# The Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Standards

The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

| Performance Criteria | Features |
| --- | --- |
| **Discourse Level**<br><br>**Linguistic Complexity**<br>*(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)* | Amount of speech/written text<br>Structure of speech/written text<br>Density of speech/written text<br>Organization and cohesion of ideas<br>Variety of sentence types |
| **Sentence Level**<br><br>**Language Forms and Conventions**<br>*(Types, array, and use of language structures)* | Types and variety of grammatical structures<br>Conventions, mechanics, and fluency<br>Match of language forms to purpose/perspective |
| **Word/Phrase Level**<br><br>**Vocabulary Usage**<br>*(Specificity of word or phrase choice)* | General, specific, and technical language<br>Multiple meanings of words and phrases<br>Formulaic and idiomatic expressions<br>Nuances and shades of meaning<br>Collocations |

The sociocultural contexts for language use involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles

# WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing, Grades K–12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce…

| | Discourse Level | Sentence Level | Word/Phrase Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Linguistic Complexity** | **Language Forms and Conventions** | **Vocabulary Usage** |
| | **Level 6 – Reaching** Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging | | |
| **Level 5 Bridging** | • Multiple, complex sentences<br>• Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas | • A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose and nearly consistent use of conventions, including for effect<br>• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Technical and abstract content-area language<br>• Words and expressions with precise meaning related to content area topics |
| **Level 4 Expanding** | • Short, expanded, and some complex sentences<br>• Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion | • A variety of grammatical structures and generally consistent use of conventions<br>• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Specific and some technical content-area language<br>• Words and expressions with multiple meanings or common collocations and idioms across content areas |
| **Level 3 Developing** | • Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity<br>• Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas | • Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation and emerging use of conventions<br>• Sentence patterns across content areas | • Specific content words and expressions (including content-specific cognates)<br>• Words or expressions related to content areas |
| **Level 2 Emerging** | • Phrases or short sentences<br>• Emerging expression of ideas | • Formulaic grammatical structures and variable use of conventions<br>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas | • General content words and expressions (including common cognates)<br>• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas |
| **Level 1 Entering** | • Words, phrases, or chunks of language<br>• Single words used to represent ideas | • Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives)<br>• Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations | • General content-related words<br>• Everyday social and instructional words and familiar expressions |

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

WiDA

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process…

| | Discourse Level | Sentence Level | Word/Phrase Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Linguistic Complexity** | **Language Forms and Conventions** | **Vocabulary Usage** |
| | Level 6 – Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging | | |
| **Level 5 Bridging** | • Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences<br>• Cohesive and organized related ideas | • Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses)<br>• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Technical and abstract content-area language<br>• Words and expressions with shades of meaning for each content area |
| **Level 4 Expanding** | • Connected discourse with a variety of sentences<br>• Expanded related ideas | • A variety of complex grammatical constructions<br>• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Specific and some technical content-area language<br>• Words and expressions with multiple meanings or collocations and idioms for each content area |
| **Level 3 Developing** | • Discourse with a series of extended sentences<br>• Related ideas | • Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions<br>• Sentence patterns across content areas | • Specific content words and expressions<br>• Words or expressions related to content area with common collocations and idioms across content areas |
| **Level 2 Emerging** | • Multiple related simple sentences<br>• An idea with details | • Compound grammatical constructions<br>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas | • General and some specific content words and expressions (including cognates)<br>• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas |
| **Level 1 Entering** | • Single statements or questions<br>• An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language | • Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives)<br>• Common social and instructional forms and patterns | • General content-related words<br>• Everyday social and instructional words and expressions |

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

WIDA