

# Introduction to WIDA



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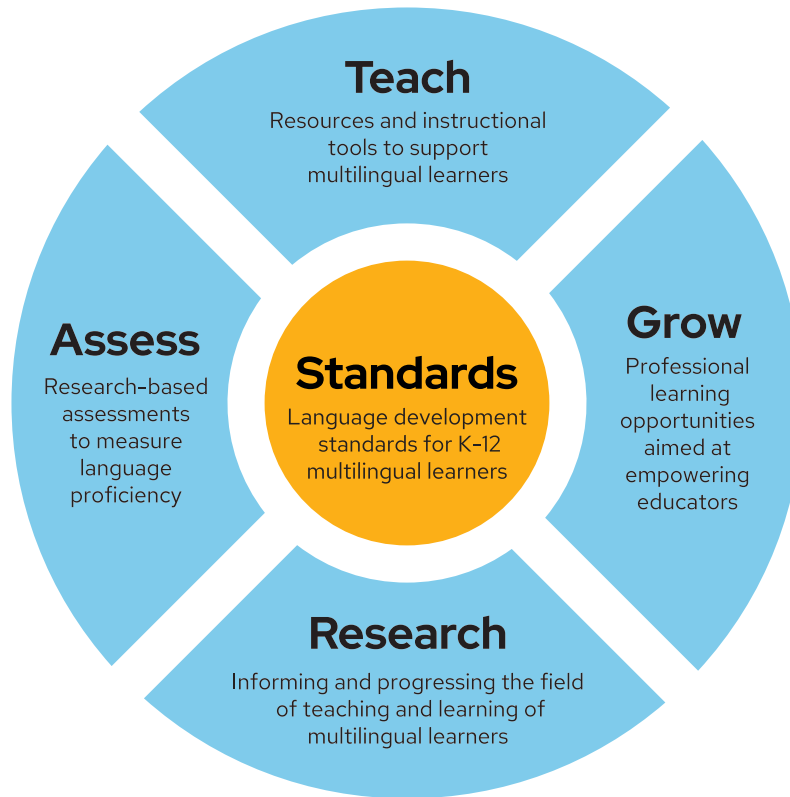


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# What Is WIDA?

WIDA provides a trusted, comprehensive approach to supporting, teaching, and assessing multilingual learners.



## WIDA Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission

To engage, equip and inspire the educators who impact the lives of multilingual learners.

### Vision

A future where every classroom is designed for multilingual learners to thrive.

### Values

- Centering Multilingual Learners
- Continuous Learning
- Partnership
- Can Do Philosophy



## Can Do Philosophy

At WIDA, we believe that everyone brings valuable resources to the education community. Linguistically and culturally diverse learners, in particular, bring a unique set of assets that have the potential to enrich the experiences of all learners and educators. As these young children and students learn additional languages, educators can draw on these assets for the benefit of both the learners themselves and for everyone in the community. By focusing on what language learners can do, we send a powerful message that students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds contribute to the vibrancy of our early childhood programs and K–12 schools.

The efforts of every stakeholder in the school community, from home care providers to superintendents, can enhance the education of language learners. The more we know about their cultural backgrounds, home environments, and formative experiences, and the positive contributions these experiences afford our school communities, the more effective standards-based instruction will be. We believe practitioners and educators have the power to recognize and unleash the potential that language learners bring to their learning communities.

Everything WIDA does is supported by the Can Do Philosophy. Our work begins with articulating examples of language learners’ assets, and continues with how we support education systems, how we design our products, and how we conduct our research.

### WIDA Believes in Language Learners’ Assets, Contributions, and Potential

Assets	Contributions	Potential
Linguistic	Knowledge of multiple languages, varying representation of ideas, metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, diverse strategies for language learning	Bi- or multilingual practices, abilities which learners utilize to communicate effectively across multiple contexts, multiple ways of expressing their thinking
Cultural	Different perspectives, practices, beliefs, social norms, ways of thinking	Bi- or multicultural practices as well as unique and varied perspectives, ability to develop relationships in a global society, ability to navigate a variety of sociocultural contexts
Experiential	Varied life and educational experiences, exposure to unique topics, diverse approaches to learning and expressing content knowledge	Enrichment of the school curriculum, extracurricular and community opportunities, success in school and beyond
Social and Emotional	Personal interests and needs, awareness of/empathy for diverse experiences, knowledge and enrichment of community resources	Ability to form and sustain positive relationships, and broker meaningful interactions among peers and others within and beyond school

## The Can Do Philosophy in Action

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy is visible in our products and services, but also extends beyond our organization into the educational systems and organizations interacting with us and our work.

WIDA supports education systems where the Can Do Philosophy empowers

- **Linguistically diverse students** and their peers to share their experiences, knowledge, cultures, skills, and interests, while supporting one another.
- **Families** to advocate on behalf of their children’s beliefs and aspirations about education and success in life, to share their social, cultural, and linguistic capital with their learning community, and to nurture growth and learning at home and in the community.
- **Communities** to shape perspectives of educators, practitioners, students, and families through diverse experiences and offer resources and supports to build upon the learning happening in school.
- **Educators** to unleash learners’ potential and serve as their advocates in culturally responsive ways, to continue to grow their capacities by learning from their students, to inspire active engagement of students and families, and to collaborate to promote effective strategies and seek solutions together.
- **Administrators** to build systems uniting schools and communities with a vision, time, and space for meaningful collaboration in support of language development and academic achievement of language learners.
- **Researchers and policymakers** to positively influence the focus and direction of programs, schools, and systems in serving the interests of language learners, highlighting students’ unique characteristics and needs to advocate for positive change.

WIDA enacts the Can Do Philosophy through its

- **Standards** that allow educators to recognize and support their students’ academic language development and academic achievement, serving as a foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- **Assessments** that build awareness of language learners’ strengths and provide valuable information to educators, students, and families. WIDA’s assessment design includes built-in supports that allow learners to show what they can do and serves as a model for classroom, school, and district language proficiency assessment.
- **Professional learning** that is sustainable and transformative, focusing on teaching and learning that supports language learners and their families by building on their strengths. Further, it promotes dynamic collaboration among educators and meaningful student engagement.
- **Research** that provides timely, meaningful, and actionable results to educators, advancing awareness of the role of language learning in achievement along with the unique traits attributable to language learners. Our research design concentrates on supporting data-based decision-making and sound policy throughout education systems.

# Assessments New York Is Operationalizing

The first WIDA ACCESS administration will be in 2026–27.

## The WIDA ACCESS Suite of Assessments

[WIDA ACCESS](#) is a suite of secure, large-scale English language proficiency assessments for kindergarten through grade 12 students who have been identified as English learners (ELs). The assessments are grounded in the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework and given annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor student progress in acquiring English language proficiency in academic contexts. ACCESS meets U.S. federal requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) for monitoring and reporting progress toward English language proficiency.

### WIDA ACCESS

- A suite of secure, large-scale, summative English language proficiency assessments
- Standards-referenced assessments
- Given annually to English learners in kindergarten through grade 12 in WIDA Consortium member states
- Meets U.S. federal requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) for monitoring and reporting progress toward English language proficiency

### WIDA ACCESS Online (grades 1–12)

- A computer-based, adaptive test that responds to student performance
- Administered in groups of students in various grades and at different proficiency levels at the same time, or in individual settings
- Grades 1–3 complete Writing domain in a booklet
- Built-in accessibility and accommodation features support individual students' needs

### WIDA ACCESS Paper (grades 1–12)

- Paper-based, semi-adaptive test
- Administered in group or individual settings
- Available for students who are unable to test online
- Has large-print and braille formats to support students with visual disabilities
- Administered to groups of students in a single tier and grade-level cluster

### WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten

- A paper-based test
- Individually administered
- Has an interactive format that is developmentally appropriate
- Reflects what students do in the classroom
- The test administrator scores all domains
- Students test until they reach their performance ceiling

### **WIDA Alternate ACCESS (grades K–12)**

- A large-print, paper-based test
- Individually administered to students who are identified as English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades K–12
- Is semi-adaptive, giving students multiple chances to show what they can do and stop when appropriate
- Scored by the test administrator

### **The WIDA Screener Suite of Assessments**

WIDA Screener is the collective name for WIDA's suite of English language proficiency assessments given to new students in grades K–12 to help educators identify whether they are English learners. It is a flexible, on-demand assessment that can be administered at any time during the school year. The first WIDA Screener administration will be in 2027–28. WIDA Screener assessments are as follows:

#### **WIDA Screener**

- WIDA Screener for Kindergarten
- WIDA Screener Online (grades 1–12)
- WIDA Screener Paper (grades 1–12)
- WIDA Alternate Screener (grades K–12)

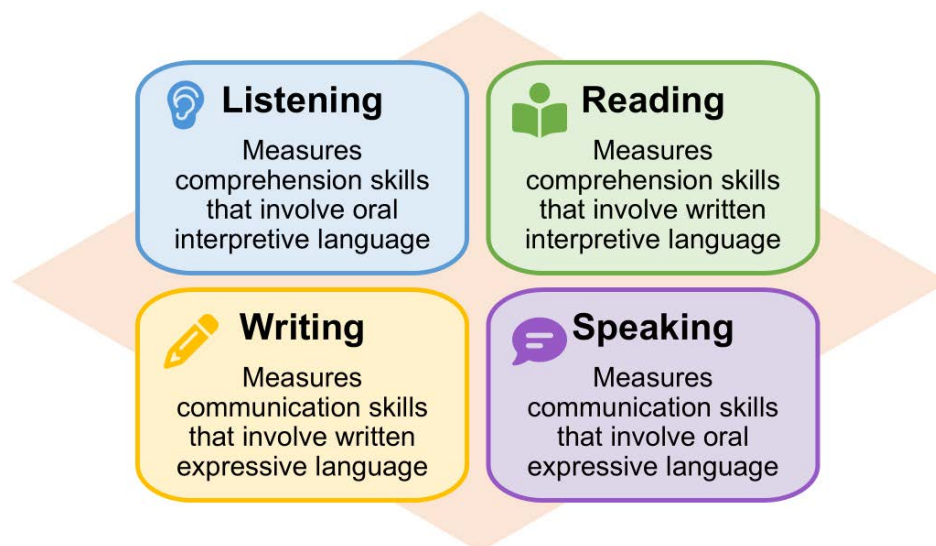
# Design of WIDA Assessments

## Anchored in the Language of School

These statements provide educators with a connection between language development and academic content-area learning. The statements represent the broad and ever-present language of the disciplines.

Description
<b>Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD-SI)</b> English learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.
<b>Language for Language Arts (ELD-LA)</b> English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.
<b>Language for Mathematics (ELD-MA)</b> English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics.
<b>Language for Science (ELD-SC)</b> English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Science.
<b>Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS)</b> English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

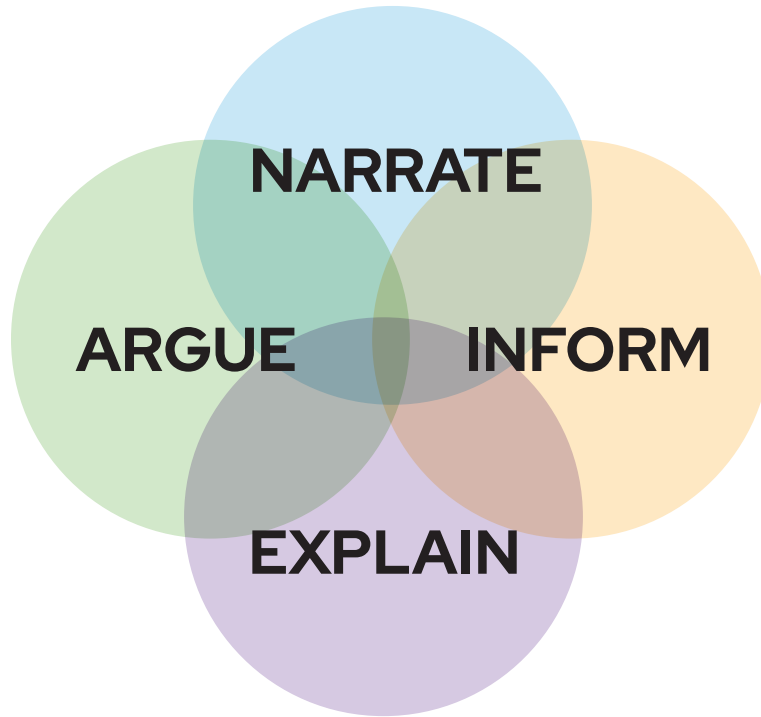
## Domains of Language Assessed



Each test, across all grade-level clusters, assesses the four language domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

## Key Language Uses

Four Key Language Uses (KLUs) represent the most prominent ways students use language as they investigate and explain phenomena, support claims with evidence, and share stories about their experiences. A KLU will be targeted in each test folder.



**Narrate** highlights language to convey real or imaginary experiences through stories and histories. Narratives serve many purposes, including to instruct, entertain, teach, or support argumentation.

**Inform** highlights language to provide factual information. As students convey information, they define, describe, compare, contrast, organize, categorize, or classify concepts, ideas, or phenomena.

**Explain** highlights language to give an account for how things work or why things happen. As students explain, they substantiate the inner workings of natural, man-made, and social phenomena.

**Argue** highlights language to justify claims using evidence and reasoning. Argue can be used to advance or defend an idea or solution, change the audience's point of view, bring about action, or accept a position or evaluation of an issue.

## Dimensions of Language in the Proficiency Level Descriptors

The dimensions of language use are one way to conceptualize the linguistic system within a sociocultural context. Language users make choices in all three dimensions of language that contribute to how a text is purposely constructed to have the desired effect on its intended audience(s).

### The three language dimensions operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

Dimension	Criteria	Focus on ...	Sample Language Features
Discourse	Organization of language	How ideas are coherently organized to meet a purpose through organizational patterns characteristic of the genre	Whole text organizational patterns, such as introduction, body, conclusion; claim, evidence, reasoning
	Cohesion of language	How language connects ideas within and across sentences and discourse using a range of cohesive devices	Cohesive devices, such as repeated words, synonyms, pronoun substitution, connectors
	Density of language	How information in noun groups is expanded or consolidated	Noun groups expanded with resources, such as adjectives or other modifiers added before nouns, prepositional phrases following nouns, nominalization
Sentence	Grammatical complexity of language	How relationships are expressed with clauses through simple, compound, and complex sentences	Simple, compound, complex sentences; coordinating, subordinating conjunctions; dependent and independent clauses
Word/Phrase	Precision of language	How everyday, cross-disciplinary, and technical language more effectively conveys precise meaning	A variety of words and phrases, such as adverbials of time, manner, and place; verb types; abstract nouns

# WIDA ACCESS Online

## Grade-Level Clusters



## Recommended Domain Order of Administration

WIDA recommends students take the Listening test first, followed by the Reading test. However, Listening and Reading can be administered in either order, followed by Speaking and Writing in either order.

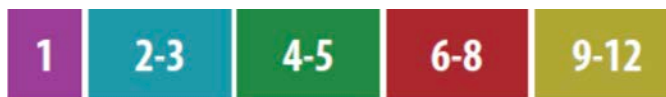


## ACCESS Online Writing

- All students in grades 1–3 take the ACCESS Online Writing test in an entirely pencil-and-paper format.
- The online-specific Writing Test booklet is grade-level cluster and Tier A or Tier B/C.
- Student in grades 4–12 view directions and tasks on their computers or tablets, and then they respond by typing in the response area on the screen.
- Responses are evaluated as first drafts, so typos and minor spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors do not lower scores.

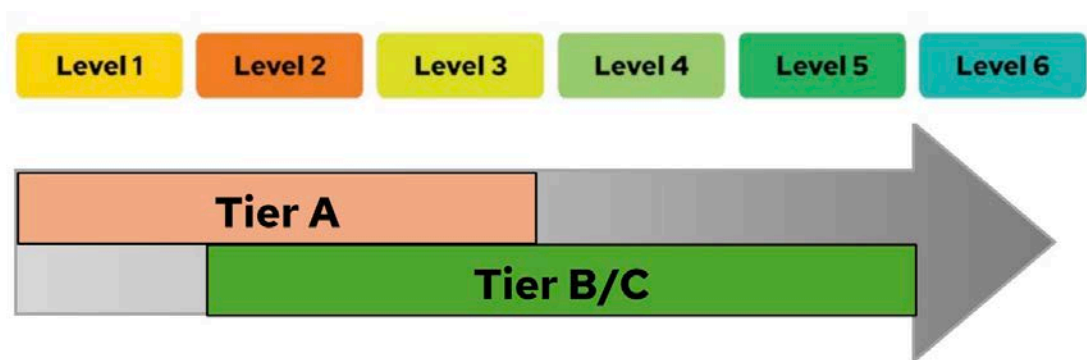
# WIDA ACCESS Paper

## Grade-Level Clusters



## Test Tiers

ACCESS Paper has two tiers: Tier A and Tier B/C. Tier A addresses the ends of Proficiency Levels (PLs) 1–3. Tier B/C addresses the ends of PLs 2–5.



## Tier Selection

**Tier A** is designed for students at beginning levels of English proficiency, so they aren't presented with items beyond their skill level. This includes students who

- Recently arrived in the United States with no prior English instruction
- Currently receive literacy instruction in a language other than English
- Have recently tested at a beginner or entering level of English language proficiency

**Tier B/C** is designed for ELs who demonstrate higher levels of English language proficiency. This includes students who

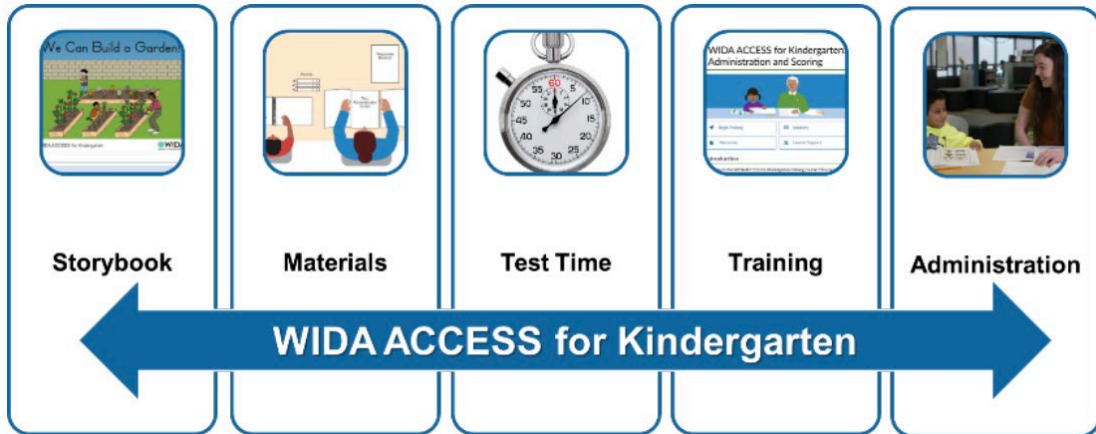
- Are using language for a wider range of social and instructional purposes and are developing a broader range of academic language skills
- Have acquired foundational literacy in English or are approaching the academic language needed for grade-level literacy instruction in English

## ACCESS Paper Speaking

- The Speaking test is structured as an exchange with a Virtual Test Administrator (Miss Lee) and Model Student (Nina).
- Students view graphics and questions asked by Miss Lee in the test booklet.
- Test Administrators stream audio or play a CD and speak aloud.
- Students orally respond and the test administrator scores the responses.

# WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten

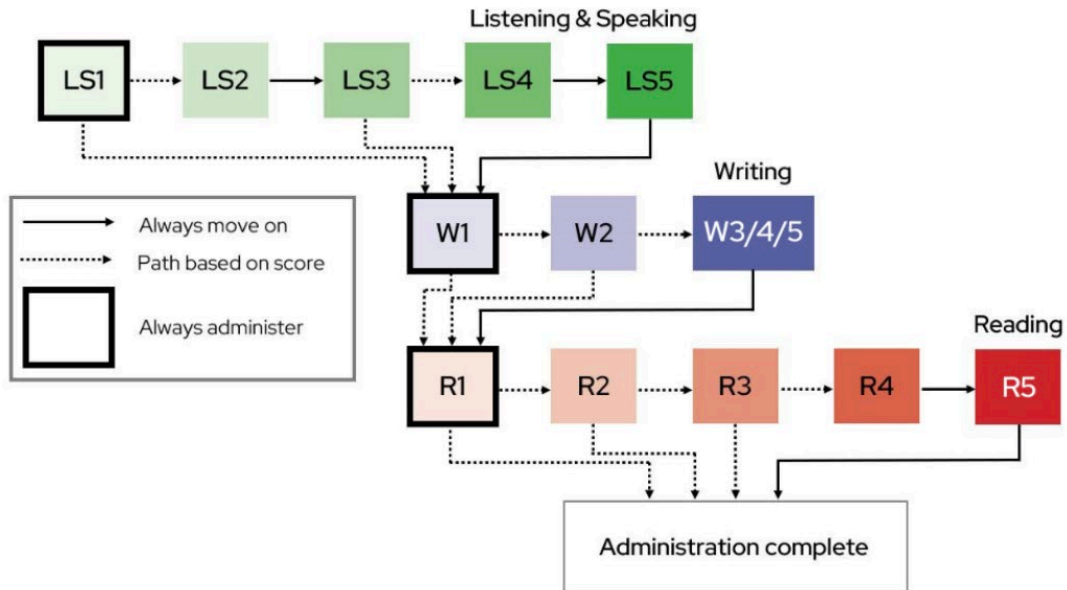
## Features of ACCESS for Kindergarten



## Supports That Benefit Early Learners

- 1:1 test administration
- Stopping rules

## ACCESS for Kindergarten Test Structure



# WIDA Alternate ACCESS

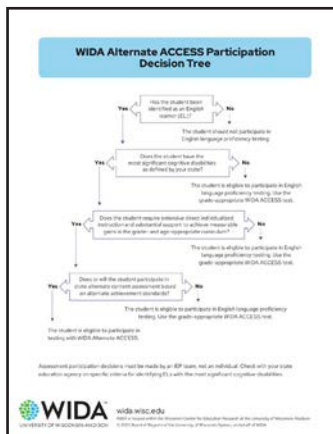
- A large-print, paper-based test
- Individually administered to students who are identified as English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades K–12
- Semi-adaptive; gives students multiple chances to show what they can do and stop when appropriate

## Understanding This Student Population

English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are individuals who have one or more disabilities that significantly limit their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, as documented in their Individualized Education Programs, and who are progressing toward English language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding (From Christensen, Mitchell, Shyyan, & Ryan [2018]. [\*Characteristics of English Learners With Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Findings From the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire\*](#)).

## Alternate ACCESS Participation Decision Tree

[Alternate ACCESS Participation Decision Tree](#)



## Alternate ACCESS Test Design

- Four grade-level clusters



- Allows for a variety of communication approaches
- Administered individually
- Scored by the test administrator

# Test Experience and Scheduling

## WIDA ACCESS Online

### Test Timing

Recommended Administration Format	Number of Students	Recommended Scheduled Testing Time
Listening	No more than 15 students	Approximately 65 minutes
Reading	No more than 15 students	Approximately 60 minutes
Writing	No more than 15 students	Approximately 70–90 minutes
Speaking	No more than 5 students	Approximately 50 minutes

### Recommended Domain Order of Administration

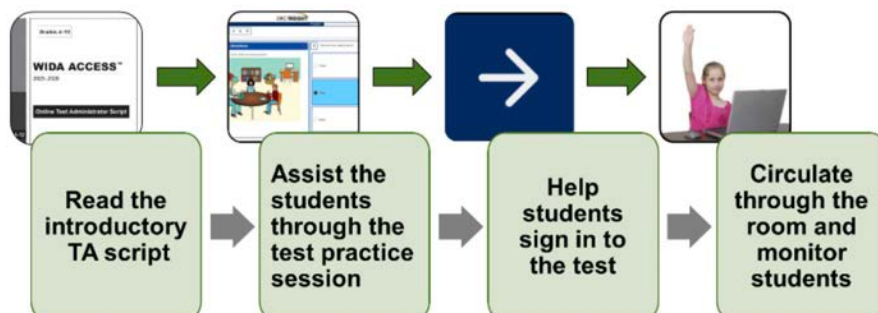
WIDA recommends students take the Listening test first, followed by the Reading test. However, Listening and Reading can be administered in either order, followed by Speaking and Writing in either order. WIDA recommends that you do not administer all four domains in one day.



### Materials

- Test Administrator Script by grade-level cluster
- Writing Test Booklet by grade-level cluster

### During Administration



## Identifying Speaking and Writing Tier

After students complete the Listening and Reading tests, look up the students' tier placement in WIDA AMS. You will export the details of a registration to view the tier of the Writing and Speaking tests that each student will take. It shows which test booklets (Tier A or Tier B/C) you'll need for students who will handwrite responses to the Writing test, and it shows which students will take Tier Pre-A of the Speaking test and need an individual test administration session.

## WIDA ACCESS Paper

### Test Timing

Recommended Administration Format	Number of Students	Recommended Scheduled Testing Time
Listening	No more than 15 students	Approximately 60 minutes
Reading	No more than 15 students	Approximately 70 minutes
Writing	No more than 15 students	Approximately 50–55 minutes
Speaking	Must be Individual	Approximately 45 minutes

### Recommended Domain Order

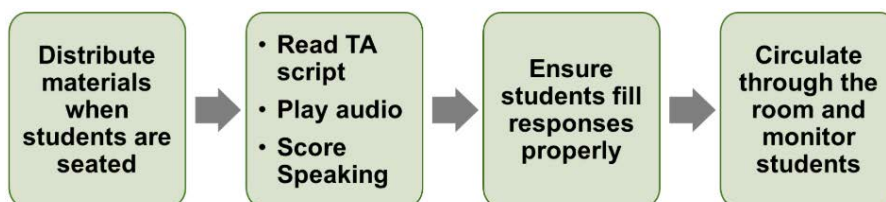
The domains may be administered in any order, but this order matches the test administrator scripting and student test booklets. WIDA recommends you do not administer four domains in one day.



### Materials

- Test Administrator Script by grade-level cluster and tier
- Speaking Test Booklet by grade-level cluster
- Listening, Reading, and Writing Test Booklet by grade-level cluster and tier
- Listening and Speaking Audio (Streaming audio/CD) by grade-level cluster and tier

### During Administration



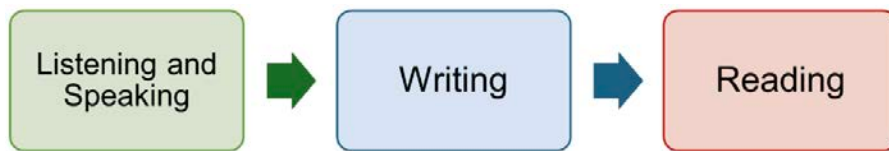
## WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten

### Test Timing

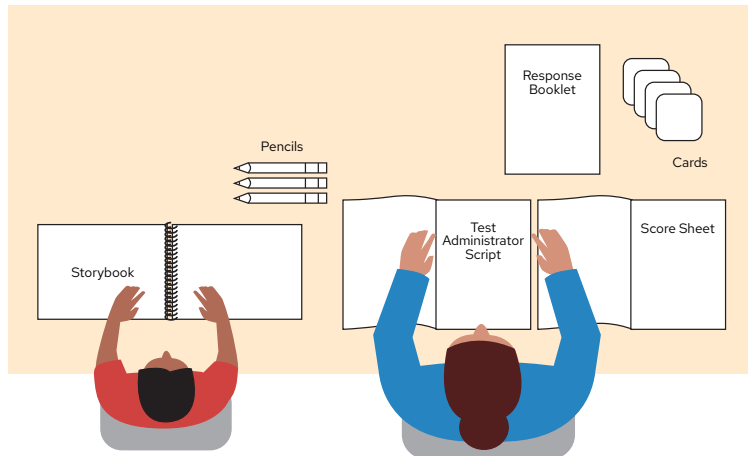
- 40–55 minutes, on average
- The length of time it takes to administer will vary for each student.

### Administration Order

The test administrator reads a themed story to start. The theme of the story continues through the rest of the test.



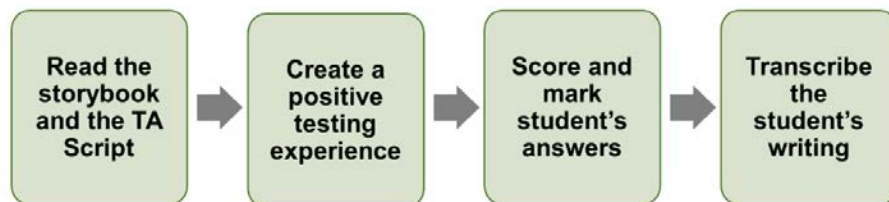
### Test Administration Set Up



### Materials

- Test Administrator Script
- Score Sheet
- Response Booklet
- Storybook
- Cards

### During Administration



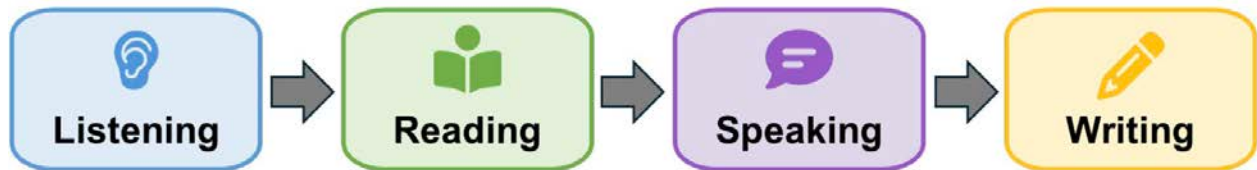
## WIDA Alternate ACCESS

### Test Timing

Recommended Administration Format	Number of Students	Recommended Scheduled Testing Time
Listening	Individual	Approximately 30 minutes
Reading	Individual	Approximately 30 minutes
Writing	Individual	Approximately 30 minutes
Speaking	Individual	Approximately 30 minutes

### Recommended Domain Order

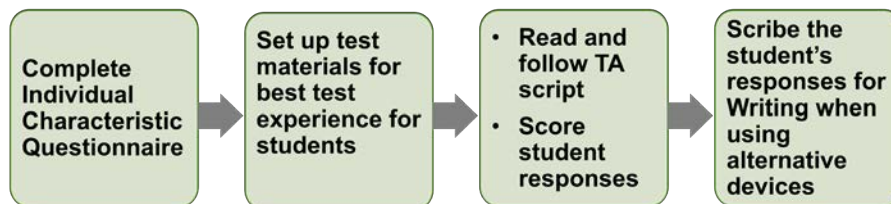
The domains may be administered in any order, but this order matches the test administrator scripting and student test booklets.



### Materials

- Test Administrator Script
- Student Test Booklet
- Student Response Booklet

### Before and During Administration



# Technology

## Websites

### WIDA

The primary hub for all WIDA resources is the main WIDA website, which provides comprehensive information on standards, assessments, and professional learning.

### WIDA Secure Portal

The WIDA Consortium provides valuable secure resources that require an account. Use the WIDA Secure Portal to access test training manuals and resources, as well as online professional learning modules.

### **WIDA Secure Portal Account**

- To obtain a WIDA Account, check your state-specific guidance on your state page.
- Forgot your username or having trouble logging in?
  - Contact the WIDA Client Services Center at [help@wida.wisc.edu](mailto:help@wida.wisc.edu) or call (866) 276-7735.
- Have a WIDA Secure Portal account but forgot your password?
  - Go to our password reset page.  
[Forgot your password?—WIDA Secure Portal](#)

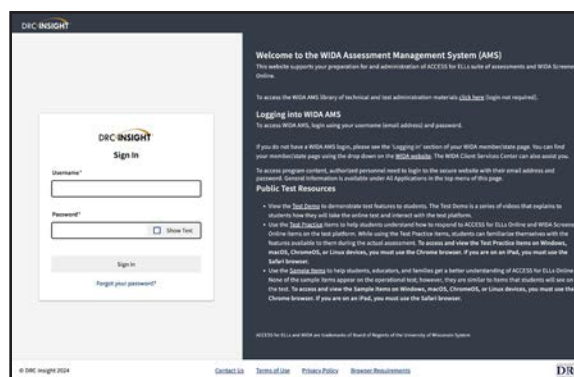
### WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS)

WIDA AMS is managed by our partner company, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). You can order ACCESS materials, manage your student and test information, and find technology resources and testing software via WIDA AMS.

### **WIDA AMS Account**

To obtain a WIDA Account, check your state-specific guidance on your state page.

- If you do not know your username or password, use the “forgot username or password” link.
  - Select “I don’t know my username” and enter your email address to receive an email containing your username.
  - Select “I don’t know my password” and enter your username to receive your password reset.





## ACCESS Online

### INSIGHT Test Engine

INSIGHT is the secure web browser testing interface installed on each testing device. This software communicates with the DRC INSIGHT server to provide test practice and test questions to the test taker and to send responses to the DRC INSIGHT server, which stores them securely.



For test security reasons, do not allow Bluetooth headsets or personal wireless earbuds.

<b>Headset</b> 	<b>Headphones</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must have a microphone</li><li>• Can be used for all domains</li><li>• Necessary for the Speaking domain to record student responses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be used for Listening, Reading, and Writing tests</li><li>• To hear test directions and practice items</li><li>• To hear test stimulus on the Listening and Writing tests</li></ul>

### More Technology Information Coming

- WIDA webinars about WIDA AMS
- DRC provides materials and software for District Technology Coordinators

# Scoring and Responsibilities of the Test Administrator

## Scoring of Tests

Domain	WIDA ACCESS Online	WIDA ACCESS Paper	WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten	WIDA Alternate ACCESS
Listening	INSIGHT	Centrally scored by DRC	Locally by Test Administrator	Locally by Test Administrator
Reading	INSIGHT	Centrally scored by DRC	Locally by Test Administrator	Locally by Test Administrator
Writing	Centrally scored by DRC	Centrally scored by DRC	Locally by Test Administrator	Locally by Test Administrator
Speaking	Centrally scored by DRC	Locally by Test Administrator	Locally by Test Administrator	Locally by Test Administrator

WIDA ACCESS Paper Speaking Test is scored by the test administrator using the WIDA Speaking Scoring Rubric Grades 1–12.

WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten is scored by the test administrator.

- Correct /Incorrect for the Listening and Reading Test
- Meets/Approaches with Expect Boxes for the Speaking Test and the beginning level Writing Test items
- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten Writing Rubric for higher level Writing Test items

WIDA Alternate ACCESS is scored by the test administrator.

- Correct /Incorrect for the Listening and Reading Test
- Meets/Approaches/No Response with Expect Boxes for the Speaking and Writing Test

# Testing Roles and Responsibilities

There are three main roles for WIDA assessments: test coordinator, test administrator, and technology coordinator. Although it is imperative that all three roles are in close communication with one another to ensure effective online test administration, each role has its own set of responsibilities.



## Test Coordinator

Facilitates the overall test administration from start to finish.

### Responsibilities

- Communicate with DRC.
- Facilitate overall test administration.
- Coordinate assignments and communication.
- Ensure test security.
- Answer questions about WIDA Secure Portal and WIDA AMS accounts.
- Order and distribute test materials.
- Coordinate and schedule test sessions.
- Ensure everyone completes their training.
- Account for and return materials.



## Test Administrator

Administers and monitors the test.

### Responsibilities

- Administer and monitor the test.
- Verify student data.
- Ensure test security.
- Provide and document appropriate accommodations for students.
- Administer sample items.



## Technology Coordinator

Provides technological support prior to and during test administration.

### Responsibilities

- Provide technological support.
- Download software to test computers.
- Verify that the firewalls and filters are configured correctly.
- Ensure that devices meet minimum system requirements and are configured to support testing.
- Troubleshoot infrastructure issues.
- Support test administrators during testing days.

# State-Specific Guidelines

## Your State's WIDA ACCESS Checklist

The first place to look for information on ACCESS testing is [your member/state page](#) of the WIDA website: [NY State Page](#)



This page will include information about the assessment, including testing dates. Under the Requirements and Resources section, you'll find one or more ACCESS checklists that contain a complete list of your responsibilities as well as test administration and material handling guidance specific to your state. The checklist is your go-to reference on all the tasks you'll complete before, during, and after testing.

You can also find your Member/State Contacts and Logging In information.

# Required Assessment Training Courses

**ACCESS for Kindergarten:** Administration and Scoring

**ACCESS Online:** Administration

**ACCESS Paper:** Administration

- Speaking Grades 1–5: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Paper
- Speaking Grades 1–5: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Braille
- Speaking Grades 6–12: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Paper
- Speaking Grades 6–12: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Braille

**Alternate ACCESS:** Administration and Scoring

## Resources for Preparing Students

- Preparing for ACCESS Quick Start Guide
- WIDA Website Page [ACCESS Test Practice and Sample Items](#)
- Test Demo shows how to navigate different features of the test
- Test Practice familiarizes students with the online test platform
- Sample Items give students a chance to practice answering the type of questions they will see on the test

## WIDA ACCESS Score Reports

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) requires that all students identified as English language learners (ELs) be assessed annually for English language proficiency. ACCESS meets the federal accountability requirements and provides educators with a measure of the English language proficiency growth of ELs.

The [WIDA ACCESS Scores and Reports Resources](#) webpage offers information for students, families, and educators to understand ACCESS scores.

The [WIDA ACCESS Score Reports Interpretive Guide](#) presents WIDA's recommendations for interpreting and using test scores.\* It was designed to support educators in understanding what students' ACCESS scores mean and how they can be used to inform instructional practice. It also introduces tools available to program coordinators and district administrators interested in reviewing and acting on group performance on ACCESS assessments.

wida.wisc.edu

