

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.



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ACCESS for ELLs

Understanding Your Child's Scores

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

- Schools, school districts, and states use ACCESS for ELLs scores as they decide what English language support services to provide.
- Teachers use test scores as they decide how best to teach your child.
- You can use test scores to advocate for your child.



The Individual Student Report shows your child's ACCESS for ELLs scores in eight different categories. Four of these categories are the language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. These four language domain scores are combined to create four additional score types:

- The oral language category is a combination of your child's Listening and Speaking scores.
- The literacy category is a combination of your child's Reading and Writing scores.
- The comprehension category is a combination of your child's Listening and Reading scores. It depends more on the Reading score than on the Listening score.

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 Domain

Students use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to learn academic content, share information, and discuss ideas. These are skills that all students work on throughout their education. Language testing measures a student's skills in all four of these domains.

- The overall category is a combination of all four language domain scores. It depends more on the Reading and Writing scores than on the Listening and Speaking scores.

For each of the eight categories on the Individual Student Report, there are two scores:

- Proficiency level scores place your child's current skills within the six WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels. (Proficiency levels are not related to a student's grade level.) The bottom of the Individual Student Report describes the language skills typical of your child's proficiency level.
- Scale scores are precise measures of how your child did on the test. They take into account your child's grade level and the difficulty of the test items your child completed. Teachers use these scores to understand how much your child's English language skills have grown since the last time your child took ACCESS for ELLs.



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.

Questions you can ask

- What does this score mean? Who will see this score and how will it be used?
- How do this year's scores compare with previous scores? Is my child making progress in building English language skills? What other information do you use to measure progress?
- Will this score change the instruction or support my child receives? How do you decide when my child stops receiving language support?

School districts use **ACCESS for ELLs** scores to evaluate language support programs, monitor student progress, and as one factor in the decision to exit a student from language support services. ACCESS for ELLs testing allows schools to meet federal and state accountability requirements.



WIDATM

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Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

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"> Point to or show basic parts, components, features, characteristics, and properties of objects, organisms, or persons named orally Match everyday oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs Group visuals by common traits named orally (e.g., "These are polygons.") Identify resources, places, products, figures from oral statements, and visuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match or classify oral descriptions to real-life experiences or visually-represented, content-related examples Sort oral language statements according to time frames Sequence visuals according to oral directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate information in social and academic conversations Distinguish main ideas from supporting points in oral, content-related discourse Use learning strategies described orally Categorize content-based examples described orally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases in social and academic contexts Analyze content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse Categorize examples of genres read aloud Compare traits based on visuals and oral descriptions using specific and some technical language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse Make inferences from oral discourse containing satire, sarcasm, or humor Identify and react to subtle differences in speech and register (e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy) Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly 	
SPEAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer yes/no or choice questions within context of lessons or personal experiences Provide identifying information about self Name everyday objects and pre-taught vocabulary Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe persons, places, events, or objects Ask WH- questions to clarify meaning Give features of content-based material (e.g., time periods) Characterize issues, situations, regions shown in illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest ways to resolve issues or pose solutions Compare/contrast features, traits, characteristics using general and some specific language Sequence processes, cycles, procedures, or events Conduct interviews or gather information through oral interaction Estimate, make predictions or pose hypotheses from models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a stance and use evidence to defend it Explain content-related issues and concepts Compare and contrast points of view Analyze and share pros and cons of choices Use and respond to gossip, slang, and idiomatic expressions Use speaking strategies (e.g., circumlocution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give multimedia oral presentations on grade-level material Engage in debates on content-related issues using technical language Explain metacognitive strategies for solving problems (e.g., "Tell me how you know it.") Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions 	

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 9-12

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"> Match visual representations to words/phrases Read everyday signs, symbols, schedules, and school-related words/phrases Respond to WH- questions related to illustrated text Use references (e.g., picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, technology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of element to its symbol on periodic table) Classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs Follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data Match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations Compare content-related features in visuals and graphics Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts Identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs Answer questions about explicit information in texts Differentiate between fact and opinion in text Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare/contrast authors' points of view, characters, information, or events Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information Infer meaning from text Match cause to effect Evaluate usefulness of data or information supported visually or graphically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret grade-level literature Synthesize grade-level expository text Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text Infer significance of data or information in grade-level material Identify evidence of bias and credibility of source 	
WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word/phrase banks Provide personal information on forms read orally Produce short answer responses to oral questions with visual support Supply missing words in short sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions Take notes using graphic organizers or models Formulate yes/no, choice and WH- questions from models Correspond for social purposes (e.g., memos, e-mails, notes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete reports from templates Compose short narrative and expository pieces Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers Compare and reflect on performance against criteria (e.g., rubrics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text Revise work based on narrative or oral feedback Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes Justify or defend ideas and opinions Produce content-related reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce research reports from multiple sources Create original pieces that represent the use of a variety of genres and discourses Critique, peer-edit and make recommendations on others' writing from rubrics Explain, with details, phenomena, processes, procedures 	

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