

World Language
Content Standards
for California
Public Schools

Kindergarten Through
Grade Twelve



*Adopted by the
California State Board
of Education
January 2009*

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The guidance in the *World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

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A Message from the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

California is home to the most diverse student population in the country, with well over a hundred languages and dialects spoken by children in our schools. It is important to recognize and appreciate this diversity in our schools by placing an added emphasis on the effective learning of these languages and the cultures from which they are derived.

Our students need to use language effectively across geographic boundaries in order to cultivate positive relationships with future clients, allies, and neighbors. At the same time, students also need to communicate with the diverse populations that constitute California's rich linguistic and cultural tapestry. For this reason the standards refer to world, rather than foreign, languages.

The *World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* sets forth for the first time a uniform vision of what students should know and be able to do in this subject area. The standards were developed to accommodate all languages and identify the various stages of acquiring linguistic and cultural proficiency. To that end, the standards reflect our commitment to promoting excellence in world language instruction throughout the state.

The vision guiding these standards is that every student will develop global competency in order to compete and cooperate in

the twenty-first century and beyond. Given today's interconnected world, it makes good economic sense to encourage all of our students to effectively learn about the different languages and cultures of people with whom they will be interacting. Communicating with our international neighbors promotes peaceful relations, prepares students for employment, and enables our students to compete in the worldwide marketplace.

The standards embody our collective hope that all students develop linguistic and cultural literacy, including academic knowledge and proficiency in English as well as in several of the world's languages and cultures. In helping our students develop the skills necessary to thrive in our interdependent world, these content standards further cement California's reputation as not only a national, but an international, trendsetter in

THEODORE R. MITCHELL
President, State Board of Education

JACK O'CONNELL
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Introduction

The standards that follow are intended to provide guidance to administrators and teachers in implementing a World Languages and Cultures program for a diverse student population at any point in the curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve. Communicative proficiency is to be developed in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways.

Developing Global Competency

To succeed in the twenty-first century, today's students need to develop academic knowledge, proficiency in English, and linguistic and cultural literacy in several of the world's languages and cultures. The ability to communicate in culturally appropriate ways in a variety of settings will ensure success in a technologically driven global economy and increase intercultural understanding and the benefits derived from collaborative international efforts. Success in an interconnected world depends on students' effective use of language and cross-cultural communication skills.

As a result of culturally appropriate language use, students will enhance their ability to effectively carry out a wide range of tasks with a high level of control of the linguistic system. We can no longer afford to simply learn about languages and cultures; but rather, we must provide students with opportunities to learn languages and cultures by participating in communicative interactions that prepare for real-world language use and global citizenship. Language learning needs to be a lifelong endeavor.

California's Diverse Student Population

California's students bring a rich variety of languages and cultures to the classroom. Students may have learned a heritage language at home, arrived recently as immigrants, or acquired the ability to understand or produce one or more languages through contact in their communities or abroad. Some students pursue languages they know; others seek opportunities to learn additional languages and cultures. Thus, the considerable number of languages spoken and taught in California schools and the range of entry points and proficiency levels among students require standards that are tied to student performance instead of grade level.

Time Frames for Learning Languages and Cultures

The amount of time it takes to learn another language and culture is linked to the linguistic and cultural differences among the languages and cultures students already know. The particular language and culture that learners study and their performance profile at entry will determine the amount of time required to achieve a particular level of proficiency.

Categories of languages have been established by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) on the basis of the time it takes for native speakers of English to develop proficiency in target languages and cultures. For example, Arabic, a Category IV language, will take considerably longer to acquire than French,

a Category I language. American Sign Language (ASL), Classical Greek, Classical Latin, and Native American languages have not been assigned to categories since no formal research studies of those languages have been published.

The Language Learning Continuum (see the *Foreign Language Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*), a framework developed by the College Board, is used to indicate growth in linguistic and cultural proficiency.* It provides benchmarks for progress at different stages of performance:

Stage I (Formulaic): Learners understand and produce signs, words, and phrases.

Stage II (Created): Learners understand and produce sentences and strings of sentences.

Stage III (Planned): Learners understand and produce paragraphs and strings of paragraphs.

Stage IV (Extended): Learners understand and produce cohesive texts composed of multiple paragraphs.

The Language Learning Continuum also includes Stage V (Tailored) proficiency, which represents performance typically achieved through university-level study.

Secondary learners may require more than one year to progress from one stage to the next and may spend a significant amount of time in two adjacent stages. For example, learners of Russian, a Category III language, may require two years to move beyond Stage I in listening and speaking but longer than two years for reading and writing. Programs may focus on specific communicative modes. For example, a Mandarin program may emphasize different communicative modes

**Foreign Language Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2003. To order a copy, please call the sales office at 800-995-4099. The publication is downloadable at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/fr/>.

in order to attain Stage III proficiency in listening and speaking, Stage II proficiency in reading, and Stage I proficiency in writing. By necessity, Classical Greek and Latin programs will emphasize reading from the very beginning of instruction. Further, it will be common in the elementary school context for learners who do not have a heritage language background to remain in Stage I for an extended period of time.

California's Language Programs

California offers a variety of language programs, beginning in elementary school, continuing in middle school, and most typically in comprehensive high school. Elementary programs include immersion, Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), and Foreign Language Experience (FLEX) that differ substantially in the number of contact hours allocated to the curriculum. These programs need to be age-appropriate in order to address students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs. Some middle schools also offer immersion and FLEX programs as well as introductory courses that may be equivalent to the first or second year of high school study.

High school programs traditionally offer a four or five-year sequence preparing students for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) II examinations in language and often culminating in the Advanced Placement program and, less frequently, the International Baccalaureate program in language and literature. Programs for heritage and native speakers may include immersion, specialized courses designed to meet learner needs, and accommodations for these learners in the world-language classroom. The standards provide an organizing principle to ensure the continuous development of student proficiency, irrespective of the multiple points of entry and exit from California's language programs.

Organization of the Standards

The *World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* represents a strong consensus that the study of a wide variety of world languages and cultures is part of the core curriculum. The *World Language Content Standards* presents the knowledge, skills, and abilities that all learners should acquire in a world language during 13 years in the California public school system.

Because of the considerable number of languages in California, the content standards were developed to accommodate all languages and describe the various stages a learner goes through to become proficient. Therefore, the content standards are not language-specific. In addition, because of the various levels of student proficiency and the multiple points of entry and exit from California's language programs, the content standards that follow are not tied to specific grade levels; instead, they describe the stages of linguistic and cultural acquisition. For ease of presentation, the standards are separated into five categories: Content, Communication, Cultures, Structures, and Settings. The categories should be taught together and, in practice, merge into seamless instruction within the various stages of the Language Learning Continuum.

Content

Language users address a wide variety of topics that are appropriate to their age and stage. As students develop their ability to communicate in the target language and culture, they are able to more fully address topics that increase in complexity along the Language Learning Continuum.

Communication

Real-world communication takes place in a variety of ways. It may be interpersonal:

culturally appropriate listening, reading, viewing, speaking, signing, and writing take place as a shared activity among language users. It may be interpretive: language users listen, view, and read by using knowledge of cultural products, practices, and perspectives. It may be presentational: speaking, signing, and writing take place in culturally appropriate ways.

Cultures

Culturally appropriate language use requires an understanding of the relationship between the products and practices of the culture and its underlying perspectives. Students must acquire the ability to interact appropriately with target culture bearers in order to communicate successfully. This category allows students to make connections and comparisons between languages and cultures.

Structures

The content standards use the term *structures* to capture the multiple components of grammar that learners must control in order to successfully communicate in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. Students need to acquire orthography, the writing systems of languages that have them; phonology, the sound systems of languages or parameters in ASL; morphology, the rules for word formation; syntax, the principles of sentence structure; semantics, language-based meaning systems; and pragmatics, meaning systems connected to language use.

Settings

Language users need to carry out tasks in a variety of situations representative of those they will experience in the target culture. The success of learner communication will depend on the situation in which the language is used. Understanding social linguistic norms will assist learners in communicating effectively in real-world encounters.



Content

As students become literate in the target language, they acquire relevant content through the study of various topics. This in turn expands their access to information from around the globe. At the same time, students use the language to participate in everyday social interactions with members of California’s diverse communities. Moreover, the content that students acquire in the language classroom enables them to make connections and reinforce knowledge from other content areas of the curriculum. As they progress along the Language Learning Continuum,* students address a wide variety of content that is age- and stage-appropriate.

Stage I

- 1.0 Students acquire information, recognize distinctive viewpoints, and further their knowledge of other disciplines.
- 1.1 Students address discrete elements of daily life, including:
 - a. Greetings and introductions
 - b. Family and friends
 - c. Pets
 - d. Home and neighborhood
 - e. Celebrations, holidays, and rites of passage
 - f. Calendar, seasons, and weather
 - g. Leisure, hobbies and activities, songs, toys and games, sports
 - h. Vacations and travel, maps, destinations, and geography
 - i. School, classroom, schedules, subjects, numbers, time, directions
 - j. Important dates in the target culture
 - k. Jobs
 - l. Food, meals, restaurants
 - m. Shopping, clothes, colors, and sizes
 - n. Parts of the body, illness
 - o. Technology

**Foreign Language Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2003, pp. 10–14.

Stage II

- 2.0 Students acquire information, recognize distinctive viewpoints, and further their knowledge of other disciplines.
- 2.1 Students address topics related to self and the immediate environment, including:
 - a. Social relationships
 - b. People in the community
 - c. Zoo and farm animals, fables
 - d. Care of the home, interacting with people in the community
 - e. Holiday customs and transition points in life
 - f. Climate
 - g. Cultural and leisure-time activities, outdoor, recreational activities, music
 - h. Transportation, lodging, itineraries, geographic features and landmarks
 - i. Curricular and extracurricular interests and events
 - j. Significant historical figures
 - k. Professions and the working world
 - l. Cuisine and recipes
 - m. Clothing and fashion
 - n. Health, medical care
 - o. Technological advances and innovation

Stage III

- 3.0 Students acquire information, recognize distinctive viewpoints, and further their knowledge of other disciplines.
- 3.1 Students address concrete and factual topics related to the immediate and external environment, including:
 - a. Social norms
 - b. Historical and cultural figures, stereotypes
 - c. Animals and their habitats
 - d. Community issues, current events
 - e. Origins of rites of passage, social and regional customs
 - f. Environmental concerns
 - g. Media, Internet, television, radio, film
 - h. Cultural, historical, and geographic aspects of travel
 - i. Curricular and extracurricular subjects
 - j. Significant historical events
 - k. Careers and future plans
 - l. Nutrition, fitness, and health
 - m. Geographically and culturally appropriate clothing
 - n. Cultural differences in health care
 - o. Effects of technology on the modern world

Stage IV

- 4.0 Students acquire information, recognize distinctive viewpoints, and further their knowledge of other disciplines.
- 4.1 Students address complex, concrete, factual, and abstract topics related to the immediate and external environment, including:
 - a. Societal expectations
 - b. Cultural and literary archetypes
 - c. Endangered species
 - d. World events, social and political issues
 - e. Belief systems
 - f. International environmental issues
 - g. The visual and performing arts
 - h. The nature of an interdependent world
 - i. Issues in curricular and extracurricular subjects
 - j. Authors and their times
 - k. Transnational careers and economies
 - l. Issues of world hunger and health
 - m. Design, production, and marketing of clothing
 - n. Policy issues in health care
 - o. The promise and challenge of technology

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Communication

To achieve communicative competence, students convey and receive messages effectively. Students actively use language to transmit meaning while responding to real situations. Moreover, they process language in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways while interacting with a wide variety of audiences. As they progress along the Language Learning Continuum, students engage in communication that is age- and stage-appropriate.

Stage I

- 1.0 Students use **formulaic language** (learned words, signs [ASL], and phrases).
- 1.1 Engage in oral, written, or signed (ASL) conversations.
- 1.2 Interpret written, spoken, or signed (ASL) language.
- 1.3 Present to an audience of listeners, readers, or ASL viewers.

Functions

- 1.4 List, name, identify, and enumerate.
- 1.5 Identify learned words, signs (ASL), and phrases in authentic texts.
- 1.6 Reproduce and present a written, oral, or signed (ASL) product in a culturally authentic way.

Stage II

- 2.0 Students use **created language** (sentences and strings of sentences).
- 2.1 Engage in oral, written, or signed (ASL) conversations.
- 2.2 Interpret written, spoken, or signed (ASL) language.
- 2.3 Present to an audience of listeners, readers, or ASL viewers.

Functions

- 2.4 Initiate, participate in, and close a conversation; ask and answer questions.
- 2.5 Demonstrate understanding of the general meaning, key ideas, and some details in authentic texts.
- 2.6 Produce and present a simple written, oral, or signed (ASL) product in a culturally authentic way.

Stage III

- 3.0 Students use **planned language** (paragraphs and strings of paragraphs).
- 3.1 Engage in oral, written, or signed (ASL) conversations.
- 3.2 Interpret written, spoken, or signed (ASL) language.
- 3.3 Present to an audience of listeners, readers, or ASL viewers.

Functions

- 3.4 Describe, narrate, explain, and state an opinion.
- 3.5 Demonstrate understanding of the main idea and key details in authentic texts.
- 3.6 Produce and present a written, oral, or signed (ASL) product in a culturally authentic way.

Stage IV

- 4.0 Students use **extended language** (coherent and cohesive multiparagraph texts).
- 4.1 Engage in oral, written, or signed (ASL) conversations.
- 4.2 Interpret written, spoken, or signed (ASL) language.
- 4.3 Present to an audience of listeners, readers, or ASL viewers.

Functions

- 4.4 Discuss, compare and contrast, and support an opinion; persuade.
- 4.5 Demonstrate understanding of the main ideas and most details in authentic texts.
- 4.6 Produce and present a complex written, oral, or signed (ASL) product in a culturally authentic way.



Cultures

To understand the connection between language and culture, students discern how a culture views the world. Students comprehend the ideas, attitudes, and values that shape the target culture. Those shared common perspectives, practices, and products incorporate not only formal aspects of a culture such as contributions of literature, the arts, and science, but also the daily living practices, shared traditions, and common patterns of behavior acceptable to a society. As they progress along the Language Learning Continuum, students demonstrate their understanding of cultural perspectives by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.

Stage I

- 1.0 Students use appropriate responses to rehearsed cultural situations.
- 1.1 Associate products, practices, and perspectives with the target culture.
- 1.2 Recognize similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.
- 1.3 Identify cultural borrowings.

Stage II

- 2.0 Students choose an appropriate response to a variety of situations.
- 2.1 Demonstrate understanding of the roles that products, practices, and perspectives play in the culture.
- 2.2 State similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.
- 2.3 State reasons for cultural borrowings.

Stage III

- 3.0 Students determine appropriate responses to situations with complications.
- 3.1 Use products, practices, and perspectives in culturally appropriate ways.
- 3.2 Describe similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.
- 3.3 Describe how products and practices change when cultures come in contact.

Stage IV

- 4.0 Students improvise appropriate responses to unpredictable situations.
- 4.1 Demonstrate culturally appropriate use of products, practices, and perspectives to others.
- 4.2 Explain similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.
- 4.3 Explain the changes in perspectives when cultures come in contact.



Structures

Languages vary considerably in the structures that learners use to convey meaning; therefore, the following standards are general in order to apply to all languages. It is expected that the curriculum will feature language-specific structures essential to accurate communication. As students acquire vocabulary in the target language, they grasp the associated concepts and comprehend the structures the language uses to convey meaning. Moreover, students discover patterns in the language system. A language system consists of grammar rules, vocabulary, and elements such as gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication. A language system also includes discourse, whereby speakers learn what to say to whom and when. As they progress along the Language Learning Continuum, students use linguistically and grammatically appropriate structures to comprehend and produce messages. Students identify similarities and differences among the languages they know.

Stage I

- 1.0 Students use orthography, phonology, or ASL parameters to understand words, signs (ASL), and phrases in context.
- 1.1 Use orthography, phonology, or ASL parameters to produce words or signs (ASL) and phrases in context.
- 1.2 Identify similarities and differences in the orthography, phonology, or ASL parameters of the languages the students know.

Stage II

- 2.0 Students use sentence-level elements (morphology or syntax or both) to understand concrete and factual topics.
- 2.1 Use sentence-level elements (morphology or syntax or both) to produce informal communications.
- 2.2 Identify similarities and differences in the sentence-level elements (morphology or syntax or both) of the languages the students know.

Stage III

- 3.0 Students use knowledge of text structure to understand topics related to the external environment.
 - 3.1 Use paragraph-level discourse (text structure) to produce formal communications.
 - 3.2 Identify similarities and differences in the paragraph-level discourse (text structure) of the languages the students know.
-

Stage IV

- 4.0 Students use knowledge of extended discourse to understand abstract and academic topics.
- 4.1 Use extended discourse (native-like text structure) to produce formal communications.
- 4.2 Identify similarities and differences in the extended discourse (native-like text structure) of the languages the students know.



Settings

For students to communicate effectively, they use elements of language appropriate to a given situation. Language conveys meaning best when the setting, or context, in which it is used, is known. This knowledge of context assists students not only in comprehending meaning but also in using language that is culturally appropriate. Context also helps define and clarify the meaning of language that is new to the learner. As students progress along the Language Learning Continuum, they carry out tasks in stage- and age-appropriate situations that reflect the target culture.

Stage I

- 1.0 Students use language in highly predictable common daily settings.
- 1.1 Recognize age-appropriate cultural or language-use opportunities outside the classroom.

Stage II

- 2.0 Students use language in interpersonal settings.
- 2.1 Participate in age-appropriate cultural or language-use opportunities outside the classroom.

Stage III

- 3.0 Students use language in informal and some formal settings.
- 3.1 Initiate age-appropriate cultural or language-use opportunities outside the classroom.

Stage IV

- 4.0 Students use language in informal and formal settings.
- 4.1 Sustain age-appropriate cultural or language-use opportunities outside the classroom.

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Glossary



abstract topics	Subjects that are not concrete or factual but represent concepts and ideas.
academic topics	Subjects that are part of the core curriculum of schools or part of university programs.
accuracy	In speaking and writing, the quality of the message produced; in listening and reading, the quality of the message received.
Advanced Placement (AP)	A program of the College Board that confers advanced placement in a course sequence for students who successfully complete an end-of-year examination.
archetype	A generic version derived from multiple examples found within a group.
authentic	Designed and used by members of a particular group.
belief system	The framework of perspectives through which an individual interprets the world.
coherent	Use of reference to a particular context to give unified meaning to a text.
cohesive	Use of structures and vocabulary to link parts of a text and give it a unified meaning.
connections	Points of access to content from other areas of the core curriculum and to perspectives available only through the target language and its culture(s).
content	The topics an individual addresses.
content standards	Clearly defined statements about what all students are expected to know and be able to do.
contexts	The situations or settings in which an individual uses a language.
created stage (Stage II)	The second stage on the Language Learning Continuum in which language users understand sentence-level relationships and use sentences and strings of sentences.
cultural bearers	Individuals in a group who share common behaviors and views of the world.

cultural borrowings	Tangible and intangible items, behaviors, and beliefs of a particular group that are used by another group.
cultural perspectives	Beliefs of members of a particular group.
cultural practices	Behaviors of members of a particular group.
cultural products	Tangible and intangible items created by members of a particular group.
culturally appropriate	Patterns of behaviors widely acceptable to members of a group.
discourse (paragraph/extended)	The use of language and context to connect sentences or paragraphs to give them unified meaning.
discrete elements	Language that refers to concrete objects in a particular culture.
extended stage (Stage IV)	The fourth stage on the Language Learning Continuum in which language users understand and produce cohesive texts composed of multiple paragraphs.
external environment	The settings for language use in which paragraphs or extended discourse are used to carry out complex tasks.
Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)	Elementary school programs that meet for a minimum of 70 minutes a week with the goal of developing proficiency in language and culture.
Foreign Language Experience (FLEX)	Elementary school programs that expose students to the study of a language or languages and cultures in order to motivate them to pursue further study.
formal settings	Situations requiring the use of careful, impersonal forms of language and behavior.
formulaic stage (Stage I)	The first stage on the Language Learning Continuum in which language users understand and produce words and phrases without knowledge of their internal structure.
functional proficiency	The ability to use language for real-world purposes in culturally appropriate ways.
functions	The ability to carry out tasks with language. May be receptive (listening, reading, and viewing) or productive (speaking, signing, and writing).
generic standards	A set of outcomes that is valid for all languages, for all ages, and for all levels of proficiency.
grammar	The rules governing the use of a natural language.
heritage learner	An individual who has acquired any level of proficiency in a language used at home.

highly predictable settings	Common situations requiring the use of learned formulas and formulaic behavior.
immediate environment	The settings for language use in which sentences are used to carry out transactional tasks.
immersion	A program used to teach at least 50 percent of the core curriculum in the target language.
informal settings	Situations in which rapport and friendly relationships require personal forms of language and behavior.
International Baccalaureate (IB)	A two-year curriculum and testing protocol that lead to a diploma widely recognized by the world's leading universities.
interpersonal communication	Language users listen, speak, sign, read, write, and view as they negotiate meaning with others.
interpersonal settings	Situations requiring the use of sentence-level language and appropriate behavior to carry out a variety of transactional tasks.
interpretive communication	Language users individually listen to, read, and view content using knowledge of cultural products, practices, and perspectives without interpersonal interaction.
language category	Groups of languages that require similar amounts of time for native speakers of English to acquire.
Language Learning Continuum	A framework designed by the College Board characterizing the development of language-learner proficiency at various performance stages.
linguistic system	The study of language in human communication that includes phonology/parameters, orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.
morphology	The field of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words or signs.
native learner	An individual who has acquired any level of proficiency in a language of a country where she or he was born.
negotiated language	Situations that require participants to create a shared communication.
negotiation of meaning	Communicative processes in which participants reach understanding through interaction.
nonnegotiated language	Situations in which one-way communication requires culturally appropriate interpretation or behavior or both.
orthography	The writing system or systems of a language.

parameters	Linguistic features (hand shape, location, movement orientation, and/or nonmanual signals) of sign language equivalent to the phonology of a spoken language.
performance standards	Clearly defined statements about how well all students are expected to meet content standards.
phonology	The field of linguistics that studies how sounds and ASL parameters are organized and used.
planned stage (Stage III)	The third stage on the Language Learning Continuum in which language users understand and produce paragraphs and strings of paragraphs.
pragmatics	The field of linguistics that studies meaning systems linked to language use.
presentational communication	Language users speak, sign, and write in culturally appropriate ways without negotiating language.
proficiency	The ability to use language for real-world purposes in culturally appropriate ways.
real world	Behaviors that occur in the target culture.
rites of passage	Rituals that mark a change in an individual’s status in a group.
semantics	The field of linguistics that studies language-based meaning systems.
signs	Linguistic features of sign language equivalent to the words of a spoken language.
stereotypes	Generalizations made about the characteristics of all members of a group.
syntax	The field of linguistics that studies the internal structure of sentences.
target language and culture(s)	The language and culture(s) that a learner seeks to acquire.
text types	The form of the message produced or received (oral and written formulas, sentences, paragraphs, extended discourse).
transactional	Tasks that require the use of sentences and have as a goal soliciting simple information, goods, and services.
transition points	Major events in the human life cycle with changes in individual roles and responsibilities.
viewing	Interpretive communication that relies on nonlinguistic elements.
viewing (American Sign Language)	Attention to, comprehension, and interpretation of visual information of a signed language in person or from various media.