



**HOW TO STAGE A
DISCOVER LANGUAGES
“POP QUIZ”
IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

**A Handbook for Successful
Media Events**

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HOW TO STAGE A DISCOVER LANGUAGES “POP QUIZ” IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

One of the most successful events for local foreign language teachers and supporters is the *Discover Languages* Pop Quiz, a fun, media-directed event aimed at reminding everyone of the importance of increased language learning in every community.

The Pop Quiz is designed to get local media to actually meet the participants at the site of the event, cover the Quiz itself, then report on the results of the quiz after its completion.

MAKING IT TERRIFIC:

There are several keys to success in generating publicity using the Pop Quiz:

Make your media connections ahead of time; make certain to tell them that they will get great quotes, interesting human interest vignettes for their stories, and terrific, action-filled pictures for print and for television. Make certain the media contacts know this is all in fun and not a scientific survey. Remind them that the goal is to raise awareness of your community’s increasing business and cultural ties to the world and the need for more language skills right at home.

Place the Quiz in the highest visibility and traffic location in your community; find the busiest street corner downtown at lunch hour, or the most active entrance to the local mall. Remember, malls are private property, so you will need to get WRITTEN permission from the mall management to conduct the quiz on any private property location. Federal government buildings, county or city administration buildings are usually under some level of security restrictions. Sidewalks in the city are public property, and can be used.

Make it a good story: Use a diverse group of language teachers from many different schools around your community, or use students taking a wide variety of foreign languages to conduct the Pop Quiz. Do you have classes in Japanese? How about any Heritage languages? We believe the Pop Quiz can be delivered by students of any age, by the way, as long as they are not shy about approaching people on the street and asking the quiz question. Many times, news media will find the students’ participation the most interesting angle to the story. At other times, adult teachers would be better suited to make the quiz a little more credible.

Think of the pictures: The heart of this story is seeing how people react when asked a question in a foreign language. That physical reaction (facial expression, etc.) makes wonderful television news images, as well as good photographs for the newspaper.

Brand the Pop Quiz: Have all your participants wear *Discover Languages* Hats, Shirts, buttons or Stickers on their clothing to clearly identify them as part of the Discover Languages campaign. Make certain they carry clipboards with the Discover Languages logo affixed to the BACK of the clipboard at the TOP, so it can be seen by the both the respondent and the photographers! (Oh, and try not to hold your hand over the logo if a camera is around!) Be sure to order your *Discover Languages* logo wear by ordering from ACTFL at www.DiscoverLanguages.org.

Make Long Term Media Contacts from this short term event: Follow up quickly with the results, and distribute the results press release to all media outlets. Follow-up with a phone call asking if there are any additional questions, and even set up a possible interview about the Discover Languages national campaign. Mention that we have Public Service Announcements, and ask for the person who is in charge of selecting PSA's for use.

Here's how your Discover Languages Pop Quiz is organized, step-by-step:

THE STEPS:

Step One: Get the Media involved well before the event (usually three to four days prior to the Pop Quiz is the earliest most media want to hear about the story). A sample Media Alert follows in this document. Fill in the local information, and get it to your local newspapers, radio stations, and television news operations (including any local cable news programs). Faxing the alert will work, but delivering it in person to the assignment editor is far better. Call and make an appointment to drop by. Look in the phone book under TV Stations, Radio Stations and Newspapers for contact information. If you fax the alert, call to make certain it was received. On the day of your event, call your media contacts and remind them ... and ask if they are going to cover it. Don't be shy ... and don't get discouraged! These are busy people with lots of news to cover, and your persistence could be what it takes to win them over.

Step Two: Assemble your Pop Quiz team, either teachers or language students from a variety of schools and with different languages being studied. In our first Pop Quiz in Chicago, we had ACTFL members and officers ask questions in Spanish, German, French and Russian. We recommend at least ten participants.

Step Three: Choose the place, and get written permission to stage the Pop Quiz on private or controlled property (such as government buildings where security is an issue). Be sure you pick a location that is heavily used, such as a busy street corner at lunch time.

Step Four: Conduct the event quickly: Challenge your "Pop Quizzers" to EACH get 12 people to respond within 30 minutes. Then, if there is more time and the media needs more pictures, ask your Quizzers to each get 12 more respondents. You will find the Pop Quiz form later in this document: make copies for your participants.

The Quiz simply asks “What time is it, please” in the foreign language of your participant. The respondent will either provide no answer, an answer in English, or an answer in the correct foreign language. Your totals will reveal which language group had the best or worst response, and what the overall totals were for each of the three categories.

Step Five: Within an hour after the last question (or even sooner if the media is waiting for results!), gather the response sheets into your different language groups, then total the responses in each column, total the overall column numbers from all the sheets, and finally, total the column numbers from all the different language groups for your final total.

Step Six: QUICKLY contact ALL the media (especially those who did not cover the story live) and deliver the Pop Quiz Results Press Release to them before their deadline. PLEASE NOTE: The story will be thrown out if you get this information to them after their immediate deadline passes. For weekly newspapers, of course, you have a bit more time, but daily newspapers, television stations and radio stations all have varying deadlines, usually in the mid to late afternoon (3-5 p.m.) Early evening newscasts want their stories before 3:00 p.m.

Step Seven: BUILD A MEDIA RELATIONSHIP: Follow up with each reporter or editor, and let them know that other events will be coming up during the Discover Languages, and you will be contacting them again. Ask what kinds of stories they like, so you can plan your next event to deliver that content, as well as our Key Messages about increasing America’s foreign language skills.

Step Eight: SHARE YOUR EVENT with other Discover Languages Ambassadors, so we can learn from your triumphs (and trip-ups!). If there is media coverage, please send the original newspaper clip, audio or video recording to Discover Languages, ACTFL , 700 South Washington Street, Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Finally, make certain you – and all your Discover Languages Pop Quizzers – have FUN! Be sure you bring your own camera or video recorder to capture the event!

TOOLS YOU CAN USE:

Here are some examples of:

- 1) The **First Media Alert** – to be delivered to local media 3-5 days before the event. Then, you should follow up the day before the event to make certain the assignment editor or person in charge of the news coverage received the Media Alert and plans to cover the Pop Quiz. Be Friendly but Forceful!
- 2) The **Pop Quiz Form** – to be filled out by your participants, then handed in to a delegated Pop Quiz collector and accountant!
- 3) An example of the follow-up **Results Press Release** – this one was used in Chicago, and gained additional late coverage, even though some media did not cover the actual event. It was delivered to the media before their deadlines on the day of the Pop Quiz.

4) And here is a link to the Discover Languages Web site, where you can order ***Discover Languages*** stickers, hats, shirts, and other branded items for increasing the visibility of the ***Discover Languages...Discover the World!*** campaign at www.DiscoverLanguages.org.

Need more help? Contact ACTFL at (703) 894-2900



MEDIA ADVISORY

DATE: _____

__Your Town__ GETS FOREIGN LANGUAGES POP QUIZ Resident “Language Ambush” to Generate Awareness of Discover Languages...Discover the World! National Public Awareness Campaign

YOUR TOWN – Foreign Language Teachers from *YOUR TOWN*_____ will test local residents’ foreign language skills in a surprise “Discover Languages Pop Quiz” at (*LOCATION*)_____. The teachers (*AND/OR STUDENTS*) will walk up to as many as 120 local people and ask for local information in various languages. The responses will be graded according to language skills: No response at all, a response in English, or a response in the correct foreign language. Given *YOUR TOWN*’s international interests and business agenda, our unscientific but tactical poll should reveal interesting results. The full results of the poll will be available within 24 hours after the ambush!

The Pop Quiz is a part of local activities highlighting Discover Languages...Discover the World! – a nationwide campaign to increase foreign language learning for children as well as adults. The campaign will also include school and business leader events to raise awareness of the community’s ties to the rest of the world, and our need to be able to communicate in languages other than English.

WHO: Foreign Language Teachers, Local Residents and Business People

WHAT: To test local foreign language abilities, teachers will be approaching pedestrians asking for basic information in various languages, then grading their responses.

WHEN: *DAY, DATE, YEAR*
12:00 p.m.

WHERE: *PRECISE LOCATION IN HIGH TRAFFIC AREA OR CITY CENTER*

Media Contacts:

School Contacts telephone number and e-mail addresses

Founded in 1967, 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 7,000 foreign language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education, as well as government and industry. Visit us on the Web at www.actfl.org and www.yearoflanguages.org.



[See next page for pop quiz score sheet](#)

Discover Languages Pop Quiz

- Approach each person from the front.
- Ask them firmly and clearly: **“What time is it, please?”** in your chosen language. Do not point at your watch, unless you want to give them a hint!
- Mark their response, and thank them for taking Discover Languages Pop Quiz!

| NO RESPONSE | ENGLISH RESP. | CORRECT RESPONSE IN LANGUAGE |
|--------------------|----------------------|---|
|--------------------|----------------------|---|

| | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> |

TOTALS: _____

NAME: _____

LANGUAGE: _____



MEDIA RELEASE

November 17, 2004

CHICAGO MAKES THE GRADE IN LANGUAGE SKILLS ... BARELY

Downtown Workers score a solid C+ in “Pop Quiz” to Generate Awareness of The Year of Languages Celebration

Chicago, IL – 240 Chicago lunch-goers were asked “What time is it?” in Spanish, French, German and Russian today. The results indicate that the average Chicagoan needs more language skills to support the city’s position on the world stage. The surprise sidewalk “Pop Quiz” was conducted by a dozen of the more than 5,000 foreign language teachers in the city for the annual convention of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

The results were:

107 passers-by did not respond at all to the question
82 responded, accurately, but in English, showing comprehension.
51 people responded accurately in the correct language.

“2005 is the Year of Languages,” said ACTFL President Keith Cothrun of Las Cruces, New Mexico, “and there’s never been a more important time for all Americans to bring the critical importance of language learning to the top of the agenda in America.”

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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 7,000 foreign language educators and administrators from elementary through postgraduate education, as well as government and industry. Visit us on the Web at www.actfl.org and www.yearoflanguages.org