

# Expository Database

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	Grade in School	# Samples	Location	SI, NSS, ESS
Expository	Expo	10;7 – 15;9	5, 6, 7, 9	242	WI	SI, ESS

## Introduction

The Expository database contains samples from middle and high school students, ages 10;7 through 15;9. Exposition was chosen for the following reasons:

- Exposition is central to curriculum in middle and high school
- Exposition is included as part of state standards for speaking and writing
- Exposition challenges students to use language in context (authentic, naturalistic, real speaking and listening)
- Exposition allows documentation of oral expository skills relative to peers

## Participants

242 typically developing students, ranging in age from 10;7 through 15;9, whose primary language is English.

Students were drawn from public schools in two geographic areas of Wisconsin:

- 166 students from Milwaukee area school districts
- 76 students from Madison Metropolitan School District

There are students from a variety of economic backgrounds and ability levels. "Typically developing" was determined by normal progress in school and absence of special education services. Economic background was based on eligibility in the free lunch program (24% qualified for free or reduced lunch). Ability level was determined by GPA scores and teacher reports (12% were low, 62% were average, and 26% were high). The race/ethnicity of the students was similar to that of the geographic area from which they were drawn (80% White, 11% African American, 7% Hispanic, and 2% Asian). There are 118 females and 124 males.

## Elicitation Protocol

### Overview

The elicitation protocol is easy to administer and provides optimum opportunity for the student to produce a "good" expository. Following a script, the examiner asks the student to explain how to play a game or sport of the student's choosing. Discourage the student from talking about video games as they may be unfamiliar to the examiner and often result in limited content. The student is given a few minutes to complete a planning sheet which contains eight topics (Object, Preparations, Start, Course of play, Rules, Scoring, Duration, and Strategies). Listed next to each topic is a brief description of what's covered within that topic and space for making notes. The planning sheet is included at the end of this document. Following the planning phase, the student is asked to explain the game or sport using his/her notes.

Using this protocol, expository samples tend to be between 5 – 6 minutes in length and have between 50 – 60 complete and intelligible utterances.

### Script

*I'm interested in finding out how well you do at giving explanations. I'm going to make a recording so I can remember what you say. If you want, you can listen to the recording when we're finished.*

*I want you to imagine that I am a student about your age. I'm visiting the United States from another country and I want to learn as much as I can about life in the U.S. You can help me by explaining how to play your favorite sport or game. You have lots of choices. For example, you could pick a sport, such as basketball or tennis. You could pick a board game, such as Monopoly or chess. Or you could pick a card game, such as poker or rummy. What sport or game do you want to pick?*

The student offers an appropriate choice. If a choice is not offered or is inappropriate (such as a video game), reread the examples given above and/or add more examples to aid the student in making an appropriate choice. If the student is still having difficulty making a selection, suggest picking a game or sport recently played in the student's physical education class.

*Assume that in my country we don't play [name of sport or game]. I'd like you to explain everything I would need to know to so I could learn to play. I'll expect you to talk for at least five minutes. To help you organize your thoughts, here's a list of topics I'd like you to talk about [hand the student a copy of the planning sheet found on the next page]. Please take the next few minutes to plan your explanation by taking notes in the blank spaces [indicate empty column on the right]. But don't waste time writing sentences. Just write some key words to remind you of what you want to say. You can talk about the topics in the order they are listed, or else you can number the topics any way you wish. If you don't want to take notes, you can use the backside of the list to draw a diagram or make a graphic organizer. Do you have any questions?*

If student expresses difficulty with reading any portion of the checklist, read the unclear portions aloud. If the student has difficulty understanding the vocabulary, give an example from a sport or game different from the one the student has chosen.

*Go ahead and start planning.*

Allow enough time for student to write something for each topic on the checklist or to complete a diagram or graphic organizer. If the student stops writing or drawing before planning is finished, prompt with, "Please do some planning for [topic name (s)]."

*I'm ready to turn on the recorder. You will be doing all the talking. I'm going to listen to what you have to say. Take as much time as you need to give a complete explanation. Remember: I expect you to talk for at least five minutes.*

Turn on recording device and have the student begin speaking. After the student has finished speaking from his/her planning sheet, turn off recording device. If the student finishes speaking before five minutes has elapsed, prompt with, "Is there anything else you can tell me?". Review the recording for quality before releasing the student.

### **Transcription Notes**

The SALT group transcribed the samples following the SALT format and performed a series of statistical analyses to describe the dataset for consistency, differences among types of expository samples, age-related changes, and differences with existing conversation and narrative samples. The language samples were segmented into communication units. All transcripts were timed and pauses, within and between utterances, of two or more seconds in length, were marked.

### Coding Notes

- [EO:word] marks overgeneralization errors.
- [EW:word] marks other word-level errors.
- [EU] marks utterance-level errors.

### Subordination Index (SI) and Expository Scoring Scheme (ESS) Coding

SI and ESS coding were applied to all samples.

SI is a measure of syntactic complexity which produces a ratio of the total number of clauses (main and subordinate clauses) to the number of C-units. A clause, whether it is main or subordinate, is a statement containing both a subject and a predicate. Grammatically, a subject is a noun phrase and a predicate is a verb phrase. Main clauses can stand by themselves. Subordinate clauses depend on the main clause to make sense. They are embedded within an utterance as noun, adjective or adverbial clauses.

ESS assesses the content and structure of an expository language sample, similar to how the Narrative Scoring Scheme provides an overall measure of a student's skill in producing a narrative. The ESS is comprised of 10 characteristics for completing an expository language sample. The first 8 characteristics correspond to the topics listed on the planning sheet that is given to students.

### References

- Heilmann, J., Miller, J. F., Iglesias, A., Fabiano-Smith, L., Nockerts A., & Andriacchi, K. (2008). *Narrative transcription accuracy and reliability in two languages*. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 28, 178-187.
- Hughes, D., McGillivray, L., Schmiddek, M. (1997). *Guide to Narrative Language: Procedures for Assessment*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications.
- Loban, W. (1963). *The Language of Elementary School Children*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Loban, W. (1976). *Language Development: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Malone, T., Heilmann, J., Miller, J., DiVall-Rayan, J., Rolland, M. (2010), *Reaching the Tweeners: Extending Two SALT Databases to Grades 5-6*, Presented at the American Speech and Hearing Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Malone, T., Miller, J., Andriacchi K., Heilmann J., Nockerts, A., Schoonveld, E. (2008), *Let Me Explain: Teenage Expository Language Samples*, Presented at the American Speech and Hearing Association, Chicago, IL.
- Nippold, M., Hesketh L., Kuthie, J., & Mansfield, T. (2005). *Conversational Versus Expository Discourse: A Study of Syntactic Development in Children, Adolescents, and Adults*. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 48, 1048-1064.
- Nippold, M., Mansfield, T., Billow, J. & Tomblin, J.B., (2008) Expository Discourse in Adolescents With Language Impairments: Examining Syntactic Development. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* (17) 356–366.

### Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge and thank Thomas O. Malone, speech-language pathologist in Brown Deer, Wisconsin, for being the driving force behind this project. His influence is everywhere including, but not limited to, a) recognizing the need for an expository database, b) designing the protocol used, c) recruiting clinicians from Milwaukee-area school districts, d) coding for types of subordination and applying the Expository Scoring Scheme, and e) presenting the results of the project (Malone, et. al., 2008, Malone, et. al., 2010).

We would like to thank the following clinicians who collected the expository samples:

- Brown Deer School District: Thomas O. Malone, Katherine E. Smith
- Fox Point-Bayside School District: Jody Herbert
- Madison Metropolitan School District: Vicki Ashenbrenner, Kelly Chasco, Ingrid Curcio, Alyson Eith, Lynn Gabrielson, Maureen Gotner, Patty Hay-Chapman, Marie Hendrickson, Andrea Hermanson, Tanya Jensen, Laura Johnson, Jane Morgan, Andrea O'Neill, Nicole Olson, Nan Perschon, Carolyn Putnam, Mary-Beth Rolland, Liz Schoonveld, Julie Scott-Moran, Jennifer Van Winkle, Helena White, Emily Wolf, Meg Wollner
- Shorewood School District: Terry Hrycyna, Katie Koepsell
- Waukesha School District: Bill Downey, Linda Carver, Judy Ertel, Susan Fischer, Jeanne Gantenbein, Lisa Haughney, Christine Herro, Patricia Engebose Hovel, Susan Moennig, Colleen Raupp, Jennifer Theisen, Maureen Waterstaat
- Wauwatosa School District: Beth Bliss, Amy Brantley, Betsy Goldberg, Peg Hamby, Karen Malecki, Lynn Meehan, Angela Quinn
- West Allis-West Milwaukee School District: Sarah Bartosch, Joy Behrend, Beth Beno, Ann-Guri E. Bishop, Lindsay Bliemeister, Pat Culbertson, Mary Fuchs, Nicole Gosser, Joyce King-McIver, Ellen Reitz, Jan Schmidt, Jill Vanderhoef, Michele Wolaver

All samples were transcribed and coded by the University of Wisconsin students working in the Language Analysis Lab. This project was funded in part by SALT Software, LLC.

The planning sheet is provided on the next page.

## What to Talk About When Explaining a Game or Sport

Topic	What's Covered	Notes
Object	What you have to do to win	
Preparations	Playing Area and Setup Equipment and Materials What players do to get ready	
Start	How the contest begins, including who goes first	
Course of Play	What happens during a team or player's turn, including any special plays, positions, or roles, both offensive and defensive	
Rules	Major rules, including penalties for violations	
Scoring	Different ways to score, including point values	
Duration	How long the contest lasts, including how it ends and tie breaking procedures	
Strategies	What smart players do to win, both offensively and defensively	

Please use the backside of this page for an optional diagram or graphic organizer, or for additional notes.

## Planning Sheet Examples

### What to Talk About When Explaining a Game or Sport

Basketball as an example, by Emily (age 14:10)

Topic	What's Covered	Notes
Object 6	What you have to do to win	get more points within time limit
Preparations 1	Playing Area and Setup Equipment and Materials What players do to get ready	court, ball, uniforms, start shooting, playing against each other, dribbling
Start 2	How the contest begins, including who goes first	jump ball, whoever ball gets tipped to starts offensively
Course of Play 3	What happens during a team or player's turn, including any special plays, positions, or roles, both offensive and defensive	offense - try to score by passing, dribbling, shooting, plays, different positions: <del>point guard</del> center, guard defense - defending basket, stealing ball, going back on offense
Rules 4	Major rules, including penalties for violations	fouling, slapping people while they're shooting, arguing, free throws
Scoring 5	Various ways to score, including point values	1 basket = 2 points past 3 point line = 3 points free throw = 1 point
Duration 7	How long the contest lasts, including how it ends and tie breaking procedures	4 quarters <del>overtime</del> overtime!
Strategies 8	What smart players do to win, both offensively and defensively	learn plays other team doesn't know learn to dribble with 2 hands practice a lot

Please use the backside of this page for an optional diagram or graphic organizer, or for additional notes.

### Scooter Soccer as an example, by Tiffany (age 14;0)

