ENGLISH LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

Mastery of language and syntactic features allows students' full participation in academics by enabling them to put ideas together in a wide range of ways. Mastery includes learning the breadth of language patterns to communicate relationships between ideas: to explain, describe, compare, and contrast, summarize, generalize, express, cause-and-effect relationships, sequences, and so on. The benefits of learning to use the language functions such as comparing, for example, extend beyond a given task because once students know how to compare; they can apply that skill to a range of contexts across content areas. Students practice and extend their language skills for comparing by applying it in different ways**.**

Increasing competence in any language function obligates the speaker or writer to use increasingly complex sentence structures. Using this approach, learning interesting content- and how to talk and write about that interesting content- is not delayed until more advanced levels of proficiency are reached. Academic language is developed from the beginning stages of second language learning. Competence in a range of functions equips students to participate in content instruction and supports academic language proficiency. Language becomes a vehicle, rather than a barrier, to learning.

Any act of verbal communication is composed of six elements, or factors:

(1) a context

(2) an addresser (a sender),

(3) an addressee (a receiver),

(4) a contact between an addresser and addressee,

(5) a common code and

(6) a message.

The message is what we often call a language function. The following are the most typical language functions with the most frequent structures used to achieve them.

1. **Student uses language to:** Observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire
   a. **Language of Inquiry/Seeking Information**

I wonder why . . .
How does . . . work?
I'd like to ask you about . . .
Am I correct in assuming that . . .?
Could you expand a little bit on what you said about . . . ?
Could you be more specific about . . .?
Something else I'd like to know is . . .
If I have understood you correctly, your point is that . . .

I didn't understand what you said about . . .
I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said about . . . ?
Sorry, but I'm not quite clear on . . .

b. Soliciting a Response

What do you think?
We haven't heard from you yet.
Do you agree?
What answer did you get?

c. Expressing an Opinion

I think/believe that . . .
In my opinion, . . .
Based on my experience, I think . . .

d. Paraphrasing

So you are saying that . . .
In other words, you think . . .
What I hear you saying is . . .

2. **Student uses language to:** Identify, report or describe information
a. **Reporting a Partner's [or anyone's] Idea**
- indicated that….
- pointed out to me that….
- emphasized that…
- concluded that….

b. **Language of Informing**
- The advantages of _____ outweigh the disadvantages of _____ insofar as…
- The statistics are misleading because they do/not show…
- These [facts/reasons/data] strongly suggest that… Yet some argue
- strongly that….

c. **Language of Summarizing**
- On the whole…
- Basically he/she is saying that….
- In this text, the author argues that….
- To support the main claim, the author provides evidence that suggests
- that….
- Main Idea/ Supporting
- ideas/ Conclusion

3. **Student uses language to:** Describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas
a. **Language of Comparing & Contrasting**
- One similarity/difference between [subject 1] and [subject 2] is ….
- [Subject 1] and [subject 2] are similar because they both….
- [Subject 1] and [subject 2] are rather different because while
- [subject 1] has _____, [subject 2] has _____.
- Whereas [subject 1] is … , [subject 2] is …
- [Subject 1] is …. Similarly / In contrast, [subject 2] is ….

b. **Language of Agreeing**
- My idea/answer/explanation is similar to/related to…
- I agree with (a person) that…
- My idea builds upon (a person's) idea…
- I don't agree with you because…

4. **Student uses language to:** sequence objects, ideas, or events.
a. **Language of Sequencing**
- First, … and second, …
- Meanwhile, the ___ appeared to be …
- While [subject 1] was …, [subject 2] was simultaneously/concurrently…
- Finally ___ proceeded to…
- Consequently the _____ began to …
- Previously, _____ had decided to …
- Following this event, …
- Initially …. Some time later…..
- After … the next step is/was to…
- What occurred/happened prior to… was that…
- In the first stage/phase, ….
- The transition between stages __ and __ can be described as….

5. **Student uses language to: Group objects or ideas according to their characteristics. It is critical to identify the rules that govern class or category membership.**
a. **Language of Classifying**
- consists of [quantity] categories.
- The [quantity] categories of _____ are ____, ____, and ___.
- We can classify _____ according to…
- _____ and _____ are types of … because….
- The most salient characteristic(s) of this group is/are…
- An appropriate name for this group is … owing to the fact that they all…
- correlates to_____ insofar as….
- These _____ are arranged according to….

6. **Student uses language to:** Separate whole into parts, identify relationships and patterns
a. **Language of Analysis**

- We can interpret _____ as ….
- Given the evidence, we can deduce that…
- _____ can be differentiated from _____ based on…
- After a thorough analysis of the evidence, we conclude that….
- This ____ is significant because…
- After careful examination of… it appears that…
- _____ is related to _____ insofar as….
- ___ and ____ are connected by….. This is important because…
- We can draw parallels between ____ and the world/other texts/self
- because….

7. Student uses language to: make inferences, predict implications, and hypothesize.

a. Language of Prediction and Hypothesis
- I predict / imagine that…
- Given …, I hypothesize that …
- If I use …then I predict…will happen.
- Based on past results, I predict…
- I deduced …. after analyzing _____ further.
- I discerned that_____ because….
- I foresee_____ because….
- I prognosticate…… because I know…..

b. Language of Inference
- Based on … I infer that …
- I infer that… based on…
- My conjecture on ____ is….
- I anticipate that…

8. Student uses language to: Give reasons for an action, decision, point of view; convince others

a. Language of Justification
- I believe this because…
- My primary reason for thinking so is…
- Perhaps the most convincing reason for this is…

b. Language of Persuasion
- Based on the evidence presented so far, I believe that…
- Although some people claim that…, opponents argue that….
- It is vital to consider…
- The advantages of ____ outweigh the disadvantages of ____ insofar as…
- The statistics are misleading because they do/not show…
- These [facts/reasons/data] strongly suggest that… Yet some argue strongly that….

9. Student uses language to: Define and represent a problem; determine a solution,

a. **Language of Describing Problems**
- A way of thinking about solving this problem is…
- In order to solve this problem we must first/initially….
- This problem is similar to….
- We need to identify…
- One way to visualize this problem is…
- Let's break this into parts. First, …
- Another way of looking at this problem is…
- The most important thing to remember in this problem is…
- In order to solve this problem we will need to know…

b. **Language of Explaining Solutions**
- A diagram or symbol that might represent this solution is…
- We know our solution is correct because….
- The solution to this problem is…
- I know I have solved the problem because…
- The solution to this problem will require….
- A critical element of the solution to this problem is…

10. **Student uses language to: Combine or integrate ideas to form a whole group**
a. **Language of Synthesizing**
- The main point(s) is/ are…
- The point that _____ makes is related to _____ in that…..
- The significance of _____ is…..
- From my perspective, _____ means…..
- The concept of _____ can be expressed as…..
- Our conclusion is a synthesis of _____ and _____.
- I feel that _____ and _____'s viewpoints are related in that….
- My visual represents a synthesis of _____ and _____ because….
- While creating _____, I built upon ………

b. **Acknowledging Ideas**
- My idea is similar to/related to _____'s idea.
- I agree/disagree with _____that . . .
- My idea builds upon _____'s idea.
- As _____already mentioned…

11. **Student uses language to:** assess and verify with of an object, idea or decision.
a. **Language of Evaluating**
- Based on … I determined that…
- _____'s judgment of … was … because …
- The critique of _____ was favorable/unfavorable because …
- We/They judge _____ to be _____ because ….
- We/I evaluated _____ on the following criteria …

- I assess that….
- After inspecting…. I have determined…
- After carefully scrutinizing_____ I believe that….
- My interpretation of_____ is…
- When ranking its importance, I feel that… because…
-

b. Language of Appreciation
- Thank you…….
- Thanks a lot for ……….
- I am grateful to you for ……….

12. Student uses language to: Describe why and how relationships and patterns exist between events, ideas, processes, problems; Identify consequences that led to the outcome

a. Language of Explaining Causes
- Even though many people thought the cause was …, I believe it was…
- The most likely reason for… was…
- I hypothesize that… made them…
- That wasn't caused by …because
- Several factors contributed to the outcome. Namely, …

b. Language of Describing an Effect
- _____ was a result of…
- The…led to…, which led to…
- The change resulted in…
- It combines with…to produce…

13. Language of eliciting factual information: Students can express past and present habits, give a promise, prohibit, etc…..
   a. Past habit
- I used to drink milk every day when I was a child.
   b. Present habit
- I am used to sleeping early
   c. Prohibition
- Don't go
   d. Promise
- I'll …. If you …..
   e. Wish
   I wish I can ……

14. Language of finding out and expressing attitudes: students can ask for and express their own and others' attitudes.

a. Obligation

- Have to
- Must
- Ought to

b. Non-obligation
- does/do not have to …

c. Asking permission

– Can I, he, she, we, they (+ VPinf)?
-- May I ….

d. Giving permission

– Yes
– You, he, she, they can (+ VPinf)

e. No permission

– (I'm) sorry
– You, he, she, they, can't (+ VPinf)

f. Volitional wants and desires

– I'd like to …..
– I want to ….

g. expressing intention

– I will go …..
-- I am going to do …..

h. enquiring about intention

– will you go?

i. expressing preference

– I('d) like to …..
--I prefer….
-- I'd rather ……

j. certainty

– I am (not) sure

k.   Doubt

-- Are you sure.

l.   expressing liking

– Lovely!
– It is (very) nice
– I love(s)/like(s) it (very much)

m.   expressing dislike

– Horrible!
– NP + be + not very nice
– I, he, she, we, they hate + NP.
– (disgust) Ugh!

n.   expressing hope

– I hope + so/declarative sentence

o.   expressing satisfaction

– Good!
-- cool, wonderful, gorgeous….

p.   expressing dissatisfaction

– It's not good --- it is only …..

q.   expressing disappointment

– What a pity!

r.   expressing gratitude

– Thank you (very much)

s.   Apologizing

- Sorry!
- Whoops! Sorry!
- Oh! Sorry.
- Sorry 'bout that.
- I apologize
t.   granting forgiveness

   - OK.

- That's all right
- Never mind.
- You're forgiven.

u. expressing appreciation

– (Very) good!
– (Very) nice!
-- Thanks a lot.
-- I am grateful to you.

v. expressing regret

– (I'm) (very) sorry.

w. expressing indifference

-- It is not important.
-- Who cares

x. Comfort

-- Don't worry

y. Protest

-- That's not fair
-- It is unfair
-- This is not enough

z. Encourage

-- off course you can
-- you can make it
-- Go ahead

15. Language of getting things done: students can suggest, offer, request ……..
a. suggesting a course of action
– Why not ……..?
-- How about ……?
– Let's ……

b. agreeing to a suggestion
– OK
Yes, why not?

– Yes, let's

c. **requesting others to do something**
– Please, close the window
– Please, can you open the door?

d. **Offer**
Why not you …
You can ……
Would you like to do …..

e. **accepting an offer or invitation**
– Thank you
– Yes, please

f. **refusing an offer or invitation**
– No, thank you
– Sorry

g. **Blaming (late advice)**

-You should have …..

h. **Advice**
-- You should go to the doctor
-- You should study hard.

i. **warning**
– (Be) Careful!
-- you will ……. If you ……..

j. **offering assistance**
– Can I help you?

k. **requesting assistance**
– Help!
– Can you help me please?

l. **Remind**
Don't forget to …..

16. **Language to Socialize**
a. **attracting attention**

Hallo!
Excuse me, please
b. greeting people
Hi.
Hallo (+ *name*)!
How are you?
c. responding
Fine, thank you

17. Language to Structure Discourse: students use language to introduce, congratulate, take leave, ………….
a. introducing someone
(other people) (*address form* +) This is + *name*
(oneself) Hallo! I'm + *name*
b. reacting to being introduced
Hallo! (informal)
How do you do? (formal)

c. congratulating someone
Congratulations!
Well done!
d. taking leave
Goodbye!
See you (later, again, tomorrow)