ACTFL
Assessments

Also includes:

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012
ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners

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ACTFL
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ACTFL Language Proficiency Assessments for Academia

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL®), through Language Testing International (LTI), offers ACTFL language proficiency assessments. ACTFL assessments, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and the ACTFL Rating Scale are the products of more than 50 years of research, development and application within the U.S. government and academia.

The validity and reliability of ACTFL assessments and the ACTFL rating scale are supported by over three decades of published research as well as new studies presented annually at professional conferences worldwide. ACTFL assessments and ratings are recognized by the members of the federal Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and are recommended for college credit based on the American Council on Education (ACE) credit-by-examination review. Due to ACTFL's strict adherence to test development guidelines, research and best practices, ACTFL ratings are the standard measure of language proficiency in the U.S.

ACTFL awards Official ACTFL Ratings and issues ACTFL Certificates for all assessments. All official speaking and writing tests, are blindly double rated by two ACTFL certified raters. In addition, ACTFL offers Diagnostic Ratings for single-rated speaking and writing tests. Upon request, ACTFL assessments can also be rated according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptions and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

LTI is committed to offering language assessments that are supported by the highest level of client service. To facilitate testing quickly and cost effectively, testing programs are managed online through a secure and customized website for each academic institution.

ABOUT ACTFL:

*The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is a national organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction. ACTFL is a not-for-profit, membership organization of over 12,000 foreign language professionals representing educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education, government and industry.

To learn more, please visit **www.actfl.org**.

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

The flagship of ACTFL assessments is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The ACTFL OPI is an internationally recognized, valid and reliable assessment of speaking proficiency. Interactive and adaptive, the OPI is a 15-30 minute telephone interview between an ACTFL Certified Tester and the test candidate. The OPI assesses speaking proficiency across the full range of the ACTFL scale, from Novice through Superior. All tests are rated by ACTFL Certified Testers according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Speaking.*

The ACTFL OPI is appropriate for a variety of assessment purposes including:

- Entrance and Exit Requirements
- Placement
- College Credit - Official OPI ratings are recommended for college credit based on the American Council on Education credit-by-examination review.
- Program Evaluation and Performance
- Teacher Credentialing
- Research
- Employment Selection and more.

Appropriate for:

Secondary, Higher Education and beyond

Test Length:

15-30 minutes

Test Format:

The ACTFL OPI is a live, telephonic interview between an ACTFL Certified OPI Tester and a candidate.

Test Content:

Content is adapted to the candidate's academic, professional, and personal experiences.

Languages:

The ACTFL OPI is available in 120+ languages. New languages are added regularly.

For a current list of languages, please visit **www.languagetesting.com**.

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview – computer (OPIc)

Designed to replicate the ACTFL OPI, the ACTFL OPIc is an Internet-based test that can be conveniently delivered at any time. The OPIc delivers pre-recorded prompts, customized to the individual test taker's background and interests. All tests are rated by ACTFL Certified Raters according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Speaking*.

The OPIc is appropriate for a variety of assessment purposes including:

- Entrance and Exit Requirements
- Placement
- College Credit - Official OPIc ratings are recommended for college credit based on the American Council on Education credit-by-examination review.
- Program Evaluation and Performance
- Research
- Teacher Credentialing
- Employment Selection and more

Appropriate for:

Secondary, Higher Education and beyond.

Test Length:

Approximately 20-40 minutes.

Test Content:

The OPIc is customized for each test taker based on information provided in a background survey and self-assessment.

Languages:

The OPIc is available in multiple languages. For a current list of languages, please visit **www.languagetesting.com.**

Forms:

The OPIc structure is based on one of five test forms, which target a specific range of proficiency. Having targeted test forms keeps the test to under 40 minutes.

Form 1 – Targets proficiency levels Novice Low through Novice High, though any rating from Novice Low through Intermediate Low can be assigned.
Form 2 – Targets proficiency levels Novice High through Intermediate Mid though any rating from Novice Low through Intermediate High can be assigned.
Form 3 – Targets proficiency levels Intermediate Mid through Advanced Low, though any rating from Novice Low through Advanced Low can be assigned.
Form 4 – Targets proficiency levels Advanced Low through Advanced Mid, though any rating from Intermediate High through Advanced High can be assigned.
Form 5 – Targets proficiency levels Advanced High & Superior, though any rating from Advanced Low to Superior can be assigned.

Remote Proctoring

LTI now offers a remote proctoring service through a testing platform that delivers the ACTFL OPIc in a remote proctored environment so individuals can purchase, schedule and take a remotely proctored OPIc at their convenience. The remotely proctored OPIc is rated by an ACTFL Certified OPIc Rater and a credential is issued stating the result.

For more information, please visit **www.languagetesting.com.**

ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)

The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) is an online test to assess writing ability in a target language.

The ACTFL WPT measures the ability of the test taker to write in a language by comparing his or her performance to the criteria in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing*.

The ACTFL WPT consists of four tasks dealing with practical, social, and professional topics encountered in informal and formal contexts. The writer is presented with tasks representing a limited range of proficiency levels from Novice through Superior, as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing.*

Tasks and prompts are written in English with the expectation that the test-taker's responses be written in the target language.

The ACTFL WPT is appropriate for a variety of assessment purposes:

- Entrance and Exit Requirements
- Placement
- College Credit - Official WPT ratings are recommended for college credit based on the American Council on Education credit-by-examination review.
- Program Evaluation and Performance
- Teacher Credentialing
- Research
- Employment Selection

Appropriate for:

Secondary (grades 10-12), Higher Education and beyond.

Test Length:

20-80 minutes. The range of proficiency can be specified in order to minimize the length of time.

Test Format:

The candidate is presented with four tasks, with approximately 10-20 minutes allowed for each task. The test-taker is prompted to demonstrate descriptive narrative, informative, and persuasive writing. The test is delivered in booklet form or via the Internet.

Test Content:

The WPT includes informal and formal writing tasks on practical, social, and professional topics.

Languages:

The WPT is offered in over 20 languages. New languages are added regularly.

For a complete list of languages, please visit **www.languagetesting.com**.

Forms:

Form 1 – Targets NL-IL (may be assigned any rating from NL-IM)

Form 2 – Targets IL-AL (may be assigned any rating from NL-AM)

Form 3 – Targets AL-S (may be assigned any rating from NL-S)

Fixed Form: Targets IM-S (may be assigned any rating from NL-S)

ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test (RPT)

The ACTFL RPT is an online assessment of reading proficiency. RPTs measure how well a person comprehends written language when presented with texts and tasks as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading* (without access to dictionaries or grammar reference material).

The ACTFL RPT is appropriate for a variety of assessment purposes:

- Entrance and Exit Requirements
- Placement
- Program Evaluation and Performance
- Teacher Credentialing
- Research
- Employment Selection

The RPT can evaluate a specific range of proficiency, as described in the chart below. These options ensure that the test targets the range of the candidate's reading ability in the shortest amount of time possible.

Superior								
Advanced High				D		F		
Advanced Mid				D		F		
Advanced Low			C					
Intermediate High		B			E		G	H
Intermediate Mid	A				E			
Intermediate Low	A							
Novice High								
Novice Mid								
Novice Low								

Appropriate for:
Secondary (grades 11-12), Higher Education and beyond.

Test Length:
50 minutes for a two-level test (A, B, C & D); 75 minutes for a three-level test (E, F & G*); 125 minutes for four-level test (H**).

Test Format:
The RPT consists of texts at specific levels of proficiency. Each text has three questions; each question has four multiple-choice answers.

Test Content: Range of informal/formal texts on general, social, academic and professional topics, such as correspondence, technical reports, and news articles.

Languages: Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

*This is a semi-adaptive version of the test. It is designed to start at Advanced Low and is based on the candidate response.
The test offers higher or lower level tasks. This is the test to choose if the student's proficiency is unknown and/or the instructor would like to give all of his or her students the same test and not select ranges individually, etc.

** This is the full-range test.

ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT)

The ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) is an online assessment of listening proficiency. LPTs measure how well a person understands spoken discourse as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012-Listening*. The ACTFL LPT is appropriate for a variety of assessment purposes:

- Entrance and Exit Requirements
- Placement
- Program Evaluation and Performance
- Teacher Credentialing
- Research
- Employment Selection

Constructed to evaluate Novice to Superior levels of listening ability, this test can also assess a specific range of proficiency, as described in the chart below. These options ensure each test targets the range of a candidate's listening ability in the shortest amount of time possible.

Level	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Superior				D		F	G	H
Advanced High				D		F	G	H
Advanced Mid			C	**D**		**F**	G	H
Advanced Low		B	**C**		E		G	H
Intermediate High		**B**			E		**G**	**H**
Intermediate Mid	A				**E**		G	H
Intermediate Low	**A**				E		G	H
Novice High					E		G	H
Novice Mid							G	H
Novice Low							G	H

Appropriate for:

Secondary (grades 11-12), Higher Education and beyond.

Test Length:

50 minutes for a two-level test (A, B, C & D); 75 minutes for a three-level test (E, F & G*); 125 minutes for a for-level test (H**).

Test Format:

The LPT consists of recorded passages at specific levels of proficiency. Each passage has three questions with four multiple-choice answers.

Test Content:

Range of informal/formal speech on general, social, and academic topics, such as daily interactions, reports, discussions and broadcasts.

Languages: Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

*This is a semi-adaptive version of the test designed to start at Advanced Low and is based on the candidate response.
The test offers higher or lower level tasks. This is the test to choose if the student's proficiency is unknown and/or the instructor would like to give all of his or her students the same test and not select ranges individually, etc.

** This is the full-range test.

ACTFL English L&Rcat

The ACTFL L&Rcat is a computer adaptive English listening and reading test that creates a unique testing experience, specifically tailored to each candidate. The ACTFL L&Rcat selects questions based on what it learns about the test-taker's ability from his or her performance during the test.

Test-takers are assessed on their ability to respond to questions about what they hear, read, and understand in real time rather than what they have memorized prior to beginning the test. The result is a greater, more-useful assessment of a test-taker's language skills.

The ACTFL L&Rcat is appropriate for a variety of purposes:

• Entrance and Exit Requirements
• Placement
• College Placement
• Program Evaluation and Performance
• Teacher Credentialing
• Research
• Employment Selection

Appropriate for:
Secondary (grades 11-12), Higher Education and beyond.

Test Length:
Each section (listening and reading) can be taken separately or together. Because it is computer adaptive or "smart" test, the test duration (both parts) can range from 50-105 minutes, based on the ability of the candidate.

Test Format:
The L&Rcat consists of recorded passages (listening) and written texts (writing) at specific levels of proficiency. Each passage or text has three questions with four multiple-choice answers.

Test Content:
The questions in the L&Rcat are based on a range of informal and formal material on general, social, professional, and academic topics. These are real-world examples of spoken and written language that surpass the scope of traditional fixed tests.

Languages:
The ACTFL L&Rcat is currently offered in English.

ACTFL Certified Testers and Raters

ACTFL Testers and Raters are language educators, university professors, or instructors at federal government language schools with Master's or Ph.D. degrees in the language in which they test. ACTFL Testers and Raters are certified at the Superior level for the skill and language in which they test/rate.

The ACTFL Tester and Rater certification program is an industry leading certification program. All testers and raters are required to attend an intensive four-day face to face Training Workshop prior to completing the certification process. This process is rigorous and demanding and can take anywhere from three months to one year to complete.

To complete the process, trainees must demonstrate their ability to reliably rate and effectively conduct tests, while adhering to strict ACTFL protocols. If successful, ACTFL awards certification to the trainee within the specific skill and language of certification. Once certified, Testers and Raters are required to participate in annual re-norming workshops, and must recertify every four years.

The ongoing performance of ACTFL certified testers and raters is monitored by the ACTFL Quality Assurance program. Inter-rater reliability statistics and trainer comments are reviewed by ACTFL testing experts, with the goal of maintaining an 85% and higher agreement among tester ratings. Mandatory trainer and tester meetings are also held periodically throughout the year to review testing issues, protocols, and new developments.

ACTFL tester and rater certifications are a highly valued and widely recognized professional credential both nationally and internationally.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The major levels, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice, are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels. The levels of the ACTFL Guidelines describe the continuum of proficiency from the highly articulate, well-educated language user to a level of little or no functional ability.

These Guidelines present the levels of proficiency as ranges describing what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The Guidelines are not based on any specific theory, pedagogical method, or educational curriculum. They neither describe how an individual learns a language nor prescribe how an individual should learn a language and they should not be used for such purposes. They are instruments for the evaluation of functional language ability.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were first published in 1986 as an adaptation for the academic community of the U.S. Government's Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptions. This third edition of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines includes the first revisions of Listening and Reading since their original publication in 1986, and a second revision of the ACTFL Speaking and Writing Guidelines, which were revised to reflect real-world assessment needs in 1999 and 2001 respectively. New for the 2012 edition are the addition of the major level of Distinguished to the Speaking and Writing Guidelines, the division of the Advanced level into the three sublevels of High, Mid, and Low for the Listening and Reading Guidelines, and the addition of a general level description at the Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice levels for all skills.

Another new feature of the 2012 Guidelines is their publication online, supported with glossed terminology and annotated, multimedia samples of performance at each level for Speaking and Writing, and examples of oral and written texts and tasks associated with each level for Reading and Listening.

The direct application of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines is for the evaluation of functional language ability. The Guidelines are intended to be used for global assessment in academic and workplace settings. However, the Guidelines do have instructional implications. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines underlie the development of the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners (1998) and are used in conjunction with the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996, 1998, and 2006) to describe how well students meet content standards. For the past 25 years, the ACTFL Guidelines have had an increasingly profound impact on language teaching and learning in the United States.

Preface:

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking describe five major levels of proficiency which are:

- Distinguished
- Superior
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Novice

The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice, are divided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels.

The Guidelines describe the tasks that speakers can handle at each level, as well as the content, context, accuracy, and discourse types associated with tasks at each level. They also present the limits that speakers encounter when attempting to function at the next higher major level.

These Guidelines can be used to evaluate speech that is either Interpersonal (interactive, two-way communication) or Presentational (one-way, non-interactive).

The written descriptions of speaking proficiency are accompanied online by speech samples illustrating the features of each major level.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012—speaking 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.

DISTINGUISHED

Speakers at this level are able to use language skillfully, and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness. They are educated and articulate users of the language. They can reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner. Distinguished-level speakers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes, allowing them to advocate a point of view that is not necessarily their own. They can tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting their speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic.

Speakers at the Distinguished level produce highly sophisticated and tightly organized extended discourse. At the same time, they can speak succinctly, often using cultural and historical references to allow them to say less and mean more. At this level, oral discourse typically resembles written discourse.

A non-native accent, a lack of a native-like economy of expression, a limited control of deeply embedded cultural references, and/or an occasional isolated language error may still be present at this level.

SUPERIOR

Speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They present their opinions on a number of issues of interest to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured arguments to support these opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities. When appropriate, these speakers use extended discourse without unnaturally lengthy hesitation to make their point, even when engaged in abstract elaborations. Such discourse, while coherent, may still be influenced by language patterns other than those of the target language. Superior-level speakers employ a variety of interactive and discourse strategies, such as turn-taking and separating main ideas from supporting information through the use of syntactic, lexical, and phonetic devices.

Speakers at the Superior level demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures, although they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in complex high-frequency structures. Such errors, if they do occur, do not distract the native interlocutor or interfere with communication.

ADVANCED

Speakers at the Advanced level engage in conversation in a clearly participatory manner in order to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest. The topics are handled by means of narration and description in the major time frames of past, present, and future. These speakers can also deal with a social situation with an unexpected complication. The language of Advanced-level speakers is abundant, the oral paragraph being the measure of Advanced-level length and discourse. Advanced-level speakers have sufficient control of basic structures and generic vocabulary to be understood by native speakers, including those unaccustomed to non-native speech.

Advanced High

Speakers at the Advanced High sublevel perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior   level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

Advanced Mid

Speakers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance.

Advanced Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future by providing a full account, with good control of aspect. Narration and description tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected, paragraph-length discourse.

Advanced Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as circumlocution or rephrasing are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Their discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language.

Advanced Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline.

Advanced Low

Speakers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities, as well as topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest.

Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can manage the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events. Responses produced by Advanced Low speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker's dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, containing noticeable self-correction. Generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven.

Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.

Advanced Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

INTERMEDIATE

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They are able to recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning. Intermediate-level speakers can ask simple questions and can handle a straightforward survival situation. They produce sentence- level language, ranging from discrete sentences to strings of sentences, typically in present time. Intermediate-level speakers are understood by interlocutors who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language.

Intermediate High

Intermediate High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with the routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence.

Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate-High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary.

Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur.

Intermediate Mid

Speakers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture. These include personal information related to self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel, and lodging.

Intermediate Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices, and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution.

Intermediate Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to produce responses typically consisting of sentences and strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations, and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. In spite of the limitations in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax. Intermediate Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Overall, Intermediate Mid speakers are at ease when performing Intermediate-level tasks and do so with significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language.

Intermediate Low

Speakers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture.

These topics relate to basic personal information; for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, and some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate Low speakers manage to sustain the functions of the Intermediate level, although just barely.

Intermediate Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences. Their responses are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections.

Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language. In spite of frequent misunderstandings that may require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

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NOVICE

Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-native speech.

Novice High

Speakers at the Novice High sub-level are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects, and a limited number of activities, preferences, and immediate needs. Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions.

Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or combinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their language consists primarily of short and sometimes incomplete sentences in the present, and may be hesitant or inaccurate. However, since their language often consists of expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes sound surprisingly fluent and accurate. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax may be strongly influenced by the first language. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but with repetition or rephrasing, Novice High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-natives. When called on to handle a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence-level discourse.

Novice Mid

Speakers at the Novice Mid sub-level communicate minimally by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may say only two or three words at a time or give an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Novice Mid speakers may be understood with difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics and perform functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.

Novice Low

Speakers at the Novice Low sub-level have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

Preface

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing describe five major levels of proficiency which are:

- Distinguished
- Superior
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Novice

The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice, are divided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels.

The Guidelines describe the tasks that writers can handle at each level as well as the content, context, accuracy, and discourse types associated with the writing tasks at each level. They also present the limits that writers encounter when attempting to function at the next higher major level.

These Guidelines can be used to describe written text that is either Presentational (essays, reports, letters) or Interpersonal (instant messaging, e-mail communication, and texting). Moreover, they apply to writing that is spontaneous (immediate, unedited) or reflective (revised, edited). This is possible because the Guidelines describe the product rather than the process or purpose of the writing.

The written descriptions of writing proficiency are accompanied online by writing samples illustrating the features of each major level.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing 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.

DISTINGUISHED

Writers at the Distinguished-level can carry out formal writing tasks such as official correspondence, position papers, and journal articles. They can write analytically on professional, academic and societal issues. In addition, Distinguished-level writers are able to address world issues in a highly conceptualized fashion.

These writers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse as representational techniques, allowing them to advocate a position that is not necessarily their own. They are also able to communicate subtlety and nuance. Distinguished-level writing is sophisticated and is directed to sophisticated readers. Writers at this level write to their audience; they tailor their language to their readers.

Distinguished-level writing is dense and complex; yet, it is characterized by an economy of expression. The writing is skillfully crafted and is organized in a way that reflects target-culture thought patterns. At the Distinguished-level, length is not a determining factor. Distinguished-level texts can be as short as a poem or as long as a treatise.

Writers at the Distinguished-level demonstrate control of complex lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic features of the language. Discourse structure and punctuation are used strategically, not only to organize meaning but also to enhance it. Conventions are generally appropriate to the text modality and the target culture.

SUPERIOR

Writers at the Superior-level are able to produce most kinds of formal and informal correspondence, in-depth summaries, reports, and research papers on a variety of social, academic, and professional topics. Their treatment of these issues moves beyond the concrete to the abstract.

Writers at the Superior-level demonstrate the ability to explain complex matters, and to present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses. Their treatment of the topic is enhanced by the effective use of structure, lexicon, and writing protocols. They organize and prioritize ideas to convey to the reader what is significant. The relationship among ideas is consistently clear, due to organizational and developmental principles (e.g., cause and effect, comparison, chronology). These writers are capable of extended treatment of a topic which typically requires at least a series of paragraphs, but can extend to a number of pages.

Writers at the Superior-level demonstrate a high degree of control of grammar and syntax, of both general and specialized/professional vocabulary, of spelling or symbol production, of cohesive devices, and of punctuation. Their vocabulary is precise and varied.
Writers at this level direct their writing to their audiences; their writing fluency eases the reader's task.

Writers at the Superior-level do not typically control target language cultural, organizational, or stylistic patterns.
At the Superior-level, writers demonstrate no pattern of error; however, errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures.
When present, these errors do not interfere with comprehension, and they rarely distract the native reader.

ADVANCED

Writers at the Advanced-level are characterized by the ability to write routine informal and some formal correspondence, as well as narratives, descriptions, and summaries of a factual nature. They can narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity. Advanced-level writers produce connected discourse of paragraph length and structure. At this level, writers show good control of the most frequently used structures and generic vocabulary, allowing them to be understood by those unaccustomed to the writing of non-natives.

Advanced High

Writers at the Advanced High sub-level are able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and detail. They can handle informal and formal correspondence according to appropriate conventions. They can write summaries and reports of a factual nature. They can also write extensively about topics relating to particular interests and special areas of competence, although their writing tends to emphasize the concrete aspects of such topics. Advanced High writers can narrate and describe in the major time frames, with solid control of aspect. In addition, they are able to demonstrate the ability to handle writing tasks associated with the Superior level, such as developing arguments and constructing hypotheses, but are not able to do this all of the time; they cannot produce Superior-level writing consistently across a variety of topics treated abstractly or generally. They have good control of a range of grammatical structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary. When writing at the Advanced level, they often show remarkable ease of expression, but under the demands of Superior-level writing tasks, patterns of error appear. The linguistic limitations of Advanced High writing may occasionally distract the native reader from the message.

Advanced Mid

Writers at the Advanced Mid sub-level are able to meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe with detail in all major time frames with good control of aspect. They are able to write straightforward summaries on topics of general interest. Their writing exhibits a variety of cohesive devices in texts up to several paragraphs in length. There is good control of the most frequently used target-language syntactic structures and a range of general vocabulary. Most often, thoughts are expressed clearly and supported by some elaboration. This writing incorporates organizational features both of the target language and the writer's first language and at times resemble casual conversation. Writing at the Advanced Mid sublevel is understood readily by natives not used to the writing of non-natives. When called on to perform functions or to treat issues at the Superior level, Advanced Mid writers will manifest a decline in the quality and/or quantity of their writing.

Advanced Low

Writers at the Advanced Low sub-level are able to meet basic work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in major time frames with some control of aspect. They are able to compose simple summaries on familiar topics. Advanced Low writers are able to combine and link sentences into texts of paragraph length and structure. Their writing, while adequate to satisfy the criteria of the Advanced-level, may not be substantive. Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel demonstrate the ability to incorporate a limited number of cohesive devices, and may resort to some redundancy and awkward repetition. They rely on patterns of oral discourse and the writing style of their first language. These writers demonstrate minimal control of common structures and vocabulary associated with the Advanced level. Their writing is understood by natives not accustomed to the writing of non-natives, although some additional effort may be required in the reading of the text. When attempting to perform functions at the Superior level, their writing will deteriorate significantly.

INTERMEDIATE

Writers at the Intermediate-level are characterized by the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of non-natives.

Intermediate High

Writers at the Intermediate High sub-level are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often but not always of paragraph length, and they typically contain some evidence of breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced-level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of Intermediate High writers essentially corresponds to those of the spoken language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not   used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension.

Intermediate Mid

Writers at the Intermediate Mid sub-level are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts about personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics. Their writing is framed in present time but may contain references to other time frames. The writing style closely resembles oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel show evidence of control of basic sentence structure and verb forms. This writing is best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together. There is little evidence of deliberate organization. Intermediate Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives. When Intermediate Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear.

Intermediate Low

Writers at the Intermediate Low sub-level are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are combinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information.

Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate-Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced-level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete.

NOVICE

Writers at the Novice-level are characterized by the ability to produce lists and notes, primarily by writing words and phrases. They can provide limited formulaic information on simple forms and documents. These writers can reproduce practiced material to convey the simplest messages. In addition, they can transcribe familiar words or phrases, copy letters of the alphabet or reproduce basic characters with some accuracy.

Novice High

Writers at the Novice High sub-level are able to meet limited basic practical writing needs using lists, short messages, postcards, and simple notes. They are able to express themselves within the context in which the language was learned, relying mainly on practiced material. Their writing is focused on common elements of daily life. Novice-High writers are able to recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create simple sentences on very familiar topics, but are not able to sustain sentence-level writing all the time. Due to inadequate vocabulary and/or grammar, writing at this level may only partially communicate the intentions of the writer. Novice-High writing is often comprehensible to natives used to the writing of non-natives, but gaps in comprehension may occur.

Novice Mid

Writers at the Novice Mid sub-level can reproduce from memory a modest number of words and phrases in context. They can supply limited information on simple forms and documents, and other basic biographical information, such as names, numbers, and nationality. Novice Mid writers exhibit a high degree of accuracy when writing on well-practiced, familiar topics using limited formulaic language. With less familiar topics, there is a marked decrease in accuracy. Errors in spelling or in the representation of symbols may be frequent. There is little evidence of functional writing skills. At this level, the writing may be difficult to understand even by those accustomed to non-native writers.

Novice Low

Writers at the Novice Low sub-level are able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases, form letters in an alphabetic system, and copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce (from memory) a limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.

Preface

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Reading describe five major levels of proficiency which are:

- Distinguished
- Superior
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Novice

The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice, are divided into High, Mid, and Low sub-levels. The subdivision of the Advanced level is new. This makes the Reading descriptions parallel to the other skill level descriptions.

Reading is an interpretive skill. Reading comprehension is based largely on the amount of information readers can retrieve from a text, and the inferences and connections that they can make within and across texts. By describing the tasks that readers can perform with different types of texts and under different types of circumstances, the Reading Proficiency Guidelines describe how readers understand written texts. These Guidelines do not describe how reading skills develop, how one learns to read, nor the actual cognitive processes involved in the activity of reading. Rather, they are intended to describe what readers are able to understand from what they have read.

These Guidelines apply to reading that is either Interpretive (books, essays, reports, etc.) or Interpersonal (instant messaging, texting, email communication, etc.).

The written descriptions of reading proficiency are accompanied online by authentic text samples and the functional reading tasks associated with each major level.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012—Reading 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.

DISTINGUISHED

At the Distinguished-level, readers can understand a wide variety of texts from many genres including professional, technical, academic, and literary. These texts are characterized by one or more of the following: a high level of abstraction, precision or uniqueness of vocabulary; density of information; cultural reference; or complexity of structure. Readers are able to comprehend implicit and inferred information, tone, and point of view and can follow highly persuasive arguments. They are able to understand unpredictable turns of thought related to sophisticated topics.

Readers at the Distinguished-level are able to understand writing tailored to specific audiences as well as a number of historical, regional, and colloquial variations of the language. These readers are able to appreciate the richness of written language. Distinguished-level readers understand and appreciate texts that use highly precise, low-frequency vocabulary as well as complex rhetorical structures to convey subtle or highly specialized information. Such texts are typically essay length but may be excerpts from more lengthy texts.

Distinguished-level readers comprehend language from within the cultural framework and are able to understand a writer's use of nuance and subtlety. However, they may still have difficulty fully understanding certain non-standard varieties of the written language.

SUPERIOR

At the Superior-level, readers are able to understand texts from many genres dealing with a wide range of subjects, both familiar and unfamiliar. Comprehension is no longer limited to the reader's familiarity with subject matter but also comes from a command of the language that is supported by a broad vocabulary, an understanding of complex structures and knowledge of the target culture. Readers at the Superior level can draw inferences from textual and extra linguistic clues.

Superior-level readers understand texts that use precise, often specialized vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. These texts feature argumentation, supported opinion, and hypothesis, and use abstract linguistic formulations as encountered in academic and professional reading. Such texts are typically reasoned and/or analytic and may frequently contain cultural references.

Superior-level readers are able to understand lengthy texts of a professional, academic, or literary nature. Additionally, readers at the Superior level are generally aware of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles. However, they may not fully understand texts in which cultural references and assumptions are deeply embedded.

ADVANCED

At the Advanced-level, readers can understand the main idea and supporting details of authentic narrative and descriptive texts. Readers are able to compensate for limitations in their lexical and structural knowledge by using contextual clues. Comprehension is likewise supported by knowledge of the conventions of the language (e.g., noun/adjective agreement, verb placement, etc.). When familiar with the subject matter, Advanced-level readers are also able to derive some meaning from straightforward argumentative texts (e.g., recognizing the main argument).

Advanced-level readers are able to understand texts that have a clear and predictable structure. For the most part, the prose is uncomplicated and the subject matter pertains to real-world topics of general interest.

Advanced-level readers demonstrate an independence in their ability to read subject matter that is new to them. They have sufficient control of standard linguistic conventions to understand sequencing, time frames, and chronology. However, these readers are likely challenged by texts in which issues are treated abstractly.

Advanced High

At the Advanced High sub-level, readers are able to understand, fully and with ease, conventional narrative and descriptive texts of any length as well as more complex factual material. They are able to follow some of the essential points of argumentative texts in areas of special interest or knowledge. In addition, they are able to understand parts of texts that deal with unfamiliar topics or situations. These readers are able to go beyond comprehension of the facts in a text, and to begin to recognize author-intended inferences. An emerging awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wide variety of texts. Misunderstandings may occur when reading texts that are structurally and/or conceptually more complex.

Advanced Mid

At the Advanced Mid sub-level, readers are able to understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts, such as expanded descriptions of persons, places, and things and narrations about past, present, and future events. These texts reflect the standard linguistic conventions of the written form of the language in such a way that readers can predict what they are going to read. Readers understand the main ideas, facts, and many supporting details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject-matter knowledge but also from knowledge of the language itself. Readers at this level may derive some meaning from texts that are structurally and/or conceptually more complex.

Advanced Low

At the Advanced Low sub-level, readers are able to understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts with a clear underlying structure though their comprehension may be uneven. These texts predominantly contain high-frequency vocabulary and structures. Readers understand the main ideas and some supporting details. Comprehension may often derive primarily from situational and subject matter knowledge. Readers at this level will be challenged to comprehend more complex texts.

INTERMEDIATE

At the Intermediate-level, readers can understand information conveyed in simple, predictable, loosely connected texts. Readers rely heavily on contextual clues. They can most easily understand information if the format of the text is familiar, such as in a weather report or a social announcement. Intermediate-level readers are able to understand texts that convey basic information such as that found in announcements, notices, and online bulletin boards and forums. These texts are not complex and have a predictable pattern of presentation. The discourse is minimally connected and primarily organized in individual sentences and strings of sentences containing predominantly high frequency vocabulary.

Intermediate-level readers are most accurate when getting meaning from simple, straightforward texts. They are able to understand messages found in highly familiar, everyday contexts. At this level, readers may not fully understand texts that are detailed or those texts in which knowledge of language structures is essential in order to understand sequencing, time frame, and chronology.

Intermediate High

At the Intermediate High sub-level, readers are able to understand fully and with ease short, non-complex texts that convey basic information and deal with personal and social topics to which the reader brings personal interest or knowledge. These readers are also able to understand some connected texts featuring description and narration although there will be occasional gaps in understanding due to a limited knowledge of the vocabulary, structures, and writing conventions of the language.

Intermediate Mid

At the Intermediate Mid sub-level, readers are able to understand short, non-complex texts that convey basic information and deal with basic personal and social topics to which the reader brings personal interest or knowledge, although some misunderstandings may occur. Readers at this level may get some meaning from short connected texts featuring description and narration, dealing with familiar topics.

Intermediate Low

At the Intermediate Low sub-level, readers are able to understand some information from the simplest connected texts dealing with a limited number of personal and social needs, although there may be frequent misunderstandings. Readers at this level will be challenged to derive meaning from connected texts of any length.

NOVICE

At the Novice level, readers can understand key words and cognates, as well as formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized. Novice-level readers are able to get a limited amount of information from highly predictable texts in which the topic or context is very familiar, such as a hotel bill, a credit card receipt, or a weather map. Readers at the Novice level may rely heavily on their own background knowledge and extra linguistic support (such as the imagery on the weather map or the format of a credit card bill) to derive meaning.

Readers at the Novice level are best able to understand a text when they are able to anticipate the information in the text. At the Novice level, recognition of key words, cognates, and formulaic phrases makes comprehension possible.

Novice High

At the Novice High sublevel, readers can understand, fully and with relative ease, key words and cognates, as well as formulaic phrases across a range of highly contextualized texts. Where vocabulary has been learned, they can understand predictable language and messages such as those found on train schedules, roadmaps, and street signs. Readers at the Novice High sublevel are typically able to derive meaning from short, non-complex texts that convey basic information for which there is contextual or extra linguistic support.

Novice Mid

At the Novice Mid sub-level, readers are able to recognize the letters or symbols of an alphabetic or syllabic writing system or a limited number of characters in a character-based language. They can identify a number of highly contextualized words and phrases including cognates and borrowed words but rarely understand material that exceeds a single phrase. Rereading is often required.

Novice Low

At the Novice Low sublevel, readers are able to recognize a limited number of letters, symbols or characters. They are occasionally able to identify high-frequency words and/or phrases when strongly supported by context.

Preface:

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Listening describe five major levels of proficiency which are:

- Distinguished

- Superior

- Advanced

- Intermediate

- Novice

The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice, are divided into High, Mid, and Low sub-levels. The subdivision of the Advanced Level into High, Mid, and Low is new. This makes the Listening descriptions parallel to the other skill level descriptions.

Listening is an interpretive skill. Listening comprehension is based largely on the amount of information listeners can retrieve from what they hear and the inferences and connections that they can make. By describing the tasks that listeners can perform with different types of oral texts and under different types of circumstances, the Listening Proficiency Guidelines describe how listeners understand oral discourse. The Guidelines do not describe how listening skills develop, how one learns to listen, nor the actual cognitive process involved in the activity. Rather, they are intended to describe what listeners understand from what they hear.

These Guidelines apply to listening that is either Interpretive (non-participative, overheard) or Interpersonal (participative).

The written descriptions of listening proficiency are accompanied online by authentic speech samples and the functional listening tasks associated with each major level.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Listening 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.

DISTINGUISHED

At the Distinguished-level, listeners can understand a wide variety of forms, styles, and registers of speech on highly specialized topics in language that is tailored to different audiences. Listeners at the Distinguished-level can understand language such as that found in classical theater, art films, professional symposia, academic debates, public policy statements, literary readings, and most jokes and puns. They are able to comprehend implicit and inferred information, tone, and point of view and can follow highly persuasive arguments. They are able to understand unpredictable turns of thought related to sophisticated topics. In addition, their listening ability is enhanced by a broad and deep understanding of cultural references and allusions. Listeners at the Distinguished-level are able to appreciate the richness of the spoken language.

Distinguished-level listeners understand speech that can be highly abstract, highly technical, or both, as well as speech that contains very precise, often low-frequency vocabulary and complex rhetorical structures. At this level, listeners comprehend oral discourse that is lengthy and dense, structurally complex, rich in cultural reference, idiomatic and colloquial. In addition, listeners at this level can understand information that is subtle or highly specialized, as well as the full cultural significance of very short texts with little or no linguistic redundancy.

Distinguished-level listeners comprehend language from within the cultural framework and are able to understand a speaker's use of nuance and subtlety. However, they may still have difficulty fully understanding certain dialects and nonstandard varieties of the language.

SUPERIOR

At the Superior-level, listeners are able to understand speech in a standard dialect on a wide range of familiar and less familiar topics. They can follow linguistically complex extended discourse such as that found in academic and professional settings, lectures, speeches and reports. Comprehension is no longer limited to the listener's familiarity with subject matter, but also comes from a command of the language that is supported by a broad vocabulary, an understanding of more complex structures and linguistic experience within the target culture. Superior listeners can understand not only what is said, but sometimes what is left unsaid; that is, they can make inferences.

Superior-level listeners understand speech that typically uses precise, specialized vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. This speech often deals abstractly with topics in a way that is appropriate for academic and professional audiences. It can be reasoned and can contain cultural references.

ADVANCED

At the Advanced-level, listeners can understand the main ideas and most supporting details in connected discourse on a variety of general interest topics, such as news stories, explanations, instructions, anecdotes, or travelogue descriptions. Listeners are able to compensate for limitations in their lexical and structural control of the language by using real-world knowledge and contextual clues. Listeners may also derive some meaning from oral texts at higher levels if they possess significant familiarity with the topic or context.

Advanced-level listeners understand speech that is authentic and connected. This speech is lexically and structurally uncomplicated. The discourse is straightforward and is generally organized in a clear and predictable way.

Advanced-level listeners demonstrate the ability to comprehend language on a range of topics of general interest. They have sufficient knowledge of language structure to understand basic time-frame references. Nevertheless, their understanding is most often limited to concrete, conventional discourse.

Advanced High

At the Advanced High sub-level, listeners are able to understand, with ease and confidence, conventional narrative and descriptive texts of any length as well as complex factual material such as summaries or reports. They are typically able to follow some of the essential points of more complex or argumentative speech in areas of special interest or knowledge. In addition, they are able to derive some meaning from oral texts that deal with unfamiliar topics or situations. At the Advanced High sub-level, listeners are able to comprehend the facts presented in oral discourse and are often able to recognize speaker-intended inferences. Nevertheless, there are likely to be gaps in comprehension of complex texts dealing with issues treated abstractly that are typically understood by Superior-level listeners.

Advanced Mid

At the Advanced Mid sub-level, listeners are able to understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts, such as expanded descriptions of persons, places, and things, and narrations about past, present, and future events. The speech is predominantly in familiar target-language patterns. Listeners understand the main facts and many supporting details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge, but also from an increasing overall facility with the language itself.

Advanced Low

At the Advanced Low sub-level, listeners are able to understand short conventional narrative and descriptive texts with a clear underlying structure though their comprehension may be uneven. The listener understands the main facts and some supporting details. Comprehension may often derive primarily from situational and subject matter knowledge.

INTERMEDIATE

At the Intermediate-level, listeners can understand information conveyed in simple, sentence-length speech on familiar or everyday topics. They are generally able to comprehend one utterance at a time while engaged in face-to-face conversations or in routine listening tasks such as understanding highly contextualized messages, straightforward announcements, or simple instructions and directions. Listeners rely heavily on redundancy, restatement, paraphrasing, and contextual clues.

Intermediate-level listeners understand speech that conveys basic information. This speech is simple, minimally connected, and contains high-frequency vocabulary.

Intermediate-level listeners are most accurate in their comprehension when getting meaning from simple, straightforward speech. They are able to comprehend messages found in highly familiar everyday contexts. Intermediate listeners require a controlled listening environment where they hear what they may expect to hear.

Intermediate High

At the Intermediate High sub-level, listeners are able to understand, with ease and confidence, simple sentence length speech in basic personal and social contexts. They can derive substantial meaning from some connected texts typically understood by Advanced-level listeners although there often will be gaps in understanding due to a limited knowledge of the vocabulary and structures of the spoken language.

Intermediate Mid

At the Intermediate Mid sub-level, listeners are able to understand simple, sentence-length speech, one utterance at a time, in a variety of basic personal and social contexts. Comprehension is most often accurate with highly familiar and predictable topics although a few misunderstandings may occur. Intermediate Mid-listeners may get some meaning from oral texts typically understood by Advanced-level listeners.

Intermediate Low

At the Intermediate Low sub-level, listeners are able to understand some information from sentence-length speech, one utterance at a time, in basic personal and social contexts, though comprehension is often uneven. At the Intermediate Low sub-level, listeners show little or no comprehension of oral texts typically understood by Advanced-level listeners.

NOVICE

At the Novice-level, listeners can understand key words, true aural cognates, and formulaic expressions that are highly contextualized and highly predictable, such as those found in introductions and basic courtesies.

Novice-level listeners understand words and phrases from simple questions, statements, and high-frequency commands. They typically require repetition, rephrasing, and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension. They rely heavily on extra linguistic support to derive meaning.

Novice-level listeners are most accurate when they are able to recognize speech that they can anticipate. In this way, these listeners tend to recognize rather than truly comprehend. Their listening is largely dependent on factors other than the message itself.

Novice High

At the Novice High sub-level, listeners are often but not always able to understand information from sentence length speech, one utterance at a time, in basic personal and social contexts where there is contextual or extra linguistic support, though comprehension may often be very uneven. They are able to understand speech dealing with areas of practical need such as highly standardized messages, phrases, or instructions, if the vocabulary has been learned.

Novice Mid

At the Novice Mid sub-level, listeners can recognize and begin to understand a number of high-frequency, highly contextualized words and phrases including aural cognates and borrowed words. Typically, they understand little more than one phrase at a time, and repetition may be required.

Novice Low

At the Novice Low sub-level, listeners are able occasionally to recognize isolated words or very high-frequency phrases when those are strongly supported by context. These listeners show virtually no comprehension of any kind of spoken message, not even within the most basic personal and social contexts.

ACTFL Performance Assessments

Comparing Performance and Proficiency

In describing language ability, the terms performance and proficiency both refer to one's ability to use language. Similar strategies can be used when teaching for both performance and proficiency. Likewise, assessments of both performance and proficiency reflect purposeful communication tasks, mirroring real-world uses of language. There are also significant differences between performance and proficiency.

WHAT DOES EACH LEVEL INDICATE?

PERFORMANCE

Performance is the ability to use language that has been learned and practiced in an instructional setting. Coached by an instructor, whether in a classroom or online, or guided by instructional materials, performance refers to language ability that has been practiced and is within familiar contexts and content areas. The practice and assessment of performance should reflect authentic, real world use of language, even though the language is learned and practiced in some type of learning environment. Best practices for assessment of performance suggest that assessment be conducted in the same communicative manner in which the language was learned, practiced or rehearsed.

To prepare for an assessment of performance, language learners need to practice the language functions, structures, and vocabulary they will apply on the assessment tasks, rather than practicing and memorizing exactly what will be on the assessment. Educators should provide language learners with practice of a variety of tasks related to the curriculum. In this way, learners will be ready to apply these elements in the context of the new tasks they will face on the performance assessment. To help language learners transfer their language skills, instruction needs to focus on real world-like tasks with the anticipation that learners will be prepared to do the same outside the instructional setting (as in a demonstration of proficiency).

In assessing performance, a language learner is evaluated against the description of the features of the domains of a given range within those contexts and content areas that have been learned and practiced. Demonstration of performance within a specific range may provide some indication on how the language user might perform on a proficiency assessment and indeed might point toward a proficiency level, but performance is not the same as proficiency. The language a learner produces on a collective set of performance assessments generally correlates to a proficiency level, that is, the ratings that a language learner receives on a variety of performance assessments provides evidence of how the learner will be rated on an assessment of proficiency.

PROFICIENCY

Proficiency is the ability to use language in real-world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired. The demonstration is independent of how the language was learned; the context may or may not be familiar; the evaluation of proficiency is not limited to the content of a particular curriculum that has been taught and learned.

An assessment of proficiency determines if the language user provides sufficient evidence of all of the assessment criteria of a particular level according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012*. The individual must do everything expected at a level in a sustained fashion, that is, all of the time, in order to be rated at that level.

ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages – AAPPL

The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) is a performance assessment of Standards-based language learning across the three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Presentational, and Interpretive) as defined by the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning.

The AAPPL assesses Interpersonal Listening/Speaking, Presentational Writing, Interpretive Reading, and Interpretive Listening.

Appropriate for:
Grades 5-12 and for first year college placement.

Test Length:
Approximately 30 minutes to complete each of the four components of this test. The AAPPL can be ordered as a combined four-component test or in other bundled options.

Test Format:
The AAPPL is delivered over the Internet, under proctored conditions, and requires headphones with a microphone.

Test Forms:
There are two major forms of the AAPPL that assess different ranges of language ability. Form A is generally for students in the Novice to Intermediate ranges. Form B is appropriate for students in the Intermediate to Advanced ranges. The selection of test forms should be based on two criteria: the age of students and the proficiency target of the course or program.

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines	ACTFL Performance Scale	AAPPL Performance Score	Form	
Advanced Low	Advanced	A-1		
Intermediate High		I-5		B
Intermediate Mid	INTERMEDIATE	I-4		B
Intermediate Mid	INTERMEDIATE	I-3		B
Intermediate Mid	INTERMEDIATE	I-2		B
Intermediate Low	INTERMEDIATE	I-1	A	B
Novice High		N-4	A	
Novice Mid	NOVICE	N-3	A	
Novice Mid	NOVICE	N-2	A	
Novice Low	NOVICE	N-1	A	

Test Content:

The AAPPL provides students the opportunity to engage on topics of personal, social, and academic relevance, creating an enjoyable experience for the student. These topics are age appropriate. Additionally, each task, such as writing an e-mail or video-chatting in the target language allows students to show what they can do in the target language through simulations of real-life activities.

Languages:
The AAPPL is currently offered in multiple languages. For a current list of languages, please visit **www.languagetesting.com**.

LTI Language Testing International
Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL

1-800-486-8444
www.languagetesting.com

ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA)

The ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA) is a performance assessment of Standards-based language learning. ALIRA tests the Interpretive Reading Mode of communication in Latin as defined by the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. ALIRA provides an ACTFL Performance Score. There are four gradations of Novice and five gradations of Intermediate.

Appropriate for:

K-12 and beginning and intermediate college courses.

Test Length:

Approximately 20-30 minutes.

Test Format:

ALIRA is delivered over the Internet under proctored conditions.

Test Forms:

ALIRA is adaptive, which means questions increase, decrease or stay at level of difficulty, depending on the student's performance during the test.

Test Content:

ALIRA uses a wide variety of texts including shorter and longer texts from ancient Rome, authentic historical documents, and modern texts from today's classical studies community. The texts appear in block letters without macrons.

Test Reporting:

ALIRA score reports contain a brief narrative explaining each score and recommendations for improvement.

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (Interpersonal)

Domains	Novice	Intermediate Range	Advanced Range
	Expresses self in conversations on very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions that have been highly practiced and memorized.	Expresses self and participates in conversations on familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences. Handles short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering a variety of questions. Can communicate about self, other and everyday life.	Expresses self fully to maintain conversations on familiar topics and new concrete social, academic, and work-related topics. Can communicate in paragraph-length conversation about events with detail and organization. Confidently handles situations with an unexpected complication. Shares point of view in discussions.
Functions	Can ask highly predictable and formulaic questions and respond to such questions by listing, naming, and identifying. May show emerging evidence of the ability to engage in simple conversation.	Can communicate by understanding and creating personal meaning. Can understand, ask and answer a variety of questions. Consistently able to initiate, maintain, and end a conversation to satisfy basic needs and/or to handle a simple transaction. May show emerging evidence of the ability to communicate about more than the "here and now."	Can communicate with ease and confidence by understanding and producing narrations and descriptions in all major time frames and deal efficiently with a situation with an unexpected turn of events. May show emerging evidence of the ability to participate in discussions about issues beyond the concrete.
Contexts/ Content	Able to function in some personally relevant contexts on topics that relate to basic biographical information. May show emerging evidence of the ability to communicate in highly practiced contexts related to oneself and one's immediate environment.	Able to communicate in contexts relevant to oneself and others, and one's immediate environment. May show emerging evidence of the ability to communicate in contexts of occasionally unfamiliar topics.	Functions fully and effectively in contexts both personal and general. Content areas include topics of personal and general interest (community, national, and international events) as well as work-related topics and areas of special competence. May show emerging evidence of the ability to communicate in more abstract content areas.
Text Type	Understands and produces highly practiced words and phrases and an occasional sentence. Able to ask formulaic or memorized questions.	Able to understand and produce discrete sentences, strings of sentences and some connected sentences. Able to ask questions to initiate and sustain conversations.	Able to understand and produce discourse in full oral para- graphs that are organized, cohesive, and detailed. Able to ask questions to probe beyond basic details.
Language Control	Can usually comprehend highly practiced and basic messages when supported by visual or contextual clues, redundancy or restatement, and when the message contains familiar structures. Can control memorized language sufficiently to be appropriate to the context and understood by those accustomed to dealing with language learners, however at times with difficulty.	Understands straightforward language that contains mostly familiar structures. Control of language is sufficient to be understood by those accustomed to dealing with language learners.	Language control is sufficient to interact efficiently and effectively with those unaccustomed to dealing with language learners. Consistent control of basic high-frequency structures facilitates comprehension and production.
Vocabulary	Able to understand and produce a number of high frequency words, highly practiced expressions, and formulaic questions.	Communicates using high frequency and personalized vocabulary within familiar themes or topics.	Comprehends and produces a broad range of vocabulary related to school, employment, topics of personal interest, and generic vocabulary related to current events and matters of public and community interest.
Communication strategies	May use some or all of the following strategies to maintain communication. Able to: • Imitate modeled words • Use facial expressions and gestures • Repeat words • Resort to first language • Ask for repetition • Indicate lack of understanding	Uses some of the following strategies to maintain communication, but not all of the time and inconsistently. Able to: • Ask questions • Ask for clarification • Self-correct or restate when not understood • Circumlocute	Uses a range of strategies to maintain communication. Able to: • Request clarification • Repeat • Restate • Rephrase • Circumlocute
Cultural Awareness	May use culturally appropriate gestures and formulaic expressions in highly practiced applications. May show awareness of the most obvious cultural differences or prohibitions, but may often miss cues indicating miscommunication.	Recognizes and uses some culturally appropriate vocabulary, expressions, and gestures when participating in everyday interactions. Recognizes differences exist in cultural behaviors and perspectives. Conforms in familiar situations.	Understands and uses cultural knowledge to conform linguistically and behaviorally in many social and work-related interactions. Shows awareness of significant cultural differences and attempts to adjust accordingly.

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (Interpretive)

Domains	Novice Range	Intermediate Range	Advanced Range
	Understands words, phrases, and formulaic language that have been practiced and memorized to get meaning of the main idea from simple, highly-predictable oral or written texts, with strong visual support.	Understands main ideas and some supporting details on familiar topics from a variety of texts.	Understands main ideas and supporting details on familiar and some new, concrete topics from a variety of more complex texts that have a clear, organized structure.
Functions	Comprehends meaning through recognition of key words and formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized. May show emerging evidence of the ability to make inferences based on background and prior knowledge.	Comprehends main ideas and identifies some supporting details. May show emerging evidence of the ability to make inferences by identifying key details from the text.	Comprehends the main idea and supporting details of narrative, descriptive, and straightforward persuasive texts. Makes inferences and derives meaning from context and linguistic features.
Contexts/ Content	Comprehends texts with highly predictable, familiar contexts (those related to personal background, prior knowledge, or experiences).	Comprehends information related to basic personal and social needs and relevant to one's immediate environment such as self and everyday life, school, community, and particular interests.	Comprehends texts pertaining to real-world topics of general interest relevant to personal, social, work-related, community, national, and international contexts.
Text Type	Derives meaning when authentic texts (listening, reading, or viewing) are supported by visuals or when the topic is very familiar. Comprehends texts ranging in length from lists, to phrases, to simple sentences, often with graphically organized information.	Comprehends simple stories, routine correspondence, short descriptive texts or other selections within familiar contexts Generally comprehends connected sentences and much paragraph-like discourse. Comprehends information-rich texts with highly predictable order.	Comprehends paragraph discourse such as that found in stories, straightforward literary works, personal and work-related correspondence, written reports or instructions, oral presentations (news), anecdotes, descriptive texts, and other texts dealing with topics of a concrete nature.
Language Control	Primarily relies on vocabulary to derive meaning from texts. May derive meaning by recognizing structural patterns that have been used in familiar and some new contexts.	Sufficient control of language (vocabulary, structures, conventions of spoken and written language, etc.) to understand fully and with ease short, non-complex texts on familiar topics; limited control of language to understand some more complex texts May derive meaning by: • Comparing target language structures with those of the native language • Recognizing parallels in structure between new and familiar language	Sufficient control of language (vocabulary, structures, conventions of spoken and written language, etc.) to understand fully and with ease more complex and descriptive texts with connected language and cohesive devices. Derives meaning by: • Understanding sequencing, time frames, and chronology • Classifying words or concepts according to word order or grammatical use
Vocabulary	Comprehends some, but not all of the time, highly predictable vocabulary, a limited number of words related to familiar topics, and formulaic expressions.	Comprehends high frequency vocabulary related to everyday topics and high frequency idiomatic expressions.	Comprehends generic and some specific vocabulary and structures, specialized and precise vocabulary on topics related to one's experience and an expanding number of idiomatic expressions.
Communication Strategies	May use some or all of the following strategies to comprehend texts, able to: • Skim and scan • Rely on visual support and background knowledge • Predict meaning based on context, prior knowledge, and/or experience For alphabetic languages: • Rely on recognition of cognates • May recognize word family roots, prefixes and suffixes	May use some or all of the following strategies to comprehend texts, able to: • Skim and scan • Use visual support and background knowledge • Predict meaning based on context, prior knowledge, and/or experience • Use context clues • Recognize word family roots, prefixes and suffixes For non-alphabetic languages: • Recognize radicals	Comprehends fully the intent of the message adapting strategies for one's own purposes; uses some or all of the following strategies, able to: • Skim and scan • Use visual support and background knowledge • Predicts meaning based on context, prior knowledge, and/or experience • Use context clues • Use linguistic knowledge • Identify the organizing principle of the text • Create inferences • Differentiate main ideas from supporting details in order to verify
Cultural Awareness	Uses own culture to derive meaning from texts that are heard, read, or viewed.	Generally relies heavily on knowledge of own culture with increasing knowledge of the target culture(s) to interpret texts that are heard, read, or viewed.	Uses knowledge of cultural differences between own culture and target culture(s) as well as increasing knowledge of the target culture(s) to interpret texts that are heard, read, or viewed.

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (Presentational)

Domains	Novice Range	Intermediate Range	Advanced Range
	Communicates information on very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, and sentences that have been practiced and memorized.	Communicates information and expresses own thoughts about familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences.	Communicates information and expresses self with detail and organization on familiar and some new concrete topics using paragraphs.
Functions	Presents simple, basic information on very familiar topics by producing words, lists, notes and formulaic language using highly practiced language. May show emerging evidence of the ability to express own thoughts and preferences.	Expresses own thoughts and presents information and personal preferences on familiar topics by creating with language primarily in present time. May show emerging evidence of the ability to tell or retell a story and provide additional description.	Produces narrations and descriptions in all major time frames on familiar and some unfamiliar topics. May show emerging evidence of the ability to provide a well-supported argument, including detailed evidence in support of a point of view.
Contexts/ Content	Creates messages in some personally relevant contexts on topics that relate to basic biographical information. May show emerging evidence of the ability to create messages in highly practiced contexts related to oneself and immediate environment.	Creates messages in contexts relevant to oneself and others, and one's immediate environment. May show emerging evidence of the ability to create messages on general interest and work-related topics.	Creates messages fully and effectively in contexts both personal and general. Content areas include topics of personal and general interest (com- munity, national, and international events) as well as work-related topics and areas of special competence. May show emerging evidence of the ability to create messages in more abstract content areas.
Text Type	Produces words and phrases and highly practiced sentences or formulaic questions.	Produces sentences, series of sentences, and some connected sentences.	Produces full paragraphs that are organized and detailed.
Language Control	Produces memorized language that is appropriate to the context; limited language control may require a sympathetic audience to be understood. With practice, polish, or editing, may show emerging evidence of Intermediate-level language control.	Control of language is sufficient to be understood by audiences accustomed to the language produced by language learners. With practice, polish, or editing, may show emerging evidence of Advanced-level language control.	Control of high-frequency structures is sufficient to be understood by audiences not accustomed to the language of language learners. With practice, polish, or editing, shows evidence of Advanced-level control of grammar and syntax.
Vocabulary	Produces a number of high frequency words and formulaic expressions; able to use a limited variety of vocabulary on familiar topics.	Produces vocabulary on a variety of everyday topics, topics of personal interest, and topics that have been studied.	Produces a broad range of vocabulary related to topics of personal, public, and community interest, and some specific vocabulary related to areas of study or expertise.
Communication Strategies	May use some or all of the following strategies to communicate. Able to: • Rely on a practiced format • Use facial expressions and gestures • Repeat words • Resort to first language • Use graphic organizers to present information • Rely on multiple drafts and practice sessions with feedback • Support presentational speaking with visuals and notes • Support presentational writing with visuals or prompts	May use some or all of the following strategies to communicate and maintain audience interest. Able to: • Show an increasing awareness of errors and able to self-correct or edit • Use phrases, imagery, or content • Simplify • Use known language to compensate for missing vocabulary • Use graphic organizer • Use reference resources as appropriate	May use some or all of the following strategies to communicate and maintain audience interest. Able to: • Demonstrate conscious efforts at self-editing and correction • Elaborate and clarify • Provide examples, synonyms, or antonyms • Use cohesion, chronology and details to explain or narrate fully • Circumlocute
Cultural Awareness	May use some memorized culturally appropriate gestures, formulaic expressions, and basic writing conventions.	Uses some culturally appropriate vocabulary, expressions and gestures. Reflects some knowledge of cultural differences related to written and spoken communication.	Uses cultural knowledge appropriate to the presentational context and increasingly reflective of authentic cultural practices and perspectives.