

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS and FORMS

The English Language Proficiency Standards are written as pathways to the Oregon English Language Arts standards. The ELP Standards are designed to supplement the ELA standards to ensure that LEP students develop proficiency in both the English language and the concepts and skills contained in the ELA standards. They can be found on the web at www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/real/standards.

This section contains language functions and forms that native English speakers acquire mostly before entering school or naturally at home. These language functions and forms, however, need to be explicitly taught to English language learners (ELLs). They may be taught to ELLs at all grade levels, and as the need and context arises.

Forms of a language deal with the internal grammatical structure of words. The relationship between *boy* and *boys*, for example, and the relationship (irregular) between *man* and *men* would be **forms** of a language.

A language **function** refers to the purpose for which speech or writing is being used.

In speech these include:

- giving instructions
- introducing ourselves
- making requests

In academic writing we use a range of specific functions in order to communicate ideas clearly. These include:

- describing processes
- comparing or contrasting things or ideas, and
- classifying objects or ideas

The contrast between **form** and **function** in language can be illustrated through a simple medical analogy. If doctors studied only a limited portion of the human system, such as anatomical form, they would be unable to adequately address their patient's needs. To fully treat their patients, physicians must understand the purposes of the human body and the relationships between organs, cells, and genes (Pozzi, 2004). Similarly, ELLs need to understand both the **form** (structure) and the **function** (purpose) of the English language in order to reach higher levels of proficiency.

Pozzi, D.C. (2004). *Forms and functions in language: Morphology, syntax*. Retrieved March 10, 2005, from University of Houston, College of Education Web site: <http://www.viking.coe.uh.edu/gm11.intr/intr.0.1.2.htm>

Language Functions and Examples of Forms

Language Function	Examples of Language Forms
Expressing needs and likes	Indirect/ direct object, subject/ verb agreement, pronouns
Describing people, places, and things	Nouns, pronouns, adjectives
Describing spatial and temporal relations	Prepositional phrases
Describing actions	Present progressive tense, adverbs
Retelling/relating past events	Past tense verbs, perfect aspect (present and past)
Making predictions	Verbs: future tense, conditional mode
Asking Informational Questions	Verbs and verb phrases in questions
Asking Clarifying Questions	Questions with increasing specificity
Expressing and Supporting Opinions	Sentence structure, modals (will, can, may, shall)
Comparing	Adjectives and conjunctions, comparatives, superlatives, adverbs
Contrasting	Comparative adjectives
Summarizing	Increasingly complex sentences with increasingly specific vocabulary
Persuading	Verb forms
Literary Analysis	Sentence structure, specific vocabulary
Cause and Effect	Verb forms
Drawing Conclusions	Comparative adjective
Defining	Nouns, abstract nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
Explaining	Verb forms, indicative verb, declarative sentences, complex sentences, adverbs of manner
Generalizing	Common, collective and abstract nouns, verb forms, nominalizations
Evaluating	Complex sentences; increasing specificity of nouns, verbs, and adjectives; correlative conjunctions
Interpreting	Language of propaganda, complex sentences, nominalizations

Sequencing	Adverbs of time, relative clauses, subordinate conjunctions
Hypothesizing and speculating	Modals (would, could, might), compound tenses (would have been)
Summarizing	Modals (would, could, might), compound tenses (would have been)

**ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS AND GRAMMATICAL FORMS
ALL GRADES**

1. Language Function: Expressing Needs and Likes					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS:
Students demonstrate minimal comprehension of general meaning; gain familiarity with the sounds, rhythms and patterns of English. Early stages show no verbal responses while in later stages one or two word responses are expected. Students respond in single words and phrases, which may include subject or a predicate. Many speech errors are observed. <i>(bear, brown)</i>	Students demonstrate increased comprehension of general meaning and some specific meaning; use routine expressions independently and respond using phrases and simple sentences, which include a subject and predicate. Students show basic errors in speech. <i>(The bear is brown. He is eating.)</i>	Students demonstrate good comprehension of general meaning; increased comprehension of specific meaning; responds in more complex sentences, with more detail using newly acquired vocabulary to experiment and form messages. <i>(The brown bear lived with his family in the forest.)</i>	Students demonstrate consistent comprehension of general meaning; good understanding of implied meaning; sustain conversation, respond with detail in compound and complex sentences; actively participate using more extensive vocabulary, use standard grammar with few random errors. <i>(Can bears live in the forest if they find food there?)</i>	Students' comprehension of general and implied meaning, including idiomatic and figurative language. Students initiate and negotiate using appropriate discourse, varied grammatical structures and vocabulary; use of conventions for formal and informal use. <i>(Would you like me to bring pictures of the bear that I saw last summer?)</i>	
One or two-word answers (nouns or yes/no) to questions about preferences, (e.g., <i>two, apples, or tree</i>)	Simple sentences with subject/verb/object. <i>"I like/don't like—(object)—." I need a /some — (object)—."</i>	Elaborated sentences with subject/verb/object	Sentences with subject/verb/object and dependent clause	Complex sentences, perhaps with tags or embedded questions	Sentence Structure: The basic sentence structures that we use to express needs and likes are foundations of the more complex sentence structure we use for academic purposes.

2. Language Function: Describing People, Places and Things					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Common nouns and adjectives	Simple sentences with the verb <i>to be</i> , using common nouns and adjectives. “ <i>The (my, her) _____ is/are _____. A (it) has/have _____.</i> ”	Elaborated sentences has/have/had or is/are/were with nouns and adjectives	Compound sentences with more specific vocabulary (nouns, adjectives)	Complex sentences with more specific vocabulary (nouns, adjectives)	<u>Nouns Pronouns and Adjectives:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language with nouns, pronouns and adjectives.

3. Language Function: Describing Location					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Demonstrated comprehension of total physical response commands, including prepositions (e.g., <i>on, off, in, out, inside, outside</i>)	Simple sentences with prepositional phrases (e.g., <i>next to, beside, between, in front of, in back of, behind, on the left/right, in the middle of, above, below, under</i>)	May include two prepositional phrases with more difficult prepositions (e.g., <i>in front of, behind, next to</i>)	Complex sentences with phrases using prepositions (e.g., <i>beneath, within</i>)	Complex sentences with phrases using prepositions (e.g., <i>beneath, within</i>)	<u>Prepositional Phrases:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language with prepositional phrases.

4. Language Function: Describing Action					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Demonstrate comprehension (perform or describe actions)	Present progressive	Variety of verb tenses and descriptive adverbs	Adverb clauses telling <i>how, where, or when</i>	Adverb clauses telling <i>how, where, or when.</i>	<u>Present Progressive Tense, Adverbs:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language skills with present progressive tense and adverbs.

5. Language Function: Retelling/Relating Past Events					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Single words in response to past tense question	Simple sentences with past progressive “ <i>_____ (pronoun) _____ was/were _____-ing.</i> ”	Simple sentences with regular and irregular past tense verbs “ <i>Yesterday/Last _____/On</i>	Compound sentences using past tense and adverbs	Present progressive/past perfect tense with specialized prepositions “ <i>_____ have/has been</i>	<u>Past Tense Verbs:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written

		____day (pronoun) ____ - ed (prep. phrase or other direct object).” First ____ and then ____ . Finally		____-ing since/for ____ . “	language with past tense verbs.
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6. Language Function: Making Predictions

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
In response to questions, may respond by circling, pointing, and so on, or answer with one or two words	“The ____ is/are going to ____.”	“The ____ will ____.”	Conditional (could, might) mood in complex sentences	Conditional (could, might) mood in complex sentences	<u>Verbs: Future Tense, Conditional Mood:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language with future tense verbs and conditional mood.

7. Language Function: Asking Informational Questions

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Simple questions about familiar or concrete subjects	Present or present progressive tense questions with <i>to be</i>	Who, what, where, why questions with <i>do</i> or <i>did</i>	Detailed questions with <i>who, what, when, where, why</i> and <i>how</i>	Detailed questions with expanded verb phrase	<u>Verbs and Verb Phrases in Questions:</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language with verbs and verb phrases in questions.

8. Language Function: Asking Clarifying Questions

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Not Applicable	Formula questions clarifying classroom procedures, rules and routines	Formula questions clarifying classroom procedures, rules and routines	A variety of fairly specific questions clarifying procedures or content	Varied, specific questions clarifying procedures or content	<u>Questions with Increasing Specificity</u>

9. Language Function: Expressing and Supporting Opinions

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
“I like/don’t like ____ (concrete topics).”	“I think/agree with (don’t) ____.”	“I think/agree with (don’t) ____ because	“In my opinion ____ should ____ because/so	Complex sentences using modals and clauses	<u>Sentence Structure</u>

		_____.”	_____.”		
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10. Language Function: Comparing					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Single words or phrases in response to concrete comparison questions	Sentences with subject/verb/adjective showing similarities and differences	Subject/verb/adjective, <i>but</i> _____. Adjective with –er or –est	Varied sentence structures with specific comparative adjectives and phrases	Complex sentence structure with specific comparative language	<u>Adjectives and Conjunctions</u>

11. Language Function: Contrasting					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
	Sentences with subject/verb/adjective showing similarities and differences	Subject/verb/adjective <i>like</i> ____ <i>but</i> subject/verb/adjective	Subject/verb/adjective, <i>both</i> subject/verb, <i>but</i>	Approximately used idiomatic phrases and contrasting words (e.g., <i>whereas</i> , and <i>in contrast</i>)	<u>Comparative Adjectives</u>

12. Language Function: Summarizing					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
	Simple sentences with key nouns, adjectives, and verbs	Compound sentences with <i>and/but</i>	Conjunctions that summarize (<i>to conclude, indeed, in summary, in short</i>)	Conjunctions that summarize (<i>indeed, therefore, consequently</i>)	<u>Increasingly Complex Sentences with Increasingly Specific Vocabulary</u>

13. Language Function: Persuading					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
		Imperative verb forms	Complex sentences with future and conditional	Complex sentences with varied verb forms and tag questions, idiomatic expressions or embedded clauses	<u>Verb Forms</u>

14. Language Function: Literary Analysis					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Single words for character and setting	Simple sentences (subject/verb/adjective)	Compound sentences with <i>and, because,</i>	Descriptive language in more complex sentences	Specific descriptive language in complex	<u>Sentence Structure and Specific Vocabulary</u>

	(subject/verb/object)	<i>before, after</i>		sentences	
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15. Language Function: Cause and Effect					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
	Answer cause and effect question with a simple response	Descriptive sentences with past tense verbs	Complex sentences with past tense verbs	Conditional: “If ____ had/hadn’t _____. _____ would/wouldn’t have _____.”	<u>Verb Forms</u>

16. Language Function: Drawing Conclusions					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
		Comparative adjectives with past tense verbs in simple sentences	Comparative adjectives with conjunctions such as <i>although, because, that</i>	Comparative adjectives with idiomatic phrases and passive voice	<u>Comparative Adjectives</u>

17. Language Function: Defining					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Patterned responses: “ <i>A table is furniture. A boy is a person.</i> ”	Simple terms, aspects of concrete and familiar objects, regular nouns singular and plural, personal pronouns, present tense, simple sentences	Connected text including irregular nouns, personal, possessive pronouns and adjectives with some irregular past tense verbs	Concrete and abstract topics using irregular nouns, singular and plural, personal and possessive pronouns and adjectives	Clear, well-structured, detailed language on complex subjects, showing controlled use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives	<u>Nouns, Abstract Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives:</u> Students learn to define concrete and abstract objects/concepts with correct nouns, pronouns, and adjectives

18. Language Function: Explaining					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
	Main points in familiar idea or problem with some precision using simple indicative verb forms in simple declarative sentences (<i>Large oaks grew in the park/ The length of the room is 40 feet.</i>)	Explain simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, using regular verbs and adverbs of manner in declarative sentences and compound sentences (<i>Maria planted the petunia seeds carefully.</i>)	Get across important points using declarative, compound and complex sentences, regular and irregular verb forms Complex: “ <i>As I came home, I stopped at the store.</i> ” Compound: “ <i>The children who came in early had refreshments, but those who came late had none.</i> ”	Get across which point he/she feels is most important using regular and irregular verb forms, adverbs of manner and compound-complex sentences. Adverbs of manner: <i>The children who sang loudly got a cookie, but those who didn’t sing had none.</i>	<u>Verb Forms- Indicative verb (makes a statement of fact), Declarative Sentences, Complex Sentences, Adverbs of Manner:</u> Students learn to develop and use explanations using appropriate verb forms, declarative and complex sentences and adverbs of manner.

19. Language Function: Generalizing					
BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
		Imperative mode: expresses command (<i>Take me home. Stay</i>	Indicative mode: makes a statement of fact (<i>The temperature is low.</i>)	Subjunctive mode: expressing a condition contrary to fact or	<u>Nouns – Common, Collective and Abstract Nouns; Verb Forms:</u>

		<i>there.</i>) Collective nouns name, as a unit, the members of a group (<i>herd, class, jury, congregation</i>).	Abstract nouns: name things or ideas that people cannot touch or handle (<i>beauty, honesty, comfort, love</i>).	expressing a doubt (<i>If only he were here.</i>)	Students learn to develop and use generalizations using abstract nouns, verb forms and nominalizations.
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20. Language Function: **Evaluating**

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Adjectives that point out particular objects (<i>that wagon, those toys, each person, every girl</i>) Number adjectives: (<i>two men, ten ships, the third time, the ninth boy</i>)	Adjectives used to limit: (<i>few horses, much snow, little rain</i>)	Evaluate simple direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters using simple verbs and adjectives. Correlative conjunctions are used in pairs: both – and; not only – but also (<i>Neither the teacher nor the students could solve the problem.</i>)	Qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.	Convey finer, precise shades of meaning by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices, such as adverbs that express degree (<i>This class is too hard.</i>); clauses expressing limitations (<i>This is a school van, but it is only used for sports.</i>); and complex sentences	<u>Complex Sentences;</u> <u>Increasing Specificity of Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives;</u> <u>Correlative Conjunctions:</u> Students learn to understand and use complex sentences using very specific nouns, verbs and adjectives.

21. Language Function: **Interpreting**

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Interpret a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases (<i>D’Onofrio chocolates are the best.</i>)	Interpret short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary	Interpret short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type, which consist of high frequency everyday or school-related language	Interpret a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning	Interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial non-literary writings	<u>Language of Propaganda, Complex Sentences:</u> Students learn to identify and interpret the language of propaganda and use complex sentences.

22. Language Function: **Sequencing**

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Subject (<i>The girl who was sick went home.</i>) Natural sequencing	Direct object (<i>The story that I read was long.</i>) Indirect object	Prepositional object (<i>I found the book that John was talking about.</i>)	Possessive (<i>I know the woman whose father is visiting.</i>) Subordinate conjunctions-	Object of comparison (<i>The person whom Susan is taller than is Mary.</i>)	<u>Adverbs of time,</u> <u>Relative clauses,</u> <u>Subordinate conjunctions:</u>

<i>(I hit him and he fell over.)</i>	<i>(The man to who[m] I gave the present was absent.)</i>		used to join two grammatical parts of equal rank <i>(Although he worked hard, he did not finish his homework.)</i>		Students learn sequencing using adverbs of time, relative clauses and subordinate conjunctions.
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23. Language Function: **Hypothesizing and Speculating**

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
		Auxiliary verbs that indicate futurity: <i>will</i> and <i>shall</i>	Auxiliary verb indicating desire or intent: <i>would</i>	Auxiliary verbs include modal verbs, which may express possibility: <i>may, might, can, could.</i>	<u>Modals (would, could, might), Compound Tenses (would have been):</u> Students learn to hypothesize and speculate using modals and compound tenses.

24. Language Function: **Summarizing**

BEGINNING	EARLY INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	EARLY ADVANCED	ADVANCED	TARGET FORMS
Copy out short texts; can copy out single words and short texts	Paraphrase short written passages in a simple fashion, using the original text wording and ordering; pick out and reproduce key words and phrases or short sentences from a short text within the learner's limited competence and experience	Summarize extracts from news items, interviews or documentaries containing opinions, argument and discussion; summarize the plot and sequence of events in a poem or play; collate short pieces of information from several sources and summarize them for someone else	Summarize a wide range of factual and imaginative texts, commenting on and discussing contrasting points of view and the main themes	Summarize information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation of the overall result	<u>Modals (would, could, might), Compound Tenses (would have been):</u> Students learn to summarize and speculate using modals and compound tenses.