



# ACTFL L&Rcat

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## EXAMINEE HANDBOOK

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# About the ACTFL L&R CAT

The ACTFL Listening and Reading Proficiency computer adaptive test (L&R CAT), 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&R CAT has become a test people trust when they want to learn what they can do in English.

The ACTFL L&R CAT 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&R CAT is a carefully constructed assessment that evaluates listening and reading abilities according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2024 – 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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 headset), 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&R CAT Assess?

The goal of the ACTFL L&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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. 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 screenshot shows the interface for the Listening section, specifically Step 2: Sample Question. At the top, there are three steps: Step 1 (Setup), Step 2 (Sample Question), and Step 3 (Begin Test). Step 2 is highlighted in orange. Below the steps, there is a 'Sample Question' section with instructions: 'Please use this sample question to familiarize yourself with the test controls. It will not count towards your final rating.' To the right of this section is a large text area labeled 'Take notes here:'. Below the instructions, it says 'The recording will play in 27 seconds.' and '1: Susan's Hobbies'. Underneath, there are three questions listed in a numbered list: 1. What is Susan's favorite hobby?, 2. With whom does Susan go shopping?, and 3. How often does Susan go swimming?. Below the questions is a 'Listening Passage' section with a speaker icon and a progress bar. At the bottom right, there is a 'Next >' button.

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.

The screenshot shows the interface for the Reading section, specifically Step 2: Sample Question. At the top, there are three steps: Step 1 (Setup), Step 2 (Sample Question), and Step 3 (Begin Test). Step 2 is highlighted in orange. Below the steps, there is a 'Sample Question' section with instructions: 'Please use this sample question to familiarize yourself with the test controls. It will not count towards your final rating.' To the right of this section is a large text area labeled 'Take notes here:'. Below the instructions, it says 'The recording will play in 27 seconds.' and '1: Susan's Hobbies'. Underneath, there are three questions listed in a numbered list: 1. What is Susan's favorite hobby?, 2. With whom does Susan go shopping?, and 3. How often does Susan go swimming?. Below the questions is a 'Listening Passage' section with a speaker icon and a progress bar. At the bottom right, there is a 'Next >' button.



## 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 *Guidelines* descriptions of the rating.



# The ACTFL L&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT Test Functionality

Once you have contacted LTI to set your appointment for your ACTFL L&R CAT, the LTI test management team will communicate to your local or remote proctor the login information to access the L&R CAT 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&R CAT, 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>.

CRITERIA	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	YOUR SYSTEM INFORMATION	STATUS
Bandwidth	Connection speed of 1,000 Kbps per candidate.	Connection Speed: 122,196.34 Kbps	✓
Web Browser	Desktop Tablet	Chrome Dev v98.0.4758.102	✓
Audio	You must be able to hear the audio.	<input type="button" value="Play Audio"/>	↻

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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 address any potential issues with your equipment to ensure that you have a computer system that meets all 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.

L&RCAT

Username

Demo


Password


••••

[System Check](#) [Sign In >](#)

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.

Which test would you like to take first?

 **Listening Test**  
Get Started >

 **Reading Test**  
Get Started >


## 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 test will begin with a sample question. Use this sample question to familiarize yourself with the test functionality.

### L&Rcat


In this section, you will be evaluated on how well you can understand spoken version of the target language.



Your test has 8-10 listening passages, each with 3 multiple-choice questions.



Your test will take 45 minutes to complete.



You won't be able to go back to previous passages.

[Next >](#)

A time counter indicates how long you have to complete each step:

1. You will first have 30 seconds to read the questions. Use this time to familiarize yourself with the questions before the recording begins.

[Sign Out](#)

Familiarize yourself with the topic and the questions below.

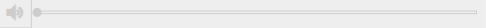
The recording will play in 26 seconds

#### 1: Service Changes

**Questions**

- 1 What is the purpose of this phone call? The purpose of the call is to inform a client . . .
- 2 According to Allison Barnes, what has affected her company?
- 3 What will Jacob Thompson need to do before he responds to the information Allison Barnes has given him? Jacob Thompson will need to . . .

**Listening Passage**



Take notes here:

[Next >](#)

2. The listening passage will play automatically at the end of the 30 seconds.

- a. **The panel on the right** provides a note pad for you to take notes while listening to the passage. Use the note pad to jot down 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.
- b. 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.

**1: Service Changes**

**Questions**

- 1 What is the purpose of this phone call? The purpose of the call is to inform a client . . .
- 2 According to Allison Barnes, what has affected her company?
- 3 What will Jacob Thompson need to do before he responds to the information Allison Barnes has given him? Jacob Thompson will need to . . .

**Listening Passage**

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

**Take notes here:**

**Use this space to jot down any notes as you listen.**

Next >

3. After the passage plays, you will have 5 seconds to review your notes if you wish. The time remaining will be displayed in blue text.

Step 1 Setup

Step 2 Sample Question

Step 3 Begin Test

**Sample Question**

Take a few moments to review your notes.

You'll be moved on to answer the questions in **1 seconds** or click **Next** if you are ready to answer the questions now.

**Take notes here:**

**1: Susan's Hobbies**

**Questions**

- 1 What is Susan's favorite hobby?
- 2 With whom does Susan go shopping?
- 3 How often does Susan go swimming?

**Listening Passage**

Next >

4. You will then have approximately 2 minutes to respond to the multiple choice questions. Scroll down in the box on the left side of your screen to view all questions and select your responses.

Time Remaining for this Selection **2:00**

**1: News Report**

- 1 What is the primary purpose of this broadcast? The primary purpose is to . . .
  - inform the public about how Congress intends to prevent future emergencies.
  - express Alice Monroe's opinion about the failure of the energy industry to protect the public.
  - warn the public about what to do if there is another wide-spread power outage.
  - update the public on an on-going investigation into what caused an emergency situation.
- 2 What should have stopped the power outage from becoming wide-spread? The power outage should have been contained by . . .
  - computer-programmed fail-safe programs.
  - laws enacted by Congress.
  - the people who are responsible for cutting down the trees in Ohio.
  - the Department of Energy.

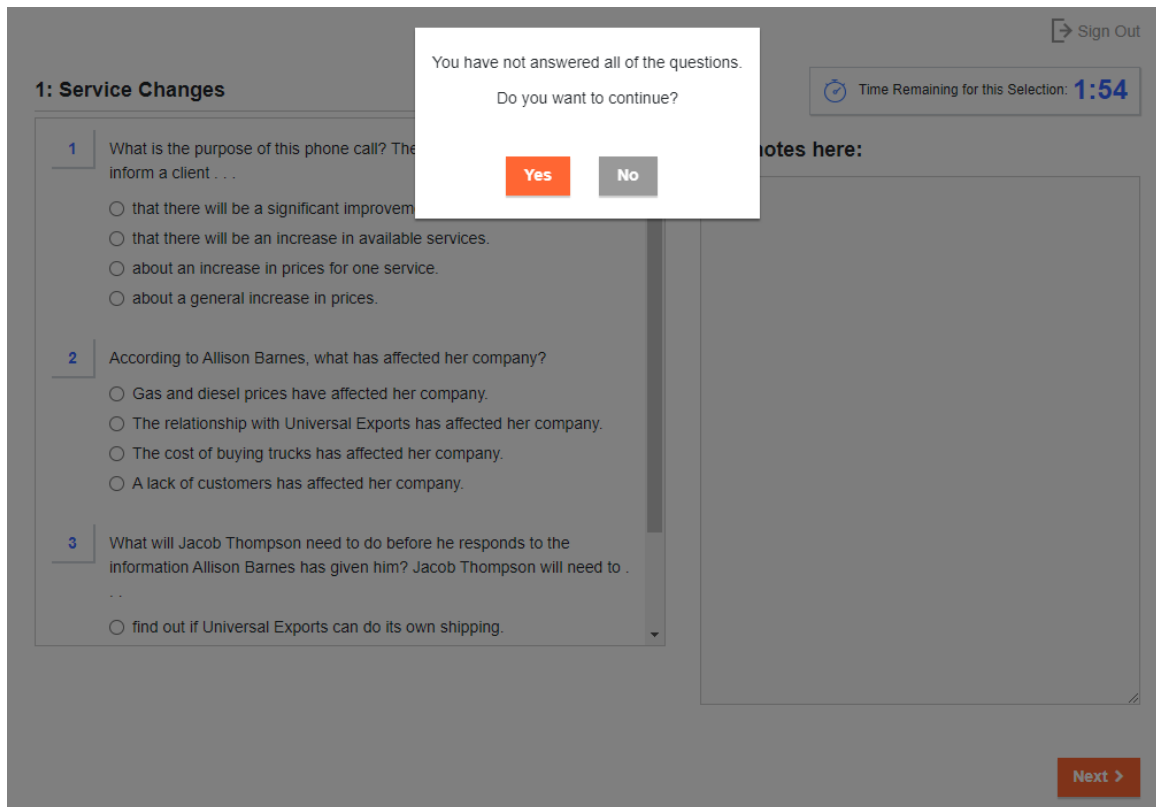
**Take notes here:**

Next >

Once the time is up, the test automatically will move to the next listening passage. If you are ready to proceed to the questions before the 30 seconds, you can click “Next” and continue to

the next passage immediately. Once you move to the next item, you will not have access to the previous item.

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, you will see a confirmation screen and may then move on to the Reading test or conclude testing if you have already taken both sections.


## 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.

### Reading Test


In this section, you will be evaluated on how well you can read the target language.



Your test has 8-10 reading passages, each with 3 multiple-choice questions.



Your test will take 50 minutes to complete.



You won't be able to go back to previous passages.

[Next >](#)

The test will begin with a sample question. Use this sample question to familiarize yourself with the test functionality.

Time Remaining for this Selection: 4:59

#### 1: Language Learning for Success

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

Zoom text above:

#### Questions

**1** What is the main topic of the passage? The main topic is about...

- what languages children are learning in American schools.
- why we need to improve second-language education in American schools.
- how learning another language at school will benefit American children.
- when American students start to learn another language at school.

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

- help to change the US into a multilingual society.
- need to learn other languages in addition to Spanish.
- have a better chance of getting a good job some day.
- be limited to getting government jobs that focus on

[Next >](#)

- A five-minute counter indicates how long you have to answer the questions related to the passage.
- The reading passage is displayed with its corresponding questions in the scroll box to the right.
- Once the time is up, the test automatically will move to the next reading passage. If you are ready to proceed to the next passage before the time is up, you can select “Next” and continue to the next passage immediately.
- Once you move to the next passage, you will not have access to the previous item.

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 and you will see a confirmation screen.



## Rating the ACTFL L&R CAT

The ACTFL L&R CAT 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 2024* – 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 [here](#). The site includes samples at each major level.



# 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 – 2024*:

## NOVICE

Listening	Reading
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

## INTERMEDIATE

Listening	Reading
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

## ADVANCED

<b>Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

## SUPERIOR

<b>Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>



# 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 to 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

Listeners and readers at the Mid sublevel 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, a listener or reader at the *Intermediate Mid* 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) but the listener or reader may need to make an effort to understand the intent of the message. Additionally, at the Advanced Low level, listeners and readers will struggle to understand Superior level passages.



# Tips for Optimal Performance on the ACTFL L&R CAT

## Logistics

- Scheduling the ACTFL L&R CAT 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&R CAT 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&R CAT, 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&R CAT. Listen and read with the purpose of understanding the meaning of passages. Consider: What message is the author trying to convey?

The ACTFL L&R CAT 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&R CAT, 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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