ACTFL L&Rcat

EXAMINEE HANDBOOK

LTI Language Testing International

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About the ACTFL L&Rcat

The ACTFL Listening and Reading Proficiency computer adaptive test (L&Rcat), developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and administered by Language Testing International, Inc. (LTI), is a valid and reliable internet-delivered assessment of how well you understand a language while listening and reading. Individuals, companies and organizations around the world use this assessment. From students in Canada, to the New York City Department of Education in the United States, to employees at Samsung in Korea, the ACTFL L&Rcat has become a test people trust when they want to learn what they can do in English.

The ACTFL L&Rcat is a version of the ACTFL English Listening and Reading Proficiency Tests (LPT and RPT). This is a computer-based test that adapts to your listening and reading abilities. It successively selects questions for the purpose of maximizing the precision of the exam based on what is known about your proficiency from previous questions. From your point-of-view, it creates a unique testing experience by customizing the selection of passages based on your own reading and/or listening abilities. Adaptive tests are comprised of items selected from a collection of items, known as an item bank. These items have been piloted and their "difficulty level" calculated through extensive analysis.

The ACTFL L&Rcat is a carefully constructed assessment that evaluates listening and reading abilities according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening and Reading, the Interagency Language Roundtable Language (ILR) Skill Level Descriptors – Listening and Reading, or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), depending on the type of language proficiency certification needed. The Listening section measures how well you spontaneously understand spoken language, without the ability to re-listen or ask for clarification, while the Reading section measures how well you spontaneously read a language when presented with written texts without access to dictionaries or grammar references.

Since the ACTFL L&Rcat assesses general language proficiency, it is not designed to assess what you learned in a specific language program, class, school or university; nor is this an assessment of what you have learned from a specific teaching method or book. Rather than assessing what you “know” about the language, ACTFL L&Rcat is an assessment of how well you can understand while listening or reading the language. Proficiency, that is, how well you can function in the language, as defined by the descriptions of listening and reading abilities in the scale of your choice (ACTFL, ILR, CEFR), is the only factor assessed by these tests.

The ACTFL L&Rcat is appropriate for a variety of purposes: language literacy certification, employment selection, program entrance, exit exams, college placement, program evaluation and performance, teacher, interpreter or translator credentialing, and research.

Proctoring Options

There are two possibilities for how your tests will be proctored:

On-site Proctoring with a Local Proctor

Organizations requesting tests for a group can arrange to proctor the LPT and the RPT on location. An authorized, responsible individual, ideally a member of the HR department or faculty of the organization requesting the assessment, must proctor the tests. This individual, nominated by the organizing agency, will review the Proctoring Guidelines to confirm the steps required to confirm the identity of the candidate and the conditions under which the test will be taken.

Off-site Proctoring with a Remote Proctor

Remote proctoring is a service that emulates the role of an on-site proctor – confirming your identity and safeguarding the integrity of the exam – using a computer-delivered or phone-delivered assessment monitored by our off-site proctor. It allows you to take tests anywhere you can access a quiet room and a computer (in addition to a webcam and a head-set), at a time that is convenient for you. It also frees the client from the practical chores of arranging and delivering on-site proctored exams. To ensure that the test goes smoothly, once a test is scheduled, you will receive an email with a hyperlink to a site that determines if the computer being used for the test meets the requirements for remote proctoring, so there are no surprises at the time of the actual test.

What Does the ACTFL L&Rcat Assess?

The goal of the ACTFL L&Rcat is to gather evidence of the full range of your functional abilities in listening and reading. These are passive skills; that is, the message in a passage is sent to the receptor, you, and you receive and understand its meaning. The ACTFL L&Rcat measures your ability to understand the passage by asking comprehension questions and providing possible answers in order to confirm how well you understood the message. Instead of simple recognition of vocabulary or isolated statements, there is an expectation of a holistic understanding of the passage and its message. At all times, you are expected to demonstrate your functional abilities in listening and reading, e.g., listen to a list of numbers to recognize the winning lottery numbers, read a list of items to understand what you need to do for the day, listen to a newscast to learn what happened in the community, read an editorial opinion in order to understand the author's point of view about a social issue. The expectations for the comprehension of details and nuances increase as the proficiency level increases.

Adaptive Test

Based on your responses to the questions, the ACTFL L&Rcat will adapt and select test items for the purpose of maximizing the precision of your exam. This means that your test is tailored to your reading and listening abilities. The program selects items from the items bank based on what it learns from your previous answers, and decides on the number of items it needs to administer until it reaches a conclusion about your rating. Therefore, each full test (with both the Listening and Reading Sections, combined) may contain a total of up to twenty (20) passages, with a maximum of ten (10) passages to listen to, or read, respectively. Because it is a computer adaptive test, the ACTFL L&Rcat can range in duration from 50-105 minutes, based on your abilities.

Content

The content in the Listening and Reading passages of the ACTFL L&Rcat are based on a range of informal and formal material on general, social, professional, and academic topics, such as daily interactions, announcements, emails, instructions, newspaper articles, technical reports, literary texts, discussions, lectures, broadcasts, etc. These are examples of spoken and written language that native listeners and readers are likely to find in the real-world, varying in topic and complexity according to the proficiency level the test is aiming to assess. You will be assessed on your ability to respond to questions about what you hear, read, and understand in real time rather than what you have memorized prior to beginning the test.

Time Control

Your functional ability affects the time it takes you to make decisions about your passage interpretation. For this reason, the ACTFL L&Rcat is time-controlled. There is a maximum amount of time allotted to answer the questions associated with each passage. The time depends on the level of difficulty and/or length of the passage. You need to work as quickly and effectively

as possible, maintaining good control over time. A count-down clock on the page indicates how much time you have before the program automatically advances the test to the next task. Given the adaptability and the time control of the test, the duration of the test will vary based on your functional ability.

The Passages

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

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

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

Multiple-Choice Questions

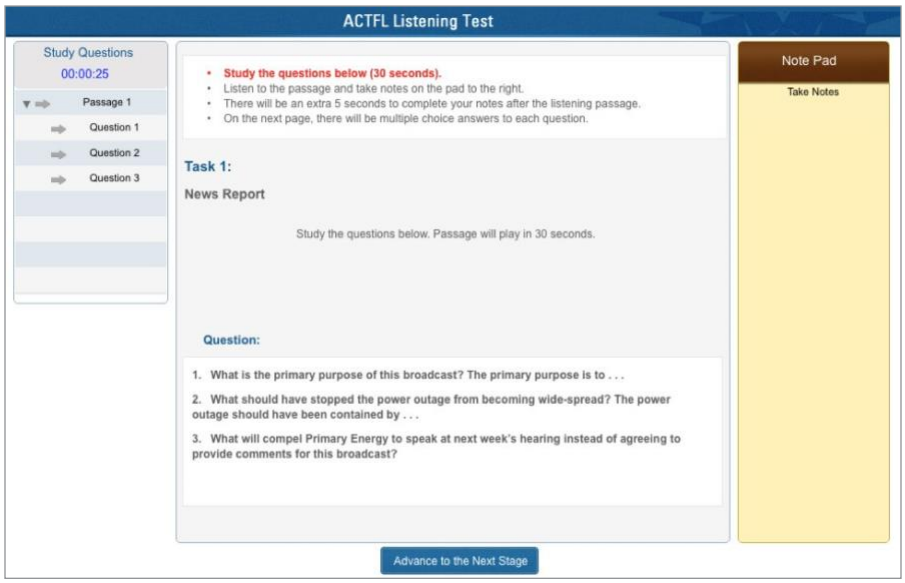
Each passage has three questions that refers to the passage's content; each question has four multiple-choice answers of which only one is correct. This assessment is only available in English, but the directions of the test are available in the following languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

All of the multiple-choice options are equally attractive. This means that all options will appear to be potentially correct. However, each item has only one correct response. Multiple reviews of each test item have confirmed the quality of these questions in order to ensure that the questions and multiple-choice options are appropriate and aligned with the level, and that they contribute to the assessment. The wording in the responses does not repeat the wording in the passages, so you will need to understand the meaning of the passages in order to answer the questions. Even when a passage may refer to information that is considered common knowledge, no external knowledge is needed or should be used to select the correct answer. You will be able to select the correct answer based only on your comprehension of the passage. Only your comprehension of the passage is needed to identify the correct answer.

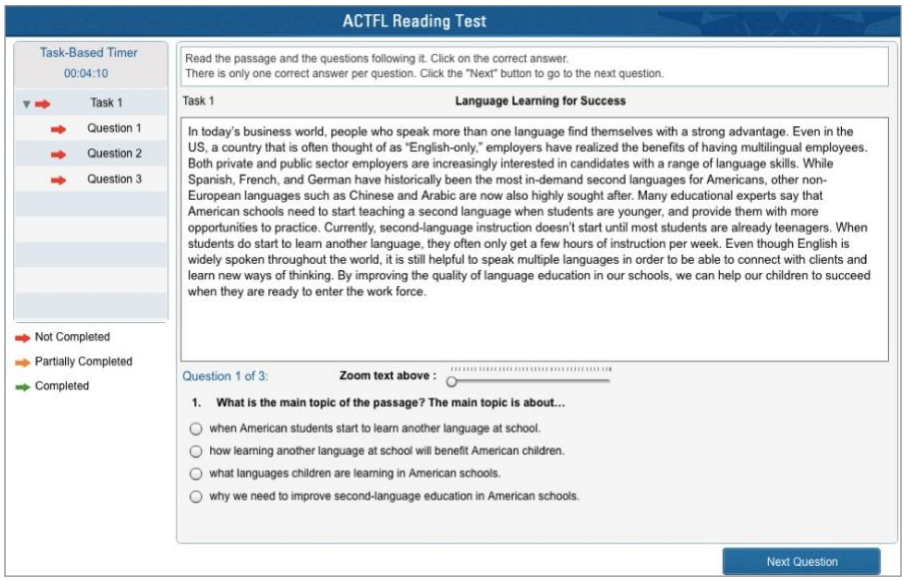
Listening and Reading with a Purpose

The ACTFL L&Rcat questions may ask for main ideas, details, implications, or inferences that you can make from the message presented in the passage. This allows the test to check your ability to understand the passage. For the Listening passages, you will be able to read the questions before the passage plays. For the Reading passages, each passage will remain in view as each question for that passage is presented. In this manner, you can listen or read with a purpose in mind.

After you read the questions in the Listening section, you will listen to the passage, and you will have the option to take notes on the screen. Then you will be able to view the multiple-choice options for each question. When taking notes in the note pad provided on the screen, you can jot down information from the passage that may help you to select the correct answer. You can visit the Test demo to familiarize yourself with the test structure.



The Reading section presents the written passages with each question. Just as with the Listening section, reading the questions in advance provides you with the opportunity to read with a specific purpose in mind. Read the questions first, and then read the passage while focusing on the information that may help you to select the correct answer. For the Reading section, only one question at a time appears on the screen, so in order to read all three questions that correspond to each Reading passage, you will need to click on the "Next Question" button at the bottom of the screen.



Your Final Rating

An ACTFL rating is assigned immediately upon completion of the test. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) ratings are also available (by request before test administration). The different levels are summarized in the next pages, but the best reference to understand your final rating is the official descriptors of each rating scale.

LTI will deliver your final rating with a certificate which provides the rating for the Listening and Reading sections separately, with the Guideline descriptions of the rating. Here is an example:

ACTFL

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

certifies that

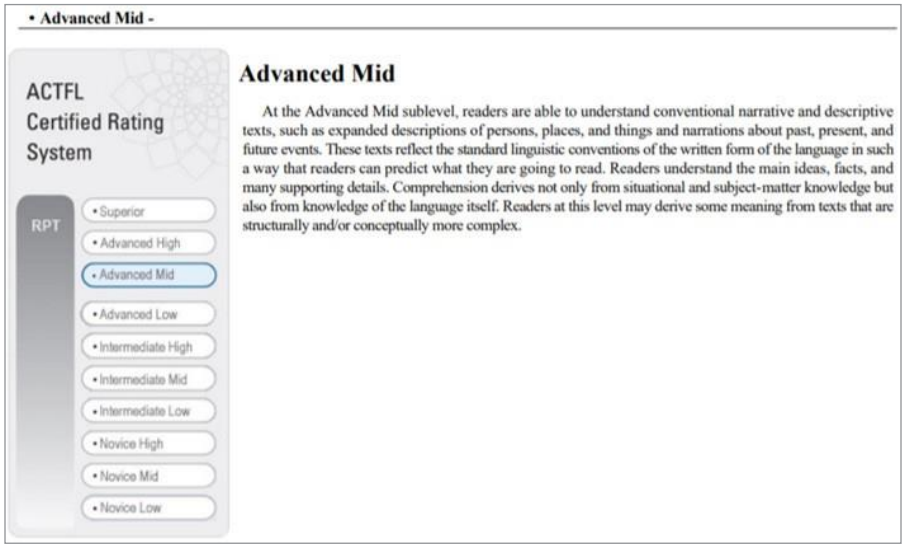
Test Type	Test Date	Language
L&Rcat	***09/19/2018***	***English***

has successfully completed an ACTFL Listening and Reading Test (L&Rcat) and has been rated, using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Reading

Advanced Mid

THE ACTFL LANGUAGE TESTING OFFICE
LTI

Executive Director, ACTFL
Date Issued: 09/19/2018
Date of Expiration: 09/19/2020
Certificate Code: 2511162-2FDF48
Issued by: LTI



• **Advanced Mid -**

ACTFL Certified Rating System

RPT

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

Advanced Mid

At the Advanced Mid sublevel, 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.

The ACTFL L&Rcat Test Administration

These assessments are administered via the internet on a secure computer that meets the minimum technical specifications stipulated by LTI. You will need an internet connection and headset with earphones. The test is proctored by an authorized individual or via LTI's remote proctoring services.

The ACTFL L&Rcat provides detailed instructions on how to access the questions and record your answers. You will have the opportunity to review the instructions and sample questions before the beginning of the test. It is important that you check these items to familiarize yourself with the ACTFL L&Rcat functionality. This will also prepare you to focus and pay attention to all aspects of the passages during the test. Once you are familiar with the system, you will be ready to begin the actual test.

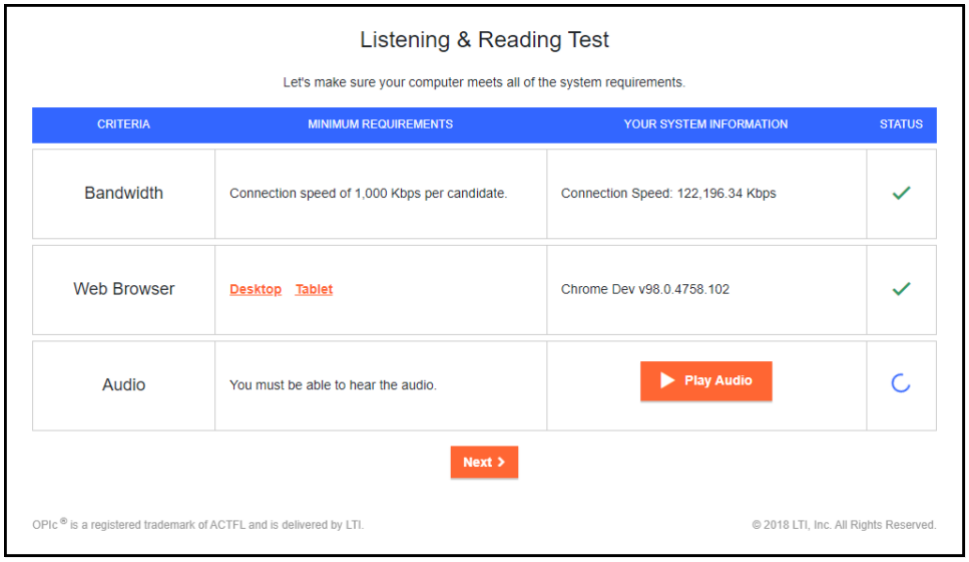
The following sections provide details and illustrations regarding the tests' functionality.

The ACTFL L&Rcat Test Functionality

Once you have contacted LTI to set your appointment for your ACTFL L&Rcat, the LTI test management team will communicate to your local or remote proctor the login information to access the L&Rcat online at: http://lrcat.actfltesting.org.

Before you start, the program will confirm that your computer meets the requirements to run the test. For the listening test, you will be asked to test the audio. It is recommended to use good quality headphones for optimal quality of sound. At this point, you can adjust the volume if needed. Additionally, the computer controls and your headphones will allow you to adjust the volume if needed later.

Immediately before accessing the L&Rcat, you must complete a System Check in order to determine that your computer meets the requirements: You can do so here http://lrcatdemo.actfltesting.org.



If the System Check shows that your computer does not meet a requirement, update your computer, or look for another computer that meets these technical requirements. The program will not allow you to proceed on a computer without the minimal requirements for the test.

Special Instructions for Chrome Browser Users

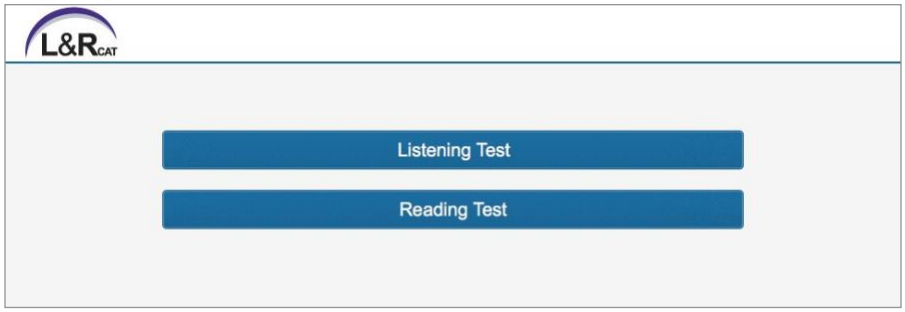
Due to a recent update to the Chrome browser, it is now necessary for all test candidates who wish to use Chrome to complete a System Check immediately before taking the test in order to confirm that Live Caption is not enabled. If Live Caption is enabled, the System Check will alert you to contact your proctor who will then provide instructions to disable the feature in Chrome. Alternatively, you may change to another browser for testing if available. It is extremely important that you complete the System Check and disable Live Caption if needed, as leaving captioning enabled may affect your test score.

Technical issues can affect the quality of your listening and your concentration, so please addressany potential issues with your equipment to ensure that you have a computer system that meetsall the requirements fully.

Make sure that all programs are closed and eliminate all possible distractions. Once you press ***Begin***, the computer will maintain time controls and will provide you with frequent time reminders. Your focus and attention will help in your best performance while distractions will affect you adversely.

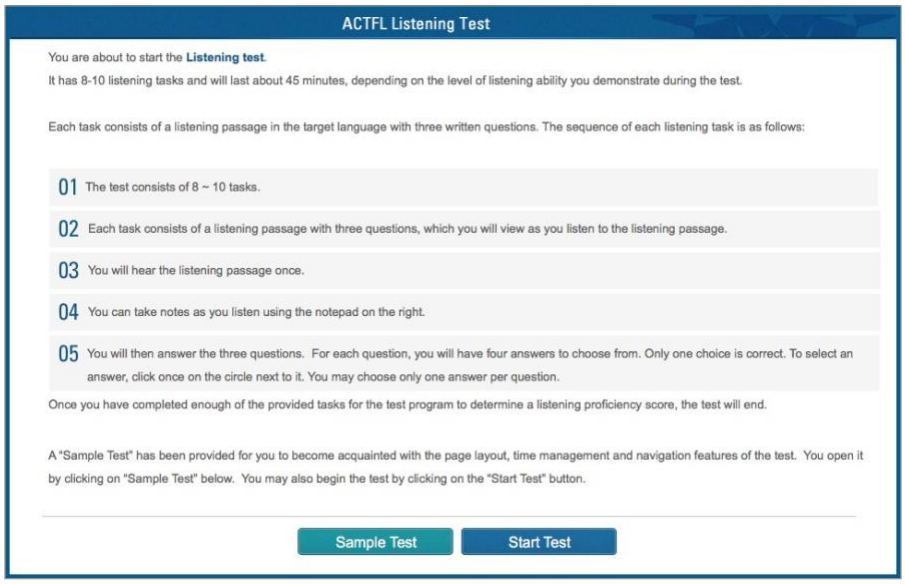
After the System Check, the program will send you to the login page. There, your proctor will log you in to the test site by using the login credentials assigned to you.

Once you log in, the program will give you the choice of which test you want to do first. Select according to your preference. Listening and Reading passages and tasks are assessed separately and the order in which you do these assessments will not affect your rating.

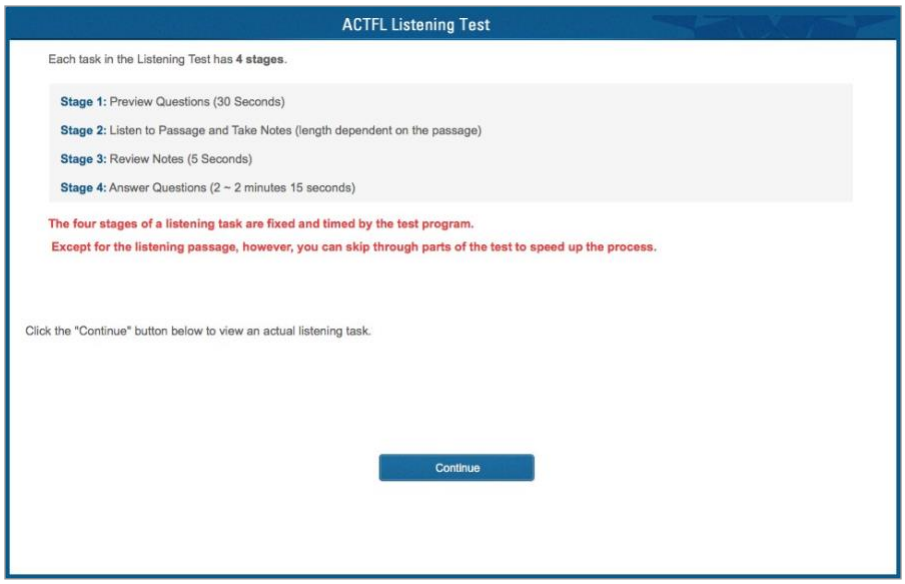


Listening Section Functionality

Once you select the Listening section, you will be introduced to its components. Read and follow these instructions carefully. Keep in mind that the number of items (up to 10) for the test program varies according to your listening proficiency.



The program describes the test process in four stages and their time allowance. Keep these instructions in mind, so you do not waste valuable time during the test.



The following screenshot shows that the screen is divided in different panels.

The panel on the left indicates your progress.

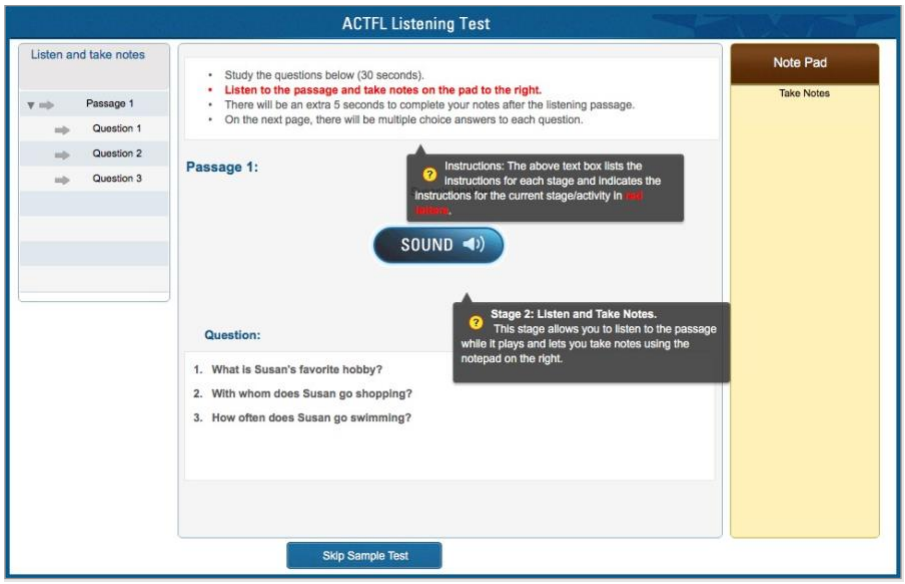
- A time counter indicates how long you have to complete each session:
  - 30 seconds to read the questions. Use this time to familiarize yourself with the questions before the recording begins.
  - 5 seconds after the passage ends to review your notes
  - Approximately 2 minutes to answer the questions related to the passage

The item number and the number of questions. The arrows by the question number indicate your progress. Once you are responding to the questions, you can navigate from one question to the other by clicking on the question number in this panel. Once the time is up, the test automatically will move to the next page. If you are ready to proceed to the questions before the 30 seconds, you can select “Next” and continue to the next page immediately. Once you move to the next item, you will not have access to the previous item.

The program will introduce you to the test functionality with a sample. Use this sample test to familiarize yourself with the test functionality.

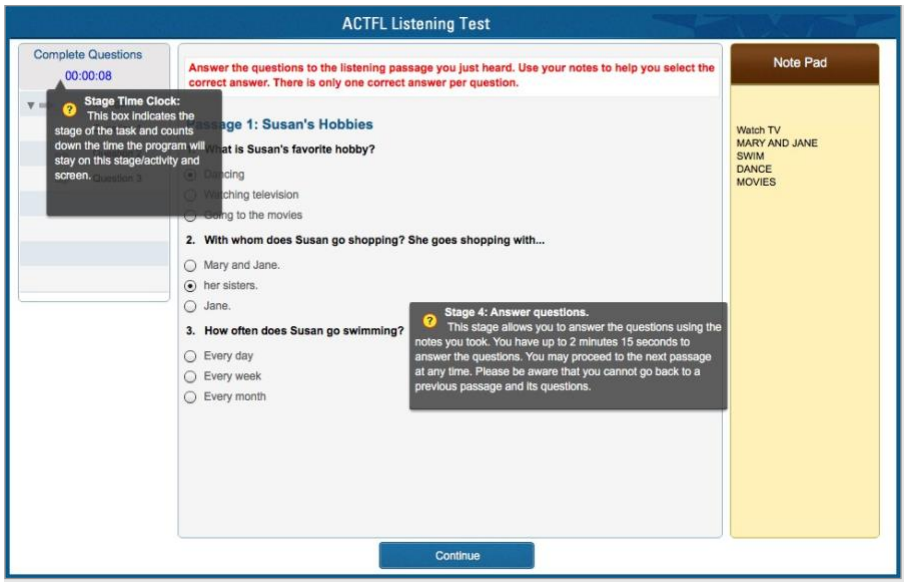
The panel in the right provides a note pad for you to take notes while listening to the passage. Use the note pad to jot done notes while you are listening to the passage. You can type any information from the recording you may think important to answer the questions. Your notes in the note pad will remain on the page until you finished with that test item.

DO NOT focus on the notes; FOCUS on listening and understanding the passage. Jot down ideas that may help you in answering the questions but do not spend time transcribing the passage. After the recording ends, you will only have 5 additional seconds to finish your notes. These notes are for your own use, and will not be used or reviewed for your assessment.

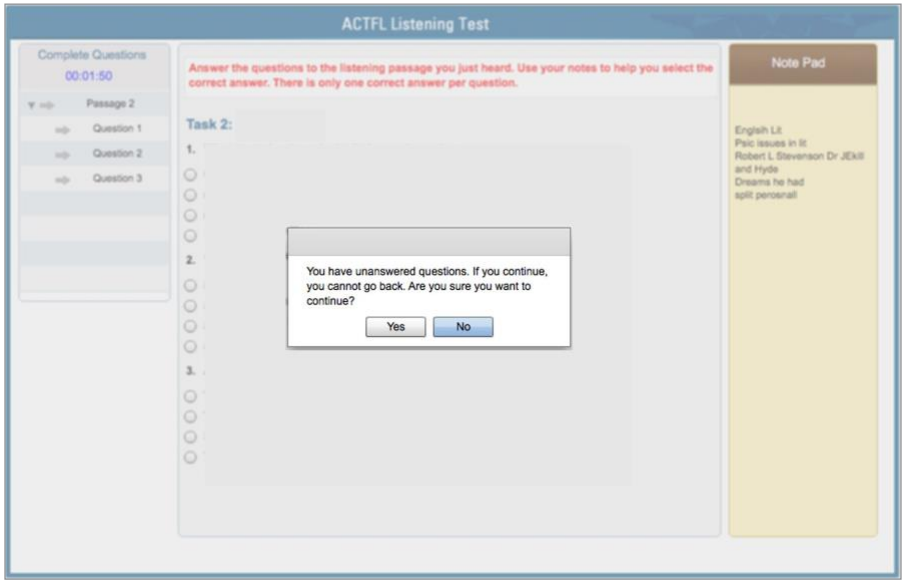


The center panel provides your instructions for the test.

- Quick instructions for each stage of the test items
- An orientation line telling what the passage is about: Passage (#): Topic
- A recorder indicator for the Listening passage. This will start automatically.
- **You do not have control over the recording**. The recording will begin to play automatically when the 30 seconds of preparation are completed, and you will not be able to stop or replay. **Be ready to listen from the moment the recording begins. You will listen to the recorded passage only once**.
- After the recording ends, you have 5 additional seconds to finish your notes. After this time ends, the center panel will automatically change to the multiple-choice questions.
  - The time counter will provide you with up to 2 minutes and 15 seconds to complete the questions. Check your time for each item as it changes according to the difficulty level.
  - The questions are repeated with the multiple-choice answers.
  - If you are ready to move to the next item before the time is finished, you can select "Continue" to move to the next item.
  - Once the time is finished, the program will move you to the next item automatically.
  - Once you move to the next item, you will not be able to return to that task.

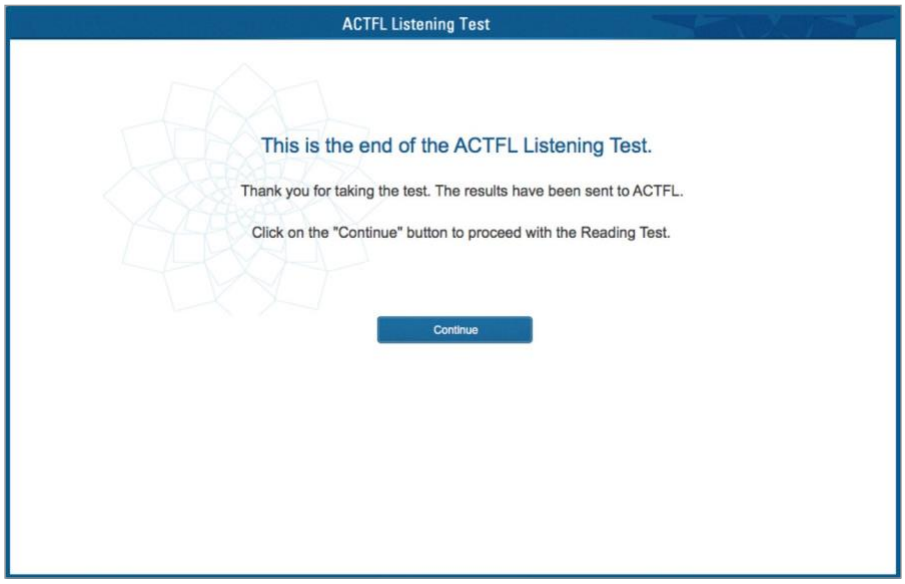


You have 2 minutes to complete each set of questions. While you are responding to the questions, you can make changes to your answers. If you try to move to the next item before you have completed all the questions, the program will warn you, that you have not finished the task.



It is recommended that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. There is no penalty for mistakes. Once the time is up or you move to the next passage, you will not be able to return to these questions.

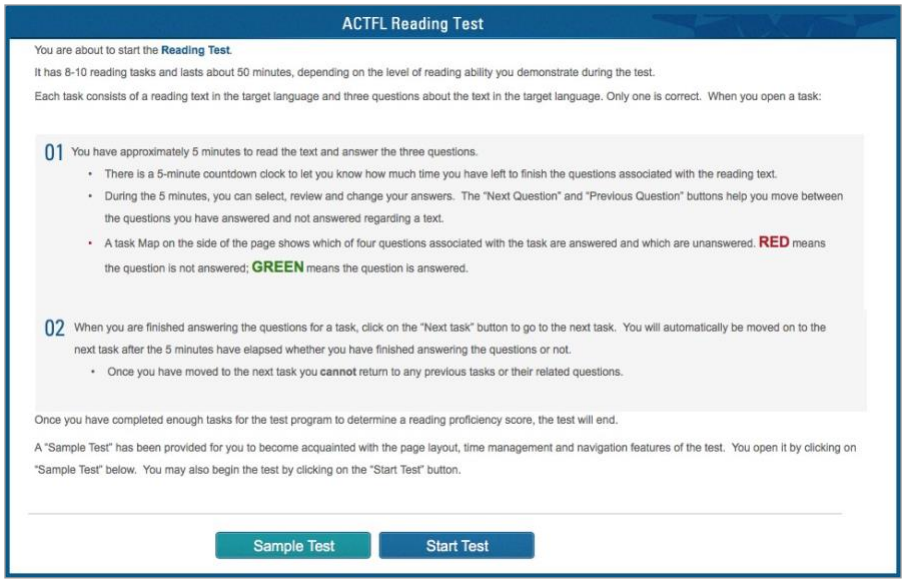
Once you finish the test, the computer will announce that you have completed the test.



Reading Section Functionality

Once you select the Reading section, you will be introduced to its components.

Read and follow these instructions carefully. You will have approximately 5 minutes to complete each test item. Keep in mind that the number of items (up to 10) for the test program varies according to your reading proficiency.

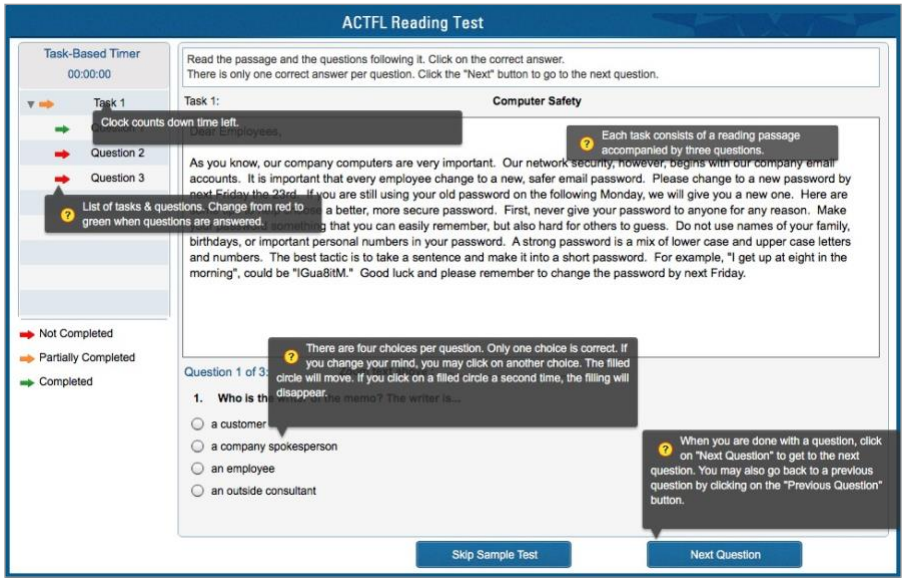


The program will introduce you to the test functionality with a sample. Use this sample test as a means to familiarize yourself with the test functionality.

The following screenshot shows that the screen is divided in different panels.

The panel on the left indicates your progress.

- A five-minute counter indicates how long you have to answer the questions related to the passage
- The item number and the questions.
- The color arrows by the question number indicate your progress.
  - Green indicates that you have completed the question.
  - Yellow indicates that the question is partially completed.
  - Red indicates you have not completed the question.
- Once you are responding to the questions, you can navigate from one question to the other by clicking on the question number in this panel.
- Once the time is up, the test automatically will move to the next item. If you are ready to proceed to the questions before the time is up, you can select “Next” and continue to the next page immediately.
- Once you move to the next passage, you will not have access to the previous item.



The main panel provides your instructions for the test.

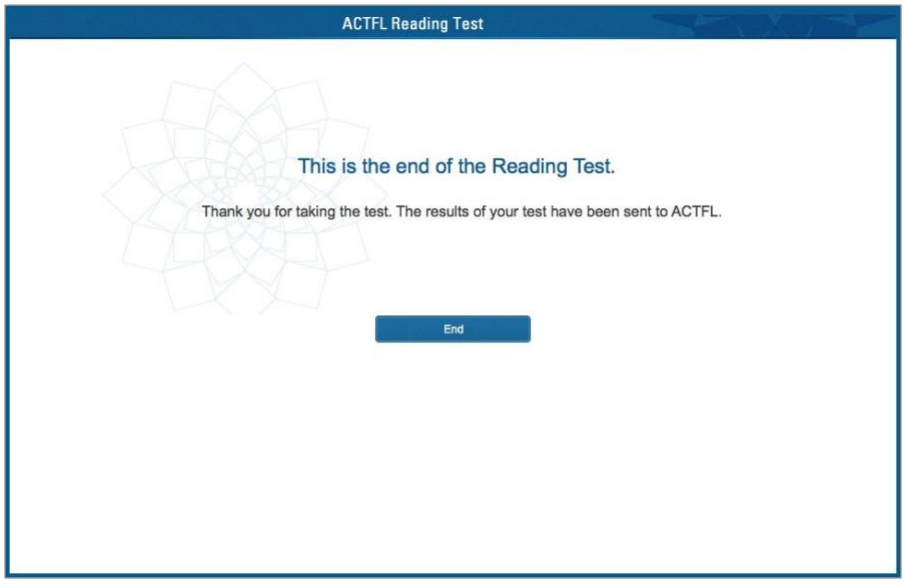
- An orientation line telling what the passage is about: Passage (#): Topic
- The Reading passage will be on the screen with one question and the multiple-choice answers below it. The screen will show one question at the time, but you can navigate between questions while you are working on this section.
- You can navigate to the next question by selecting “Next Question,” or by clicking in the navigation panel. Arrows by the questions will change colors as indicated in the navigation panel.

- The passage will remain in the top of the panel until you complete the questions or until time is up.
- If you are ready to move to the next item before the time is finished, you can select "Continue" to move to the next item.
  - Once the time is finished, the program will move you to the next item automatically.
  - Once you move to the next item, you will not be able to return to that task.

In contrast to the Listening section, the Reading section presents the Reading passage and the questions together with the multiple-choice questions related to the passage. You will be able to re-read the passage while responding to the questions.

Since the passage and the questions are presented at the same time, you will have more opportunity to re-read before you finalize your answers. Still, time is limited, so you should not linger more than the recommended time on each item.

Once the program has enough information to provide the rating, the test will finish.



Rating the ACTFL L&Rcat

The ACTFL L&Rcat is a machine-scored test and results will be available within hours. A computerized algorithm assesses test responses and assigns a final rating. The scoring procedure considers the difficulty of the passage, the items' levels of difficulty, and the test-taker's ability to answer the questions correctly. Hundreds of tests items were evaluated in order to create this reliable procedure. The last step in this procedure is completed when the computer score is interpreted into a proficiency rating.

Results will be reported according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening, the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Language Skill Level Descriptors – Listening, or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), depending on the type of language proficiency certification needed. All ratings for all languages refer to the same criteria. You can study the descriptors for the ACTFL scale in detail at https://www.actfl.org/ publications/ guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012. The site includes translations of the document and samples at each major level in at least 10 languages.

Proficiency Levels

The descriptions of the different scales follow similar criteria and the best way to understand a rating is to read the descriptors from the full version of the guidelines. As a reference, here are some highlights for each major level according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – 2012*:

NOVICE

Listening	Reading
At the Novice level, listeners can understand key words, true aural cognates and formulaic expressions that are highly contextualized and highly predictable. They understand words and phrases from simple questions, statements and high-frequency commands.	At the Novice level, readers can understand key words and cognates, as well as formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized. They are able to get limited information from highly predictable texts on very familiar topics. They are best able to understand a text when they are able to anticipate the information in the text. Recognition of key words, cognates, and formulaic phrases makes comprehension possible.

INTERMEDIATE

Listening	Reading
At the Intermediate level, listeners can understand information conveyed in simple, sentence-length speech on familiar or everyday topics. They rely heavily on redundancy, restatement, paraphrasing and contextual clues. They understand speech that conveys basic information. They require a controlled listening environment where they hear what they may expect to hear.	At the Intermediate level, readers can understand information conveyed in simple, predictable, loosely connected texts. The discourse is minimally connected and primarily organized in individual sentences and strings of sentences containing predominantly high-frequency vocabulary. Intermediate-level readers are able to understand messages found in highly familiar, everyday contexts.

ADVANCED

Listening	Reading
At the Advanced level, listeners can understand the main ideas and most supporting details in connected discourse on a variety of topics of general interest, such as news stories, explanations, instructions, anecdotes, or travelogue descriptions. They understand speech that is lexically and structurally uncomplicated. The discourse is straightforward and is generally organized in a clear and predictable way. They demonstrate the ability to comprehend language on a range of topics of general interest. Their understanding is most often limited to concrete, conventional discourse.	At the Advanced level, readers can understand the main idea and supporting details of authentic narrative and descriptive texts. They 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. They demonstrate 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.

SUPERIOR

Listening	Reading
At the Superior level, listeners are able to understand speech on a wide range of familiar and less familiar topics. Comprehension is no longer limited to the listener's familiarity with subject matter, but it also comes from a command of the language supported by a broad vocabulary, an understanding of more complex structures and linguistic experience within the target culture. They can understand not only what is said, but sometimes what is left unsaid; that is, they can make inferences. They understand speech that typically uses precise, specialized vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, which can contain cultural references. This speech often deals abstractly with topics in a way that is appropriate for academic and professional audiences.	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 it also comes from a command of the language supported by a broad vocabulary, an understanding of complex structures and knowledge of the target culture. They can draw inferences from textual and extra-linguistic clues. They understand texts featuring argumentation, supported opinion and hypothesis, and abstract linguistic formulations. Such texts are typically reasoned and/or analytic and may frequently contain cultural references.

Sublevels

The descriptors of each sublevel in listening and reading in the ACTFL Guidelines provide details about the quality of functional ability demonstrated within the level. Sublevels are assigned in the ACTFL scale for Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. Superior does not have sublevels. The three sublevels are: High, Mid, and Low.

The HIGH Sublevel

Listeners and readers at the High sublevel are able to function with ease and confidence when performing the functions of their baseline level (Novice, Intermediate or Advanced). They are able of understand the contexts, content, and the text type at the next higher major level most of the time, but they are unable to sustain functional ability at the next higher level without intermittent lapses or evidence of difficulty.

For example, a ***Novice High*** listener or reader is able to understand sentence-level discourse about the content and contexts associated with the Intermediate level, but he or she would not be able to maintain that level of comprehension all the time. There will be evidence of breakdown when the listener or reader would not be able to sustain the criteria of the Intermediate.

The MID Sublevel

Mid sublevel listeners and readers are able to function with ease and confidence when performing the functions of their baseline level (Novice, Intermediate or Advanced). They may demonstrate some understanding of the next level's passages, but they are unable to sustain functional ability at that level most of the time.

For example, an ***Intermediate Mid*** listener or reader would be able to understand sentence-level discourse with the content and contexts associated with the Intermediate level consistently throughout the test. Nevertheless, they will show frequent evidence of breakdown in comprehension of passages at the Advanced level.

The LOW Sublevel

Listeners and readers at the Low sublevel work hard to hold on to the major level of proficiency for which they have qualified. They demonstrate minimal but sustained functional ability in the functions of their baseline level (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior). They meet the minimal requirements for the level and do not break down to the level below. On the other hand, they struggle to understand passages at the next level.

For example, an ***Advanced Low*** listener or reader is able to just hold onto the Advanced level by understanding short paragraphs about the content and contexts related to the Advanced level. He or she would be able to recognize different time frames (past, present, and future) butthe listener or reader may need to make an effort to understand the intent of the message. Additionally, an Advanced Low listeners and readers will struggle to understand Superior level passages.

Tips for Optimal Performance on the ACTFL L&Rcat

Logistics

- Scheduling the ACTFL L&Rcat is handled by LTI. Make sure to follow their instructions. If you have any questions, contact LTI immediately.
- Make sure in advance that your computer meets the minimal connection requirements for the test. Technical problems can be very distracting and will affect your ability to focus on the listening and reading tasks. Check your settings in advance.
- Make sure that the area where you are taking the ACTFL L&Rcat is quiet and void of distractions. If you are taking a proctored test in a testing site, the proctor is responsible for taking care of the environment in which you are taking the test. If, however, the test is un-proctored, be sure to find a quiet place, without any interruptions.
- Meet your test schedule. Once LTI sends you the registration information, you will have 2 weeks to complete the test. Tests will automatically expire after two (2) weeks, but your test administrator can provide extensions.
- Once you begin the test, you have a limited amount of time to complete the test. The time counters will assist you to maintain good control of time. Work as efficiently as you can. Once time is up, you will not be able to return to the section.
- During the test, you are not allowed to check documents or dictionaries, or ask for help. Rely exclusively on what you can do.

Personal Preparation

To do your best on the ACTFL L&Rcat, you must create a habit of listening and reading in the target language across a variety of contexts, formats, topics, and domains. Working to build your skills, so you can understand the language in real world contexts, is the best way to get ready to take the ACTFL L&Rcat. Listen and read with the purpose of understanding the meaning of passages. Consider: What message is the author trying to convey?

The ACTFL L&Rcat is an assessment of what you understand in the language at the time of the test. Your final rating describes your general functional ability and your current receptive/comprehension skills. The final rating describes your sustained functional ability, which is, the level at which you show full control over the functions. Only language development over time will impact your rating. Last minute preparation will not improve your functional ability throughout the test. Last-minute language learning, grammar review, or vocabulary practice will not improve your final results. Knowing more about the language will not affect your rating unless it reflects on what you can understand. As such, focus your practice on listening and reading real-life materials, with attention to the speaker's/writer's message rather than the language forms he or she uses.

As with any test, you should prepare by being well rested and alert, maintaining a positive attitude throughout the test. During the test, FOCUS! Concentration will help you to understand better and recognize details. Focus on understanding each passage and its message.

Test-Taking Tips

- It is to your advantage that you prepare by listening and reading materials in the language before the assessment begins, so you do not waste the first few minutes connecting with the language.
- Read the questions first, then proceed to the passage. Read the questions carefully making sure that you understand the purpose of the question. Then, listen to or read the passage with that purpose in mind to help you identify the correct answers to the questions.
- Pay attention to time. During the ACTFL L&Rcat, a counter will announce when the recording begins. Be ready to listen before the recording starts so you understand the passage from the very beginning.
- The Listening section provides you with space to take notes. Take advantage of this notepad, since you do not know what the possible choices for the multiple-choice questions will be until after you have finished listening to the passage.
- Do not lose focus from the passage comprehension. Do not get distracted taking notes.
- The Reading section questions and multiple-choice answers are available to you while the Reading passage is on screen. This means that you can go back to the passage to clarify any information or better select your response.
- Select your answers carefully. All of the choices will look like possible correct answers, but only one is correct. All choices are equally attractive, and they will not repeat the content of the passage in the same words. You will be able to select the correct answer based only on your comprehension of the passage. If you are not sure of an answer, you should still attempt a response.

Questions? Contact us.

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

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