



APPT

ACTFL PROFICIENCY PLACEMENT TEST

Familiarization Guide

ACTFL | CENTER FOR ASSESSMENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (CARD)

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ACTFL LISTENING PROFICIENCY TEST

FAMILIARIZATION GUIDE

What is ACTFL?

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction. ACTFL is an individual membership organization of more than 12,500 language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education, as well as government and industry.

Since its founding (in 1967), ACTFL has become synonymous with innovation, quality, and reliability in meeting the changing needs of language educators and their students. From the development of Proficiency Guidelines, to its leadership role in the creation of national standards, ACTFL focuses on issues that are critical to the growth of both the profession and the individual teacher.

What is CARD?

The ACTFL Center for Assessment Research and Development (CARD) supports PK-12 schools and institutions of higher education in areas of assessment, articulation, and research. To that end, CARD develops and maintains high-quality language proficiency assessments, and certifies, norms, and maintains highly reliable testers and raters of the assessments. Research focuses on proficiency and performance standards and outcomes that inform language teaching and learning. CARD collaborates with state and national language organizations and government agencies to support research in quality language teaching and learning, including examination of the implications for teacher education. CARD aims to help bridge the divide between language research and classroom practice.

What are the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines?

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012*¹ are descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels.

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

Listening is an interpretive skill. Listening comprehension is largely based 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 *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* describe how listeners understand oral discourse. These Guidelines do not describe how listening skills develop, how one learns to listen, nor the actual cognitive processes involved in the activity of listening. Rather, they are intended to describe what listeners understand from what they hear. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* can be found in the appendix of this document. They can also be found online, <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>, with authentic speech samples and the functional listening tasks associated with each major level.

Reading is an interpretive skill. Reading comprehension is largely based 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 *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading* describe how readers read texts and retrieve information. 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 read. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading* can be found in the appendix

¹ The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* 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.

of this document. They can also be found online, <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>, with authentic text samples and the functional reading tasks associated with each major level.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* can also be found on the ACTFL website along with authentic text samples associated with each major level.

To access this website, go to <http://www.actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/listening>.

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test (APPT).

What is the ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test (APPT)?

For institutions of higher education in need of a placement assessment, the ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test (APPT) is a computer adaptive, criterion-referenced test of reading and listening proficiency. The APPT takes a total of 60 minutes or less to administer both reading and listening sections. Results are aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced language abilities for reading and listening, and is currently available in French and Spanish.

What is the ACTFL Rating Scale?

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 describe five major levels of language ability across varying levels of proficiency. These guidelines are not specific to a certain curriculum, method of instruction, or set of standards, but rather describe language proficiency regardless of how learning occurred. The hierarchy of proficiency levels ranges from lowest functional ability to highest, as follows: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. Each level or function is defined by accuracy, content/context, and text type. Each level of the hierarchy subsumes all lower levels.

The ACTFL Rating Scale (derived from the Guidelines) encompasses four major levels: Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. Each level represents a different profile of functional language ability.

Three of the major levels, Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced, are divided into sublevels (Low, Mid, and High) based on a test taker's demonstrated ability to sustain performance on tasks at a given level. (See Figure 1.) These sublevels differ from each other in terms of the quantity as well as the inferences and connections listeners or readers can make within and across passages.

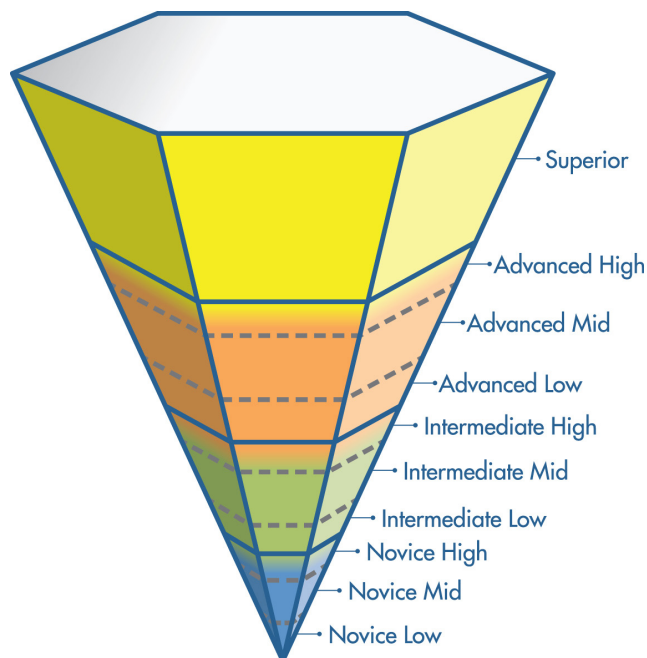


Figure 1. Inverted Pyramid Representing ACTFL rating Scale with Major Levels and Sublevels

The “High” sublevel

Listeners or readers at the “High” sublevel comprehend fully with ease spoken language or written texts of their respective level. They are capable of understanding oral passages or written texts at the next higher level most of the time, but they are unable to sustain functional ability at the next higher level without intermittent lapses, misunderstandings, or evidence of difficulty.

The “Mid” sublevel

Listeners or readers at the “Mid” sublevel represent different profiles, based on their particular mix of the quantity of language understood and/or the degree to which they make inferences and connections within and across oral passages or written texts from the next higher major level. They may demonstrate some understanding of the passages or texts at the next higher major level, but they are unable to sustain functional ability at that level most of the time.

The “Low” sublevel

Listeners or readers at the “Low” sublevel use all their linguistic knowledge to sustain the requirements of the level. They comprehend spoken or written language primarily within the level with minimal inferences and connections and little or no demonstrated ability to comprehend spoken or written language of the next higher level.

What is being evaluated in the ACTFL APPT?

The APPT measures reading and listening proficiency from Novice Low through Advanced Low on the ACTFL Rating Scale. Reading and listening tasks are interpretive skills, as described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. APPT results for reading and listening skills are used as indicators of general proficiency for placement. The following chart displays the descriptors from the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for reading and listening proficiency at each major level.

Major Level	Reading	Listening
Advanced	Readers can understand the main idea and supporting details of authentic, paragraph-length narrative and descriptive texts. They can compensate for limitations in their lexical and structural knowledge by using contextual clues.	Listeners can understand the main ideas and most supporting details in connected, paragraph-length discourse on a variety of general interest topics. They can compensate for limitations in their lexical and structural control of the language by using real-world knowledge and contextual clues.
Intermediate	Readers can understand information conveyed in simple, sentence-length, predictable, loosely connected texts. Readers rely heavily on contextual clues. They can most easily understand information if the format of the text is familiar.	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.
Novice	Readers can understand key words, cognates, and formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized.	Listeners can understand key words, true aural cognates, and formulaic expressions that are highly contextualized and highly predictable.

What is the format of the ACTFL APPT?

The test consists of two sections, reading and listening, which assess the interpretive mode of communication. Each section consists of test items across a range of proficiency levels to assess language proficiency between Novice Low and Advanced Low. Each item consists of either a genuine reading text or audio passage and one multiple-choice question with one correct answer associated with the text or passage.

The APPT can last up to 60 minutes. The test is timed, but instead of a time limit for the entire test, there is a time limit for each test question (test item). Test items targeted at the Intermediate and Advanced levels have a time limit of 75 and 120 seconds, respectively. The test is computer-adaptive, and each component skill of reading and listening presents between 10-25 items depending on the ability of the test taker.

What should test takers be able to do in order to demonstrate proficiency?

As a result of its proficiency-based framework, the APPT does not focus on any curriculum or language program. The APPT assesses a broad range of topics appropriate for adults. Genuine texts and passages are presented from any source including business and economics, politics and current events, education, science and technology, and arts and entertainment, etc. The following texts and passages exemplify the descriptions listed in previous sections. They indicate what a test taker should be able to do in order to demonstrate their proficiency on the APPT.

Novice Examples

Novice texts and passages relate to situations requiring highly familiar or predictable situations. These items may include key words and cognates, as well as formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized.

Reading text

HUGE Year End Sale!
30% off all:

- *tops*
- *skirts*
- *shorts*
- *accessories*
- *shoes*
- *and MORE!*

Rationale

This text meets the requirements for the Novice level. Readers must be able to process a highly predictable, loosely organized text with limited cohesion.

Listening Transcript

At the store, can you please get some milk, eggs, bread, cheese, and apples?

Rationale

This passage meets the requirements for the Novice level. It is a simple shopping list that requires the test taker to pick out key words from the passage from a highly predictable situation.

Intermediate Examples

Intermediate texts and passages relate to common, everyday situations requiring survival reading or listening skills to understand very basic information. These items may include simple descriptions and narratives in loosely connected texts or passages.

Reading Text

November 25

The 50th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Noon—3:00 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 25, in the Cypress Room at the Westcott Fairgrounds, 1400 Fairground Road.

Free. To donate turkeys, pies, hams, cakes, or clothing, call James at 506-8329.

Rationale

This text meets the content requirements for the Intermediate level. It is an announcement from a newspaper that was selected with low accuracy expectations. The test taker will be asked to pick out some of the main idea in the text. Test takers with abilities below the targeted level may locate key words but misapply them and select an incorrect option.

Listening Passage

Transcript

You have reached the State College switchboard. The office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you wish to leave a message, please wait for the tone and then give your name and telephone number. Thank you.

Rationale

This passage meets the content requirements for the Intermediate level. The passage is a brief spoken message on an everyday topic and includes simple instructions. The item was constructed with low accuracy expectations. Test takers with abilities below the targeted level may understand key words but misapply them and select an incorrect option.

Advanced Examples

Advanced texts and passages relate to concrete, factual situations requiring reading skills to understand detailed instructions, descriptions, and narratives. The content is presented in paragraph-length discourse on current and general interest topics.

Reading text

The state transportation department announced today that construction will begin Monday on the Fredericksburg interchange with Highway 89. The \$91 million project will remove three major intersections—at Fredericksburg, Stratton, and Lindstrom Roads—and replace them with a single interchange near the Grenville Mall. This area is seriously congested. More than 63,000 vehicles travel through the area every day, according to the transportation authority.

The work will be completed by Meadows Construction, of Hudson City, and Bridgeway Construction, of East Highlands. All construction is expected to be completed within 18 months.

Rationale

This text meets the content requirements for the Advanced level. It is a news item reporting concrete facts about a construction project that was selected with the expectation that both Intermediate and Advanced-level readers would understand the main idea, but those below the Advanced level would be uncertain about the details.

Listening passage

Transcript

1st speaker: I've seen spiderwebs strung high in the branches between two trees. How is the spider able to do this—to reach a distance that's often several feet away?

2nd speaker: Well, the answer begins with the spider's ability to turn the liquid silk inside its glands into solid threads. The spider physically pulls the silk through its spinnerets. Do you know about spinnerets?

1st speaker: No.

2nd speaker: Spinnerets are the spider's silk-secreting organs. Once the thread is started, the spider lifts its spinnerets into the breeze. It's the breeze that allows the spider to spin a web from one tree to another.

1st speaker: What if there is no wind?

2nd speaker: Spider silk is very lightweight. Any slight breeze—even motions resulting from a patch of ground warming in the sun—can carry the thread from tree to tree. Although the thread isn't sticky or gluey, it can still stick to a tree. Most likely, it just gets tangled on small bumps or knots on the tree. Or it sticks because of static electricity.

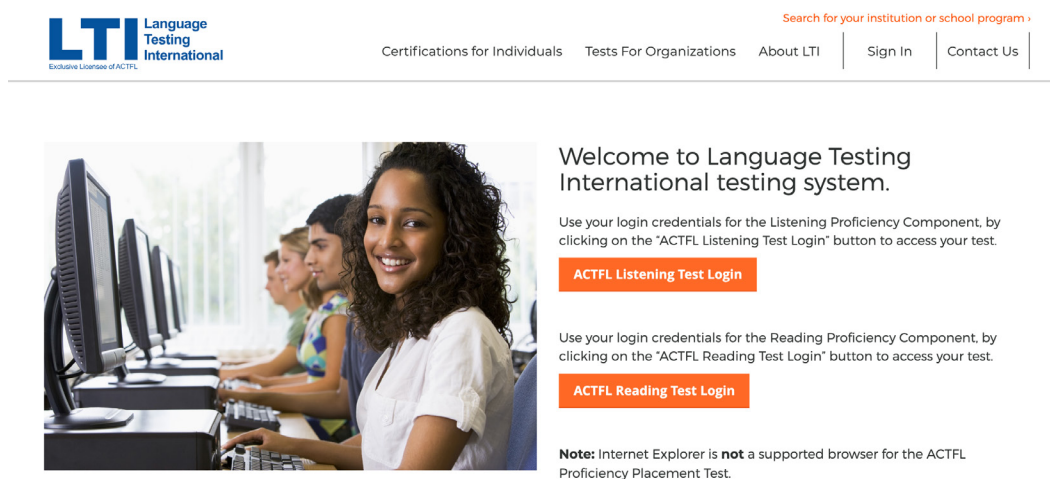
Rationale

This text is an authentic conversation in which a speaker provides factual information to a person who has a question. The topic is of general interest. The discourse is concrete and instructional.

How do I take the ACTFL APPT?

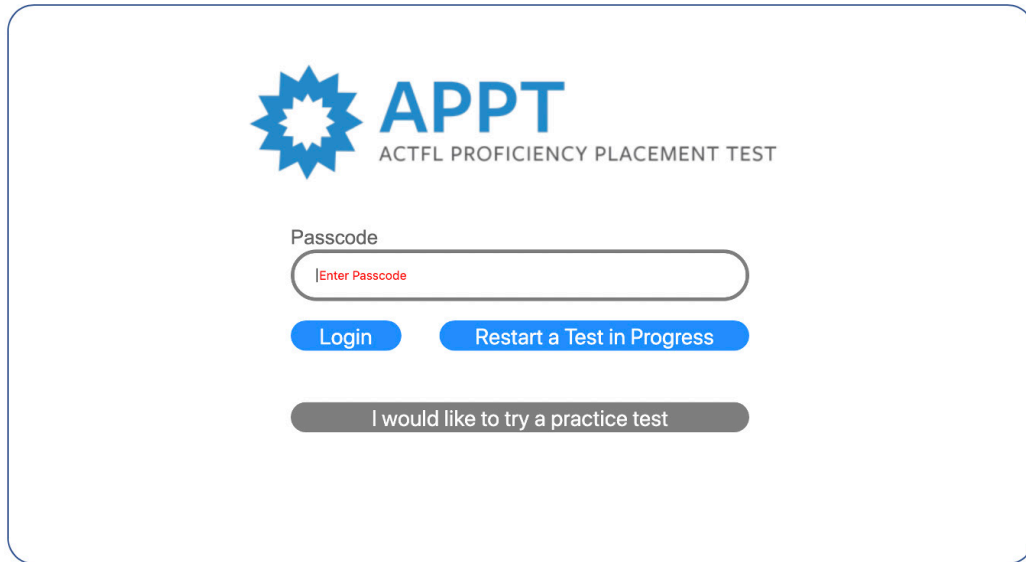
The APPT is available to take over the internet. The following section contains visuals and descriptions of the APPT.

APPT Landing Page



The screenshot shows the ACTFL APPT landing page. At the top left is the LTI Language Testing International logo. To the right is a search bar with the text "Search for your institution or school program". Below the search bar are navigation links: "Certifications for Individuals", "Tests For Organizations", "About LTI", "Sign In", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a photograph of students in a computer lab. To the right of the photo is the heading "Welcome to Language Testing International testing system." followed by instructions for logging in to the Listening and Reading Proficiency Components. Two orange buttons are provided: "ACTFL Listening Test Login" and "ACTFL Reading Test Login". A note at the bottom states: "Note: Internet Explorer is not a supported browser for the ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test."

Test takers will receive a unique passcode, one for the reading component and another for the listening component, which directs them to the appropriate test.



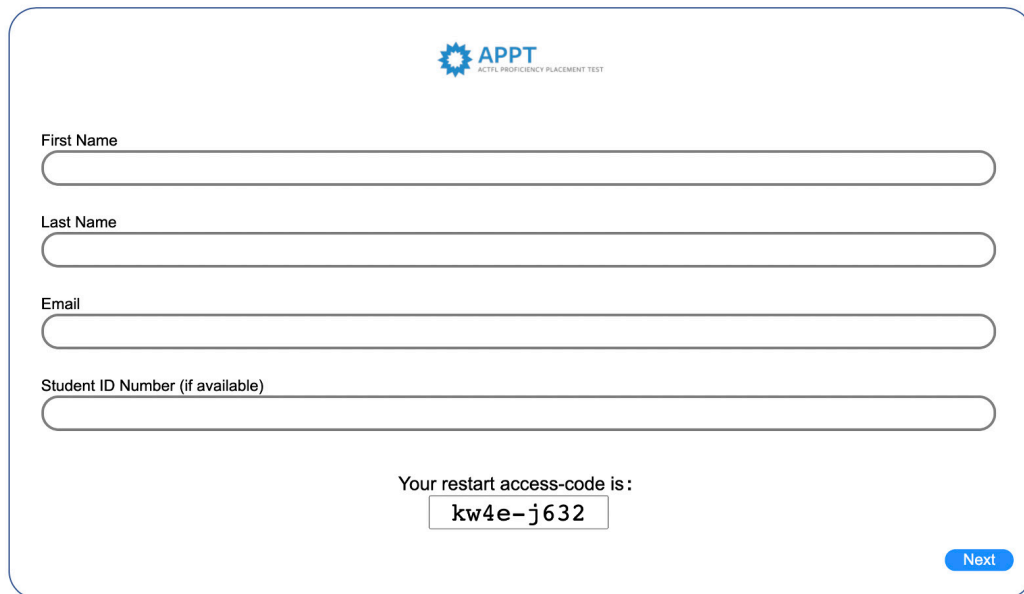
The image shows the APPT login interface. At the top left is the APPT logo, a blue starburst, followed by the text "APPT" in large blue letters and "ACTFL PROFICIENCY PLACEMENT TEST" in smaller blue letters below it. Below the logo is a "Passcode" label and a text input field containing the placeholder text "Enter Passcode" in red. Underneath the input field are two blue buttons: "Login" and "Restart a Test in Progress". At the bottom of the form is a grey button with the text "I would like to try a practice test".

Student Information Page

Test takers then enter their identifying information such as: first and last name, email, and student ID (entering student ID is recommended but not required).

Restart access code

In case of loss of power, break in internet connection, etc., test takers can enter the restart access code to continue the test where they left off. However, tests must be restarted within 2 hours from the original start time.



The image shows the student information and restart access code form. At the top center is the APPT logo. Below it are four text input fields labeled "First Name", "Last Name", "Email", and "Student ID Number (if available)". Below these fields is the text "Your restart access-code is:" followed by a text box containing the code "kw4e-j632". At the bottom right of the form is a blue button labeled "Next".

Example Items

Items for reading and listening are displayed in a similar format, with slight modifications for each of the two modalities. Test content, including the instructions, questions, and answers, appear in English, while reading texts and audio passages are delivered in the target language.

Listening Item Example

The screenshot shows a listening item interface. At the top, the APPT logo and 'ACTFL PROFICIENCY PLACEMENT TEST' are displayed, along with a timer showing '20'. The orientation is 'Public Service Announcement'. The question is 'What class is being offered?'. Below the question is a headphone icon and a progress bar labeled 'Plays available: 99'. The response options are 'Community', 'English', 'Babysitting', 'Swimming', and 'I don't know.'. At the bottom, there is an 'Audio Play Button' labeled 'Play' and a 'Next' button.

Orientation → **Public Service Announcement**

Headphone Icon →

Audio Controls →

Timer → 20

Question → What class is being offered?

Response Options → Community, English, Babysitting, Swimming, I don't know.

Audio Play Button → Play

Next Button → Next

Reading Item Example

The screenshot shows a reading item interface. At the top, the APPT logo and 'ACTFL PROFICIENCY PLACEMENT TEST' are displayed, along with a timer showing '20'. The orientation is 'Public Service Announcement'. The reading text is 'English Classes 7:00 PM every Tuesday at the Community Center next to the pool. Child care provided.'. The question is 'What class is being offered?'. The response options are 'Community', 'Swimming', 'English', 'Babysitting', and 'I don't know.'. At the bottom, there is a 'Next' button.

Orientation → **Public Service Announcement**

Reading Text → English Classes
7:00 PM every Tuesday at the Community Center next to the pool.
Child care provided.

Timer → 20

Question → What class is being offered?

Response Options → Community, Swimming, English, Babysitting, I don't know.

Next Button → Next

Orientation

The orientation is found on the top left side of the screen and provides the test taker with enough direction to answer the question by providing a context to where the text or passage might be encountered in the real world.

Reading Text

For the reading component of the APPT, the text is found on the left side of the screen below the orientation.

Listening Passage

For the listening component of the APPT, a *Headphone icon* is displayed below the orientation in the same location where the text would appear for a reading item. This headphone icon indicates that the item is a listening item. Test takers use the audio controls to listen to the passage, as described below.

Audio Controls

For listening questions, the audio controls are located below the Headphone icon of the page and include, volume control, and a number indicating how many times a passage can be played. The *Play* button is located at the bottom of the screen. Test takers should ensure that the volume is high enough when listening to the example item before starting the test.

Time Clock

The time clock is displayed at the top right of the screen and indicates the amount of time that is allowed per item. For each item, when the timer has counted down and reached 20 seconds left on the clock, the numbers will turn red. If the time for an item runs out before the test taker provides a response, the “I don’t know” option is automatically selected, and students must proceed to the next question.

Questions and Answers

The questions and answers are displayed just below the time clock. There is only one question per text or passage and five potential answers for each question. They include one correct response, three incorrect responses, and the fifth option is always “I don’t know.” This fifth option is included, so test takers are not forced to guess if the item is above their ability level.

Navigation

The navigation buttons are displayed on the bottom of the screen on the right. Because this is a computerized, adaptive test, test takers can only move forward through the assessment, not backward.

How are APPT tasks scored?

The APPT is machine scored, with each item assessed as either correct or incorrect. The exam consists of testlets, or a group of five items all at the same level, with each item in a testlet administered one at a time.

Each testlet is constructed so that it has the same difficulty of the other testlets at its level. The testlets function as a mini-test, and test taker performance on each testlet will result in one of three outcomes: 1) the test taker was able to sustain reading or listening performance at the level; 2) the test taker was unable to sustain performance; or 3) more information is needed. Depending on test-taker performance, the test taker will be given another testlet from the same level, or will be given a testlet from the next higher level.

Once enough information has been gathered to assign a floor rating (the level where the test taker has demonstrated sustained performance) and a ceiling rating (the level where patterns of breakdown emerge) the test will end. Test takers receive a separate rating for each of the two component skills of reading and listening.

What is an official APPT rating?

The APPT rating consists of two summative scores, one for reading and one for listening that are aligned with the ACTFL Rating Scale, as described by the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading/Listening*. These ratings are based on the sample of responses from the reading or listening components of the test. Possible scores range from Novice Low through Advanced Low. While test takers are provided proficiency ratings for their reading and listening abilities in the target language, proficiency certificates are not available for this assessment. Results are permanently stored in the official ACTFL Test Management System.

How is an APPT used?

Results from the APPT should be used for placing students into the appropriate world-language class in cases where language programs have specified proficiency range goals for their courses.

Results from the APPT should NOT be used for awarding certificates, or other high-stakes purposes. Further, APPT ratings do not carry the same weight as official reading and listening proficiency scores from the Reading Proficiency Test (RPT) or Listening Proficiency Test (LPT).

How can one best prepare for the APPT?

Because the test design is based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, there is not a single curriculum, resource, or teaching method that will prepare a test taker for the APPT. However, test takers can practice with a wide variety of texts and passages found in the real world. For listening skills, test takers can practice with podcasts, audio books, music, radio programs, movies, and conversations to identify main ideas and supporting details. For reading skills, test takers can practice with newspapers, magazines, literature, and advertisements to identify the main idea(s) and supporting details.

What test taking tips are recommended?

- *Take the demo tests.* These tests are provided in English for both reading and listening. While they are not computer adaptive, taking them will familiarize the test taker with the instructions, format, and types of texts, passages, and questions they will encounter in the APPT.
- *Set the volume level for listening passages during the example item.* The volume for all listening passages has been equalized, so appropriately setting the volume level before the test will help to avoid missing important information during the APPT.
- *Read the question first.* Test takers should read the question they will need to answer before they read the text or listen to the passage.
- *Choose an answer before re-reading the text or re-listening to the passage (when permitted).* Test takers can change this response later, but there is a time-limit for each item. If time runs out and no answer has been chosen, the “I don’t know option” is automatically chosen, and test takers must move to the next question.

Interested in Scheduling an ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test (APPT)?

To schedule individuals or groups for the APPT, contact:

Language Testing International (LTI)
Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL
www.languagetesting.com
testing@languagetesting.com
Tel: (914) 963 7110
800-486-8444

ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES 2012

LISTENING

Preface

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* describe five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and 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 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 largely based 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 processes 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 or overheard) or Interpersonal (par-dissipative).

The written descriptions of listening proficiency are accompanied online by authentic speech samples and the functional listening tasks associated with each major level. The guidelines can be found here: <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

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

INTERMEDIATE

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

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

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

Intermediate High

At the Intermediate High sublevel, 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 sublevel, 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 sublevel, 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 sublevel, listeners show little or no comprehension of oral texts typically understood by Advanced-level listeners.

NOVICE

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

Novice-level listeners understand words and phrases from simple questions, statements, and high-frequency commands. They typically require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension. They rely heavily on extralinguistic 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 sublevel, 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 extralinguistic 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 sublevel, 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 sublevel, listeners are able occasionally to recognize isolated words or very high-frequency phrases when those are strongly supported by context. These listeners show virtually no comprehension of any kind of spoken message, not even within the most basic personal and social contexts.

ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES 2012

READING

Preface

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading* describe five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished,

Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and 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 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 read.

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

The written descriptions of reading proficiency are accompanied online by authentic text samples and the functional reading tasks associated with each major level. The guidelines can be found here: <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

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

Advanced Low

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

NOVICE

At the Novice level, readers can understand key words and cognates, as well as formulaic phrases that are highly contextualized.

Novice-level readers are able to get a limited amount of information from highly predictable texts in which the topic or context is very familiar, such as a hotel bill, a credit card receipt, or a weather map. Readers at the Novice level may rely heavily on their own background knowledge and extralinguistic 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 extralinguistic support.

Novice Mid

At the Novice Mid sublevel, 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.

Interested in scheduling an APPT?

To schedule an APPT, contact: Language Testing International (LTI) 580 White Plains Road, Suite 660 Tarrytown, NY 10591
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testing@languagetesting.com www.languagetesting.com

For more information on ACTFL assessments, please visit <https://www.actfl.org/assessments> or contact: assessments@actfl.org.

For more information on ACTFL Workshops please contact:

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