ACTFL TEP

EXAMINEE HANDBOOK

LTI Language Testing International

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ACTFL Language Connects

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About the ACTFL Test of English Proficiency (TEP)

The ACTFL Test of English Proficiency (TEP) is a remotely proctored, four-skills proficiency assessment that brings together three of ACTFL's internationally recognized assessments (OPIc™, WPT™, L&Rcat™) to provide a valid and reliable measure of language proficiency in speaking, writing, listening and reading. ACTFL tests are widely used by schools, universities, corporations, and government agencies to assess language proficiency levels of current students and employees, as well as prospective students and employees.

The ACTFL TEP assesses proficiency, meaning it tests what one can do with English in "real life." It is not designed to assess what you learned in a language program, class, school, or university, nor is it tied to a specific teaching method. The ratings come from assessing how well you can use the language, as described in the complete *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - 2024 for English*. The test does not address when, where, why, or the way in which you learned the target language.

The ACTFL TEP is remotely proctored, on the test taker's computer, from any suitable location. Test results and the certificates are delivered in approximately 14 days.

The ACTFL TEP is on-demand, and all three assessment components are adaptive. Each one delivers a rating from Superior to Novice on the ACTFL scale.

1. **The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer (OPIc)** – The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview-Computer (OPIc) assesses functional speaking ability. It was developed as a valid and reliable tool to deliver and score oral proficiency testing on a larger scale than the "live" OPI. The OPIc uses an avatar to simulate aspects of conversation. The avatar asks questions on practical, social, and professional topics that are encountered in informal and formal contexts. The recorded, spoken answers are rated by certified ACTFL raters.

2. **The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)** – The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) assesses functional writing ability. The WPT was developed as a tool to measure how well a person spontaneously writes in a language (without access to revisions and/or editing tools). The WPT presents four prompts for written responses dealing with practical, social, and professional topics that are encountered in informal and formal contexts. The written answers are rated by certified, ACTFL raters.

3. **The ACTFL Listening and Reading Computerized Adaptive Test (L&Rcat)** – The ACTFL Listening and Reading Computerized Adaptive Test (L&Rcat) assesses how well a person understands spoken and written discourse. The L&Rcat requires that the test taker listen to and read a number of passages and texts and respond to associated multiple-choice questions, by selecting the most appropriate answers. The answers are computer-rated.

To schedule an ACTFL TEP, please visit: http://languagetesting.com/test-of-english-proficiency.

ACTFL TEP Administration

The ACTFL TEP is administered by Language Testing International (LTI) which is the exclusive partner and licensee of ACTFL. Since its inception in 1992, LTI has administered millions of language assessments for academic institutions, federal, state and city agencies, major corporations and companies of all sizes.

Remote Proctoring

An important feature of the ACTFL TEP is remote proctoring. It allows you to take the test anywhere you have access to a quiet room and a computer, webcam, microphone, and headset.

With the instructions on your confirmation email from LTI, you should plan on logging in to your test 25 minutes prior to your test time. You will be required to complete a System Check and download a temporary software application on your computer. The proctor must confirm your identity. You will need to show a photo ID, much like an on-site proctor would require.

The application allows the remote proctor to see system settings and activity on your computer to verify that no unauthorized programs or additional devices are accessible for use. If you attempt to access any other program, open another browser window, or press any function key on the keyboard, the test will automatically shut down.

In addition to verifying the secure computer, the remote proctor will check the security of your space by having you use the webcam to show the areas adjacent to you (e.g., desktop, under the table/desk, etc.) to ensure that no unauthorized notes or other resources are available during the assessment.

The remote proctor will then log you in to the test. The proctoring system remains in place throughout the entire time you are taking the test, and any suspicious activity on the computer or in the testing environment is documented using photos and video.

Time Needed to Take the Test

The ACTFL TEP is a comprehensive assessment of proficiency. The time needed to take the test can range from 2 – 4 hours, depending on ability.

Speaking: 20-40 minutes

Writing: 20-80 minutes

Listening and Reading: 50-105 minutes

Technical Requirements

To take the ACTFL TEP, which is delivered with remote proctoring, you will need to use a computer. Tablets, phones, and Chromebooks are not permitted. You will also need Google Chrome as your browser, with pop-up blockers disabled.

1 Computer:

- » Operating System: Windows 7, 8.1, or 10 (10S is not supported.)
- » Browser: the latest version of Google Chrome for all Operating Systems
- » Audio: During the OPIc, a series of audio/video prompts will play. Your computer must be able to play audio/video files.
- » Video resolution: 1024×768 or higher

2 Headset or Speaker:

- » The ability to play audio and respond via a microphone is required.
- » A good quality digital USB headset with microphone is recommended.
- » Units with noise cancellation are suggested for noisy environments, although noisy rooms are strongly discouraged.

3 Network: An internet connection is required. We strongly recommend a wired internet connection instead of wireless for desktop or laptop computers. Hot spots are not recommended. Technically, we require:

- » 2 Mbps for download and 2 Mbps for upload
- » Approx. 200 kbps sustainable free bandwidth required per test taker
- » Minimum bandwidth should be more than 1,000 kbps.

4 Keyboard: For the writing section (WPT), computer keyboards must be set up to permit you to type in English. No special characters are required.

5 Pop-up blockers: For the writing section (WPT), pop-up blockers must be disabled.

6 If the test taker is forced out of the test for reasons *not* related to suspicious activity, the remote proctor will immediately log the test taker back in so that they can continue from where they left off.

System Check

You can verify that your computer meets all system requirements for each part of the test by clicking on the links below. Technical issues can affect the quality of your answers and your concentration, so please address any potential issues with your equipment to ensure that you have a computer system that meets all the requirements fully. For the speaking and listening tests, you will be asked to test the audio. It is recommended to use good quality headphones for optimal sound quality.

Speaking (OPIc): https://opic.actfltesting.org/systemcheck

Writing (WPT): https://wptdemo.actfltesting.org/systemcheck

Listening and Reading (L&Rcat): https://actfllrhtmldemo.actfltesting.org/systemcheck

If the System Check shows that your computer does not meet a requirement, update your computer, or look for another computer that meets these technical requirements.

Once you have ordered your ACTFL TEP the LTI test administration team will send an email with your credentials and a link to perform a System Check for remote proctoring (if applicable).

NOTES: 1. If the System Check is complete and successful, the same computer and WIFI must be used for the test. If a different computer or WIFI are used, a new System Check must be performed. 2. The program will not allow you to proceed on a computer without the minimal requirements for the test.

Adaptive Features

All parts of the ACTFL TEP are adaptive.

OPIc and WPT

Surveys: The OPIc and WPT will begin with a short survey about your life, preferences and interests. The information provided allows you to customize the OPIc and WPT to your own interests. The content of the interview and writing prompts are based on topics related to your everyday life, school, work experience, and/or current events happening in your town or city.

Self-Assessment: For the OPIc and WPT, you will also complete short Self-Assessments that help to determine an appropriate speaking or writing proficiency range. They include descriptions of how well a person can speak or write in a language. You should select the description you feel most accurately describes your abilities. The information you provide allows the computer to generate a test tailored specifically to your linguistic capabilities.

Speaking Self-Assessment:*

1. I can name basic objects, colors, days of the week, foods, clothing items, numbers, etc. I can speak in words, very simple phrases, and memorized expressions.

2. I can give some basic information about myself, work, familiar people and places, and daily routines by speaking in simple sentences. I can ask some simple questions.

3. I can participate in simple conversations about familiar topics and routines. I can talk about things that have happened, but sometimes my forms are incorrect. I can handle a range of everyday transactions to get what I need.

4. I can participate fully and confidently in all conversations about topics and activities related to home, work/school, personal and community interests. I can speak in connected discourse about things that have happened, are happening and will happen. I can explain and elaborate when necessary. I can handle routine situations, even when there may be an unexpected complication.

5. I can engage in all informal and formal discussions on issues related to personal, general or professional interests. I can deal with these issues abstractly, support my opinion, and construct hypotheses to explore alternatives. I am able to elaborate at length and in detail on most topics with a high level of accuracy and a wide range of precise vocabulary.

*Please note that for Speaking, you must select Statement 3 or 4 if you need a rating up to Advanced Mid. You must select Statement 5 if you need a rating up to Superior.

Writing Self-Assessment:*

1   I can write only a few words (fewer than 10).

2   I can write or list basic objects, colors, days of the week, foods, clothing items, numbers, etc. I can write words, very simple phrases and memorized phrases.

3   I can compose simple sentences to communicate limited correspondences on familiar topics. I can meet practical writing needs and requests for information. I can write compositions primarily in the present time frame. I produce mainly sentences.

4   I can meet basic work or academic writing needs. I can relate events or describe people and places related to my life and work. I can write simple summaries and compositions and handle routine work or school related correspondences. I can write several sentences of a paragraph in length.

5   I can meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. I can organize ideas and write narrations, summaries and descriptions of familiar topics or current events. I can easily produce writings of several paragraphs.

6   I can produce most formal and informal correspondences, complex summaries, reports and research papers on a variety of practical, social, academic or professional topics. Through my writing, I am able to explain complex matters, provide detailed narrations in most time frames, and present and support my opinions.

*Please note that for Writing, you must select Statement 3 or 4 if you need a rating up to Advanced Mid. You must select Statement 5 or 6 if you need a rating up to Superior.

L&Rcat

The content in the Listening and Reading passages of the L&Rcat is based on a range of informal and formal material on general, social, professional, and academic topics, such as daily interactions, announcements, emails, instructions, newspaper articles, technical reports, literary texts, discussions, lectures, broadcasts, etc. These are examples of spoken and written language that listeners and readers of English as their first language are likely to find in the real-world, varying in topic and complexity according to the proficiency level the test is aiming to assess.

The L&Rcat measures your ability to understand a listening passage or reading text by asking comprehension questions and providing possible answers in order to confirm how well you understood the message. Instead of simple recognition of vocabulary or isolated statements, there is an expectation of an overall understanding of the passage and its message. Based on your responses to the questions, the L&Rcat will adapt and select test items for the purpose of maximizing the precision of your exam. This means that your test is tailored to your listening and reading abilities. The program selects items from the items bank based on what it learns from your previous answers and decides on the number of items it needs to administer until it reaches a conclusion about your rating. Therefore, each full test (with both the Listening and Reading Sections, combined) may contain a total of up to twenty (20) passages, with a maximum of ten (10) passages to listen to, or read, respectively.

How the Test Works

To learn how each part of the ACTFL TEP works, read the descriptions below. You can also take free demo tests on LTI's websites:

OPIc: https://opicdemo.actfltesting.org/

WPT: https://wptdemo.actfltesting.org/

L&Rcat: https://lrcatdemo.actfltesting.org/

How the OPIc and WPT Work

Once the Background Survey and the Self-Assessment are completed, the OPIc and WPT provide detailed test instructions and directions on how to respond to the questions. A sample question is provided to make sure you understand what will be required of you when you take the test.

For the OPIc, this is when you will have the opportunity to confirm that your device meets the technical requirements to run the test. You will record your voice and play it back to confirm that your microphone and headset are working properly.

Additionally, for the OPIc, you will be introduced to "Ava" – an avatar interviewer.

Oral Proficiency Interview - computer (OPIc)

You will be tested on how well you speak English.

Meet Ava! She will be your interviewer (and new best friend) during your test.

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Ava will guide you through the test by introducing each section of the test and by asking you questions. Having the avatar on the screen helps you to engage in a conversation that mimics a one-on-one conversation with a speaker of English.

For the WPT, the questions will look like this:

Sample Question

This is a sample question to test your keyboard. Your response will not count toward your final test score. Please write several words to ensure that your keyboard is working before you begin your test.

If your keyboard is not working or if you're automatically logged out from this page, it's likely that you're attempting to use a keyboard that is incompatible with this test. Please logout, visit the System Check page, and follow the directions to setup your keyboard.

Question 1 of 1

Time remaining will appear here.

Write a note to a friend who is visiting you. Be sure to:

1 Greet him/her and tell him/her why you are writing.

2 Describe where you live.

3 List places you like to visit.

Remember to write in Spanish
Suggested Length: 6-10 sentences
Suggested Time: 3 minutes

á

Next >

How the L&Rcat Works

The listening passages and reading texts are selected to meet specific criteria assigned to specific levels of proficiency based on content and complexity. The passages and texts include a range of topics appropriate for each level. They include informal and formal language used to express general, social and academic topics, such as daily interactions, reports, discussions, and broadcasts. The internal structure of the passages and texts (sentences, strings of sentences, paragraphs, complex development) match the level of complexity of the passages.

Multiple-Choice Questions: Each passage or text has three questions that refer to the passage's content; each question has four multiple-choice answers of which only one is correct. You will be able to select the correct answer based only on your comprehension of the passage. (In other words, you do not need prior knowledge.)

The L&Rcat questions may ask for main ideas, details, implications or inferences that you can make from the message presented in the passage. This allows the test to check your ability to understand the passage.

Listening passages are heard only once, as you would hear such communications in real-life situations. The voices are clear and there is no obstruction in the audio channel that may affect your listening (e.g., environment noises, background voices, music). The questions are provided in advance before you listen to the passage in order to allow you to focus on the message and listen with a purpose in mind.

After you read the questions in the Listening section, you will listen to the passage and have the option to take notes on the screen. Your notes will not affect scoring and will not be saved. When taking notes in the note pad provided on the screen, you can jot down information from the passage that may help you to select the correct answer. Then you will be able to view the multiple-choice options for each question. Your notes will remain on the screen with the multiple-choice questions.

Sample Question

Take notes here:

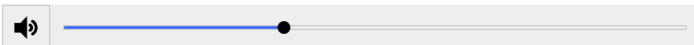**1: Susan's Hobbies**

Questions

1   What is Susan's favorite hobby?

2   With whom does Susan go shopping?

3   How often does Susan go swimming?

Listening Passage

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(i) You'll only hear the passage once, and you'll be unable to pause. Take some notes as you listen if you need to. Don't worry. Your notes won't affect your rating.

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The Reading section presents the written texts with each question. Just as with the Listening section, reading the questions in advance provides you with the opportunity to read with a specific purpose in mind. Read the questions first, and then read the passage while focusing on the information that may help you to select the correct answer.

Reading texts are visible to you until you finish with the questions related to them. Just as in real life, you can go back and review the printed media (e.g., notes, newspapers, reports). The questions and responses are provided with the passage, so you can view the questions as you read.

⬗ Sign Out

🕐 Time Remaining for this Selection: **4:35**

1: Language Learning for Success

In today's business world, people who speak more than one language find themselves with a strong advantage. Even in the US, a country that is often thought of as "English-only," employers have realized the benefits of having multilingual employees. Both private and public sector employers are increasingly interested in candidates with a range of language skills. While Spanish, French, and German have historically been the most in-demand second languages for Americans, other non-European languages such as Chinese and Arabic are now also highly sought after. Many educational experts say that American schools need to start teaching a second language when students are younger, and provide them with more opportunities to practice. Currently, second-language instruction doesn't start until most students are already teenagers. When students do start to learn another language, they often only get a few hours of instruction per week. Even though English is widely spoken throughout the world, it is still helpful to speak multiple languages in order to be able to connect with clients and learn new ways of thinking. By improving the quality of language education in our schools, we can help our children to succeed when they are ready to enter the work force.

Zoom text above: ▭────────

Questions

1 What is the main topic of the passage? The main topic is about…

○ when American students start to learn another language at school.

○ how learning another language at school will benefit American children.

○ what languages children are learning in American schools.

○ why we need to improve second-language education in American schools.

2 What does the article imply about American children who learn to speak another language? The article implies that these children will…

○ have a better chance of getting a good job some day.

○ need to learn other languages in addition to Spanish.

○ help to change the US into a multilingual society.

○ be limited to getting government jobs that focus on language.

Next >

Linguistic Functions and the OPIc and WPT Prompts

OPIc and WPT prompts elicit a variety of functions associated with the different levels on the ACTFL Proficiency scale. For each of the major levels of proficiency, there are specific types of communicative tasks that you must address to show what you can do in the language. The test might ask for the same functions in different contexts or topics in order to determine the quantity and quality of your functional ability. The rating that is associated with a specific proficiency level must demonstrate all functions of that level.

Below is a visual representation of the ACTFL scale followed by concise information about the four major levels assessed by the OPIc and WPT. As you can see, the ACTFL scale covers a full range of proficiency from Superior to Novice.
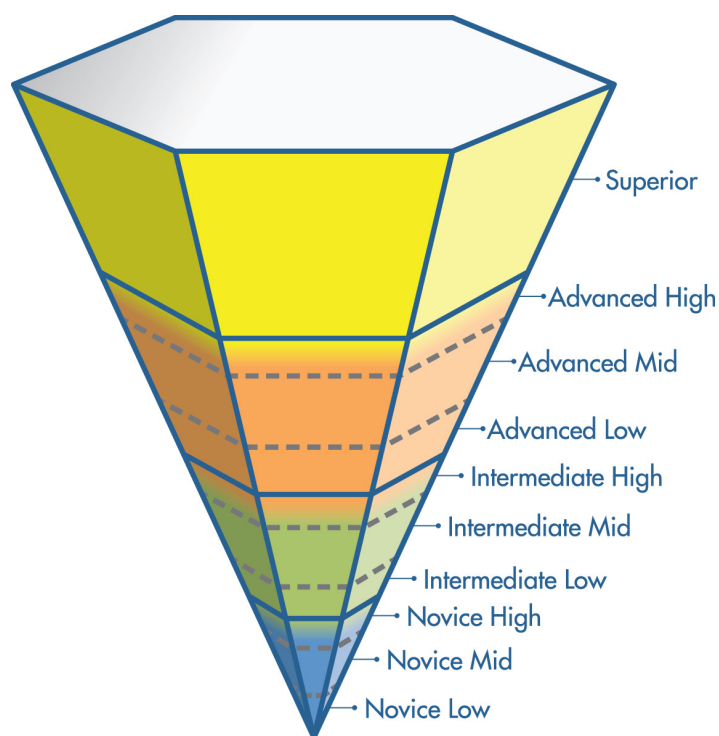
OPIc Linguistic Functions

Below are tables with question types, example questions, and notes to indicate what an appropriate response should contain at the targeted level. One example is provided for Superior, Advanced, and Novice, and three examples are provided for Intermediate.

SUPERIOR

Superior-level questions invite you to reflect thoughtfully about issues and problems of our society. These questions require you to organize your ideas in a logical manner and provide more complex elaboration.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
State and support an opinion Hypothesize about possible conditions and outcomes Discuss in general, abstract terms	*Nowadays, communication through digital resources is increasingly maintained among young people through social media, texting, instant messaging, etc.* *In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of relying solely on digital resources for interpersonal communication? How do these changes in communication affect contemporary society?*	You will be expected to produce extended discourse, which means that your responses will need to develop into multiple paragraphs in length. The paragraphs must be well-organized and connected. They also need to be easily understood by educated listeners who have English as their first language. In addition to the length of your responses, you need to be able to deal with complex topics that may require you to express your opinion or deal hypothetically or abstractly with the subject. To respond to the question at the Superior level, you should talk about changes in society caused by digital resources and interpersonal communication. Your focus on the topic should be on a large scale (how it affects people, communities, countries, the world, etc.) and not simply your life and personal experiences (that would most likely be an Advanced-level response). Your response should have few, if any errors. A pattern of errors (such as problems of agreement, missing language features, etc.) that distract the listener from your message, is considered breakdown from the Superior level to the Advanced level.

ADVANCED

Advanced-level prompts invite you to speak about autobiographic topics and beyond. You will have the opportunity to talk about yourself, and about your work or your community. The primary focus of the Advanced-level prompts is on narrations and descriptions in paragraph length discourse in the major time frames (present, past and future).

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Detailed descriptions of people, places, and things from your present and your past Detailed stories about something that has happened, is happening, or will happen Handle a complication that arises in a transaction Report on a current event	*I'd like you to tell me your favorite memory about a good friend. It can be a story that involves you and your friend together, or a story that you know about your friend. Talk about this memory in as much detail as you can.*	You are expected to be able to produce a paragraph-length response. This means that the sentences you produce must be organized and connected to each other with a beginning, middle and end. At this level, you are also expected to use the appropriate time frames. For this prompt, your response should be in the past time frame, and the person listening to your response should be able to understand when the action or event happened in addition to what happened with your friend. Advanced-level speakers do not need sympathetic listeners who have to fill in the gaps of the narrative or description in order to understand the speaker's idea. If you are at the Advanced level, you should be able to do all these things in your response.

NOTE: Role plays are also a part of the OPIc for both the Intermediate and the Advanced levels. Role plays present social transactions or situations you might encounter in real-life (i.e., introducing yourself to a friend, buying tickets). Instructions to this task will be presented in two consecutive prompts: The first prompt proposes the situation, and the second prompt proposes a complication to the situation. For example, the first prompt might require you to make a doctor's appointment, and the second might require you to make changes to the appointment with an explanation and alternative options.

INTERMEDIATE

All interviews include prompts at the Intermediate level, and all speakers will have the opportunity to speak about their routines and personal interests. Intermediate-level prompts invite you to speak in sentences about simple everyday activities on familiar topics.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Simple description of a person, place or thing	*Tell me about the different rooms in your home. Do you have a favorite room? What does it look like?*	You should be able to talk about your favorite room using sentences and enough details for the listener to know what the room looks like.
Simple description of an activity or event	*What is your normal routine at home? What kinds of things do you do at home during the week and on the weekends?*	You should be able to speak in sentences about your daily habits and the things you usually do when you are at home — during the week and on the weekends.
Ask questions to get something you want or need	*You would like to get a hotel room this weekend. Ask three or four questions to find out what is available.*	You should be able to formulate questions about availability of rooms, locations, days, and prices.

NOVICE

Novice-level prompts invite you to make lists of basic vocabulary and to repeat memorized expressions and phrases that beginner learners tend to use.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Lists Phrases	*What things are outside your house? Trees, cars . . . name all the things you see outside your house.*	If you are a Novice-level speaker, you should be able to provide words, lists, and phrases.

WPT Linguistic Functions

Below are tables with question types, example questions, and notes to indicate what an appropriate response should contain at the targeted level. One example is provided for Superior, Advanced, and Novice, and three examples are provided for Intermediate.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

Superior-level questions invite you to reflect thoughtfully about issues and problems in our society. These questions ask you to organize your ideas in a logical manner, which will require more complex elaboration in an essay-like discourse. The context of these questions is more formal and will invite you to deal with a problem or issue at the community, national, or global level.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
State and support an opinion Hypothesize about possible conditions and outcomes Discuss topics in general, abstract terms	*Your city is inviting proposals for collaboration between your university and the community. As president of the student union, you are writing a proposal to the community for a collaboration between the student community and the city governance. Provide a rationale for this collaboration. Explain why student organizations and local governance collaboration can be beneficial for the community and an educational opportunity for student leaders.*	Make sure you read the directions carefully so that you understand the context, type of task you are being asked to complete, and the purpose of the writing tasks as described in the prompt. You will be expected to produce extended discourse, which means that your responses should include multiple, connected, well-organized paragraphs. They also need to be easily understood by all educated readers who have English as their first language. In addition to the length of your responses, you need to be able to address complex topics that may require you to express your opinion or deal hypothetically or abstractly with the subject. To respond to the prompt at the Superior level, you should write about the relationship between the university and the community, using cause and effect arguments. Your focus on the topic should be on a large scale and not simply your life and personal experiences. Your response should have few, if any errors. A pattern of errors (such as problems of agreement, missing language features, etc.) that distract the reader from your message, is considered breakdown from the Superior level to the Advanced level.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Advanced-level questions invite you to write in detail about autobiographic topics and beyond. Writers will be asked to write about themselves and about their work or community. Questions invite you to provide detail in paragraph-length discourse.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Detailed descriptions of people, places, and things from your present and your past Detailed stories about something that has happened, is happening, or will happen Handle a complication that arises in a transaction Report on a current event	*You are writing a report for the local newspaper about the impact of climate changes on local weather. Report on the recent weather trends in your area and what has happened most recently. Comment on the most recent news.*	Make sure you read the directions carefully so that you understand the context, type of task you are being asked to complete, and the purpose of the writing tasks as described in the prompt. The context is a newspaper article on the impact of climate change on local weather. The questions ask for a description of recent weather events and trends in relation to climate change. Since you are writing a newspaper report, full performance of the task will include a text of several paragraphs, internal organization, details to add precision to the narration and description, and interconnection between all elements of the answer (i.e., cohesion). Because it is a newspaper article, you should make an effort to represent a formal and professional voice, by writing with a high level of accuracy and complexity.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

At the Intermediate level, writers can write about their routines and personal interests. Questions will invite you to write with sentence-level discourse.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Simple description of a person, place or thing	*Write a note to your parents in which you describe your best friend. What does he or she look like?*	You should be able to write about your best friend using sentences and enough details for the reader to know what they look like.
Simple description of an activity or event	*Write an e-mail in which you tell a new friend about what you usually do when you go to a concert.*	You should be able to write in sentences about the things you usually do when you go to a concert.
Ask questions to get something you want or need	*Write a letter to your host family to ask about their house and the family. Ask three or four questions to find out what you want to know.*	You should be able to formulate questions about the house, the rooms, the family members, and pets.

NOVICE LEVEL

Novice-level prompts invite you to write lists of basic vocabulary and to use memorized expressions and phrases in written texts that beginner learners tend to use. For example, these prompts will provide a context in which you might have to create a list of words.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Example of a Superior-Level Question and/or Request	Notes about an Appropriate Response
Lists Phrases	*In preparation for your friend's party, make a list of the activities you want to prepare.*	If you can write at the Novice level, you should be able to provide words, lists, and phrases.

How to Prepare

The best advice for doing well on the ACTFL TEP is PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE! The ACTFL TEP is an assessment of what you can do with language at the time of the test. Only language development over time will influence your rating. Last-minute language learning, grammar review or vocabulary practice will most likely not improve your final results. Knowing more *about* the language will not affect your rating unless it reflects on what you can do. Practice communicating naturally in the language in all four skills, focusing on the message rather than just the language forms. As with any test, you should prepare by being well-rested and alert, maintaining a positive attitude throughout the test and responding completely to all the questions.

As stated previously, it is also important to familiarize yourself with the complete *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - 2024* and with the format for each assessment in the ACTFL TEP.

Specific Ways to Prepare for Each Part of the ACTFL TEP

OPIc

- Practice speaking at length about a wide variety of topics, current events, past memories, future plans, etc.
- Speak every day. If possible, have someone who is able to provide feedback based on the ACTFL Guidelines listen to you speak.
- Take a conversation course or find a conversation partner, in person or online.
- Read. Reading not only builds vocabulary, but also provides speaking models.

WPT

- Practice writing longer descriptions and narratives about a wide variety of topics, current events, past memories, future plans, etc.
- Write every day. If possible, have your writing reviewed by someone who is able to provide feedback based on the ACTFL Guidelines.
- Take a composition course.
- Read. Reading not only builds vocabulary, but also provides writing models.

L&Rcat

- Listen to and read newspapers, magazines, and journals on a wide range of topics.
- Listen to a variety of spoken English discourse such as daily interactions and dialogues, reports, presentations, discussions, and broadcasts.
- Read different types of texts such as informal notes, emails, letters, announcements, short reports, articles, and commentaries.
- Dedicate time to listening and reading for greater comprehension of spoken language and texts, to understand all the facts, to interpret the connections between different parts of a conversation or text, and to make inferences based on the information, organization, style, and other rhetorical devices that are employed by speakers and writers.

TIPS for Optimal Performance on the ACTFL TEP

Take Care of the Logistics

- Once you schedule your test, instructions will be sent to you by email. Please follow them closely. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact LTI immediately at support@languagetesting.com.
- Make sure that the area where you are taking the ACTFL TEP is quiet.
- Make sure that your device meets all the technical requirements. Please check your settings in advance using the links to the System Check provided by email.
- During the test, you are not permitted to review documents or dictionaries, or ask for help. Rely exclusively on what you can do in the language on your own. If the remote proctor or the software detects that you are receiving assistance, the test will not receive a rating.

OPIc Tips

- Respond to the questions in the Survey and the Self-Assessment as accurately as you can. The prompts in the test are generated based on your answers, so make sure that you provide the best answers you can to generate a test that is unique to you and your level of ability. Please note that for speaking, you must select Statement 3 or 4 if you need a rating up to Advanced Mid. You must select Statement 5 if you need a rating up to Superior.
- During the OPIc, enjoy the conversation and speak as much as you can about each topic.
- Warm up by speaking the language before the assessment begins, so you do not waste the first few minutes getting used to speaking the language. Doing so will prepare you to communicate in the language at your best.
- Listen carefully to the prompts and respond accordingly. If your answer is incomplete or does not respond fully to the request, you will not have another opportunity to answer. Make sure you provide a response to the question that is being asked.
- Speak only in English and avoid using slang or words from other languages. Demonstrate, to the best of your ability, that you can function in a monolingual environment. If you do not know a word or expression, explain or paraphrase in order to convey your message as clearly as possible. Use other words, explain, or give examples to get the message across and maintain the conversation in English.
- Do not prepare for the OPIc by memorizing responses. Do not try to lead the conversation into topics you have practiced in advance. The raters are highly experienced at recognizing rehearsed/memorized material, which may negatively impact your rating. Keep in mind, memorized language is typically a characteristic of the Novice level. Raters may rate your speech accordingly. Creating authentic answers to the questions will provide better at-level responses.
- When prompted to ask questions, make sure you formulate your questions appropriately for the target language about the proposed topic.

- If you are asked to tell a story about an experience that took place in the past, make sure you tell the story in detail using appropriate time frames and structures. If you are asked to speak about a future plan, you should also make sure you use the appropriate forms and structures for that time frame too. Sustained control of the major time frames is required for the Advanced level. While a lack of control of aspect (i.e., present perfect vs. past perfect) does not prevent you from sustaining functional ability at the Advanced level, lack of control over the time frames may result in breakdown to a lower level of proficiency.
- Do not exclusively focus on verb formations (or any other grammar point). The Advanced level requires control over the use of connectors, time indicators, and other language elements that may contribute to the development of the narration in paragraph-length discourse.
- Short answers can work against you, because they do not show the breadth and depth of your speaking ability. Provide as many details as you can.
- If you are asked to state and support your opinion, make sure you support your point of view with well-organized arguments. Try to maintain the abstract treatment of the topic: a description of facts about what happened is an Advanced-level explanation, whereas a consideration of the issues involved in the problem provides a Superior-level treatment of the topic.
- If you are asked to speculate about some possible conditions and/or outcomes, make sure you use the appropriate hypothetical structures for that language. Maintain the hypothetical treatment throughout your response. Consider the topic from an abstract perspective.

WPT Tips

- Respond to the questions in the Survey and the Self-Assessment as accurately as you can. The prompts in the test are generated based on your answers, so make sure that you provide the best answers you can to generate a test that is unique to you and your level of ability. Please note that for writing, you must select Statement 3 or 4 if you need a rating up to Advanced Mid. You must select Statement 5 or 6 if you need a rating up to Superior.
- Make sure that you understand the technology involved in answering your test. Before you finish the test, review your answers to check correct spelling, punctuation, accentuation, or any other feature required in writing in the language. Be as accurate as you can.
- Read the prompts carefully and address all the requirements in the questions fully. Keep in mind that each component of the questions addresses a variety of linguistic functions. Respond accordingly. Your answers should demonstrate your ability to perform these functions fully. If your answer is incomplete or does not respond fully to the request, your final rating may be affected. Review each question before you move to the next task and make sure that you have responded to the prompt completely.
- Write only in English and avoid using slang or words from other languages. Express your ideas as clearly as possible, and, as much as you can, demonstrate that you can function in a monolingual environment without the support of your reader. If you do not know a word or expression, explain or paraphrase what you want to say in order to convey your message. Use other words, explain, or give examples to get the message across.

- Do not prepare for the WPT by memorizing responses. Do not try to incorporate materials you have practiced in advance. The tester is highly experienced at recognizing memorized material. Memorized responses prepared in advance can count against you, whereas creating real answers to the questions will provide better at-level responses. Focus on providing legitimate answers to the questions.
- If you are asked to write a story about an experience that took place in the past, make sure you tell the story in detail using appropriate time frames and structures. If you are asked to write about a future plan, you should also make sure you use the appropriate forms and structures for that time frame. Sustained control of the time frame is required for the Advanced level. While lack of control of aspect (i.e., present perfect vs. past perfect) does not prevent you from sustaining functional ability at the Advanced level, a lack of control over the time frame may result in breakdown to the level below.
- Do not focus on verb formations (or any other grammar point) exclusively. The Advanced level requires control over the use of connectors, time expressions, and other language elements that may contribute to the development of the narration in paragraph-length discourse.
- Short answers can work against you, because they do not show the breadth and depth of your writing ability. Provide details in as well-organized discourse as you can.
- If you are asked to state and support your opinion, make sure to support your point of view with well-organized arguments. Try to maintain the abstract treatment of the topic: a description of facts about what happened is an Advanced-level explanation, while a consideration of the issues involved in the problem provide a Superior-level treatment of the topic.
- If you are asked to speculate about some possible conditions and/or outcomes, make sure you use the appropriate hypothetical structures for the language. Maintain the hypothetical treatment of a topic throughout your response. Consider each topic from an abstract perspective and consider ideas instead of facts.

L&Rcat Tips

- It is to your advantage that you prepare by listening and reading materials in the language before the assessment begins, so you do not waste the first few minutes connecting with the language.
- Read the questions first, then proceed to the passage. Read the questions carefully making sure that you understand the purpose of the question. Then, listen to or read the passage with that purpose in mind to help you identify the correct answers to the questions.
- Pay attention to time. During the L&Rcat, a counter will show when the recording begins. Be ready to listen before the recording starts so you understand the passage from the very beginning.
- The Listening section provides you with space to take notes. Take advantage of this virtual notepad, since you do not know what the possible choices for the multiple-choice questions will be until after you have finished listening to the passage. Your notes will remain available while you are answering the multiple-choice questions. Your notes will not affect scoring and will not be saved.

- Try to stay focused on understanding the passage. Do not get distracted taking notes.
- The Reading section questions and multiple-choice answers are available to you while the Reading passage is on screen. This means that you can go back to the passage to clarify any information or better select your response.
- Select your answers carefully. All the choices will look like possible correct answers, but only one is correct. All choices are equally attractive, and they will not repeat the content of the passage in the same words. You will be able to select the correct answer based only on your comprehension of the passage. If you are not sure of an answer, you should still attempt a response.

Ratings

Each part of the ACTFL TEP is rated separately. Test takers are provided with their rating (Superior to Novice) for each part. It is important to remember that for most test takers, proficiency levels will not be the same across all language skills.

OPIc and WPT Ratings

Once the OPIc and WPT are complete, the language samples are uploaded and saved automatically on a secure Internet site. Two certified OPIc and WPT raters evaluate the sample and select the best match between the sample and the assessment criteria of the rating scale. A rating at any major level is arrived at by the sustained performance across ALL the criteria of the level. An appropriate sublevel can then be determined, and the rating is assigned.

It's important to note that the OPIc and WPT raters are ACTFL certified, highly specialized language professionals who have completed a rigorous certification and calibration process that concludes with a demonstrated ability to consistently rate samples with a high degree of reliability. ACTFL certified raters uphold the highest professional and ethical standards in test administration and rating.

L&Rcat Ratings

The L&Rcat is computer scored and an ACTFL rating is assigned immediately based on a system that compares the difficulty levels of all questions that test takers have answered correctly and incorrectly.

FAQs

What modes does the ACTFL TEP measure?

The ACTFL TEP measures your level of English language proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

Proficiency refers to your ability to use language for real-world purposes to accomplish real-world linguistic tasks across a wide range of topics and settings. A proficiency test is different from an achievement test, which measures specific information. For example, for a driver's test, an achievement test would include questions about the rules of the road, while a proficiency test determines how well a person can actually drive the car. A language proficiency test is an evaluation of how well a person can use language to communicate in real life.

With a proficiency test, it is not possible to get all the answers "right." There is no such thing as a perfect score and the results are not compared to those of other test takers. In proficiency tests, your performance is compared to a set of criteria, as defined in the complete *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - 2024* for English.

How is the ACTFL TEP rated?

For the assessments for speaking (OPIc) and writing (WPT), spoken and written examples are captured online and then rated by ACTFL certified raters. Two raters must rate and agree on the rating for each assessment. The assessments for listening and reading (L&Rcat) are rated by computer.

What are the ratings?

Ratings for the ACTFL tests are descriptive. The raters assign one of the following to each part of the test:

Superior	Advanced High	Intermediate High	Novice High
	Advanced Mid	Intermediate Mid	Novice Mid
	Advanced Low	Intermediate Low	Novice Low

You will receive separate ratings for each skill, giving you, and institutions, a more customized view of capabilities. For example, it is possible to receive a rating of Intermediate Mid in speaking and Advanced Low in reading.

Read the complete *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - 2024* for English for details about what you should be able to do at each level. On the Guidelines site, you can also choose **View Samples** to hear and read what each level is like.

How do I register for the ACTFL TEP?

To register for the Test of English Proficiency, please visit: https://languagetesting.com/test-of-english-proficiency.

For more information, visit Language Testing International (LTI), the exclusive licensee for all ACTFL proficiency tests or email support@languagetesting.com.

When can I take the ACTFL TEP?

You can schedule the ACTFL TEP when you feel ready, but you must register at least 72 hours in advance. You should try to schedule it at least four weeks before you need the ratings for admissions or for any other purpose.

I registered but I forgot my log-in and/or password. Where can I get help?

Please email support@languagetesting.com for assistance.

How long does it take to get test results?

Test ratings for the ACTFL TEP are generally available approximately 14 days after the test was taken.

How do I receive my test results?

You will receive an email notification once your results are available. You may access your test results and download your certificates directly from your online account. Please email support@languagetesting.com for assistance.

For how long are my official ratings valid?

Your official ACTFL rating is valid for two years.

I took a test, but I didn't get the certificate or I lost my certificate. Can I get a replacement?

Replacements are available online – please contact us at support@languagetesting.com to request one.

How long must I wait before I take another test?

90 days. If you wish to retake the test, we recommend significant study, exposure or practice to further develop your language skills.

How do you ensure that test takers don't cheat?

Remote proctors confirm the test taker's identity, monitor the test taker via a webcam, and monitor computer use through software that is temporarily installed on the computer.

How do I prepare for the ACTFL TEP?

Practice speaking and writing in English on a variety of topics. Practice listening to a variety of media and reading a variety of text types. There is no specific, commercially available test preparation for the TEP because it is an assessment of what you can do with language at the time of the test. Only language development over time will influence your rating.

To see how the test works, you can

- Read this ACTFL TEP Examinee Handbook carefully.
- Take a demo test for each part of the ACTFL TEP: OPIc, WPT and L&Rcat.

These are all available for free on LTI websites:

OPIc: https://opicdemo.actfltesting.org/

WPT: https://wptdemo.actfltesting.org/

L&Rcat: https://lrcatdemo.actfltesting.org/

Does it matter where I learned my language?

No. ACTFL assessments (administered by LTI) do not focus on whether you learned your language in school, as an adult, or in your family. The assessments measure your ability to perform real-world tasks.

What is on the tests?

The subjects covered in the assessments reflect real-world concerns and topics and cover a range of tasks one might be expected to handle in real life. For more details, visit https://languagetesting.com/test-of-english-proficiency.

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* may be used for non-profit, educational purposes only, provided that they are reproduced in their entirety, with no alterations, and with credit to ACTFL.

Click here to access the complete *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - 2024* for English and to view samples at each proficiency level.

Questions? Contact us.

If you have any additional questions, please contact us at:

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