

# Can Do Descriptors by Domain, Proficiency Level, and Key Use of Language: GRADES 9-12

***By the end of each of the English language proficiency levels 1-5 English language learners can...***

## LISTENING

| Language Proficiency Level | Students | Process **Recounts** by: | Process **Explanations** by: | Process **Arguments** by: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level1** Entering |  | * Matching everyday oral content-related words and phrases to pictures, diagrams, or photographs
* Selecting resources, places, products, or figures from oral statements and visual supports
 | * Ordering events or stages of phenomena from oral statements
* Identifying words and phrases related to sequence
 | * Matching oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs that show points of view
* Distinguishing words and phrases related to opinions or facts from oral statements
 |
| **Level2** Emerging |  | * Matching oral descriptions of characters or main events in content-related topics
* Following modeled oral commands
 | * Sequencing steps in processes or procedures described orally
* Comparing information, symbols, or icons on charts or tables described orally
 | * Recognizing the pros or cons of issues from short oral statements
* Identifying claims in oral statements
 |
| **Level3** Developing |  | * Identifying main ideas from short content-related oral presentations
* Classifying examples of genres read aloud *(e.g., types of narration)*
 | * Recognizing relationships in a series of oral statements
* Identifying causes for particular events or phenomena in short oral presentations
 | * Organizing information related to different perspectives presented orally
* Identifying language choices that represent specific points of view from a series of oral statements
 |
| **Level4** Expanding |  | * Following the steps of content-related tasks or assignments given orally
* Identifying details from oral discussions *(e.g., when, who, where, what, and why)*
 | * Identifying components of systems from multimedia
* Interpreting cause and effect from oral discourse
 | * Classifying claims and evidence from oral presentations
* Differentiating multiple perspectives presented orally
 |
| **Level5** Bridging |  | * Reconstructing past experiences or series of events based on oral discourse
* Recognizing nuanced meanings of words and phrases in extended oral discourse
 | * Identifying effects and consequences of events and phenomena from class discussions
* Identifying interdependence of different parts of systems from multimedia presentations
 | * Identifying how language choices connect to particular audiences
* Evaluating the purpose of arguments presented by others
 |
| **Level6** Reaching |  | * Categorizing perspectives of multiple speakers
* Identifying important information on specific events and concepts from lectures and presentations
 | * Recognizing specific language used to enhance clarity and precision
* Recognizing and following language related to the same event or phenomenon throughout presentations
 | * Identifying strengths, limitations, and potential biases from oral presentations
* Organizing claims and counter claims presented in debates
 |

## SPEAKING

| Language Proficiency Level | Students | **Recount** by: | **Explain** by: | **Argue** by: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level 1** Entering |  | * Naming and briefly describing content topics using visual support *(e.g., posters, diagrams, pictures)*
* Answering select yes/no or Wh-questions
 | * Ordering events or stages of phenomena with sequential language *(e.g., first, next, step 1)*
* Using words and phrases to identify visually supported phenomena
 | * Relating points of view with visual support *(e.g., posters, photographs)*
* Stating pros and cons listed visually on a topic
 |
| **Level 2** Emerging |  | * Restating information using content-specific terms
* Providing examples of content-related information previously studied
 | * Naming properties, characteristics or features of illustrated content-related topics
* Posing and responding to Wh-questions that relate to phenomena
 | * Responding to oral or written claims
* Offering facts or opinion statements as appropriate to discussion
 |
| **Level3** Developing |  | * Posing and responding to questions in small group discussions
* Describing the sequence of processes, cycles, procedures, or events with details
 | * Connecting causes to effects in a series of statements
* Sequencing processes, cycles, or procedures in short extended discourse
 | * Stating claims matched to evidence using a series of related sentences
* Suggesting details or reasons to reinforce points of view
 |
| **Level4** Expanding |  | * Presenting factual information on content-related topics to the class
* Paraphrasing and summarizing content-related ideas in large and small groups
 | * Describing components of systems in small groups and class discussions
* Providing precise words and phrases to provide details, descriptions, classifications, comparisons, causes/effects, or procedures
 | * Taking stances and defending them with evidence *(e.g., using data or citations)*
* Comparing and contrasting different points of view
 |
| **Level5** Bridging |  | * Engaging in extended discussion of effects, impacts, or events related to content topics
* Giving multimedia oral presentations on content-related material learned from various sources
 | * Presenting information using an objective, neutral tone in extended discourse
* Using nominalization to compress information and maintain coherence *(e.g., “This expansion…,” “Weathering…,” “An implication...”)*
 | * Challenging evidence and claims in debates
* Convincing audiences of personal points of view using persuasive language
 |
| **Level6** Reaching |  | * Adjusting presentation style, degree of formality, word choice, tone, and information to the context and audience
* Presenting information that follows discipline-specific organization *(e.g., orientation to topic, sequence of events, conclusion)*
 | * Providing precision and accuracy in classifications, procedures, processes, and accounts using abstraction, technical language, and a variety of active/passive verb forms
* Following discipline-specific organization *(e.g., orienting the reader, details, conclusion)* and supporting presentations with graphs, formulas, quotes or other media
 | * Organizing claims and counter claims in debates with evidence from multiple sources
* Negotiating differing cultural perspectives in pairs or small groups
 |

\*\*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. There is no ceiling for 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.

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.



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## ORAL LANGUAGE

| Language Proficiency Level | Students | **Discuss** by: |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level****1** Entering |  | * Representing one’s ideas using various media
* Responding to yes and no questions posed by the group
* Using nonverbal signals to demonstrate engagement in conversations
 |
| **Level****2** Emerging |  | * Asking and answering questions
* Communicating need for clarity of messages
* Recognizing intonation used to achieve various purposes of communication
 |
| **Level****3** Developing |  | * Suggesting creative ways to resolve communication issues
* Clarifying one’s own ideas using a variety of strategies *(e.g., analogies or metaphors, paraphrasing)*
* Asking clarifying questions in a respectful manner
 |
| **Level****4** Expanding |  | * Demonstrating stamina when building ideas in a small group
* Validating ideas of others
* Sorting through one’s own ideas to determine relevant ones
* Providing and receiving constructive feedback from others tactfully
 |
| **Level****5** Bridging |  | * Co-creating novel perspectives on issues
* Responding to diverse perspectives and recognizing bias in one’s own view
* Generating new ideas or questions to sustain conversations
 |
| **Level****6** Reaching |  | * Identifying and reacting to subtle differences in speech and register *(e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy)*
* Producing coherent oral discourse appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
* Synthesizing and sharing information from a variety of sources and perspectives
 |

## READING

| Language Proficiency Level | Students | Process **Recounts** by: | Process **Explanations** by: | Process **Arguments** by: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level 1** Entering |  | * Matching key content-related terms and ideas to images, graphs, icons, or diagrams
* Sequencing illustrated text of narrative or informational events
 | * Identifying key words and phrases that describe the topics or phenomena
* Recognizing sequence statements and illustrations that describe phenomena
 | * Matching media *(e.g., posters, photos, banners)* with point of view words and phrases
* Connecting characters/historical figures with positions or stances on various issues
 |
| **Level 2** Emerging |  | * Identifying patterns specific to narrative or informational text *(e.g., orientation, presentation of events, conclusion)*
* Locating main ideas in a series of related sentences
 | * Identifying different types of connectors that show relationships between topics and phenomena
* Differentiating between technical and everyday vocabulary that describe phenomena
 | * Making connections between statements that make claims and those providing evidence
* Distinguishing language that identifies facts and opinions
 |
| **Level3** Developing |  | * Recognizing lexical chains that show how characters and ideas are labeled across the text
* Identifying detailed descriptions, procedures, and information in paragraphs
 | * Identifying how language provides clarity and precision in describing topics or phenomena
* Summarizing information with diagrams, models, flow charts, or illustrations
 | * Identifying their purposes and audiences
* Evaluating the strength of evidence statements
 |
| **Level4** Expanding |  | * Identifying how the authors make language choices and adjusts for audience and purpose
* Reflecting on various accounts of a subject told in different media *(e.g., print and multimedia)*
 | * Identifying the interdependence of parts of systems *(e.g., technical, government, chemical)*
* Comparing information on phenomena across a variety of multimedia sources
 | * Identifying persuasive language across content areas
* Following the progression of logical reasoning
 |
| **Level5** Bridging |  | * Identifying how text structure supports comprehension and retrieval of information and details
* Identifying the central idea or theme and how it is supported by clear descriptions and extended details
 | * Identifying how authors connect related ideas across paragraphs with abstraction, complex sentences, and technical terms
* Tracing the central idea of text and how it develops, including how it is shaped by specific details, extended definitions, facts, quotes, or examples
 | * Recognizing multiple perspectives and points of view on any given issue
* Identifying evidence of bias and credibility of sources
 |
| **Level6** Reaching |  | * Analyzing and comparing how authors use language for specific purposes and audiences
* Identifying how authors develop and maintain cohesion by connecting ideas or events in extended texts
 | * Recognizing discipline-specific patterns *(e.g., orienting the reader, part-whole classification, neutral/ authoritative tone)*
* Identifying authors’ precision and accuracy in classifications, comparisons, accounts, or procedures as a result of clear language choices
 | * Evaluating word choice and nuance as tools for distinguishing facts, claims, reasoned judgment, and opinions
* Identifying the logical connections among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
 |

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## WRITING

| Language Proficiency Level | Students | **Recount** by: | **Explain** by: | **Argue** by: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level 1** Entering |  | * Listing content words or phrases that relate to the topic
* Including images, diagrams, and charts to add details to the topic
 | * Producing short responses to questions using word/phrase banks
* Labeling charts, graphs, timelines, or cycles to describe phenomena
 | * Selecting words and phrases to represent points of view
* Listing pros and cons of issues
 |
| **Level 2** Emerging |  | * Following patterns specific to narrative or informational text *(e.g., orientation, presentation of events, conclusion)*
* Sequencing narratives or informational text using linking words and phrases
 | * Using transitions and connectors to show causal relationships or procedures
* Choosing everyday or technical language to describe phenomena
 | * Expressing claims with evidence *(e.g., “Socialism is a good government system because...”)*
* Listing content-related ideas that represent different points of view on issues
 |
| **Level3** Developing |  | * Summarizing content-related material
* Including important information and related details
 | * Choosing words and phrases to provide precise details, descriptions, comparisons, and ordered procedures
* Integrating headings, introductory statements, and other features to organize text
 | * Justifying reasons or opinions with evidence
* Summarizing opposing positions with evidence
 |
| **Level4** Expanding |  | * Creating narrative or informational extended text of past events or experiences *(e.g., lab reports, current events)*
* Connecting main points, events, and central ideas to conclusions
 | * Presenting information objectively by using a neutral tone appropriate to the content area
* Integrating images, diagrams, formulas, or charts to describe phenomena
 | * Evaluating and challenging evidence presented
* Creating persuasive essays or reports making adjustments for specific audiences
 |
| **Level5** Bridging |  | * Sequencing using language that creates coherence
* Organizing information according to content-specific expectations
 | * Synthesizing information and details about phenomena from a variety of sources
* Organizing information and details logically and cohesively
 | * Organizing information to show logical reasoning
* Integrating multiple perspectives and evidence from a variety of sources
 |
| **Level6** Reaching |  | * Summarizing content-related notes from lectures or readings
* Producing research reports using multiple sources of information
 | * Developing ideas about phenomena with relevant and sufficient facts, extended descriptions, concrete details, or quotations
* Maintaining discipline-specific patterns that bridge across key uses *(e.g., explanation to argument in history, explanation to recount for information reports)*
 | * Evaluating positive and negative implications associated with various positions *(e.g., historical events, scientific discoveries, individuals)*
* Organizing information logically and coherently to represent contrasting views
 |

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:

| **KEY USE** | **DEFINITION** | **EXAMPLES** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Recount** | To retell to display knowledge or narrate experiences or events | telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences, stating the steps to make something, describing experiences, ordering steps to get an answer |
| **Explain** | To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena | describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, sharing results of experiments, stating consequences of behaviors, describing factors that contribute to events, examining relationships among content-related ideas and concepts |
| **Argue** | To persuade by making claims supported by evidence | stating preferences or opinions, constructing arguments supported with evidence, critiquing the reasoning of others, giving reasons for a stance |
| **Discuss** | To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge | Participating in small or large group activities and projects, contributing ideas to a conversation, extending knowledge with a mentor, elaborating ideas with peers, questioning and critiquing ideas in small groups |

**The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help….**

* 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

Generously created for WIDA by **Becky Linderholm**

*Eau Claire Area School District*

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