The 2019 California World Languages Standards

What is essential for educators to know?

Students in the twenty-first century, with all its technological developments, live in a global society. People all over the world can communicate in real time, organizations and businesses are multinational, and new professions are continually emerging. Students that are successful in the twenty-first century will be those who are proficient in more than just the core subjects. These students will be global citizens with the ability to navigate the international marketplace, communicate proficiently, and interact meaningfully with understanding and awareness across cultures. These skills—understanding, speaking, reading, writing, and signing in world languages, as well as in English—are essential for students to effectively contribute to state and national efforts and succeed in business, research, and international relations in the twenty-first century.

California is ready to expand opportunities for its unique and diverse student population to acquire world languages, develop intercultural competence, and become global citizens. California educators will find that the 2019 World Languages Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (WL Standards) are aligned with and support recent legislation and initiatives that champion these outcomes. Naturally, the WL Standards establish a path for students to become multilingual and prepare to attain California’s Seal of Biliteracy. The WL Standards also provide guidance in light of two significant pieces of legislation. In 2016, the passage of Proposition 58, the California Education for a Global Economy (EdGE) initiative, initiated a state-wide effort to promote linguistic, global, and intercultural competency among California students. The charge of this legislation and a subsequent initiative—Global California 2050—is for K–12 schools to support multilingualism for California’s unique and diverse student population through access to world languages programs.

Taken together, these initiatives prompt schools to introduce and support language learning early in elementary school, offer a wider range of world languages, and streamline the progression of language acquisition from elementary through high school and beyond. The WL Standards can help schools bolster opportunities for students to develop essential, lifelong aptitudes by offering multiple entry points to instruction in world languages from kindergarten through grade twelve. The standards also support local education agencies as they promote multilingualism for all students through access to high-quality, well-articulated world language programs.

Communities and Comparisons Curricular Areas are Integrated Throughout the World Languages Standards

The WL Standards incorporate the five goal areas, also known as the five Cs, of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), into three curricular strands—Communication, Cultures, and Connections. Educators familiar with the ACTFL standards will recognize what this redistribution accomplishes: The integral components of proficiency in the Communities and Comparisons goal areas can be found in all three goals areas of Communication, Cultures, and Connections. For example, Comparisons are found under the Language Comparisons, Cultural Comparisons, and Connections to Other Disciplines standards. The integration of the Comparisons goal area addresses how students make connections between the home and target language and culture and to their studies in other disciplines. The Communities goal area can be found under the Settings for Communication, Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives, and Distinctive Viewpoints standards. This integration of the Communities goal area addresses the language skills that learners need to interact in target-language communities at home and around the world. While the approach to teaching and learning world languages remains aligned with the ACTFL standards, the Communities and Comparisons goal areas have been strategically distributed throughout the WL Standards to emphasize communicative proficiency in the world languages classroom.

Communication

Communication takes place in a variety of authentic settings that represent what students will experience in the target cultures.

- Interpretive: language users listen, view, and read using knowledge of cultural products, practices, and perspectives.
- Interpersonal: culturally appropriate listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and signing (American Sign Language [ASL]) take place as a shared activity among language users.
- Presentational: speaking, signing, and writing take place for an audience of listeners, readers, and viewers in culturally appropriate ways.

The Communication Standard uses the term structures to capture the multiple components of grammar that students must learn to communicate with accuracy.

Cultures

Students need to acquire the ability to interact appropriately with culture bearers to communicate successfully. Culturally appropriate language use requires an understanding of the relationships between the products and practices of culture and their underlying perspectives. While acquiring knowledge of products, practices, and perspectives of the target cultures, learners engage in comparisons of similarities and differences among their cultures and the target cultures, and also explore intercultural influences when they come into contact with multilingual and multicultural communities.

Language users address a variety of topics that are appropriate to their age and range of proficiency, increase their knowledge of numerous areas of the curriculum, and make connections across K–12 areas of study. As students develop their ability to communicate in the target language and cultures, they are able to more fully address topics that increase in complexity and learn how target-language culture bearers understand and address discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary concepts.

Connections

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Note: This document provides an overview of the essential information California educators need to know about the WL Standards. The standards document itself includes additional information not included here. Two notable exceptions are appendices that provide guidance regarding ways the WL Standards support biliteracy and multilingual education and ways students with disabilities may access the WL Standards.
The goals for the standards highlight the kinds of knowledge and skills students will be acquiring. These goals are aligned with the most current documents that inform language and culture teaching communities, including guidance from ACTFL.

The goals compiled below highlight how California’s WL Standards support the Global California 2030 initiative by identifying what students should know and be able to do in language and culture, as appropriate. The standards also establish a path for students to become multicultural and prepare to attain California’s Seal of Biliteracy.

**Communication Goals**

**Interpretive Communication**

WL.CM7.N Identify similarities and differences in the orthography, phonology, ASL, and gestures of very basic sentence-level elements (morphology and syntax) of the languages known.

WL.CM7.T Identify similarities and differences in the basic sentence-level elements (morphology and syntax) of the languages known.

WL.CM7.A Identify similarities and differences in sentence-level elements (morphology and syntax of common and uncommon structures) of the target languages.

**Intermediate**

- **Novice**
- **Superior**

**Novice**

- **Intermediate**
- **Advanced**

**Intermediate**

- **Novice**
- **Superior**

**Advanced**

- **Novice**
- **Superior**

**Superior**

- **Novice**
- **Superior**

**Shifting in Instructional Approaches in the World Languages Standards**

The WL Standards illustrate necessary shifts in instructional approaches intended to bring about optimal performance among students in world languages classrooms. The standards, and more specifically the chart highlighted in the appendix called “Ways Students May Access the World Languages Standards,” respond to a call to action to create a more inclusive learning environment, named WL.CM7.N.

The Then and Now chart calls attention to necessary shifts in instructional approaches by contrasting the ineffective practices of the past (Then) with the research-based practices that yield evidence of positive impact on world languages learning (Now). Additional guidance for program delivery is provided in the appendices of the WL Standards and will be fully developed in the California World Languages Framework.

**1. Then – Students learn about the language (grammar)**

**Now – Students learn to use the target language**

- Teachers use the target language almost exclusively.
- Teachers use the target language to make the different range and characteristics of the language comprehensible using multiple modalities for learning.
- Students engage in authentic learning.
- Students exchange information and opinions and express thoughts and feelings through the target language.

**2. Then – Teacher-centered class**

**Now – Student-centered with teacher as facilitator or collaborator**

- Teachers design activities that lead to autonomy and flexibility in unrehearsed situations and create student-driven learning.
- Teachers engage in individual, pair, and small- and whole-group activities.
- Teachers who choose activities based on learning profiles, readiness, and interests.
- Teachers are able to assess, plan, and direct their own learning.

**3. Then – Focus on four skills**

**Now – Focus on interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication in the target language**

- Students engage in culturally authentic, real-world tasks that require proficiency in the target language.
- Students make a variety of presentations for target-culture audiences in appropriate ways.

**4. Then – Coverage of the textbook**

**Now – Use of backward design focusing on the end goal**

- Teachers design culturally authentic integrated performance tasks for units and courses of the target language.
- Performance tasks developed in the target language.
- Performance tasks designed and implemented in the target language.
- Teachers are able to assess, plan, and direct their own learning.

**5. Then – Use of the textbook as the curriculum**

**Now – Use of thematic units and authentic resources**

- Essential questions guide the selection of themes and sub-themes.
- Materials from the textbook are used only when those sub-themes are related to authentic target-language sources.
- Teachers use authentic materials rich in language, culture, and content.
- Teachers use the target language to teach the content.

**6. Then – Emphasis on teacher as presenter**

**Now – Emphasis on student as “doer” and “creator”**

- Students use the target language for real-world purposes in culturally appropriate ways.
- Teachers use the target language beyond the classroom.
- Students use the target language to develop critical thinking and solve problems.

**7. Then – Focus on isolated cultural “factsoids”**

**Now – Focus on relationships among products, practices, and perspectives**

- Students learn the target cultures through the target language.
- Students learn to function in culturally appropriate ways.
- Teachers use target-culture perspectives that underlie products and practice.
- Students learn about the effects of interpretive influences.

**Cultures Goals**

**Culturally Appropriate Behavior**

WL.CL7.1 Students interact with cultural and understanding.

**Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives**

WL.CL7.2 To interact with cultural competence, students demonstrate understanding and use the target language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of cultural diversity and similarities and differences in the target culture and the culture(s) they know.

**Intercultural Influences**

WL.CL7.4 To interact with intercultural competence, students demonstrate understanding and use the target language to investigate how cultures influence each other over time.

**Connections Goals**

**Connections to Other Disciplines**

WL.CM7.1 Integration in real-world situations in academic and career-related settings, students build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines using the target language to develop critical thinking and solve problems.

**Diverse Perspectives and Distinctive Viewpoints**

WL.CM7.2 To function in real-world situations in academic and career-related settings, students access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are readily or only available through the language and its cultures.

Keep up with the latest developments by visiting the World Languages Standards and the World Languages Framework web pages on the California Department of Education website.