



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

High School Promotion and Graduation Policy in New York City Public Schools for English Language Learners (ELLs)

English Language Learners (ELLs) generally have the same promotion standards and graduation requirements as other students.

What are the requirements for ELLs to be promoted in high school?

To be promoted each year, you need 8 credits in 9th grade, 20 credits in 10th grade (at least 4 from English/ESL classes and 4 from Social Studies), and 30 credits in 11th grade.

What happens if I am not promoted to the next grade?

If you do not earn the credits you need to move on to the next grade, you will receive a letter from your school in June. You will need to attend summer school and pass the necessary classes to make up the credits. Some schools also offer afterschool or other programs known as "credit recovery" programs. Ask your school about the types of credit recovery programs they offer.

How many credits do I need to graduate?

You need 44 course credits to graduate. These must include:

- 8 English/ESL credits
- 8 Social Studies credits
- 6 math credits
- 6 science credits
- 4 gym credits
- 2 foreign language credits
- 2 arts credits
- 1 health credit
- 7 elective credits

Can I get credit for courses taken in a different country?

Yes. The principal will review your transcript and give you credits based on a comparison of the course to New York State standards.

If I enrolled in a New York City school for the first time in high school, can I graduate with fewer than 44 credits?

No. Regardless of when you entered the New York City school system, you still need 44 course credits to graduate.

Do I need to pass any exams to graduate with a high school diploma?

You are required to pass (score 65 or higher) 5 New York State Regents exams or 4 Regents exams and one other approved New York State test. If you entered a New York public school before 11th grade, you must pass the following Regents exams:

- English Language Arts (English) exam
- One History exam (Global or U.S. History)
- One Math exam (Algebra I, II, or Geometry)

- One Science exam (Living Environment (Biology), Chemistry, Physics, or Earth Science)
- One other approved exam, like a Career and Technical Education (CTE) exam, Advanced Placement (AP) exam, LOTE exam, or CDOS Credential

You may appeal two exams with a score of 60, 61, 62, 63, or 64 and pass if you meet certain requirements. See our Appeals Fact Sheet for more information:

http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/regents_exam_appeal_options.pdf.

What if I enrolled in a New York public school for the first time in 11th grade?

If you enrolled in school in New York for the first time in 11th grade, you must pass 4 Regents exams in English, Math, U.S. History, and Science. The principal may exempt ELL students who recently arrived from the Global History exam.

What if I enrolled in a New York public school for the first time in 12th grade?

If you enrolled in school in New York for the first time in 12th grade, you must pass 3 Regents exams in English, Math, and U.S. History. The principal may exempt ELLs who recently arrived from the Science exam and the Global History exam.

Do ELLs have to take the English Regents exam?

Yes. All ELLs must pass the English Regents exam to graduate. **ELLs who enrolled in school in the US for the first time in 9th grade or later may appeal the English Regents Exam and graduate with a score of 55-59.** To appeal an exam, you must:

- Take the exam at least twice
- Get academic help in English Language Arts
- Pass your English Language Arts classes
- Be recommended by your English teacher or the chair of the English department

Students who appeal the English Regents exam may also appeal one other exam with a score of 60, 61, 62, 63, or 64.

Do I have to take the other Regents exams in English?

It depends. U.S. History, Global History, Algebra I, Living Environment (Biology), and Earth Science exams are available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Haitian Creole. If a test is not available in your native language, you can have tests orally translated. Open-ended answers can be written in your language when you are given the test in your native language. However, *all* questions and answers on the English Regents exam must be read and written in English.

What other testing accommodations can ELLs receive on the Regents exams?

ELL students can receive the following accommodations:

- Extended time, often “time and a half”
- Take Regents exams in a separate location by yourself or in a small group
- On the English Regents exam, you may hear the listening passage 3 times instead of twice
- Use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, except for the English Regents exam

Do these testing accommodations apply to students who are no longer classified as ELLs?

You can get Regents testing accommodations for 2 years after passing the NYSESLAT (New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test), the English proficiency test that ELLs take every spring. If you are no longer classified as an ELL, you do not qualify for the English Regents exam appeal explained above.

CHANGES DURING COVID-19:

If you planned to take a Regents exam from **June 2020 to January 2022**, you may be eligible for a COVID-19 exemption to the exam.*

If you pass a Regents course and take the Regents exam in that subject between **June 2022 and August 2023**, you can appeal scores of 50-64, instead of the usual 60-64, and still earn a Regents Diploma. To learn more, check out this [tip sheet](#).

**The U.S. History Regents exam was also cancelled in June 2022, though not due to COVID-19. If you were supposed to take that Regents exam, you are eligible for a Regents exemption.*

Still have more questions?
Please Call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline
Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm
1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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