

Montana Small Schools Alliance

Presents

2025

English Language Development and Proficiencies Standards

Compiled by

Montana Rural Teacher
Montana Small Schools Alliance

Introduction to this Guide

The Montana Small School Alliance English Language Development and Proficiencies Standards are designed to assist in curriculum planning and implementation in support of English Language learners in the classroom, to build a bridge for educators and students.

The information in this guide is aligned with or referenced from the English Language Learners departments of Montana Office of Public Instruction, WIDA World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, and Colorin Colorado, but are organized and adapted to meet the specific needs of Montana's small or rural schools.

This guide aims to be Culturally Responsive, and take into consideration many factors of the experience of English Learners, in an effort to prepare educators to fully support and guide English learners to be successful and thrive in the classroom.

Resources For Educators

Montana OPI English Learners Resources

https://opi.mt.gov/Families-Students/Family-Student-Support/English-Learners

The Colorin Colorado–Montana ELL Resources

https://www.colorincolorado.org/montana-ell-resources

WIDA Resources

https://wida.wisc.edu/

Montana OPI Indian Education for All Resources

https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All

Montana OPI Learning Hub Course: Identifying and Supporting English Language Learners

https://learninghub.mrooms.net/course/index.php?categoryid=142

Identifying English Learners

English Learners, also called EL's in this document, may be students who:

- Do not yet speak or write in the English Language
- Are bilingual/multilingual, or whose homes are bilingual/multilingual

It is beneficial to identify English Learners so educators can provide each student with an equitable education, where every child regardless of language is able to receive a quality education. Once a student is identified as an EL, educators can provide supports to that student through tailored instruction and differentiation, culturally responsive teaching and considerations, and equitable assessment practices which will result in informed policy and program development, enhanced parent and community engagement, and long-term academic success.

For the purpose of assessing and identifying if a student will be classified as an English Learner, many Montana schools use the WIDA resources. A home language survey is the first step for identifying if students may be impacted by a language other than English, and should be completed for any student entering school. If a home language survey shows a need for further consideration, a screener should be administered. The WIDA Kindergarten Screener is used specifically for children entering Preschool or Kindergarten programs, while the WIDA Screener is administered to students entering the school system in grades 1-12, to determine their proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing the English language. EL students should be reassessed each year, to determine proficiency and students may no longer be listed as an EL when they test as proficient.

English Learners may have difficulties in one or more areas of speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and these difficulties may pose a challenge in the individual's ability to:

- meet State academic standards
- Successfully learn and progress in classrooms where the dominant language of lessons and materials is English
- Interact socially because of a language barrier

Heritage Languages are languages children learn at home instead of or in addition to a Primary, First, or Home language. These may also be referred to as a Language of Impact. There are three types of Heritage Languages:

- Immigrant–students who have or whose parents have moved from another Country, such as immigrants, migrant workers, children adopted from another country, international Exchange students, or refugees.
- Indigenous
 – American Indian children who are impacted by a heritage language
 of their family or community, such as Assiniboine, Apsalooke, or Piikani.
- Colonial-students who speak a language spoken by a group that colonized
 America in past generations, such as Hutterite children who learn a dialect of German as their first or additional language

Accommodations

Once a child is identified as an English Learner, educators may provide a variety of accommodations to support the student's education. These accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Alternative communications to parents, in preferred language or with supports to ensure effective communication, including translated IEP documents
- Extended work or test times
- In-person reader: someone who reads text, graphics, answer choices etc. to student
- Interpreters for first language, including ASL
- Bilingual and multicultural texts
- Bilingual dictionaries
- Audio recording of texts or assessments
- Scribe to record the student's answer verbatim
- Recording device and transcription so a student may record themselves verbally answering a question rather than writing
- Visual aides such as schedules or routine instructions
- Adapted or scaffolded assignments proportionate to proficiency level
- Augmentative/Alternate Communication Device (AAC)

Early English Language Development-Pre-school

In the years before entering elementary school, usually ages 2.5-5.5, English Language Development should focus on Social Emotional Skills and 5 academic areas corresponding to and built with considerations to the developmental growth of that age group. The Developmental Domains are:

- Approaches to learning
- Language and communication development
- Cognition and general knowledge
- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development

The Academic Domains are:

- Early Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical development

| Early English Language Development Standards | | |
|--|---|--|
| Upon entering Kindergarten, children should be gaining proficiency in: | Examples of Emerging Proficiency | |
| Social Emotional Expression | Sharing wants, needs, feelings, making choices Appropriate play relationships with peers, communicating turn-taking, roles in pretend play, resolving minor conflicts with peers, initiating play with familiar and unfamiliar peers Sense of Self and Individuality, sharing information about themself Following simple oral instructions Sharing opinions, explaining why they do or do not like something | |
| Recounting Information | Telling stories about their own life and past experiences Retelling or rephrasing familiar stories, nursery rhymes, books, simple songs, including with an image for reference i.e: retelling a familiar story using the pictures from the book Acting out simple stories or songs Communicating in short sentences, with some correct grammar structure. Sequencing familiar story using picture cards Making up a story using simple language Naming items in the environment or using pictures | |
| Seeking New Information | Asking questions of peers and adults Predicting and guessing about outcomes of activities, including simple science experiments Explaining ideas and observations Engaging in problem solving discussions in play or structured activities Expecting consequences or results of actions i.e: if i jump in a puddle, my feet will be wet Categorize items based on qualities such as shape, size, use, type. | |

English Language Development Standards K-12

The English Language Development standards for Kindergarten through 12th grade are written as a supplement to the Content standards for each grade level and subject, so content specific standards for Social and Instructional Purposes, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are not included in this document. The Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing domains for English Development and Proficiency cover the skills needed for English Learners to approach grade level understanding goals and can be applied to all instructional areas at the appropriate grade level once a child has reached proficiency in a certain domain. In each grade level standard cluster, the standards progress in difficulty as you move down the list, so the list may be used as a checklist for marking growth through each of the four domains.

English Language Development Domain-Listening

Students will develop and apply active listening skills to comprehend, interpret, and respond to spoken English in both interpersonal and academic settings across increasing levels of linguistic complexity.

- Distinguish first, next, last chronological order in a story—using pictures or words
- Act out a short story as it is being read or shortly after it has been read
- Make patterns based on oral descriptions

- shape, color, size
- Recall details from a story read aloud—where did the character go after he went to the park?
- Make inferences about a story read aloud-how did the character feel when he dropped his ice cream?
- Use ideas from an oral discussion to solve a problem—In the story, John had to use a boat to cross the river. What could you use to cross a river?

of a topic

- Distinguish between literal and figurative language in a discussion
- Form opinions and communicate them to peers or teachers—I like this book because the character is funny and smart.

English Language Development Domain-Listening

Students will develop and apply active listening skills to comprehend, interpret, and respond to spoken English in both interpersonal and academic settings across increasing levels of linguistic complexity.

| English Language Development Domain–Listening | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6-8 | 9-12 | |
| Match social language to visual and graphic displays Use gestures to identify people, places, objects using gestures like pointing, or orally Identify information on charts and tables based on oral statements Match main ideas and supporting details of familiar texts to illustrations or visuals Use time frame language or forms of words to express past, present, and future Identify main idea or concept and supporting details from oral discussions Make inferences from grade-level texts that are read aloud Distinguish between genres of texts read aloud | By using gestures or words, Communicate understanding of characteristics and properties of objects, organisms, or people Group visuals by traits—these are all rectangles, these animals all have webbed feet Match oral descriptions to real life experiences Sort oral language into groups based on verb tense or chronological order Sequence or organize visuals according to oral instructions Evaluate information in social and academic conversations Determine main idea of oral discussions, summarize key points Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases Categorize different genres of read-aloud texts Compare traits based on visual descriptor, using specific and content specific or technical language Interpret cause and effect from oral discussion Make inferences from oral discussions, including satire, humor, sarcasm | |

| Distinguish and interpret differences in speech, tone, and delivery in discussions with peers |
|---|
| Evaluate the purpose of speech and respond accordingly |

English Language Development Domain-Speaking

Students will develop and use spoken English to express ideas, interact with others, and present information across a range of social and academic contexts, demonstrating increasing control of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discussion patterns.

| English Language Development Domain–Speaking | | |
|--|---|---|
| Kindergarten | 1-2 | 3-5 |
| Identify people or objects in illustrated stories | Repeat simple words and language | Express needs and wants |
| Repeats words and phrases | Respond to academic questions with short phrases | Name familiar objects, people, diagrams Recite words and |
| Answer yes and no questions about | Identify and name everyday items | phrases • Answer yes and no |
| self-information-name, age, family | Participate in whole group chants, rhymes, | questions, and make choices |
| Name common items found in the classroom or at home | and songsUse english and first language | Ask simple questions—where is Jane? |
| Restate simple facts from stories—who is in the story, what did | interchangeably to fill gaps in language | Restate facts related to a lesson |
| goldilocks eat, Describe objects, organisms, or people using simple phrases—the book is | Repeat facts and statements Describe jobs that people do, based on pictures—community | Describe pictures, objects, people using short phrases and some content specific language |
| big, the dog is brown Answer simple questions with simple phrases—where is your mom? At work. | helpers Compare objects using descriptors like big, bigger, biggest etc | Communicate social information with peers–name, age, likes, friends |
| Complete phrases or provide missing words in familiar songs, rhymes, stories Retell short stories | Ask questions of peers in social groups Express feelings and reasons for them–I feel mad because | Tell and retell short stories or events Make predictions about stories, experiences, problems, and |

- using picture clues
- Make predictions about simple events—what will happen if i step in a puddle?
- Answer who, what, where, when questions
- Sing repetitive songs or rhymes independently
- Repeat phrases in a song or story that uses patterns or repeated story elements
- Compare traits of real items-size, shape, color, use
- Describe spatial relations like on, under, over, next to
- Tell stories that they make using increasing levels of details
- Explain situations, including ones with feelings
- Express opinions and feelings

- Sort and explain reason for categories—these things float, etc
- Make predictions and hypotheses
- Take an active role in class discussions, social and academic based
- Retell stories with increasing levels of details
- Sequence stories using first, next, then, last language
- Use academic specific vocabulary and key words in different subjects
- Express and support ideas, using facts and examples
- Give oral presentations
- Initiate conversations with peers and teachers

scenarios

- Create solutions to problems, academically and socially
- Give content based oral presentations
- Compare and contrast functions and relationships in subject-specific scenarios
- Sequence steps in problem solving
- Explain detailed results of experiments and experiences

English Language Development Domain-Speaking

Students will develop and use spoken English to express ideas, interact with others, and present information across a range of social and academic contexts, demonstrating increasing control of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discussion patterns.

| English Language Development Domain–Speaking | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6-8 | 9-12 | |
| Answer yes and no, and simple choice questions | Answer yes or no | |
| Use general and high-frequency grade level vocabulary to explain content-specific ideas and facts | questions, within context of lessons or personal experiences | |
| Report familiar and memorized words and phrases | Provide information about self | |
| Answer who, what, when, where questions | Ask who, what, where, | |
| Rephrase or retell main ideas of classroom and small-group discussions | when questions to clarify information | |
| Describe situations, routines, and everyday events | Give general features of learned information and | |
| Express needs and wants, opinions | themes | |
| Communicate in social situations | Suggest ways to solve problems and resolve | |
| Make requests | issues | |
| Express time in multiple tenses—past, present, future | Compare traits of items using content-specific language | |
| Give oral presentations | Sequence process, | |
| Use but, then, because sentences to show connections and relations in ideas | cycles, metamorphosis, procedures, and events | |
| State main ideas and supporting details | Conduct oral interviews | |
| Ask questions for clarification | to gain knowledge on a topic | |
| Paraphrase ideas presented orally, by teachers and peers | Estimate and make predictions | |
| Defend opinions and points of view | Form an opinion about a | |
| Explain outcomes and results, using details and evidence | content specific topic and use evidence to support that stance | |
| | Explain content-related | |

- Use and explain similes and metaphors
- Discuss and explain ideas that are abstract vs tangible

concepts

- Analyze pros and cons of choices
- Use social language like slang, idioms, cliches etc
- Give presentations orally and with supporting media
- Debate ideas using content-language

English Language Development Domain-Reading

Students will read and comprehend literary and informational texts across a range of complexity levels, using appropriate strategies to interpret meaning, analyze structure and purpose, and build vocabulary knowledge as they develop proficiency in English.

| English Language Development Domain–Reading | | |
|---|--|--|
| Kindergarten | 1-2 | 3-5 |
| | | <u> </u> |
| Distinguish between letters, words, and sentences Use reading foundational skills of print (Common Core CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R F.K.1) Understand organization and basic features of print Follow words from left to | Identify matching pictures, icons, letters to spoken words Sort words into word families—rhyming words, matching beginning sounds, same letter patterns, etc Explain text-to-self connections Categorize pictures by making a titled group, explaining how or why they relate Match illustrations to phrases that explain—matching | Identify facts from texts, with help from illustrations Find root words and identify the change in related words, such as "jumping= root word jump and -ing" Identify elements of story, grammar, structure—character, setting, plot Follow written directions, with help from visual aids—draw |

- right, top to bottom, page by page
- Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters
- Recognize that single words are separated by spaces
- Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters
- Recognize features of print like title, author, etc
- Use pictures to identify words (flashcard style practice)
- Classify visuals according to labels
- Sort labeled pictures by common attribute such as beginning sound, rhyme, etc-later, identify by more than one attribute
- Begin to identify some high-frequency words in picture books
- Order labeled pictures to retell stories that

- "Tom can catch a fish" to a picture of a boy fishing.
- Using words from a word bank, create a sentence
- Follow sentence-level instructions
- Identity elements of fictional stories like title, author, illustrator
- Distinguish between general and specific language, recognizing that words can be vague or distinct—animal is vague, horse is specific.
- Use features of non-fiction to aid comprehension, such as graphs, charts, vocabulary,
- Use learning strategies to determined meaning-such as context clues, related sentences, etc
- Explain the main idea of a short text
- Explore figurative language and its meaning, similes, metaphors, idioms etc

- an → arrow to matching words
- Explain information given in graphs and charts
- Identify main ideas and supporting details
- Sequence events from stories and processes
- Use context clues to find meaning of unknown words
- Classify features of different genres—what do most fairy tales start with? What elements are in nonfiction books?
- Identify graphic organizers that match specific, pre-taught texts
- Make graphic organizers, may scaffold by providing a word bank for a venn diagram, for example.
- Identify facts and opinions, in various genres and media
- Summarize information from multiple sources to support one claim
- Answer higher-level, analytical questions about a grade-level text
- Use and explain

are read aloud

- Match pictures to phrases or short sentences—a picture of a boy on a bike goes with "Tim rode his bike."
- Identify school-related vocabulary items—where is your pencil? Which picture is a library?
- String words together to make sentences
- NOTE: rebus stories where some higher level words are replaced with pictures may benefit EL's at this stage

figures of speech

 Draw conclusions from a text that are not explicitly stated in the text, from grade-level or near-grade-level text

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English Language Development Domain-Reading

Students will read and comprehend literary and informational texts across a range of complexity levels, using appropriate strategies to interpret meaning, analyze structure and purpose, and build vocabulary knowledge as they develop proficiency in English.

| English Language Development Domain–Reading | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6-8 | 9-12 | |
| Match letters and letter teams with the sounds they make | Match visual representations to words and phrases | |
| Match content-specific objects or symbols to their corresponding words | Read common signs, symbols, environmental text, schedules, and school-related words and phrases | |
| Recognize concepts of print | · | |
| Identify common words | Ask and answer who, what, where, when, questions about illustrated texts | |
| Give simple answers, one word to short phrase, to who, what, where, when questions | Use references to aid understanding, such as picture, bilingual, and English only dictionaries and glossaries, as | |
| Use illustrated dictionaries or glossaries to support learning goals | well as technology aidesMatch data or information with its | |
| Sequence events, from fictional stories or nonfiction, real events such as a history unit | source or genre, including non-literature sources like scientific graphs, maps, timelines, and the periodic table | |
| Locate main idea from a short paragraph, building to the ability to sort main idea and supporting details | Evaluate and explain information from a graph or visual | |
| from a paragraph | Follow multi-step written instructions, with visual aides | |
| Use text features to gain understanding of a topic–titles, graphs, glossaries in a textbook | Match descriptive sentences to visual illustrations | |
| Follow text in a book with a read-aloud, either audiobook, teacher read, or text-to-speech | Compare subject specific features in visuals and graphics | |
| Use content-specific vocabulary to support learning goals | Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences | |
| Sort vocabulary words Use word banks to finish | Apply multiple meanings or words and phrases to social and academic contexts | |
| OSC WOLU DALING TO IIIIISII | Identify main idea and supporting | |

sentences

- Create or complete graphic organizers using a word bank
- Identify multiple meanings of words
- Use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries to support learning
- Use First language to support second language, Use cognates to define meanings in second language
- Use context clues effectively
- Make predictions using illustrated texts
- Identify and use common prefixes, suffixes, affixes and root words.--un-, re-, -ing, -ed
 - Note: practice with Greek and Latin roots may help some students, as the word roots are similar in many languages
- Differentiate between fact and opinion
- Answer increasingly in depth questions about explicit information in texts
- Use English dictionaries and glossaries
- Order paragraphs using main idea, supporting ideas, and grammatical clues
- Identify and create summaries of short texts or parts of texts
- Identify and use figurative language
- Interpret adapted or modified versions of classic literature
- Identify language specific to certain genres or intent of texts

- details in increasingly more difficult texts
- Answer questions relating to explicitly given information in texts
- Make inferences about information not explicitly given in texts
- Differentiate between fact and opinion in different genres and intents of texts
- Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs
- Compare and contrast authors point of view, characters, information, or events in a text
- Match cause to effect, from fiction and nonfiction sources
- Evaluate usefulness of data presented in a graph
- Interpret grade-level literature
- Create a claim about a text and support with details, facts, and opinions
- Draw conclusions from related texts of different genres or author's intent
- Identify bias and credibility of a source

- Explain and use multiple meanings of words and phrases, including homophones, idioms, etc
- Make inferences and determine meaning of grade-level texts
- Evaluate a text and use material to support a claim
- Sort grade-level text by genre or author's purpose

English Language Development Domain-Writing

Students will develop the ability to write clearly and coherently in English for different purposes, audiences, and formats. They will produce written texts that demonstrate increasing command of vocabulary, grammar, organization, and writing conventions.

| English Language Development Domain–Writing | | |
|---|--|--|
| Kindergarten | 1-2 | 3-4 |
| Draw pictures and scribble. Underline or circle items and symbols Trace figures and letters Use manipulatives to make letters, symbols, shapes and figures—straws, playdoh, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners Make figures and letters in sensory material like shaving cream or paint Connect oral language to print (spoken words can be written on a page) Reproduce letters using models Copy icons of familiar environmental print—make an M like the McDonalds Golden arches Draw objects from models and label with | Copy written language Use first language to help form words in English Communicate through drawings Label familiar objects or pictures Provide information using graphic organizers and fill in the blank Generate lists of words and phrases from banks or walls Complete modeled sentence starters Describe people, places, or objects from illustrated examples Engage in prewriting strategies such as graphic organizers Form simple sentences using word banks Participate in interactive journal writing, with peers Give content-based information using visuals or graphics Write own sentences Create messages for social interactions, | Label objects, pictures or diagrams from word banks Draw pictures and symbols to communicate Copy phrases and sentences Answer oral questions with short answers, 1-2 words Make lists from labels Make lists with peers Use word walls and word banks to: Fill in the blank Complete graphic organizers Complete charts and tables Write sentences and lists Make comparisons using real-life or |

numbers

- Communicate using letters, symbols, and numbers in contextsuch as putting an M by a picture of mom
- Make illustrated cards and notes with recognizable letters and letter groups
- Make connections between speech and writing—such as writing scribbles on a page and "reading" the note to their teacher
- Reproduce familiar words from labels, signs, or illustrations
- Produce symbols and strings of letters associated with pictures
- Draw pictures and use words to tell a story
- Label people and objects from models—if a teacher writes Mom, Dad, Me on the board, the child can label a self-drawn picture of their family
- Produce familiar words and phrases from environmental text and illustrated texts
- Create content-based representations through pictures and words

- like cards or invitations
- Compose journal entries about own experiences
- Use classroom resources like picture dictionaries and word walls to compose sentences
- Create a related series of sentences in response to prompts
- Produce content-related sentences
- Compose stories
- Explain processes and events and procedures using connected sentences

pictures

- Write simple narrative texts
- Write simple expository text
- Write simple persuasive text
- Combine phrases into simple sentences
- Compare and contrast using information from content lessons
- Describe events, processes, plans
- Take notes using graphic organizers
- Summarize information from lessons
- Explain problem solving strategies and summarize attempted solutions
- Make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections
- Write grade-level stories and reports

| Make story books with multiple pages with drawings and some letter labels | |
|--|--|
| Produce words/phrases independently | |
| Retell everyday experiences using short sentences and phrases, increasing the level of details | |

English Language Development Domain-Writing

Students will develop the ability to write clearly and coherently in English for different purposes, audiences, and formats. They will produce written texts that demonstrate increasing command of vocabulary, grammar, organization, and writing conventions.

| English Language Development Domain–Writing | | |
|--|--|--|
| 6-8 | 9-12 | |
| Draw pictures related to subject lessons | Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word banks | |
| Write high-frequency words | Provide personal information on forms read orally | |
| Label pictures and graphics | Produce short answer responses to | |
| Write lists from word banks and graphic organizers with explicitly | oral questions with visual support | |
| taught information | Supply missing words in short sentences | |
| Complete sentences following a modeled pattern | Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions | |
| Write sentences using sentence starters and own created endings | Take notes using graphic organizers | |
| Connect simple sentences into longer sentences | Ask and write yes/no, choice and who, what, where, when, why questions from models | |
| Complete graphic organizers | | |
| Respond to yes/no questions, choice questions, and who, what, where, | Write correspondence for social purposes—texts, e-mails, notes | |
| when questions | Write reports using graphic organizers or modeled form | |
| Produce short paragraphs with main ideas and supporting details | Write short narrative essaysWrite short expository essays | |
| Use conjunctions to combine short sentences into compound sentences | Write short persuasive essays Create outlines for ideas and essays using models or graphic organizers | |
| Explain steps in problem solving plans and solutions | Using feedback, comments, or a rubric, reflect on own work and past performances | |
| Compare and contrast various types of items–information, events, characters, stories | Revise own work based on feedback Summarize content from notes, lectures, and text Make a claim, provide evidence, and | |
| Explain opinions and preferences, use evidence and details to support the | defend that claim Produce research reports from | |

claim

- Write essays of multiple paragraphs, may need to use a graphic organizer as the first draft. Use introduction, body, conclusion format
- Defend ideas with evidence
- Write reports on content covered in class
- Use transition words and conjunctions effectively
- Paraphrase or summarize text of different genres
- Take notes from different sources–from books, from research, from video sources etc
- Write narrative essays
- Write expository essays, to explain graphs, charts, information
- Write research reports
- Use analogies
- Use figurative language
- Evaluate and interpret essays and articles

- multiple sources and multiple types of media
- Evaluate and peer-edit pieces, make recommendations to peers on writings, using a rubric
- Explain ideas from different subjects, and use supporting details