

World Language Essential Standards Crosswalk

A Document to Assist with the Transition from the
2004 *Standard Course of Study* to the 2010 *Essential Standards*

The previous examples focus on world language programs at the secondary level, but students can begin to study a world language at any point, K-12. Elementary school programs allow students to start the study of a language as early as kindergarten, though formal instructional time is somewhat harder to gauge because of the variety of programs and the students' developmental level. Middle school programs also vary widely, from exploratory programs that do not build proficiency in communication skills to proficiency-based programs that earn students high school graduation credit.

In addition, the type of writing system used by a language impacts the amount of time needed to reach different levels of proficiency. Learning an alphabetic language, or one that uses a system in which each letter is linked to a particular sound, is different than learning a logographic language that uses a character writing system. For native English speaking students, a logographic language will require more time to master the writing system, which also impacts reading skills. There are also languages like Cherokee and Japanese that use a syllabary system, where each letter or character represents a syllable or sound combination. Based on advice from national experts, Cherokee has been grouped with alphabetic languages and Japanese with logographic ones.

The program introductions in the *World Language Essential Standards* describe each type of program and outline proficiency expectations for the different variations, including alphabetic and logographic languages, as well as American Sign Language (ASL) which is a visual language. In working toward a clear and concise way to show the increasing proficiency levels or learning trajectories, or “spiraling up,” a series of descriptors was used with the Clarifying Objectives, which helped with vertical and horizontal alignment: