



# Student Profiles

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## Olena

### Background

Olena is a 5th grade student who was born in Ukraine and moved to the U.S. with her family when she was 9 years old. She has been in the United States for less than one year. In Ukraine, she attended a special primary school for students with disabilities.

### Home language skills

Olena speaks Ukrainian at home with her family and can easily converse about common topics using phrases and some simple sentences. Still, she has difficulty expressing ideas with complex information or vocabulary. For example, she is not able to give some basic factual information such as her home address or phone number in her first language. She often requires extra time to think of the words she wants to choose to express an idea. She also has difficulty using more complex sentence structure in her first language. Olena's mother reports that she processes information presented to her in Ukrainian at a slower rate than her siblings do. Olena had several years of instruction in Ukrainian and can read and write simple sentences in the language. However, she struggles with decoding text in her first language. In her U.S. classroom, a Ukrainian-speaking educational assistant provides her with some Ukrainian explanations of directions for activities or content concepts.

### Disability

Olena has a moderate intellectual disability. Her parents report that there are no other known medical issues that might affect her learning. Olena receives the majority of her instruction in the general education classroom where she is actively engaged in learning most of the time. She has difficulty processing information, which affects her ability to remember and express information she has previously learned. She receives special education services for a specific learning disability, as well as speech services to improve her receptive-expressive language skills. She works hard to decode English text at her grade level. Olena has difficulty maintaining focus, especially when working on challenging tasks, and tends to give up easily. Olena receives specialized instruction through special education for reading, writing, and mathematics. According to her most recent scores on standardized assessments, Olena is far below proficient in reading.

Olena has difficulty remembering lists of information and requires help with planning and problem solving. In class, she needs to sit in a quiet area of the classroom and requires information to be presented to her in multiple ways. Her teacher often uses visual cues when presenting the directions for an activity, and she typically repeats the directions more than once.

Currently, Olena receives speech-language services and is making good progress. At the beginning of the year, she had difficulty forming English speech sounds correctly. Her speech-language pathologist says that in English speech she now has average sentence structure with some errors when she uses simple grammar. If she has trouble thinking of an English word, Olena will often use a hand gesture and an associated word.

### English language development

Olena is a recent arrival to the United States and has been placed in the ESL program. Her difficulties with decoding text and producing complex thoughts in Ukrainian are also apparent in her second language. Her English speaking skills were assessed as low on her special education placement tests and basic on her initial English proficiency screening test. Listening comprehension is her strongest skill in English but she still scores at a low-intermediate level.

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