



World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)
English Language Proficiency Standards

CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency

The CAN DO Descriptors offer teachers and administrators working with English language learners a range of expectations for student performance within a designated English language proficiency level of the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards.

The CAN DO Descriptors are broad in nature, focusing on language functions generally found in the school setting, rather than language skills related to specific academic topics. A distinguishing feature of these Descriptors, although not explicitly mentioned, is the presence of sensory, graphic, or interactive supports to enable English language learners to access the language and content required for success in school. Given the broad nature of these Descriptors and the fact that they are not distinguished by grade level cluster, educators need to keep in mind the variability of students' cognitive development, age and grade level differences, and their diversity of educational experiences. The CAN DO Descriptors are available by grade level cluster (PreK-K, 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) in the Standards section of the WIDA website (www.wida.us).

The CAN DO Descriptors are an extension of the Performance Definitions for the English Language Proficiency Standards. The Descriptors inform the use of *ACCESS for ELLs*[®] scores as they may assist teachers and administrators in interpreting the meaning of the score reports as well as sharing them with students and their families.

The Descriptors are not instructional or assessment strategies, per se. They are samples of what English language learners may do to demonstrate comprehension in listening and reading as well as production in speaking and writing within a school setting. Unlike the strands of model performance indicators within the standards matrix, the Descriptors do not form a developmental strand encompassing a shared topic or theme. Rather, each English language proficiency level is to be viewed as an independent set of Descriptors.

For the most part, the Descriptors are drawn from the English Language Proficiency Standards' Framework for Large-Scale/Summative Assessment that serves as the anchor for the English language proficiency test. Teachers are encouraged to supplement these bulleted points with additional ones from the Formative Framework for Classroom Instruction and Assessment. In that way, educators will have a more complete understanding of what English language learners 'can do' as they move along the second language acquisition continuum.

The Descriptors are presented in a matrix format similar to the English Language Proficiency standards across the language domains for the five levels of English language proficiency. English language proficiency level 6, Reaching, is reserved for those students who have completed the continuum of English language proficiency development.

The *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards and Resource Guide, PreKindergarten-Grade 12* (2007) and the *ACCESS for ELLs*[®] *Interpretive Guide for Score Reports* (2010) can be found on the WIDA Consortium website at www.wida.us.