

## LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS and FORMS

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 and may be taught to ELLs at all grade levels and as the need and context arise.

The contrast between **form** and **function** in language may be illustrated using a simple biological parallel. If doctors studied only the anatomy of the human body (assuming that it could be studied exclusively) they would not be able to heal us. To cure us they need to understand the physiology of our bodies, the interrelated functions of systems, organs, cells and genes...

The study of **forms** or parts of speech used to be called Morphology. It is the Anatomy of a language. (Viking Coe, U of Houston, 1994). **Forms** of a language deal with the internal grammatical structure of words. The relationship between "boy" and "boys" and the relationship (irregular) between man and men would be **forms** of a language.

The study of **functions** focuses on the way that parts of speech stand in line or are ordered together in the language. It is the Physiology of a language, its Syntax, a derivative of the Greek verb *syntassw* (to order together). A language **function** refers to the purpose for which the speech or writing is being used.

For example, **in speech** we

- give instructions,
- introduce ourselves, or
- make 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

### LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS and SOME FORMS

1. Expressing needs and likes
  - Indirect/ direct object
  - Subject/ verb agreement
  - Pronouns
2. Describing people, places and things
  - Nouns,
  - Pronouns
  - Adjectives
3. Describing spatial and temporal relations
  - Prepositional phrases
4. Describing actions
  - Present progressive
  - Adverbs
5. Retelling/relating past events
  - Past tense verbs
  - Perfect aspect (present and past)
6. Making predictions
  - Verbs: future tense, conditional mode
7. Asking Informational Questions
  - Verbs and verb phrases in questions
8. Asking Clarifying Questions
  - Questions with increasing specificity
9. Expressing and Supporting Opinions
  - Sentence Structure
  - Modals (will, can, may, shall)
10. Comparing
  - Adjectives and conjunctions
  - Comparatives
  - Superlatives
  - Adverbs
11. Contrasting
  - Comparative adjectives
12. Summarizing
  - Increasingly complex sentences with increasingly specific vocabulary
13. Persuading
  - Verb Forms
14. Literary Analysis
  - Sentence structure and
  - Specific Vocabulary
15. Cause and Effect
  - Verb Forms
16. Drawing Conclusions
  - Comparative adjective
17. Defining
  - Nouns, pronouns and adjectives
18. Explaining
  - Verb forms
  - Declarative sentences
  - Complex sentences
  - Adverbs of manner
19. Generalizing
  - Abstract nouns
  - Verb forms
  - Nominalizations
20. Evaluating
  - Complex sentences
  - Increasing specificity of nouns, verbs, and adjectives
21. Interpreting
  - Language of propaganda
  - Complex sentences
  - Nominalizations
22. Sequencing
  - Adverbs of time
  - Relative clauses
  - Subordinate conjunctions
23. Hypothesizing and speculating
  - Modals (would, could, might)
  - Compound tenses (would have been)

## ACQUISITION OF GRAMMATICAL FORMS AND LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS ALL GRADES

1. Language Function: <b>Expressing Needs and Likes</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Early Intermediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Early Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Target Forms:</b>
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 participates 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 (nouns or yes/no) to questions about preferences, such as two, apples, or tree. Many write name of favorite _____ from list/web	Simple sentences with subject/verb/object. "I like/don't like— (object)—" "I need a s/some --- (object)—."	Elaborated sentences with subject/verb/object.	Sentences with subject/verb/object and dependent clause.	Complex sentences, perhaps with tag or embedded questions.	<b>Sentence Structure:</b> The basic sentence structures we use to express needs and likes are foundations to the more complex sentence structure we use for academic purposes

2. Language Function: <b>Describing People, Places and Things</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Early Intermediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Early Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Target Forms</b>
Common nouns and adjectives	Simple sentences with the verb to be, using common nouns and adjectives. The (my, her) _____ is/are _____. A (it) has/have _____	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 ( <i>on, off, in, out, inside, outside</i> )	Simple sentences with prepositional phrases, such as <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 such as: <i>in front of, behind, next to.</i>	Complex sentences with phrases using prepositions, such as <i>beneath, within.</i>	Complex sentences with phrases using prepositions, such as <i>beneath, within.</i>	<u>Prepositional Phrases</u> Students learn to understand and general oral and written language with prepositional phrases.

4. Language Function: Describing Action					
Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced	Target Forms
Demonstrate comprehension (They perform or describe actions)	Present progressive.	Variety of verb tenses and descriptive adverbs.	Adverb clauses telling how, where, or when.	Adverb clauses telling how, where, or when.	<u>Present progressive, adverbs</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language skills with present progressive and adverbs.

5. Language Function: Retelling/Relating Past Events (Kinder – General Understanding)					
Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced	Target Forms
Single words in response to past tense question.	Simple sentences with past progressive ___ (pronoun) ___ was/were ___ing.	Simple sentences with regular and irregular past tense verbs “ <i>Yesterday/Last ___/On ___day (pronoun) ___ - ed (prep. Phrase or other direct object.) First ___ and then ___ . Finally</i> ”	Compound sentences using past tense and adverb/	Present progressive/past perfect tense with specialized prepositions ___ have/has been ___ing since/for ___.	<u>Past Tense Verbs</u> Students learn to understand and generate oral and written language with past tense verbs

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 Informal Questions					
Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced	Target Forms
Simple questions about familiar or concrete subjects	Present or present progressive tense questions with “to be”	Who, what, where, why questions with “do or did”	Detailed questions, with 5w’s and how	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>

10. Language Function: Compacting					
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.	<i>Both</i> subject/verb/adjective, <i>but</i> subject/verb.	Approximately used idiomatic phrases and contrasting words such as, <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 “and/but”	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) (subject/verb/object)	Compound sentences with <i>and, because, before, after.</i>	Descriptive language in more complex sentences.	Specific descriptive language in complex sentences.	<u>Sentence Structure and Specific Vocabulary</u>

15. Language Function: Cause and Effect Relationship					
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: Draw 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>

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17. Language Function: <b>Defining</b>					
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: <b>Explaining</b>					
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 oats grew in the park</i> ) ( <i>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. ( <i>Complex: As I came home, I stopped at the store</i> ) ( <i>Compound: 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. ( <i>Adverbs of manner: The children who sang loudly got a cookie, but those who didn't sing had none.</i> )	<u>Verb forms; Indicate verbs(A verb which makes a statement of fact)</u> <u>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 or manner.

19. Language Function: <b>Generalizing</b>					
Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced	Target Forms
		Imperative mode: Expresses command: ( <i>Take me home. Stay there</i> )` Collective nouns name as a unit the members of a group ( <i>herd, class, jury, congregation.</i> )	Indicative mode: makes a statement of fact ( <i>The temperature is low.</i> ) Abstract nouns: name things or ideas that people cannot touch or handle ( <i>beauty, honestly, comfort, love.</i> )	Subjunctive Mode: expressing a condition contrary to fact or expressing a doubt ( <i>If only he were here.</i> )	<u>Nouns - Common and Collective and Abstract nouns; Verb forms;</u> Students learn to develop and use generalizations using abstract nouns, verb forms and nominalizations..

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20. Language Function: <b>Evaluating</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Early Intermediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Early Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Target Forms</b>
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, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.	Convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing 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> ) 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: <b>Interpreting</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Early Intermediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Early Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Target Forms</b>
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;</u> <u>Complex sentences</u> Students learn to identify and interpret the language of propaganda and use complex sentences.

22. Language Function: <b>Sequencing</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Early Intermediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Early Advanced</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Target Forms</b>
Subject: The girl who was sick went home. Natural sequencing: <i>I hit him and he felt over.</i>	Direct object: The story that I read was long. Indirect object: The man who[m] I gave the present to was absent.	Prepositional: object I found the book that John was talking about.	Possessive: I know the woman whose father is visiting. Subordinate conjunctions: used to join two grammatical parts of equal rank ( <i>Although he worked hard, he did not finish his homework</i> )	Object of comparison: The person that Susan is taller than is Mary.	<u>Adverbs of time;</u> <u>Relative clauses;</u> <u>Subordinate conjunctions.</u> Students learn sequencing using adverbs of time, relative clauses and subordinate conjunctions.



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23. Language Function: <b>Hypothesizing and speculating</b>					
Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced	Target Forms
		Auxiliary verbs that indicate futurity: will and shall.	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)</u> <u>Compound tenses (would have been)</u> Students learn to hypothesize and speculate using modals and compound tenses..

24. Language Function: <b>Summarizing</b>					
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. Can summarize the plot and sequence of events in a .lm or play. Can collate short pieces of information from several sources and summarize them for somebody el	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)</u> <u>Compound tenses (would have been)</u> Students learn to summarize and speculate using modals and compound tenses..