# WIDA®

## CONSORTIUM

WORLD-CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT

# The English Language Learner CAN DO Booklet

## Grades 1-2

**INCLUDES:**

Performance Definitions

CAN DO Descriptors

For use in conjunction with the
WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards

# Foreword: The WIDA English Language Learner CAN DO Booklet

The WIDA Consortium, from its conception, envisioned a system of standards and assessments that would assist schools in teaching academic language to English Language Learners (ELLs). This dream, now a reality, includes the development of practical tools to guide teachers when designing and implementing lessons, monitoring student progress, determining student language proficiency levels, collaborating across programs, and conveying results to ELLs and their parents.

The *WIDA English Language Learner CAN DO Booklet* is a very important contribution to meeting these goals. The booklet complements the *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards* and provides a valuable set of resources aligned to the Performance Definitions for the levels of English language proficiency. WIDA's professional development program works with these resources to assist teachers in embedding academic English into content lessons and working school-wide to ensure the academic success of our culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

The WIDA Consortium recognizes that as a teacher of ELLs, you have a challenging but crucial job within your school. We sincerely hope that this booklet and other WIDA resources help to make your work more effective and your students more successful both in learning English and mastering challenging academic content.

Timothy Boals, Ph.D.
Executive Director
WIDA Consortium

# Introduction

The resources contained in this booklet are intended to support classroom instruction. As with all WIDA products and services, they address language proficiency in relation to five English language proficiency (ELP) standards:

- Social and Instructional Language
- The Language of Language Arts
- The Language of Mathematics
- The Language of Science
- The Language of Social Studies

The following table displays the major components of WIDA's standards-based system. The bold-faced components are included in this booklet and listed in the order in which they appear.

| Components of WIDA's Standards-based System | |
|---|---|
| **Standards-based Component** | **Distinguishing Feature** |
| Strands of Model Performance Indicators as representative of the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards | Illustrate how English language learners process and use language for each English language **proficiency standard, language domain,** and language proficiency **level** *by grade level cluster* |
| **Performance Definitions** | Outline how English language learners process and use language for each **level** of language proficiency *in grades K-12* |
| **CAN DO Descriptors** | Describe how English language learners process and use language for each **language domain** and level of language proficiency *by grade level cluster* |
| Speaking and Writing Rubrics | Document how English language learners process and use language in the domain of **speaking** or **writing** for each **level** of language proficiency based on three criteria: linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control *in grades K-12* |

The resources contained in this booklet are intended to support classroom instruction. The **Performance Definitions** (see page 4) provide criteria that shape each of the six levels of English language proficiency. The three bullets within each proficiency level in the Performance Definitions represent:

- **Linguistic Complexity**—the amount and quality of speech or writing for a given situation
- **Vocabulary Usage**—the specificity of words or phrases for a given context
- **Language Control**—the comprehensibility of the communication based on the amount and types of errors

The Performance Definitions provide a concise, global overview of language expectations for each level of English language proficiency. They span the spectrum of grade levels which means that educators must interpret the meaning of the Definitions according to students' cognitive development due to age, their grade level, their diversity of educational experiences, and any diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable). For example, in level 5, "extended oral or written discourse" would probably be indicated by a 1st grade student's ability to orally retell a story in a series of sentences using simple transition words. However, a middle school student might be expected to exhibit linguistic complexity at level 5 by incorporating a variety of sentence structures in an essay several paragraphs in

length. It is important to recognize that the Performance Definitions are the basis for use of other standards-based resources such as the CAN DO Descriptors.

The **CAN DO Descriptors** (see pages 6-7) are the centerpiece of this booklet, designed to support teachers by providing them with information on the language students are able to understand and produce in the classroom. What is unique about the CAN DO Descriptors is that they apply to all five English language proficiency standards, which means they provide an opportunity to link language development across all academic content areas. The Descriptors are intended to be used in tandem with the Performance Definitions. This is because the quantity and quality of language expected at a particular level of language proficiency may not be fully indicated within the CAN DO Descriptor for each language domain and proficiency level.

For example, the CAN DO Descriptors show that students may be able to *"identify"* at various levels of language proficiency, but the language (linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control) they use will vary tremendously. At one end of the spectrum, beginning English language learners may *identify* by pointing or using short words or phrases, whereas at the end of the language development continuum, students will begin to *identify* complex themes and ideas described in detailed technical language.
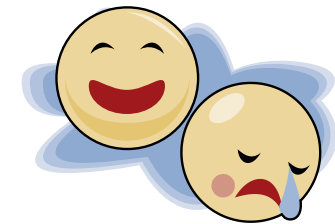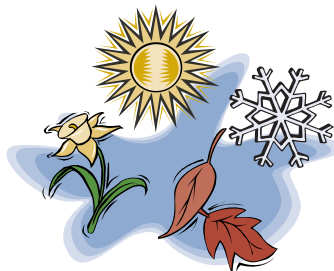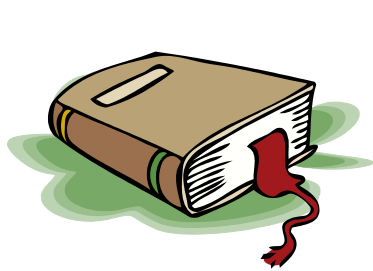
# Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency in Grades K-12

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:

| Level | Definitions |
|---|---|
| **6** **Reaching** | • specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level<br>• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level<br>• oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers |
| **5** **Bridging** | • specialized or technical language of the content areas<br>• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports<br>• oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material |
| **4** **Expanding** | • specific and some technical language of the content areas<br>• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences, or paragraphs<br>• oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support |
| **3** **Developing** | • general and some specific language of the content areas<br>• expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs<br>• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support |
| **2** **Beginning** | • general language related to the content areas<br>• phrases or short sentences<br>• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support |
| **1** **Entering** | • pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas<br>• words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support<br>• oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support |

# WIDA CONSORTIUM — Grade Level Cluster CAN DO Descriptors

The grade level cluster CAN DO Descriptors have been created by teachers, primarily for teachers, who work with English language learners throughout the consortium. During 2007-08, over 900 teachers and administrators participated in refining and validating five grade level clusters of Descriptors from the original document spanning the K-12 spectrum. These Descriptors for the four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and five levels of English language proficiency are based on the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards.

**Interpretation of the CAN DO Descriptors**
To maintain the succinctness of the individual statements, some basic assumptions need to be made in interpreting the CAN DO Descriptors.

1. Sensory, graphic, or interactive support are present through language proficiency level 4, Expanding.
2. English language learners can process or produce the **language** associated with the stated language functions.
3. Linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control increase incrementally as students move from one English language proficiency level to the next.

The CAN DO Descriptors are a sampling of the language expectations of English language learners as they travel along the continuum of English language development. Unlike the strands of model performance indicators that scaffold across levels of language proficiency, the CAN DO Descriptors function independently within a given level of language proficiency.

# Uses for the CAN DO Descriptors

The CAN DO Descriptors are a resource, in addition to the English language proficiency standards, to use in classrooms with English language learners. As an instructional assessment tool, language teachers may:

- Share the Descriptors with classroom teachers and administrators to describe the second language acquisition process around the levels of English language proficiency
- Provide resource teachers, such as Title I or literacy coaches, additional information about English language learners
- Use to plan with tutors or mentors who work with English language learners
- Develop or co-develop lessons and units of study with differentiated language objectives
- Set language goals with their English language learners
- Explain to parents students' progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Suggest language goals to be incorporated into Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for English language learners with diagnosed disabilities
- Translate English language proficiency test scores (i.e., ACCESS for ELLs®, W-APT™, and WIDA MODEL™) into classroom practice
- Observe and note levels of student performance as a precursor to using WIDA Speaking and Writing Rubrics for formative assessment
- Use the Descriptors to advocate on behalf of English language learners

# CAN DO Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 1-2

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

|  | Level 1<br>Entering | Level 2<br>Beginning | Level 3<br>Developing | Level 4<br>Expanding | Level 5<br>Bridging |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LISTENING** | • Follow modeled, one-step oral directions (e.g., "Find a pencil.")<br>• Identify pictures of everyday objects as stated orally (e.g., in books)<br>• Point to real-life objects reflective of content-related vocabulary or oral statements<br>• Mimic gestures or movement associated with statements (e.g., "This is my left hand.") | • Match oral reading of stories to illustrations<br>• Carry out two- to three-step oral commands (e.g., "Take out your science book. Now turn to page 25.")<br>• Sequence a series of oral statements using real objects or pictures<br>• Locate objects described orally | • Follow modeled multi-step oral directions<br>• Sequence pictures of stories read aloud (e.g., beginning, middle, and end)<br>• Match people with jobs or objects with functions based on oral descriptions<br>• Classify objects according to descriptive oral statements | • Compare/contrast objects according to physical attributes (e.g., size, shape, color) based on oral information<br>• Find details in illustrated, narrative, or expository text read aloud<br>• Identify illustrated activities from oral descriptions<br>• Locate objects, figures, places based on visuals and detailed oral descriptions | • Use context clues to gain meaning from grade-level text read orally<br>• Apply ideas from oral discussions to new situations<br>• Interpret information from oral reading of narrative or expository text<br>• Identify ideas/concepts expressed with grade-level content-specific language | **Level 6 - Reaching** |
| **SPEAKING** | • Repeat simple words, phrases, and memorized chunks of language<br>• Respond to visually-supported (e.g., calendar) questions of academic content with one word or phrase<br>• Identify and name everyday objects<br>• Participate in whole group chants and songs | • Use first language to fill in gaps in oral English (code switch)<br>• Repeat facts or statements<br>• Describe what people do from action pictures (e.g., jobs of community workers)<br>• Compare real-life objects (e.g., "smaller," "biggest") | • Ask questions of a social nature<br>• Express feelings (e.g., "I'm happy because…")<br>• Retell simple stories from picture cues<br>• Sort and explain grouping of objects (e.g., sink v. float)<br>• Make predictions or hypotheses<br>• Distinguish features of content-based phenomena (e.g., caterpillar, butterfly) | • Ask questions for social and academic purposes<br>• Participate in class discussions on familiar social and academic topics<br>• Retell stories with details<br>• Sequence stories with transitions | • Use academic vocabulary in class discussions<br>• Express and support ideas with examples<br>• Give oral presentations on content-based topics approaching grade level<br>• Initiate conversation with peers and teachers |  |

The CAN DO Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.
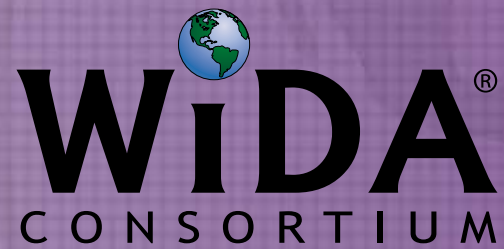
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For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

| | Level 1<br>Entering | Level 2<br>Beginning | Level 3<br>Developing | Level 4<br>Expanding | Level 5<br>Bridging | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **READING** | • Identify symbols, icons, and environmental print<br>• Connect print to visuals<br>• Match real-life familiar objects to labels<br>• Follow directions using diagrams or pictures | • Search for pictures associated with word patterns<br>• Identify and interpret pre-taught labeled diagrams<br>• Match voice to print by pointing to icons, letters, or illustrated words<br>• Sort words into word families | • Make text-to-self connections with prompting<br>• Select titles to match a series of pictures<br>• Sort illustrated content words into categories<br>• Match phrases and sentences to pictures | • Put words in order to form sentences<br>• Identify basic elements of fictional stories (e.g., title, setting, characters)<br>• Follow sentence-level directions<br>• Distinguish between general and specific language (e.g., flower v. rose) in context | • Begin using features of non-fiction text to aid comprehension<br>• Use learning strategies (e.g., context clues)<br>• Identify main ideas<br>• Match figurative language to illustrations (e.g., "as big as a house") | **Level 6 - Reaching** |
| **WRITING** | • Copy written language<br>• Use first language (L1, when L1 is a medium of instruction) to help form words in English<br>• Communicate through drawings<br>• Label familiar objects or pictures | • Provide information using graphic organizers<br>• Generate lists of words/phrases from banks or walls<br>• Complete modeled sentence starters (e.g., "I like ____.")<br>• Describe people, places, or objects from illustrated examples and models | • Engage in prewriting strategies (e.g., use of graphic organizers)<br>• Form simple sentences using word/phrase banks<br>• Participate in interactive journal writing<br>• Give content-based information using visuals or graphics | • Produce original sentences<br>• Create messages for social purposes (e.g., get well cards)<br>• Compose journal entries about personal experiences<br>• Use classroom resources (e.g., picture dictionaries) to compose sentences | • Create a related series of sentences in response to prompts<br>• Produce content-related sentences<br>• Compose stories<br>• Explain processes or procedures using connected sentences | |

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