

# Guidelines for Proficiency Based Grading with English Learners

## 1. Focus on what students can do.

What are their assets? What is within their zones of proximal development? See:

- WIDA Can Do Philosophy <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do>
- WIDA Can Do Descriptors <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors>

## 2. Adapt the linguistic expectations to the students' individual WIDA English proficiency levels.

The Utah Core Standards include many language verbs. For each language verb, we must define what it means for students at each WIDA English proficiency level. It will not be the same for every student. For example, if the Utah Core Standard says **explain**, what is meant? The WIDA Can Do Descriptors suggest that explain could mean:

- WIDA level 1 students produce short responses to questions using word/phrase banks.
- WIDA level 2 students use transitions and connectors to show causal relationships or procedures.
- WIDA level 3 students choose words and phrases to provide precise details, descriptions, comparisons, and ordered procedures.
- WIDA level 4 students present information objectively by using a neutral tone appropriate to the content area. *(Source: Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition for Grades 9-12)*

The language tasks and expectations should be adapted based on both the students' WIDA levels and on the specific content and context.

## 3. Hold the content knowledge expectation constant for all students.

All students need access to the same core curriculum.

## 4. Adapt the supports or scaffolding for the students' specific needs based on their WIDA proficiency levels.

These supports can be sensory, graphic, or interactive. Students at different WIDA proficiency levels will need varying types and amounts of support. WIDA level 1 students will need much more support and scaffolding than WIDA level 4 students.

Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real-life objects (realia)</li> <li>• Manipulatives</li> <li>• Pictures &amp; photographs</li> <li>• Illustrations, diagrams, &amp; drawings</li> <li>• Magazines &amp; newspapers</li> <li>• Physical activities</li> <li>• Videos &amp; films</li> <li>• Broadcasts</li> <li>• Models &amp; figures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charts</li> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Tables</li> <li>• Graphs</li> <li>• Timelines</li> <li>• Number lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In pairs or partners</li> <li>• In triads or small groups</li> <li>• In a whole group</li> <li>• Using cooperative group structures</li> <li>• With the internet (websites) or software programs</li> <li>• In the home language</li> <li>• With mentors.</li> </ul>

For examples of differentiated performance indicators for English learners, see:

<https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/2012-ELD-Standards.pdf>