



# Student Profiles

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## Ben

### Background information

Ben is 14 years old, according to his birth certificate, and is in the 7th grade. Until age 5 he lived in a Haitian orphanage and then was adopted by a loving U.S. American family who spoke only English.

### Home language skills

Ben lived in a large orphanage in Haiti and due to the large staff to child ratio he had limited interaction with staff. As a young child he spent a great deal of time alone in a crib so he had little interaction with other children until he was a preschooler and could move about on his own. The lack of interaction affected his first language development. He had basic listening comprehension skills. He could respond appropriately to commands given by orphanage staff and could comprehend some simple stories. He spoke little. He did not develop any pre-literacy skills. When he arrived in the U.S., he lived with an English-speaking family and no longer communicated in Haitian Creole.

### Disability

Ben was born with a medical condition that left him with only one functioning eye. He suffered from malnutrition during his early years in the orphanage. At age 5, he did not have any fine motor skills due to low muscle tone. When he started school in the U.S., Ben was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Ben's kindergarten and first grade teachers reported that he had difficulty listening and following instructions. Ben also struggled with early reading skills and received supplemental interventions.

Ben demonstrated lower than expected academic achievement in most areas, including reading and writing. He continued to have difficulty following instructions and maintaining focus in second grade. In third grade, Ben was diagnosed with a learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Ben currently receives specialized reading and math instruction through special education, while remaining in the general education classroom for the rest of the time. His reading and math skills are below proficient. To minimize distractions, Ben's teachers highlight classroom materials to identify important information, and provide frequent breaks for Ben during class. Ben's teachers report that such strategies have been working.

Ben received some physical and occupational therapy when he was young, but at age 14 he still has difficulty holding a pencil or turning pages in a book.

### English language development

Ben received ESL services from kindergarten to grade three, but is no longer receiving them now due to changes in the location of his special education program and conflicts with his schedule. He does not have any current English proficiency test results. Ben can communicate using a combination of English words and short phrases. His listening comprehension skills are more developed and he can discuss stories that are read aloud to him. His reading and writing skills are limited.



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