
WIDA-Aligned ELL Differentiation Toolkit

Grades 3 - 8 | All 5 Proficiency Levels

Differentiated lesson support materials for ELA and content areas:

- 50 Differentiated Sets (10 Topics x 5 WIDA Levels)
- Leveled Comprehension Questions (Entering to Bridging)
- Academic Sentence Frames & Vocabulary Scaffolds
- Modified Reading Passages (Entering to Bridging)
- WIDA Level Quick-Reference Teacher Guide

UM Printables

WIDA Proficiency Levels: Quick-Reference Teacher Guide

Use this guide to assign appropriate materials, interpret student language output, and set linguistic targets for your ELLs across all content areas.

Level	Proficiency	Student Can Do (Receptive)	Student Can Do (Expressive)	Instructional Focus
1	Entering	Identify pictures, match words to objects, point to answers	Respond with single words, gestures, or short phrases; copy words	Build foundational vocabulary, use extensive visual aids, L1 support
2	Beginning	Follow simple directions, recognize key phrases, understand short sentences	Use phrases or short sentences, repeat familiar language chunks	Expand vocabulary, provide sentence starters, use realia and models
3	Developing	Understand grade-level text with scaffolds, identify main ideas, follow multi-step directions	Formulate simple to compound sentences, use transitions (because, but)	Bridge to complex sentences, teach academic language structures, graphic organizers
4	Expanding	Comprehend content texts with targeted support, make inferences, analyze relationships	Produce compound and complex sentences, use academic vocabulary accurately	Develop academic writing, refine discourse complexity, close reading skills
5	Bridging	Access grade-level text with light scaffolding, synthesize information from multiple sources	Produce extended discourse, use sophisticated academic vocabulary and varied sentence structures	Refine nuance, edge toward native-like proficiency, independent application

Academic Sentence Frame Reference Cards

General academic frames for ELA and content areas, scaffolded by WIDA level. Students can use these to structure verbal and written responses.

Explaining & Defining

Level 1: Entering

■ _____ is _____.

■ It means _____.

■ This is a _____.

Level 2: Beginning

■ A _____ is a type of _____.

■ This means that _____.

■ It is called _____ because _____.

Level 3: Developing

■ _____ can be defined as _____.

■ This concept means _____.

■ An example of _____ is _____.

Level 4: Expanding

■ _____ is defined as _____, which means _____.

■ This concept is significant because _____.

■ Unlike _____, _____ is characterized by _____.

Level 5: Bridging

■ _____ constitutes _____, fundamentally operating as _____.

■ The significance of this concept lies in _____.

■ This principle is distinguished from _____ by _____.

Comparing & Contrasting

Level 1: Entering

■ _____ and _____ are _____.

■ _____ is different.

Level 2: Beginning

■ _____ and _____ are alike because _____.

■ They are different because _____.

Level 3: Developing

■ A similarity between _____ and _____ is _____.

■ In contrast, _____ while _____.

Level 4: Expanding

■ While _____ shares _____ with _____, they differ significantly in _____.

■ In comparison, _____ exhibits _____, whereas _____ demonstrates _____.

Level 5: Bridging

■ Although _____ and _____ share fundamental characteristics, they diverge substantially regarding _____.

■ The primary distinction lies in _____, whereas their commonalities are rooted in _____.

Describing Cause & Effect

Level 1: Entering

■ _____ makes _____ happen.

■ Because of _____.

Level 2: Beginning

■ _____ happened because _____.

■ This caused _____ to _____.

Level 3: Developing

■ The cause of _____ was _____.

■ As a result, _____ occurred.

■ Due to _____, _____.

Level 4: Expanding

■ _____ directly resulted in _____, primarily because _____.

■ The underlying cause of _____ was _____, leading to _____.

Level 5: Bridging

■ The phenomenon of _____ was precipitated by _____, which consequently yielded _____.

■ _____ was an inevitable outcome of _____, driven by _____.

Sequencing & Ordering

Level 1: Entering

■ First, _____. Then, _____.

Level 2: Beginning

■ First, _____. Next, _____. Finally, _____.

Level 3: Developing

■ Initially, _____. Subsequently, _____. Ultimately, _____.

Level 4: Expanding

■ The process begins with _____, proceeds through _____, and culminates in _____.

Level 5: Bridging

■ *The sequence initiates with _____, transitions into _____, and concludes upon reaching _____.*

Vocabulary Scaffold Templates

Copy these templates for students to complete with topic-specific vocabulary. Adjust expectations by WIDA level: Entering students may draw pictures; Bridging students should write extended definitions and original context sentences.

Frayer Model Vocabulary Map

Term: _____			
Definition	Illustration / Example	Non-Example	Sentence

4-Square Vocabulary Organizer

Term: _____	
What is it?	What is it like?
What are some examples?	Use it in a sentence!

Topic 1

Ecosystems & Food Webs

Subject: Science | **Grades:** 3-5

Contains 5 WIDA-Leveled Sets:

- Level 1: Entering
- Level 2: Beginning
- Level 3: Developing
- Level 4: Expanding
- Level 5: Bridging

Topic Vocabulary Reference

This vocabulary list applies to all 5 WIDA levels for this topic. Refer to the Differentiated Tasks box below to assign appropriate practice for each student.

Term	Student-Friendly Definition
ecosystem	All the living and nonliving things in an area that interact
producer	A living thing, like a plant, that makes its own food
consumer	A living thing that eats other organisms for energy
decomposer	An organism that breaks down dead plants and animals
food chain	The path of energy from one living thing to another
food web	Many food chains that are connected in an ecosystem
habitat	The natural home where a living thing grows and lives
predator	An animal that hunts and eats other animals for food

Differentiated Vocabulary Tasks

Level 1: Entering	Draw a picture or point to the correct meaning for each word.
Level 2: Beginning	Use the word in a short phrase.
Level 3: Developing	Write a simple sentence using the word.
Level 4: Expanding	Write a detailed sentence explaining the word in context.
Level 5: Bridging	Use the word in a complex sentence demonstrating deep understanding.

Level 1: Entering

Modified Reading Passage

An ecosystem is a place. Plants and animals live there. Plants make food from the sun. Animals eat plants or other animals. A food chain shows who eats what.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Point to a plant. What does it make?

Q2: Do animals eat plants or the sun?

Q3: What shows who eats what?

Sentence Frames

■ A _____ is _____.

■ Plants are _____.

■ Animals eat _____.

■ A food chain shows _____.

■ _____ live in an ecosystem.

Level 2: Beginning

Modified Reading Passage

An ecosystem has living and nonliving things. Plants are producers that make food. Animals are consumers that eat plants or other animals. Decomposers break down dead things. A food chain shows how energy moves.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Are plants producers or consumers?

Q2: Do decomposers break down living or dead things?

Q3: Does a food chain show energy or water?

Sentence Frames

■ *An ecosystem has _____ and _____ things.*

■ *Producers make food from _____.*

■ *Consumers eat _____ or _____.*

■ *Decomposers break down _____.*

■ *A food chain shows how _____ moves.*

Level 3: Developing

Modified Reading Passage

An ecosystem includes all the living and nonliving things in an area that interact. Producers, such as plants, make their own food. Consumers eat other organisms. Decomposers break down dead organisms and return nutrients to the soil. Food chains and food webs show how energy flows.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: What do producers make their own food from?

Q2: What happens when decomposers break down dead organisms?

Q3: How is a food web different from a food chain?

Sentence Frames

■ *In an ecosystem, _____ interact with _____.*

■ *Producers create food through _____.*

■ *Herbivores eat _____, but carnivores eat _____.*

■ *Decomposers help by _____.*

■ *A food web is different from a food chain because _____.*

Level 4: Expanding

Modified Reading Passage

An ecosystem is a complex system where living organisms interact with each other and their physical environment. Producers form the base by converting sunlight into energy. Consumers occupy different levels: primary consumers eat producers, while secondary consumers eat other consumers. Decomposers recycle nutrients by breaking down dead organic matter. Food webs represent the interconnected feeding relationships within an ecosystem.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: How do producers form the base of the ecosystem?

Q2: Explain the relationship between primary and secondary consumers.

Q3: Why are decomposers essential for nutrient cycling?

Sentence Frames

- *Organisms within an ecosystem interact by _____.*
- *Producers support the ecosystem through _____.*
- *The relationship between primary and secondary consumers is _____.*
- *Decomposers contribute to nutrient cycling by _____.*
- *Food webs are more complex than food chains because _____.*

Level 5: Bridging

Modified Reading Passage

An ecosystem constitutes a dynamic complex of biotic and abiotic components functioning as an integrated unit. Photosynthetic producers convert solar energy into chemical energy, establishing the foundation of the food web. Consumers occupy successive trophic levels, with significant energy loss occurring at each transfer. Decomposers facilitate essential nutrient cycling by decomposing organic matter. Food webs reveal the intricate network of trophic interactions that characterize resilient ecological communities.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Analyze the impact of significant energy loss at each trophic transfer.

Q2: Evaluate the role of photosynthetic producers in sustaining the food web.

Q3: How do food webs reveal the resilience of ecological communities?

Sentence Frames

■ *The interdependence within an ecosystem is evidenced by _____.*

■ *Producers sustain the food web through _____.*

■ *Energy transfer between trophic levels is characterized by _____.*

■ *The role of decomposers is critical because _____.*

■ *The distinction between food chains and food webs lies in _____.*

Topic 2

The American Revolution

Subject: Social Studies | **Grades:** 4-6

Contains 5 WIDA-Leveled Sets:

- Level 1: Entering
- Level 2: Beginning
- Level 3: Developing
- Level 4: Expanding
- Level 5: Bridging

Topic Vocabulary Reference

This vocabulary list applies to all 5 WIDA levels for this topic. Refer to the Differentiated Tasks box below to assign appropriate practice for each student.

Term	Student-Friendly Definition
revolution	A big change, often involving war, to replace one government with another
colony	A place that is ruled by another country
independence	Freedom from being ruled by someone else
patriot	A colonist who wanted independence from Britain
loyalist	A colonist who stayed faithful to the British king
protest	An action to show you disagree with something
representation	Having someone speak and make decisions for you in government
treaty	A formal agreement between countries

Differentiated Vocabulary Tasks

Level 1: Entering	Draw a picture or point to the correct meaning for each word.
Level 2: Beginning	Use the word in a short phrase.
Level 3: Developing	Write a simple sentence using the word.
Level 4: Expanding	Write a detailed sentence explaining the word in context.
Level 5: Bridging	Use the word in a complex sentence demonstrating deep understanding.

Level 1: Entering

Modified Reading Passage

The American Revolution was a war. The colonies fought against Britain. They wanted to be free. The war lasted many years. The colonies won and became a new country.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Who fought in the American Revolution?

Q2: Did the colonies want to be free or ruled?

Q3: Who won the war?

Sentence Frames

■ *The American Revolution was _____.*

■ *The colonies fought against _____.*

■ *They wanted to be _____.*

■ *A patriot is _____.*

■ *The colonies won and became _____.*

Level 2: Beginning

Modified Reading Passage

The American Revolution was a war between the American colonies and Great Britain. The colonists wanted independence because they had no say in the government. Patriots fought for freedom, while Loyalists stayed with Britain. After many battles, the colonies won their independence.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Did the colonists have a say in the British government?

Q2: Did Patriots want independence or the British king?

Q3: What did the colonies win after the battles?

Sentence Frames

■ *The American Revolution was a war between _____.*

■ *The colonists wanted independence because _____.*

■ *Patriots fought for _____, but Loyalists _____.*

■ *The Declaration of Independence said _____.*

■ *After the war, the colonies _____.*

Level 3: Developing

Modified Reading Passage

The American Revolution was a conflict between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain. The colonists protested against British taxes and laws because they had no representation. Patriots supported independence, while Loyalists remained faithful to Britain. The Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. The colonies won the war and formed a new nation.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Why did colonists protest against British taxes?

Q2: What was the difference between Patriots and Loyalists?

Q3: What happened in 1776?

Sentence Frames

■ *The American Revolution was caused by _____.*

■ *Colonists protested against _____.*

■ *Patriots supported _____, while Loyalists _____.*

■ *The Declaration of Independence was important because _____.*

■ *The Treaty of Paris resulted in _____.*

Level 4: Expanding

Modified Reading Passage

The American Revolution was a pivotal conflict between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain, driven by disputes over taxation, representation, and individual rights. Colonists protested British policies such as the Stamp Act, arguing that taxation without representation was unjust. Patriots championed independence while Loyalists maintained allegiance to the Crown. The Declaration of Independence articulated the colonies' vision for self-governance. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 formally recognized American independence.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: How did the Stamp Act contribute to the start of the Revolution?

Q2: Explain the ideological divide between Patriots and Loyalists.

Q3: What vision did the Declaration of Independence articulate?

Sentence Frames

- *The American Revolution was driven by disputes over _____.*
- *Colonists argued that taxation without representation was _____.*
- *The ideological divide between Patriots and Loyalists reflected _____.*
- *The Declaration of Independence articulated _____.*
- *The Treaty of Paris (1783) established _____.*

Topic Vocabulary Reference

This vocabulary list applies to all 5 WIDA levels for this topic. Refer to the Differentiated Tasks box below to assign appropriate practice for each student.

Term	Student-Friendly Definition
democracy	A system of government where people vote to make decisions
constitution	The supreme law of a country that tells how the government works
citizen	A person who belongs to a country and has its rights and duties
rights	Freedoms and protections that belong to every person
responsibilities	Duties that citizens are expected to fulfill
vote	To make a choice in an election
branch	A part of government with its own duties, like the President or Congress
law	A rule made by the government that everyone must follow

Differentiated Vocabulary Tasks

Level 1: Entering	Draw a picture or point to the correct meaning for each word.
Level 2: Beginning	Use the word in a short phrase.
Level 3: Developing	Write a simple sentence using the word.
Level 4: Expanding	Write a detailed sentence explaining the word in context.
Level 5: Bridging	Use the word in a complex sentence demonstrating deep understanding.

Level 1: Entering

Modified Reading Passage

A government makes rules. Citizens live in a country. Citizens can vote. They have rights. They also have rules to follow.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: What does a government make?

Q2: Can citizens vote?

Q3: Do citizens have rules to follow?

Sentence Frames

■ A government makes _____.

■ Citizens live in _____.

■ Citizens can _____.

■ They have _____.

■ They follow _____.

Level 2: Beginning

Modified Reading Passage

Government is the system that runs a country. In a democracy, citizens vote to choose their leaders. The Constitution is the highest law of the land. Citizens have rights, like freedom of speech. They also have responsibilities, like following laws and voting.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Do citizens in a democracy vote for leaders or kings?

Q2: Is the Constitution a rule or a right?

Q3: What is one responsibility of a citizen?

Sentence Frames

- *Government is the system that _____.*
- *In a democracy, citizens _____.*
- *The Constitution is _____.*
- *Citizens have rights, like _____.*
- *They also have responsibilities, like _____.*

Level 3: Developing

Modified Reading Passage

Government is the system that creates and enforces laws for a country. In a democracy, citizens have the power to choose their leaders through voting. The United States Constitution establishes the structure of the government and protects the rights of citizens. The government is divided into three branches to make sure no one part has too much power. Good citizens exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities, such as obeying laws and serving on a jury.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: How do citizens choose their leaders in a democracy?

Q2: What does the United States Constitution do?

Q3: Why is the government divided into three branches?

Sentence Frames

■ *Government is the system that creates and enforces _____.*

■ *In a democracy, citizens have the power to _____.*

■ *The Constitution protects _____.*

■ *The government is divided into three branches to _____.*

■ *Good citizens exercise their rights and _____.*

Level 4: Expanding

Modified Reading Passage

Government is the institution that establishes and enforces laws, provides services, and protects citizens. In a representative democracy, citizens elect officials to make decisions on their behalf. The United States Constitution delineates the framework of the federal government and enumerates fundamental citizen rights through the Bill of Rights. The separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches ensures checks and balances. Active citizenship encompasses exercising voting rights, obeying laws, and participating in civic duties.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: How does a representative democracy function?

Q2: Explain the purpose of the Bill of Rights.

Q3: How does the separation of powers ensure checks and balances?

Sentence Frames

- *Government is the institution that _____.*
- *In a representative democracy, citizens elect officials to _____.*
- *The Constitution delineates the framework of _____.*
- *The separation of powers ensures _____.*
- *Active citizenship encompasses _____.*

Level 5: Bridging

Modified Reading Passage

Government constitutes the formal institution responsible for establishing and enforcing public policy, maintaining social order, and providing collective goods. In a representative democracy, sovereignty resides with the citizenry, who delegate governing authority to elected representatives through electoral processes. The United States Constitution establishes the fundamental legal framework, delineating federal structure and enumerating protected liberties. The separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches creates a system of checks and balances designed to prevent the concentration of authority. Civic participation requires citizens to exercise enumerated rights and fulfill civic obligations.

Leveled Comprehension Questions

Q1: Analyze how the separation of powers prevents the concentration of authority.

Q2: Evaluate the role of the citizenry in delegating governing authority in a representative democracy.

Q3: How does the Constitution delineate the balance between federal structure and protected liberties?

Sentence Frames

■ *Government constitutes the formal institution responsible for ____.*

■ *In a representative democracy, sovereignty resides with ____.*

■ *The United States Constitution establishes ____.*

■ *The separation of powers creates a system designed to ____.*

■ *Civic participation requires citizens to ____.*

Thank You for Your Purchase!

We hope this WIDA-Aligned ELL Differentiation Toolkit supports your students' language development and content mastery across all proficiency levels.

Your feedback is highly appreciated!

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