



**ACTFL WPT**  
WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST

# WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST FAMILIARIZATION GUIDE



**ACTFL**  
Language Connects



# WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST

## FAMILIARIZATION GUIDE

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### 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.

ACTFL supports PK-12 schools and institutions of higher education in areas of assessment, articulation, and research. To that end, ACTFL develops and maintains high-quality language proficiency assessments, and certifies, norms, and maintains highly reliable testers and raters of their assessments. Research focuses on proficiency and performance standards and outcomes that inform language teaching and learning. ACTFL 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. ACTFL aims to bridge the divide between language research and classroom practice.

## WHAT ARE THE ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES?

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012*<sup>1</sup> 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.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing* describe the tasks that writers can handle at each level as well as the content, context, accuracy, and discourse types associated with the writing tasks at each level. They also present the limits that writers encounter when attempting to function at the next higher major level. These Guidelines are the basis for rating the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT). The ACTFL WPT assesses the ability to write effectively and appropriately for real-life writing contexts.

To access the proficiency guidelines online, go to:

<https://www.actfl.org/educator-resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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## WHAT IS THE ACTFL WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST?

The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) is a standardized test for global assessment of functional writing ability in a language. It is an assessment of the presentational and interpersonal modes of communication as described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learners*. The ACTFL WPT measures how well a person spontaneously writes in a language (without access to revisions and/or editing tools) by comparing their performance of specific writing tasks with the criteria stated in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing*.

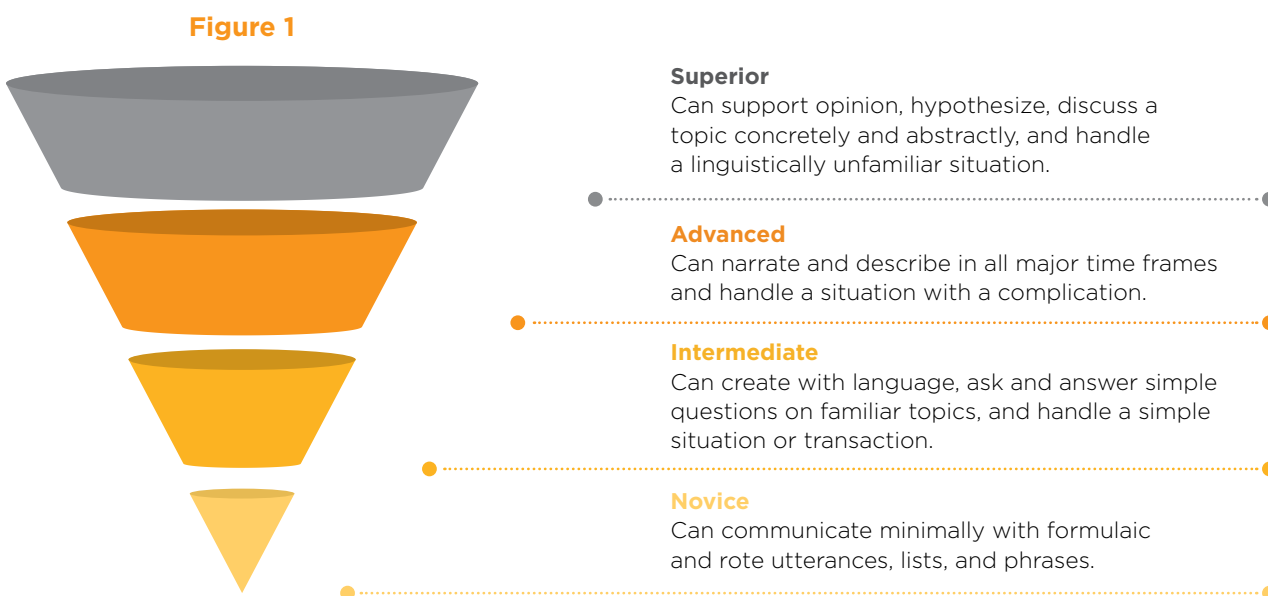
The ACTFL WPT is a carefully constructed assessment with four prompts for written responses dealing with practical, social, and professional topics that are encountered in informal and formal contexts. The test taker is presented with writing tasks and contexts that represent the range of proficiency levels from Superior to Novice on the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing*. The tasks and prompts are written in English; the responses are written in the target language.

As per its proficiency-based framework, the ACTFL WPT assesses the ability to write effectively and appropriately for real-life writing purposes, regardless of when, where, why, or how an individual learned to write. It is not an achievement test assessing a writer's acquisition of specific aspects of course and curriculum content, nor is it tied to any specific method of instruction. The ACTFL WPT compares each individual writing sample to the descriptors in the guidelines, rather than comparing one individual's writing to another's writing.

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## WHAT IS THE ACTFL RATING SCALE?

While the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing* describe five major levels of written language proficiency (Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, Novice), the ACTFL Rating Scale (derived from the Guidelines) encompasses four major levels. These are:



**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 writing abilities, from Superior (individuals who can produce informal and formal writing on practical, social, and professional topics, treated both abstractly and concretely) to Novice (those who can produce only lists and notes and limited formulaic information on simple forms and documents). Each level in the hierarchy subsumes all lower levels.

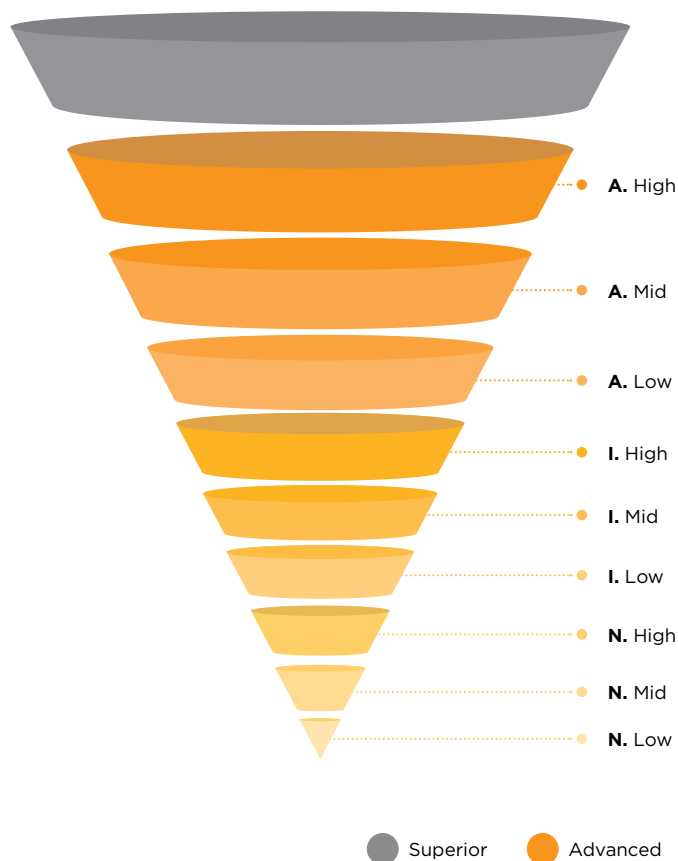
The chart below highlights features of each of the major proficiency levels for writing. As shown in the inverted pyramid (see **Figure 2**), each level represents a range of functional language ability.

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 quality of language produced and in some cases by the tasks performed.

### The “High” sublevel

Writers at the “High” sublevel communicate with ease and confidence when performing the functions of their respective level. They are capable of functioning much of the time at the next higher major level, but they are unable to sustain language at the next higher level.

**Figure 2**



### The “Mid” sublevel

Writers at the “Mid” sublevel represent a number of writing profiles, based on their particular mix of quantity (sheer volume of language produced) and/or quality (efficiency and effectiveness with which meaning is expressed and communicated) at level, and/or the degree to which they produce and control language features from the next higher major level.

### The “Low” sublevel

Writers at the “Low” sublevel summon up all their linguistic energy to sustain the requirements of the level. They function primarily within the level with minimal quantity and quality of language and little or no demonstrated ability to perform the tasks of the next higher level.

**Figure 2:** Inverted Pyramid Representing ACTFL Rating Scale with Major Ranges and Sublevels

The Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) is an integrative test, i.e., it addresses a number of abilities simultaneously and looks at them from a global perspective rather than from the point of view of the presence or absence of any given linguistic feature. Linguistic components are viewed from the wider perspective of how they contribute to the overall written sample. In evaluating writing, ACTFL-certified raters consider the following criteria:

- the functions or global tasks the writer performs,
- the social contexts and specific content areas within which the writer performs the tasks,
- the accuracy of the writing,
- the length and organization of the written discourse the writer produces.

The assessment criteria for the major levels used to evaluate the ACTFL WPT is provided in the chart below:

Proficiency Level	Global Tasks and Functions	Context / Content	Text Type	Accuracy
Superior	<p>Can write most kinds of correspondence, in-depth summaries, reports, and research papers.</p> <p>Can write in detail and explain complex matters, present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments, and compose hypotheses and conjectures.</p>	<p>Most informal and formal settings.</p> <p><i>Practical, professional, and social topics treated both concretely and abstractly.</i></p>	<p>Writes a clearly organized and articulated text that can extend from several paragraphs to pages.</p>	<p>Demonstrates no patterned errors in basic structures, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling. Some occasional errors may occur, which rarely disturb the reader.</p>
Advanced	<p>Can write routine, informal, and some formal correspondence, as well as narratives, descriptions in detail, and summaries of a factual nature.</p> <p>Can narrate and describe in all major time frames, at times uses paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity.</p>	<p>Informal settings and some routine formal settings.</p> <p><i>Topics of personal and general interest.</i></p>	<p>Writes a connected, cohesive text of at least a paragraph in length.</p> <p>Can extend to two or more paragraphs in length on familiar topics.</p>	<p>Demonstrates good control of the most frequently used structures and generic vocabulary, comprehensible to readers unaccustomed to the writing of language learners.</p>
Intermediate	<p>Can create with language.</p> <p>Can meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes.</p> <p>Can ask and respond to simple questions.</p>	<p>Routine informal settings and limited tasks involving the exchange of simple information.</p> <p><i>Familiar, predictable topics related to self and daily routines and activities.</i></p>	<p>Writes a loosely connected text made up of a collection of primarily discrete sentences.</p>	<p>Expresses meaning through vocabulary and basic structures that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of language learners.</p>
Novice	<p>Can write words, lists, notes and limited formulaic information to communicate the most basic information.</p>	<p>The most common informal settings.</p> <p><i>Most common aspects of self and daily life.</i></p>	<p>Words, lists, phrases, and some limited formulaic information.</p>	<p>May be difficult to comprehend, even for readers accustomed to the writing of language learners.</p>

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## WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE ACTFL WPT?

The Writing Proficiency Test is a proctored 90-minute test that consists of an Introduction and Warm-up followed by four prompts. Each prompt is comprised of multiple related writing tasks. The open-ended prompts are provided in English and require the test taker to respond in the target language. The WPT is a web-based online assessment on which examinees can keyboard their responses; it can also be offered in a paper and pencil format.

### Introduction and Warm-up

This section contains directions, information on test taking strategies, and a warm-up activity at the Novice level. Directions are also made available in advance of the scheduled testing time. All directions and prompts are written in English. Special accommodations may be requested when directions and prompts need to be provided in a language other than English. Approximately ten (10) minutes are allotted for this introductory section of the test.

### Writing Prompts

There are four separate prompts, each of which encompasses multiple writing tasks, (i.e., descriptive, informative, narrative, and persuasive writing). Each request describes the audience, context, and purpose of the prompt. The four prompts that are presented to the writer are designed to elicit writing at the Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior levels, across a variety of contexts and content areas. Most prompts will target tasks associated with one or more levels within the same context.

Each prompt also describes the suggested length of the response (i.e., several sentences, multiple paragraphs, etc.) and suggests a time allotment (i.e., 10 minutes, 25 minutes, etc.) for completing the response to that specific prompt. The total time allotted for all four prompts is 80 minutes.

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## WHAT ARE WRITING TASKS LIKE?

### Novice Level

A Novice-level task may ask the writer to supply limited information on a simple form using isolated words or phrases.

### Intermediate Level

An Intermediate-level task may ask the writer for a simple description on a familiar topic.

### Advanced Level

An Advanced-level task may ask for paragraph-length narration of a factual nature using appropriate time frames.

### Superior Level

A Superior-level task may ask the writer to state and support an opinion and to hypothesize in a cohesive and structured text.



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## WPT TEST STRUCTURE

The WPT test structure is based on one of three test forms:

### Form 1

Ratings from Novice Low through Intermediate Mid can be assigned to a writing sample that is elicited using Form 1.

### Form 2

Ratings from Novice Low through Advanced Mid can be assigned to a writing sample that is elicited using Form 2.

### Form 3

Ratings from Novice Low through Superior can be assigned to a writing sample that is elicited using Form 3.

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## HOW DOES THE WPT WORK?

The ACTFL WPT is available online and in traditional paper and pencil format. Before beginning the WPT, test takers complete a Background Survey and a Self-Assessment. They also receive clear instructions for taking the test. These instructions are delivered in English.

### Background Survey: Selecting topics for Writing

The Background Survey is a questionnaire which elicits information about the test taker's work, school, home, personal activities, and interests. The survey answers determine the pool of prompts from which the computer will randomly select topics for writing tasks. The variety of topics, the types of questions, and the range of possible computer-generated combinations allows for individualized assessments. Even if two test takers select the same combination of Background Survey responses, the resulting tests will be different yet appropriate for each.

### Self-Assessment: Defining the Level of the WPT

The Self-Assessment provides six different descriptions of how well a person can write in a language. Test takers select the description that they feel most accurately describes their writing ability in the target language. The Self-Assessment choice determines which of the WPT test forms is generated for the specific individual. The choices made by the test taker in response to the Background Survey and the Self-Assessment ensure that each test taker receives a customized and unique test.

### WPT Test Administration & Keyboard Options

The WPT provides detailed test instructions and directions on how to navigate the test. To ensure that the WPT test taker can make the necessary diacritical marks in the target language, which are not represented on a standard US keyboard, several keyboard options are available within the test. Institutions can determine in advance which keyboard options should be made

available to their test takers. At the time of the test, the test taker will make a choice based on the options set forth by the client/institution. These options include:

### **Virtual Keypad**

Test takers can choose to use a virtual keypad during the test that allows access to diacritical marks specific to the target language.

### **Language Specific Virtual Keyboard**

This option converts the test taker's keyboard to LTI's virtual keyboard using technology based on a Windows virtual keyboard layout. For example, candidates testing in Arabic will see a representation of an Arabic keyboard on their screen that correlates to the test taker's local keyboard.

### **Local Computer Keyboard**

This option is for test takers who would prefer to forgo the virtual options and use only the keyboard in front of them. This allows candidates and institutions to access any custom codes already programmed for writing in the target language.

To ensure that the test taker understands these options, a warm-up activity is provided in advance of the test to allow the candidates to become familiar with the options available. Once the warm-up is completed and the actual test is started, the test taker cannot change the selected keyboard.

A paper and pencil version of the WPT is available upon request.

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## **HOW IS THE WPT RATED?**

The completed writing samples are provided to ACTFL WPT Certified Raters through a secure internet site. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - Writing* provide the basis for assigning a global rating to the writing sample. Patterns of strength and weakness in accomplishing the writing tasks are established by an ACTFL WPT Certified Rater. A rating at any major level is arrived at by the sustained performance across ALL the criteria of the level. An appropriate sublevel can then be determined, and the rating is assigned.

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## **WHO ARE THE RATERS?**

ACTFL WPT Certified Raters are highly specialized language professionals who have completed a rigorous certification and calibration process that concludes with a demonstrated ability to consistently rate samples with a high degree of reliability. ACTFL WPT Certified Raters uphold the highest professional and ethical standards in test administration, rating, and confidentiality. Every rater agrees to respect the rules and regulations regarding WPT rating, and the exclusivity of the WPT as ACTFL property. WPT raters are authorized to rate WPTs and assign official ACTFL

ratings exclusively through Language Testing International (LTI), the Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL. Raters are required to follow all WPT procedures and guidelines, as well as any other information received on behalf of ACTFL and LTI.

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## WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL ACTFL WPT RATING?

Official ACTFL WPT ratings are assigned to those WPTs that are conducted under the supervision of ACTFL Quality Assurance while serving as raters for Language Testing International (LTI), the Exclusive Licensee of ACTFL assessments. Each Official WPT is blindly double rated by two separate certified raters. When a final rating is assigned, an ACTFL WPT Certificate is issued. The terms “ACTFL WPT,” “Official ACTFL WPT,” and the “ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test protocol” are the property of ACTFL. Their use is restricted to those purposes intended by ACTFL.

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## HOW IS THE ACTFL WPT CURRENTLY BEING USED?

The ACTFL WPT is currently being used for a variety of purposes in the academic, commercial, and government communities.

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

Establishing proficiency outcomes in terms of the descriptors contained in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* provides a framework for the design and development of the writing component of the curriculum for language courses and sequences of language courses. Proficiency testing of students can also be used as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of language programs.

In addition, Teacher Certification Boards in some states require evidence of written language competency as demonstrated through an Official ACTFL WPT. WPT ratings are used in the business world and in government for purposes of certification, hiring, and promotion in multilingual positions.

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## 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.

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## HOW CAN AN ACTFL WPT BE SCHEDULED?

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

**Language Testing International (LTI)**

580 White Plains Road, Suite 660

Tarrytown, NY 10591

Phone: (914) 963-7110 or 800-486-8444

Fax: (914) 963-7113

Email: [testing@languagetesting.com](mailto:testing@languagetesting.com)

[www.languagetesting.com](http://www.languagetesting.com)

# ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES 2012



## WRITING

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### PREFACE

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing* 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 Guidelines describe the tasks that writers can handle at each level as well as the content, context, accuracy, and discourse types associated with the writing tasks at each level. They also present the limits that writers encounter when attempting to function at the next higher major level.

These Guidelines can be used to describe written text that is either Presentational (essays, reports, letters) or Interpersonal (instant messaging, e-mail communication, texting). Moreover, they apply to writing that is spontaneous (immediate, unedited) or reflective (revised, edited). This is possible because the Guidelines describe the product rather than the process or purpose of the writing.

The written descriptions of reading proficiency are accompanied online by writing illustrating the features of each major level.

**<https://www.actfl.org/educator-resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines>**.

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## DISTINGUISHED

Writers at the Distinguished level can carry out formal writing tasks such as official correspondence, position papers, and journal articles. They can write analytically on professional, academic, and societal issues. In addition, Distinguished-level writers are able to address world issues in a highly conceptualized fashion.

These writers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse as representational techniques, allowing them to advocate a position that is not necessarily their own. They are also able to communicate subtlety and nuance. Distinguished-level writing is sophisticated and is directed to sophisticated readers. Writers at this level write to their audience; they tailor their language to their readers.

Distinguished-level writing is dense and complex; yet, it is characterized by an economy of expression. The writing is skillfully crafted and is organized in a way that reflects target-culture thought patterns. At the Distinguished level, length is not a determining factor. Distinguished-level texts can be as short as a poem or as long as a treatise.

Writers at the Distinguished level demonstrate control of complex lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic features of the language. Discourse structure and punctuation are used strategically, not only to organize meaning but also to enhance it. Conventions are generally appropriate to the text modality and the target culture.

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## SUPERIOR

Writers at the Superior level are able to produce most kinds of formal and informal correspondence, in-depth summaries, reports, and research papers on a variety of social, academic, and professional topics. Their treatment of these issues moves beyond the concrete to the abstract.

Writers at the Superior level demonstrate the ability to explain complex matters, and to present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses. Their treatment of the topic is enhanced by the effective use of structure, lexicon, and writing protocols. They organize and prioritize ideas to convey to the reader what is significant. The relationship among ideas is consistently clear, due to organizational and developmental principles (e.g., cause and effect, comparison, chronology). These writers are capable of extended treatment of a topic which typically requires at least a series of paragraphs, but can extend to a number of pages.

Writers at the Superior level demonstrate a high degree of control of grammar and syntax, of both general and specialized/professional vocabulary, of spelling or symbol production, of cohesive devices, and of punctuation. Their vocabulary is precise and varied. Writers at this level direct their writing to their audiences; their writing fluency eases the reader's task.

Writers at the Superior level do not typically control target-language cultural, organizational, or stylistic patterns. At the Superior level, writers demonstrate no pattern of error; however, 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.

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## ADVANCED

Writers at the Advanced level are characterized by the ability to write routine informal and some formal correspondence, as well as narratives, descriptions, and summaries of a factual nature. They can narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity. Advanced-level writers produce connected discourse of paragraph length and structure. At this level, writers show good control of the most frequently used structures and generic vocabulary, allowing them to be understood by those unaccustomed to the writing of non-natives.

### Advanced High

Writers at the Advanced High 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.

### Advanced Mid

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 non-natives. When called on to perform functions or to treat issues at the Superior level, Advanced Mid writers will manifest a decline in the quality and/or quantity of their writing.



### Advanced Low

Writers at the Advanced Low 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.

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## INTERMEDIATE

Writers at the Intermediate level are characterized by the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of non-natives.

### Intermediate High

Writers at the Intermediate High 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.

### **Intermediate Mid**

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.

### **Intermediate Low**

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

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## NOVICE

Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-native speech.

### Novice High

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.

### Novice Mid

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.

### Novice Low

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.

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For more information on ACTFL Assessments, please visit:

[www.actfl.org/assessments](http://www.actfl.org/assessments)

For information on Proficiency and Assessment workshops,  
please visit:

<https://www.actfl.org/professional-learning/individual-workshops>

For information on Tester and Rater Certification, please visit:

<https://www.actfl.org/assessments/tester-rater-certifications>

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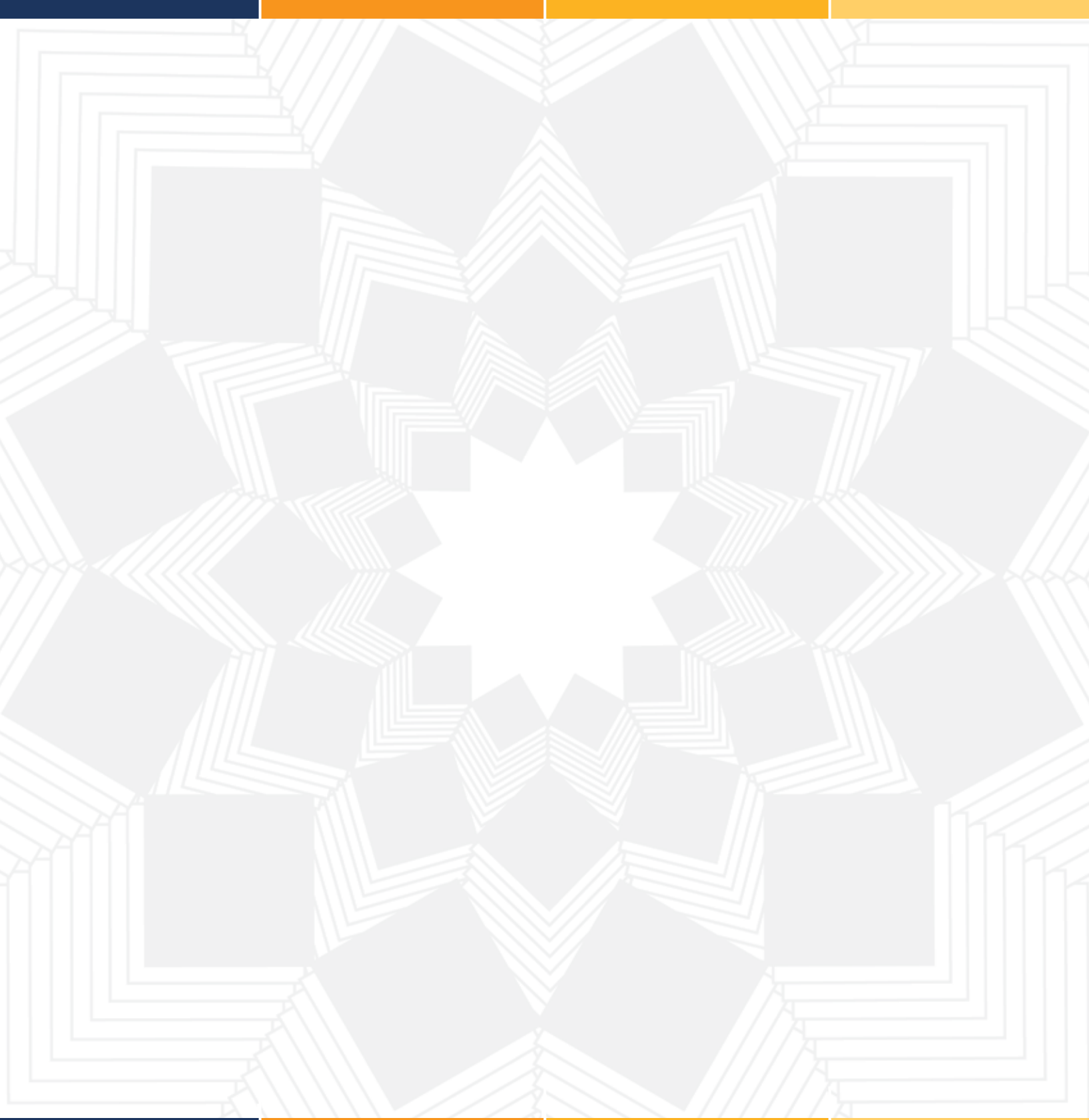
## INTERESTED IN SCHEDULING AN WPT?

To schedule a test, please visit:

Language Testing International's website at

[www.languagetesting.com](http://www.languagetesting.com)

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



**ACTFL**

1001 NORTH FAIRFAX STREET, SUITE 200 | ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

**[WWW.ACTFL.ORG](http://WWW.ACTFL.ORG)**