

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Paper Tier Placement Guidance

Prior to 2018-19, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Paper was divided into three tiers: A, B, and C, and WIDA provided [tier placement guidance](#) as shown in the figure below.

Tier Placement Through the 2017-2018 School Year

| Level 1 Entering | Level 2 Emerging | Level 3 Developing | Level 4 Expanding | Level 5 Bridging | Level 6 - Reaching |
|---|---------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <p>TIER A is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have arrived in the U.S. or entered school in the U.S. within this academic school year without previous instruction in English, OR • currently receive literacy instruction ONLY in their native language, OR • have recently tested at the lowest level of English language proficiency | | | | | |
| <p>TIER B is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have social language proficiency and some, but not extensive, academic language proficiency in English, OR • have acquired some literacy in English though have not yet reached grade level literacy | | | | | |
| | | <p>TIER C is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are approaching grade level in literacy and academic language proficiency in the core content areas, OR • will likely meet the state's exit criteria for support services by the end of the academic year | | | |

What is Changing?

In 2018-19, WIDA is changing the tier structure of ACCESS Paper. This year, the Tier B and Tier C test forms are being consolidated into a single Tier B/C test form for the Listening and Reading domains. The Speaking and Writing domains remain unchanged from past years – these two domains were already divided into Tiers A and B/C. The consolidated Tier B/C Listening and Reading test forms will target Proficiency Levels (PLs) 3-5.

Tier Placement 2018-19 and Beyond

| Level 1 Entering | Level 2 Beginning | Level 3 Developing | Level 4 Expanding | Level 5 Bridging | Level 6 - Reaching |
|--|----------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <p>TIER A is most appropriate for English language learners who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have arrived in the U.S. or entered school in the U.S. within this academic school year without previous instruction in English, OR • currently receive literacy instruction ONLY in their native language, OR • have recently tested at the lowest level of English language proficiency | | <p>TIER B/C is most appropriate for English language learners who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have social language proficiency and are beginning to approach or have acquired academic language proficiency in English, OR • have acquired some literacy in English or are approaching grade level literacy in English, OR • will likely meet the state's exit criteria for support services by the end of the academic year | | | |

What do I need to do?

Like every year, educators need to consider the appropriate tier for ELLs who are taking ACCESS Paper. WIDA recommends that educators make few changes in student tier placement as a result of the new tier structure. Please see the following table for WIDA's recommendations on tier placement. WIDA has also included guidance based on students' previous scores attained on either ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or on WIDA Screener.

| Tier Placement through 2017-18 | Tier Placement in 2018-19 | PL score guidance |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A | A | Overall PL 2.0 or below |
| B | B/C | Overall PL above 2.0 |
| C | B/C | NA |

The proficiency level score guidance is provided to help educators with tier placement decisions. Generally, WIDA suggests that students who have taken ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or WIDA Screener and attained a score at or below PL 2.0 take ACCESS Paper Tier A. In typical situations, the Tier A test form is designed for newcomer ELLs who have only just begun to develop their academic English language proficiency. Students whose academic language development is characterized by the language presented in Tier B are typically recommended to take the Tier B/C test form.

Additional Considerations

- **Noteworthy Progress:** Some students who previously scored in the 1.0-2.0 range may have demonstrated significant growth since they were last tested and may be ready to take the Tier B/C ACCESS Paper test forms. Local educators are the best judges of a student's appropriate test tier.
- **English Literacy Development:** Educators may want to keep in mind their students' literacy skills. Students who have emerging levels of English literacy can find the ACCESS for ELLs Tier B/C Writing test challenging, and younger students, particularly those in Grade 1, can find the ACCESS for ELLs Reading test challenging.
- **State and District Guidance:** States may wish to provide more specific guidance on PL scores used to determine tier placement. More information on state guidance can be found on your state's ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Checklist.

Of course, educators are the best judges of the appropriate tier for each student. If you have any questions about tier placement for your students, please contact the WIDA Client Services Center (help@wida.us).