

Exploring Key Language Uses Across Content Areas

The four WIDA Key Language Uses (KLUs)—Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue—are one of the main components of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework. They help bring focus and coherence to the language of schooling and prompt educators to attend to language in systematic, explicit, and sustained ways.

The following tables have been adapted from the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, and are designed for quick reference and easier classroom implementation. They help educators better understand the text types within each KLU and quickly identify relevant content-area examples. Find out more about the WIDA KLUs on pages 222–233 of the 2020 Edition.

Source: WIDA. (2020). *WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12*. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. <https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/wida-english-language-development-standards-framework-2020-edition>

Narrate

Sample Text Types	Purpose	Sample Classroom Applications
Personal recount	Reflect on experience by giving details of an incident	- How I came to this country - Our class field trip to the virtual museum
Short stories	Engage, encourage reflection, entertain, or teach a moral lesson	- The Rabbit and the Fox - Finding Helena
Anecdotes	Share a short and amusing episode about a real person	You won't believe what happened!
News stories	Inform about newsworthy events in a compelling way	Writing a story or blog for a school newspaper: Safety in School
Autobiographies	Recount episodes in someone's life as told by that person	<i>A Long Walk to Here and Now</i> <i>Hard Lessons Learned</i>
Biographies	Recount episodes from another person's life	<i>A Biography of Nelson Mandela</i>
Historical recounts and accounts	- Recount historical periods - Recount and explain historical stages	- The Ming Dynasty - The Victorian Era - U.S. Immigration History

Narrate Across Content Areas

Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
In language arts, students process and produce narratives to • Convey real or imaginary experience through short stories, novels, anecdotes, memoirs, and autobiographies • Develop and process their own identities	In mathematics, students process and produce narratives to • Illustrate mathematical concepts • Contextualize and build stronger connections to the applications of math, bringing them to life in story forms	In science, students process and produce narratives to • Tell stories that add meaning to technical and abstract scientific phenomena • Share observations of how things work and evolve, and of how humans become interested in science	In social studies, students process and produce narratives to • Communicate their perspective on what happened, who was involved, and where and when it took place (settings, epochs) • Paint a larger picture of a particular event or social phenomenon

Inform

Sample Text Types	Purpose	Sample Classroom Applications
Descriptive report	Give information about an entity by describing its uses, characteristics, physical attributes, behavior, or other features	• Dolphins • Magnets • Stages of cell division
Classifying report	Organize and describe a field or topic into class and subclass hierarchies	• Classes of environmental disasters • Types of software
Comparative report	Identify similarities and differences between two or more things	• Stars and planets • Mitosis and meiosis
Compositional report	Describe parts and wholes	• Layers of the rainforest • The acoustic guitar
Lab report	Describe experiments using the scientific method	• Types of techniques to separate mixtures
Investigation report	Research a topic using a variety of sources	• The impact of COVID-19 on school learning
Design report	Design and create a product, service, performance, or artwork	• Designing and constructing multimedia compositions
Problem-solution report	Devise a solution to a problem	• Solutions report: robot arm designs for trash pick up

Inform Across Content Areas

Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
In language arts, students process and produce information to • Ask and answer questions about local and global issues • Compare and contrast themes in various works • Research, summarize, draw conclusions, and report findings	In mathematics, students process and produce information to • Ask and answer questions, explore, model, conjecture, test, and prove • Define and represent concepts • Engage in problem-solving	In science, students process and produce information to • Ask and answer questions about phenomena • Explore solutions to problems • Elaborate on concepts and processes	In social studies, students process and produce information to • Ask and answer questions about past and present events • Pursue investigations through the tools and lenses of geography, history, economics, and political science

Explain

Sample Text Types	Purpose	Sample Classroom Applications
Sequential explanation	Explain phenomena in a linear sequence	• How recycled paper is made • How a bill becomes a law
Causal explanation	Explain phenomena in a linear sequence showing how one step causes the next	• How a volcano erupts • How a solar eclipse occurs • How we get hiccups
Cyclical explanation	Explain phenomena in a way that the last step is also the beginning of the cycle	• The life cycle of a frog • The water cycle
Systems explanation	Explain how a system works. Includes a description of the components and how they relate and interact with one each other.	• How the desert works as an ecosystem • How the branches of the government work • How school or local community works as a system
Factorial explanation	Explain factors (multiple causes) that contribute to an event or outcome	• Factors that create the conditions for a tornado • Factors that led to World War II
Consequential explanation	Explain consequences (multiple effects) of an event	• What are the consequences of not following our classroom community rules? • What happened as a result of Westward Expansion in the U.S.? • What were the consequences on Native people?

Explain Across Content Areas

Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
In language arts, students process and produce explanations to Account for how ideas, characters, and themes develop in various literary and informational works	In mathematics, students process and produce explanations to - Account for how something was done (how students determined a solution or came to a conclusion) - Convey flaws in the chain of mathematical reasoning	In science, students process and produce explanations to - Account for the underlying causes or principles of phenomena - Draw on scientific models, principles, and ideas that are based on evidence	In social studies, students process and produce explanations to - Account for causal and consequential relationships among events and outcomes - Foreground reasons that contribute to outcomes - Account for the effects or consequences of something - Account for how political, economic, or cultural systems work

Argue

Sample Text Types	Purpose	Sample Classroom Applications
Persuasion	Convince an audience to act in a particular way	- Plastic straws should be banned! - Save the rainforests!
Discussion	Discuss two or more sides of an issue	- Nuclear power, for or against? - Online learning, pros and cons
Challenge	Rebut a position on an issue	- Graffiti is art - A response to immigration policy
Review	Assess the value of a work	Reviews of books, films, videogames
Interpretation	Interpret message in a work, usually a literary text or art form	- What is the message/theme in <i>The House on Mango Street</i>? - Literary elements in <i>Bless Me Ultima</i>
Critical response	Analyze and evaluate various aspects of a texts, including ideas, themes, messages, and symbols	Analyze the representation of Mexicans in <i>American Dirt</i>

Argue Across Content Areas

Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
In language arts, students process and produce arguments to • Determine the validity of a claim, position, belief, or conclusion • Offer reasons and evidence from multiple sources to support an opinion or claim • Convince someone to believe or do something • Respond to, interpret, and evaluate literary and informational works	In math, students process and produce arguments to • Examine and evaluate the validity of conjectures (explanations) • Distinguish correct from flawed reasoning • Examine connections to mathematical principles or previously accepted ideas	In science, students process and produce arguments to • Test out claims about the world • Evaluate the limitations of a claim • Design solutions • Engage in a process of reasoning that is grounded in evidence • Reach agreements	In social studies, students process and produce arguments to • Interpret and analyze the nature of historical understandings • Evaluate and communicate understandings through political, historical, geographic, and economic lenses • Discuss and evaluate sources that are grounded in evidence