# 2026 *Alabama Course of Study: World Languages*

## An Introduction and Overview



# Connecting Alabama Through Language

**Statewide Effort**

**School Systems & Universities**

Dedicated collaboration driving comprehensive statewide language excellence.

**Research & Needs Analysis**

**Framework Analysis**

Reviewing national standards, research, instructional trends, and stakeholder feedback in relation to Alabama's needs.

## Rounds of Feedback & Review

**JANUARY 2026** — **Initial Feedback Phase**

**SEP – OCT 2026** — **Draft Feedback Phase**

**NOV – DEC 2026** — **Final Draft Completion**

# Contributors to the 2026 *Alabama Course of Study: World Languages*

Representing Twenty School Districts and Additional Higher Education Partners

- Auburn City Schools
- Autauga County Schools
- Baldwin County Public Schools
- Birmingham City Schools
- Decatur City Schools
- Dekalb County Schools
- Gadsden City Schools
- Geneva County Schools
- Homewood City Schools
- Hoover City Schools
- Huntsville City Schools
- Jefferson County Schools
- Lawrence County Schools
- Leeds City Schools
- Mobile County Public Schools
- Montgomery Public Schools
- Mountain Brook City Schools
- Russellville City Schools
- Troy City Schools
- Tuscaloosa County Schools

TROY UNIVERSITY

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Jefferson State Community College

UAB BLAZERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

# 2026 Alabama World Languages Conceptual Framework

**Alabama + Globe**
Connects local, state, and global contexts

**5Cs Framework**
Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities

**Interconnected Arcs**
Emphasize the relationship among the 5Cs

**Authentic Resources**
Support meaningful, proficiency-based learning

**Intercultural Competence**
Builds understanding across cultures

**Real-World Application**
Extends language learning beyond the classroom

**Student Outcomes**
Develops proficiency, communication, and intercultural skills

**College & Career Readiness**
Prepares students for an interconnected world



# World Language Groups

## GROUP A: Most Commonly Taught Languages

- May share some vocabulary, writing-system features, or linguistic patterns with English
- Can accelerate reading, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Proficiency development depends on instructional time, prior language experience, and sustained practice

**EXAMPLES**

French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish

## GROUP B: U.S. Government-Identified Critical Languages

- May differ substantially from English in writing system, grammar, syntax, or vocabulary
- Fewer recognizable cognates
- May require additional time and sustained opportunities for practice

**EXAMPLES**

Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian

## GROUP C: Classical Languages

- Familiar writing systems with distinct grammar
- Unique linguistic patterns require adaptation
- Emphasis on authentic texts and interpretation
- Builds intercultural and historical understanding

**EXAMPLES**

Ancient Greek, Latin

## GROUP D: American Sign Language (ASL)

- Visual-spatial language
- Distinct grammar and syntax unlike spoken English
- Uses a three-dimensional visual modality
- Builds understanding of Deaf communities and culture

**EXAMPLE**

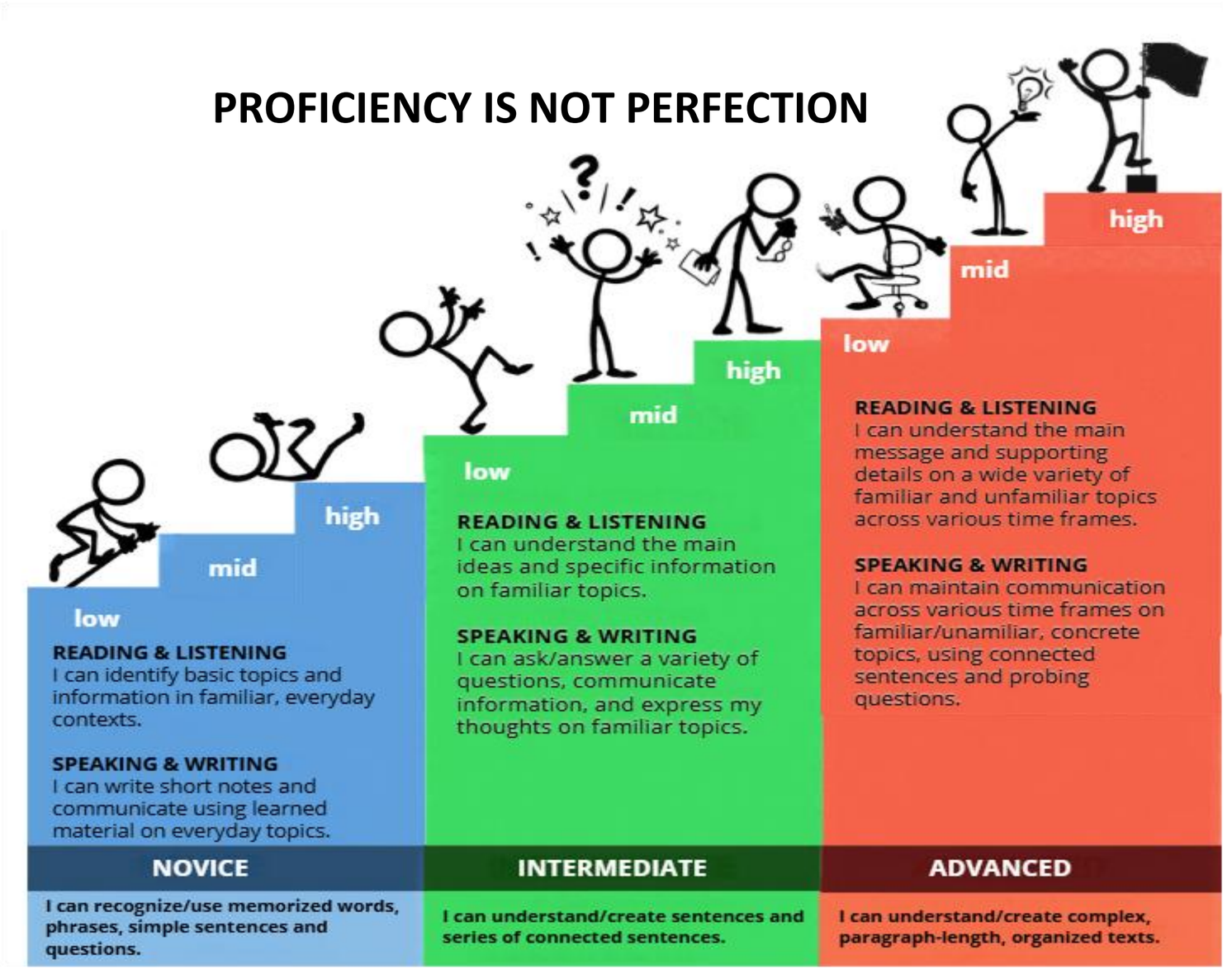
American Sign Language (ASL)

# Kindergarten-Grade 12 Language Proficiency Scales

- Describe what learners can do with language
- Measure communication across proficiency levels
- Progress from Novice to Advanced levels
- Focus on real-world language use
- Support instruction, assessment, and goal setting
- Provide a common framework for measuring language growth

**Note:**

- Intermediate Mid or Higher: Alabama Seal of Biliteracy



# Illustrative Spanish Language Samples

## NOVICE LEVEL

### NOVICE LOW

*"Hola. Me llamo Ana."*

- *Hi. I'm Ana.*

### NOVICE MID

*"Me gusta la música y el fútbol."*

- *I like music and soccer.*

### NOVICE HIGH

*Él va al parque con sus amigos."*

- *He goes to the park with his friends.*

## INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

### INTERMEDIATE LOW

*"Los fines de semana paso tiempo con mi familia."*

- *On the weekends I spend time with my family.*

### INTERMEDIATE MID

*"El fin de semana pasado fuimos a un restaurante y comimos comida mexicana."*

- *Last weekend we went to a restaurant and ate Mexican food.*

### INTERMEDIATE HIGH

*"Es importante que los jóvenes participen en actividades fuera de la escuela porque desarrollan nuevas habilidades."*

- *It is important for young people to participate in activities outside school because they develop new skills*

## ADVANCED LEVEL

### ADVANCED LOW

*"La tecnología ha cambiado la manera en que los estudiantes aprenden y se comunican."*

- *Technology has changed the way students learn and communicate.*

### ADVANCED MID

### ADVANCED HIGH

**Note: An immersive educational experience beginning in elementary school can support students in reaching Advanced Mid or Advanced High proficiency.*

*These examples illustrate language features associated with proficiency development; a single sentence does not establish an overall proficiency rating.*

COMMUNICATION



CULTURES



CONNECTIONS



COMPARISONS



COMMUNITIES



# How the Standards Are Organized

## THE 5Cs OF WORLD LANGUAGE LEARNING

**Communication**
Interact, interpret, and present

**Cultures**
Explore products, practices, and perspectives

**Connections**
Connect language learning across disciplines

**Comparisons**
Compare languages and cultures

**Communities**
Apply language in real-world settings

## THREE MODES OF COMMUNICATION

**Interpretive**
Understand and interpret spoken, written, and visual texts

**Interpersonal**
Exchange information and negotiate meaning

**Presentational**
Communicate ideas and information to an audience

## KEY MESSAGE

*The **5Cs** provide the framework and the **three modes of communication** describe how students use language to demonstrate proficiency.*

# Kindergarten-Grade 8 Exploratory: Overview

## 1. FOUNDATION

### Early Language Exposure

- Builds a strong foundation for language development and literacy
- Strengthens students' understanding of language structure, including other languages they know

## 2. EXPLORATORY APPROACHES

### FLEX – Explore a Language

- Emphasize exposure and engagement
- Build awareness and curiosity
- May vary in frequency and duration
- Progress along proficiency continuum may be gradual

**Goal**: Interest and continued exploration

### FLES – Develop a Language

- Develop communication and proficiency
- Build language skills and cultural understanding
- Provide ongoing practice
- Support measurable growth in proficiency

**Goal**: Increasing proficiency and communication skills

## 3. PLACEMENT & CREDIT

### Instructional Time Impact

Reaching target proficiency levels depends heavily on instructional time, which varies across elementary and middle school programs.

### High School Credit Placement

Because students' proficiency levels will differ, initial placement in courses that award high school credit must account for prior instructional background.

# Grades 7 - 12: Overview

## 1. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

### Structured Level I–V Sequence

Grades 7–12 courses provide a structured sequence of five levels (I–V) designed to develop language proficiency and intercultural competence.

### Progression & High School Credit

- **Novice Low Start:** Level I begins at Novice Low proficiency using practiced words and phrases.
- **Progressive Growth:** Levels I–V build accuracy, fluency, confidence, and intercultural competence.
- **Grade 8 Credit:** Students may begin earning high school credit in Grade 8 to pursue advanced levels.

## 2. PLACEMENT & FLEXIBILITY

### Demonstrated Proficiency Focus

Students enter secondary courses with varied backgrounds, heritage language exposure, community interactions, or previous coursework.

Students with demonstrated prior proficiency may be placed at the appropriate level in accordance with local LEA policy.

### Placement Guidelines

- **Valid Measures:** LEAs are encouraged to use placement assessments rather than grade level or age.
- **Aligned Entry:** Students enter the Level I–V sequence at the level aligning with demonstrated proficiency.
- **District Policy:** Course placement remains consistent with local LEA placement policies.

## 3. ASSESSMENT & GROWTH

### Performance-Based Evaluation

Learning is measured through performance tasks and assessments, both formative and summative.

### Key Drivers

- **Three Modes:** Evaluates student ability to interpret, interact, and present meaning.
- **Proficiency Continuum:** Identifies clear developmental targets across all levels.
- **Individual Rates:** Students progress at varied rates based on prior exposure and the quality and amount of instruction time.

# Questions? Comments? Discussion?

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