Can Do Descriptors
KEY USES EDITION
Grade 1
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiences</th>
<th>The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help....</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **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.
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td><strong>LISTENING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mimicking gestures or movement associated with oral commands</td>
<td>Acting out oral statements using manipulatives or real-life objects</td>
<td>Sequencing pictures of stories read aloud (e.g., beginning, middle, end)</td>
<td>Identifying characters, plots, and settings from oral stories</td>
<td>Constructing models based on instructions from extended oral discourse with a partner</td>
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<td>Matching key words or expressions in songs, chants, and poems to illustrations</td>
<td>Pointing to objects, characters or places from oral descriptions</td>
<td>Following modeled oral instructions related to content</td>
<td>Finding details in illustrated narrative or informational text read aloud</td>
<td>Following multi-step oral directions during content-related activities</td>
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<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
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<td>Recount by</td>
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<td>Repeating words, phrases and memorized chunks of language related to different topics</td>
<td>Stating content-related facts in context (e.g., playing telephone)</td>
<td>Retelling simple stories from picture cues</td>
<td>Restating information with some details</td>
<td>Presenting information on content-related topics</td>
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<td>Answering yes or no questions about stories or experiences</td>
<td>Describing characters or places in picture books</td>
<td>Participating in dialog with peers on familiar topics</td>
<td>Summarizing a series of familiar events or routines</td>
<td>Sharing details about personal experiences with peers and adults</td>
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<td>Producing discourse appropriate to task and situation</td>
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<td>Rehearsing content-related presentations with peers</td>
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<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Process recounts by</strong></td>
<td>• Using pictures and illustrations to identify themes or storylines</td>
<td>• Pointing to icons, letters, or illustrated words that represent ideas</td>
<td>• Identifying repetitive words and phrases in texts</td>
<td>• Identifying the main topic of texts</td>
<td>• Distinguishing among characters, settings, and events in narratives</td>
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<td>• Matching vocabulary to illustrated stories</td>
<td>• Identifying repetitive words and phrases in texts</td>
<td>• Recalling content-related information from illustrated texts read aloud</td>
<td>• Ordering illustrations based on sequence of events from texts read aloud</td>
<td>• Reconstructing texts read orally using drawings or re-enacting text with performances</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recount by</strong></td>
<td>• Forming words using a variety of strategies</td>
<td>• Providing information in graphic organizers</td>
<td>• Describing feelings or reactions to personal events or situations</td>
<td>• Producing a series of related sentences from transition word starters (e.g., first, next, last)</td>
<td>• Composing stories or narratives using sequential language</td>
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<td>• Answering Wh- oral questions or using icons to plan stories</td>
<td>• Presenting content-related information labeling visuals or graphics</td>
<td>• Recalling information from events or experiences</td>
<td>• Describing observations first-hand or from media</td>
<td>• Editing personal narratives based on criteria for success</td>
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<td><strong>Recount by</strong></td>
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By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can:

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<th>KEY USE OF EXPLAIN</th>
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| LISTENING           | Process explanations by:  
  - Identifying real-life objects based on descriptive oral phrases or short sentences  
  - Pointing to objects or people reflective of content-related vocabulary (e.g., family members) | Process explanations by:  
  - Classifying real-life objects according to their function based on oral directions  
  - Interpreting oral descriptions and matching them to illustrations | Process explanations by:  
  - Following peer statements to create projects  
  - Identifying illustrated cycles or processes described orally | Process explanations by:  
  - Organizing causes and effects of various phenomena presented orally  
  - Using strategies and procedures shared by peers | Process explanations by:  
  - Identifying details from oral descriptions of processes or procedures  
  - Representing ideas from oral discussions or multimedia |
| SPEAKING            | Explain by:  
  - Answering questions with words or phrases (e.g., “Go washroom.”)  
  - Describing pictures or classroom objects | Explain by:  
  - Demonstrating how to do something using gestures or real-life objects (e.g., tie a bow)  
  - Describing what people do from action pictures (e.g., jobs of community workers) | Explain by:  
  - Stating associations between two objects, people, or events (e.g., “Lidia is my sister and Lisa is my sister.”)  
  - Telling why something happened | Explain by:  
  - Connecting ideas by building on guided conversations with peers  
  - Describing in detail the function of objects or roles of people | Explain by:  
  - Stating conditions for cause and effect (e.g., “If it rains, I play inside.”)  
  - Elaborating on details of content-related procedures | Explain by:  
  - Asking and answering content-related “how” and “why” questions  
  - Expressing connected ideas with supporting details |

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| Process explanations by | • Identifying icons from illustrated texts or media with a partner  
• Sorting objects according to their use based on labeled illustrations | Process explanations by | • Matching descriptive labels or headings to illustrated text  
• Identifying labeled illustrations signaled by Wh- questions | Process explanations by | • Finding details in illustrated narrative or informational texts read aloud  
• Identifying what authors say in oral stories | Process explanations by | • Ordering content-related events according to information in illustrated texts  
• Identifying steps or stages of content-related processes or events from informational or explanatory texts |
| **WRITING**          |                      |                        |                       |                     |                     |
| Explain by | • Designing, drawing and labeling content-specific models  
• Identifying topics through photographs, illustrated word walls, or software | Explain by | • Labeling and illustrating observations over time (e.g., growing plants)  
• Describing people, places, or objects from illustrated examples | Explain by | • Classifying illustrated words and phrases into groups (e.g., “Animals that fly. Animals that swim.”)  
• Comparing real-life objects, numbers, or animals using models | Explain by | • Describing models related to content-related phenomena in pictures or real-life  
• Expressing feelings and a reason related to situations or events | Explain by | • Predicting how stories, events, or situations might end  
• Producing texts that can name a topic and supply topic-related facts |

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</table>

**LISTENING**

- Process arguments by
  - Answering questions about likes and preferences
  - Identifying words or phrases that express opinions
  - Evaluating options to make personal choices from oral simple sentences
  - Signaling agreement or disagreement with short oral statements using gestures (e.g., “Today is Monday.” “Clap one time for yes. Clap two times for no.”)
  - Classifying objects according to descriptive oral statements
  - Following conditional directions (e.g., “Raise two hands if you like ice cream.”)
  - Organizing information from oral comparisons of people or objects
  - Identifying claims about real-life objects or events based on observations or experiences
  - Identifying claims and reasons from oral discourse
  - Identifying reasons for choices from oral stories
  - Identifying reasons authors give to support points in text read aloud
  - Distinguishing opinions from reasons in oral discourse

**SPEAKING**

- Argue by
  - Expressing preferences in naming and pointing to objects
  - Repeating language to express agreement or disagreement
  - Responding to short statements or questions about choices (e.g., “I am sure.” “I am not sure.”)
  - Stating likes and dislikes to participate in conversations with peers
  - Describing characters or objects using pictures or actions
  - Stating choices of materials or supplies and reasons for their selection
  - Justifying the use of objects for particular purposes
  - Supporting content-related ideas with examples
  - Comparing and contrasting content-related ideas (e.g., “Winter is hot in Hawaii. Winter is cold in Alaska.”)
  - Providing evidence for specific claims
  - Defending solutions to simple problems
  - Elaborating reasons to justify content-related ideas

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

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<td>• Categorizing labeled pictures or photographs</td>
<td>• Identifying information related to events from graphics (e.g., birthday charts, weather calendars)</td>
<td>• Identifying persuasive words in written phrases or statements in context (e.g., “have to,” “must”)</td>
<td>• Distinguishing characters’ opinions or preferences from illustrated text read aloud</td>
<td>• Determining what happens next from illustrated observations</td>
<td>• Predicting meaning of words based on clues from sentence-level context</td>
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<td>• Identifying opinions from illustrated statements (e.g., likes and dislikes)</td>
<td>• Sharing likes and dislikes using environmental print</td>
<td>• Identifying language of wants and needs in illustrated short stories read aloud</td>
<td>• Determining the author’s point of view from illustrated texts</td>
<td>• Identifying evidence or reasons in peers’ written text</td>
<td>• Identifying similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING</strong></td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Indicating agreement with opinions of others using labeled drawings</td>
<td>• Producing simple sentences from models about likes, wants, and needs (e.g., “I like…, I don’t like…”)</td>
<td>• Participating in interactive journals with peers</td>
<td>• Describing patterns in processes and stories to use as evidence</td>
<td>• Providing simple edits to peers’ writing</td>
<td>• Using persuasive language in a variety of sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drawing icons or symbols to represent preferences</td>
<td>• Supplying facts about topics</td>
<td>• Stating preferences related to social and academic topics (e.g., “I want to go…”)</td>
<td>• Stating reasons for particular claims or opinions in content-related topics</td>
<td>• Elaborating content-related claims with examples</td>
<td>• Producing opinion pieces by stating an opinion and providing a connected reason</td>
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### Key Use of Discuss

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</table>
| ORAL LANGUAGE | Discuss by | • Tracking the speakers to demonstrate understanding  
• Sharing pictures, created work, or visuals to contribute to conversations | Discuss by | • Following along familiar routines of small and large groups  
• Recognizing different types of intonation used by speakers | Discuss by | • Asking clarifying questions  
• Inviting others to participate | Discuss by | • Using intonation appropriate for the purposes of communication  
• Restating statements to clarify ideas | Discuss by | • Asking and answering questions to maintain conversations  
• Elaborate on someone else’s comments to participate in conversations  
• Asking and answering questions about key details in social and academic contexts | Discuss by | • Sustaining conversations by responding to comments made in multiple exchanges  
• Asking and answering questions about key details in social and academic contexts |

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Acknowledgements

The development of the Can Do Descriptors represents the work of many educators in the field. WIDA would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who contributed through their expertise to this work, including the staff at the Center for Applied Linguistics for their ongoing partnership and support.

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.

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