

# English Learner Newcomer Resource Guide for Teachers

This guide was put together by Whitney Knight-Rorie, EL Instructional Specialist, DeSoto County Schools.

Please contact me at [whitney.rorie@dcsms.org](mailto:whitney.rorie@dcsms.org) or (901)467-8638 with any questions or concerns.

Check out my website, [dcsel.desotocountyschools.org/whitneyknightrorie](https://dcsel.desotocountyschools.org/whitneyknightrorie) for more resources and updates to this guide.

# Step 1: Learn what your Newcomer CAN DO

Knowing more about newcomer students lets you know how to support them. Not all newcomers are the same!

## 1. What language(s) does the newcomer speak?

- If the student's native language is similar to English, like Spanish (both come from Latin), it will have cognates (words that are similar in both Languages)
- If the native language is very different from English (e.g. Chinese, Arabic), the student will need more support in building vocabulary

## 2. Can the student read and write in their native language?

- If the student has already learned to read in their native language, they will likely be able to transfer those decoding skills over to reading in English, with proper support in spelling conventions and vocabulary.
- If the alphabet of the student's native language is the same as that of English, they will more easily be able to learn to read and write in English
- If the student has literacy skills in their native language, written translation tools like Google Translate can be used.
  - If the student does not have literacy skills in their native language, they can make use of Google Translate's voice features!
- If a student does not have literacy skills in their native language, they will need phonics instruction to begin learning to read for the first time, and audio supports in the meantime.
- Some languages do not have a writing system – in these cases, students often learn another language in school. Use of both languages can help students learn English.

## 3. What was the student's past educational experience like?

- The term for students who have gaps in their formal education is SLIFE, or Students with Interrupted or Limited Formal Education.
- Some students may have had English as a Foreign Language instruction in schools.
- To determine students' content skills, you can give them simple formative assessments that do not require them to speak English. In Math, give them a simple equation to work. In Science, use pictures and translated materials to gauge students' knowledge. In Social Studies/History, ask students to write or record audio in their native language about their knowledge of history in their own country. In ELA, begin by assessing students' reading and writing skills in their native language.

# Categories of Newcomer Supports

This guide is broken down into 5 one-page resource lists based on the answers to the questions on the last page. These categories are a starting point - newcomers are much more diverse than this guide can convey.\*

**Resource 1** – Students with beginning literacy in their native language (p. 3)

**Resource 2** – Students who can read and write in Spanish (p. 4)

**Resource 3** – Students who can read and write in Arabic (p. 5)

**Resource 4** – Students who can read and write in Chinese (p. 6)

**Resource 5** – Students who can read and write in Vietnamese (p. 7)

**Resource 5** – More resources for VIP Newcomers (p. 8)

\*For more guidance about newcomers, read the [Newcomer Tool Kit](#) from the US Department of Education.

# Newcomers who are not literate in their native language

Newcomers who have not learned to read often have gaps in their education. Connecting with life skills and prior knowledge can help them "catch up."

## Tips & Tricks

- **Begin at the beginning** – students need to learn alphabetic principles and letter sound correspondence at the same time they begin learning English vocabulary.
- **Modeling** – demonstrating procedures to students while using simple sentences.
- **Visuals** – Using pictures or videos to show vocabulary, or have students label or draw a picture to demonstrate understanding
- **Hands-on Learning** can help students access your content
- **Check for understanding** often, and avoid yes-no questions.
- **Activate prior knowledge** – though students may not have experience with education, they have life experiences and practical skills to draw on.
- **Scaffolding** content and language means students can learn language skills and content-related skills at the same time.
- **Use of audio** can help students learn to listen in English and associate sounds with words.

## SLIFE Teacher Resources

This [Colorín Colorado article about SLIFE students](#) offers concrete strategies for teachers, as well as background information on SLIFE students.

This [WIDA Resource for SLIFE Students](#) offers a wide array of considerations for teaching SLIFE students.

## Translation for Families

- Liliana Rangel is our district interpreter. [Visit her site](#) to see her translation procedures.
- SchoolStatus has translation options for texting caregivers. [Read about them here!](#)

## Translation for Students

- **Google Translate App** –Students can speak their native language and the app will translate to English, and vice versa. Use the camera function to scan a text, translate, and read it out loud. Text should not be too complex.
- [Unite for Literacy](#) has stories in many different languages and reads them aloud. A student can listen to a page in their native language, then listen to it in English
- [Rivet](#) has interesting books in a variety of levels in English and Spanish. Click on a word to hear it out loud.

## Resources to simplify texts

- [Rewordify](#) – You copy text into the box, and it simplifies the language for newcomers
- [Read and Write](#) is a screen reader for Google Chrome that can read websites out loud to students. Other similar apps, e.g. [TTSReader](#), are available for other devices/browsers.

## Beginning English Websites

- [Learning Chocolate](#) provides language models for beginning vocabulary words.
- [LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners
- [English Central](#) is free when students create an account & has lesson videos!
- [Language Guide](#) has listening and speaking English Vocabulary activities

# Newcomers Who Can Read and Write in Spanish

Literacy in Spanish is a great asset -- so many things are translated in Spanish, and there is a huge amount of positive language transfer!

## Tips & Tricks

- **Preteach vocabulary** – Before beginning a lesson with the whole class, teach newcomers vocabulary you will be using.
- **Modeling** – demonstrating procedures to students while using simple sentences.
- **Visuals** – Using pictures to show vocabulary, S labels or draws a picture to demonstrate understanding
- **Use a blend of translated and scaffolded assignments**
  - Provide both the English and Spanish versions side-by-side
- **Wait Time** - after asking a question and after a student responds
- **Classroom Buddies** provide language models in English and in Spanish.

## Beginning English Websites

- [Pumarosa](#) has English instruction in Spanish
- [LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners
- [English Central](#) is free when students create an account & has lesson videos!

## Language Transfer

- [This List of Spanish/English Cognates](#) can be useful for helping students learn new vocabulary quickly
- [This list of Phonological Similarities and Differences Between Spanish and English](#) can help students transfer their literacy skills from Spanish to English.

## Translation for Families

- Liliana Rangel is our district interpreter. Visit her site to see her translation procedures.
- SchoolStatus has translation options for texting caregivers. [Read about them here!](#)

## Translation for Students

- **Student-made or [Pre-made](#) bilingual glossaries** can help with vocabulary.
  - **Google Translate Chrome Extension** – Students install on Chrome, and it will translate Schoology!
  - **Google Translate App** – Scan documents or upload PDFs! Speak one language and listen in another!
  - **PowerPoint Online** – Record live captions of your teaching in whatever language you want!
  - **Microsoft Translator** – Live translation during class or via Teams!
- \*\*When using Electronic Translators, try to use simple sentences so that the structure is more likely to be recognized.

## Where to get Spanish Texts

- [NewsELA](#) and [TweenTribune](#) offer leveled news articles in Spanish and English.
- [Common Lit](#) offers Spanish literature with English Translation
- [Parallel Text](#) offers some bilingual texts side by side for language learning

## Spanish Content Resources

[Khan Academy Spanish](#) has lessons from many different content areas

[Tubersidad](#) has Spanish language History videos

[Microsoft Math](#) is available in many languages

[Xtra Math](#) is available in Spanish!

[2Lingual](#) searches Google in two languages side-by-side

# Newcomers Who Can Read and Write in Arabic

Literacy in Arabic is a great asset, though there are many differences between reading in Arabic and in English

## Tips & Tricks

- **Preteach vocabulary** – Before beginning a lesson with the whole class, teach newcomers vocabulary you will be using.
- **Modeling** – demonstrating procedures to students while using simple sentences.
- **Visuals** – Using pictures to show vocabulary, S labels or draws a picture to demonstrate understanding
- **Use a blend of translated and scaffolded assignments**
  - Provide both the English and Arabic versions side-by-side
- **Wait Time** - after asking a question and after a student responds
- **Classroom Buddies** provide language models in English.

## Beginning English Websites

- [LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners
- [English Central](#) is free when students create an account & has lesson videos!
- [Learning Chocolate](#) provides language models for beginning vocabulary words.

## Language Transfer

- [This List of English-Arabic-Spanish Cognates](#) can be useful for helping students connect vocabulary
- [This list of differences between Arabic and English](#) can help students transfer their literacy skills from Arabic to English.

## Translation for Families

SchoolStatus has translation options for texting caregivers. [Read about them here!](#)

## Caution w/ Arabic Translation!

Try out different translation tools with your newcomer first using simple language – There are many different dialects of Arabic and electronic translation for Arabic lags behind that for Spanish.

## Translation for Students

- **Bilingual glossaries**
  - Student-made glossaries are specific to your class.
  - [Pre-made](#) glossaries can help communication
- **Google Translate Chrome Extension** – Students install on Chrome, and it will translate Schoology!
- **Google Translate App** – Scan documents or upload PDFs! Speak one language and listen in another!
- **PowerPoint Online** – Record live captions of your teaching in whatever language you want!
- **Microsoft Translator** – Live translation during class or via Teams!

## Where to get Arabic Texts

- [World Stories](#) has stories in Arabic with English translation
- [Parallel Text](#) offers some bilingual texts side by side for language learning

## Arabic Content Resources

[Khan Academy](#) has a variety of content-related lessons available in Arabic.  
[Edraak](#) is an education site in Arabic!  
[Microsoft Math](#) is available in many languages  
[Binoqi](#) has math and science lessons  
[2Lingual](#) searches Google in two languages side-by-side

# Newcomers Who Can Read and Write in Chinese

Literacy in Chinese is a great asset, though there are many differences between reading in Chinese and in English

## Tips & Tricks

- **Preteach vocabulary** – Before beginning a lesson with the whole class, teach newcomers vocabulary you will be using.
- **Modeling** – demonstrating procedures to students while using simple sentences.
- **Visuals** – Using pictures to show vocabulary, S labels or draws a picture to demonstrate understanding
- **Use a blend of translated and scaffolded English assignments**
  - Provide both the English and Chinese versions side-by-side
  - Or provide lower level texts (see resources on the SLIFE page).
- **Wait Time** - after asking a question and after a student responds
- **Classroom Buddies** provide language models in English.

## Beginning English Websites

- [LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners
- [English Central](#) is free when students create an account & has lesson videos!
- [Learning Chocolate](#) provides language models for beginning vocabulary words.

## Language Transfer

[This list of differences between Chinese and English](#) can help students transfer their literacy skills from Chinese to English.

## Translation for Families

SchoolStatus has translation options for texting caregivers. [Read about them here!](#)

## Caution w/ Chinese Translation!

Try out different translation tools with your newcomer first using simple language – There are several *drastically* different dialects of Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin, for example), and electronic translation for Chinese lags behind that for Spanish.

## Translation for Students

- **Bilingual glossaries**
  - Student-made glossaries are specific to your class.
  - [Pre-made](#) glossaries can help communication
- **Google Translate Chrome Extension** – Students install on Chrome, and it will translate Schoology!
- **Google Translate App** – Scan documents or upload PDFs! Speak one language and listen in another!
- **PowerPoint Online** – Record live captions of your teaching in whatever language you want!
- **Microsoft Translator** – Live translation during class or via Teams!

## Where to get Chinese Texts

- [World Stories](#) has stories in Cantonese and Mandarin with English translation
- [Parallel Text](#) offers some bilingual texts side by side for language learning

## Chinese Content Resources

[Khan Academy](#) has a variety of content-related lessons available in Chinese.  
[Microsoft Math](#) is available in many languages  
[Binogi](#) has math and science lessons  
[2Lingual](#) searches Google in two languages side-by-side

# Newcomers Who Can Read and Write in Vietnamese

Literacy in Vietnamese is a great asset, though there are many differences between reading in Vietnamese and in English

## Tips & Tricks

- **Preteach vocabulary** – Before beginning a lesson with the whole class, teach newcomers vocabulary you will be using.
- **Modeling** – demonstrating procedures to students while using simple sentences.
- **Visuals** – Using pictures to show vocabulary, S labels or draws a picture to demonstrate understanding
- **Use a blend of translated and scaffolded English assignments**
  - Provide both the English and Vietnamese versions side-by-side
  - Or provide lower level texts (see resources on the SLIFE page).
- **Wait Time** - after asking a question and after a student responds
- **Classroom Buddies** provide language models in English.

## Beginning English Websites

[Learning Chocolate](#) provides language models for beginning vocabulary words.

[LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners

[English Central](#) is free when students create an account & has lesson videos!

[Language Guide](#) has listening and speaking English Vocabulary activities

## Language Transfer

[This list of differences between Vietnamese and English](#) can help students transfer their literacy skills from Vietnamese to English.

## Translation for Families

SchoolStatus has translation options for texting caregivers. [Read about them here!](#)

## Caution w/ Vietnamese Translation!

Try out different translation tools with your newcomer first using simple language – Electronic translation for Vietnamese lags behind that for Spanish.

## Translation for Students

- **Bilingual glossaries**
  - Student-made glossaries are specific to your class.
  - [Pre-made](#) glossaries can help communication
- **Google Translate Chrome Extension** – Students install on Chrome, and it will translate Schoology!
- **Google Translate App** – Scan documents or upload PDFs! Speak one language and listen in another!
- **PowerPoint Online** – Record live captions of your teaching in whatever language you want!
- **Microsoft Translator** – Live translation during class or via Teams!

## Vietnamese Texts

- [Parallel Text](#) offers some bilingual texts side by side for language learning
- [Unite for Literacy](#) has stories in Vietnamese & English and reads them aloud.

## Content Resources

[Microsoft Math](#) is available in many languages

[2Lingual](#) searches Google in two languages side-by-side



# VIP Newcomers – Some Considerations

Resources in previous pages will likely be helpful when a newcomer is a VIP student. Here are further resources and tutorials for working with newcomers online!

## Tips & Tricks

- **Videos** can provide models of English to VIP students who do not have people to practice English with at home
- Students can **translate virtual assignments** with guidance. To grow in English skills, working with both languages side by side or clicking on a word to translate it is very helpful.
- **Teams Meetings or Phone Calls** offer students a chance to listen and speak English in real time.
- **Collaborative assignments** with other VIP students using tools like shared OneDrive documents, Teams, or the messaging feature in Schoology allow for scaffolding and language models for newcomers.
- **Simplify assignments** by breaking down multi-step directions into one assignment for each step, if possible.
- **Sentence frames** or **graphic organizers** lower linguistic demands of students while keeping content expectations.

## Community Resources

- [First Regional Libraries](#) are providing ebooks and appointments to patrons.
- [Latino Memphis](#) is a great resource for students and families
- You can reach out to other community- and faith-based organizations to collaborate to meet students' needs virtually.

## Family Engagement

Using SchoolStatus translation to communicate with families is especially helpful for VIP students. Providing translated materials and support for all family members will help VIP newcomers thrive in their online learning environment. [Find a wealth of resources for engaging families here.](#)

## Schoology Features

- You can **individually assign materials** or **folders** to just your EL student in order to provide extra language support, give them an alternate assignment, or provide accommodations and modifications. [Check out this video](#) about using accommodations in Schoology using NewsELA.
- You can upload **audio or videos** to Schoology to explain directions for assignments, discussion boards, or [assessments](#).
- You can allow students to **submit an assignment using the audio option** instead of writing.
- Use the [One Drive Assignments App](#) to assign graphic organizers to students.

## Helpful Sites & Apps

- [Read and Write](#) is a screen reader for Google Chrome that can read websites out loud to students.
- [Microsoft Translator](#) can be used to translate Teams Meetings live!
- [LingoHut](#) is a great resource for beginning language learners
- [Learning Chocolate](#) provides language models for beginning vocabulary words.