Overview of the California English Language Development Standards and Proficiency Level Descriptors

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**Overview of the California English Language Development Standards
and Proficiency Level Descriptors**

**Background: California English Language Development Standards Aligned to California's
Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts**

In 2010, the California State Board of Education (SBE) adopted California's Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (Common Core State Standards), which describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities in reading, writing, speaking and listening, conventions, knowledge of language, and vocabulary that all students need for college- and career-readiness across key academic content areas. These next generation standards, along with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards, are part of a national movement to ensure K–12 students gain the necessary literacy and mathematical understanding and practices required in 21st-century higher education and workplace communities. The sponsors of the Common Core State Standards Initiative specify that these new standards are intended to apply to all students, including English learners (ELs):

> The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers strongly believe that all students should be held to the same high expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards. This includes students who are English language learners. However, these students may require additional time, appropriate instructional support, and aligned assessments as they acquire both English language proficiency and content area knowledge.[1]

California's ELs may need instructional support in developing proficiency in English language and literacy as they engage in learning academic content based on these new, rigorous standards. ELs face an additional challenge in developing literacy in English since they must develop oral proficiency in English—including depth and breadth of vocabulary—at the same time that they are learning to read and write (see Appendix A for more details). In recognition of the need for new English language development standards to clarify what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to help ELs engage with and master next generation standards, including college- and career-readiness standards, Assembly Bill 124 was enacted and required the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the SBE, to update, revise, and align the state's current California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) by grade level to the state's English language arts (ELA) standards.

In response to this legislation, the California Department of Education (CDE), with the assistance of the California Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestEd in partnership with WestEd's Assessment and Standards Development Services Program, conducted an extensive and robust process to develop and validate new CA ELD Standards that align to California's

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[1] http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-for-english-learners.pdf

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and address English language and literacy skills ELs need in key content areas. This process was grounded in two core principles: 1) transparency toward and input from the field and 2) development based on sound theory and empirical research. The first principle included comprehensive guidance and review provided by the CDE, statewide focus groups, a state-appointed Panel of Experts, as well as comments on a draft of the standards from the public via public hearings and written feedback. Public commenters included teachers, principals, staff in district and county offices of education, advocacy groups, educational scholars, and other educational community members. For the second principle, three overlapping guidance areas were analyzed: 1) theoretical foundations; 2) current empirical research and research reviews; and 3) additional relevant guidance documents, such as policy documents.

California's English Learner Students

ELs come to California schools from all over the world, and from within California, with a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, experiences with formal schooling, proficiency with native language and English literacy, migrant statuses, and socioeconomic statuses, as well as other experiences in the home, school, and community. All of these factors inform how educators support ELs to achieve school success through implementation of the CA ELD Standards and the academic content standards. Some of these key factors follow:

- **Stages of Cognitive Development.** It is important to note how ELs learn the English language at different stages of their cognitive development. Most notably, it is important to distinguish between students in the primary grades, for whom the focus is "learning to read" while also engaging in challenging content learning, and students in the intermediate and secondary grades, for whom the focus is "reading to learn" in various content areas. ELs entering California schools in kindergarten, for example, will benefit from participating in the same instructional activities in literacy as their non-EL peers, along with additional differentiated support based on student need. EL students who enter in secondary grades, depending upon the level and extent of previous schooling they have received, may need additional support mastering certain linguistic and cognitive skills in order to fully engage in intellectually challenging academic tasks.

- **Native Language Literacy.** Adolescent ELs who enter California schools after the primary grades may have varying levels of native language foundations in literacy. All students can draw upon knowledge of oral vocabulary and structures (e.g., recognition of cognates) to inform their English language learning to some extent, depending on their native language oral proficiency and how closely their native language is related to English. Students with established native language literacy and content knowledge can transfer these skills and knowledge to English with appropriate instructional support. (See Appendix A: Foundational Literacy Skills for English Learners for additional information on teaching foundational literacy skills to students with varying literacy experiences.) Nevertheless, even with strong native language foundations, some EL adolescents may still struggle to master disciplinary

literacy, given the accelerated time frame in which they are expected to meet grade-level content-area expectations.

- **Long-Term English Learners.** Many ELs may have not received the support they need to continually progress in English language development and academic subjects (typically English language arts [ELA]), giving rise to the "long-term English learner" phenomenon. These long-term ELs have been schooled in the U.S. for six or more years but have not made sufficient linguistic and academic progress to meet redesignation criteria and exit English learner status.[2] Fluent in social/conversational English but challenged by literacy tasks, and particularly disciplinary literacy tasks, these students find it difficult to engage meaningfully in increasingly rigorous coursework. The State of California recognizes that Long term ELs face considerable challenges succeeding in school as the amount and complexity of the academic texts they encounter rapidly increase. To this end, and to ensure that regardless of the challenges ELs face they achieve the same core academic standards as their non-EL peers, on September 21, 2012, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 2193 (Lara, Statutes of 2012, Chapter 427). AB 2193 defines "long-term English learners" and "ELs at risk of becoming long-term ELs," and requires the CDE to annually ascertain and provide to school districts and schools the number of such pupils in each school district and school.

- **Programs and Services for English Learners.** California's ELs are enrolled in a variety of different school and instructional settings that influence the application of the CA ELD Standards. An EL could be in a newcomer program, a structured English immersion program, a mainstream program where ELs may receive specialized ELD instruction, a separate ELD class, or a bilingual/dual-language program. The CA ELD Standards apply to all of these settings and are designed to be used ***by all teachers of academic content and of ELD in all these settings***, albeit in ways that are appropriate to the setting and identified student needs. For example, they are the focal standards in settings specifically designed for English language development—such as an ELD class where ELs are grouped by English language proficiency level. To help meet the needs of schools and districts in the implementation of these standards, Governor Brown on September 27, 2012 signed AB 1719 (Fuentes, 2012) into law. AB 1719 requires the CDE to recommend, and the SBE to approve, evaluation criteria to guide the development and review of supplemental instructional materials for ELs. The bill also requires the CDE to develop a list by March 1, 2014, of supplemental instructional materials for beginning through advanced levels of proficiency for use in kindergarten and grades 1 to 8 that are aligned with the revised ELD standards. Additionally, the CA ELD Standards are designed and intended to be used *in tandem with* other academic content standards to support ELs in mainstream academic content classrooms. These could include, for

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[2] For a discussion of defining the term "Long Term English Learners" see Olsen, L. (2010). *Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners.* Californians Together. Available at: www.californianstogether.org.

example, a third-grade self-contained classroom during ELA, social studies, math, and science instruction; a middle school math class; or high school science class

Overview of the Proficiency Level Descriptors

The Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) provide an overview of stages of English language development that English learners are expected to progress through as they gain increasing proficiency in English as a new language. The PLDs describe student knowledge, skills, and abilities across a continuum, identifying what ELs know and can do at early stages and at exit from each of three proficiency levels: Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging[3]. These descriptors are intended to be used as a guide for teachers and curriculum developers to provide ELs with targeted instruction in English language development as well as differentiated instruction in academic content areas.

It is important to note that while the PLDs describe an aligned set of knowledge, skills, and abilities at each proficiency level that reflect a linear progression across the levels, this is done for purposes of presentation and understanding: Actual second language acquisition does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion within or across proficiency levels. An EL at any given point along his or her trajectory of English learning may exhibit some abilities (e.g., speaking skills) at a higher proficiency level, while at the same time exhibiting other abilities (e.g., writing skills) at a lower proficiency level[4]. Additionally, a student may successfully perform a particular skill at a lower proficiency level (such as reading and analyzing an informational text) and at the next higher proficiency level need review in the same reading and analysis skills when presented with a new or more complex type of informational text. Thus, while a student may be identified—based on state assessment results and other state and local criteria—as being eligible for English language services appropriate to a particular proficiency level, the student's actual abilities may vary by language domain (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing). For the same reason, a proficiency level does not identify a student (e.g., "Emerging student"), but rather identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of English language development, for example: "a student at the Emerging level," or "a student whose listening comprehension ability is at the Emerging level."

The California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities in English as a new language that are expected *at exit from each proficiency level*, with the highest level, Bridging, being aligned to the California's Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. These exit descriptors signal high expectations for ELs to progress through all levels and to attain the academic English language they need to access and engage with

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[3] As there is currently no available empirical evidence to support a particular number of ELD proficiency levels as optimal, the development and design of the PLDs for the CA ELD Standards was based on common practices in the state of grouping ELs into three levels for purposes of instruction. These practices were confirmed by practitioners, administrators, and academic researchers throughout the state as part of the ELD standards validation process, as well as by guidance documents such as the Framework for English Language Proficiency/Development Standards Corresponding to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. Council of Chief State School Officers (2012). *Framework for English language proficiency development standards corresponding to the common core state standards and the next generation science standards*. Washington DC: Author.

[4] See, for example, the discussion on pp. 26–27 in Gottlieb, M. (2006). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges from language proficiency to academic achievement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

grade-level content in all content areas. Note also that the proficiency level descriptors include specifications at "early stages" and at "exit" for each of the three levels, providing valuable information that can be used for determining meaningful performance level distinctions based on assessment results.

Organization of the Proficiency Level Descriptors

The organization of the PLDs represents English language development as a continuum of increasing proficiency in language learning and use, starting with **native language** competencies students possess when they enter school, and concluding (though not ending) with **lifelong language learning** that all language users engage in[5]. The three levels are labeled to represent three stages of English language development, describing expectations for how well students can understand and use the English language at each level as they continue to build on existing language skills and knowledge.

- **Emerging:** Students at this level typically progress very quickly, learning to use English for immediate needs as well as beginning to understand and use academic vocabulary and other features of academic language.

- **Expanding:** Students at this level are challenged to increase their English skills in more contexts, and learn a greater variety of vocabulary and linguistic structures, applying their growing language skills in more sophisticated ways appropriate to their age and grade level.

- **Bridging:** Students at this level continue to learn and apply a range of high-level English language skills in a wide variety of contexts, including comprehension and production of highly technical texts. The "bridge" alluded to is the transition to full engagement in grade-level academic tasks and activities in a variety of content areas without the need for specialized ELD instruction. However, ELs at *all* levels of English language proficiency fully participate in grade level tasks in all content areas with varying degrees of scaffolding in order to develop both content knowledge and English.

The PLDs also emphasize that ELs at all proficiency levels are capable of high-level thinking and can engage in complex, cognitively demanding social and academic activities requiring language as long as they are provided appropriate linguistic support. The ***extent of support needed varies depending on the familiarity and complexity of the task and topic, as well as on the student's English language proficiency level.*** Within the PLDs, three general levels of support are identified: **Substantial, Moderate, and Light**. The descriptors for these general levels of support are intended to signal the extent of linguistic scaffolding most likely needed for implementing the CA ELD Standards appropriately at each proficiency level. They are not intended to explain how to provide support or differentiate instruction for ELs at each level.

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[5] Note that the concept of "lifelong language learning" for proficient users of English (as well as other languages) is distinct from that of "long term English learners" who have not been supported to progress to full proficiency in English.

Each proficiency level descriptor also includes the following sections:

- **Overall Proficiency:** A general descriptor of ELs' abilities at *entry to, progress through,* and *exit from* the level;
- **Early Stages:** Descriptors of abilities in English language that ELs have *at the early stages* of the level; and
- **Exit Stages:** Descriptors of abilities in English language students have *at exit from* the level.

The descriptors for early and exit stages of each proficiency level are detailed across:

- Three Modes of Communication:
  - **Collaborative** (engagement in dialogue with others);
  - **Interpretive** (comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts); and
  - **Productive** (creation of oral presentations and written texts); and
- Two dimensions of Knowledge of Language:
  - **Metalinguistic Awareness:** The extent of language awareness and self-monitoring students have at the level; and
  - **Accuracy of Production:** The extent of accuracy in production ELs can be expected to exhibit at the level; English learners increase in accuracy of linguistic production as they develop proficiency in English. ***Accuracy may vary within a level depending on context, such as extent of cognitive demand or familiarity of a task.***

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

Student Capacities	English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum →------------------------------Emerging -----------------------------→-------------------------------------Expanding---------------------------→			
Native Language English learners come to school possessing a wide range of competencies in their native language appropriate to their age. They may have varying levels of literacy in their native language depending on their prior experiences in the home, community, and school. As learners of English as a new language, they gain metacognitive awareness of what language is and how it is used and apply this awareness in their language learning strategies, including drawing upon knowledge of their native language.	**Overall Proficiency** English learners **enter** the Emerging level having limited receptive and productive English skills. As they **progress through** the Emerging level, they start to respond to more varied communication tasks using learned words and phrases with increasing ease.	**Overall Proficiency** At **exit** from the Emerging level, students have basic English communication skills in social and academic contexts.	**Overall Proficiency** As English learners **progress through** the Expanding level, they move from being able to refashion learned phrases and sentences in English to meet their immediate communication and learning needs towards being able to increasingly engage in using the English language in more complex, cognitively demanding situations.	**Overall Proficiency** At **exit** from the Expanding level, students can use English to learn and communicate about a range of topics and academic content areas.
High Level Thinking with Linguistic Support English learners possess cognitive abilities appropriate to their age and experience. In order to communicate about their thinking as they learn English, they may need ***varying linguistic support depending on the linguistic and cognitive demand of the task.***	**General Extent of Support: Substantial** Students at the ***early stages*** of the Emerging level can engage in complex, cognitively demanding social and academic activities requiring language when provided **substantial** linguistic support; as they develop more familiarity and ease with understanding and using English, support may be **moderate or light** for familiar tasks or topics.		**General Extent of Support: Moderate** Students at the ***early stages*** of the Expanding level can engage in complex, cognitively demanding social and academic activities requiring language when provided **moderate** linguistic support; as they develop increasing ease with understanding and using English in a variety of contexts, support may be **light** for familiar tasks or topics.	

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum →------------------------------Bridging ------------------------------→		Lifelong Language Learning
Overall Proficiency As English learners **progress through** the Bridging level, they move from being able to communicate in ways appropriate to different tasks, purposes, and audiences in a variety of social and academic contexts towards being able to refine and enhance their English language competencies in a broader range of contexts.	**Overall Proficiency** At **exit** from the Bridging level, students can communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet academic demands in a variety of disciplines.	**Overall Proficiency** Students who have reached "proficiency" in the English language as determined by state and/or local criteria continue to build increasing breadth, depth, and complexity in comprehending and communicating in English in a wide variety of contexts.
General Extent of Support: Light Students at the **early stages** of the Bridging level can engage in complex, cognitively demanding social and academic activities requiring language when provided **light** linguistic support; as they develop increasing ease with understanding and using highly technical English, support may not be necessary for familiar tasks or topics using everyday English.		**General Extent of Support: Occasional** Students who have **exited** the Bridging level benefit from **occasional** linguistic support in their ongoing learning of English.

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

Mode of Communication	English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum			
	→----------------------------------Emerging ---→--Expanding---------------------------------→			
	At the *early stages* of the Emerging level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Emerging level, students are able to:	At the *early stages* of the Expanding level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Expanding level, students are able to:
Collaborative	• express basic personal and safety needs, ideas, and respond to questions on social and academic topics with gestures and words or short phrases; • use basic social conventions to participate in conversations;	• express basic personal and safety needs, ideas, and respond to questions on social and academic topics with phrases and short sentences; • participate in simple, face-to-face conversations with peers and others;	• express a variety of personal needs, ideas, and opinions and respond to questions using short sentences; • initiate simple conversations on social and academic topics;	• express more complex feelings, needs, ideas, and opinions using extended oral and written production; respond to questions using extended discourse • participate actively in collaborative conversations in all content areas with moderate to light support as appropriate;
Interpretive	• comprehend frequently occurring words and basic phrases in immediate physical surroundings; • read very brief grade-appropriate text with simple sentences and familiar vocabulary, supported by graphics or pictures; • comprehend familiar words, phrases, and questions drawn from content areas;	• comprehend a sequence of information on familiar topics as presented through stories and face-to-face conversations; • read brief grade-appropriate text with simple sentences and mostly familiar vocabulary, supported by graphics or pictures; • demonstrate understanding of words and phrases from previously learned content material;	• comprehend information on familiar topics and on some unfamiliar topics in contextualized settings; • independently read a variety of grade-appropriate text with simple sentences ; • read more complex text supported by graphics or pictures; • comprehend basic concepts in content areas;	• comprehend detailed information with fewer contextual clues on unfamiliar topics; • read increasingly complex grade-level text while relying on context and prior knowledge to obtain meaning from print; • read technical text on familiar topics supported by pictures or graphics;
Productive	• produce learned words and phrases and use gestures to communicate basic information; • express ideas using visuals such as drawings or charts, or graphic organizers; and • write or use familiar words and phrases related to everyday and academic topics.	• produce basic statements and ask questions in direct informational exchanges on familiar and routine subjects; • express ideas using information and short responses within structured contexts; and • write or use learned vocabulary drawn from academic content areas.	• produce sustained informational exchanges with others on an expanding variety of topics; • express ideas in highly structured and scaffolded academic interactions; and • write or use expanded vocabulary to provide information and extended responses in contextualized settings.	• produce, initiate, and sustain spontaneous interactions on a variety of topics; and • write and express ideas to meet most social and academic needs through the recombination of learned vocabulary and structures with support.

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

Mode of Communication	English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum →-------------------------------Bridging -------------------------------→	
	At the *early stages* of the Bridging level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Bridging level, students are able to:
Collaborative	• express increasingly complex feelings, needs, ideas, and opinions in a variety of settings; respond to questions using extended, more elaborated discourse • initiate and sustain dialogue on a variety of grade-level academic and social topics;	• participate fully in all collaborative conversations in all content areas at grade level with occasional support as necessary; • participate fully in both academic and non-academic settings requiring English;
Interpretive	• comprehend concrete and many abstract topics and begin to recognize language subtleties in a variety of communicative settings; • read increasingly complex text at grade level; • read technical text supported by pictures or graphics;	• comprehend concrete and abstract topics and recognize language subtleties in a variety of communicative settings; • read, with limited comprehension difficulty, a variety of grade-level and technical texts, in all content areas;
Productive	• produce, initiate, and sustain interactions with increasing awareness of tailoring language to specific purposes and audiences; and • write and express ideas to meet increasingly complex academic demands for specific purposes and audiences.	• produce, initiate, and sustain extended interactions tailored to specific purposes and audiences; and • write and express ideas to meet a variety of social needs and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences.

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

Knowledge of Language	English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum			
	→----------------------------------Emerging ---→--Expanding--------------------------------→			
	At the *early stages* of the Emerging level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Emerging level, students are able to:	At the *early stages* of the Expanding level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Expanding level, students are able to:
Metalinguistic Awareness	Apply to their learning of English an emerging awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English; • ways in which different kinds of language are appropriate for different tasks, purposes, and audiences; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use a limited range of everyday vocabulary, phrases, and memorized statements and questions in English;	Apply to their learning of English an awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English; • ways in which different kinds of language are appropriate for different tasks, purposes, and audiences; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use mostly everyday, and a limited range of general academic vocabulary and domain-specific vocabulary, phrases, and memorized statements and questions in English related mostly to familiar topics;	Apply to their learning of English an expanding awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English; • ways in which language may be different based on task, purpose, and audience; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use mostly everyday vocabulary, and an expanding range of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary in English related mostly to familiar topics; • extend discourse in limited ways in a range of conversations; • recognize language differences and engage in some self-monitoring;	Apply to their learning of English awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English; • ways in which language may be different based on task, purpose, and audience; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use both everyday vocabulary and a range of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary in English related to familiar and new topics; • extend discourse in a variety of ways in a range of conversations; • recognize language differences, engage in self-monitoring, and adjust oral and written language;
Accuracy of Production	• be comprehensible when using memorized or copied words or phrases; and • may exhibit **frequent errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **often** impede meaning.	• be comprehensible when using simple or learned phrases and sentences; and • may exhibit **frequent errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **sometimes** impede meaning.	• be comprehensible when using simple and some expanded sentences and discourse or texts; and • may exhibit **fairly frequent errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **may sometimes** impede meaning.	• be comprehensible when using expanded sentences, discourse or texts; and • may exhibit **fairly frequent errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **usually do not** impede meaning.

Proficiency Level Descriptors for California English Language Development Standards

Knowledge of Language	English Language Development: Proficiency Level Continuum →---------------------------------Bridging --------------------------------------→	
	At the *early stages* of the Bridging level, students are able to:	At *exit* from the Bridging level, students are able to:
Metalinguistic Awareness	Apply to their learning of English a sophisticated awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English to learning English; • ways in which language may be different based on task, purpose, and audience; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use a range of precise and varied grade-level general academic and domain-specific vocabulary in English related to new topics; • extend grade-level academic discourse in a variety of ways in a range of conversations and written texts of varying lengths and complexities; • recognize language differences, engage in self-monitoring, and adjust oral and written language in a range of contexts;	Apply to their learning of English a sophisticated awareness about: • differences and similarities between their native language and English to learning English; • ways in which language may be different based on task, purpose, and audience; and how to: • intentionally and purposefully use a range of precise and varied grade-level general academic and domain-specific vocabulary in English related to new topics across the disciplines; • extend grade-level academic discourse in a variety of ways in a range of conversations and written texts of varying lengths and complexities across the disciplines; • recognize language differences, engage in self-monitoring, and adjust oral and written language in a range of contexts across the disciplines;
Accuracy of Production	• be comprehensible when using a variety of grade-level expanded discourse or texts; and • may exhibit **some errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **usually do not** impede meaning.	• be comprehensible when using a variety of grade-level expanded discourse or texts on a variety of topics; and • may exhibit **some minor errors** in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions that **do not** impede meaning.

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Overview of the California English Language Development Standards

The California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) describe the key knowledge, skills, and abilities in core areas of English language development that students learning English as a new language need in order to access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content, with particular alignment to the key knowledge, skills, and abilities for achieving college- and career-readiness described in the Common Core State Standards for ELA. However, the CA ELD Standards do not repeat the Common Core State Standards for ELA, or represent ELA content at lower levels of achievement or rigor. Rather, the CA ELD Standards are designed to provide challenging content in English language development for ELs to gain proficiency in a range of rigorous academic English language skills. ***The CA ELD Standards are not intended to replace the Common Core State Standards for ELA but instead to amplify the language knowledge, skills and abilities of those Common Core State Standards that are critical in order for ELs to simultaneously be successful in school while they are developing English.***

ELs must have full access to high quality English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies content, as well as other subjects, at the same time as they are progressing through the ELD level continuum. The CA ELD Standards are intended to support this dual endeavor by providing fewer, clearer, and higher standards:

1. Fewer: Those standards that are necessary and essential for development and success;
2. Clearer: A coherent body of standards that have clear links to curriculum and assessments; and
3. Higher: Correspondence with the elevated standards in the CCSS.

Organization of the California English Language Development Standards

The California English Language Development (ELD) Standards are organized into two main sections common across all grade levels:

Section 1: Goal, Critical Principles, and Overview
Provides a foundation for and an orientation to the standards via the following components:

- A Goal statement for all English learners in California
- Critical Principles for Developing Language & Cognition in Academic Contexts
- An "at-a-glance" overview of Parts I–III of the CA ELD Standards, with corresponding grade-level Common Core State Standards for ELA indicated

Section 2: Elaboration on Critical Principles for Developing Language & Cognition in Academic Contexts
Extends the Critical Principles and provides detailed, grade-level CA ELD Standards, with corresponding Common Core State Standards indicated, in three parts:

- **Part I:** Interacting in Meaningful Ways
- **Part II:** Learning About How English Works
- **Part III:** Using Foundational Literacy Skills

Section 1 Components

Section 1: Goal, Critical Principles, and Overview is generally consistent across all grades, with some terminology variations in the K–8 and 9–10, 11–12 grade spans indicating relevant cognitive differences. Each Section 1 component is explained below.

Goal: This component of the CA ELD Standards provides an overarching goal statement which crystallizes what all educators in California want for English learners' development of academic English proficiency, success with grade-level disciplinary content, and broader awareness about language.

Critical Principles for Developing Language & Cognition in Academic Contexts: This component further details the goal statement by defining the critical and meaningful experiences and knowledge that English learners need in order to ultimately achieve the Goal. The Critical Principles also provide the foundation for the bulk of the CA ELD Standards document and introduce an outline of Parts I–III indicating the main components of the critical principles that will be elaborated upon in the remainder of the document.

Parts I–III Overview ("At a Glance"): Because content and language are inextricably linked, the three parts of the CA ELD Standards–Interacting in Meaningful Ways, Learning About How English Works, and using Foundational Literacy Skills – should be interpreted as complementary and interrelated dimensions of what must be addressed in a robust instructional program for English learners. Parts I and II are intentionally presented separately in order to call attention to the need for *both* a focus on meaning and interaction *and* a focus on building knowledge about the linguistic features and structure of English. Part III outlines foundational literacy skills ELs may need, depending on their previous literacy and educational experiences.

Just as teachers focus on meaningful and engaging activities designed to build content knowledge before strategically delving into specifics about how language is structured, the CA ELD Standards are organized with the focus on meaning and interaction first and the focus on knowledge about the English language and how it works afterward. ***Accordingly, the standards in Part II should not be used in isolation, but rather they should be used in the context of fostering intellectually- and discourse-rich, meaningful interactions outlined in Part I.***

Parts I and II of the CA ELD Standards are further delineated by headings, represented by letters, which cluster standards together. In Part 1: Interacting in Meaningful Ways, the headings identify *communicative modes*: Collaborative, Interpretive, and Productive. In Part II: Learning About How English Works, the headings identify key *language processes*: Structuring Cohesive Texts, Expanding & Enriching Ideas, and Connecting & Condensing Ideas. Below each heading is a set of ELD content *strands*, represented by numbers, as shown below.

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

    A. Collaborative (engagement in dialogue with others)

        1. Exchanging information/ideas via oral communication and conversations
        2. Interacting via written English (print and multimedia)
        3. Offering opinions and negotiating with/persuading others
        4. Adapting language choices to various contexts

    B. Interpretive (comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts)

        5. Listening actively and asking/answering questions about what was heard
        6. Reading closely and explaining interpretations/ideas from reading
        7. Evaluating how well writers and speakers use language to present or support ideas
        8. Analyzing how writers use vocabulary and other language resources

    C. Productive (creation of oral presentations and written texts)

        9. Expressing information and ideas in oral presentations
        10. Composing/writing literary and informational texts
        11. Supporting opinions or justifying arguments and evaluating others' opinions or arguments
        12. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources

Part II: Learning About How English Works

   A. Structuring Cohesive Texts

      1. *Understanding text structure* and organization based on purpose, text type, and discipline

      2. *Understanding cohesion* and how language resources across a text contribute to the way a text unfolds and flows

   B. Expanding & Enriching Ideas

      3. *Using verbs and verb phrases* to create precision and clarity in different text types

      4. *Using nouns and noun phrases* to expand ideas and provide more detail

      5. *Modifying to add details* to provide more information and create precision

   C. Connecting and Condensing Ideas

      6. *Connecting ideas* within sentences by combining clauses

      7. *Condensing ideas* within sentences using a variety of language resources

Part III: Using Foundational Literacy Skills: Considerations for instruction in foundational literacy at each grade level K–5, and the grade span 6–12 are outlined here.

Corresponding Common Core State Standards for ELA: The right-hand column of the overview of the CA ELD Standards shows the correspondence[6] of the CA ELD Standards to the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards are identified by their strand, grade, and number (or number and letter, where applicable), so that RI.4.3, for example, stands for Reading, Informational Text, grade 4, standard 3 and W.5.1a stands for Writing, grade 5, standard 1a. Common Core State Standards strand designations are indicated in the CA ELD Standards as follows:

- **RL:** Reading Standards for Literature (K–12)
- **RI:** Reading Standards for Informational Text (K–12)
- **RF:** Reading Standards for Foundational Literacy Skills (K–5)
- **RH:** Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (6–12)
- **RST:** Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects (6–12)
- **SL:** Speaking and Listening Standards (K–12)
- **L:** Language Standards (K–12)

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[6] As noted above, since the CA ELD Standards are not intended to repeat content in the Common Core State Standards for ELA, individual ELD and ELA standards *correspond* to each other in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities and rigor, rather than matching exactly.

- **W:** Writing Standards (K–12)
- **WHST:** Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (6–12)

Section 2 Components

Section 2: Elaboration on Critical Principles for Developing Language & Cognition in Academic Contexts unpacks the Critical Principles via a set of ELD standards for each grade level K–8 and for the grade spans 9–10 and 11–12. These standards provide descriptions of expectations for English learners *at exit* from each of the three proficiency levels along the ELD continuum—*Emerging, Expanding,* and *Bridging*—by each ELD standard strand. These expectations are appropriate so long as ELs are provided with an appropriately designed curriculum, effective instruction, and strategic levels of scaffolding. Components of Section II are explained below.

Texts and Discourse in Context: This column emphasizes language as a complex and social meaning-making resource to be fostered via intellectually challenging, interactive, and dialogue-rich contexts focused on content knowledge and linguistic development. *Texts* can be written, spoken, or multimodal, and in print or digital forms. *Discourse* is, in broad terms, communication of meaning in any modality (e.g., spoken, written, visual). The language choices students make, including which grammatical and lexical resources to use, are influenced by *context*, which includes the communicative purpose, audience, text type, and discipline/content area. Students use their knowledge of the English language in the context of intellectually engaging instruction where the primary focus is on comprehending and making meaning. This column calls out some of the variables teachers need to consider when designing and implementing instruction for English learners:

- **Corresponding Common Core State Standards for ELA:** The corresponding Common Core State Standards for ELA are provided first so that teachers see the interconnected nature of the ELA and CA ELD Standards.

- **Purposes for Using Language:** Purposes for using language that are featured prominently in the Common Core State Standards, and correspondingly, in the CA ELD Standards. Teachers support ELs to develop an awareness of these purposes as they progress in language proficiency and through the grades.

- **Text Types:** Provided in the Common Core State Standards, each text type has particular language features, based on the discipline, content, purpose, and audience. Teachers help ELs develop an awareness of text types and their language features as they progress through the grades. Informational text types are presented first in order to emphasize their importance in college- and career-readiness, as well as in developing content knowledge.

- **Audiences:** As they use language, ELs need to consider the audience, which could be a peer in a one-to-one conversation about a social topic, a group of peers engaged in an academic conversation (one-to-group), or an academic oral presentation or written task (one-to-many), as well as other types of audience.

Teachers help ELs develop an awareness of audience as they progress through the grades.

English Language Development Level Continuum: This continuum distinguishes the three overall English language development (ELD) levels: *Emerging, Expanding,* and *Bridging.* Gradations and spiraling of acquisition of knowledge and skills between levels, as well as variation within levels, is expected. Explanation of the continuum is provided in the English Language Proficiency Level Descriptors section above.

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways: Part I provides grade level CA ELD Standards that sets expectations for English learners to participate in meaningful, relevant, and intellectually challenging ways in various contexts and disciplines in three modes: *collaborative, interpretive,* and *productive*.

Part II: Learning About How English Works: Part II focuses on ways in which English learners build awareness about language resources available to them, how English is structured and organized, and how meaning is made through language choices in order to improve their ability to comprehend and produce academic texts in various content areas. Part II is organized into the following ways of using language to be applied to activities in all three modes in Part I: *Structuring Cohesive Texts, Expanding and Enriching Ideas,* and *Connecting and Condensing Ideas.*

Part III: Using Foundational Literacy Skills: Part III is provided separately in order to highlight for teachers the potential need to provide specialized instruction to their ELs in order to support their development of foundational literacy skills. This specialized instruction is designed by adapting the Reading Standards: Foundational Literacy Skills (K–5) in the Common Core State Standards for ELA based on ELs' age, cognitive level, and previous literacy or educational experiences. Since the Reading Standards: Foundational Literacy Skills are intended to guide instruction for students in kindergarten through fifth grade, these standards need to be adapted—using appropriate instructional strategies and materials—to meet the particular pedagogical and literacy needs of ELs at the secondary level, including the need to teach foundational literacy skills in an accelerated time frame.