



# TNL Narrative Samples Database

Samples used to norm the TNL: Test of Narrative Language (Gillam & Pearson, 2004)

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	# Samples	Location
TNL Narrative Samples	Nar (GNT)	5;0 – 11;11	500	USA

## Participants

This reference database consists of narrative samples from participants ranging in age from 5;0 to 11;11, including 50 five-year olds, 100 six-year olds, 100 seven-year-olds, 100 eight-year-olds, 50 nine-year-olds, 50 ten-year-olds, and 50 eleven-year-olds. There are an equal number of boys and girls at each age. Children came from four US regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West). Their primary language was English and they had not been identified with a disability and were not receiving any special education services. The race/ethnicity distribution of the children in the sample is 71% white (not Hispanic), 11% black or African-American, 10% Hispanic, and 8% other or not reported.

## Elicitation Protocol

Examiners collected data on children's ability to tell stories in three formats: (1) a script retell (no picture cues), (2) a story about five sequenced pictures, and (3) a fictional narrative based on a single picture. The examiner scripts and picture stimuli that were used to elicit the narratives are available in the Test of Narrative Language (Gillam & Pearson, 2004).

- **Task 1: McDonald's - Script Retell (no picture cues)**  
In the first narrative format, the examiner reads aloud a story about two children who go to McDonald's with their mother. Because no picture cues are provided, the child must rely on auditory memory to answer literal and inferential comprehension questions about the story. After answering the story comprehension questions, the child is asked to retell the entire McDonald's story. The child's retelling was transcribed.
- **Task 2: Late For School - Five Sequenced Pictures**  
The examiner shows the child a sequence of five pictures that illustrate the critical events in a single-episode story that the examiner tells. The story is about a child who creates a school project at home, falls, and breaks the project on the way to school, and then fixes the project when she gets to school. After reading the story to the child, the examiner asks the child to answer nine literal and inferential comprehension questions about the characters, events, and consequences in the story. The comprehension questions and answers were not transcribed. The examiner then shows the child a sequence of five new pictures that depict a sequence of events about a boy who is late for school. The child's oral story about the sequence of pictures was transcribed.
- **Task 3: Aliens - Single Picture**  
The examiner tells a multi-episode story that corresponds to a picture of two children who are looking at a treasure being guarded by a dragon. The examiner asks ten literal and inferential comprehension questions about the characters, events, problems, and consequences in the story. The comprehension questions and answers were not transcribed. The examiner then shows the child a picture of two children who witness a family of aliens walking out of a spaceship that has landed in a park. The child's oral story that corresponded to the picture of a fictional event was transcribed.

When selecting language samples from the database, you have the option including all three stories or restricting the selection to a specific story by specifying one of the following subgroups:

- All 3 Stories - all three narrative story tasks
- McDonalds - the first narrative task only (script retell)
- LateForSchool - the second narrative task only (five sequenced pictures)
- Aliens - the third narrative task only (single picture)

## Transcription Notes

Language samples were transcribed according to SALT conventions by undergraduate and graduate students in Communication Sciences and Disorders who completed a course on transcription and reached 90% or better agreement on three training transcripts. Utterances were segmented into C-units, which were defined as groups of words that could not be further divided without loss of their essential meaning. After the tape was transcribed by one research assistant, a second research assistant listened to the tape and marked disagreements with any of the original segmentation and/or coding decisions. All disagreements were resolved by a PhD level research coordinator who listened to the tape as she made a third pass through the transcripts. Timing information was not coded. Gender, age, and ethnicity information is included in the header.

## Coding Notes

- [EO:word] marks overgeneralization error
- [EP:word] marks pronoun error
- [EW] marks an extraneous or unnecessary word in the utterance that, if omitted, would make the utterance syntactically correct, e.g., C And he shout/ed and[EW] to the frog.
- [EW:word] marks other word-level error
- [EU] marks utterance-level error (*also marks utterances with 3 or more errors*)
- [FP] marks filled pause words such as *like*, e.g., *You (like[FP]) get six card/s.*

## Using SALT to Compare Samples to the TNL Narrative Database

Use SALT's Database menu to compare your sample with age or grade-matched samples selected from the TNL Narrative database. SALT looks at the "+ Context" and "+ Subgroup" plus lines in your transcript to determine which database to pre-select. To pre-select the TNL Narrative database, include the following plus lines in your transcript:

+ Context: Nar  
+ Subgroup: TNL

Although you can type these plus lines into your transcript, the easiest way is to select the correct sampling context (Nar) and subgroup (TNL) when first creating a new transcript (by completing the New Transcript Header information dialogue box).

## Acknowledgements

The narratives in this database were collected for the standardization of the Test of Narrative Language, funded by Pro-Ed Inc. Denise Hayward, PhD, supervised the transcription process while she was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Texas at Austin. Allie Baron, Kara Bergemann, Samantha Castenuela, Jennifer Heard, Lisa Hendrix, Rebecca Garcia, Amy Grant, Tiffany Porter, Beth Schwab, and Davnee Wilson transcribed and checked the narratives. Gillam, R., & Pearson, N. (2004). Test of Narrative Language, Pro-Ed Inc.