WIDA™

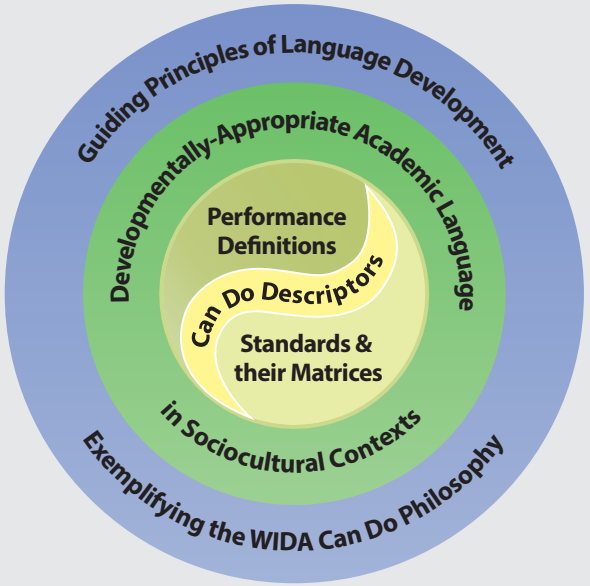
Can Do Descriptors

KEY USES EDITION

Grades 6-8

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The Can Do Descriptors provide examples of what language learners ***can do*** at various stages of English language development in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* are one component of the WIDA Standards Framework (shown at right). The Framework, as a whole, supports the implementation of the WIDA Language Development Standards in the instruction and assessment of language learners. We encourage educators to use the *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* in conjunction with the other components of the Framework, along with the previous edition of the Can Do Descriptors. For more information on the WIDA Standards Framework, visit www.wida.us.



English Language Development Standards Framework

The *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* provide examples of academic language use for four specific communicative purposes. These purposes, referred to as **Key Uses,** were identified based on reviews of literature and a language analysis of college and career readiness standards:

Recount: To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks that include the Key Use of **Recount** include producing information reports, biographies, historical accounts, lab reports, research papers, and personal narratives.

Explain: To clarify the "why" or the "how" of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks that include the Key Use of **Explain** include presentations, classroom discussions, and various projects and research papers examining and demonstrating understanding of relationships, causes and effects of events, components of systems, and natural or historic phenomena.

Argue: To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks that include the Key Use of **Argue** include debates, oral presentations defending points of view, creating persuasive texts, editorials, critiques, opinion pieces and scientific argumentations.

Discuss: To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks that include the Key Use of **Discuss** include participating in academic conversations on various topics, small or large group activities and projects.

The Key Uses, as well as the example tasks, are not exhaustive, but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based content curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Organization of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* are organized by grade-level bands (K, 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12) that correspond to those in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Within each grade-level band, the descriptors are organized by Key Use (Recount, Explain, Argue and Discuss) and within each Key Use, there are example descriptors across WIDA's six levels of language proficiency (ELP Levels 1–6).

The descriptors in Level 6 represent the language performance of students who have met all the criteria for Level 5. Unlike the descriptors at Levels 1–5 that provide examples of performance at the end of the level, the descriptors at Level 6 are examples of performance within the Level 6.

For three of the Key Uses (**Recount, Explain,** and **Argue**) you'll see descriptors for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). The descriptors for the Key Use **Discuss** are only shown for the domain of Oral Language. The Key Use **Discuss** highlights the importance of oral language development for the meaningful participation of all language learners at this grade level, regardless of their level of language proficiency. The descriptors in the Key Use **Discuss** provide examples of what students ***can do*** to participate in oral discussions.

Potential Uses for the Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition

Audiences	The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help….
Educators who work with language learners, including coaches, teachers *(e.g., general education, gifted and talented, special education, Title I),* language specialists, and support staff.	• Interpret results from WIDA English language proficiency assessments *(e.g., ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, WIDA MODEL, and language screeners)* to inform classroom decisions • Differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessments designed in English based on language learners' levels of English language proficiency • Collaborate and engage in instructional conversations about the academic success of language learners in English environments • Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency
Administrators and school leaders	• Interpret results from WIDA English language proficiency assessments *(e.g., ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, WIDA MODEL, and language screeners)* to inform decisions on educational programming for language learners • Communicate with other educators about students' English language development • Support the WIDA Can Do philosophy throughout schools and districts • Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the Can Do Descriptors beyond the audiences and purposes identified above to advocate on behalf of language learners.

By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency* English language learners can...

	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
LISTENING	**Process recounts by** • Identifying familiar objects or places from oral statements • Pointing to objects, people, or places based on short oral descriptions	**Process recounts by** • Sequencing labeled visuals per oral directions • Identifying settings or time frame in narrative or informational scenarios read aloud	**Process recounts by** • Matching main ideas of familiar text read aloud to visuals • Stating the next event in a series based on clues from narrative or informational oral text	**Process recounts by** • Identifying main ideas and details in oral discourse • Evaluating oral presentations of peers based on criteria for success	**Process recounts by** • Categorizing details of content-related main ideas seen and heard in videos or other technologies • Sequencing a series of illustrated events from oral passages *(e.g., historical recaps)*	**Process recounts by** • Identifying the key ideas expressed orally • Identifying new information expressed by others
SPEAKING	**Recount by** • Answering select Wh-questions • Naming and briefly describing past community or school events using visual support *(e.g., posters, photographs)*	**Recount by** • Stating main ideas or points of classroom conversations • Restating details of content-related topics in home language and English in small groups	**Recount by** • Relating a series of events by expressing time in multiple tenses • Connecting ideas in content-related discourse using transitions	**Recount by** • Paraphrasing and summarizing content-related ideas presented orally • Connecting ideas with supporting details in a variety of oral venues	**Recount by** • Producing oral multimedia, content-related reports based on research from multiple sources • Tracing the evolution of literary characters, themes, and plots from different venues *(e.g., digital text or video)*	**Recount by** • Restating new information expressed by others in extended speech • Posing questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments

*Except for level 6, for which there is no ceiling.

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	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
READING	**Process recounts by** • Identifying responses to Wh-questions in charts or illustrated text • Identifying icons in graphs, charts, and environmental print related to familiar topics	**Process recounts by** • Sequencing illustrated text of narrative or informational events • Locating main ideas in a series of simple sentences	**Process recounts by** • Identifying topic sentences, main ideas, and details in paragraphs • Connecting people to actions based on oral descriptions with details	**Process recounts by** • Ordering paragraphs in narrative and informational text • Identifying summaries of passages in a variety of genres	**Process recounts by** • Sequencing main ideas, events, and conclusions in narrative and informational text • Matching details of content-related topics to main ideas	**Process recounts by** • Identifying a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; summarizing the text absent personal opinions or judgments • Evaluating in detail how a key event is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text *(e.g., through examples or anecdotes)*
WRITING	**Recount by** • Producing labeled illustrations of conclusions reached in problem-solving with a partner • Reproducing words and phrases related to topics *(e.g., including cognates)*	**Recount by** • Completing sentences using word banks • Producing statements related to main ideas on familiar topics in home language and English	**Recount by** • Producing short paragraphs with main ideas and some details • Composing dialogues or blogs based on personal experiences	**Recount by** • Producing content-related reports • Reproducing a sequence of events or experiences using transitional words	**Recount by** • Producing research reports using multiple sources • Summarizing conclusions reached from recounting steps in problem-solving or conducting experiments	**Recount by** • Providing a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented • Conveying sequence, signaling shifts from one time frame to another, and showing the relationships among experiences and events

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	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
LISTENING	**Process explanations by** • Matching instructional language, given orally, with visual representation *(e.g., "Show me your schedule.")* • Identifying functions of content-related topics based on short oral statements reinforced visually *(e.g., organisms in ecosystems)*	**Process explanations by** • Classifying content-related visuals per oral descriptions *(e.g., environmental v. genetic factors)* • Matching oral sentences of cause and effect to illustrations *(e.g., weather or climate conditions)*	**Process explanations by** • Matching main ideas of familiar text read aloud with visuals • Showing differences between or among content-related phenomena described orally *(e.g., descriptive statistics)*	**Process explanations by** • Identifying relationships between people, ideas, or events in oral discourse • Matching complex oral descriptions to images, graphs, or formulas	**Process explanations by** • Carrying out a series of oral directions to construct mathematical or scientific models • Connecting details to main ideas based on extended oral discourse	**Process explanations by** • Evaluating main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and oral formats • Developing models from oral discourse from multimedia *(e.g., YouTube videos)*
SPEAKING	**Explain by** • Comparing attributes of real-life objects with a partner • Showing how to solve real-world problems using symbols, numerals, graphs, or diagrams	**Explain by** • Describing situations from modeled sentences • Connecting two content-related ideas that define "how" or "why"	**Explain by** • Demonstrating how to conduct experiments, engage in processes, or solve problems with supports • Stating why events occur, phenomena exist, or some things happen	**Explain by** • Comparing content-related concepts • Connecting ideas with supporting details to show relationships *(e.g., characters' actions to their feelings)*	**Explain by** • Giving demonstrations with step-by-step details *(e.g., converting Fahrenheit to Celsius)* • Evaluating the significance of events, people, or phenomena in oral presentations	**Explain by** • Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks *(e.g., use of register)* • Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and respond to others' with relevant ideas

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	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
READING	**Process explanations by** • Matching content-related objects, pictures, or media to words and phrases • Identifying social or academic topics highlighted in text	**Process explanations by** • Comparing ideas on the same topic in a series of simple sentences • Identifying how content-related phenomena relate to one another in illustrated text or media	**Process explanations by** • Illustrating relationships between main ideas and details in paragraphs • Sequencing steps or events to describe a process *(e.g., solving math problems)*	**Process explanations by** • Matching content-related cause to effect in graphically-supported text • Highlighting text evidence that points to how phenomena function *(e.g., different forms of government)*	**Process explanations by** • Sorting grade-level text by highlighting elements of the genre *(e.g., differentiating the "how" from the "why")* • Sequencing events based on cause and effect *(e.g., how machines operate)*	**Process explanations by** • Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that from reading text on the same topics • Using context as a clue to the meaning of words or phrases
WRITING	**Explain by** • Indicating relationships by drawing and labeling content-related pictures on familiar topics • Describing processes or cycles by labeling diagrams and graphs	**Explain by** • Connecting short sentences • Comparing illustrated descriptions of content-related concepts *(e.g., mitosis v. meiosis)*	**Explain by** • Comparing and contrasting information, events, or characters • Producing descriptive paragraphs around a central idea	**Explain by** • Describing relationships between details or examples and supporting ideas • Connecting content-related themes or topics to main ideas	**Explain by** • Producing informational text around graphs and charts • Comparing content-related ideas from multiple sources in essays, reports, and narratives	**Explain by** • Determining two or more central ideas in a text and tracing their development over its course • Evaluating the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in text *(e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events and the converse)*

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	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
LISTENING	**Process arguments by** • Signaling agreement or disagreement of short oral statements or questions • Identifying points of view *(e.g., first or third person)* from short statements	**Process arguments by** • Identifying claims from within a series of oral statements • Identifying evidence to support a claim from charts and tables	**Process arguments by** • Illustrating claims or reasons from oral narratives • Identifying opposing perspectives from oral text *(e.g., sides in wars, regimes, or revolutions)*	**Process arguments by** • Matching evidence to claims in oral discourse • Formulating opinions on evidence presented within oral discourse	**Process arguments by** • Establishing connections among claims, arguments, and supporting evidence within oral discourse • Comparing opposing points-of-view presented within oral discourse	**Process arguments by** • Evaluating the soundness of opposing claims presented orally • Identifying bias within claims in oral discourse
SPEAKING	**Argues by** • Responding yes or no to short statements or questions related to a claim • Expressing personal points of view (in home language and English) in support of or against a claim	**Argues by** • Answering simple questions related to claims • Stating evidence to support a claim (in home language and English)	**Argues by** • Critiquing opposing claims • Evaluating the value of options in content-based situations	**Argues by** • Connecting ideas with supporting details or evidence • Taking stances and summarizing ideas supporting them	**Argues by** • Engaging in debates on content-related topics with claims and counterclaims along with reasonable evidence • Defending points of view with specific claims	**Argues by** • Paraphrasing new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modifying own views or positions • Making presentations with multimedia components to clarify claims and emphasize salient points

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	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
READING	**Process arguments by** • Identifying words or phrases associated with topic choices • Classifying true from false short statements	**Process arguments by** • Distinguishing facts from opinions in text • Identifying features associated with content-related claims	**Process arguments by** • Identifying claims and the reasons for each claim • Identifying opposing points of view	**Process arguments by** • Identifying evidence to support analysis of what texts say *(e.g., position papers)* • Classifying pros and cons of claims and evidence presented within written texts	**Process arguments by** • Evaluating evidence presented in support of claims • Developing a stance in favor of or against claims presented within content-related texts	**Process arguments by** • Identifying specific evidence to support analyses of content area texts • Distinguishing among facts, reasoned judgment, and speculation in text
WRITING	**Argues by** • Generating words and phrases that represent opinions *(e.g., "I think…")* • Making lists of topic choices with peers	**Argues by** • Stating opinions using evaluative language related to content *(e.g., "I agree. Metric is better.")* • Connecting simple sentences to form content-related ideas	**Argues by** • Substantiating opinions with content-related examples and evidence • Providing feedback to peers on language used for claims and evidence	**Argues by** • Crafting persuasive pieces *(e.g., editorials)* with a series of substantiated content-related claims • Composing scripts with protagonists and antagonists	**Argues by** • Presenting opinions in persuasive essays or reports backed by content-related research • Justifying ideas using multiple sources	**Argues by** • Introducing claims and opposing claims, along with their associated reasons and evidence • Closing with concluding statements or paragraphs that support claims

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DOMAINS: ORAL LANGUAGE	**Discuss by** • Tracking the person speaking • Using appropriate nonverbal behaviors to show engagement and listening • Contributing to conversations by sharing own work *(e.g., pictures, posters, graphics)*	**Discuss by** • Inviting others to participate in discussions • Answering Wh-questions in conversations • Connecting ideas to one's experiences	**Discuss by** • Supporting ideas with examples • Asking clarifying questions to demonstrate engagement • Generating new questions to maintain discussions	**Discuss by** • Recognizing purposes of contributions in conversations • Demonstrating awareness of personal bias when defending one's point of view	**Discuss by** • Building on the ideas of others • Listening to others with a purpose *(e.g., to challenge own or others' ideas)*	**Discuss by** • Presenting organized ideas and information on content topics including the use of graphics and multimedia • Synthesizing ideas of several speakers, posing questions, and responding with evidence, examples and ideas

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Please visit www.wida.us to view a full list of educators who participated on the development workshop, national experts who shared their expertise in the development process, and those who participated in the review of the Can Do descriptors.

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