will be taught as well as the teaching hours suggested for each one; bear in mind both, the total of hours suggested for leveling and the needs of the group.
- Review and analyze the examples provided in this guide for the teaching of contents. Take into account that these only represent one of the many ways in which they can or should be approached. Therefore, teachers should be aware that they are not designed to rule the organization and planning of class work, so it may be necessary to make any adjustments depending on the needs of students. It is important to mention that, in the case of literary texts (songs, stories, legends, etc.), it was only possible to present sample texts; however, it is expected that students participate in the reading of complete texts. Since the first cycle emphasizes the development of oral receptive skills, examples should be presented mainly orally, and later on, through written texts.
- Choose from the list of permanent and specific topics for reflection in this guide, only those which are relevant to the contents. It is important to highlight that the topics of reflection in the leveling sessions

should not be the focus of attention, since they do not promote the acquisition of the necessary skills to achieve the objectives of Cycle 1. This guide presents a variety of contents related to early literacy. Even though it is not expected or intended that children become literate in English, the acquisition of skills and knowledge that can be transferred from one language to another is promoted (vid. *Presentation. NEPBE Syllabuses. Cycle 1*). This guide does not include lists of vocabulary nor strategies to teach them since it is impossible to consider all texts in which vocabulary can be taught.

- Consider the convenience of adopting the suggestions to address the contents. These do not appear in any specific order and can be used to teach one or more of the specific competencies.
- Assess the progress and achievements of students, as well as changes or adjustments to the components of the teaching practice. It is important to notice that assessment in Cycle 1 does not involve promotion, so it is expected to be used only for formative purposes.



# Basic Leveling Contents of 1<sup>st</sup> grade Elementary school

Listening/speaking	Reading/writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and express words used in expressions of greeting, farewell, and courtesy.</li> <li>• Recognize and follow the instructions to school activities when listening to them with the help of graphics and non-verbal language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish greeting and courtesy expressions in written form.</li> <li>• Explore the writing of instructions to school activities.</li> </ul>

## Specific topics for reflection

Features and types of oral and written texts

- Non-verbal language.

Knowledge of the writing system

- Written forms of proper names.

## Suggested examples

Example 1

- Good morning, Miss Julia.
- Good morning, Mariana.
- May I come in?
- Please, come in, Mariana.

Example 2

- Good afternoon, Micaela. How are you?
- Good afternoon, José.
- I am/I'm fine, and you?
- I am OK, thank you.

Example 3

- Good morning, girls and boys.
- Good morning, Mr. García.
- Ramón, please, sit down.
- Yes, Mr. García.

Example 4

- Be quiet, everybody, please. Listen to me.
- Yes, Miss Mercedes.
- Now, children, open your books.

## Teacher's examples

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In addition to the specific topics of reflection suggested, the ones listed below are expected to be included in the contents since they help to contextualize and give meaning to the specific competencies. For example, *Purpose and intended audience of oral and written texts* is a necessary knowledge that

helps to *Identify and follow school instructions of school activities while listening, with the support of visual aids and non-verbal language, or Follow the reading aloud of a text with information about the world of nature (animals, vegetation, ecosystems, etc.)*.

### Permanent topics for reflection

#### Features and types of oral and written texts

- Purpose and intended audience of oral and written texts.
- Graphic and textual components.
- Graphic distribution of texts.

#### Knowledge of the writing system

- Repertoire of words necessary for this social practice of the language.
- Word formation (beginning/ending, variety and number of letters).
- Writing directionality.
- Correspondence between parts of writing and speaking.
- Correspondence between text and images.
- Differences between numbers and letters.

## Introduction to the NEPBE

The social practices of the language are the same for all three grades in Cycle 1; however, there are variations in depth and complexity of contents derived from the *Specific activities with the language*. Thus, teachers may select the social practice of the language in Unit 1 of the grade they are teaching: Familiar and community environment (*Understand and use every day greeting, courtesy, and farewell expressions*) or Literary and ludic environment (*Participate in the reading and writing of rhymes and stories in verse*).

The “doing with the language” and “knowing about the language” of these practices are included in this guide for the two school grades, but the level of complexity is what differentiates one from the other. Consequently, regardless of the social practice of the language chosen to start teaching, students will be working with all contents of the unit; therefore, working with the NEPBE will

be a familiar practice. However, when teaching the contents of the NEPBE, it is necessary to consider the following:

- Pay attention to the development of receptive communicative skills in the social practices.
- Take into account that topics for reflection are cyclical throughout the specific competencies; therefore, there are several opportunities to work with them in context.
- Emphasize the development of *being through the language* contents that haven't been taught (interculturality, attitudes, values, cooperative work, etc.).
- Consider the students' literacy stage in order to develop contents related to reading and writing included in the specific competencies.

## Appendix. Planning format

Listening/speaking	Reading/writing
Specific competencies	Specific competencies
Topics for reflection	
Specific	
General	
Texts	
Suggestions to approach the contents	
Time suggested by the teacher: ____ hours	

