



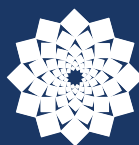
ACTFL Assessments

Also includes:

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012

ACTFL Rating Scale

LTI Language
Testing
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ACTFL
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



ACTFL Assessments: Table of Contents

Introduction:

Language Proficiency Assessments for the Global Market.....2

Proficiency Assessments:

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)3

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer (OPIC)4

 – Remote Proctoring

ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)5

ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test (RPT)6

ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT)7

ACTFL English Listening & Reading Computer Adaptive Test (L&Rcat)8

ACTFL Testers & Raters Information9

Oral Proficiency In The Workplace.....10

Determining Workplace Proficiency.....11-12

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines:

Speaking13-17

Writing18-22

Reading23-27

Listening28-32

ACTFL Proficiency Levels Pyramid Chart.....33



Language Proficiency Assessments for the Global Market

Only Language Testing International offers ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) language proficiency assessments. The current ACTFL assessments and rating guidelines represent more than fifty years of research, development and application within the U.S. government and academia. The validity and reliability of ACTFL assessments and the ACTFL rating scales 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 recommended for credit by the American Council on Education (ACE). Due to ACTFL's strict adherence to test development guidelines, research and testing best practices, ACTFL ratings have emerged as a standard measure of language proficiency in the U.S.

LTI is committed to offering language assessments that are supported by the highest level of client service. LTI facilitates testing quickly and cost effectively utilizing the latest technologies to expedite test scheduling and result reporting over secure, customized client sites. LTI is able to offer on-demand testing with results reported within 24 hours.

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*.

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 100+ 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 a live conversation, 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*.

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

Remote Proctoring

LTI now offers a remote proctoring service through a testing platform that delivers the ACTFL OPIC in a remote proctored environment. This is a first of its kind testing platform that enables candidates to obtain the world renowned ACTFL language credential independently, and gives organizations that ability to seek and hire candidates with qualified language skills. This test can be ordered by companies, and delivered to candidates through a secure and defensible process, without the candidate ever having to come into the office.

Next time you’re looking to hire bilingual candidates make sure you put “Remote proctoring certifications preferred” into the job posting and take the guesswork out of your next hire!

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 business 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*.

The ACTFL WPT consists of 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*.

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

Test Length:

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

Test Format:

The candidate is presented with 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 over 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



ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test (RPT)

The ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test (RPT) is an online assessment of reading ability. An RPT measures 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 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								
Advanced Mid								
Advanced Low								
Intermediate High								
Intermediate Mid								
Intermediate Low								
Novice High								
Novice Mid								
Novice Low								

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 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:

There is a range of informal/formal texts on general, social, academic and professional topics, such as correspondence, product descriptions, 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 proficiency level of the test taker is unknown and/or if an organization (company, institution, etc.) wants to give multiple people the same test and not select ranges individually.

** This is the full-range test.



ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT)

The ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) is an online assessment of listening ability. An LPT measures how well a person understands spoken discourse as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*.

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 that each test targets a candidates listening ability in the shortest amount of time possible.

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

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 four-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:

There is a 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. 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 proficiency level of the test taker is unknown and/or if an organization (company, institution, etc.) wants to give multiple people the same test and not select ranges individually.

** This is the full-range test.



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.

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 passage (listening) and written texts (reading) at specific levels of proficiency. Each passage or text has three questions with four multiple-choice answers.

Test Content:

The L&Rcat presents a range of informal and formal material on general, social, professional, and academic topics appropriate to the level of the text or passage. These are real-world examples of spoken and written language.

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. It 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 re-certify every four years.

The ongoing performance of ACTFL certified testers and raters is monitored by the ACTFL Quality Assurance Division, delivering industry leading inter-rater reliability statistics. 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 globally recognized professional credential.



ACTFL: Oral Proficiency Levels in the Workplace

Q: How proficient does one need to be for success in the workplace in a language-related position?

A: That depends upon the language-specific tasks that are required for the position.

The chart below, describes tasks associated with the major levels of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and relates these tasks and levels to specific workplace positions. The levels of proficiency associated with each of the positions are based on the results of task analyses and determined by subject matter experts from companies and agencies who use ACTFL proficiency tests to document oral proficiency for purposes such as employment and certification. The chart also includes information about the profile of individuals who are likely to reach the designated levels of oral proficiency.

To download a digital copy of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, please go to www.languagetesting.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ACTFL-Proficiency-Guidelines-2012.pdf

ACTFL Level	ILR	Language Functions	Corresponding Professions/Positions*	Examples of Who Is Likely to Function at This Level
Superior	3	<i>Discuss topics extensively, support opinions, hypothesize. Deal with linguistically unfamiliar situations.</i>	University Language Professor, Financial Services Marketing Consultant, Foreign Area Officer, Lawyer, Judge, Court Interpreter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-educated native speakers Educated language learners with extended professional and/or educational experience in the target language environment
Advanced High	2+	<i>Narrate and describe in past, present, and future. Deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.</i>	Physician, Human Resources Communications Consultant, Financial Services Senior Consultant, Quality Assurance Specialist, Marketing Manager, Financial Advisor, Broker, Military Linguist, Translation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language learners with graduate degrees in language or a related area and extended educational experience in target environment
Advanced Mid			Banking and Investment Services Customer Service Representative, Fraud Specialist, Account Executive, Medical Interpreter, Patient Advocate, Court Stenographer, Court Interpreter, Human Resources Benefits Specialist, Technical Service Agent, Collections Representative, Estimating Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage speakers, informal learners, non-academic learners who have significant contact with language Undergraduate majors with year-long study in the target language culture
Advanced Low			K-12 Language Teacher, Nurse, Social Worker, Claims Processor, Police Officer, Maintenance Administrator, Billing Clerk, Legal Secretary, Legal Receptionist, 911 Dispatcher, Consumer Products Customer Services Representative, Retail Services Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate language majors
Intermediate High	1+	<i>Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.</i>	Fire Fighter, Utilities Installer, Auto Inspector, Aviation Personnel, Missionary, Tour Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language learners following 6-8 year sequences of study (e.g., AP) or 4-6 semester college sequences
Intermediate Mid			Cashier, Sales Clerk (highly predictable contexts), Receptionist	
Intermediate Low				
Novice High	0+	<i>Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language learners following content-based language program in Grades K-6
Novice Mid				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language learners following 2 years of high school language study
Novice Low				

*The levels of proficiency associated with each of the positions above are minimal levels of oral proficiency based on task analyses. The minimal levels were determined by subject matter experts from companies and agencies who use ACTFL proficiency tests.



Determining Workplace Proficiency

This is a general guide to show you where a candidate's language skills would be useful within the workplace. Keep in mind, this is a general outline, but can help you determine which level a candidate should have in order to be successful in a number of different roles within your organization.

Novice

- Novice Low (Minimal Word Level Proficiency)
- Novice Mid (Word and Phrase Level Proficiency)
- Novice High (Simple Survival Proficiency)

If your language is consistent with any of these levels, you cannot truly have a meaningful conversation in the language. For this reason, your language skills are not likely to be helpful in advancing your career.

Intermediate

- Intermediate Low (Survival Proficiency)
- Intermediate Mid (Conversational Proficiency)

If your language is consistent with any of these levels, you're just doing the very basics in the language; in other words, you're surviving. Because most jobs you're looking for will probably want more than just survival skills in the language, these scores are not likely to help you very much.

- Intermediate High (Limited Work Proficiency)

At this level, you're just starting to be able to have meaningful conversations in the language, even if they're just on topics you are used to talking about. For example, if you're a cashier, you'll be able to ask and answer questions and process a simple transaction. This skill level will be useful if you're looking for a job that requires basic language skills in routine situations.

Examples: Receptionist, Cashier, Sales Clerk

Advanced

- Advanced Low (Routine Work Proficiency)
- Advanced Mid (General Work Proficiency)

If your language is consistent with any of these levels, you're able to talk about many different topics related to your daily life, including work. A rating at one of these levels will help you get a job that requires you to speak in a variety of work situations, including situations with a complication or a problem. At these levels, you are understood without difficulty, but you still make some mistakes.

Examples: Customer Service Representative, Social Worker, Claims Processor, Credit Representative, Human Resources Assistant.



Determining Workplace Proficiency – (cont'd)

Advanced (cont'd)

- Advanced High (Professional Proficiency)

At this level, you're very flexible and confident in your use of the language. You can speak at length with precise vocabulary. You can handle a wide range of professional situations and you have a lot of cultural understanding. This combination allows you to work in the types of professions that need someone to interact with clients in more complex situations, giving clear and fully communicated advice and recommendations.

Examples: Account Executive, Team-Lead, Company Spokesman, Brand Manager

Superior

- Superior (Extensive Professional Proficiency)

When you certify as a Superior speaker, you are essentially as good as a native speaker who has been educated in the language. You can speak at great length about issues ranging from everyday life to more complex current events. You have a broad vocabulary and excellent grammar, and you can function well in just about any professional setting that requires your knowledge of the language.

Examples: Trainer, Business, Legal Interpreter, Translator, Intelligence Specialist, Marketing Specialist, Public Relations Specialist, Lobbyist.



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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading

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.

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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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening

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.

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ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening

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.



ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening

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

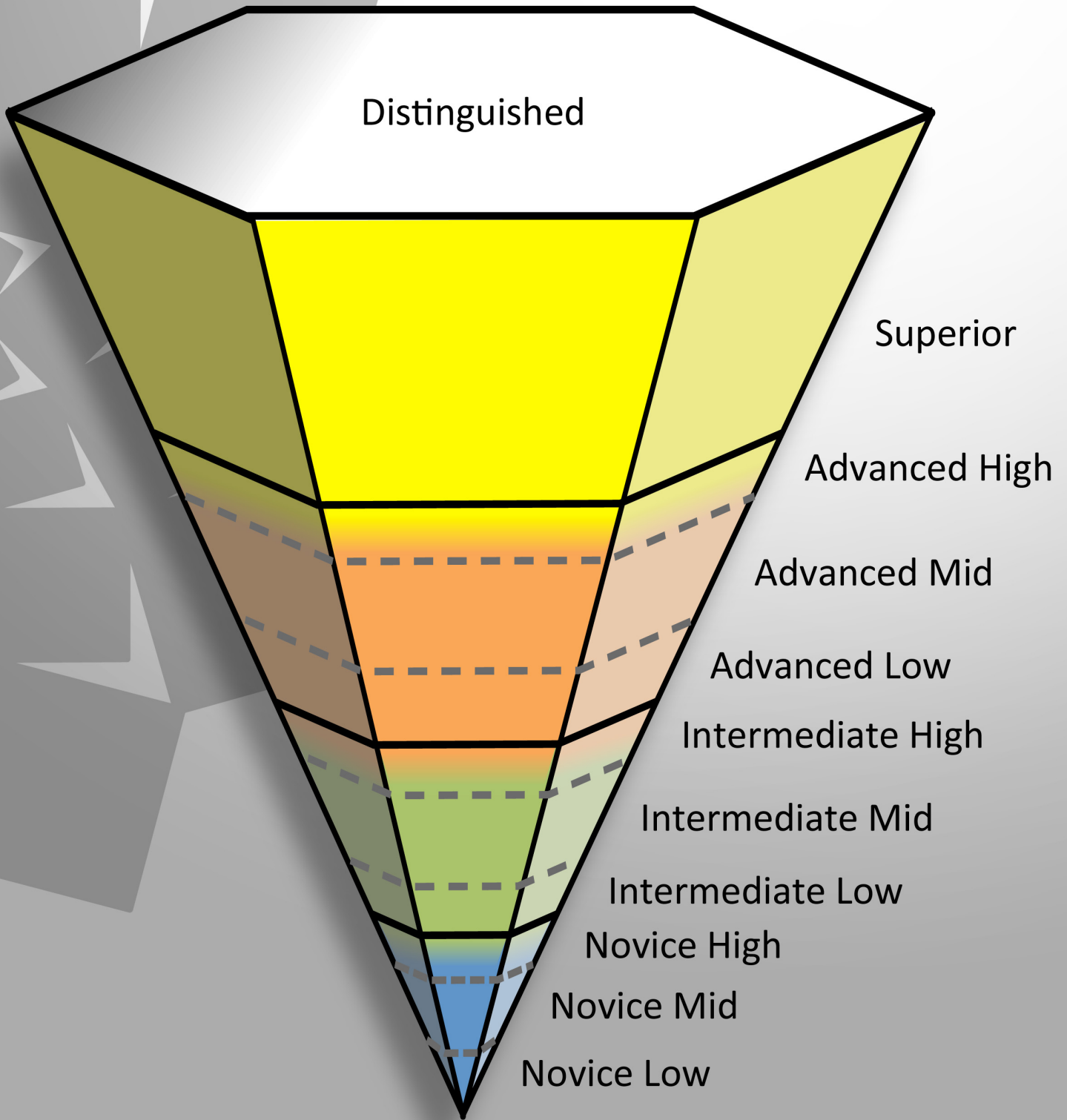
At the Novice High sub-level, listeners are often but not always able to understand information from sentence length speech, one utterance at a time, in basic personal and social contexts where there is contextual or extra linguistic support, though comprehension may often be very uneven. They are able 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.





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