



ACTFL WPT

EXAMINEE HANDBOOK

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TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Table of Contents

About the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)	4
WPT Test Structure	5
Background Survey: Identifying your personal activities and interests	5
Self-Assessment: Determining the level of the WPT	6
WPT Test Administration	7
Linguistic Functions and WPT Question Types	8
NOVICE LEVEL	8
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	9
ADVANCED LEVEL	9
SUPERIOR LEVEL	10
Writing Prompts in the WPT	11
Expectations for Each Major Level	13
NOVICE	13
INTERMEDIATE	13
ADVANCED	13
SUPERIOR	14
Accuracy and the WPT	15
NOVICE LEVEL	15
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	15
ADVANCED LEVEL	15
SUPERIOR LEVEL	16
Sublevels	17
The HIGH Sublevel	17
The MID Sublevel	17
The LOW Sublevel	17
Rating the WPT	18
Tips for Optimal Performance on the WPT	19
Logistics	19
Personal preparation	19
Test-taking tips	19
Frequently Asked Questions	21
Policies & Guidelines for the Use of the WPT	23
Questions? Contact us	24



About the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)

The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) is a standardized test for the global assessment of functional writing ability in a language. The WPT measures how well a person spontaneously writes in a language (without access to revisions and/or editing tools) by comparing his/her performance of specific writing tasks with the criteria stated in the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing](#), [Interagency Language Roundtable \(ILR\) Skill Level Descriptions – Writing](#), or the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#), depending on the type of language proficiency certification needed. For the purposes of this orientation, all explanations of standards and protocols are based on the ACTFL Guidelines. These principles apply to all rating tools and criteria.

The WPT assesses general language proficiency. It is not designed to assess what you learned in a specific language program, class, school or university, nor is it tied to a specific teaching method or book. Rather than assessing what you “know” about writing in the language, the WPT is an assessment of what you “can do” with the language. Proficiency, that is, how well a person can use the language as described in the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 - Writing](#), is the only factor that is assessed by the WPT.

The ACTFL WPT is a proctored 20-80-minute test, depending on your functional ability. The test is a carefully constructed assessment with four or five requests for written responses that cover different topics. It can be written using a paper and pencil format, or by using a computer that can access the internet. The WPT elicits a series of writing tasks such as those you might encounter in real-life. The prompts represent a range of proficiency levels, functions and topics, in formal and informal contexts, dealing with practical, social, and/or professional topics. The tasks and prompts are open-ended and written in English with the expectation that the responses be written in the target language.

The WPT is not an achievement test that assesses a writer’s acquisition of specific aspects of course and curriculum content. The tasks do not address when, where, why, or the way in which an individual learned to write in the target language. There is no right answer to the tasks, so you should focus on providing a spontaneous and genuine response to each task rather, than using memorized material. The WPT is evaluated in terms of your ability to write effectively and appropriately for real-life writing purposes. The writing sample is evaluated by an ACTFL-trained and certified rater to determine the level of proficiency demonstrated while performing these linguistic functions.

The ACTFL WPT is appropriate for a variety of purposes: language fluency certification, employment selection, program entrance and exit exams, course placement, college credit, program evaluation, and Translator or Teacher Credentialing.

To take a Demo version of the WPT, [click here](#).



WPT Test Structure

The goal of the WPT is to obtain a ratable written sample that both demonstrates the highest level at which you can write consistently, and the quantity and quality of your functional ability. The tasks explore functions at different proficiency levels, to identify the level at which you demonstrate sustained control, and the level at which evidence of breakdown is observable. Your responses provide detail about your ability to perform these functions and allow raters to assess your general writing proficiency. All raters in all languages are trained to follow the ACTFL rating protocols. Since all samples are compared to the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#), all ratings in all languages refer to the same criteria.

Background Survey: Identifying your personal activities and interests

Before taking the WPT, the first step is to fill out a Background Survey, which is a questionnaire about your life, work, school, home, personal activities and interests. The information you provide allows you to customize the WPT to your own interests. The variety of topics, the type of questions and the range of possible combinations the computer can generate allow for individually designed WPTs.

Below is a sample of the questions you will answer in the Background Survey:

What best describes your field of work?

- Business / Corporation
- Home Business
- Teacher /Educator
- No work experience

Are you currently working?

- Yes
- No

Are you currently going to school?

- Yes
- No

Where do you live?

- I live alone in a house or apartment.
- I live with non-family members in a house or apartment.
- I live with family members (spouse/children/other family members) in a house or apartment.
- I live in a school or a dormitory.
- I live in military barracks.

Additional questions about activities, hobbies, sports, and travel are included in the survey. To view the full Background Survey, go to the WPT demo at the site below.

<http://wptdemo.actfltesting.org/system-check-wpt/wpt-demo.html>

Self-Assessment: Determining the level of the WPT

Additionally, you will complete a Self-Assessment survey that helps to determine an appropriate writing proficiency range at which to target the assessment. The information you provide allows the computer to generate a test tailored specifically to your linguistic capabilities.

The Self-Assessment will allow you to assess your abilities in the target language. It includes six descriptions of how well a person can write in a language. You should select the description you feel most accurately describes your writing ability. This will determine which one of the three WPT test forms is generated for you.

IMPORTANT: If you need to meet a requirement of Advanced High or Superior, you must choose either statements 5 or 6 so that the WPT elicits linguistic functions required for those ratings.

Below are the self-assessment options.

Self-Assessment Descriptions

Self-Assessment Descriptions	
1	I can write only a few words (less than 10) in the target language.
2	I can write or list basic objects, colors, days of the week, foods, clothing items, numbers, etc. I cannot always make a complete sentence or write simple questions. My writing is understood by sympathetic natives accustomed to the writing of non-natives.
3	I can compose simple sentences to communicate limited correspondences on similar topics. I can meet practical writing needs and requests for information. I can write compositions primarily in the present time frame. I produce mainly sentences. My writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives.
4	I can meet basic work or academic writing needs. I can relate events or describe people and places related to my life and work. I can write simple summaries and compositions and handle routine work or school-related correspondences. I can write several sentences of a paragraph in length. Most natives can understand what I write.
5	I can meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. I can organize ideas and write narrations, summaries and descriptions of familiar topics or current events. I can easily produce writing that is several paragraphs in length. My writing is easily understood by natives not used to the writing of non-natives.
6	I can produce most formal and informal correspondences, complex summaries, reports and research papers on a variety of practical, social, academic or professional topics. Through my writing, I am able to explain complex matters, provide detailed narrations in most time frames, and present and support my opinions. My writing is easily understood by natives.

The Self-Assessment choice determines which test format will be generated for you. The choices made in response to the Background Survey and the Self-Assessment assure that the WPT generated for you will target your range of abilities and provide questions on topics familiar to you. Each WPT is customized and unique, tailored to your interests and your level of functional ability.

WPT Test Administration

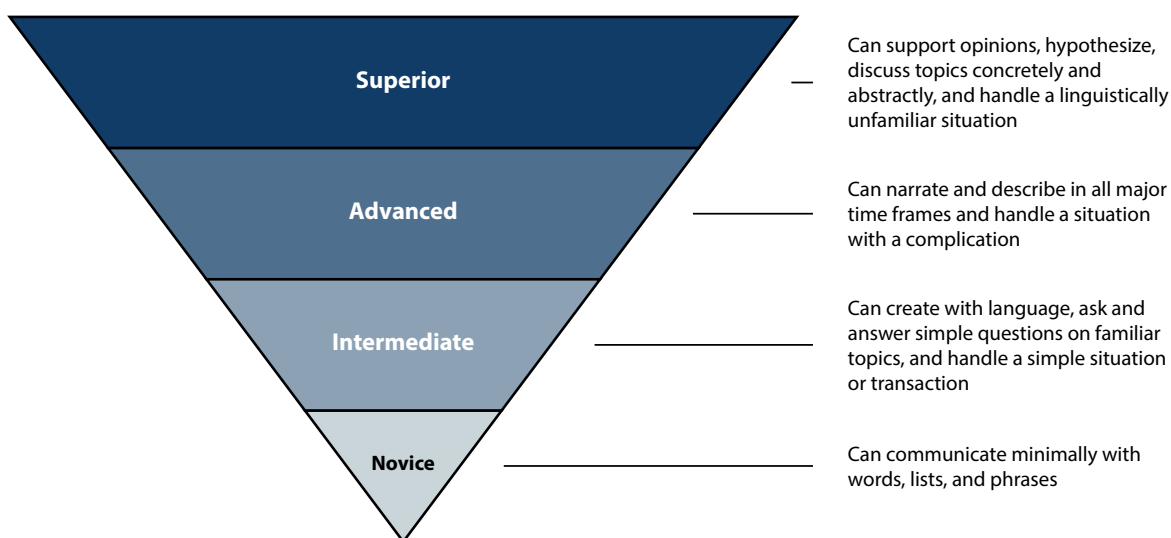
Once the Background Survey and the Self-Assessment are completed, the WPT provides detailed test instructions and directions on how to respond to the questions. A sample question is provided to make sure you understand what will be required of you when you take the test. You will have the opportunity to review the instructions and sample questions again before beginning of the test. 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. The general introduction suggests a time allotment (i.e.: 10 minutes, 20 minutes, etc.) for completing the response of each specific request. The total time to read the directions and complete all the writing tasks is 20-80 minutes, depending on the type of WPT required.

Once you are familiar with the system, you will be ready to begin the WPT.

Linguistic Functions and WPT Question Types

WPT prompts elicit different functions associated with the different levels in the ACTFL Proficiency scale. For each of the major levels of proficiency, there are specific types of communicative tasks that you must demonstrate. The WPT may touch on the functions in different topics, in order to determine the quantity and quality of your functional ability.

Below is a visual representation of the ACTFL scale with concise information about the four major levels tested by the WPT. As you can see, the ACTFL scale covers a full range of proficiency from Novice to Superior.



NOVICE LEVEL

Test forms addressing lower levels of proficiency will include Novice level questions. These prompts will provide a context in which you might have to create a list of words.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Examples of Novice-Level Questions and/or Requests
Lists	What colors do you want to paint your house? Make a list of the rooms in the house and the colors you want to use in each room.
Phrases	In preparation for your friend's party, make a list of the activities you want to prepare.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

At the Intermediate level, writers can write about their routines and personal interests. Questions will invite you to write with sentence-level discourse.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Examples of Intermediate-Level Questions and/or Requests
Simple description of a person, place or thing	Write a note to your parents in which you describe your best friend. What does he or she look like?
Simple description of an activity or event	Write an e-mail in which you tell a new friend about what you usually do at an American picnic.
Ask questions to get something you want or need	Write a letter to your host family to ask about their house and the family. Ask three or four questions to find out what you want to know.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Advanced-level questions invite you to write in detail about autobiographic topics and beyond. Writers will be asked to write about themselves and about their work, or community. Questions invite you to provide detail in paragraph-length discourse.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Examples of Advanced-Level Questions and/or Requests
Detailed descriptions of people, places, and things from your present and your past	You are writing a report about your internship in a computer company. Write about the area where you worked at the company. Provide a detailed description of the office and the people who worked there.
Detailed stories about something that has happened, is happening, or will happen	You just arrived from a camping vacation. Write a story about an interesting situation that happened while camping. What started the situation and how was it finally resolved?
Handle a complication that arises in a transaction	You bought an item on the internet but, when the package arrived, the item was not what the description advertised. Write a note to customer service. Explain what happened and request a replacement.
Report on a current event	You are writing a report for the local newspaper about the impact of climate changes in local weather. Report on the recent weather changes in your area and what has happened most recently. Comment on the most recent news.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

Superior-level questions invite you to reflect thoughtfully about issues and problems in our society. These questions ask you to organize your ideas in a logical manner, which will require more complex elaboration in an essay-like discourse. The context of these questions is more formal and will invite you to deal with a problem or issue at the community, national or global level.

Types of Questions and/or Requests	Examples of Superior-Level Questions and/or Requests
State and support an opinion	You have been invited to write a column for the local paper on the impact of air travel in our society. Write an essay about the most significant changes that aviation has produced for American society. In your opinion, what has been the most important contribution of air travel to contemporary American society? Explain why that contribution, and not others, is the most important.
Hypothesize about possible conditions and outcomes	Continue your essay commenting on air travel changes that could be adopted by airlines and airports to improve the travel experience. Suggest some changes and describe what impact these changes would have on the traveler if they were adopted.
Discuss topics in general, abstract terms	Your city is inviting proposals for collaboration between your university and the community. As president of the student union, you are writing a proposal to the community for a collaboration between the student community and the city governance. Provide a rationale for this collaboration. Explain why student organizations and local governance collaboration can be beneficial for the community and an educational opportunity for student leaders.



Writing Prompts in the WPT

A WPT Form 1 contains five separate prompts that target the Novice and Intermediate levels of proficiency. Both Form 2 and Form 3 contain four separate prompts, each of which encompasses multiple writing tasks (i.e. past narration, description, abstract treatment, etc.). Each prompt describes the audience, context and purpose of the writing task. The prompts on Form 2 are designed to elicit writing at the Intermediate and Advanced levels. The prompts on Form 3 are designed to elicit responses at the Advanced and Superior levels across a variety of contexts and content areas. Each request also describes the suggested length of the response (i.e. several sentences, multiple paragraphs, etc.).

Sample tasks

Question #1

An e-mail to a local student in a study abroad program

You are going abroad for a week-long culture class. The school has put you in contact with a local student so that you can get to know more about the school and the course. Write an e-mail to the student. Introduce yourself and ask questions about the class environment.

- 1 Introduce yourself. Write about where you come from and your academic institution.
- 2 Briefly explain why you want to take the class and what you want to learn during the week.
- 3 Ask 4-5 questions to learn about the class and the learning environment in the school abroad.

While the requests at lower levels are of a simple nature, it is important to read the instructions carefully to understand the specific functions and the context presented by the prompts. For example, in this sample prompt, the context is an e-mail to a local student on the topic of a study abroad program. The prompts ask you to introduce yourself and your academic institution, to explain the purpose of taking the class, and to ask questions about the school environment. Since you are writing an e-mail, full performance of the task will include a text of a few sentences, with some personal details and questions. Because it is an e-mail to a fellow student, it is expected that the communication is casual and informal.

Question #2

A newspaper article

You are writing a newspaper article about a recent weather disaster in your area. The newspaper director has asked you to provide general details about the disaster, to provide a human-interest story, and to reflect on the impact and consequences of climate change in the area.

- 1 Provide general information about the event (what happened, when, where, local conditions)
- 2 Narrate a specific story that happened during the disaster. Describe the experience in detail.
- 3 Reflect on the impact of climate change in the area, possible causes and consequences of more disasters in the area.

In this case, reading the instructions carefully will help you to understand the context and purpose of the writing tasks and the specific functions requested by the prompts. The context is a newspaper article on the topic of a weather disaster. The questions ask for a description of the disaster (Advanced), a narration of a specific case (Advanced) and an abstract consideration about climate change (Superior). Since you are writing a newspaper article, full performance of the task will include a text of several paragraphs, internal organization, details to add precision to the narration and description and interconnection between all elements of the answer. Because it is a newspaper article, you should make an effort to represent a formal and professional voice through the writing with a high level of accuracy and complexity. Because the questions are moving from Advanced-level functions to the Superior, there is an increase in the demand of complexity of the writing as the article progresses.



Expectations for Each Major Level

A final rating indicates both a major level and a sublevel on the ACTFL scale. The ACTFL scale has four major levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior. Each level represents a range in which writers demonstrate sustained functional ability of the linguistic functions associated with that level. The sublevel indicates a more precise range associated with the quality and quantity within the level.

NOVICE

If you are a Novice-level writer, you should be able to provide words, lists and phrases. Words and phrases may be misspelled. This is a natural process that happens when people first start studying a language and is perfectly acceptable at this level. In fact, it is the way new students of a language build their vocabulary, a sense of sentence structure, and, ultimately, the ability to create with language (Intermediate). A Novice-level writer may be able to provide lists of words that are used more frequently, such as the days of the week, colors, family members, objects, etc. At this level, the writer is not able to produce sentences yet.

For example, a Novice level writer can make a list of the food to be served at a picnic, or a list of colors you want in the rooms of your house. Memorized phrases or sentences correspond to the Novice level repertoire.

INTERMEDIATE

If you are an Intermediate-level writer, you should be able to write about your life and routines. You should be able to write in sentences about your daily habits and the things you usually do when you are at home—during the week and on the weekends. You might be able to perform simple linguistic functions at work, such as requesting a meeting or asking simple questions.

An Intermediate-level writer is able to maintain sentence-level discourse. The sentences that this type of writer generates allow her or him to express ideas and engage with other readers of the language socially. Intermediate-level writers can tell people what they regularly do at work, and they can formulate questions to find out information. On the other hand, an Intermediate-level writer is not able to organize and connect those sentences to form paragraphs, nor is this writer able to control the language well enough for a reader to be able to understand whether an action or event happened in the past, present, or future.

For example, an Intermediate level writer can write a simple message in sentences, or string of sentences about a party, and ask questions about what activities someone might enjoy doing for the evening.

ADVANCED

An Advanced-level writer is a storyteller. At this level, the language production is paragraph-length. That means a writer's responses are organized, with a beginning, middle, and end. It also means that there is a connection, not only among ideas, but also among the sentences of a response.

Advanced-level prompts will elicit the use of appropriate time frames and the reader should be able to understand when the action or event happened. Advanced level writers demonstrate control over time frames by using the appropriate markers to indicate present, past or future (i.e. verbal forms, time indicators, chronology, etc.). Advanced-level writers do not need sympathetic readers who have to fill in the gaps of the narrative or description in order to understand the writer's idea.

Advanced-level writers use paragraphs to tell readers stories that happened in the past, actions that take place in their daily lives, and events that are going to happen in the future. When someone reads a text from an Advanced-level writer, there is no confusion about what happened or when it happened. Like Intermediate-level writers, Advanced-level writers can handle simple social transactions. Furthermore, they can handle these transactions in a more formal environment, using the language to address complications that might arise during the transaction (e.g., the package did not arrive on time or the delivery was damaged). This ability allows them to find solutions to resolve the transaction successfully. In addition, Advanced-level writers can write about things they did not personally experience; but they cannot write extensively without returning to topics that are part of their lives and their own experiences.

For example, an Advanced-level writer can tell a story in detail about a favorite childhood memory, or report events from the local community, in paragraph-length discourse that is comprehensible even for those who are not accustomed to dealing with learners of the language.

SUPERIOR

A Superior-level writer is able to produce responses that are multiple paragraphs in length. These paragraphs are organized with a beginning, middle, and end to express opinions and deal with topics that are no longer part of the writer's everyday experiences. Rather, a Superior-level writer deals with topics on a societal and sometimes a global level (i.e. he or she writes about how issues affect society and countries). Superior-level writers are not only able to accomplish all of the tasks of the other levels (i.e. they can tell stories and control time in their responses, etc.), but they are also able to write about ideas at a higher level than writers at the Novice-Advanced levels.

Superior-level writers understand what level of language they are supposed to use in each situation, and they can write flexibly at whatever level is necessary to communicate their ideas successfully.

At the Superior level, you will be expected to produce extended discourse, which means that your responses need to be multiple paragraphs in length. The paragraphs must be well organized and connected. They also need to be easily understood by all native language readers. In addition to the length of your responses, you need to be able to deal with complex topics to express your opinion or deal hypothetically or abstractly with the subject.

For example, a Superior-level writer can write about changes in society caused by digital resources and interpersonal communication. The focus on the topic should be on a large scale (i.e. how it affects people, communities, countries, the world, etc.) and not personal experiences (that would most likely be an Advanced-level response). Writing should have few if any errors. Patterns of errors (such as problems of agreement, missing language features, etc.) that distract the reader from the message are considered breakdown from the Superior level to the Advanced level.



Accuracy and the WPT

Writing with a high level of accuracy to convey a clear message to the reader is the goal of every writer. Mistakes can cause problems of comprehensibility and can distract the reader from the writer's intent or message. Additionally, written mistakes can be visual evidence of the writer's limited control over the written language. For these reasons, lack of control over grammatical features of the language can have an impact on the final rating.

At higher levels of writing proficiency, the expectations for clarity in communication increase according to the content and context of the communicative task and the complexity required to perform the linguistic function optimally. For example, accuracy in preparing a list of clothing items to pack for camping is much less significant than the level required to provide an explanation about why the community fund raising activities were cancelled. The degree of empathy and effort required from the reader is also reduced as the level of proficiency increases to the point that, at the Superior level, pattern of errors or errors that distract the reader from the message can impact the final rating. When considering the sublevels, writers improve on the quality of their text as they progress within the level. For example, at the Advanced level, a writer's accuracy in narrating and describing increases within the level as he or she approaches the Superior level.

NOVICE LEVEL

Writers at the Novice level display limited accuracy while writing lists of words or memorized phrases. Errors, such as missing letters or special script, confusing similar spellings, or errors in agreement may affect comprehensibility. A reader will require knowledge of language learners' writing habits and may still have problems understanding the message.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Writers at the Intermediate level will be able to compose sentences and string of sentences. Spelling mistakes or other structural errors that may demand an additional effort from the reader to understand the message may be evident in the Intermediate-level writing. A reader may require knowledge of language learners' writing habits and some effort, but she or he will be able to understand the written message.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Writers at the Advanced level will be able to link sentences and ideas in internally connected paragraph-length messages. Control of time frames and other elements required to narrate and describe are demonstrated. The Advanced-level writer is able to communicate without the reader's support or assistance. Errors do not require the reader's knowledge of the writer's native language in order to understand the message. Despite mistakes, the reader will be able to understand the message clearly.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

Writers at the Superior level will be able to communicate complex ideas in lengthy essay-like discourse. Length requires discourse to be internally connected and organized. There are no patterns of errors in frequently-used structures that may reveal the writer as someone who is learning to write the language. Writers demonstrate control over structure and language features to develop complex ideas and hypothetical discourse. Errors do not distract the reader from the thoughts and ideas presented in the message.



Sublevels

Sublevels provide a more precise description within the level. The three sublevels are: High, Mid, and Low. Sublevels are assigned on the ACTFL scale for Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. Superior does not have any sublevels. Sublevels provide detail within the level in terms of the amount and quality of language produced, and the functional ability demonstrated at each major level. The ACTFL Guidelines describe each rating based on the quantity and quality at the level, and functional ability control at the next level.

The HIGH Sublevel

Writers at the High sublevel can write with ease and confidence when performing the functions of their respective level. They are capable of functioning most of the time at the next higher major level and may spontaneously raise the exchange to that level, but they are unable to sustain language at the next higher level without intermittent lapses or evidence of difficulty.

For example, a *Novice High* writer would be able to create with language and produce sentences at the Intermediate level, but he or she would not be able to maintain that level of production all the time. There would be evidence of breakdown when the writer would not be able to sustain the criteria of the Intermediate and would resort to Novice-level performance (words and phrases).

The MID Sublevel

There are many kinds of writers that match the description of the Mid sublevel, depending on the amount of text produced, the quality of the text (how well the writer communicates) in all the functions associated with the level, and/or the degree to which he or she controls language features from the next higher major level.

For example, an *Intermediate Mid* writer would be able to communicate about his or her own routine activities by creating sentence-level responses consistently throughout the test, ask questions and provide information to handle a social transaction (finding out information about a business, buying/selling something, dealing with travel situations, etc.), with good quality and abundance of language. Additionally, an *Intermediate Mid* writer would demonstrate some features of the Advanced level.

The LOW Sublevel

Writers at the Low sublevel work hard to hold on to the major level of proficiency for which they have qualified. They meet the minimal requirements for the level, and do not break down to the level below.

For instance, an *Advanced Low* writer would be able to just hold onto the Advanced level by producing short paragraphs and minimally controlling the linguistic function in the major time frames. He or she would be able to narrate and describe in the past, present, and future, but the reader may need to make an effort to understand the intent of the writer's message. Additionally, an Advanced Low writer may struggle to handle social interactions with complications (e.g. lost reservations, a borrowed item that got broken, etc.).



Rating the WPT

ACTFL-Certified WPT raters are highly specialized language professionals who have completed a rigorous training process. They are trained to follow strict rating protocols, procedures and guidelines to rate the WPT. The responses to each question are considered based on the purpose of the prompt and the text type required to complete the task. To determine your rating, the rater uses all of the information gained from reviewing your responses to decide the highest level of sustained functional ability. In order to achieve a rating, you must meet all of the requirements of that level (noted in the guidelines). The level is decided by the evidence of sustained performance of the linguistic functions associated with the level. Once the major level is identified, the sublevel is assigned based on the quantity and quality of the performance at level, and the evidence of performance at the next higher level.

The WPT rating process is performed exclusively through Language Testing International (LTI), the ACTFL Testing Office. Once a WPT is completed, LTI assigns the test to a rater for rating. Your test will not be released to you or any other party under any circumstances. Only the rating will be released. Any questions about the rating should be sent to LTI directly at customercare@languagetesting.com.

Each rating is fully described in the ACTFL Guidelines. You can study the guidelines in detail at <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/english/writing>. The site includes translations of the document and samples at each major level in in 10 languages.



Tips for Optimal Performance on the WPT

Logistics

- Scheduling of a WPT is handled by LTI. Make sure to follow their instructions. If you have any questions, contact LTI immediately at customercare@languagetesting.com.
- Make sure that the area where you are taking the WPT is quiet and that you will not be interrupted while you take the test.
- During the WPT, you are not allowed to check documents or dictionaries, or ask for help. Rely exclusively on what you can do. If the proctor detects that you are using help, the test will be discontinued or cancelled.

Personal preparation

The best advice for doing well on the WPT is PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE! The WPT is an assessment of what you can do with your language at the time of the test. Your final rating describes your general functional ability and your current writing skills. The final rating describes your sustained functional ability, that is, the level at which you show full control over the functions. Only language development over time will impact your rating. Last-minute preparation will not improve your functional ability throughout the test and last-minute language learning, grammar review or vocabulary practice will most likely not improve your final results. Knowing more about the language will not affect your rating unless it reflects on what you can do. Focus your writing practice on communicating naturally in the language, focusing on the message rather than the language forms.

As with any test, you should prepare by being well-rested and alert, maintaining a positive attitude throughout the test.

Test-taking tips

- Respond to the questions in the Background Survey and the Self-Assessment as accurately as you can. The prompts in the test are generated based on your answers, so make sure that you provide the best answers you can to generate a test that truly fits your interests and level of ability.
- Make sure that you understand the technology involved in answering your test. Follow the instructions on how to add special characters or use the appropriate script. Before you finish the test, review your answers to check correct spelling, punctuation, accentuation or any other feature required in writing in the language. Be as accurate as you can.
- Read the prompts carefully and address all the requirements in the questions fully. Keep in mind that each component of the questions addresses a variety of linguistic functions. Respond accordingly. Your answers should demonstrate your ability to perform these functions fully. If your answer is incomplete or does not respond fully to the request, your final rating may be affected. Review each question before you move to the next task and make sure that you have responded to the prompt fully.

- Write only in the target language and avoid using words from other languages. Express your ideas as clearly as possible, and, as much as you can, demonstrate that you can function in a monolingual environment without the support of your reader. If you do not know a word or expression, explain or paraphrase in order to convey your message. Use other words, explain or give examples to get the message across.
- Do not prepare for the WPT by memorizing responses. Do not try to incorporate materials you have practiced in advance. The tester has been trained to recognize memorized material. Memorized responses prepared in advance can count against you, whereas creating real answers to the questions will provide better at-level responses. Focus on providing legitimate answers to the questions.
- If you are asked to write a story about an experience that took place in the past, make sure you tell the story in detail using appropriate time frames and structures. If you are asked to write about a future plan, you should also make sure you use the appropriate forms and structures for that time frame too. Sustained control of the time frame is required for the Advanced level. While lack of control of aspect (i.e. present perfect vs. past perfect) does not prevent you from sustaining functional ability at the Advanced level, a lack of control over the time frame may result in breakdown to the level below.
- Do not focus on verb formations (or any other grammar point) exclusively. The Advanced level requires control over the use of connectors, time expressions and other language elements that may contribute to the development of the narration in paragraph-length discourse.
- Short answers can work against you because they do not show the breadth and depth of your writing ability. Provide details in as well-organized discourse as you can.
- If you are asked to state and support your opinion, make sure to support your point of view with well-organized arguments. Try to maintain the abstract treatment of the topic: a description of facts about what happened is an Advanced-level explanation, while a consideration of the issues involved in the problem provide a Superior-level treatment of the topic.
- If you are asked to speculate about some possible conditions and/or outcomes, make sure you use the appropriate hypothetical structures for the language. Maintain the hypothetical treatment of a topic throughout your response. Consider each topic from an abstract perspective and consider ideas instead of facts.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I request the WPT?

Organizations wanting to schedule a WPT for candidates must set up a free account with Language Testing International (LTI). In the account, LTI collects some basic administrative information and then provides access to a secure web-based scheduling utility. Using this utility, the organization can request assessments, track those requests, confirm appointments and see results. Because the WPT is computer-based, organizations can arrange for candidates to take the assessment in a proctored setting at any time. All that is needed is a computer that meets the minimum specifications required by LTI in an appropriate test environment. Results of assessments are also posted and stored on the client utility website, allowing organizations to track their testing activity easily in a single location.

Individuals who need to test and certify their writing ability or literacy in a target language can order and take the assessment by selecting the appropriate Language Proficiency Certification based on their need. To view individual language proficiency options and pricing, [click here](#). The actual test is taken via a computer with an Internet connection, and is proctored via LTI's remote proctoring services.

How is the WPT proctored?

Organizations can arrange to proctor WPTs on location. An authorized, responsible individual, ideally a member of the HR department or faculty of the organization requesting the assessment, must proctor the tests. This individual, nominated by the organizing agency, will sign a form and provide it to LTI in advance of the assessment to confirm the identity of the candidate and the conditions under which the test will be taken. Individuals can arrange to take the test via LTI's remote proctoring program by signing up for one of the Language Proficiency Certification options offered to individuals by LTI.

What is the cost of the WPT?

Organizations, please fill out a [Contact Us](#) form to receive discounted group or organizational pricing. Government clients can find pricing on our GSA Schedule [here](#).

In what languages is the WPT available?

Albanian (Booklet form only), Arabic, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, English, French, German, Greek (Modern), Haitian Creole (Booklet form only), Hebrew (Booklet form only), Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian Farsi, Polish, European Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese.

Who takes the WPT test?

The WPT is an assessment of writing skills in a target language that is used by individuals, companies and organizations around the world: From students in Canada, to the New York City Department of Education in the United States, to employees at Samsung in Korea and

many other clients. ACTFL assessments have become the tests people trust to have an expert assessment of their communicative abilities in a language based on well-respected and reliable language proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, ILR, CEFR).

Why do candidates take the WPT?

Many people take the WPT every year. The people who take the WPT usually fall into one of two categories: 1) individual test-takers and people who have been directed to take the WPT by a company, academic institution, etc., and 2) individuals who take the WPT to have credentials that validate their language proficiency levels, so they can work as bilingual employees, translators, interpreters, tutors, etc. Companies, universities, schools, hospitals and other types of organizations often require current and potential employees to take the WPT to ensure that they can write the language at a level that will allow them to do their work successfully. In both cases, knowing exactly what a person can do in a language and being able to validate it provides individuals and potential employees with life and career opportunities. It also provides companies, universities and other organizations with the certainty that they have employees who can use the language well enough to do their jobs successfully.

How is the WPT administered?

Language Testing International (LTI) administers the scheduling, testing and rating of all WPTs.

How do I prepare to take the WPT?

The best way for you to prepare is to practice writing the language in real-world situations. Try your best to find situations in which you have to write the language to communicate. For instance, depending on your level of ability, you can write short messages to friends and colleagues. Write stories about things you do regularly at home, school, or work. Write about things that happened to you in the past or your plans for the future. Expressing your opinion about anything, from the news to sports or entertainment, will also help you improve what you can do in the language. Working to build your skills, so you can communicate in the language as someone would do in the real world, is the best way to get ready to take the WPT.

To be successful on the WPT, it is also important to understand what a writer can do at each level of proficiency so that you can understand what is expected from you when you respond to the prompts. The descriptions of the four major proficiency levels of the WPT are included in previous sections in this booklet.



Policies & Guidelines for the Use of the WPT

Confidentiality

Your answers in the WPT shall remain the sole property of ACTFL and LTI. They will not be given to you or to anyone else under any circumstances. Only your final rating will be released.

Rehearsed Material

The WPT is a test of your ability to express yourself spontaneously in a language. Certified ACTFL WPT Raters will evaluate what you can do in the language when you are writing. In order to do this effectively, your responses must be authentic. While you should make every effort to improve your abilities in writing, you should not try to memorize responses prior to taking the WPT. If you prepare a response or use responses from online sources or books, you will not receive an accurate rating. Proficiency is characterized by spontaneous language use. ACTFL WPT raters are experienced in identifying rehearsed responses, so, if you use them, you may not receive a rating for your test.

It sounds simple, but practicing your writing skills as much as you can in the language is the best preparation for a successful WPT assessment. We wish you success in improving your language skills and for your next WPT test.



Questions? Contact us

If you have any additional questions, please contact us at:

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