

ACCESS for ELLs Proficiency Level Descriptors

Grades 1-12 Proficiency Level Descriptors

Proficiency levels are interpretive scores. In other words, they are based on, but separate from, scale scores. The proficiency level score describes the student's performance in terms of the six WIDA English language proficiency levels:

- Level 1 Entering
- Level 2 Emerging
- Level 3 Developing
- Level 4 Expanding
- Level 5 Bridging
- Level 6 Reaching

The proficiency level score is a whole number followed by a decimal. The whole number reflects the student's proficiency level, and the number after the decimal reflects how far the student has progressed within that level.

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Grades 1–12)

LISTENING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	<p>Understand oral language in English and participate in all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synthesize information from multiple speakers• Recognize language that conveys information with precision and accuracy• Create models or visuals to represent detailed information presented orally• Identify strengths and limitations of different points of view
5	<p>Understand oral language in English and participate in all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand on others' ideas• Distinguish events, people, or situations from oral descriptions• Recall key information and details about processes or concepts discussed orally• Identify examples and reasons that support an opinion or viewpoint
4	<p>Understand oral language in English related to specific topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exchange information and ideas with others• Connect people and events based on oral information• Apply key information about processes or concepts presented orally• Identify positions or points of view on issues in oral discussions
3	<p>Understand oral language related to specific common topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect spoken ideas to own experiences• Find, select, and order information from oral descriptions• Identify the causes and effects of events or situations discussed orally• Classify pros and cons of issues in discussions
2	<p>Understand oral language related to specific familiar topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify main topics in discussions• Categorize or sequence information presented orally using pictures or objects• Follow short oral directions with the help of pictures• Sort facts and opinions stated orally
1	<p>Understand oral messages that include visuals and gestures and may contain a few everyday words or phrases in English, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize familiar words and phrases in conversations• Match information from oral descriptions to objects, figures, or illustrations• Follow one-step oral directions• Show agreement or disagreement with oral statements

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Grades 1–12)

SPEAKING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	<p>Use English to communicate orally and participate in all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • React and respond to multiple points of view • Organize and present research-based information • Clarify how or why something happens • Persuade others based on opinions, examples, and reasons
5	<p>Use English to communicate orally and participate in all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the causes and impact of events • Summarize and relate information • Present and justify ideas showing how or why • Express and defend opinions backed by examples and reasons
4	<p>Communicate orally in English using language related to specific topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare stories, issues, and concepts • Paraphrase and summarize information • State ideas to show how or why with examples • Give opinions supported by detailed reasons
3	<p>Communicate ideas and details orally in English using several connected sentences and can participate in short conversations and discussions in school, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate stories or events • Share ideas and provide details • Describe processes or procedures • Give opinions with reasons
2	<p>Communicate ideas and information orally in English using language that contains short sentences and everyday words and phrases, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share about what, when, or where something happened • Compare objects, people, pictures, and events • Describe steps in cycles or processes • Express opinions
1	<p>Communicate orally in English using gestures and language that may contain a few words, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and answer simple questions about what, when, or where something happened • Name familiar objects, people, and pictures • Show how to solve problems using words and gestures • Express personal preferences

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Grades 1–12)

READING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	<p>Understand written language in English from all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate written information from various sources of information • Conduct research and synthesize information from multiple sources • Distinguish various processes based on details in written texts • Recognize different ideas, claims, and evidence about a variety of issues
5	<p>Understand written language in English from all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize information on a variety of topics and for a variety of purposes • Compare ideas and information across various texts • Identify causes, effects, and consequences of events from written information • Recognize claims and supporting evidence around specific issues or concepts
4	<p>Understand written language related to specific topics in school, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish viewpoints and justifications described in editorials and other written texts • Identify main ideas and details in informational and fictional texts • Recognize biases and diverse perspectives in written text • Connect claims, evidence, and examples in a variety of written sources
3	<p>Understand written language related to common topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classify main ideas and examples in written information • Identify main information that tells who, what, when, or where something happened • Identify steps in written processes and procedures • Recognize language related to claims and supporting evidence
2	<p>Understand written language related to specific familiar topics in school and can participate in class discussions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify main ideas in written information • Identify main actors and events in stories and simple texts with pictures or graphs • Sequence pictures, events, or steps in processes • Distinguish between claim and evidence statements
1	<p>Understand written texts that include visuals and may contain a few words or phrases in English, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret information from graphs, charts, and other visual information • Comprehend short text with illustrations and simple and familiar language • Identify steps in processes presented in graphs or short texts with illustrations • Identify words and phrases that express opinions and claims

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Grades 1–12)

WRITING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	<p>Communicate in writing in English using language from all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce clearly organized commentaries and editorials on various issues• Elaborate narratives with rich, descriptive language and complex organization• Create formal written reports on a variety of issues, ideas, and information• Produce well-organized persuasive essays using complex and technical language
5	<p>Communicate in writing using language from all academic classes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create detailed opinion pieces about a variety of topics• Write summaries of various types of texts• Describe causes, effects, and consequences of processes and events• Express and defend positions supported by examples and reasons
4	<p>Communicate in writing in English using language related to specific topics in school, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce papers describing specific ideas or concepts• Narrate stories with details of people, events, and situations• Create explanatory text that includes details or examples• Provide opinions supported by reasons with details
3	<p>Communicate in writing in English using language related to common topics in school, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe familiar issues and events• Create stories or short narratives• Describe processes and procedures with some details• Give opinions with reasons in a few short sentences
2	<p>Communicate in writing in English using language related to familiar topics in school, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe ideas or concepts using phrases or short sentences• Label illustrations describing what, when, or where something happened• State steps in processes or procedures• Express opinions about specific topics or situations
1	<p>Communicate in writing using visuals and symbols that may contain few words in English, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Express ideas or concepts using text and illustrations• Share personal experiences through drawings and words• Label steps in processes presented in graphs or short texts• State opinions or preferences through text and illustrations

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Kindergarten)

Kindergarten Proficiency Level Descriptors

Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs is designed with age-appropriate tasks that presume students are still developing full literacy skills. Because the test does not assess advanced reading and writing skills—as young learners with typical language development would not be expected to have these skills—kindergartners cannot earn scale scores above 400, a Reading proficiency level above 5.0, or a Writing proficiency level above 4.5.

Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs does not assess advanced literacy skills, so these proficiency levels cannot be earned on the assessment.

LISTENING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	Understand detailed stories and ideas related to a variety of topics and situations, including language with multiple meanings and original language
5	Understand stories, messages, or directions and detailed information, including technical and specific language related to a variety of topics and situations
4	Understand main ideas and details in stories, messages, or directions, including language specific to particular topics or situations
3	Understand ideas and some details in language that is related to school
2	Understand messages or directions involving language related to routines and familiar experiences
1	Understand brief messages and short commands

SPEAKING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6	Communicate connected ideas in a variety of situations using language appropriately and taking risks in using language in new and creative ways
5	Communicate details about ideas or stories or elaborate on topics using language specific to the topic or situation
4	Communicate ideas using a series of sentences related to the topic
3	Communicate ideas using short sentences related to routines and familiar situations
2	Communicate ideas using words and phrases related to everyday routines or situations
1	Communicate using familiar words, gestures, or body language

Proficiency Level Descriptors (Kindergarten)

READING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6*	Identify new information and details for a variety of purposes in illustrated text
5	Identify new information and some details in illustrated text
4	Identify main ideas about familiar topics and some details in illustrated text
3	Identify familiar repetitive language in illustrated text
2	Identify language represented visually in illustrated text
1	Identify meaning or messages in drawings, symbols, or other visual representations

WRITING Level	Students at this level generally can...
6*	Communicate details about ideas or stories for a variety of purposes and situations
5*	Communicate ideas and information using language related to specific topics and situations
4	Communicate ideas and information with some details using language related to familiar topics and situations
3	Communicate ideas and information using language related to familiar topics
2	Communicate messages using visual and written language related to everyday routines and situations
1	Communicate messages using drawings, symbols, or other visual representations

Information for this document comes from the [Interpretive Guide to Score Reports](#), which is available on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports web page. Additional resources are available to further explain to parents and teachers the meanings behind the score numbers.