

Guidance Document	Assent Letter
Effective Review	Delegated & Full Board
Version Date	April 28, 2021

Legend

Blue text: Guidance and/or instructions
 Black text: Suggested wording and/or example
 Red text: Language that should not be included

An Assent Form should be used for the following:

- For children or adolescents who do not have the capacity to consent on their own behalf but who have the capacity to assent.
 - For adult-aged participants who do not have the capacity to consent on their own behalf but who are capable of assent.
- References to children in the template must be amended.

When writing the assent, please remember:

1. Language should be age-appropriate and no greater than a grade 8 reading level.
2. Use at least size 12 font.
3. The only identifiers accepted on the assent form are the participant's name and initials/signature (recommended).
4. Use the term "participant" instead of "subject" in all instances to emphasize the voluntary nature of participation.
5. The participant must be provided with a copy of the Assent form and this should be stated.
 - **E.g.**, "This letter is for you to keep" OR "You will be given a copy of this Assent Form once it has been signed."
6. All Assent forms should be printed on institutional letterhead.
http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/western_brand/vis_toolkit/templates.html
7. PROOFREAD before submitting to the REB.
8. Keep the footer simple and short; it should only include the version date (dd/mm/yyyy) and pagination ("Page x of y") on every page.
9. Do not state "This study has been approved by the research ethics board..." as this may appear to offer a guarantee of safety.

Project Title	
Enter the full title of study exactly as it appears on the Protocol / WREM Form.	
Document Title	
Add particular study subgroups to the document title, as applicable. This enables everyone to differentiate between consent forms and groups within a study (e.g., student group, teacher, or parent).	
E.g.,	Assent Letter – Student
Principal Investigator + Contact	
Enter the Principal Investigator's name, with title and telephone number.	
E.g.,	Principal Investigator Dr. Jane Miller, PhD, Psychology Western University, X80000
Additional Research Staff + Contact (optional)	
You may choose to enter names and titles of Additional Research Staff, but this is not required. Please note: if you do enter names and titles, it will be necessary to submit a revised Consent Form and Western Protocol for review and approval any time personnel changes.	
E.g.,	Additional Research Staff Dr. Mary Jones, PhD, Anthropology Dr. James Wright, MA, Ivey
1. Why do you want to talk to me?	
Introduce the research and why this research is being done in very basic terminology.	
E.g.,	We want to tell you about a research study we are doing. A research study is a way to learn more about something. This study will look at why children like to play. You are being invited to participate in this study because you like to play.
2. Why are you doing this study?	
Explain in very basic terminology why you are doing this study.	
E.g.,	We want to see if certain things, more than others, make you like to play.
3. What will happen to me?	
Explain in very basic terminology what will happen to the participant should they decide to participate.	
E.g.,	If you want to be in the study, two things will happen: 1. Every XX months while you are in grade 4, we will ask you

- some questions about how you like to play.
2. You will go on a field trip to the museum.

4. Will there be any tests?

Explain in very basic terminology if the participant will/will not have to go through any tests or procedures (e.g., in educational environments, age-related assessments, or blood/diagnostic tests). In this scenario (educational environments), reassure them that participating will not affect his/her grade.

E.g. (NM), There will not be any tests or marks on your report card for this study.

E.g. (HS), *We will need to collect one vial of blood. To avoid multiple pokes, we will collect the blood sample during your regular blood work.*

5. Will the study help me?

Indicate in very basic terminology whether or not the participant will receive any benefit.

E.g., This study will not help you directly, but in the future, it might help children who do not like to play.

6. Do I have to be in the study?

Let the participant know they do not have to be in the study if they do not want to be, and can change their mind at any time.

E.g., You do not have to be in the study. It is up to you. No one will be upset if you do not want to do this. If you do not want to be in the study, tell your **<insert as appropriate: parents, guardian or your teacher/doctor>**. Even if you say yes now, you can change your mind later.

7. What if I have any questions?

Let the participant know who they can contact if they have any questions.

E.g., You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to the teachers, your family or **(insert study PI and study telephone number)**.

You will be given a copy of this paper to keep.

8. Assent

Include this section with the rest of the LOI document, but on its own page.
Keep the assent portion very simple and encourage the participant to sign/mark for him/herself.

Print Name of Participant _____ Participant Initials _____

Date _____

Name of Person Obtaining Assent _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Assent _____