



LISTENING PROFICIENCY TEST

FAMILIARIZATION GUIDE



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ACTFL LISTENING PROFICIENCY TEST FAMILIARIZATION GUIDE

WHAT IS ACTFL?

ACTFL is a membership organization of world language professionals dedicated to promoting and fostering the study of languages and cultures as an integral component of education and society. ACTFL's membership includes more than 13,000 language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education, as well as government and industry. Since 1967, ACTFL has led the field in world language research and assessments, while publishing, and disseminating performance and proficiency standards that guide best practices for language learning, teaching, and assessment.

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.

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.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening can also be found on the ACTFL website (www.actfl.org) along with authentic sample passages associated with each major level. Transcripts of sample passages are also included in this manual.

To access the proficiency guidelines online, go to:

www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manual

WHAT IS THE ACTFL LISTENING PROFICIENCY TEST (LPT)?

The ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) is a proficiency-based test for the global assessment of listening ability in a language. It is an assessment of the interpretive communication mode, as described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. The LPT measures how well a person understands spoken language spontaneously when presented with discourse types and listening tasks as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening*. Listening skills are evaluated without candidates having time and/or access to dictionaries or grammar references. The LPT assesses general language proficiency, rather than what is learned in a specific language program, class, school, or university. It is not tied to a specific teaching method or curriculum. Rather than assessing what you “know” about the language, the LPT is an assessment of how well you can understand the spoken language.

The ACTFL LPT assesses listening comprehension in the target language across the four major levels of the ACTFL proficiency Scale (Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice). The LPT is a proctored online assessment that can be taken on a computer or tablet.

WHAT IS THE ACTFL RATING SCALE?

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* describe five major levels of listening proficiency (Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice). The ACTFL LPT tests listening proficiency through four of these levels. The rating scale for the ACTFL LPT is:

Figure 1

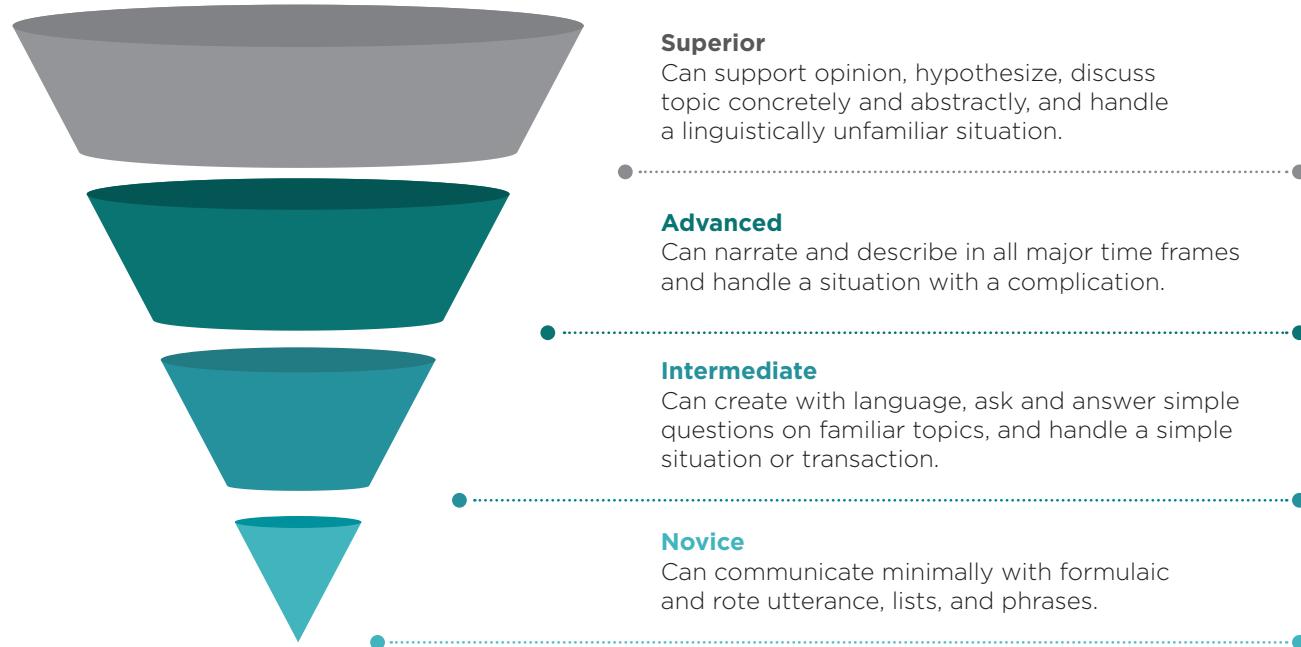


Figure 1: Inverted Pyramid Representing ACTFL Rating Scale with Major Levels and Global Tasks.

The four major levels are delineated according to a hierarchy of global tasks. This hierarchy is summarized in a rating scale spanning a full range of listening abilities from Superior (individuals who can understand passages from many genres dealing with a wide range of subjects) to Novice (those who can recognize words and get limited information from highly predictable, simple passages in familiar contexts and formats). Each level in the hierarchy subsumes all lower levels.

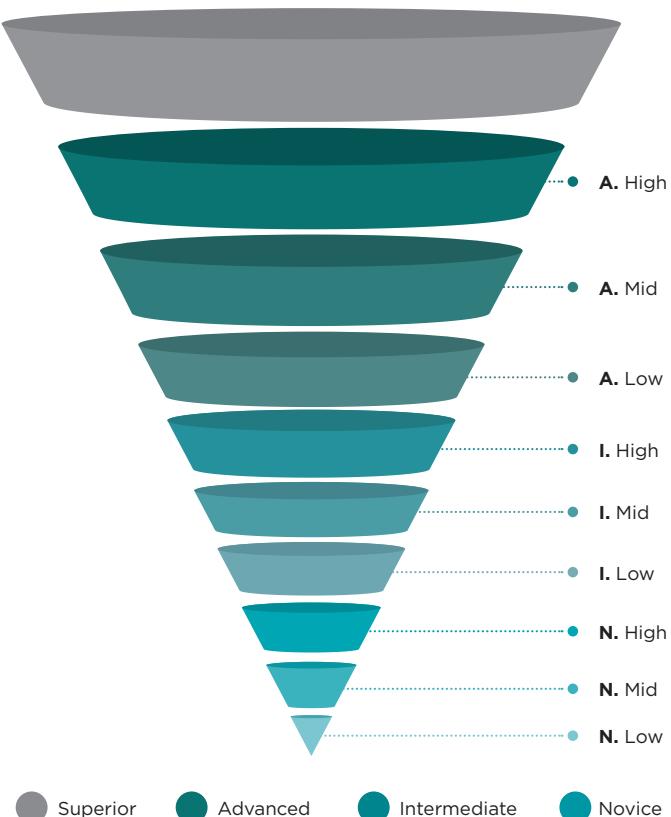
Major borders divide the major levels of the scale (Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice). As shown in the inverted pyramid (**see Figure 1**), each level represents a range of functional language ability.

Three of the major levels are further divided by minor borders into High, Mid and Low sublevels. (There are no sublevels for Superior) these sublevels differ from each other in terms of the quantity as well as the as well as the inferences and connections listeners can make within and across passages.

The “High” sublevel

Listeners at the “High” sublevel comprehend fully with ease spoken language of their respective level. They are capable of understanding oral passages 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 (**see Figure 2**).

Figure 2



The “Mid” sublevel

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

Figure 2: Inverted Pyramid Representing ACTFL Rating Scale with Major Levels

WHAT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA ARE USED?

Listening comprehension is based largely on the amount of information listeners can retrieve as well as the inferences and connections they can make from listening to spoken language produced by one or multiple speakers under a variety of circumstances. The ACTFL LPT assesses how well listeners comprehend spoken passages and the listening tasks associated with the different types of passages in a variety of contexts, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired.

In assessing listening comprehension, the following criteria are considered :

- the functions and purposes of the spoken language the listener comprehends,
- the content areas and context for which the passages are spoken,
- the text type that the listener can understand in the language,
- the range of vocabulary and grammatical structures the listener can understand,
- the cultural references the listener can understand in the language.

The assessment criteria as they relate to the four major proficiency levels are shown below.

Proficiency Level*	Function	Content	Context	Text Type	Vocabulary	Grammar	Culture
Superior	Argumentation Supported Opinion Hypothesis	Familiar and unfamiliar abstract topics	Professional Academic Literary	Complex lengthy passages	Broad Precise Specialized	Complex structures	Cultural references Aesthetic properties
Advanced	Description Narration Exposition Explanation	Concrete current and general interest topics	Public Education Work News	Paragraph-length connected passages with clear, predictable structures	Broad general vocabulary	Sequencing Time frames Chronology	Most common cultural patterns
Intermediate	Convey basic information	Highly familiar everyday content	Highly familiar everyday contexts	Simple, predictable, loosely-connected language	High frequency vocabulary	Simple sentence patterns and strings of sentences	A few of the most common cultural patterns
Novice	Recognize familiar words, and formulaic phrases	Very familiar and predictable content, basic information related to self	Highly, contextualized, familiar, and predictable contexts	Words, lists, phrases	Key words, cognates, memorized vocabulary	Memorized, formulaic phrases and word combinations	Recognition of basic awareness informal and formal practices

* A rating at any major level is arrived at by the **sustained performance** of the functions of the level, with the degree of accuracy and the text type described for that level. The performance must be sustained across ALL of the criteria for the level in order to be rated at that level.

WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE ACTFL LPT?

The LPT is offered in eight test forms, where each form targets a specific range of proficiency. Depending on the levels being assessed, test administration times will vary. Table 1 below provides information on the different test forms, proficiency ranges and time allotments. These options ensure that the test administered targets the range of the test taker's listening ability and is economical in terms of time and effort.

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

Test Length	50 minutes for a two-level test 75 minutes for a three-level test 125 minutes for the full-range test	(A, B, C & D) (E, F & G*) (H**)
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* This is a semi-adaptive version of the test, which ranges in time from 50-75 minutes. It is designed to offer tasks at higher or lower levels depending on the candidate's responses, the test will offer higher or lower level tasks. This is the test to choose if the student's proficiency is unknown and/or the instructor would like to give all of his or her students the same test and not select ranges individually, etc.

** This is the full-range test.

The LPT presents between 10 and 25 spoken passages for the test taker to listen to based on the proficiency range of the selected test form.

Each passage is accompanied by three questions; each question has four multiple-choice answers, of which only one is correct. The passages and multiple-choice answers are in the target language.

WHAT ARE LISTENING TASKS LIKE?

The LPT listening passages vary in genre, content, length, and complexity depending on the proficiency levels being targeted. They are real-world types of spoken passages such as informal and formal exchanges on general, social, academic, and professional topics such as oral reports, news broadcasts, discussions, and debates.

Test items target the main idea, supporting detail and, at the higher levels, the inferences and connections the test taker can make for the content and organization of the passages they hear.

Examples of what Listeners can do at major proficiency levels (from Online ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012)

SUPERIOR

AL GORE: Global Warming Testimony @ Congress 3.21.07

The following is a transcript of the sound sample that can be found on the ACTFL website www.actfl.org.

And our world faces a true planetary emergency. I know the phrase sounds shrill, and I know it's a challenge to the moral imagination, to see and feel and understand that the entire relationship between humanity and our planet has been radically altered. We quadrupled human population in less than one century from 1.6 billion in 1900 to 6.56 billion today. Population is stabilizing of its own accord as girls are educated and women are empowered and family planning that's culturally acceptable in country after country becomes widely available, and most importantly as child-survival rates increase and infant and maternal mortality... mortality decreases... when those things happen and especially when literacy among women increases around the world, the birth rates come down. The death rates come down, and then the birth rates come down, and it's stabilizing, but having multiplied by four the numbers of people on this planet, and we're going from over six-and -half now to over 9.1, almost certainly within the next 40, 45 years, that in itself causes a big change in the relationship between humanity and the planet.

Secondly, our technologies are thousands of times more powerful than any our grandparents had at their disposal. And so, even though we're more skillful and more effective in doing the things we've always done - exploiting the Earth for sustenance, providing for our families, and going about productive lives - the side effects of what we're doing sometimes now outstrip the development of extra wisdom to make sure that we handle these new powers in a way that doesn't do unintended harm. And somehow we've also adopted kind of a short-term way of thinking that is also more different than what our grandparents more commonly used. Ah, we, in the markets, Congressman Bartlett said global warming is the biggest market failure in history. I kind of agree with that. If you look at the markets, the short-term focus is just dominant now. Quarterly reports, day traders, if you look at the entertainment business, and the media business, and even the news business, its overnight polls, and how many eyeballs can you glue to the screen; you know the phrases...

Rationale for Rating

Listeners must be able to comprehend a speaker who is addressing a professional audience—here, members of Congress—on the abstract topic of humanity and the planet and who is using precise vocabulary (shrill) and phrasing (exploiting the Earth for sustenance) and even an idiom (how many eyeballs you can glue to the screen). Listeners must be able to understand a speaker using a standard dialect and talking on a subject with which the listeners may have varying degrees of familiarity and opinions. Listeners must be able to follow the speaker as he constructs an argument in extended discourse that includes cultural references. Listeners who comprehend this passage are able to understand lengthy, formal discourse intended for an audience of educated native-speaker non-specialists.

ADVANCED

Flight Attendant News

The following is a transcript of the sound sample that can be found on the ACTFL website www.actfl.org

The flight attendant is well on his way, I think, to becoming a folk hero. Talk about a dramatic exit. Flight attendant Steven Slater told the passenger to sit down when Jet Blue's Flight 1052 from Pittsburgh pulled up at the gate at JFK yesterday afternoon. The passenger refused, continued removing his luggage from the overhead bin, and that luggage accidentally struck the flight attendant. Mr. Slater demanded an apology. The passenger declined, using a not-very-nice four-letter word, and that set Slater off. He turned on the public address system, and used the same four-letter word in front of all of the passengers, in particular directed to that man who had refused to sit. He then activated the inflatable slide, grabbed some brewskies, and slid his way out of a career as a flight attendant. Mr. Slater got home quickly. It wasn't long before the police showed up to arrest him.

Rationale for Rating

Listeners must be able to comprehend a speaker telling an uncomplicated story. The story, set in past time, deals with a newsworthy incident that requires no special knowledge on the part of the listeners to be understood. Listeners need to process authentic, connected speech that is several paragraphs long. This speech is lexically and structurally uncomplicated. The discourse is straightforward and is generally organized in a clear and predictable way.

INTERMEDIATE

Weather Report

The following is a transcript of the sound sample that can be found on the ACTFL website www.actfl.org

103 the record high today... 101 out at the airport. Today is now the 85th day this summer we've seen 100-degree heat - number one on the all-time list by a mile. 69 days... the old record. We're not going to hit a hundred for the next several days, so can we end the summer with this being the final number? Nice round 85 days, let's hope so. Ah, out there, right now, skies are clear. It's 101 in the city. At 8:00 tonight, 94... At 10 P.M. tonight, forecasting 87 degrees...

Rationale for Rating

Listeners must be able to comprehend a speaker using loosely-connected language on the very familiar topic of weather. Listeners need to follow a speaker who communicates entirely in the present time and communicates a set of facts in a predictable way. Listeners are helped by the redundancies within the message and by their familiarity with the content of the message that allows them to hear what they expect to hear.

NOVICE

Lottery Drawing

The following is a transcript of the sound sample that can be found on the ACTFL website www.actfl.org

First the daily number.... Draw the first digit please... Two... The second digit... Seven... And the third digit ... Nine.

Rationale for Rating

Listeners need only comprehend formulaic language that consists of two lists of numbers—one ordinal and one cardinal. Listeners need to process a message that is compartmentalized and has limited cohesion. The specific context of the message—a lottery drawing—allows listeners to anticipate speech that they can then recognize.

HOW DOES THE LPT WORK?

The ACTFL LPT is available online and can be taken on a computer or tablet. Before beginning the LPT, the test taker completes a system check to make sure that their computer or tablet is set up correctly to support the test. Once the test taker logs into the online test delivery system, they are introduced to the test functionality with sample listening passages and multiple-choice questions. This provides the test taker an opportunity to become acquainted with the page layout, time management, and navigation features of the test. The listening passages can be played only once, and a notepad is available on the screen to take notes while the listening passage is being played. The multiple-choice questions can be reviewed before playing the listening passage. During the test administration period, a clock will display the amount of time remaining. More information about the LPT administration can be found in the Examinee Handbook.

Task Navigation: The window shows the following:

The title of the listening passage.

A 30-second time counter to indicate the time left before the recording begins to play.

The questions related to the passage in the recording. Test-takers should use the 30 seconds to familiarize themselves with these questions.

Recorder indicator for the listening passage: Test-takers do not have control over the recording. The recording will begin to play automatically when the 30 seconds of preparation have transpired; they will not be able to stop or replay the passage.

A notepad on which they can note/type any information from the recording that they deem important in order to answer the questions. The notepad will remain on the page until they have finished with that test item.

After the recording ends, a 20-second timer will count down to highlight the time remaining for taking notes after the recording is finished. Once the time is up, the test will automatically move to the next page. If the test-takers are ready to proceed to the questions before the 20 seconds is up, they can click on “Next” and continue to the next page immediately.

The “Next” button to move to the next task after completion of the answers.

HOW ARE LPT TASKS SCORED?

The ACTFL LPT is a machine-scored test. The scoring procedure considers the difficulty of the passage, the questions’ level of difficulty, and the test taker’s ability to respond to the questions. An algorithm then uses the data points to assign a final rating.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL LPT RATING?

Official ACTFL LPT ratings are assigned to those LPTs that are conducted under the supervision of the ACTFL Assessment and Quality Assurance Programs. The LPT is delivered by Language Testing International (LTI), the Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL assessments. Clients can request an ACTFL rating (according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening*), an ILR rating (according to the U.S. Government's *Interagency Language Roundtable Skill Level Descriptions for Listening*), or a CEFR rating (according to the *Common European Framework of Reference*). An ACTFL Certificate of Listening Proficiency is issued for test-takers and the results are permanently stored in the official ACTFL Test Management System.

HOW IS AN ACTFL LPT USED?

The ACTFL LPT can be used for a variety of purposes in the academic, commercial, and government communities.

Because an LPT rating provides a common metric for describing an individual's ability to understand what they hear, it serves as a way of providing parity among language programs. ACTFL LPT ratings may be used for purposes of admission into programs, placement within a language sequence, formative and summative assessments, and determination of the fulfillment of exit or graduation requirements.

Establishing proficiency outcomes in terms of the descriptors that are contained in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (or the U.S. Government's *Interagency Language Roundtable Skill Level Descriptions for Listening*, or the *Common European Framework of Reference*) provides a framework for the design and development of the listening component of the curriculum for language courses and sequences of language courses. Proficiency testing of students is also used as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of language programs.

Listening proficiency ratings are also used in business and the government for purposes of certification, hiring, and promotion in multi-lingual positions.

WHAT ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

Accommodations for ACTFL assessments can be requested from Language Testing International (LTI), Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL. Available accommodations include, and are not limited to, extended testing time, extended breaks, screen magnification, human reader, oral interpreter for directions, testing environment adjustments, blank scratch paper, etc. LTI's accommodation team works with candidates to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to their conditions and needs.

HOW TO SCHEDULE AN ACTFL LPT?

To schedule individual or group ACTFL Listening Proficiency Tests, contact:

Language Testing International (LTI)

580 White Plains Road, Suite 660

Tarrytown, NY 10591

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 (participative). The written descriptions of listening proficiency are accompanied online by authentic speech samples and the functional listening tasks associated with each major level www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Listening* 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.

SUPERIOR

At the Superior level, listeners are able to understand speech in a standard dialect on a wide range of familiar and less familiar topics. They can follow linguistically complex extended discourse such as that found in academic and professional settings, lectures, speeches, and reports. Comprehension is no longer limited to the listener's familiarity with subject matter, but also comes from a command of the language that is supported by a broad vocabulary, an understanding of more complex structures and linguistic experience within the target culture. Superior listeners can understand not only what is said, but sometimes what is left unsaid; that is, they can make inferences.

Superior-level listeners understand speech that typically uses precise, specialized vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. This speech often deals abstractly with topics in a way that is appropriate for academic and professional audiences. It can be reasoned and can contain cultural references.

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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ACTFL ASSESSMENT:

Please visit

www.actfl.org/assessments

For information on Proficiency and Assessment workshops,
please visit:

www.actfl.org/learn/proficiency-assessment-workshops

For information on ACTFL tester and rater certifications,
please visit:

www.actfl.org/certifications

INTERESTED IN TAKING AN OPI?

To schedule a test, please visit Language
Testing International's website at

www.languagetesting.com

or call **1-800-486-8444**.

The background of the page features a large, abstract graphic composed of numerous overlapping, light gray rectangles of varying sizes and orientations. This creates a complex, tessellated pattern that resembles a snowflake or a molecular structure. The rectangles are set against a white background and are partially obscured by a dark blue horizontal bar at the bottom.

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