

# What is WIDA Alternate ACCESS?

**WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a test administered to students in grades K-12 who are identified as English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.**

WIDA Alternate ACCESS measures students' English language skills in Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

## Why does my child take WIDA Alternate ACCESS?

Your child was identified as an English learner which means your child can have language support services in English, in addition to taking other classes. English learners take an English language proficiency test every year. Many English learners take the ACCESS for ELLs test. The reason your child takes the WIDA Alternate ACCESS test is likely because

- They have been identified as having a significant cognitive disability.
- Their teachers think that WIDA Alternate ACCESS, which offers extra support and opportunities to respond to test items, would best allow them to demonstrate their developing English language skills.

## English Language Proficiency

An English language proficiency level is a measurement of where students are in the process of developing the English language skills needed to access content instruction in English. When students reach the highest levels of English language proficiency, they no longer need language support services to participate in content instruction that is in English.



## How are WIDA Alternate ACCESS scores used?

Testing helps teachers understand whether students have the language skills they need to fully participate in the classroom. English learners with disabilities **can** learn complex language and communication systems. Your child's teachers use WIDA Alternate ACCESS test scores as they decide how best to teach your child.

Test scores also help teachers track your child's progress in learning academic English and help schools decide what English language support services to provide. You can use test information to advocate for your child at school.

## Getting ready for WIDA Alternate ACCESS

- Your child does not need to study for WIDA Alternate ACCESS. The test is an opportunity for students to demonstrate all the ways that they understand and can communicate in English.
- Find examples of WIDA Alternate ACCESS test questions on the Alternate ACCESS Sample Items page of the WIDA website, [wida.wisc.edu/assess/alt-access/preparing/practice](https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/alt-access/preparing/practice).
- Prepare for test day by making sure your child gets plenty of sleep and eats breakfast.
- Talk with your child's teachers about when you will receive the test scores, how your child's school uses those scores, and how your family can support your child's language development at home.

### Questions you can ask your child's teachers

- How will my child's English language development goals be recorded and tracked?
- When will my child take WIDA Alternate ACCESS?
- When will I receive my child's WIDA Alternate ACCESS test scores?
- How are test scores used to help my child make progress in learning academic English?
- How do you decide when my child stops receiving English language services?

