

Virginia Department of Education

English Learner (EL) Teacher Toolkit

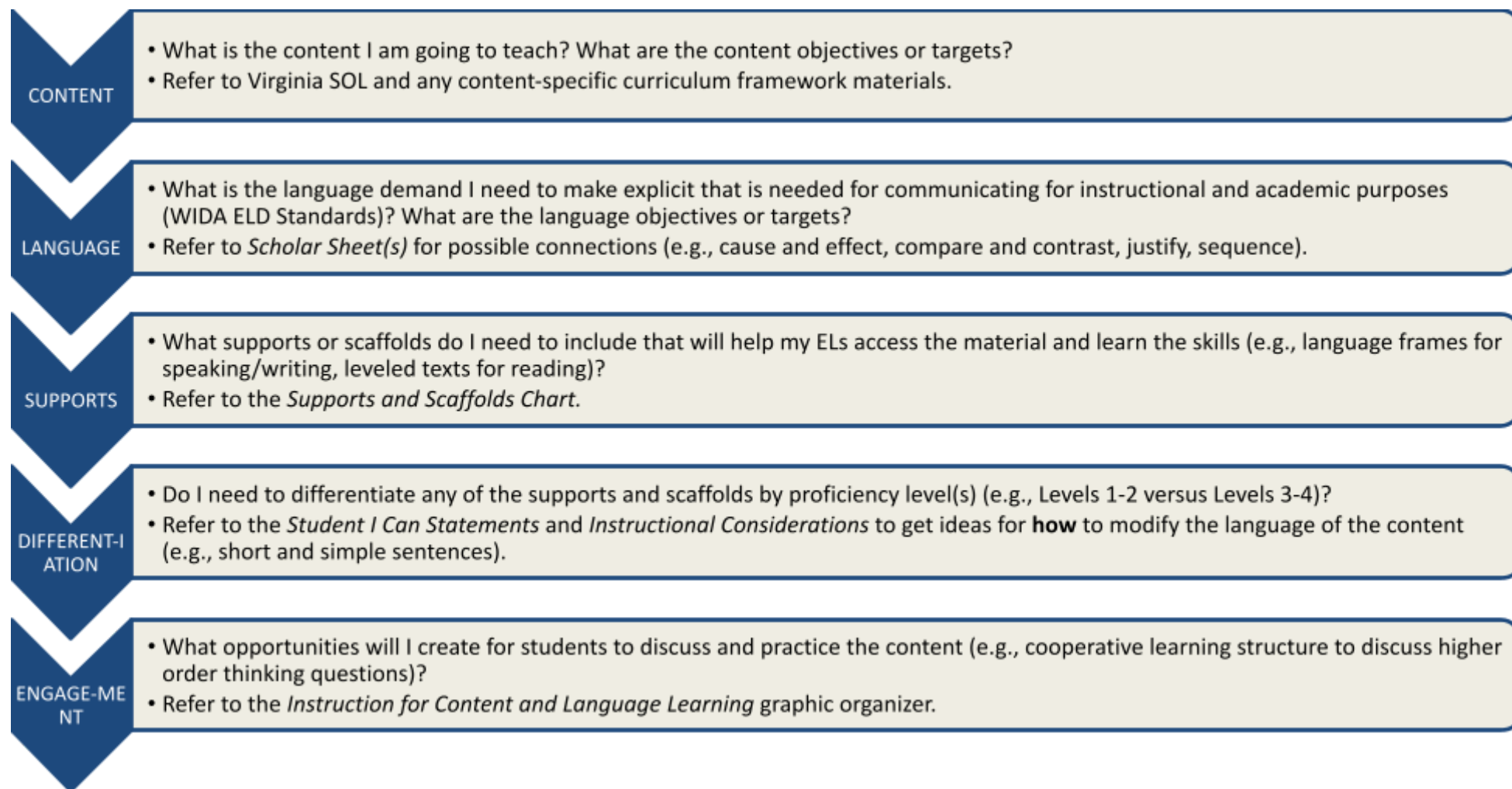
For all Educators of ELs



Please Visit the [VDOE's English Learner Education Webpage](#) for Additional Resources.

How to Make Grade-Level Content More Accessible to a Variety of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Levels

This document is intended to provide guidance to teachers as they plan content- and standards-based instruction for ELs. Any processes included are only examples, and teachers are encouraged to integrate new ideas within their current practice.










Main Sources: *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (National Academies Press, 2017).

Each resource mentioned in the chart above includes specific sources referenced.

Primary Student Scholar Sheet: Connecting Ideas and Using Academic Language

This chart is intended to help create language targets and supports based on Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL). These are only starting points. Teachers and students are encouraged to add to these with their own, authentic language that supports academic speaking and writing.







Example Function	Example Structures and Language Frames
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and Contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ and _____ are the same/different. Both _____ are/have/can _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> alike, also, and, as well as, but, like, similar</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence Order Arrange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, _____. / Next, _____. / Then, _____. / After that, _____. / Finally, _____. _____ came before _____. / _____ happened after _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> afterward, as soon as, at the same time, awhile, before, begin, during, last, later</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify Sort Categorize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I organized these objects by _____. _____ belongs to category _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> according to, arrange, attribute(s), group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Identify] Cause and Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If _____, then _____. _____ is a cause/effect/result of _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> based on, because, caused by, effect/affect, since, so, therefore, this is why, _____ will happen if _____</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict Make Inferences Draw Conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I infer _____. I predict that _____ will happen. / My prediction is _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> guess, think</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justify Persuade Explain Reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In my opinion _____. I chose this because _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u> reason(s) why</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Critique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I agree/disagree because _____. _____ is better than _____ because _____. <p><u>Additional expressions:</u></p>

	agree/disagree, bad, best, better
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Main Sources: *WIDA workshop materials* (Costa, 2018); [Academic Language Function Toolkit](#) (Sweetwater Union High School District from Kinsella, 2010)

Upper Elementary and Secondary Student Scholar Sheet: Connecting Ideas and Using Academic Language

This chart is intended to help create language targets and supports based on Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL). These are only starting points. Teachers and students are encouraged to add to these with their own, authentic language that supports academic speaking and writing.

Example Function	Example Expressions	Example Structures and Language Frames
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and Contrast 	alike, also, although, alternatively, although, and, as well as, but, connects to, contrary to, conversely, despite, differ/difference/different, difference/similarity between, equally, even though, however, in common, instead, like, likewise, neither/nor, nevertheless, on the other hand, opposed to, rather, same, similarly to, unlike, versus, while, whereas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One similarity/difference between ___ and ___ Both ___ and ___ are/have/can ___. ___ and ___ differ in a variety of ways.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence Order Arrange 	afterward, as soon as, at last, at that time, at the same time as, at which point, awhile, before, begin, concurrently, daily, during, eventually, finally, first, following that, immediately, in anticipation, initially, last, later, meanwhile, next, ongoing, over time, preceding, precipitate, previously, prior to, simultaneously, sometime later, sometimes, subsequently, then, the onset of, to begin, to start, ultimately, when, while	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the time between ___ and ___. First, ___. / Next, ___. / Then, ___ / After that, ___ ___ came before ___. / ___ happened just after ___.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify Sort Categorize 	according to, arrange, attribute(s), behavior(s), belongs to/in, category, characteristic(s), correlate(s) to, features(s), fits into, group, organize/organized by, properties, quality (qualities), trait(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classification is based on ___. I sorted these objects by ___. ___ belongs to category ___.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Identify] Cause and Effect 	accordingly, as a result, based on, because, caused by, consequently, correlates to, effect/affect, factors contributed to the outcome, for that reason, if/then, in order to, led to, makes, one reason for, resulted in, since, so, therefore, this is why, thus, was the result of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If ___, then ___. ___ in order to ___. ___ is a cause/effect/result of ___.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict Make Inferences Draw Conclusions 	assume, based on, conclude, determine, due to, estimate, expect, guess, implies, infer, in light of, predict/prediction, speculate, suppose, surmise, suspect, therefore, thus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I infer ___ based on ___. Due to the fact that ___, I conclude ___. Given ___, I surmise that ___.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justify/Defend Position Persuade/Argue Explain Reasoning Also see Evaluate 	according to, advantages outweigh disadvantages, appeal to, argue/argument, based on, belief, claim, clearly, convince, definitely, disadvantage, due to, evidence, feel, following careful scrutiny, for this reason, for example, furthermore, influence, obligation to, obvious that, in my opinion, my interpretation is, opponents would argue, outweigh, must, perception, perspective, prefer, proposition, should, shows, support, the benefits are obvious, the facts suggest that, think, urge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evidence points to ___. ___ suggest ___, while ___ argue(s) that ___. The advantages of ___ clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

- Evaluate
- Critique



advantage/disadvantage, after analysis or inspection, agree, apparent, assessment, bad, benefit, best, better, challenge, consideration, criteria, disagree, estimation, favorable, further, greater than, inspection, interpretation, judgment, less than, negative, obvious, positive, unfavorable, valuable, value, worse than, worst, worth

- After analyzing____, it is apparent that____.
- Considering____, it is obvious that____.
- ____is more valuable than____because____.

Main Sources: *WIDA workshop materials* (Costa, 2018); [Academic Language Function Toolkit](#) (Sweetwater Union High School District from Kinsella, 2010)

Supports and Scaffolds for Equitable EL Instruction

The following supports and scaffolds can be combined as needed during instruction and classroom assessments for all levels of instruction and all ELs. This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Any of these can be provided as part of Tier 1, core instruction. The resources above are readily searchable online; however, first seeking input from local specialists/coordinators/coaches is encouraged.

Sensory (The 5 senses)	Graphic (Visual representations)	Interactive (Interaction with others)	Linguistic (Language)	Well-Being within Classroom Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasts (web and podcasts) • Magazines and newspapers • Manipulatives • Models and figures • Physical Movement (Total Physical Response/TPR) • Real life objects • Simulations and virtual trips • Videos and films 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Organizers • Anchor Charts • Graphs • Number and timelines • Visual checklists • Visuals (diagrams, pictures, illustrations, drawings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk moves or other protocols for academic conversations • Student roles for group work • Cooperative learning strategies and structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pairs, triads, small groups ○ Flexible grouping ○ Same language groups ○ Heterogeneous groups by language level • Explicit modeling • Interactive and Shared read-aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home language (L1) • Slow and clear speech for easier comprehension • Differentiated language frames • Language-focused anchor charts and visually supported word walls • Audio support (audio books, test readers) • Labeled items in the room • Leveled texts • Mentor texts • Mnemonics • Partner Reading • Writing Conferences • Chunked text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms for inclusive learning environments • Model of respect • Explicit routines and procedures • Goal-setting • Positive Affirmations • Coping and stress relief strategies • Student agency and choice • Relationship building • Strengths-based coaching approach • Self-reflection and regulation strategies

Sensory (The 5 senses)	Graphic (Visual representations)	Interactive (Interaction with others)	Linguistic (Language)	Well-Being within Classroom Community
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Think-alouds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging techniques 	

Main Sources: *WIDA's English Language Development Standards Framework Resource Guide* (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007), *Growing Language and Literacy: Strategies for English Learners* (Honigfeld, 2019), *Proactive Planning: Tier 1 Supports* (Fairfax Public Schools)

Student “I Can” Statements: Monitoring English Language Progress

This tool was created to represent the information included in WIDA's Performance Definitions for English Language Development (Speaking and Writing). The descriptors below are *modified* to correlate with Virginia's definition of proficient (English Language Proficiency 4.4), and to be more accessible for students. Students should be encouraged to create language development goals and assess their own language use and progress. Teachers may want to modify this to track EL progress.

	Discourse Dimension	Sentence Dimension	Word/Phrase Dimension
ELP Level	<u>Details, Voice, Organization</u> <i>Extend with more detail, complexity, variety, and amount of language output</i>	<u>Grammatical structures (Usage/Mechanics)</u> <i>Expand with prepositional phrases, relative pronouns (e.g. that, who), conjunctions, and connectors (see scholar sheet)</i>	<u>Vocabulary</u> <i>Enhance with specificity or figurative language</i>
	I can express my ideas ...	I can make...	I can use words and phrases that ...
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with many details and descriptions in an organized way with different connectors (<i>see scholar sheets</i>) in multiple, different kinds of sentences (<i>See sentence level 3</i>) by staying on topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of compound and complex sentences* many sentences that have different structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See level 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are abstract or technical (<i>ethical</i>) are precise (shades of meaning, <i>mad/fuming</i>) refer to a very specific topic have figurative meaning
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with some details and descriptions with connectors (<i>see scholar sheets</i>) in multiple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple and some compound sentences* some sentences that have different structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> start differently are different lengths use different conjunctions and connectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are specific to a content area sound and look similar to words in my language (cognates) just go together in English (<i>sick and tired</i>) have multiple meanings or different uses (<i>cause as noun and verb</i>)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes with a detail in phrases and simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> phrases and sentences when I have a frame to use sentences that look like ones I already know (I can repeat.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hear and see in many classes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> phrases that I see or hear a lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hear and see a lot I use with my friends (social language)

Teachers should **model language and include supports at the next level** to promote language development.

*Compound sentences are simple sentences combined with a coordinating conjunction (e.g., *and*, *but*). Complex sentences are a combination of a complete sentence and an incomplete sentence combined with a subordinating conjunction (e.g., *when*, *that*, *which*, *unless*).

Additional notes:

- Students may be able to use language at different levels depending on the content and specific task. It is important for teachers and students to note how student language production (in speaking and writing) varies.
- Teacher actions for language development during language practice activities:
 - Create models and have students practice at a level higher than their last performance. Provide a couple of models as options for students at different levels to use.
 - Re-voice student ideas in an academic format (e.g., student retells a story using "*The boy's problem.*" The teacher re-voices with more specific language and intentionally verifies with the student, "So you are saying that, '*The character's conflict...*'").
 - Use prompts to extend student discourse such as, "*Can you tell me more?*"
- Teachers can use this information as guidelines for modifying or selecting appropriately leveled texts for ELs to read. Students can read at higher levels when other supports are in place that aid comprehension; e.g., visuals, shorter captions, graphic organizers.

English Learner (EL) Instructional Considerations by Proficiency Level

This chart was created to provide additional instructional considerations for the different proficiency levels. It is important to frame student skills by what they “can do” and what teachers “can do” to support them. Even *Entering Level* ELs may be described with points from the levels 2-4 depending on the context.

ELP Level	Learners may...
4 Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and understand academic language skills, and are approaching the more complex and varied linguistic demands necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency in a variety of academic contexts (settings), at a mainly independent level ● Need supports and models at high levels of language proficiency in order to become proficient, e.g., sample projects, extended paragraph frames with a variety of sentence types
3 Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and understand more extended language with emerging complexity and detail with connections to specific content topics ● Need supports, but are also starting to use and understand language and grade-level content independently; will start to add their own ideas to sentence frames ● Attend more independently to accuracy with self-correction and detailed notes/text annotations
2 Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and understand repetitive and common, conversational language in shorter chunks, memorized formulas, and simple academic language ● Need a high level of support and teacher modeling of academic language use ● Use nonlinguistic and visual representation, familiar text features, primary language, and simple English to construct meaning
1 Entering*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and understand short chunks of very common and familiar language ● Engage in conversations better when peer and teacher speech is clear and at a slower rates ● Recognize and use language previously introduced and supported as part of a lesson or learning environment ● Learn and practice new language by repeating peers and teacher ● Need a high level of support and teacher modeling of social and academic language use ● Use gestures, pointing, peer interaction, and repeating to convey meaning and follow directions ● Use illustrations, graphs, maps, tables, other nonlinguistic and pictorial representations, and primary language to construct meaning <p><i>*ELs entering at a Level 1 may have had very different educational experiences and different levels of primary language literacy, which will impact the amount of support and time needed to move into Level 2</i></p>

Main sources: WIDA’s *English Language Proficiency Levels* (WIDA 2007, Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007, p. RG45), *Differentiation Guide for Bilingual Learners* (Fairbairn, Jones-Vo & Aurora), *Growing Language and Literacy: Strategies for English Learners* (Honigsfeld, 2019)

