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 (e.g., general education, gifted and talented, special education, Title 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.
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<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
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<td><strong>LISTENING</strong></td>
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<td>Process recounts by</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identifying familiar objects or places from oral statements</td>
<td>• Sequencing labeled visuals per oral directions</td>
<td>• Matching main ideas of familiar text read aloud to visuals</td>
<td>• Identifying main ideas and details in oral discourse</td>
<td>• Categorizing details of content-related main ideas seen and heard in videos or other technologies</td>
<td>• Identifying key ideas expressed orally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pointing to objects, people, or places based on short oral descriptions</td>
<td>• Identifying settings or time frames in narrative or informational scenarios read aloud</td>
<td>• Stating the next event in a series based on clues from narrative or informational oral texts</td>
<td>• Evaluating oral presentations of peers based on criteria for success</td>
<td>• Sequencing a series of illustrated events from oral passages (e.g., historical recaps)</td>
<td>• Identifying new information expressed by others</td>
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<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
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<td>Recount by</td>
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<td>• Answering select Wh-questions</td>
<td>• Stating main ideas or points of classroom conversations</td>
<td>• Relating a series of events by expressing time in multiple tenses</td>
<td>• Paraphrasing and summarizing content-related ideas presented orally</td>
<td>• Producing oral multimedia, content-related reports based on research from multiple sources</td>
<td>• Restating new information expressed by others in extended speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Naming and briefly describing past community or school events using visual support (e.g., posters, photographs)</td>
<td>• Restating details of content-related topics (in home language and English) in small groups</td>
<td>• Connecting ideas in content-related discourse using transitions</td>
<td>• Connecting ideas with supporting details in a variety of oral venues</td>
<td>• Tracing the evolution of literary characters, themes, and plots from different venues (e.g., digital text or video)</td>
<td>• Posing questions that elicit elaboration and responding to others’ questions and comments</td>
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*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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| **ELP Level 1 (Entering)** | 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 | 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) |
| **ELP Level 2 (Emerging)** | Process recounts by:  
- Sequencing illustrated text of narrative or informational events  
- Locating main ideas in a series of simple sentences | Recount by:  
- Completing sentences using word banks  
- Producing statements related to main ideas on familiar topics in home language and English |
| **ELP Level 3 (Developing)** | Process recounts by:  
- Identifying topic sentences, main ideas, and details in paragraphs  
- Connecting people to actions based on oral descriptions with details | Recount by:  
- Producing short paragraphs with main ideas and some details  
- Composing dialogues or blogs based on personal experiences |
| **ELP Level 4 (Expanding)** | Process recounts by:  
- Ordering paragraphs in narrative and informational text  
- Identifying summaries of passages in a variety of genres | Recount by:  
- Producing content-related reports  
- Reproducing a sequence of events or experiences using transitional words |
| **ELP Level 5 (Bridging)** | Process recounts by:  
- Sequencing main ideas, events, and conclusions in narrative and informational text  
- Matching details of content-related topics to main ideas | Recount by:  
- Producing research reports using multiple sources  
- Summarizing conclusions reached from steps in problem-solving or conducting experiments |
| **ELP Level 6 (Reaching)** | 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 (e.g., through examples or anecdotes) | 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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<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
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<td><strong>ELP Level 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
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<td>• Matching instructional language, given orally, with visual representation (e.g., “Show me your schedule.”)</td>
<td>• Classifying content-related visuals per oral descriptions (e.g., <em>environmental v. genetic factors</em>)</td>
<td>• Matching main ideas of familiar text read aloud with visuals</td>
<td>• Identifying relationships between people, ideas, or events in oral discourse</td>
<td>• Carrying out a series of oral directions to construct mathematical or scientific models</td>
<td>• Evaluating main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and oral formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying functions of content-related topics based on short oral statements reinforced visually (e.g., <em>organisms in ecosystems</em>)</td>
<td>• Matching oral sentences of cause and effect to illustrations (e.g., <em>weather or climate conditions</em>)</td>
<td>• Showing differences between or among content-related phenomena described orally (e.g., <em>descriptive statistics</em>)</td>
<td>• Matching complex oral descriptions to images, graphs, or formulas</td>
<td>• Connecting details to main ideas based on extended oral discourse</td>
<td>• Developing models from oral discourse and multimedia (e.g., <em>YouTube videos</em>)</td>
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<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ELP Level 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELP Level 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Explain by</strong></td>
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<td>• Comparing attributes of real-life objects with a partner</td>
<td>• Describing situations from modeled sentences</td>
<td>• Demonstrating how to conduct experiments, engage in processes, or solve problems with supports</td>
<td>• Comparing content-related concepts</td>
<td>• Giving demonstrations with step-by-step details (e.g., <em>converting Fahrenheit to Celsius</em>)</td>
<td>• Adapting speech to a variety of contexts and tasks (e.g., <em>use of register</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Showing how to solve real-world problems using symbols, numerals, graphs, or diagrams</td>
<td>• Connecting two content-related ideas that define “how” or “why”</td>
<td>• Stating why events occur, phenomena exist, or some things happen</td>
<td>• Connecting ideas with supporting details to show relationships (e.g., <em>characters’ actions to their feelings</em>)</td>
<td>• Evaluating the significance of events, people, or phenomena in oral presentations</td>
<td>• Posing questions that connect several speakers’ ideas and responding to others’ ideas</td>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• Matching content-related objects, pictures, or media to words and phrases</td>
<td>• Indicating relationships by drawing and labeling content-related pictures on familiar topics</td>
<td>• Comparing ideas on the same topic in a series of simple sentences</td>
<td>• Connecting short sentences</td>
<td>• Comparing and contrasting information, events, or characters</td>
<td>• Describing relationships between details or examples and supporting ideas</td>
<td>• Producing informational text around graphs and charts</td>
<td>• Determining two or more central ideas in text and tracing their development</td>
<td>• Comparing content-related ideas from multiple sources in essays, reports, and narratives</td>
<td>• Evaluating the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events and the converse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying social or academic topics highlighted in text</td>
<td>• Describing processes or cycles by labeling diagrams and graphs</td>
<td>• Identifying how content-related phenomena relate to one another in illustrated text or media</td>
<td>• Comparing illustrated descriptions of content-related concepts (e.g., mitosis v. meiosis)</td>
<td>• Producing descriptive paragraphs around a central idea</td>
<td>• Connecting content-related themes or topics to main ideas</td>
<td>• Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics</td>
<td>• Identifying factors that contribute to phenomena in explanations</td>
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**KEY USE OF EXPLAIN**

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<td><strong>Process arguments by</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Signaling agreement or disagreement of short oral statements or questions</td>
<td>- Identifying claims from a series of oral statements</td>
<td>- Illustrating claims or reasons from oral narratives</td>
<td>- Matching evidence to claims in oral discourse</td>
<td>- Establishing connections among claims, arguments, and supporting evidence within oral discourse</td>
<td>- Evaluating the soundness of opposing claims presented orally</td>
<td>- Comparing opposing points-of-view presented within oral discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identifying points of view (e.g., <em>first or third person</em>) from short statements</td>
<td>- Identifying evidence to support claims from charts and tables</td>
<td>- Identifying opposing perspectives from oral text (e.g., <em>sides in wars, regimes, or revolutions</em>)</td>
<td>- Formulating opinions based on evidence presented within oral discourse</td>
<td>- Identifying bias within claims in oral discourse</td>
<td>- Identifying bias within claims in oral discourse</td>
<td>- Establishing connections among claims, arguments, and supporting evidence within oral discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Argue by</strong></td>
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<td>- Responding yes or no to short statements or questions related to a claim</td>
<td>- Answering simple questions related to claims</td>
<td>- Critiquing opposing claims</td>
<td>- Connecting ideas with supporting details or evidence</td>
<td>- Engaging in debates on content-related topics with claims and counterclaims along with reasonable evidence</td>
<td>- Paraphrasing new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modifying views or positions</td>
<td>- Making presentations with multimedia components to clarify claims and emphasize salient points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expressing personal points of view (in home language and English) in support of or against a claim</td>
<td>- Stating evidence to support claims (in home language and English)</td>
<td>- Evaluating the value of options in content-based situations</td>
<td>- Taking stances and summarizing ideas supporting them</td>
<td>- Defending points of view with specific claims</td>
<td>- Making presentations with multimedia components to clarify claims and emphasize salient points</td>
<td>- Establishing connections among claims, arguments, and supporting evidence within oral discourse</td>
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## Key Use of Argue

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

### ELP Level 1: Entering

**Reading**
- Process arguments by identifying words or phrases associated with topic choices
- Classifying true from false short statements

**Writing**
- Argue by generating words and phrases that represent opinions (e.g., “I think…”)
- Making lists of topic choices with peers

### ELP Level 2: Emerging

**Reading**
- Process arguments by identifying claims and the reasons for each claim
- Identifying opposing points of view

**Writing**
- Argue by stating opinions using evaluative language related to content (e.g., “I agree. Metric is better.”)
- Connecting simple sentences to form content-related ideas

### ELP Level 3: Developing

**Reading**
- 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

**Writing**
- Argue by substantiating opinions with content-related examples and evidence
- Providing feedback to peers on language used for claims and evidence

### ELP Level 4: Expanding

**Reading**
- Process arguments by evaluating evidence presented in support of claims
- Developing a stance in favor of or against claims presented within content-related text

**Writing**
- Argue by crafting persuasive pieces (e.g., editorials) with a series of substantiated content-related claims
- Composing scripts with protagonists and antagonists

### ELP Level 5: Bridging

**Reading**
- 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 presenting opinions in persuasive essays or reports backed by content-related research
- Justifying ideas using multiple sources

### ELP Level 6: Reaching

**Reading**
- Process arguments by introducing claims and opposing claims, along with their associated reasons and evidence
- Closing with concluding statements or paragraphs that support claims

**Writing**
- Argue 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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<tr>
<td><strong>ORAL LANGUAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discuss by</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Using appropriate nonverbal behaviors to show engagement and listening</td>
<td>- Inviting others to participate</td>
<td>- Supporting ideas with examples</td>
<td>- Recognizing purposes of contributions in conversations</td>
<td>- Building on the ideas of others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Contributing to conversations by sharing own work (e.g., pictures, posters, graphics)</td>
<td>- Answering Wh-questions in conversations</td>
<td>- Asking clarifying questions to demonstrate engagement</td>
<td>- Listening to others with a purpose (e.g., to challenge own or others’ ideas)</td>
<td>- Synthesizing ideas of several speakers, posing questions, and responding with evidence, examples, and ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Connecting ideas to one’s experiences</td>
<td>- Generating new questions to maintain conversations</td>
<td>- Demonstrating awareness of personal bias when defending one’s point of view</td>
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Acknowledgements

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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.