

# HW 3.2: Article - WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels

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Click the [WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels](#) link to look at the PDF version of what is below.

## **Level 1 - *Entering/Beginner/Preproduction:***

- The student does not understand or speak English with the exception of a few isolated words or expressions.

## **Level 2 - *Emerging/Beginning/Production/Early Intermediate:***

- The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty.
- The student understands parts of lessons and simple directions.
- The student is at a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English, significantly below grade level.

## **Level 3 - *Developing/Intermediate:***

- The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty.
- The student is post-emergent, developing reading comprehension and writing skills in English.
- The student's English literacy skills allow the student to demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance.

## **Level 4 - *Expanding/Advanced Intermediate/Early Advanced:***

- The student understands and speaks conversational English without apparent

difficulty, but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy.

- The student continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance.

**Level 5 - *Bridging/Advanced*:**

- The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English well.
- The student is near proficient in reading, writing, and content area skills needed to meet grade level expectations.
- The student requires occasional support.

**FULL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVELS**

**Level 6 - *Reaching/Formerly LEP/ Moving in to the transition phase*:**

- The student was formerly limited English proficient and is now fully English proficient.
- The student reads, writes, speaks and comprehends English within academic classroom settings.

**Level 7 - *Non-English Language Background (NELB)/Fully English Proficient/Never Limited-English Proficient/ English-Only*:**

- The student was never classified as limited-English proficient and does not fit the definition of a limited-English proficient student outlined in either state or federal law. The student will be listed as NELB in EIS.

\*Italics indicate WIDA language for proficiency levels

<http://www.wida.us/standards>

<b>Level</b>	<b>Definition/Student Behavior</b>	<b>Instruction/Instructional Support</b>
<b>Level 1</b> <b>Entering</b> New Comer Beginner 0-6 months in K-12 school system, sometimes a whole academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student does not understand or speak English</li> <li>• Grade level understanding cannot be assessed due to English ability</li> <li>• Student listens and absorbs language</li> <li>• Student is adjusting to U.S. culture</li> <li>• Student indicates comprehension non-verbally (pointing, nodding, etc.)</li> <li>• May not produce speech for several months</li> <li>• Will try to make sense out of messages</li> <li>• Working to gain familiarity with the sounds, rhythm and patterns of English</li> <li>• Responds to commands</li> <li>• Able to locate, observe, label, match, classify, and categorize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESL is core English arts instruction. Explicit core instruction in other academic areas with scaffolds and differentiation to make material accessible to the student from the most highly qualified general ed. teacher</li> <li>• Use gestures, manipulatives, visuals, props, realia (real things)</li> <li>• Create climate of acceptance/respect that supports acculturation</li> <li>• Give one and two-step directions in English supported by modeling, visuals, demonstrations, etc.</li> <li>• Provide materials or support staff in student's first language</li> <li>• Use buddies and cooperative grouping</li> <li>• Repeat after me; choral reading</li> <li>• Chants, songs, poems, learning walls</li> <li>• Use of Cognates if available for the native language</li> <li>• ESL in core English arts instruction Explicit core instruction with appropriate supports from most highly qualified general ed. teacher</li> <li>• Access to Tier Instruction</li> <li>• Simplify language not the content</li> <li>• Design lessons to motivate discussion</li> <li>• Ask questions requiring simple responses such as: yes/no, who, what, where, which one, how many?</li> <li>• Expose students to experiences with understandable texts, such as patterned or predictable books</li> <li>• Introduce a dictionary</li> <li>• Use of word walls and learning walls</li> <li>• Expand student simple responses by encouraging responses in complete sentences... Model for student</li> <li>• Do not overly correct grammatical errors</li> <li>• Model appropriate language</li> <li>• Use shared and paired reading</li> <li>• Collaborative learning groups</li> <li>• Explicit core Instruction with appropriate supports (sentence frames, sentence starters, etc.)</li> <li>• 60 minute ELD block outside core</li> <li>• Tiered Instruction</li> <li>• List instructions to procedures</li> <li>• Build on student's prior knowledge</li> <li>• Incorporate more reading and writing</li> <li>• Explicitly teach writing skills</li> <li>• Ask students to describe personal experiences being mindful that refugees and some immigrants may have had emotional experiences.</li> <li>• Use meaningful context where students can express ideas in speech and print</li> <li>• Use thinking maps to develop vocabulary and ideas</li> <li>• Provide content-area texts rich in visuals</li> <li>• Encourage creative expression to represent meaning-illustrations, songs, etc.</li> <li>• Provide optimal opportunity for language production</li> <li>• Cooperative learning groups</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b> <b>Emerging</b> <b>Stage of</b> <b>Reading</b> Early Production Social Language Stage Emergent 6 months to 2 years in K-12 school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student understands and speaks conversational and some academic English with hesitancy and difficulty</li> <li>• Student understands parts of lessons and directions</li> <li>• Student is at a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English</li> <li>• Significantly below grade level</li> <li>• Student communicates with one/two word utterances</li> <li>• Very limited comprehension and vocabulary</li> <li>• Responds with one/two word answers or short phrases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Tier Instruction</li> <li>• Simplify language not the content</li> <li>• Design lessons to motivate discussion</li> <li>• Ask questions requiring simple responses such as: yes/no, who, what, where, which one, how many?</li> <li>• Expose students to experiences with understandable texts, such as patterned or predictable books</li> <li>• Introduce a dictionary</li> <li>• Use of word walls and learning walls</li> <li>• Expand student simple responses by encouraging responses in complete sentences... Model for student</li> <li>• Do not overly correct grammatical errors</li> <li>• Model appropriate language</li> <li>• Use shared and paired reading</li> <li>• Collaborative learning groups</li> <li>• Explicit core Instruction with appropriate supports (sentence frames, sentence starters, etc.)</li> <li>• 60 minute ELD block outside core</li> <li>• Tiered Instruction</li> <li>• List instructions to procedures</li> <li>• Build on student's prior knowledge</li> <li>• Incorporate more reading and writing</li> <li>• Explicitly teach writing skills</li> <li>• Ask students to describe personal experiences being mindful that refugees and some immigrants may have had emotional experiences.</li> <li>• Use meaningful context where students can express ideas in speech and print</li> <li>• Use thinking maps to develop vocabulary and ideas</li> <li>• Provide content-area texts rich in visuals</li> <li>• Encourage creative expression to represent meaning-illustrations, songs, etc.</li> <li>• Provide optimal opportunity for language production</li> <li>• Cooperative learning groups</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b> <b>Developing</b> <b>Stage</b> Intermediate Speech Emergent Simple Sentences Short Phrases 1-3 years in K-12 school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student understands and speaks conventional and academic English with less hesitancy and difficulty</li> <li>• Student possesses some English literacy skills that demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance</li> <li>• Student still makes grammatical, word order and usage errors</li> <li>• Limited vocabulary development, comprehension of texts, and spoken English</li> <li>• Uses newly acquired receptive vocabulary to experiment with English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Tier Instruction</li> <li>• Simplify language not the content</li> <li>• Design lessons to motivate discussion</li> <li>• Ask questions requiring simple responses such as: yes/no, who, what, where, which one, how many?</li> <li>• Expose students to experiences with understandable texts, such as patterned or predictable books</li> <li>• Introduce a dictionary</li> <li>• Use of word walls and learning walls</li> <li>• Expand student simple responses by encouraging responses in complete sentences... Model for student</li> <li>• Do not overly correct grammatical errors</li> <li>• Model appropriate language</li> <li>• Use shared and paired reading</li> <li>• Collaborative learning groups</li> <li>• Explicit core Instruction with appropriate supports (sentence frames, sentence starters, etc.)</li> <li>• 60 minute ELD block outside core</li> <li>• Tiered Instruction</li> <li>• List instructions to procedures</li> <li>• Build on student's prior knowledge</li> <li>• Incorporate more reading and writing</li> <li>• Explicitly teach writing skills</li> <li>• Ask students to describe personal experiences being mindful that refugees and some immigrants may have had emotional experiences.</li> <li>• Use meaningful context where students can express ideas in speech and print</li> <li>• Use thinking maps to develop vocabulary and ideas</li> <li>• Provide content-area texts rich in visuals</li> <li>• Encourage creative expression to represent meaning-illustrations, songs, etc.</li> <li>• Provide optimal opportunity for language production</li> <li>• Cooperative learning groups</li> </ul>

Level	Definition/Student Behavior	Instruction/Instructional Support
<b>Level 4</b> <b>Expanding Stage</b> Early Advanced High Academic Language Stage 3-5 years in K-12 U.S. School System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student understand and speaks conversational English without difficulty</li> <li>• Understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy</li> <li>• Student continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance</li> <li>• Student can communicate thoughts more completely</li> <li>• Participates in every day dialogue without heavy support</li> <li>• May demonstrate acceptable comprehension: higher order language, persuades, evaluates, etc.</li> <li>• Conducts research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit Core Instruction</li> <li>• May need remediation and/or intervention</li> <li>• Tiered Instruction</li> <li>• Expose to more academic language/ vocabulary both oral and written</li> <li>• Ask questions soliciting opinions, judgment, explanation</li> <li>• Thinking maps for brainstorming, listing, production of writing, etc.</li> <li>• Structure group discussions with discussion starter frames if needed</li> <li>• Guide use of reference materials</li> <li>• Expose to advanced literature studies</li> <li>• Encourage/ model realistic writing experiences</li> <li>• Publish student work: writing wall, student success wall, Shiny Star, etc.</li> <li>• Teach organizational skills</li> <li>• Teach study skills</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5</b> <b>Bridging</b> Advanced Near Fluent Academic Language Stage 5-7 years in K-12 school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student understands and speaks conversational and academic English comfortably</li> <li>• Student is near proficient in reading, writing, and content area skills needed to meet grade level expectations</li> <li>• Student requires occasional support</li> <li>• Advanced skills in cognitive/academic language</li> <li>• Academic level with age/grade peers</li> <li>• Maintains advanced conversations around academic content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit core Instruction</li> <li>• May need remediation</li> <li>• 60 minute ELD block can be structured for content enrichment w/ EO peers</li> <li>• Incorporate note-taking skills</li> <li>• Teach study skills</li> <li>• Teach test-taking skills</li> <li>• Demonstrate how to verify answers (oral and written)</li> <li>• Expand figurative language (idioms)</li> <li>• Continue on-going language development through integrated language arts and content-area activities</li> </ul>
<b>Level 6</b> <b>Reaching</b> Full English Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student was formerly limited-English proficient and is now fully English proficient, moving toward fluency</li> <li>• Student reads, writes, speaks and comprehends English within academic classroom settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit core instruction</li> <li>• Support for language and academics when needed</li> <li>• Continue best teaching practices</li> </ul>

**Exemplary ESL instruction should focus on communication. Areas of vocabulary development, sentence level communication, and discourse should be taught concurrently, not in isolation. WIDA suggests that at the end of each level, the English Learner (EL) should be able to accomplish the following:**


Level	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
Entering - Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single words</li> <li>• Phrases/chunks of language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrase level grammatical structures</li> <li>• Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content related words</li> <li>• Social and instructional words and expressions</li> </ul>
Emerging - Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrases or short sentences</li> <li>• Expression of ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulaic grammatical structures</li> <li>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General content words and expressions</li> <li>• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</li> </ul>
Developing - Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some expanded sentences with emerging complexity</li> <li>• Expanded expression of one idea or multiple related ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence patterns across content areas</li> <li>• Repetitive grammatical structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific content language</li> <li>• Words or expressions with multiple meanings</li> </ul>
Expanding - Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some complex sentences</li> <li>• Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of grammatical structures</li> <li>• Sentence patterns characteristic of content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific content area languages</li> <li>• Words and expressions with expressive meaning through the use of idioms and collocations</li> </ul>

<b>Level</b>	<b>Discourse Level</b>	<b>Sentence Level</b>	<b>Word/Phrase Level</b>
Bridging - Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple complex sentences</li> <li>• Cohesiveness and coherency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammatical structures matched to purpose</li> <li>• Broad range of sentences patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and abstract content area language including content specific collocations</li> <li>• Connotations of meaning across content areas</li> </ul>

2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards: University of Wisconsin Systems, Madison Wisconsin, 2012.[http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN\\_DOs/](http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/)



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