

**An English language learner, or ELL, is a student who has extra support learning English in school. There are 4.9 million ELLs in the United States.\***



*\*In 2016, according to the National Center for Education Statistics*

## Identifying a student as an ELL



1. You answered questions about the languages you use at home.



2. A test measured your child's academic English skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing.



3. Your child can have instruction in English, in addition to other classes.

ELLs take an academic English language test every year. Test information helps teachers plan how best to teach your child. Test scores also help teachers know when your child can stop receiving English language support. You can use test information to advocate for your child at school. Talk with your child's teachers about:

- When you will receive test scores and how to track your child's progress.
- How you can support your child's language learning at home.
- How support changes as your child builds academic English language skills.
- When students stop receiving English language support.

### Questions you can ask

- What are the goals for my child?
- How does learning English fit with other skills my child is learning?
- How do you include students' languages and cultures at school?

**Ask about English language learning at your child's school.**

**Students are tested every year, but you have the right to accept or decline language support.**

# What is ACCESS for ELLs?

**ACCESS for ELLs is an English language proficiency test that measures students' academic English language skills.**

---

Your child was identified as an ELL, which means your child can have instruction in English, in addition to taking other classes. ELLs take an English language proficiency test every year.

Testing helps teachers understand whether students have the language skills they need to fully participate in the classroom. Your child's teachers use ACCESS for ELLs test scores as they decide how best to teach your child.

Test scores also help teachers track your child's progress in learning academic English and help schools decide what English language support services to provide. You can use test information to advocate for your child at school.



## **ELL**

An English language learner, or ELL, is a student who has the opportunity to receive instruction in English, in addition to taking other classes. ELLs are tested every year to help teachers understand their language skills, but you have the right to accept or decline language support.

## **Language Proficiency**

A language proficiency level is a measurement of where students are in the ongoing process of building language skills. When students reach the highest levels of language proficiency, they no longer need language support services.

## ACCESS for ELLs Assessments

- ACCESS for ELLs is available in a paper-and-pencil or computer-based format.
- Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs uses stories and activities to keep young learners engaged.
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is a test that support teams can elect to use for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It offers extra support and gives students multiple opportunities to respond to test items.



**Talk with teachers about ACCESS for ELLs testing plans at your child's school.**

Your child does not need to study for ACCESS for ELLs. The test is an opportunity for students to demonstrate all the ways that they understand and can communicate in English.

Prepare for test day by making sure your child gets plenty of sleep and eats breakfast.

Talk with your child's teachers about when you will receive test scores, how your child's school uses those scores, and how language support changes as your child builds English language skills.

## Questions you can ask

- When will my child take ACCESS for ELLs?
- When will I receive my child's ACCESS for ELLs test scores?
- How are test scores used to help my child make progress in learning academic English?
- How do you decide when my child stops receiving language support?



**WIDA**<sup>™</sup>

WIDA is housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
© 2020 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, on behalf of WIDA



## Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 6-8

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 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow one-step oral commands/instructions</li> <li>Match social language to visual/graphic displays</li> <li>Identify objects, people, or places from oral statements/questions using gestures (e.g., pointing)</li> <li>Match instructional language with visual representation (e.g., “Use a sharpened pencil.”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow multi-step oral commands/instructions</li> <li>Classify/sort content-related visuals per oral descriptions</li> <li>Sequence visuals per oral directions</li> <li>Identify information on charts or tables based on oral statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Categorize content-based examples from oral directions</li> <li>Match main ideas of familiar text read aloud to visuals</li> <li>Use learning strategies described orally</li> <li>Identify everyday examples of content-based concepts described orally</li> <li>Associate oral language with different time frames (e.g., past, present, future)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify main ideas and details of oral discourse</li> <li>Complete content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse</li> <li>Apply learning strategies to new situations</li> <li>Role play, dramatize, or re-enact scenarios from oral reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use oral information to accomplish grade-level tasks</li> <li>Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly</li> <li>Make inferences from grade-level text read aloud</li> <li>Discriminate among multiple genres read orally</li> </ul>	
SPEAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer yes/no and choice questions</li> <li>Begin to use general and high frequency vocabulary</li> <li>Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks</li> <li>Answer select WH-questions (e.g., “who,” “what,” “when,” “where”) within context of lessons or personal experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convey content through high frequency words/phrases</li> <li>State big/main ideas of classroom conversation</li> <li>Describe situations from modeled sentences</li> <li>Describe routines and everyday events</li> <li>Express everyday needs and wants</li> <li>Communicate in social situations</li> <li>Make requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to express time through multiple tenses</li> <li>Retell/rephrase ideas from speech</li> <li>Give brief oral content-based presentations</li> <li>State opinions</li> <li>Connect ideas in discourse using transitions (e.g., “but,” “then”)</li> <li>Use different registers inside and outside of class</li> <li>State big/main ideas with some supporting details</li> <li>Ask for clarification (e.g., self-monitor)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paraphrase and summarize ideas presented orally</li> <li>Defend a point of view</li> <li>Explain outcomes</li> <li>Explain and compare content-based concepts</li> <li>Connect ideas with supporting details/evidence</li> <li>Substantiate opinions with reasons and evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defend a point of view and give reasons</li> <li>Use and explain metaphors and similes</li> <li>Communicate with fluency in social and academic contexts</li> <li>Negotiate meaning in group discussions</li> <li>Discuss and give examples of abstract, content-based ideas (e.g., democracy, justice)</li> </ul>	

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.

## Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 6-8

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 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Associate letters with sounds and objects</li> <li>Match content-related objects/pictures to words</li> <li>Identify common symbols, signs, and words</li> <li>Recognize concepts of print</li> <li>Find single word responses to WH- questions (e.g., “who,” “what,” “when,” “where”) related to illustrated text</li> <li>Use picture dictionaries/illustrated glossaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequence illustrated text of fictional and non-fictional events</li> <li>Locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences</li> <li>Find information from text structure (e.g., titles, graphs, glossary)</li> <li>Follow text read aloud (e.g., tapes, teacher, paired-readings)</li> <li>Sort/group pre-taught words/phrases</li> <li>Use pre-taught vocabulary (e.g., word banks) to complete simple sentences</li> <li>Use L1 to support L2 (e.g., cognates)</li> <li>Use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify topic sentences, main ideas, and details in paragraphs</li> <li>Identify multiple meanings of words in context (e.g., “cell,” “table”)</li> <li>Use context clues</li> <li>Make predictions based on illustrated text</li> <li>Identify frequently used affixes and root words to make/extract meaning (e.g., “un-,” “re-,” “-ed”)</li> <li>Differentiate between fact and opinion</li> <li>Answer questions about explicit information in texts</li> <li>Use English dictionaries and glossaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Order paragraphs</li> <li>Identify summaries of passages</li> <li>Identify figurative language (e.g., “dark as night”)</li> <li>Interpret adapted classics or modified text</li> <li>Match cause to effect</li> <li>Identify specific language of different genres and informational texts</li> <li>Use an array of strategies (e.g., skim and scan for information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate and apply multiple meanings of words/phrases</li> <li>Apply strategies to new situations</li> <li>Infer meaning from modified grade-level text</li> <li>Critique material and support argument</li> <li>Sort grade-level text by genre</li> </ul>	
WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw content-related pictures</li> <li>Produce high frequency words</li> <li>Label pictures and graphs</li> <li>Create vocabulary/concept cards</li> <li>Generate lists from pre-taught words/phrases and word banks (e.g., create menu from list of food groups)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete pattern sentences</li> <li>Extend “sentence starters” with original ideas</li> <li>Connect simple sentences</li> <li>Complete graphic organizers/forms with personal information</li> <li>Respond to yes/no, choice, and some WH- questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce short paragraphs with main ideas and some details (e.g., column notes)</li> <li>Create compound sentences (e.g., with conjunctions)</li> <li>Explain steps in problem-solving</li> <li>Compare/contrast information, events, characters</li> <li>Give opinions, preferences, and reactions along with reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create multiple-paragraph essays</li> <li>Justify ideas</li> <li>Produce content-related reports</li> <li>Use details/examples to support ideas</li> <li>Use transition words to create cohesive passages</li> <li>Compose intro/body/conclusion</li> <li>Paraphrase or summarize text</li> <li>Take notes (e.g., for research)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create expository text to explain graphs/charts</li> <li>Produce research reports using multiple sources/citations</li> <li>Begin using analogies</li> <li>Critique literary essays or articles</li> </ul>	

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.