

WIDA Language Charts

Tying WIDA ACCESS Scores to
Classroom Assessment

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Introduction

The WIDA Language Charts: Tying WIDA ACCESS Scores to Classroom Assessment (Language Charts) are updates of the K–12 WIDA Speaking and Writing Rubrics. Six grade-level cluster matrices describe the expressive and interpretive progressions of language development. Intended for educators who work with multilingual learners, the Language Charts are a tool designed to help understand annual WIDA ACCESS test scores and connect the results to classroom assessment for units of learning.

Note: Beginning with WIDA ACCESS scores in the 2026–2027 WIDA testing year, educators can use the Language Charts to interpret and communicate about WIDA ACCESS scores. Until then, refer to the other uses for the Language Charts in the following sections.

Language Charts: Purposes

The primary purposes of the Language Charts are to encourage language specialists and program directors to:

- Share and discuss students’ expressive language (speaking and writing) and interpretive language (listening and reading) development with content teachers, coaches, counselors, and administrators.
- Document progress of students’ language development; plan curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment; and invite individual teachers or teams to use information for making grade-level decisions.
- Supplement WIDA ACCESS scores with individual student samples to reveal a more comprehensive portrait of a student’s language development.

Language Charts: Organization

Aligned with WIDA ACCESS, WIDA’s annual English language proficiency test, and the Proficiency Level Descriptors of the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, the Language Charts span kindergarten, grades 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12. They are organized by the following:

- Two modes—Expressive (Speaking and Writing) and Interpretive (Listening and Reading)
- Six levels of language development where each level encompasses previous levels; additionally, there is an expanded continuum within Level 1 starting at grade 1
- Three dimensions of language use: Discourse (reflecting Key Language Uses—Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue by organizational patterns and core elements; Cohesion; and Density), Sentence (Grammatical Complexity), and Word/Phrase (Precision)

Language Charts: Formatting

Color and display choices have been purposefully selected to optimize their usability:

- The overall color of each grade-level cluster mirrors that of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.
- The tri-colored language proficiency levels reflect the progression of language development, from language proficiency levels 1–2 (white color) to language proficiency levels 3–4 (pale color) to language proficiency levels 5–6 (medium color).
- The Language Charts define expected language use toward the end of a multilingual learner’s designated language proficiency level for their grade-level cluster. Across levels, **bolding** indicates changes as the proficiency level increases.
- There are two formats—PDF and Excel—for educators to have flexibility in use.

Language Charts: Highlights

- The four questions below each chart invite teachers to plan next steps with their students during classroom assessment. These observational and reflective questions encourage a classroom environment of learning and growth built on all students’ assets—their languages, cultures, histories, and experiences. The planning questions are as follows:
 - What can the student do with language?
 - What are the connections to the student’s social, cultural, and multilingual strengths and interests?
 - What concrete feedback will move the student forward?
 - What scaffolding and modalities will increase the student’s engagement?
- The Definitions and Examples section identifies terminology by dimension for language use, understanding that it is a sampling rather than an exhaustive list.

Language Charts: Tips for Educators

| Uses | Tips |
|---|---|
| <p>Understanding and interpreting WIDA ACCESS scores</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project where the student is headed on the language development continuum. For example, an overall WIDA ACCESS score of 3.6 means the student is moving toward the End of Level 3 with their language proficiency. • Confirm what the student can do on a consistent basis according to multiple sources of evidence. • Remember that results reflect linguistic scaffolding and multimodal support. |
| <p>Co-planning curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assign an overall level, identify the proficiency level that is indicated in two or more of the three dimensions of language. • Align the Language Charts with instructional activities and tasks within each unit. • Match descriptors in the Language Charts with the Key Language Uses (KLUs), Language Expectations, and Language Features used in units and lessons to examine student language use in context. |
| <p>Selecting anchors for each grade-level cluster or proficiency level</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create local exemplars of student work with professional learning communities or grade-level teams for each level of language proficiency. • Make provision for reaching consensus as a group; build in inter-rater reliability of student samples to have confidence in reporting student progress. • Co-construct a local language proficiency continuum for each grade-level cluster with colleagues. |
| <p>Documenting student language growth over time</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine multimodal evidence for learning with students based on local curriculum. • Apply the Language Charts to a portfolio or collection of student work or a long-term project at the end of a unit of learning. • Exchange student progress with classroom teachers and collaborate on instructional next steps (after de-identifying student data to be shared digitally). |

| Uses | Tips |
|--|---|
| Conferencing with students and family members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-construct learning targets with students. • Plan for student-led conferences. • Share student work samples with family members. |
| Offering evidence in MTSS/ referral meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information for monitoring student progress and making decisions. • Ensure authentic representation of what students CAN DO. • Graph student progress month-by-month along the language proficiency continuum. |
| Choosing formats that match your teaching style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and print the PDF charts to collaborate with colleagues. • Create personalized Language Charts, integrate with learning platforms (local learning management systems and Google Classroom), and share/discuss de-identified student data with colleagues using the Excel spreadsheet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize for individual or small groups by copying relevant proficiency levels and planning questions and inserting student data rows. • Use and adapt sample data collection templates included in the planning tabs. |

WIDA Expressive Language Chart for End of Level 1

As multilingual learners work toward the End of Level 1, they *can consistently* . . .

| End of Level 1 for This Grade-Level Cluster | Discourse Organization, Cohesion, and Density of Language by Key Language Uses | Sentence Grammatical Complexity of Language by Key Language Uses | Word/Phrase Precision of Language by Key Language Uses |
|---|--|---|--|
| Grades 9–12 | Express ideas using basic organizational patterns , connecting ideas with demonstratives, pronouns, and conjunctions | Convey meaning using simple sentences, occasionally adding dependent clauses | Communicate using technical language to convey complex concepts in specialized contexts |
| Grades 6–8 | Express ideas using sequencing, repetition, and transitions for logical flow | Convey meaning primarily through simple sentences with emerging variation in sentence structure | Communicate using multiple-meaning words to demonstrate flexible word use across contexts |
| Grades 4–5 | Express ideas with simple transitions and developing connections | Convey meaning using sentence fragments and occasional simple sentences with emerging subject-verb agreement | Communicate using word formation strategies to create new meanings |
| Grades 2–3 | Express ideas, often relying on repeated phrases | Convey meaning primarily through sentence fragments , occasionally with full sentences | Communicate using words and phrases to relate personal experiences and classroom routines |
| Grade 1 | Express ideas with increased use of formulaic phrases | Convey meaning using words, phrases, or memorized chunks of language | Communicate using high-frequency words to share ideas about known situations |
| Kindergarten | Express ideas in isolation | Convey meaning primarily through individual words , progressing toward simple phrases | Communicate using familiar words and commands to share ideas about concrete, immediate situations |

Planning Questions for Instruction and Classroom Assessment

- What can the student do with language?
- What are the connections to the student’s social, cultural, and multilingual strengths and interests?
- What concrete feedback will move the student forward?
- What scaffolding and modalities will increase the student’s engagement?

WIDA Interpretive Language Chart for End of Level 1

As multilingual learners work toward the End of Level 1, they *can consistently* . . .

| End of Level 1 for This Grade-Level Cluster | Discourse Organization, Cohesion, and Density of Language by Key Language Uses | Sentence Grammatical Complexity of Language by Key Language Uses | Word/Phrase Precision of Language by Key Language Uses |
|---|--|---|--|
| Grades 9–12 | Identify basic organizational patterns in ideas, examining how noun groups with prepositional phrases and extended modifiers enhance meaning | Comprehend meaning in simple sentences, recognizing how dependent clauses enhance logical relationships | Understand technical language to support comprehension of complex concepts in specialized contexts |
| Grades 6–8 | Identify sequences of ideas, examining how noun groups with adjectives refine meaning | Comprehend meaning in simple sentences , recognizing basic syntactic variations | Understand multiple meanings , demonstrating flexible word use across content areas |
| Grades 4–5 | Identify early attempts at arranging ideas, examining how noun groups with conjunctions help connect meaning | Comprehend meaning in sentence fragments and occasional simple sentences , beginning to recognize transitional phrases | Understand word formation strategies to create new meanings |
| Grades 2–3 | Identify emerging links among ideas, recognizing how noun groups contribute to meaning | Comprehend meaning in sentence fragments , with emerging recognition of sentence patterns | Understand words and phrases when processing personal experiences and classroom routines |
| Grade 1 | Identify loosely related ideas, recognizing meaning through frequently used nouns | Comprehend meaning in words, phrases, or memorized chunks of language , beginning to recognize syntactic repetition | Understand high-frequency words and translanguaging strategies when processing information about known situations |
| Kindergarten | Identify isolated ideas, noticing meaning conveyed through single nouns or verbs | Comprehend meaning in individual words , progressing toward simple phrases | Understand familiar words and commands when processing ideas about concrete, immediate situations |

Planning Questions for Instruction and Classroom Assessment

- What can the student do with language?
- What are the connections to the student’s social, cultural, and multilingual strengths and interests?
- What concrete feedback will move the student forward?
- What scaffolding and modalities will increase the student’s engagement?

Language Charts: Definitions and Examples

The definitions and associated examples in this section accompany the WIDA grade-level cluster Expressive and Interpretive Language Charts and are consistent with the glossary provided in the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

General Definitions

Accessibility: The practice of making information, activities, resources, and/or environments meaningful and usable for as many students as possible through Universal Design for Learning and/or other principles and practices.

Consistently: When a student reliably demonstrates the descriptor(s) over time and across various tasks, contexts, and modalities—not just in isolated instances.

Dimensions of Language: A linguistic system that describes multilingual learners' language development within a sociocultural context and in relation to the purpose for language use, as represented by the Key Language Uses (Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue).

Discourse Dimension: Imparting meaning across an entire text (oral, written, visual), focusing on **organization, cohesion, and density of language**.

Sentence Dimension: Contributing to the **grammatical complexity** of text through various sentence types.

Word/Phrase Dimension: Adding **precision** to communication using everyday, cross-disciplinary, or technical language, at times employing multiple meanings, nuances, or shades of meaning.

Expressive language: Domains associated with productive language (speaking, writing, and representing).

Interpretive language: Domains associated with receptive language (listening, reading, and viewing).

Language proficiency levels: Designations that identify multilingual learners' placement along a language development continuum, from the End of Level 1 (lowest) to Level 6 (highest). The descriptors in each level mark a boundary point, not a developmental range.

Multimodality: Use of multiple means of communication, including spoken and written language, gestures, facial expressions, images, equations, symbols, diagrams, charts, videos, graphs, and computer-mediated means.

Proficiency Language Descriptors (PLDs): A component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, that defines the dimensions of language for grade-level clusters at the end of each language proficiency level.

Scaffolding: Maintaining high expectations for all students through multimodalities, multiple languages, and accessibility supports across all levels of language proficiency.

Text: Oral, written, multimodal, or computer-mediated expression.

Translanguaging: A strategy whereby multilingual learners at all proficiency levels use their full linguistic resources to communicate.

Discourse Dimension Definitions

Key Language Uses (KLUs): A component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition. They consist of four high-leverage genre families identified across state academic content standards. Each KLU is defined by its communicative purpose—Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue—and characterized by specific language patterns and features. These KLUs are interconnected and often blend together in extended texts. For example, Inform may precede Explain or Argue to introduce and define a topic, while Explain may lead into Argue to support claims with logical reasoning.

| KLU | Purpose | Common Language Features | Organizational Pattern |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Narrate | Convey real or imaginary experiences through stories and histories. | Tells stories, entertains, or describes events | Orientation → Complication → Resolution → Coda/Ending |
| Inform | Provide factual information. | Defines, compares, contrasts, organizes, categorizes, or classifies concepts | Topic statement → Description → Summary or Synthesis |
| Explain | Account for how things work or why things happen. | Shows relationships among component parts | Concept or goal → Explanation sequence → Results → Evaluation |
| Argue | Develop claims and counterclaims and provide supporting evidence. | Evaluates issues, defends ideas, changes opinions, or advocates for action | Position about a claim → Evidence sequences → Reasoning |

Language Expectations: Language Expectations, one of the four main components of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, are used to establish overarching unit goals for content-driven language learning. Language Expectations outline the language multilingual learners need in order to meet grade-level academic content standards. The Language Expectations for the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, and las expectativas del lenguaje for the Marco de los estándares del desarrollo auténtico del lenguaje español de WIDA (Marco DALE) are available in digital format at: <http://standards.wida.us>.

Language Function: A common pattern of language use associated with a Language Expectation, describing what language users **do** with language. From a socio-cultural perspective, language functions are (a) situated within content area contexts and (b) framed by a communicative purpose (Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue) and so, the full statement—**not just its initial verb**—is referred to as a Language Function.

Language Expectation reference codes: Each Language Expectation reference code includes information that can be used **to digitally link similarly tagged instruction, assessments, and curricular resources:** [Content Area/WIDA Standard Statement] + [Grade-Level Cluster] + [Key Language Use] + [Communication Mode]. The following Language Expectation example illustrates the location of the reference code:

ELD-LA.4-5.Argue.Expressive [reference code]

Multilingual learners will construct language arts arguments that:

- Introduce and develop a topic clearly; state an opinion
- Support opinions with reasons and information
- Use a formal style
- Logically connect opinions to appropriate evidence, facts, and details; offer a concluding statement or section

Coherence: Consistency and focus in oral or written text that helps create logical connections among ideas. It is how the text is meaningfully held together and may vary by culture and experience.

- staying on topic, connecting ideas logically, using clear transitions between ideas, providing relevant examples, and maintaining a consistent tone and style

Cohesion: The flow and sequence of oral, written, and multimodal text, achieved through the use of cohesive devices.

Cohesive devices: Words, phrases, clauses, and organizational patterns that tie ideas together and unify the text. Common cohesive devices and strategies include the following:

Linking Ideas Within and Across Sentences

Repetition

- My sister and I found a **cat**. The **cat** was white with black spots. Where “cat” is the repetition.
- **I like** cats. **I like** dogs. **I like** my pets. Where “I like” is the repetition.

Demonstratives (this, that, these, those)

- Here is a **paper**. Please give **this** to Juan. Where “this” is the demonstrative for “a paper.”

Pronoun referencing

- **Elena** is fast. **She** ran to school. Where “She” is the pronoun referent for “Elena.”

Synonyms

- I found a **cat**. The **kitty** was white with black spots. Where “cat” and “kitty” are synonyms.

Classification

- **Earth** has a **mantle**, **outer core**, and **inner core**. Where the terms “mantle,” “outer core,” and “inner core” are classifying “Earth.”

Ellipsis

- Would you like an apple? Yes, I would ... Where the ellipsis implies the phrase “like an apple.”

Substitution

- **My bicycle** is too old. I need **a new one**. Where “a new one” is a substitution for “my bicycle.”

Parallelism

- She enjoys **reading**, **writing**, and **painting**. Where “reading,” “writing,” and “painting” demonstrate parallelism by all ending in “-ing.”

Linking Ideas Within and Across Paragraphs

Whole/part

- Pandas eat **bamboo** as their **main food**. They spend most of their day chewing on **bamboo shoots and leaves**. Where “bamboo shoots and leaves” are parts of the whole category “bamboo,” linking the two sentences by elaborating on a key part of the panda’s diet.

Class/subclass

- **Dogs** are **animals**. They share characteristics like breathing, eating, and moving. Where “dogs” is a subclass of the broader class “animals,” and the shared characteristics establish the relationship between the subclass and class.

Given/new information [theme/rheme structuring]: Presenting known information (given) before introducing new information in a sentence, enhancing clarity and coherence

- **The Earth orbits the Sun. This movement causes the seasons to change.** Where “The Earth orbits the Sun” is given (known) information and “This movement causes the seasons to change” introduces new information, demonstrating a theme–rheme structure.

Paragraph openers

- Introductory sentences that provide a clear topic or transition to subsequent content. Where the introductory phrase signals the start of a new paragraph and prepares the reader for what follows, supporting coherence.

Organization: structuring content according to a common pattern or logic

- Introduction/body/conclusion, beginning/middle/end (refer also to language patterns associated with each Key Language Use). Where “Introduction/body/conclusion” and “beginning/middle/end” represent common organizational patterns that structure a text and guide the reader through its logical flow.

Density: The amount of information in a clause’s noun group.

Elaborating text: Adding more information or details to something being expressed.

Simple connectors

- red **and** blue; where “and” is a simple connector that links two related items within the noun group, increasing informational density.

Classifiers

- a **flying** insect; **tree** frog; **poison** frog; where terms like “flying,” “tree,” and “poison” function as classifiers, adding descriptive detail to the noun and increasing the specificity and density of information.

Prepositional phrases

- an insect **with wings**; where “with wings” is a prepositional phrase that adds detail to the noun “insect,” increasing the density of the noun group.

Embedded clauses after the noun

- an insect **that can fly**; where “that can fly” is an embedded clause modifying “insect,” providing more detailed information and increasing the informational density of the noun group

Added details characteristic of purpose and content area

- **a significantly underreported fact about flying insects**; where the addition of qualifiers like “significantly underreported” and “about flying insects” layers multiple levels of detail onto the noun “fact,” making the phrase more content-rich.

Condensing text: Shortening or consolidating text, either by including only the most important parts and/or by compacting language.

Nominalization: The process of converting verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or entire clauses into nouns or noun to create a more formal or academic tone.

- Heated water **evaporates** faster. **Evaporation** increases as the temperature rises. Where “evaporation” is a nominalized form of the verb “evaporates,” condensing action into a single noun to create a more academic and formal tone.

Sentence Dimension Definitions

Sentence fragment: A partial sentence missing either a subject or main verb.

- Because of the sun
- Drawing a picture
- Before lunch

Where each example lacks either a subject or a complete verb, making it a sentence fragment that does not express a full thought.

Clause: A group of words acting as a unit that has both a subject and a predicate [verb]. Clauses are the building blocks of sentences.

Independent clause: This clause has its own subject and verb and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

- **They were happy.** Where “They” is the subject and “were happy” is the predicate, making this a complete sentence that can stand alone.

Dependent clause: This type of clause needs an independent clause to make sense.

- They were happy **until it rained.** Where “until it rained” is a dependent clause that cannot stand alone and relies on the independent clause “They were happy” to complete its meaning.

Simple sentences: Contain a single independent clause with a subject and a predicate; they may also include a direct or indirect object.

- I like **cars.** (a direct object) Where “I” is the subject and “like cars” is the predicate, forming a simple sentence with a direct object.
- I **can run** fast. (auxiliary verb followed by a main verb) Where “can run” is a verb phrase including an auxiliary verb and a main verb, forming a simple sentence.
- I **will walk with my friend.** (verb phrase that includes an auxiliary verb and is followed by a prepositional phrase) Where “will walk” is a verb phrase with an auxiliary verb and “with my friend” is a prepositional phrase, together forming a complete simple sentence.
- You **should** run today. (modal verb; expresses opinion or necessity) Where “should run” includes a modal verb (should), expressing advice or necessity in a complete sentence.

Compound sentences: Contain two or more independent clauses, often linked with coordinating conjunctions, commas, or semicolons.

Coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

- I ran, **and** they slept. Where two independent clauses are joined by the coordinating conjunction “and,” creating a compound sentence.
- I wanted to run, **but** it was raining. Can we go running, **or** will you be too busy? Where each sentence combines independent clauses with “but” or “or,” showing contrast or offering choices.
- I finished, **so** now let’s eat. Where “so” links two independent clauses, showing cause and effect in a compound sentence.

Complex sentences: Consist of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause, often joined by subordinating conjunctions.

Reasons (because, since, in case, as a result of)

- I run **because it is fun**. Where “because it is fun” is a dependent clause explaining the reason for the action in the independent clause “I run.”

Time (when, as long as, after, before)

- **When I run**, I get tired. Where “When I run” is a time-related dependent clause that sets up the main idea in “I get tired.”

Comparisons (like, as if)

- **Like many of their friends**, they run every day. Where “Like many of their friends” is a dependent clause used for comparison, modifying the main clause.

Conditions (if, unless, as long as)

- You will have fun **if you run**. Where “if you run” is a conditional dependent clause that describes the condition under which the main action occurs.

Word/Phrase Dimension Definitions

Precision: The criterion used to examine student progress in the Word/Phrase Dimension. As students’ language repertoires expand, their word choice becomes more precise and sophisticated as students adjust and use language to fit different situations.

Example of Grades 4–5 Word/Phrase Precision Adjusted Using the Grades 4–5 Interpretive Language Chart:

End of Level 1: Understand word formation strategies to create new meanings.

- **Un**cover your paper. Write **slowly**. Where “uncover” and “slowly” illustrate the use of simple yet purposeful word choices that show beginning control over word formation and pacing.

End of Level 3: Understand technical language to support comprehension of complex concepts in specialized contexts.

- Earthquakes happen when **tectonic plates** move, **releasing energy** that shakes the ground, with the **epicenter** marking the strongest point. Where technical terms like “tectonic plates,” “energy,” and “epicenter” reflect precision in conveying scientific meaning.

End of Level 5: Understand choices around use of abstract nouns and adverbials to add clarity about when, how, and where.

- **Understanding** instructions **thoroughly** during class. Where the abstract noun “understanding” and the adverb “thoroughly” illustrate how precise language adds clarity to how and when something happens.

Phrase: A group of words acting as a unit that does not include a subject nor a predicate (verb).

Noun phrase

- **Nice smile;** where “nice” modifies the noun “smile,” creating a phrase that functions as a unit.

Prepositional phrase

- **With her;** where “with her” is a phrase beginning with a preposition that gives information about relationship or position.

Adjective phrase

- **Pretty red hat;** where both “pretty” and “red” describe the noun “hat,” forming a descriptive phrase.

Verb phrase

- **May need;** where “may need” combines a modal and a main verb, forming a phrase that expresses possibility.

Cognates: Words in different languages that share a common ancestor and are similar in form and meaning.

- Latin: **scribit** - English: **write**; Spanish: **nación** - English: **nation**
- Italian: **musica** - English: **music**; French: **cite** - English: **city**
- German: **Haus** - English: **house**; Dutch: **nacht** - English: **night**
- Swedish: **bröd** - English: **bread**
- Sanskrit: **pitr** - English: **father**; Russian: **brat** - English: **brother**
- Greek: **kithara** - English: **guitar**; Haitian Creole: **bisiklèt** - English: **bicycle**
- Chinese: **chá** - English: **tea**; Arabic: **qahwa** - English: **coffee**
- Nahuatl (Aztec): **xocolatl** - English: **chocolate**

Dual Language Glossary Resources

- See New York University’s *Glossaries of Cognates* at: <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/language-rbern/resources/bilingual-glossaries-and-cognates#cognate>

Sample of Approved Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries for Use on State Content Assessments

- See *Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries and Glossaries Authorized for Use by English Learners on the 2024–25 MCAS Tests* at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/> (frequently updated Massachusetts Department of Education resource)

Collocations: Groups of words that commonly go together in a fixed order. Changing their order often sounds unnatural.

- plus and minus, multiply and divide, push and pull, up and down, ebb and flow, black and white, peanut butter and jelly

Evaluative language: Language for expressing different attitudes, feelings, beliefs, or judgments toward people or phenomena.

- nouns (fear, admiration), verbs (frighten, reassure, dislike), adjectives (significant, trusting, worthless)

Figurative language: Words or expressions that have a meaning different from their literal definition, employing figures of speech to create a more vivid and imaginative effect.

Simile: Comparison using “as” or “like.”

- Her smile was **as bright as the sun**. Where the phrase “as bright as the sun” uses “as” to create a simile comparing two unlike things.

Metaphor: Direct comparison without “as” or “like.”

- The classroom **was** a zoo. Where the classroom is directly compared to a zoo without “like” or “as,” creating a metaphor.

Personification: Giving human qualities to inanimate objects.

- The wind **whispered secrets** through the trees. Where the wind is given human-like qualities (whispering secrets), demonstrating personification.

Hyperbole: Exaggeration for emphasis.

- I’ve told you **a million times**. Where exaggeration is used to emphasize repetition, illustrating hyperbole.

High-frequency words: These are the most commonly occurring words used for communicating. Multilingual learners’ emergent writing may utilize high-frequency words encompassing (yet not restricted to) the following:

Phonetically decodable words: These are words with patterns that can be sounded out using basic phonetic rules.

- Emergent writing examples include short vowel (V) patterns [where C = Consonant] such as VC and CVC words such as at, can, had, not.

Words with irregular spellings: These are high-frequency words, often learned by sight, that do not always follow regular phonetic patterns. These words are recognized instantly without needing to decode them (“sound them out”).

- Emergent writing examples include common sight words such as the, a, I, to, was, for, you, is, of.

Hedging: Language to show uncertainty or caution, softening statements and considering other viewpoints.

Possibility

- **Perhaps** it will rain later. Where “perhaps” softens the certainty of the prediction, signaling possibility.

Uncertainty

- **Maybe** we should try a different approach. Where “maybe” indicates a lack of certainty and openness to alternatives.

Lower probability

- The meeting **could** be delayed. Where “could” suggests that the delay is possible but not guaranteed.

Tentative opinion

- It **seems** like a good idea. Where “seems” reflects caution in expressing agreement or belief.

Idioms/idiomatic expressions: Unique phrases not deducible by individual words, thereby signifying more than their literal meanings.

- **under the weather, raining cats and dogs, piece of cake**; where each phrase has a figurative meaning not easily inferred from the individual words.

Modal verbs: A helper [auxiliary] verb that changes the meaning of the main verb to show things like possibility, permission, or necessity.

Ability

- I **can** swim. Where “can” shows the speaker’s ability to perform the action.

Lower possibility

- I **might** go but I’m not sure. Where “might” indicates that the action is not definite.

Polite request

- I **would** like to go to the movies. Where “would” is used to make a polite statement or request.

Necessity

- I **must** go to work tomorrow. Where “must” expresses a strong necessity or obligation.

Multiple Meanings: Same word or phrase with a variety of uses, applications, or contexts (and may include cross-disciplinary language).

Homonyms

- table, bark, novel, mine, bat, right, nail, play, rose, leave; where each word has multiple meanings depending on context (e.g., “bark” of a dog vs. “bark” of a tree).

Synonyms

- begin → start, black → ebony; where each pair shows two words with similar meanings, demonstrating synonymy.

Register: A specific variety of language used for a particular purpose or communicative situation. At all proficiency levels, all of the following language registers may be present to varying degrees:

Everyday language: Language representing ideas in nontechnical or general ways (similar to Tier 1 language).

- familiar routines and interactive learning; where phrases use informal, commonly understood vocabulary appropriate for everyday contexts.

Cross-disciplinary language: Language commonly used across multiple schooling contexts (similar to Tier 2 language).

- compare, analyze, evaluate, explain; where the terms are used across subject areas and support academic tasks.

Technical language: Language central to building conceptual understandings in specialized contexts (similar to Tier 3 language).

- protagonist (language arts), geothermal (science), polynomials (math), longitude (social studies); where subject-specific terms convey specialized concepts within disciplines.

Shades of meaning: Small, subtle differences between words, often involving slight variations in intensity or implication.

- Happy: joyful, ecstatic, content, pleased, cheerful
- Sad: dejected, gloomy, heartbroken, blue, downcast
- Hot: scorching, warm, tepid, heated, fiery
- Big: enormous, large, substantial, considerable, immense

Where each group includes words with related meanings but different intensities, helping learners choose more precise vocabulary.

Word formation strategies: Use of bases and affixes to build new meanings.

Prefixes

- re- (replay = play again), un- (unlock = not locked); where prefixes change the meaning of the base word by adding “again” or negation.

Suffixes

- -ly (slowly = in a slow way), -y (sunny = full of sun); where suffixes modify the base word to indicate manner or quality.

Root words

- read → reader (someone who reads), look → looking (to see something); where suffixes are added to a root to change its function in a sentence (e.g., from verb to noun or to present participle).

Word families

- play → player, playing, playful, replay; where related words share a common root and demonstrate how affixes build meaning across grammatical forms.

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