

***KENTUCKY STANDARD
FOR
WORLD LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY***



Photo from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development website ThinkKentucky.com.

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The Kentucky World Language Association

Members of the Kentucky World Language Association board of directors and volunteer members reviewed the standards document.

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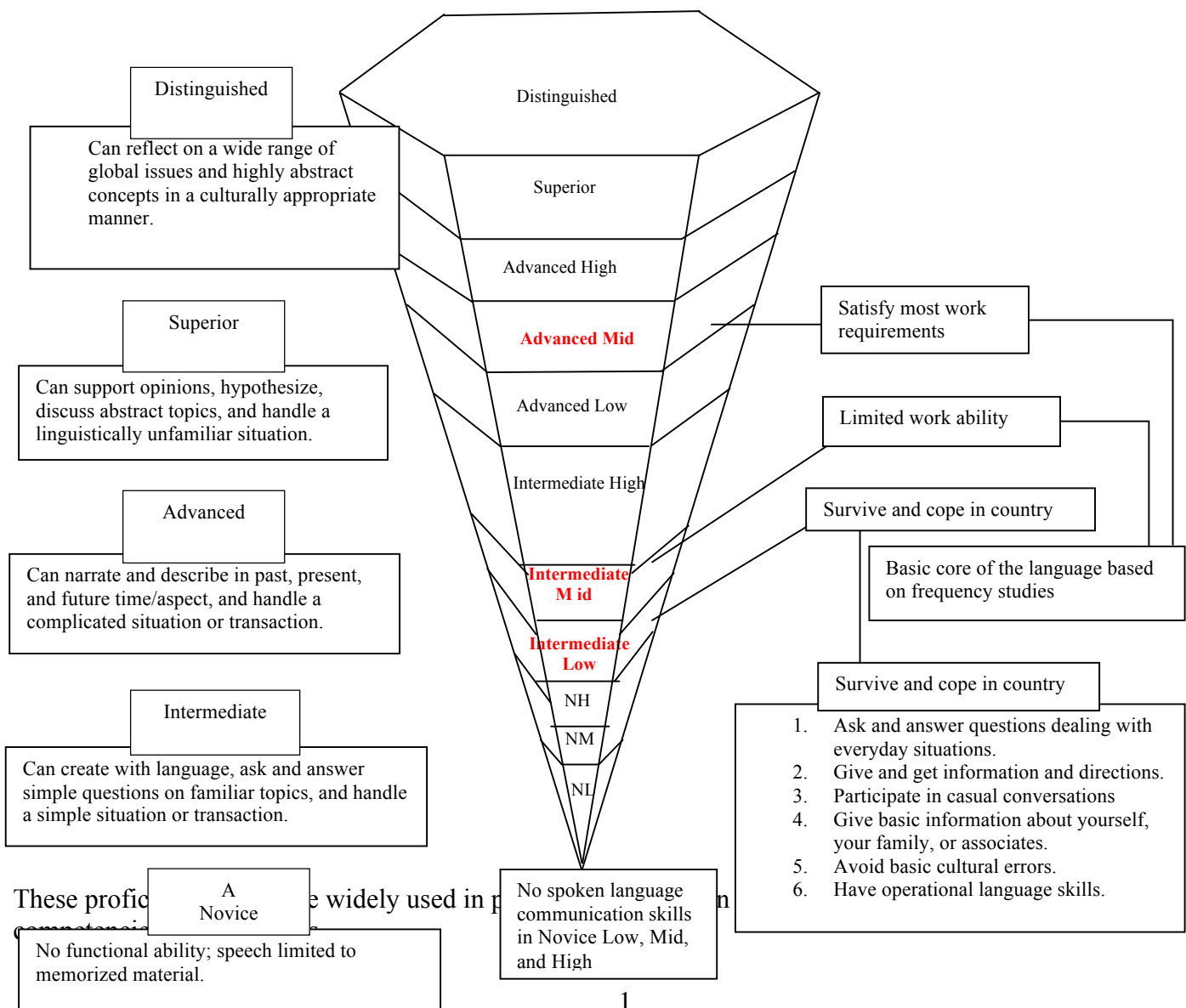
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency*?**

The *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* is a description of the competencies a Kentucky world language learner should demonstrate at three of five proficiency levels as defined in the *2012 American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines*. These guidelines are a description of what individuals can do at five levels of proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. They imply spontaneous and non-rehearsed performance in a real-world context. The three proficiency levels used for this document, novice, intermediate, and advanced, are further subdivided into low, mid and high sublevels. The highest levels of superior and distinguished are not included, as they are generally not considered expected outcomes of k-12 learning.

The ACTFL Proficiency Pyramid



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- **What is the reason for revising the 2009 *Kentucky Standard World Language Proficiency*?**

The basic proficiency approach, format and structure, and use of LinguaFolio® can-do statements in the 2009 document remain the same in the revised standard. These elements have served as a model for other states' world language standards. In 2012, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages revised the LinguaFolio® can-do statements to align more closely to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. These can-do statements are now included in the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. By adopting these statements, Kentucky embraces a common national standard for languages.

Another reason for revising the standard document was to develop Classical Language and American Sign Language adaptations to the standards. These languages were previously not addressed.

Finally, intercultural competency Can Do statements were developed to replace the self-reflective approach and give guidance to teachers and learners about charting intercultural progress on the proficiency scale.

- **What is the rationale behind the 2013 *Kentucky Standard World Language Proficiency*?**

The proficiency approach to learning languages focuses on performance and aims to build learners' capacity to use the language(s) of study at high levels of proficiency in functional and meaningful ways in college and life. In this way it prepares students to be college and career ready and builds state and national language capacity to strengthen our national defense strategies and to improve the Commonwealth's and the nation's economic competitiveness. Equally, it answers the growing need for the critical skills of language and cultural competencies for relationship building—a keystone for success in global business and diverse social environments.

It is the responsibility of the state's educational system to prepare students to compete in an increasingly international job market and to live in an increasingly diverse world. Foreign investment and international trade play an integral role in the Commonwealth's economy and both have grown dramatically in recent years. All are significant and vital parts of the state economy. Demographics of the state have also changed and the census shows a growing number of homes where English is not the home language.

Demonstrating proficiency in a language other than English offers potential benefits to learners. Career and technical education programs provide opportunities for learners to obtain industry-recognized certificates that document their skill attainment. Language proficiency can also be documented through a variety of nationally recognized assessments and used in portfolios for potential employment. Military careers now require officers to have second language proficiency and offer incentive pay to recruits and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) members. Additionally, candidates with world language proficiency are highly recruited for career opportunities in agriculture, health care, law enforcement, and business.

The rationale for the creation of this document stems from the need to provide a transparent, learner-friendly document that clearly describes benchmarks of what learners can do with language and culture at various stages. Its intent is to recognize that everyone can learn a language, to motivate learning and increase achievement through goal setting and self-assessment, and to facilitate building functional language skills and interculturality. The standard, benchmarks, indicators and targets are intended to guide learning and should be shared with learners and made available to parents and other stakeholders.

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- **What is the purpose of the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency*?**

In general, the purpose is to clarify the process of language learning. The standard document helps motivate learning by showing how to set achievable goals, self-assess and chart progress by using “I can” statements that facilitate this process. Learners, thus, take ownership of their individual language development. The standard document guides the facilitation of language learning toward more functional, communicative and intercultural goals, rather than those of language structure and cultural fact. It provides examples of learning targets that can be used regardless of age, grade level, or content studied. By posting or citing daily learning targets and celebrating success, teachers can model behavior that leads students to become autonomous learners. This document provides a clear understanding of what learners need to know and be able to do to move from one level to the next.

For learners, the purpose is to:

1. demystify language learning by simplifying and clarifying the process.
2. provide clear descriptions of what can be done with language at various levels and make expectations more realistic.
3. offer examples of small, incremental, and achievable goals that learners can use as models to set personal goals, self-assess, and chart their own progress.

For teachers, the purpose is to:

1. guide facilitation of language learning toward more functional, communicative and intercultural goals, rather than those of language structure and cultural fact.
2. provide examples of learning targets that can be used across ages, class levels, or content studied.
3. suggest learning experiences, scenarios, and integrated performance assessment tasks.
4. provide a cross-check for ensuring that each mode of communication and skill is addressed at each level.
5. clarify what learners need to be able to do in order to move from one level to the next.

For parents, administrators, and other stakeholders, the purpose is to:

1. demonstrate how world language learning has moved from a focus on grammar and translation toward effective communication, literacy, and cultural interaction.
2. demonstrate how the shift has occurred in classical languages from decoding and translation to interpretive reading proficiency.
3. define exactly what is expected of learners at different levels of proficiency.
4. emphasize real-world application for language use.

- **Why does the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* apply to all learners regardless of grade level?**

Learners begin new language experiences at different ages and progress toward proficiency at different rates. The amount of quality time spent in the target language (i.e., immersion vs. high school level I) is a determining factor in the proficiency level that learners will reach. Learners at similar ages frequently demonstrate varying proficiency levels in all three modes of communication when assessed. The *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* outlines the progression of learner skills, making it easier for teachers to identify a learner’s skill level and to differentiate learning for all learners.

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- **How does the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* apply to heritage speakers?**

Learners bring a variety of languages and cultures to Kentucky. They may have learned a language at home, in another country, or through local communities. Some may decide to pursue the study of their native language, while others may decide to study a different language. When heritage speakers choose to continue their native language, differentiated learning must take place to meet their needs.

When determining the placement of heritage speakers in language courses, consideration should be given to proficiency levels rather than seat time. Within language courses, the performance indicators allow teachers to set class goals while allowing learners to modify them to meet their own personal learning goals. Heritage speakers may demonstrate varying levels of proficiency across the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational. For example, they may perform at a higher level of proficiency in the interpersonal mode than in the presentational mode. The benchmarks and indicators identify the learner's skill and modify the learning experience to meet the learner's needs. When possible, specially designed language courses for heritage speakers are optimal.

- **How does the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* align with the *Common Core State Standards*?**

"The *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* contains four strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language.

These four strands are represented in the *National Standards for Learning Languages* by the Communication standards (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and the level of proficiency demonstrated. In addition, the standards of the other four goal areas for learning languages – Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities – also support and are aligned with the Common Core. These standards describe the expectations to ensure all students are college-, career-, and world-ready.

The Common Core strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening are captured in the standards for learning languages' goal area of Communication, by emphasizing the purpose behind the communication:

- Interpersonal (speaking + listening or writing + reading)
- Interpretive (reading, listening, viewing)
- Presentational (writing, speaking, visually representing)" (www.actf.org)

For more information go to

http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning_CCSS_Language_Standards_v6.pdf

- **How is the *Kentucky Standard for World Language for Proficiency* organized?**

STANDARD: Every learner will use a world language, in addition to English, to engage in meaningful, intercultural communication, understand and interpret the spoken and written language, and present information, concepts and ideas in local and global communities. Through learning the language, learners will connect with other disciplines and gain an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures and compare the language and cultures learned with their own.

Summary of Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

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The content of the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* is organized according to the national standards, blending the two focus goal areas of Communication and Cultures into one standard. The remaining goals of Connections, Comparisons, and Communities are embedded within Communication and Cultures.

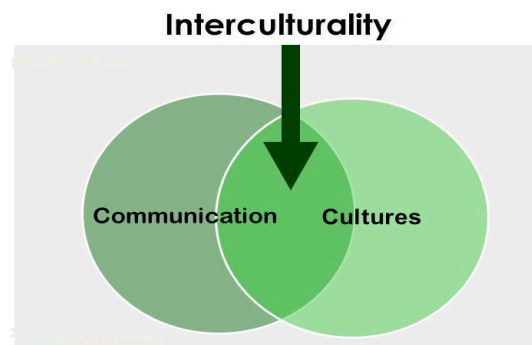
The language competencies are three modes of communication:

- interpretive listening and reading,
- interpersonal communication, and
- presentational speaking and writing.



The intercultural competencies are:

- investigation of cultures' products and practices
- understanding of cultures' perspectives (ways of thinking), and
- interaction, bridging one's own and the other's culture.



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Language Competencies define the modes of communication:

One-Way Receptive Negotiation of Meaning

Interpretive Listening

Interpretive Reading

Two-Way Communication

Interpersonal

Communication

One-Way Productive Communication

Presentational Writing

Presentational Speaking

Document Organization

| Language Competencies | Intercultural Competencies |
|--|---|
| 1: Interpretive Listening (IL) and Reading (IR) I can interpret information, concepts, and ideas from a variety of culturally authentic sources on a variety of topics. | Investigation of the Target Cultures' Products and Practices I can use my language skills to investigate the world beyond my immediate environment. |
| 2: Interpersonal Communication (IC) I can exchange information, concepts, and ideas with a variety of speakers or readers on a variety of topics in a culturally appropriate context. | 5: Understanding the Target Cultures' Perspectives I can recognize and understand others' ways of thinking as well as my own. |
| 3: Presentational Speaking (PS) and Writing (PW) I can present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in a culturally appropriate context. | 6: Cultural Interaction I can use my language skills and effectively in a cultural context. |

Intercultural Competencies define the skills needed for successful interaction with native speakers through the knowledge of a culture's products and practices to an understanding of that culture's perspectives (beliefs, values, attitudes, etc.)

Novice is one of the three levels of proficiency (Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced) with sublevels low, mid, and high.

Novice High (NH)

| Learner Benchmark NH.IL Interpretive Listening | Learner Benchmark NH.IR Interpretive Reading | Learner Benchmark NH.IC Interpersonal Communication | Learner Benchmark NH.PS Presentational Speaking | Learner Benchmark NH.PW Presentational Writing | Learner Benchmark NH.I Intercultural |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| NH.IL.1 I can understand some ideas about familiar topics expressed in phrases, simple sentences, and frequently used expressions. I can understand the main ideas in short conversations, messages and announcements. | NH.IR.1 I can understand some ideas from simple texts that contain familiar vocabulary. | NH.IC.1 I can communicate and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences, sometimes supported by memorized language. I can usually handle short social interactions in everyday situation by asking and answering simple questions. | NH.PS.1 I can provide basic information on familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences. | NH.PW.1 I can write descriptions and short messages to request or provide information on familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences. | NH.I.1 I can recognize some very familiar products and practices related to family, daily routines and celebrations in the target cultures. |
| Learning Indicators | Learning Indicators | Learning Indicators | Learning Indicators | Learning Indicators | Learning Indicators |
| NH.IL.1.1 I can understand some short conversations or descriptions. | NH.IR.1.1 I can understand information I need on familiar topics. | NH.IC.1.1 I can exchange some personal information. | NH.PS.1.1 I can describe aspects of my daily life using phrases and simple sentences. | NH.PW.1.1 I can describe aspects of my daily life using phrases and simple sentences. | NH.I.1.1 I can identify what makes up the basic meals of the target cultures and when they might be typically eaten. NH.I.1.2 I can recognize simple differences between my school schedule and that of a peer in the target culture. NH.I.1.3 I can recognize some basic differences in the make up of families in the target culture. |
| Sample Learning Targets | Sample Learning Targets | Sample Learning Targets | Sample Learning Targets | Sample Learning Targets | Sample Learning Targets |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can understand short conversations about hobbies and sports. I can understand conversations related to daily life and routine. I can understand short descriptions of people I know. I can... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can understand information from advertisements, brochures, lists, menus, or schedules. I can understand personal notes, emails, or postcards. I can understand some ideas from simple texts that contain familiar vocabulary. I can... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can ask and express a home address and email address. I can ask and express someone's nationality. I can ask and tell about family members and their characteristics. I can ask and tell about friends, classmates, and teachers. I can... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can describe my family and friends. I can describe my school. I can describe myself. I can describe my workplace. I can... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write a description of my family and friends. I can describe my school. I can write a description of myself. I can write describe my workplace. I can... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can sometimes use a target culture schedule for familiar activities. I can sometimes use a target culture calendar to identify a date. |

Learner Benchmarks are broad summary statements of what learners can do at specific proficiency levels. They allow learners to chart their progress on the continuum of learning.

Learning Indicators deconstruct the benchmarks to show the range of functions that learners can expect to experience and attain.

Sample Learning Targets are specific examples of functional language goals for a unit or lesson. Learning targets are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). Each series of **Sample Learning Targets** includes a blank "I can" statement as a reminder that learners and teachers can customize targets to meet individual needs.

Reading the Nomenclature: Numbers and Letters

Each core competency begins with the benchmark abbreviation of the proficiency level, such as Novice Mid (NM). The second pair of letters indicates the mode, such as Interpretive Reading (IR). Finally, the number of each indicator is given. For example:

NM.IR.1 = Novice-Mid, Interpretive Reading, Indicator 1

NM.IR.2 = Novice-Mid, Interpretive Reading, Indicator 2

NM.IR.3 = Novice-Mid, Interpretive Reading, Indicator 3, etc.

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- **How will the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* be used?**

Districts, schools, programs, and independent learners will

- create long-range program proficiency goals reflective of a shared vision.
- identify proficiency benchmarks for assessment at designated intervals.
- develop a backward-design plan to support learners in meeting identified proficiency benchmarks.

- **How will teachers use the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* to plan?**

In order to make the best use of this document, teachers will apply the principles of backward design to curriculum, unit, and lesson planning. The premise of backward design consists of three stages:

1. identify the desired results;
2. determine what evidence demonstrates that learners have achieved those results; and then
3. plan learning experiences that match. (Wiggins and McTighe).

The desired results are defined as the learning benchmarks (general) and the learning indicators (specific). Learners demonstrate proficiencies through Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA's) (a series of real-world tasks that assess the interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of communication).

As teachers implement the document they use the

- *standard* as the mission and vision that drives all language-learning decisions.
- *core competency* “I can” statements to ensure that all elements of language learning and interculturality are appropriately balanced.
- *benchmark* statements to establish the expectations for learner performance at the identified proficiency level.
- *learning indicators* to identify measurable, attainable goals.
- *sample learning targets* as examples of real-world contexts that can facilitate and motivate language learning.

- **Why and how do teachers and learners address intercultural competencies?**

The need for language competence in a global society touches every sector of life. From career preparation in an international workforce to citizen diplomacy and national defense to one's role in a social or virtual community, communication across cultures is key. Learners today must have the language proficiency to communicate with global audiences, the insight into the cultural perspectives that shape those audiences, and the ability to behave appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts. The series of can-do statements organized around the language proficiency levels (*2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*) guides learners in their development of such linguistic and intercultural competencies.

Intercultural competence, therefore, is the demonstration of interaction between the use of language skills and cultural knowledge. The national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* highlights the need for learners to understand the relationship between a culture's perspectives and its products and practices. A culture's perspectives reflect the values, beliefs and attitudes of its people. Through contact with products (i.e., monuments, laws, music, etc.) developed by a culture and practices (eating habits, shopping behaviors, use

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of space, etc.) demonstrated by its people, we come to understand the perspectives (i.e., values, attitudes, beliefs, etc.) of a people.

Demonstrating intercultural competence requires both the ability to use the language and to behave appropriately in cultural contexts. This may be particularly challenging for learners in the early stages of language learning, who may not have the linguistic skill to address cultural perspectives in the language of study. It is the responsibility of all those who facilitate language learning - be they teachers in Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), immersion, middle/ high school, virtual or after-school programs - to provide opportunities for learners to experience language and culture together. Learners and educators must recognize that language and culture are inseparable. This requires the near exclusive use of the language of study. Thus, as language proficiency grows, so will intercultural competence.

Just as the proficiency level can-do statements of novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior are cumulative in nature for language competencies, they are cumulative for intercultural competencies as well. Learners demonstrate evidence of novice-level competencies first, and then add evidence of intermediate-level competencies and so forth. They continually add to their repertoire as they move up the proficiency continuum, applying knowledge of products and practices before developing and applying an understanding of perspectives. The interaction of language and cultural competencies thus results in interculturality.

Unlike the language benchmarks and indicators, the interculturality can-do statements are not divided into low, mid, and high sublevels. Learners are expected to demonstrate the interculturality benchmarks when they have demonstrated the highest language proficiency sublevel. For example, learners who have demonstrated novice high language competencies should also be demonstrating the novice level interculturality competencies.

• How much language learning is enough?

The answer lies in one's purpose for learning language as indicated below in ACTFL's *Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World*. This table is a synthesis of data collected from employers who describe their language proficiency requirements for specific jobs and professions.

Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World

| Proficiency Levels | Language Functions | Corresponding Jobs | Examples of Who is Likely to Function at the Level |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Distinguished | <i>Ability to tailor language to specific audiences, persuade, & negotiate. Deal with nuance and subtlety</i> | Diplomat, Contract Negotiator, International Specialist, Translator/Interpreter Intelligence Specialist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly articulate, professionally specialized native speakers; - L2 learners with extended (17 years) and current professional and/or educational experience in the target culture |
| Superior | <i>Discuss topics extensively, support opinions, &</i> | University FL Professor, Business Executive, Lawyer, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well- educated native speakers - Educated L2 learners with |

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| Proficiency Levels | Language Functions | Corresponding Jobs | Examples of Who is Likely to Function at the Level |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| | <i>hypothesize. Deal with linguistically unfamiliar situations</i> | Judge, Financial Advisor | extended professional and/or educational experience in the target language environment |
| Advanced High | <i>Narrate and describe in past, present, and future and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.</i> | Physician, Military Linguist, Senior Consultant, Human Resources Personnel, Financial Broker, Translation Officer, Marketing Manager, Communications Consultant | - L2 learners with graduate degrees in language-related area and extended educational experience in the target environment - |
| Advanced Mid | | Fraud Specialist, Account Executive, Court Stenographer/Interpreter, Benefits Specialist, Technical Service Agent, Collection Representative, Estimating Coordinator | - Heritage speakers, informal learners, non-academic learners who have significant contact with language |
| Advanced Low | | Customer Service Agent, Social Worker, Claims Processor, K-12 Language Teacher, Police Officer, Maintenance Administrator, Billing Clerk, Legal Secretary, Legal Receptionist | - Undergraduate language majors <i>with</i> year-long study abroad experience |
| Intermediate High | <i>Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.</i> | Auto inspector, Aviation Personnel, Missionary, Tour Guide | - Undergraduate language majors <i>without</i> year-long study abroad experience |
| Intermediate Mid | | Cashier, Sales Clerk (highly predictable contexts) | - L2 learners with 6-8 year sequences of study (AP, etc.) or 4-6 semester college sequence |

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| Proficiency Levels | Language Functions | Corresponding Jobs | Examples of Who is Likely to Function at the Level |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Intermediate Low | | Receptionist, Housekeeping Staff | - L2 learners with 4 year high school sequence or 2 semester college sequence |
| Novice High Novice Mid Novice Low | <i>Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases.</i> | None | L2 learners after 2 years of high school study |

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As indicated in the Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World chart above, language preparation for career readiness necessitates higher levels of proficiency than established by current language requirements for high school graduation and college entrance.