

## 5.4 The CAN DO Descriptors for WIDA's Levels of English Language Proficiency

For teachers unfamiliar with the ELP standards, the CAN DO Descriptors provide a starting point for working with ELLs and a collaborative tool for planning. As teachers become comfortable with the Descriptors, the standards' matrices can be introduced. The CAN DO Descriptors are also general enough to be appropriate to share with students' family members to help them understand the continuum of English language development.

The CAN DO Descriptors expand the Performance Definitions for the ELP standards by giving suggested indicators (not a definitive set) in each language domain: listening, speaking, reading and writing. More targeted than the Performance Definitions, the Descriptors have greater instructional implications; that is, the information may be used to plan differentiated lessons or unit plans. The Descriptors may also apply to ACCESS for ELLs® scores and may assist teachers and administrators in interpreting the meaning of the score reports. In addition, the Descriptors may help explain the Speaking and Writing Rubrics associated with the ELP test. A distinguishing feature of these Descriptors, although not explicitly mentioned, is the presence of sensory, graphic or interactive support, through ELP level 4, to facilitate ELLs' access to content in order to succeed in school.

The CAN DO Descriptors offer teachers and administrators working with ELLs a range of expectations for student performance within a designated ELP level of the WIDA ELP Standards. The Descriptors are not instructional or assessment strategies, per se. They are exemplars of what ELLs 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 MPIs, the Descriptors do not scaffold from one ELP level to the next. Rather, each ELP level is to be viewed independently.

Currently, the CAN DO Descriptors are written for the entire preK-12 spectrum. Given that they are generalized across grade spans, it is important to acknowledge the variability of students' cognitive development due to age, grade level spans, diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable) and their diversity of educational experiences. Due to maturation, expectations of young ELLs differ substantially from those of older students. These differences must be taken into account when using the Descriptors.

Presented as an oral language and literacy matrix, similar to the format of the ELP standards, the Descriptors should facilitate educators' examination of the language domains for the five levels of English language proficiency. ELP level 6, Reaching, is reserved for those students whose oral and written English is comparable to their English-proficient peers. Figure 5M presents the CAN DO Descriptors of English oral language and literacy development across the levels of English language proficiency.

In Figure 5N, the CAN DO Descriptors for English language proficiency have been translated into Spanish. This version may be shared with parents literate in Spanish, perhaps at parent-teacher conferences, or to set goals for an individual student's English language development.

**Figure 5M: CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency, PreK-12**

For the given level of English language proficiency, **with support**, English language learners can:

Level 6 Reaching					
	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
<b>LISTENING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point to stated pictures, words, phrases</li> <li>Follow one-step oral directions</li> <li>Match oral statements to objects, figures or illustrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions</li> <li>Follow two-step oral directions</li> <li>Match information from oral descriptions to objects, illustrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions</li> <li>Follow multi-step oral directions</li> <li>Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures, objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast functions, relationships from oral information</li> <li>Analyze and apply oral information</li> <li>Identify cause and effect from oral discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw conclusions from oral information</li> <li>Construct models based on oral discourse</li> <li>Make connections from oral discourse</li> </ul>
<b>SPEAKING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name objects, people, pictures</li> <li>Answer WH- (who, what, when, where, which) questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask WH- questions</li> <li>Describe pictures, events, objects, people</li> <li>Restate facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate hypotheses, make predictions</li> <li>Describe processes, procedures</li> <li>Retell stories or events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss stories, issues, concepts</li> <li>Give speeches, oral reports</li> <li>Offer creative solutions to issues, problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in debates</li> <li>Explain phenomena, give examples and justify responses</li> <li>Express and defend points of view</li> </ul>
<b>READING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match icons and symbols to words, phrases or environmental print</li> <li>Identify concepts about print and text features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate and classify information</li> <li>Identify facts and explicit messages</li> <li>Select language patterns associated with facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequence pictures, events, processes</li> <li>Identify main ideas</li> <li>Use context clues to determine meaning of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret information or data</li> <li>Find details that support main ideas</li> <li>Identify word families, figures of speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct research to glean information from multiple sources</li> <li>Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text</li> </ul>
<b>WRITING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Label objects, pictures, diagrams</li> <li>Draw in response to a prompt</li> <li>Produce icons, symbols, words, phrases to convey messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make lists</li> <li>Produce drawings, phrases, short sentences, notes</li> <li>Give information requested from oral or written directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce bare-bones expository or narrative texts</li> <li>Compare/contrast information</li> <li>Describe events, people, processes, procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize information from graphics or notes</li> <li>Edit and revise writing</li> <li>Create original ideas or detailed responses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply information to new contexts</li> <li>React to multiple genres and discourses</li> <li>Author multiple forms/genres of writing</li> </ul>

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