

The ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat

What is the ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat?

The ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat is the iBT CAT version of the ACTFL English Reading and Listening Proficiency Tests (RPT and LPT).

CAT stands for “computerized adaptive testing,” and means that this is a dynamic test that selects test items based on what it learns about the candidate’s proficiency from the candidate’s answers to previous test questions. To the candidate, the ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat seems to tailor the texts and passages presented to the candidate’s own reading and/or listening ability.

Compared to static multiple choice tests that are traditionally used for Reading and Listening Tests, the ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat requires fewer test items to determine the candidate’s ability level, making it efficient in terms of both time and effort.

What does the test assess?

The test assesses reading and listening ability from A1-C2 on the CEFR scale.

What does the test contain?

The test contains two assessments – one for listening and one for reading. Both measure language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It is an Internet-based test (iBT) taken on a computer with headphones in a proctored environment.

How is the test structured?

Each full test may contain up to 20 (twenty) passages, with a maximum of 10 (ten) passages for the candidate to listen to or read, respectively. Each reading or listening passage has three questions with multiple-choice answers about the text.

Candidates may move forward in the test by clicking on “Continue” buttons. There is a maximum amount of time allotted to answer the questions associated with a passage. The time depends on the difficulty/length of the passage. A count-down clock on the page tells the candidate how much time remains before the program automatically advances to the next task.

How long is each portion?

Each portion of the test has a maximum length of 45 minutes for the listening component and a maximum length of 50 minutes for the reading component; however, sections may end earlier if the candidate has answered enough questions for the program to determine a final rating. The entire test has a maximum length of an hour and 35 minutes (95 minutes).

What is contained in each test task?

Each test task contains a text to read, or a listening passage, with three questions with multiple-choice answers about the text. All passages, multiple-choice questions, and answers are in English.

The task presentation for the Listening portion of the test has four phases. In the first phase, the title of the passages and questions appear, so the candidate has time to become familiar with the topic and questions before he or she hears the passage. Then the passage is played, and, while it is played, the candidate can take notes on a notepad. When the passage ends, there are a few seconds to review notes before the multiple-choice answers to the questions appear.

What kinds of passages are in the test?

In the Reading portion, a variety of texts are presented in the target language. They vary in genre, content, length and complexity depending on the proficiency level targeted. They are real-world types of texts ranging from informal notes, emails, letters and announcements to short reports, articles, and commentaries. They cover social, academic and professional topics.

In the Listening portion, there is a range of informal and formal speech on general, social, and academic topics and text types, such as daily interactions, reports, discussions and broadcasts.

What kinds of questions are asked about the texts?

Reading and Listening are interpretive skills. Questions on Reading texts will be asked regarding the main ideas, supporting details, and the inferences and connections the candidate can make from the content and organization of the text read or the passage the candidate hears.

Questions on the Listening passages will be asked regarding main ideas, supporting details, inferences and connections the candidate makes from the content, tone, pace, and organization of the discourse the candidate hears.

The ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat is a proficiency test; there are no discrete grammar or vocabulary questions in the test.

What are the best strategies for success on the ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat?

- Candidates should read carefully. Candidates should read the questions they will need to answer before they read the text to help them read the text with specific goals.
- Candidates should use their time wisely and not spend too much time on any one text and set of questions. The test provides a candidate with enough time to read texts and answer questions.
- Candidates should do their best to choose an answer to every question. There is only one correct answer for each question. Any unanswered question will count as an “incorrect” answer.

How can candidates best prepare to take the ACTFL CEFR L&Rcat?

It is helpful to select a range of material to read and listen to on a wide range of topics, newspapers, magazines, and journals delivered in any medium (hard-copy or electronic) in English. Test candidates should read different types of texts, such as English informal notes, emails, letters and announcements to short reports, articles and commentaries, and listen to a variety of spoken English discourse such as daily interactions and dialogues, reports, presentations, discussions and broadcasts.

As stated earlier, reading and listening are interpretive skills, so one needs to spend time and practice reading and listening for greater comprehension of texts, to understand all the facts, to interpret the connections between different parts of the texts and to make inferences based on the information, organization, style, and other rhetorical devices.