

Can Do Descriptors

KEY USES EDITION

Grades 6-8

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

The WIDA 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* is one component of the WIDA Standards Framework (shown at right). The framework, as a whole, supports the implementation of the WIDA English 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.

The *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* provides 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:

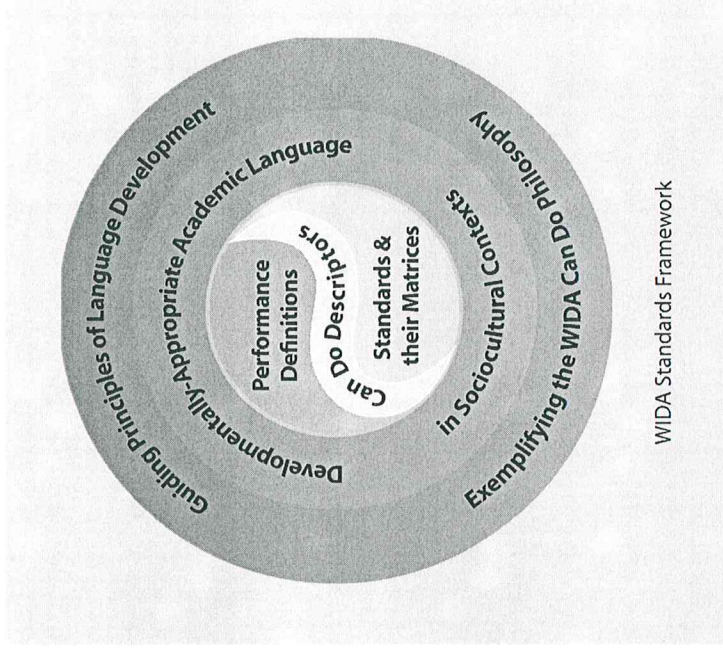
Recount: To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks for the Key Use of **Recount** include telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences.

Explain: To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks for the Key Use of **Explain** include describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, and sharing results of experiments.

Argue: To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks for the Key Use of **Argue** include stating preferences or opinions and constructing arguments with evidence.

Discuss: To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks for the Key Use of **Discuss** include participating in small or large group activities and projects.

The *WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition* and the example descriptors are not exhaustive but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based contest 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* is 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 for 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 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 oral language. The Key Use **Discuss** highlights the importance of oral language development for meaningful participation of all language learners, regardless of their level of language proficiency.

Potential Uses for the WIDA 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 (<i>e.g., general education, gifted and talented, special education, Title I</i>), language specialists, and support staff.	• 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	• 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...

LISTENING	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	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 frames 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 texts	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., <i>historical recaps</i>)	Process recounts by - Identifying key ideas expressed orally - Identifying new information expressed by others
SPEAKING	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	Recount by - Answering select Wh-questions - Naming and briefly describing past community or school events using visual support (e.g., <i>posters, photographs</i>)	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., <i>digital text or video</i>)	Recount by - Restating new information expressed by others in extended speech - Posing questions that elicit elaboration and responding to others' questions and comments

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

READING	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	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 text absent personal opinions or judgments - Evaluating how a central event is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in text (<i>e.g., through examples or anecdotes</i>)
WRITING	Recount by - Producing labeled illustrations of conclusions reached in problem-solving with a partner - Reproducing words and phrases related to topics (<i>e.g., including cognates</i>)	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 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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By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency* English language learners can...

KEY USE OF EXPLAIN	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
LISTENING	Process explanations by - Matching instructional language, given orally, with visual representation (<i>e.g., "Show me your schedule."</i>) - Identifying functions of content-related topics based on short oral statements reinforced visually (<i>e.g., organisms in ecosystems</i>)	Process explanations by - Classifying content-related visuals per oral descriptions (<i>e.g., environmental v. genetic factors</i>) - Matching oral sentences of cause and effect to illustrations (<i>e.g., weather or climate conditions</i>)	Process explanations by - Matching main ideas of familiar text read aloud with visuals - Showing differences between or among content-related phenomena described orally (<i>e.g., descriptive statistics</i>)	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
	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 (<i>e.g., characters' actions to their feelings</i>)	Explain by - Giving demonstrations with step-by-step details (<i>e.g., converting Fahrenheit to Celsius</i>) - Evaluating the significance of events, people, or phenomena in oral presentations
SPEAKING	Explain by - Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (<i>e.g., use of register</i>) - Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and responding to others' ideas	Explain by - Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (<i>e.g., use of register</i>) - Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and responding to others' ideas	Explain by - Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (<i>e.g., use of register</i>) - Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and responding to others' ideas	Explain by - Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (<i>e.g., use of register</i>) - Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and responding to others' ideas	Explain by - Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (<i>e.g., use of register</i>) - Posing questions that connect several speakers' ideas and responding to others' ideas

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READING	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	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 processes (e.g., <i>solving math problems</i>)	Process explanations by - Matching content-related cause to effect in graphically-supported text - Highlighting text evidence that points to how systems function (e.g., <i>different forms of government</i>)	Process explanations by - Sorting grade-level text by highlighting elements of the genre (e.g., <i>differentiating the "how" from the "why"</i>) - Sequencing events based on cause and effect (e.g., <i>how machines operate</i>)	Process explanations by - Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics - Identifying factors that contribute to phenomena in explanations
WRITING	Explain by	Explain by	Explain by	Explain by	Explain by	Explain by
	- Indicating relationships by drawing and labeling content-related pictures on familiar topics - Describing processes or cycles by labeling diagrams and graphs	- Connecting short sentences - Comparing illustrated descriptions of content-related concepts (e.g., <i>mitosis v. meiosis</i>)	- Comparing and contrasting information, events, or characters - Producing descriptive paragraphs around a central idea	- Describing relationships between details or examples and supporting ideas - Connecting content-related themes or topics to main ideas	- Producing informational text around graphs and charts - Comparing content-related ideas from multiple sources in essays, reports, and narratives	- Determining two or more central ideas in text and tracing their development - Evaluating the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in text (e.g., <i>how ideas influence individuals or events and the converse</i>)

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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
Process arguments by • Signaling agreement or disagreement of short oral statements or questions • Identifying points of view (<i>e.g., first or third person</i>) from short statements	Process arguments by • Identifying claims from a series of oral statements • Identifying evidence to support claims from charts and tables	Process arguments by • Illustrating claims or reasons from oral narratives • Identifying opposing perspectives from oral text (<i>e.g., sides in wars, regimes, or revolutions</i>)	Process arguments by • Matching evidence to claims in oral discourse • Formulating opinions based on evidence presented within oral discourse	Process arguments by • Establishing connections among claims, arguments, and supporting evidence within oral discourse • Comparing 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
Argue 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	Argue by • Answering simple questions related to claims • Stating evidence to support claims (in home language and English)	Argue by • Critiquing opposing claims • Evaluating the value of options in content-based situations	Argue by • Connecting ideas with supporting details or evidence • Taking stances and summarizing ideas supporting them	Argue by • Engaging in debates on content-related topics with claims and counterclaims along with reasonable evidence • Defending points of view with specific claims	Argue by • Paraphrasing new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modifying views or positions • Making presentations with multimedia components to clarify claims and emphasize salient points
LISTENING					
SPEAKING					

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

READING	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	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 (<i>e.g., position papers</i>) - 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 text	Process arguments by - Identifying specific evidence to support analyses of content area text - Distinguishing among facts, reasoned judgment, and speculation in text
WRITING	Argue by	Argue by	Argue by	Argue by	Argue by	Argue by
	- Generating words and phrases that represent opinions (<i>e.g., "I think..."</i>) - Making lists of topic choices with peers	- Stating opinions using evaluative language related to content (<i>e.g., "I agree. Metric is better."</i>) - Connecting simple sentences to form content-related ideas	- Substantiating opinions with content-related examples and evidence - Providing feedback to peers on language used for claims and evidence	- Crafting persuasive pieces (<i>e.g., editorials</i>) with a series of substantiated content-related claims - Composing scripts with protagonists and antagonists	- Presenting opinions in persuasive essays or reports backed by content-related research - Justifying ideas using multiple sources	- 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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By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency* English language learners can...

ORAL LANGUAGE	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
	Discuss by - Using appropriate nonverbal behaviors to show engagement and listening - Contributing to conversations by sharing own work (<i>e.g., pictures, posters, graphics</i>)	Discuss by - Inviting others to participate - 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 conversations	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 (<i>e.g., to challenge own or others' ideas</i>)	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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