

Essential Skills

Definitions/Descriptions of Essential Skills tested by TOWES

Reading

<u>Levels</u>	<u>IALS</u>	<u>Levels</u>	<u>Essential Skills Task</u>
Level 1 (0-225)	Most of the tasks at this level require the reader to locate one piece of information in the text that is identical or synonymous to the information given in the directive. If a plausible incorrect answer is present in the text, it tends not to be near the correct information.	1	Read relatively short texts to locate a single piece of information Follow simple written directions
Level 2 (226-275)	Tasks at this level tend to require the reader to locate one or more pieces of information in the text, but several distractors may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Tasks at this level also begin to ask readers to integrate two or more pieces of information, or to compare and contrast information.	2	Read more complex texts to locate a single piece of information or read simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information
Level 3 (276-325)	Tasks at this level tend to direct readers to search texts to match information that require low-level inferences or that meet specified conditions. Sometimes the reader is required to identify several pieces of information that are located in different sentences or paragraphs rather than in a single sentence. Readers may also be asked to integrate or to compare and contrast information across paragraphs or sections of text.	3	Choose and integrate information from various sources or from several parts of a single text Make low-level inferences from multiple sources Identify relevant and irrelevant information
Level 4 (326-375)	These tasks require readers to perform multiple-feature matching or to provide several responses where the requested information must be identified through text-based inferences. Tasks at this level may also require the reader to integrate or contrast pieces of information, sometimes presented in relatively lengthy texts. Typically, these texts contain more distracting information and the information that is requested is more abstract.	4	Choose and integrate information from various sources or from several parts of a single text Make low-level inferences from multiple sources Identify relevant and irrelevant information
Level 5 (376-500)	Some tasks at this level require the reader to search for information in dense text that contains a number of plausible distractors. Some require readers to make high-level inferences or use specialized knowledge.	5	Interpret dense and complex texts Make high level inferences and use specialized knowledge

Document Use

<u>Levels</u>	<u>IALS</u>	<u>Levels</u>	<u>Essential Skills Task</u>
Level 1 (0-225)	Most of the tasks at this level require the reader to locate a piece of information based on a literal match. Distracting information, if present, is typically located away from the correct answer. Some tasks may direct the reader to enter personal information onto a form.	1	Document is very simple Limited search using key words, numbers, icons or other visual characteristics to locate information Entering few pieces of information Minimal inference is required
Level 2 (226-275)	Document tasks at this level are a bit more varied. While some still require the reader to match on a single feature, more distracting information may be present or the match may require a low-level inference. Some tasks at this level may require the reader to enter information onto a form or to cycle through information in a document.	2	Document is simple Locating one or more pieces of information Entering several pieces of information A low level of inference is required Limited knowledge of the content of the document may be required to use the information. Limited analysis required.
Level 3 (276-325)	Tasks at this level appear to be most varied. Some require the reader to make literal or synonymous matches, but usually the matches require the reader to take conditional information into account or to match on multiple features of information. Some tasks at this level require the reader to integrate information from one or more displays of information. Other tasks ask the reader to cycle through a document to provide multiple responses.	3	Document is somewhat complex Locating one or more pieces of information Entering multiple pieces of information A moderate degree of inference is required Some knowledge of the content of the document is required to use the information Some analysis required involving selection and integration of information
Level 4 (326-375)	Tasks at this level, like those in the previous levels, ask the reader to match on multiple features of information, to cycle through documents, and to integrate information; frequently however, these tasks require the reader to make higher order inferences to arrive at the correct answer. Sometimes, conditional information is present in the document, which must be taken into account by the reader.	4	Document is complex Locating multiple pieces of information Entering multiple pieces of information Considerable inference may be required
Level 5 (376-500)	Tasks at this level require the reader to search through complex displays of information that contain multiple distractors, to make high-level inferences, process conditional information, or use specialized knowledge.	5	Document is complex Locating multiple pieces of information Entering multiple pieces of information A high level of inference is required

Numeracy

<u>Levels</u>	<u>IALS</u>	<u>Levels</u>	<u>Essential Skills Task</u>
Level 1 (0-225)	Although no quantitative tasks used in the IALS fall below the score value of 225, experience suggests that such tasks would require the reader to perform a single, relatively simple operation (usually addition) for which either the numbers are already entered onto the given document and the operation is stipulated, or the numbers are provided and the operation does not require the reader to borrow.	1	<p><u>Numerical Calculation</u> Only the simplest operations are required and the operations to be used are clearly specified. Only one type of mathematical operation is used in a task Only minimal translation is required to turn the task into a mathematical operation. All information required is provided.</p> <p><u>Numerical Estimation</u> There is a formula. It identifies the variable and how they are to be combined. One factor. All information about the factors that make up the estimate and how to combine them is known. Any complicating factors are known Little or no consequences of error; estimation errors can be easily and quickly rectified with little or no work plan required or costs incurred Little or know precision required</p>
Level 2 (226-275)	Tasks in this level typically require readers to perform a single arithmetic operation (frequently addition or subtraction) using numbers that are easily located in the text or document. The operation to be performed may be easily inferred from the wording of the question or the format of the material (for example, a bank deposit form or an order form).	2	<p><u>Numerical Calculation</u> Only relatively simple operations are required. The specific operations to be performed may not be clearly specified. Tasks involve one or two types of mathematical operation. Few steps of calculation are required. Some translation may be required or the numbers needed for the solution may need to be collected from several sources. Simple formulae may be used.</p> <p><u>Numerical Estimation</u> There is a formula, but it does not incorporate all of the variables. A small number of factors. Most information is known, but there are factors that could throw an estimate off. Estimation errors have some minor consequence. Precision required within relatively wide range</p>
Level 3 (276-325)	Tasks found in this level typically require the reader to perform a single operation. However, the operations become more varied—some multiplication and division tasks are found in this level. Sometimes two or more numbers are needed to solve the problem and the numbers are frequently embedded in more complex displays. While semantic relation terms such as "how many" or "calculate the difference" are often used, some of the tasks require the reader to make higher order inferences to determine the appropriate operation.	3	<p><u>Numerical Calculation</u> Tasks may require a combination of operations or multiple applications of a single operation. Several steps of calculation are required. Some translation is required but the problem is well defined. Combinations of formulae may be used.</p> <p><u>Numerical Estimation</u> There is no formula, but an approach has been developed, possibly by having to perform the task repeatedly. Many factors, but a routine has been established. Information about significant factors that make up the estimate is uncertain; several complications are possible but they are constrained in their impact. Estimation errors have significant consequences. Precision required within a small range of values.</p>

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Level 4 (326-375)	Tasks at this level, like those in the previous levels, ask the reader to match on multiple features of information, to cycle through documents, and to integrate information; frequently however, these tasks require the reader to make higher order inferences to arrive at the correct answer. Sometimes, conditional information is present in the document, which must be taken into account by the reader.	4	<u>Numerical Calculation</u> Tasks involve multiple steps of calculation. Considerable translation is required. <u>Numerical Estimation</u> There is no formula and no established approach is available to the worker. Many factors involved and the methodology for making the estimate must be developed by the worker. Little or no information about significant factors that make up the estimate; the factors may have to be estimated. Many complications are possible and they may not be constrained in their impact. Estimation errors have significant consequences that are not rectifiable or only rectifiable at significant cost. High degree of precision required.
Level 5 (376-500)	These tasks require readers to perform multiple operations sequentially, and they must disembed the features of the problem from the material provided or rely on background knowledge to determine the quantities or operations needed.	5	<u>Numerical Calculation</u> Tasks involve multiple steps of calculation. Advanced mathematical techniques may be required. Numbers needed for calculations may need to be derived or estimated; approximations may need to be created in cases of uncertainty and ambiguity. Complex formulae, equations or functions may be used <u>Numerical Estimation</u> <i>Numerical Estimation is based on a four-level rating scale</i>

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-588-XIE/about.htm>

http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/general/Help_section8.asp

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