

CELF-5 Report Write-Up Cheat Sheet

Reviewed by the BastionGPT Clinical Advisory Board · September 2026 · Reproduces no items, forms, norms, or tables

The CELF-5 (NCS Pearson, 2013) is a norm-referenced language battery for ages 5:0 through 21:11: 16 standalone tests, about 10 per age band, yielding a Core Language Score and index scores (mean 100, SD 15) from age-selected tests, plus observational and pragmatic components. The write-up's hard parts are composition (the same index label draws on different tests at ages 5 to 8, 9 to 12, and 13 to 21), uncertainty (the confidence interval at a threshold), and the rule (the publisher's cut, the state's rule, and the payer's policy are three different things).

Identification + norm set edition, platform, tests given

Do: name the edition and norm set (US, Australian and NZ, Spain), the platform, the language of testing, and every test administered.

Pitfall: "CELF-5 administered" with no norm set or test list; nobody can tell what produced the numbers.

Observations + validity bound the interpretation

Do: chart attention, hearing and vision status, language history and dialect, interpreter use, and any extension testing.

Pitfall: second-language or dialect patterns scored as disorder; the norms assume English-dominant experience.

Composites + intervals SS, 95% CI, percentile, tests

Do: report the CLS and each index with its interval, percentile, descriptor, and the tests that composed it at this age.

Pitfall: a bare 78 against a 77.5 threshold; the interval is the honest sentence.

Test-level pattern converging, not a list

Do: describe scaled-score patterns that converge; run the manual's discrepancy procedure before calling any gap meaningful.

Pitfall: a low Language Memory Index written up as a memory disorder.

Context + pragmatics ORS, Profile, PAC, sample

Do: ORS by rater and context; Pragmatics Profile as a norm-referenced scaled score; PAC as criterion-based; language sample.

Pitfall: the Pragmatics Profile labeled criterion-referenced; it has yielded norm-referenced scores since this edition.

Eligibility statement against the named rule

Do: quote the state, board, funder, or payer rule; compare each element; the team decides, the score does not.

Pitfall: "a Core Language Score below 85 qualifies"; no federal rule or publisher cut says so.

Recommendations + progress weakness to service to measure

Do: link each documented weakness to a service or accommodation; name the progress measure (Growth Scale Values for change).

Pitfall: template recommendations with no thread back to the profile.

Before the note is signed

- ☐ Edition, norm set, and platform named
- ☐ Every composite carries interval and percentile
- ☐ Constituent tests listed per index
- ☐ Pragmatics Profile labeled norm-referenced
- ☐ Language sample or second measure documented
- ☐ Rule quoted, scores compared, team decides
- ☐ No age equivalent doing decisional work

Drafting with AI

Give it the facts: age band and tests administered, scaled and standard scores with intervals, ORS and Pragmatics Profile results, language-sample findings, the governing rule.

"Draft a CELF-5 results section: age 7:4, US norms, paper administration, CLS 76 (95% CI 70 to 82, 5th percentile), ELI 74, RLI 84, LCI 88, 62-utterance sample with reduced morphology, rule 1.5 SD on two measures or one plus a sample."

Never paste patient-identifying information into consumer AI tools. BastionGPT is HIPAA-compliant with a signed BAA on every plan.

SS 100/15, scaled 10/3

interval + percentile with every composite

Same label, different tests

composition shifts at 9 and 13

Publisher cut vs rule

80 in Pearson's study; the rule decides

Profile is norm-referenced

PAC criterion-based, ORS observational

CELF-5 Results Section Template

Copy or print for your practice · Adapt fields to your organization's, payer's and jurisdiction's documentation requirements. Contains no test content.

Setting: _____ Patient (initials): _____ Date: _____ Clinician: _____

Edition, norm set + platform: _____ Age band + tests administered: _____

Referral question and measures

Referral concern · evaluation dates · tests administered and why · language sample, dynamic assessment, and records reviewed

Behavioral observations and validity

Attention and effort · hearing and vision status · language history and dialect · interpreter use · conditions that bound interpretation

Composite results with intervals

CLS and each index: standard score (mean 100, SD 15) · 95% confidence interval · percentile · descriptor · constituent tests at this age band

Test-level pattern

Scaled scores (mean 10, SD 3) · converging strengths and weaknesses · discrepancy analysis per the manual · no over-interpretation of scatter

Contextual and pragmatic evidence

ORS observations by rater · Pragmatics Profile scaled score · PAC criterion result if given · language sample findings · dynamic assessment response

Eligibility or diagnostic statement

Governing rule quoted (state, board, funder, payer) · evidence compared with each element · converging measures · team determination

Recommendations and progress plan

Each weakness linked to a service or accommodation · classroom strategies · progress measure and reevaluation timing

Clinician (name and credentials): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____