Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
Understanding Your Child's Scores

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an English language proficiency test that measures the academic English language skills of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

- Schools, school districts, and states use ACCESS for ELLs scores as they decide what English language support services to provide.
- Teachers use test scores as they decide how best to teach your child.
- You can use test scores to advocate for your child.

The Individual Student Report shows your child's Alternate ACCESS for ELLs scores in eight different categories. Four of these categories are the language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. These four language domain scores are combined to create four additional score types:

- The oral language category is a combination of your child's Listening and Speaking scores.
- The literacy category is a combination of your child's Reading and Writing scores.
- The comprehension category is a combination of your child's Listening and Reading scores. It depends more on the Reading score than on the Listening score.

ELL

An English language learner, or ELL, is a student who has the opportunity to receive instruction in English, in addition to taking other classes. ELLs are tested every year to help teachers understand their language skills, but you have the right to accept or decline language support.

Language Domain

Students use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to learn academic content, share information, and discuss ideas. These are skills that all students work on throughout their education. Language testing measures a student's skills in all four of these domains.

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- The overall category is a combination of all four language domain scores. It depends more on the Reading and Writing scores than on the Listening and Speaking scores.

For each of the eight categories on the Individual Student Report, there are two scores:

- Proficiency level scores place your child's current skills within the six WIDA Alternate English Language Proficiency Levels. (Proficiency levels are not related to a student's grade level.) The third page of the Individual Student Report describes the language skills typical of each proficiency level.
- Scale scores are precise measures of how your child did on the test. They take into account your child's grade level and the difficulty of the test items your child completed. Teachers use these scores to understand how much your child's English language skills have grown since the last time your child took Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Language Proficiency

A language proficiency level is a measurement of where students are in the ongoing process of building language skills. When students reach the highest levels of language proficiency, they no longer need language support services.

Questions you can ask

- What does this score mean? Who will see this score and how will it be used? Why is a score missing?
- How do this year's scores compare with previous scores? Is my child making progress in building English language skills? What other information do you use to measure progress?
- How does learning English fit with the other skills my child is learning? How is language support different from other communication support my child receives?
- Will this score change the instruction or support my child receives? How do you decide when my child stops receiving language support?

School districts use **Alternate ACCESS for ELLs** scores to evaluate language support programs, monitor student progress, and as one factor in the decision to exit a student from language support services. ACCESS for ELLs testing allows schools to meet federal and state accountability requirements.

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