

Language Milestones – Normal Language Development

(Multiple errors across language domains or in single areas indicate child **may** need language assessment.)

Mark + or -
and any comments

By Age 5

Syntax (Sentence Structure)

- _____ sentences in conversation should average 4.5-7 words
- _____ simple sentences are complete
- _____ uses and understands some complex sentences

Semantics (Word Knowledge)

- _____ knows time concepts (early, tomorrow, etc.)
- _____ labels common objects by use and function

Morphology (Word Structure)

- _____ knows comparatives (e.g. bigger, nicer, taller)
- _____ knows third person singular present tense (e.g. "he runs.")
- _____ knows regular past tense
- _____ knows regular plurals
- _____ uses basic helping verbs in sentences (e.g. is, are, am)
- _____ uses contractions (e.g. can't, won't, he's)

Pragmatics (Social Language)

- _____ can judge grammatical correctness of basic sentences
- _____ maintains topic

Suggestions for Eliciting Targets

Ask about favorite movies, friends, siblings, pets, how to make a peanut butter sandwich, favorite games, etc.

*"What day is tomorrow? What did you do yesterday?"
"What tells time? What keeps food cold?"*

*"Is a car heavier than a bicycle?"
"What does a bird do with its wings?" or
"Use the word "walks" in a sentence."
After dropping pencil, ask "What did I do?"
Hold up fingers and ask, "What are these?"
"Use the word 'are' in a sentence."*

"Do cows fly? Tell me that in a sentence."

"Is it correct to say, 'He drawing picture?'"

Elicit spontaneous speech.

Ages 5-6

Syntax (Sentence Structure)

- _____ sentences averages 6.0-8.0 words
- _____ uses and understands past and future tense consistently with usually complete and some complex sentences

Semantics (Word Knowledge)

- _____ uses and understands many location prepositions (e.g. on top, above, between, near)
- _____ knows address
- _____ knows some common opposites (e.g. hard-soft)
- _____ tells stories about past events
- _____ defines basic words using use and composition
- _____ can name position (e.g. first, second, third)

_____ knows indefinite pronouns (e.g. every, any, both, few)

Morphology (Word Structure)

- _____ uses irregular plurals (e.g. mice, teeth)
- _____ uses possessive nouns (e.g. the dog's tail)

_____ uses basic conjunctions (e.g. and, if, because)

Pragmatics (Social Language)

- _____ uses basic requests (wh and yes-no questions)
- _____ understands some indirect requests
- _____ self monitors speech, sometimes self correcting errors

Elicit spontaneous speech. Ask about what the student will do after school, what happened yesterday after school, etc.

*Place pencil in different areas (e.g. below table), and ask, "Where is my pencil?"
"What town/state/country do you live in?"
"What is the opposite of stop?"
"What did you do (yesterday, last weekend, etc.)?"
"What is glue?" (Includes use and composition.)
"What is the third day of the week? What is the last letter in the alphabet?"
"Use the word 'many' in a sentence."*

*Point to teeth or feet and ask "What are these?"
Point to picture of person, animal, etc. and ask,
"Whose ears, etc. are those?"
"Use the word 'or' in a sentence."*

*"What could you ask if you lost your coat?"
"I would like you to stand."
Elicit spontaneous speech.*

Language Milestones – Normal Language Development

Mark + or -
and any

Ages 7,8, and 9

comments

Syntax

- _____ sentences in conversation should average 7.0-9.0 words
- _____ uses complete sentences
- _____ uses primarily complex sentences with conjunctions, clauses, and/or embedding
- _____ uses correct word order (particularly in questions)

Semantics

- _____ knows seasons, and categories such as holidays, liquids, punctuation, planets, directions, states, etc.
- _____ labels curriculum objects, and labels functions
- _____ knows curriculum opposites and synonyms
- _____ uses more complex location prepositions (eg. through)
- _____ knows basic idioms
- _____ knows basic metaphors

Morphology

- _____ knows superlatives, e.g. biggest, best, tallest
- _____ uses infinitive verbs
- _____ knows irregular past tense
- _____ knows derivational morphemes
- _____ understands complex negation

Pragmatics

- _____ varies intonation, gestures and other nonverbal behavior

Ages 10 and up

Syntax

- _____ minimal errors in word order; adult sentence length;
- _____ includes variety of tense and clauses, including progressives

Semantics

- _____ knows similarities and differences of curriculum objects
- _____ can define multiple curriculum words using at least 2 of the following: categories, examples, attributes, functions
- _____ differentiates similar words
- _____ consistently uses precise terms
- _____ consistently answers mixed “wh” questions
- _____ understands and explains idioms

Morphology

- _____ any morphologic error

Pragmatics

- _____ can distinguish facts and opinions
- _____ requests clarifications

Suggestions for Eliciting Targets

Ask about favorite movies, friends, siblings, how to do a book report, hobbies, etc.
“Use the word ‘unless’ in a sentence.”

“Name the seasons.” “What are China, Canada, and The United States of America?”
“Name something that measures.” “What does a title do?”
“What is the opposite of lower case?” “What is a word that means the same as author?”
“Use the word ‘across’ in a sentence.”
“What does it mean to ‘catch up,’ ‘figure out,’ ‘call it a day,’ etc.”
“Finish this sentence. That old dog was as slow as a _____.”

“Tell me the slowest animal that you can think of.”
“Use the phrase “to walk” in a sentence.”
“Use the word ‘hold’ in a sentence starting with the word ‘yesterday’.” (hear, bring, etc.)
“If a reader is somebody who reads, what do you call somebody who listens?”
“Tell me something that doesn’t live in the ocean.”

Elicit spontaneous speech

Use phrases in sentences, such as “may be able to, would have, will be, could have,” etc.

“How are a microscope and a telescope alike, and how are they different?”
“What is punctuation? What is an ocean? What is a government?”, etc.
“Is it worse to be furious or upset?” “Is it better to be happy or ecstatic?”
monitor conversation sample for excessive use of demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these and those) and words like “thing” and “stuff”
“Where/When/Why do you eat lunch? Who/What is the President?”
“What really happens when a person turns the clock back?... if something appears out of thin air?”, etc.

refer to suggestions for ages 7,8, and 9

“I like pizza. Is that a fact or an opinion?”
Say something very quietly.