

The Defining Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Standards

The Defining Features of Academic Language operate within a sociocultural context for language use.

	Performance Criteria	Features	Examples
Discourse Level	Discourse Complexity <i>(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)</i>	Amount of speech/written text Structure of speech/written text Density of speech/written text Organization and cohesion of ideas Variety of sentence types	Voice Mood Cohesive forms (referential, repetition) Coherence (e.g., topic and comment and key words for written language; relevance, sequencing, and closing relevant to topic for oral language) Logical connectors Parallelism Organizational types (e.g., narration, exposition, description)
Sentence Level	Language Forms and Conventions <i>(Types, array, and use of language structures)</i>	Types and variety of grammatical structures Conventions, mechanics, and fluency Match of language forms to purpose/perspective	Tense Aspect (e.g., progressive, perfect tenses) Simple, compound, and complex sentences Word order Parallelism Denotation and connotation Formulaic expressions Interrogatives Prosodic features (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm of speech) Agreement (e.g., subject/verb)
Word/Phrase Level	Vocabulary Usage <i>(Specificity of word or phrase choice)</i>	General, specific, and technical language Multiple meanings of words and phrases Formulaic and idiomatic expressions Nuances and shades of meaning Collocations	Sound-symbol-spelling correspondence Word formations (e.g., affixes, compounding) Count/non-count distinctions Denotation and connotation Possession (e.g., possessives)

The sociocultural context for language use involves the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles