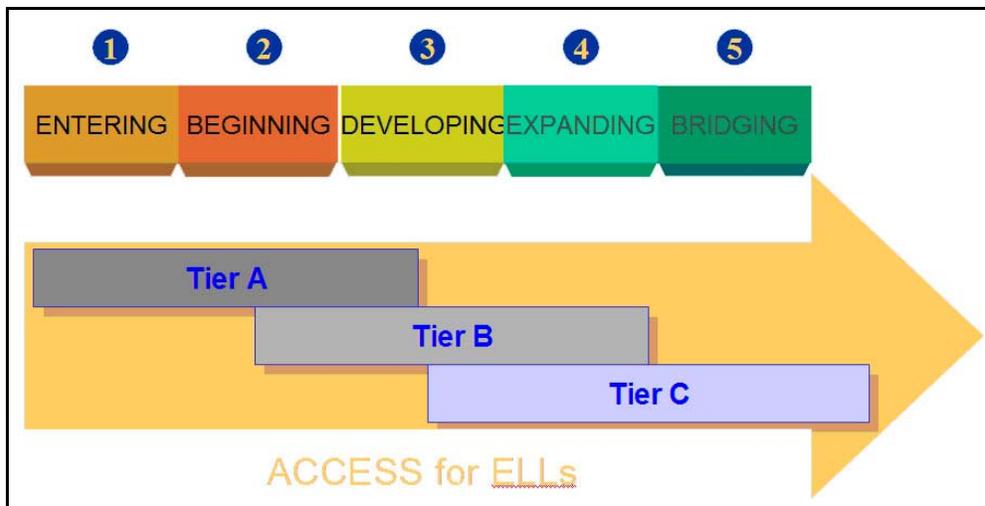


Tiers

The goal of the ACCESS for ELLs™ test is to determine English language learners' level of English language proficiency and, at the same time, provide useful feedback to stakeholders. However, there are far too many model performance indicators in the English language proficiency standards to fit into a reasonable testing session. For any particular student, some of the questions on a comprehensive test might be dismissively easy, making it boring, while others would be exactly hard, making it frustrating. It is important to avoid both possibilities in order to produce a valid test. To address this issue, ACCESS for ELLs™ for each grade level cluster test (except kindergarten) is divided into three tiers—A, B and C.

Tier A contains items for proficiency levels 1-3, but targets the lowest levels, 1 and 2. Tier B covers proficiency levels 2-4, focusing especially on 3 and low 4, and Tier C has items from proficiency level 3 to beyond 5, particularly focusing on the uppermost proficiency levels. (See the chart below.)



Determining tier placement

Broadly Speaking, students can be divided into tiers as follows:

- Tier A = beginning to low intermediate students (proficiency levels 1-2)
- Tier B = low to mid level students (proficiency levels 3-4)
- Tier C = mid to high level students (proficiency levels 4-5 and beyond)

Several factors may be used to determine a student's appropriate tier placement, including:

- Teacher judgment based on his or her knowledge and experience with a student. The *Criteria for Tier Placement for ACCESS for ELLs™* (Appendix A) is a guide to assist teachers in assigning students into their appropriate tier according to given criteria regarding a student's level of English proficiency, educational background, and academic expectations.
- Previous English language proficiency test scores and corresponding performance levels.
- Results from the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), a semi-secure placement test aligned with the ACCESS for ELLs™. (See section on W-APT in this booklet.)