

WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

What is Alternate ACCESS for ELLs?

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an English *language proficiency* assessment for students in Grades 1–12. The test is administered every year to help school districts monitor the English *language development* of students identified as *English language learners* who have significant cognitive disabilities.

What is the purpose of the test?

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs measures students' abilities to understand and produce English used within school settings. The four sections of the test are Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

Why does my child have to take the test?

Your child is identified as an *English language learner* who also has one or more significant cognitive disabilities. Your child will take the test to help school districts monitor your child's progress in acquiring the English language. Contact your child's school for more information on how your child was identified as an English language learner.

When will my child take the test?

Every state sets a time frame for schools to administer Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Schools schedule when students will take the four sections of the test during the testing time frame. Contact your child's school for more specific information on when your child is scheduled to take Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

How are the test scores used?

Scores from Alternate ACCESS for ELLs can be used in many ways. Parents can use the scores to advocate for their child, especially when meeting with the school team that creates their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Teachers use the scores to plan instruction and assessments. Districts use the scores to evaluate their language support programs, to monitor student progress in acquiring English, and to determine if a student is eligible to exit an English language support program. Scores are also used to meet federal and state accountability requirements.

Questions to Ask

Parents can use the following questions to obtain more information about their child's testing experience:

- Who will give my child Alternate ACCESS for ELLs?
- Where will my child take the test?
- Did someone from the school explain the test to my son/daughter?
- Are all of my child's teachers aware that he/she is taking the test?
- Based on my child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), what accommodations will be provided to him/her during the test?
- When and how will the scores be shared with me?

Contact your child's school if you have questions about Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Key Terms to Know

English language learners are students who are eligible to receive support at school with the English language.

Language proficiency is a measurement of where students are in the process of language development.

Language development is a process that takes time. Students move along this process at different rates.