

Glossary of Terms:

ACTFL (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages):

An American organization that 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. (www.actfl.org)

ACTFL Proficiency Scale:

The ACTFL proficiency scale was developed from the Federal Government's ILR scale by ACTFL and divides levels of proficiency into Novice (Low, Mid, High), Intermediate (Low, Mid, High), Advanced (Low, Mid, High) and Superior.

<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages):

Developed by the Council of Europe, the CEFR proficiency scale is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language.

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>

“Can Do” Statements:

These statements are a result of collaboration between the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and ACTFL. Can-Do Statements are self-assessments for learners to see their progress and the skills they *can do* in the target language at different levels of proficiency in various modes of communication – Interpretive, Interpersonal and Presentational.

<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>

[Click here](#) to learn more on **Understanding Proficiency** from Language Testing International.

Remember that true fluency and cultural understanding can take years to master. These standards are to be used as overarching guides for expectations along the way. Motivation and self-study play a large role in the rate of one's progression and mastery of a language.

Novice Low (<A1) (approximately 20-30 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines ([source: ACTFL](#))

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel 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.

Writing:

Writers at the Novice Low sublevel 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 very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** identify memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** identify memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in fictional texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** understand memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in conversations. [Interpretive]
- **I can** provide information by answering a few simple questions on very familiar topics, using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express some basic needs, using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express basic preferences or feelings, using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express my likes and dislikes using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Presentational]
- **I can** introduce myself using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Presentational]
- **I can** name very familiar people, places, and objects using practiced or memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals. [Presentational]

Novice Mid (A1) (approximately 60-90 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines (source: ACTFL)

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

Speakers at the Novice Mid sublevel 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.

Writing:

Writers at the Novice Mid sublevel 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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in fictional texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in conversations. [Interpretive]
- **I can** request and provide information by asking and answering a few simple questions on very familiar and everyday topics, using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express basic needs related to familiar and everyday activities, using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases, and questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express my own preferences or feelings and react to those of others, using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases, and questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** present information about myself, my interests and my activities using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases and simple sentences. [Presentational]
- **I can** express my likes and dislikes on very familiar and everyday topics of interest, using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases and simple sentences. [Presentational]
- **I can** present on very familiar and everyday topics using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases and simple sentences. [Presentational]

Novice High (A2) (approximately 120-180 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines (source: ACTFL)

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

Speakers at the Novice High sublevel 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 recombinations 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. On the other hand, 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 used to nonnatives. 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.

Writing:

Writers at the Novice High sublevel 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.

Information was gathered from: www.actfl.org.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** identify the topic and some isolated facts from simple sentences in informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** identify the topic and some isolated elements from simple sentences in short fictional texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** understand familiar questions and statements from simple sentences in conversations. [Interpretive]

- **I can** request and provide information by asking and answering practiced and some original questions on familiar and everyday topics, using simple sentences most of the time. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** interact with others to meet my basic needs related to routine everyday activities, using simple sentences and questions most of the time. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express, ask about, and react to preferences, feelings, or opinions on familiar topics, using simple sentences most of the time and asking questions to keep the conversation on topic. [Interpersonal]

- **I can** present personal information about my life and activities, using simple sentences most of the time. [Presentational]



- **I can** express my preferences on familiar and everyday topics of interest, using simple sentences most of the time. [Presentational]
- **I can** present on familiar and everyday topics, using simple sentences most of the time. [Presentational]

Intermediate Low-Mid (B1) (approximately 240 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines ([source: ACTFL](#))

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

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.

Writing:

Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are recombinations 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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

Intermediate Low:

- **I can** identify the topic and related information from simple sentences in short informational texts. [Interpretative]
- **I can** identify the topic and related information from simple sentences in short fictional texts. [Interpretative]
- **I can** identify the main idea in short conversations. [Interpretative]
- **I can** request and provide information in conversations on familiar topics by creating simple sentences and asking appropriate follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** interact with others to meet my basic needs in familiar situations by creating simple sentences and asking appropriate follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** express, ask about, and react with some details to preferences, feelings, or opinions on familiar topics, by creating simple sentences and asking appropriate follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** present personal information about my life, activities and events, using simple sentences. [Presentational]

- **I can** express my preferences on familiar and everyday topics of interest and explain why I feel that way, using simple sentences. [Presentational]
- **I can** present on familiar and everyday topics, using simple sentences. [Presentational]

Intermediate Mid:

Speaking:

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.

Writing:

Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel 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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

Intermediate Mid:

- **I can** understand the main idea and key information in short straightforward informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** understand the main idea and key information in short straightforward fictional texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** identify the main idea and key information in short straightforward conversations. [Interpretive]
- **I can** exchange information in conversations on familiar topics and some researched topics, creating sentences and series of sentences and asking a variety of follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** interact with others to meet my needs in a variety of familiar situations, creating sentences and series of sentences and asking a variety of follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** exchange preferences, feelings, or opinions and provide basic advice on a variety of familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences and asking a variety of follow-up questions. [Interpersonal]



Chattanooga School of Language

- **I can** tell a story about my life, activities, events and other social experiences, using sentences and series of connected sentences. [Presentational]
- **I can** state my viewpoint about familiar topics and give some reasons to support it, using sentences and series of connected sentences. [Presentational]
- **I can** give straightforward presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched, using sentences and series of connected sentences. [Presentational]

Intermediate High (B2) (approximately 480 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines ([source: ACTFL](#))

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

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.

Writing:

Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel 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 correspond 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.

Information was gathered from: www.actfl.org.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** usually follow the main message in various time frames in straightforward, and sometimes descriptive, paragraph length informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** usually follow the main story and actions expressed in various time frames in paragraph-length fictional texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** usually understand the main idea and flow of events expressed in various time frames in conversations and discussions. [Interpretive]
- **I can** exchange information in conversations and some discussions on a variety of familiar and some concrete topics that I have researched, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** interact with others to meet my needs in a variety of situations, sometimes involving a complication, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** explain preferences, opinions, and emotions and provide advice on a variety of familiar and some concrete topics that I have researched, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often



across various time frames. [Interpersonal]

- **I can** tell stories about school and community events and personal experiences, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames. [Presentational]
- **I can** state my viewpoint on familiar or researched topics and provide reasons to support it, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames. [Presentational]
- **I can** give detailed presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames. [Presentational]

Advanced Low-Mid (C1) (approximately 720 hours)

Proficiency Guidelines ([source: ACTFL](#))

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Advanced Low:

Speaking:

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. They can also speak about some 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 handle appropriately 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 their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More 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.

Writing:

Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel 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

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** identify the underlying message and some supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** follow the main story and some supporting detail across major time frames in fictional texts. [Interpretive]

- **I can** understand the main message and some supporting details across major time frames in conversations and discussions. [Interpretive]
- **I can** exchange information and ideas in discussions on a variety of familiar and concrete academic and social topics, using a few simple paragraphs across major time frames. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** interact and negotiate to resolve an unexpected complication that arises in a familiar situation, using a few simple paragraphs across major time frames.
- **I can** maintain conversations by providing explanations and comparisons of preferences, opinions, and advice on familiar and concrete academic and social topics using a few simple paragraphs across major time frames.
- **I can** tell stories about school and community events and personal experiences, using paragraphs across major time frames. [Presentational]
- **I can** state a viewpoint with supporting evidence on some concrete academic, social and professional topics of interest using paragraphs across major time frames.
- **I can** deliver presentations on some concrete academic, social and professional topics of interest, using paragraphs across major time frames.

Advanced Mid

Speaking:

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.

Information was gathered from: www.actfl.org.

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.

Writing:

Writers at the Advanced Mid sublevel 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 may at times resemble oral discourse. Writing at the Advanced Mid sublevel is understood readily by natives not used to the writing of nonnatives. 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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** understand the underlying message and most supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts. [Interpretive]
- **I can** follow the main story and most supporting details across major time frames in fictional texts.
- **I can** understand the main message and most supporting details across major time frames in conversations and discussions.
- **I can** maintain discussions on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar concrete topics of personal and general interest, and sometimes academic, social or professional topics, by using probing questions and providing detailed responses across major time frames.
- **I can** interact and negotiate to resolve an unexpected complication that arises in a familiar situation, providing detailed explanations and offering a variety of resolutions across major time frames.
- **I can** maintain extended conversations by supporting, reacting to, and comparing preferences and opinions and expressing advice and emotions in detail across major time frames, and by asking probing questions.
- **I can** tell stories based on concrete experiences in academic, social, and professional topics of interest, using organized paragraphs across major time frames. [Presentational]
- **I can** present an argument with supporting evidence, based on a variety of concrete academic, social and professional topics of interest, using organized paragraphs across major time frames.
- **I can** deliver detailed presentations and elaborate on a variety of concrete academic, social and professional topics of interest, using organized paragraphs across major time frames.

Advanced High-Superior (C2) (approximately 1,200+ hours)

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Proficiency Guidelines (source: ACTFL)

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Advanced High:

Speaking:

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.

Writing:

Writers at the Advanced High sublevel 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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** interpret and infer meaning from complex, academic and professional texts on a range of unfamiliar, abstract, and specialized issues that are spoken, written, or signed. [Interpretive]

- **I can** participate fully and effectively in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed discussions and debates on issues and ideas ranging from broad general interests to my areas of specialized expertise, including supporting arguments and exploring hypotheses. [Interpersonal]
- **I can** deliver extended presentations on abstract or hypothetical issues and ideas ranging from broad general interests to my areas of specialized expertise, with precision of expression and to a wide variety of audiences, using spoken, written, or signed language. [Presentational]

Superior:

Speaking:

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.

Writing:

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, occasional errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures. When present, these errors do not interfere with comprehension, and they rarely distract the native reader.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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 extralinguistic 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. In addition, readers at the Superior level are generally aware of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles, but may not fully understand texts in which cultural references and assumptions are deeply embedded.

DISTINGUISHED:

Proficiency Guidelines ([source: ACTFL](#))

These are descriptions of what students can do with language in terms of **speaking**, **writing**, **listening**, and **reading** in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Speaking:

Speakers at the Distinguished level are able to use language skillfully, and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness. They are educated and articulate users of the language. They can reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner. Distinguished-level speakers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes, allowing them to advocate a point of view that is not necessarily their own. They can tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting their speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic. Speakers at the Distinguished level produce highly sophisticated and tightly organized extended discourse. At the same time, they can speak succinctly, often using cultural and historical references to allow them to say less and mean more. At this level, oral discourse typically resembles written discourse. A non-native accent, a lack of a native-like economy of expression, a limited control of deeply embedded cultural references, and/or an occasional isolated language error may still be present at this level.

Writing:

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.

Listening:

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.

Reading:

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 nonstandard varieties of the written language.

Competencies acquired at this level:

- **I can** interpret and infer meaning from dense, structurally sophisticated texts on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, with deeply embedded cultural references and colloquialisms and dialects that are spoken, written, or signed. [interpretive]
- **I can** interact, negotiate, and debate on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, fully adapting to the cultural context of the conversation, using spoken, written, or signed language. [interpersonal]
- **I can** deliver sophisticated and articulate presentations on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, fully adapting to the cultural context of the audience, using spoken, written, or signed language. [presentational]