

Person—proficiency in spoken English, code N

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Proficiency in spoken English
METEOR identifier:	270203
Registration status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Services (retired), Standard 01/03/2005• Disability, Standard 13/08/2015• Health, Standard 01/03/2005• Housing assistance, Standard 10/02/2006 [Non Dictionary]
Definition:	A person's self-assessed level of ability to speak English, as represented by a code.
Data Element Concept:	Person—proficiency in spoken English

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Representation class:	Code												
Data type:	Number												
Format:	N												
Maximum character length:	1												
Permissible values:	<table><thead><tr><th>Value</th><th>Meaning</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>0</td><td>Not applicable (persons under 5 years of age or who speak only English)</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Very well</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Well</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Not well</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Not at all</td></tr></tbody></table>	Value	Meaning	0	Not applicable (persons under 5 years of age or who speak only English)	1	Very well	2	Well	3	Not well	4	Not at all
Value	Meaning												
0	Not applicable (persons under 5 years of age or who speak only English)												
1	Very well												
2	Well												
3	Not well												
4	Not at all												

Supplementary values:	<table><thead><tr><th>Value</th><th>Meaning</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>9</td><td>Not stated/inadequately described</td></tr></tbody></table>	Value	Meaning	9	Not stated/inadequately described
Value	Meaning				
9	Not stated/inadequately described				

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:	<p>CODE 0 Not applicable (persons under 5 years of age or who speak only English)</p> <p>Not applicable, is to be used for people under 5 year of age and people who speak only English.</p> <p>CODE 9 Not stated/inadequately described</p> <p>Not stated/inadequately described, is not to be used on primary collection forms. It is primarily for use in administrative collections when transferring data from data sets where the item has not been collected.</p>
Comments:	The ABS advises that the most useful information provided by this metadata item is in the distinction between the two category groups of Very well/Well and Not well/Not at all.

Source and reference attributes

Reference documents: Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity 1999. Cat. no. 1289.0. Canberra: ABS.

Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Collection methods: This metadata item is only intended to be collected if a person has a main language other than English spoken at home; and/or first language spoken is not English.

Recommended question:

How well do you speak English? (tick one)

1. Very well
2. Well
3. Not well
4. Not at all

Generally this would be a self-reported question, but in some circumstances (particularly where a person does not speak English well) assistance will be required in answering this question. It is important that the person's self-assessed proficiency in spoken English be recorded wherever possible. This metadata item does not purport to be a technical assessment of proficiency but is a self-assessment in the four broad categories outlined above.

This metadata item is not relevant to and should not be collected for persons under the age of five years.

While agencies are encouraged to use the recommended question described above, it is acknowledged that this is not always possible in practice. For example, where the data collection is a by-product of the provision of a health or community service, the information may be ascertained using different means. However, this standard should be used wherever practically possible.

Comments: This metadata item identifies those people who may suffer disadvantage in terms of their ability to access services due to lack of ability in the spoken English language. This information can be used to target the provision of services to people whose lack of ability in spoken English is potentially a barrier to gaining access to government programs and services.

In conjunction with Indigenous status, the main language other than English spoken at home and the country of birth, this metadata item forms the minimum core set of cultural and language indicators recommended by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Source and reference attributes


Origin: National Health Data Committee
National Community Services Data Committee

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Has been superseded by [Person—proficiency in spoken English, code N](#)

- [Health](#), Standard 05/10/2022
- [Homelessness](#), Standard 10/08/2018

Is re-engineered from  [Proficiency in spoken English, version 2, DE, Int. NCSDD & NHDD, NCSIMG & NHIMG, Superseded 01/03/2005.pdf](#) (18.6 KB) *No registration status*

See also [Person—country of birth, code \(SACC 1998\) NNNN](#)

- [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Superseded 02/06/2008
- [Health](#), Superseded 01/10/2008
- [Housing assistance](#), Superseded 24/11/2008

See also [Person—first language spoken, code \(ASCL 2005\) NN{NN}](#)

- [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
- [Health](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
- [Housing assistance](#), Superseded 30/05/2013

See also [Person—first language spoken, code \(ASCL 2011\) NN{NN}](#)

- [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Standard 13/10/2011
- [Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015
- [Health](#), Standard 13/10/2011
- [Homelessness](#), Superseded 10/08/2018
- [Housing assistance](#), Standard 13/10/2011

See also [Person—main language other than English spoken at home, code \(ASCL 2005\) NN{NN}](#)

- [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
- [Health](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
- [Housing assistance](#), Superseded 30/05/2013

Implementation in Data Set Specifications:

[Cultural and language diversity cluster](#)

[Community Services \(retired\)](#), Standard 10/04/2013

[Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015

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