

Figure 4.2 Academic Language Functions

Academic Language Function	Student uses language to:	Examples
1. Seeking Information/ Informing	Observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire; identify, report, or describe information	Use <i>who, what, when, where, and how</i> to gather information; recount information presented by teacher or text; retell a story or personal experience
2. Comparing	Describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas	Make/explain a graphic organizer to show similarities and contrasts
3. Ordering	Sequence objects, ideas, or events	Describe/make a timeline, continuum, cycle, or narrative sequence
4. Classifying	Group objects or ideas according to their characteristics	Describe organizing principle(s), explain why A is an example and B is not
5. Analyzing	Separate whole into parts; identify relationships and patterns	Describe parts, features, or main idea of information
6. Inferring	Make inferences; predict implications, hypothesize	Describe reasoning process (inductive or deductive) or generate hypotheses to suggest causes or outcomes
7. Justifying and Persuading	Give reasons for an action, decision, point of view; convince others	Tell why A is important and give evidence in support of a position
8. Solving Problems	Define and represent a problem; determine a solution	Describe problem-solving procedures; apply to real-life problems and describe
9. Synthesizing	Combine or integrate ideas to form a whole	Summarize information; incorporate new information
10. Evaluating	Assess and verify worth of an object, idea, or decision	Identify criteria, explain priorities, indicate reasons for judgment, confirm truth

Adapted from Chamot and O'Malley (1994).

means: (1) using authentic language in listening/speaking activities; (2) setting real-world tasks, such as getting the gist of a message, listening selectively, describing, giving directions, and giving opinions; and (3) giving students opportunities to use language in situations based on everyday life. It is important to expose students to authentic language and help them work out strategies for dealing with less than total comprehension (Porter and Roberts 1987).

In your lesson planning, articulate learning goals and objectives in terms of those language functions students need to learn first. Be sure to include language functions that reflect both social and academic language. Within this context, the areas of grammar and pronunciation can be addressed, instead of being assessed as discrete items. In all cases, assessment should be instructive, challenging, engaging, and even enjoyable (Underhill 1987; Wiggins 1992).

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7.6 Definitions and Examples of Thinking Skills in the Content Areas

Thinking Skill	Definition	Reading	Mathematics	Social Studies	Science
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall or paraphrase information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to texts, comprehend the literal meaning, and infer meanings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and use numbers in computation with the four operations, recognize place value, and use fractions and decimals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the variety of systems of government Understand past events and issues as they occurred Understand main ideas of basic documents in the United States government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand procedures of scientific inquiry Begin to understand the physical properties of the earth and universe, including light, temperature, weight, and gravity
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide a whole into component elements, including part/whole, cause-effect, or elements in a sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify components of literary, expository, and persuasive discourse Analyze the structure, language, and content of oral or written discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use arithmetic appropriate to solve a problem and explain solutions Identify the properties of geometric figures and their relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine social, cultural, and technological changes in early and modern times Explain the changing role of the U.S. in WWI, WWII, the cold war, and in global economic relations; analyze what has/has not worked and why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand cause/effect See the relationships between systems and parts Analyze the composition of matter, and how different substances interact Analyze the interdependence of earth systems
Comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize or explain similarities and differences based on one or more attributes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make connections both within and among oral and written texts Make connections between text and prior knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make connections between related mathematical concepts and apply these concepts to other content areas Express a rational number in a variety of forms, including fractions, decimals, percents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare/contrast socialism, capitalism, and communism Know the basic beliefs of the world's principal religions Discuss the American tensions between liberty and equality, liberty and order, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, sort, catalog, and classify objects and materials
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine elements to form a unified whole or to form a generalization from knowledge of elements Use deductive and inductive reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw on literary and non-literary documents in reaching generalizations or conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and solve real-world problems Apply the basic concepts of measurement in solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show relationships among the variety of family, work, and government systems of the world and how communities fit into the larger picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect the Periodic Table of Elements and its divisions to atomic structure and summarize what the structure means See the relationship between systems and parts
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judge the quality, worth, or credibility of information or arguments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate believability, significance, form, completeness, clarity Evaluate one's own language and how others use language for effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use estimation for solving problems, and check the reasonableness of results Use statistical methods to describe, analyze, evaluate, and make decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give examples of the significance of change, location, diversity, justice, power, and compromise in local history Act as a responsible citizen within community and state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between scientific evidence and personal opinion Show how evidence is needed to confirm a theory

Extracted from Council on Basic Education (1994).

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