

Alignment of the ACTFL Proficiency Ratings to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)



INTRODUCTION

This document supports the justification for designating the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) as a Third Party Language Testing (TPLT) organization for Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC). ACTFL, through its sole licensee, Language Testing International (LTI), provides internationally recognized language proficiency assessments in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. ACTFL-certified tests are developed to evaluate a candidate's ability to produce and comprehend language in real-world scenarios. ACTFL-certified testers, raters and item writers use the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – 2012* as a basis for developing and evaluating assessments. These guidelines describe a language user's functional language ability, i.e., what one can and cannot do with language both receptively and productively.

ACTFL assessments provide ratings according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). Because the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) align with the CEFR, ACTFL assessments may also be used to provide CLB ratings.

The sections that follow this introduction detail the correspondences between ACTFL assessments and CEFR ratings.

LINKING ACTFL TESTS TO THE CEFR

There are several major frameworks for learning, teaching, and assessing foreign language skills: the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, ILR Skill Level Descriptions, the CLB, and the CEFR. These frameworks form the basis of major testing and certification systems. In addition, these frameworks are used for textbook development, curriculum development, and educational standards.

In 2010, the American Association for Teachers of German (AATG), in collaboration with ACTFL, launched the first of a series of four ACTFL-CEFR Alignment Conferences. The goal of this series was to establish an empirically-based alignment between the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* and the CEFR and the tests based on those frameworks. The conferences brought together leading proficiency experts from the U.S., Canada, and Europe, representing 15 organizations from fourteen different countries and received support from both US and EU organizations¹. The conference series developed into a formal collaboration between ACTFL and the European Center for Modern Languages (ECML), a Council of Europe (CoE) institution, to explore such topics as the elements of proficiency, pathways from frameworks to the classroom, linking language proficiency to goals in higher education, and establishing common language policy goals.

The transatlantic cooperation has resulted in many publications to better educate the experts and the public on both frameworks. The collaboration has led to, for example, the development and publication of the ACTFL “Can Do” statements that better correspond to the CEFR, several

¹ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Council of Europe Language Policy Unit, European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), Institute for Test Research and Test Development (ITT), Leipzig, University of Leipzig, Brigham Young University, American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), University of Cambridge ESOL, Goethe Institute, American Consulate General of the United States, The European Language Certificates (telc), Gesamtverband Moderne Fremdsprachen, and Language Testing International.

studies linking ACTFL tests to the CEFR, and the inclusion in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* of terminology that reflects its similarities to the CEFR. In 2015, the Council of Europe selected a total of 54 ACTFL reading and listening proficiency test items in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish to demonstrate CEFR levels A1 to C1 in the Council of Europe's Illustrative Reading and Listening Test Tasks and Items project (published at the CoE website 2016).

TEST-BY-TEST ALIGNMENTS: CEFR RATINGS FOR ACTFL PROFICIENCY TESTS

Based on the information and discussions from the ACTFL-CEFR Conferences and resulting papers and journals, ACTFL worked with an EU-based research group to develop an ACTFL-CEFR crosswalk to be able to offer CEFR ratings for ACTFL assessments. The research generated by the ACTFL-CEFR Conferences very clearly showed that frameworks cannot be aligned based solely on their constructs (see e.g. the papers compiled in Tschirner 2012). Frameworks can only be aligned on a test by test basis. That is to say, CEFR tests need to be linked to the ACTFL Framework, and ACTFL tests need to be linked to the CEFR.

To date, the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and the OPIc have been linked to the CEFR using the CoE's Standard Setting Approach (Bärenfänger & Tschirner 2012; Council of Europe 2009; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2012), while the ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) and Reading Proficiency Test (RPT) were linked using empirical validation studies in addition to the CoE's Standard Setting Approach (Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2013a; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2013b; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2015; Tschirner, Bärenfänger, & Wisniewski 2015).

RECEPTIVE SKILLS – LINKING ACTFL TESTS TO THE CEFR

In a series of validation studies, the ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test (RPT) and Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) were validated and linked to the CEFR (Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2013a; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2013b; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2015; Tschirner, Bärenfänger, & Wisniewski 2015). The initial validation studies were done in English using a side-by-side study approach. Test-takers took both the ACTFL RPT and LPT and NATO's Benchmark Advisory Test (BAT) Reading and Listening, which assess reading and listening proficiency in English according to NATO's STANAG 6000 scale equivalent to the U.S. Government's Inter-Agency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency scale. The studies provided clear internal and external validity arguments, and they established the correspondences as shown in Table 1 below (Swender, Tschirner, Bärenfänger 2012; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2011).

Because RPTs and LPTs are based on the same construct for all languages (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Reading and Listening), because they follow the same blueprint, and because they follow the same quality assurance procedures, it can be claimed that RPT and LPT ratings are equivalent across languages. In addition, all items are piloted and evaluated rigorously using both classical and IRT approaches to item validation (Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2013 a and b). Moreover, in 2015, these correspondences were empirically shown to be the same for Spanish,

French, and German (Tschirner and Bärenfänger 2015). Finally, another standard-setting procedure verified the established link between ACTFL and CEFR ratings on ACTFL tests for German (Tschirner, Bärenfänger, & Wisniewski 2015).

PRODUCTIVE SKILLS – LINKING ACTFL TESTS TO THE CEFR

In 2011, the ACTFL OPI and OPIc were linked to the CEFR using the CoE's Standard-Setting Approach (Council of Europe 2009), and the correspondences shown in Table 1 were established (Bärenfänger & Tschirner 2012; Tschirner & Bärenfänger 2012). The study was done in German. Because the construct of the OPI/OPIc is the same across languages, and because both rater training and proficiency assessment follow the same rigorous quality assured standards for all languages, these results may be generalized to all languages for which there exists an OPI or OPIc procedure (close to 100 at present). A Standard-Setting Study to link the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) to the CEFR will be completed by the end of 2016. It is assumed that the correspondences will be very similar, if not identical, because the WPT was developed on the basis of the OPI. Note that the correspondences for the productive modalities are different than for the receptive modalities.

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OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN ACTFL, CLB, AND CEFR RATINGS AND ACTFL ASSESSMENTS

As previously demonstrated, CEFR ratings can be assigned to ACTFL assessments in all languages. Since both ACTFL and the CLB have been linked to the CEFR, correspondences between ACTFL and CLB can be established and justified.

ONE-DIRECTIONAL ALIGNMENT:
Receptive Skills – Reading and Listening

ONE-DIRECTIONAL ALIGNMENT:
Productive Skills – Speaking and Writing

Canadian Language Benchmarks	Rating on ACTFL Assessment (LPT, RPT or L&Rcat)	Corresponding CEFR Rating	Canadian Language Benchmarks	Rating on ACTFL Assessment (OPI, OPIc or WPT)	Corresponding CEFR Rating
CLB 1	Novice Mid	A1.1	CLB 1	Novice Low	A1.1
CLB 2	Novice High	A1.2	CLB 2	Novice Mid	A1.2
CLB 3	Intermediate Low	A2.1	CLB 3	Novice High	A2.1
CLB 4	Intermediate Mid	A2.2	CLB 4	Intermediate Low	A2.2
CLB 5	Intermediate High	B1.1	CLB 5	Intermediate Mid	B1.1
CLB 6	Advanced Low	B1.2	CLB 6	Intermediate High	B1.2
CLB 7	Advanced Mid	B2.1	CLB 7	Advanced Low	B2.1
CLB 8	Advanced Mid+	B2.2	CLB 8	Advanced Mid	B2.2
CLB 9	Advanced High	C1.1	CLB 9	Advanced Mid +	C1.1
CLB 10	Superior	C1.2	CLB 10	Advanced High	C1.2
CLB 11/12	Distinguished	C2	CLB 11/12	Superior	C2

COMPARISON OF CLB PROFILES OF ABILITY AND ACTFL GUIDELINES

The following section presents the CLB Profiles 4–10 for Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing and highlights those criteria that are identical to the corresponding ACTFL Proficiency level descriptors. As evidenced by the tasks and criteria that ACTFL and CLB share, the two systems correlate.

PROFILES OF ABILITY ACROSS STAGES 1–3 **LISTENING**: CLB AND ACTFL COMPARISON

CLB 4 – INTERMEDIATE MID

The listener can:

Understand, with considerable effort, simple formal and informal communication on topics of personal relevance.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Sometimes supported by visual or contextual clues
- Face-to-face or via digital media (usually one-one-one or in small groups)
- Related to topics of personal relevance
- Relatively short
- In non-demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands and expanded range of factual details and some implied meanings
- Recognizes meaning based on simple sentences and structures and shows and initial understanding of some complex sentences and structures
- Sometimes relies on contextual clues for comprehension
- Begins to recognize some common registers and idioms
- May need some assistance (such as repetition paraphrasing, speech modification or explanation)
- Comprehension on the phone is difficult.
- Communication is face-to-face (usually one-on-one or in small groups), very briefly on the phone or via digital media (video, online).
- Speech is clear and at a slow to normal rate.
- Visual clues and setting support the meaning when the topic or situation is less routine or familiar.
- Listening texts can be short, informal, monologues, presentations, dialogues, or instructions.
- Monologues and presentations are relatively short (up to about 10 sentences).
- Dialogues are relatively short (up to about 8 turns).
- Instructions contain simple and compound structures, and longer phrases of location, movement and manner.

- Language is simple and related to everyday topics and situations.
- Topics are related to familiar, everyday situations of personal relevance.
- Context is non-demanding (i.e., routine, predictable) and personally relevant.
- Response to task does not require much speaking or writing.

CLB 5 – INTERMEDIATE HIGH

The listener can:

Understand most moderately complex formal and informal communication, including some abstract concepts and ideas related to life experience.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one or in small groups)
- Related to relevant topics and life experience
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands overall meaning or intent
- Identifies main ideas, supporting details and implied meanings
- Understands language that is generally concrete with some abstract elements and a range of common vocabulary
- Recognizes meaning based on a developing understanding of complex sentences and structures
- May occasionally rely on contextual clues for comprehension
- Recognizes some registers and styles
- Understands common idiomatic language
- May require repetition
- Can comprehend on the phone when context and topic are relevant and familiar
- Communication is live, face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one or in small groups).

- Speech is clear and at a slow to normal rate.
- Visual clues and setting support the meaning when the topic is unfamiliar or the situation is not predictable.
- Listening texts can be informal monologues, presentations, dialogues or small group interactions.
- Monologues and presentations are up to about 10 minutes.
- Dialogues may include conversations, interviews and discussions in any media (digital/online, television, radio, etc.).
- Instructions are clear and explicit, but not always presented step by step.
- Language is generally concrete with some abstract elements, and contains a range of common vocabulary and idioms.
- Topics are generally familiar and personally relevant.
- Context is moderately demanding.
- Response to task may require some speaking or writing.

CLB 6 – ADVANCED LOW

The listener can:

Understand most moderately complex formal and informal communication, including some abstract concepts and ideas related to general knowledge and life experience.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one or in small groups)
- Related to relevant topics, general knowledge, and life experience
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands overall meaning or intent
- Identifies main ideas, supporting details and implied meanings
- Understands language that is concrete or abstract and sometimes specialized, with an expanded range of vocabulary
- Recognizes meaning based on an understanding of an increasing range of complex sentences and structures
- May use contextual clues to enhance comprehension
- Recognizes an expanding range of registers and styles
- Understands an expanding range of common idiomatic language
- Can follow most moderately complex phone interactions
- Has difficulty following faster conversations
- Communication is live, face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one or in small groups).
- Speech is clear and at a normal rate.

- Visual clues and setting may enhance comprehension when the topic is unfamiliar or the situation is not predictable.
- Listening texts can be informal or semi-formal monologues, presentations, dialogues or group interactions.
- Monologues and presentations are up to about 15 minutes.
- Dialogues may include conversations, interviews and discussions in any media (digital/online, television, radio, etc.).
- Instructions are clear and explicit, but not always presented step by step.
- Language is concrete or abstract and sometimes specialized with an expanded range of vocabulary and some less common idiomatic expressions.
- Topics are generally familiar, personally relevant, and may be about general knowledge or work-related.
- Context is moderately demanding.
- Response to task may require some speaking or writing.

CLB 7 – ADVANCED MID

The listener can:

Understand moderately complex formal and informal communication, including abstract concepts and ideas related to general knowledge, life experience and specialized or work-related situations.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one, with multiple speakers, or in small groups)
- Related to general knowledge, life experience and specialized or technical matters
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands overall meaning or intent
- Identifies main ideas, even when not explicitly stated, supporting details and implied meanings
- Understands language that is concrete or abstract and conceptual, with an expanded range of vocabulary
- Recognizes meaning based on an understanding of an adequate range of complex sentences and structures
- May use contextual clues to enhance comprehension
- Recognizes an expanding range of registers and styles
- Understands an expanding range of common idiomatic language
- Can follow moderately complex phone interactions
- Has difficulty following faster colloquial or idiomatic conversations
- Communication is live on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one, with multiple speakers, or in small groups).

- Speech is clear and at a normal rate.
- Visual clues and setting may enhance comprehension when the topic is unfamiliar or the situation is not predictable.
- Listening texts can be informal or semi-formal monologues, presentations, dialogues or group interactions.
- Monologues and presentations are up to about 20 minutes.
- Dialogues may include conversations, interviews and discussions in any media (digital/online, television, radio, etc.).
- Instructions are clear and coherent, but not always presented step by step.
- Language is concrete or abstract and conceptual, with an expanded range of vocabulary, idioms, and colloquial expressions.
- Topics are generally familiar, about general knowledge, or related to specialized or workplace issues in own field.
- Context is moderately demanding.
- Response to task may require some speaking or writing.

CLB 8 – ADVANCED MID+

The listener can:

Understand moderately complex formal and informal communication including abstract concepts and ideas related to general knowledge, life experience and specialized or work-related situations.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (with individuals, small or large groups)
- Related to general knowledge, life experience and specialized or technical matters
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands overall meaning or intent
- Identifies main ideas, even when not explicitly stated, supporting details and implied meanings
- Understands language that is concrete or abstract and conceptual, with an expanded range of vocabulary
- Recognizes meaning based on an understanding of an adequate range of complex sentences and structures
- May use contextual clues to enhance comprehension
- Recognizes an expanded range of common registers and styles
- Understands an expanded range of common idiomatic language
- Can follow moderately complex phone interactions
- Has difficulty following fast colloquial or idiomatic conversations
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone or via digital

media (with individuals, or small or larger groups in any live or recorded media).

- Speech is clear and at a normal rate.
- Visual clues and setting may enhance comprehension when the topic is unfamiliar or the situation is not predictable.
- Listening texts can be informal, semi-formal, or formal monologues, presentations, lectures, panel discussions, dialogues or exchanges between small groups of speakers.
- Monologues and presentations are up to about 20 minutes.
- Dialogues may include conversations, interviews, and discussions in any media (digital/online, television, radio, etc.).
- Instructions are clear and coherent, but not always presented step by step.
- Language is concrete or abstract, conceptual with an expanded range of vocabulary, idioms and colloquial expressions.
- Topics are generally familiar, about general knowledge, or related to specialized or workplace issues in own field.
- Context is moderately demanding.
- Response to task may require some speaking or writing.

CLB 9 – ADVANCED HIGH

The listener can:

Understand adequate range of complex formal and informal communication on a broad range of general interest topics, and on some specialized topics in own field.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (with individuals, small or large groups)
- Related to unfamiliar, abstract, conceptual or technical matters
- Lengthy
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Sufficiently grasps meaning to paraphrase or summarize key points and important details
- Understands a range of concrete, abstract and technical language appropriate for the content and purpose
- Uses knowledge of complex grammar and syntax to interpret meaning
- Infers bias, purpose and attitudinal meaning
- May sometimes miss some details or transition signals
- Recognizes the nuances in different styles, registers and language varieties
- Often has difficulty interpreting verbal humour, low-frequency idioms and cultural references
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (with individuals, or small or larger groups in any live

or recorded media).

- Speech is clear and at a normal rate.
- Contextual clues (non-verbal communication, relationship cues) support comprehension in high-stakes situations.
- Listening texts can be informal, semi-formal, or formal monologues, presentations, lectures, panel discussions, dialogues or exchanges between small groups of speakers.
- Required listening time may be quite long, as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Instructions are complex, in an order, but clear and coherent.
- Language is abstract, conceptual, and technical, and may include verbal humour, low-frequency idioms and cultural references.
- General interest topics and some specialized topics in own field.
- Context is demanding.
- Task response may require knowledge of social, academic and business codes.

CLB 10 – SUPERIOR

The listener can:

Understand an expanding range of complex, detailed formal and informal communication on most general interest topics and specialized topics in own field.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (with individuals, small or large groups)
- Related to unfamiliar, abstract, conceptual or technical matters
- Lengthy
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies, analyzes and critically evaluates selected aspects of communication
- Understands an expanding range of concrete, abstract and technical language appropriate for the content and purpose
- Uses knowledge of complex grammar and syntax to interpret meaning
- Infers bias, attitudinal and other unstated meanings
- Only occasionally misses a topic shift or transition
- Recognizes the nuances in different styles, registers and language varieties
- Sometimes has difficulty interpreting verbal humour, low-frequency idioms and cultural references especially when spoken quickly
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (with individuals, or small or larger groups in any live

or recorded media).

- Speech is clear and at a normal rate.
- Contextual clues (non-verbal communication, relationship cues) support comprehension in high-stakes situations.
- Listening texts can be informal, semi-formal, or formal monologues, lectures, panel discussions, expository or argumentative presentations, extended dialogues or complex exchanges between small groups of speakers.
- Required listening time may be quite long, as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Instructions are complex, in an order, but clear and coherent.
- Language is abstract, conceptual, and technical, and may include verbal humour, low-frequency idioms and cultural references.
- General interest topics and specialized topics in own field.
- Context is demanding.
- Task response may require knowledge of formal social, academic and business codes.

PROFILES OF ABILITY ACROSS STAGES 1–3 **READING**: CLB AND ACTFL COMPARISON**CLB 4 – INTERMEDIATE MID****The reader can:**

Understand and get most information from short, simple texts related to familiar, routine everyday topics of personal relevance

When the text is:

- Limited to common and mostly factual, concrete vocabulary
- Clearly organized and easy to read with simple layout
- Sometimes supported by graphics, charts or diagrams
- Short
- In non-demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Understands most simple connected discourse
- Gets the overall meaning
- Identifies purpose, main ideas, some specific details and links between paragraphs
- Occasionally guesses the meaning of unknown words and identifies some very common idioms
- May rely on graphics and other visual clues when interpreting meaning
- May identify some aspects of register and style
- Comprehension is based on a developing knowledge of basic grammar and some initial understanding of a limited range of complex sentences and structures
- Relies on a bilingual dictionary
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Texts have a clear font or legible printing and a simple layout
- Texts are sparse with clear organization
- Continuous texts are short (up to about 3 paragraphs) and include mostly descriptive and narrative genres
- Formatted texts are simple, with clear labels and may include forms, tables, schedules, directories, graphs, and short business brochures and flyers
- Visuals are sometimes included to support meaning
- Instructions or instructional texts are for 1 to 6 steps and for familiar procedures
- Language is simple, concrete, and factual with a few common idioms
- Topics are mostly familiar, personally relevant and predictable
- Responses to tasks do not require much writing, if any, but can require circling, matching, checking off items or filling in blanks
- Context is non-demanding.

CLB 5 – INTERMEDIATE HIGH**The reader can:**

Understand simple and some moderately complex texts in predictable, practical and relevant social, educational and work-related situations

When the text is:

- Mostly concrete, factual and descriptive
- With mostly common and some abstract or specialized vocabulary and occasional high-frequency idioms
- Sometimes supported by visuals
- Relatively short
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, important details, and links between paragraphs
- Finds some information to make comparisons
- Occasionally guesses the meaning of unknown terms, phrases or idioms from the context without a dictionary
- Often rereads and needs clarification
- Comprehension is based on knowledge of basic grammar and some developing understanding of complex sentences and structures
- Identifies some different styles and registers
- Uses a bilingual dictionary regularly; begins to use a concise unilingual ESL dictionary
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Formatted texts are moderately complex and may include maps, forms, tables, schedules, directories, course calendars, and graphs
- Instructions or instructional texts are clear and explicit and are for 7 to 10-step routine procedures that are presented step by step
- Continuous texts are moderately complex, and may include narrative, descriptive, and some literary genres.
- Length of the continuous text is relatively short (up to about 1 page) as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Language is mostly factual, concrete and literal, with some abstract words.
- Topics are personally relevant mostly familiar and predictable.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 6 – ADVANCED LOW**The reader can:**

Understand an adequate range of moderately complex texts in predictable, practical, and relevant social, educational and work-related situations.

When the text is:

- Mostly concrete, factual and descriptive
- With mostly common and some abstract or specialized vocabulary and occasional idioms
- Relatively short
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, specific factual details, and some implied meanings
- Finds specific, detailed information for comparing and contrasting
- Sometimes guesses the meaning of unknown terms, phrases or idioms from the context without a dictionary
- May reread and ask for clarification
- Comprehension is based on a developing understanding of complex sentences and structures
- Identifies an expanding range of different styles and registers
- Uses a concise unilingual ESL dictionary regularly
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Formatted texts are moderately complex and may include maps, forms, tables, schedules, directories, course calendars, and graphs
- Instructions or instructional texts are clear and explicit and are for 10-step routine procedures that are not always presented step by step
- Continuous texts are moderately complex, and may include narrative, descriptive, and some literary genres.
- Length of the continuous text is relatively short (up to about 2 pages) as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Language is mostly factual, concrete and literal, but may also be abstract and specialized.
- Topics are personally relevant mostly familiar and partly predictable.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 7 – ADVANCED MID**The reader can:**

Understand an expanding range of moderately complex texts in less predictable by relevant social, educational and work-related situations.

When the text is:

- Factual, descriptive, or argumentative; with opinions, explicit and implied meanings

- With concrete, abstract and specialized vocabulary and idiomatic language
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, supporting details, and many implied meanings
- Finds, integrates, compares, contrasts information
- Often guesses the meaning of unknown terms, phrases and idioms from the context
- Comprehension is based on a developing understanding of an increasing range of complex sentences and structures
- Identifies a range of different styles and registers
- Uses a unilingual dictionary to confirm and refine interpretation of unknown terms
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Formatted texts are moderately complex and may include forms, tables, schedules, directories, course calendars, and graphs
- Instructions or instructional texts are clear and explicit and are for 10-13 step procedures that are not always presented step by step
- Continuous texts are moderately complex, and may include narrative, descriptive, argumentative, persuasive and literary genres.
- Length of the continuous text is moderate (up to about 4 pages) as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Language is concrete or abstract and may be specialized.
- Topics are personally relevant mostly familiar and partly predictable.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 8 – ADVANCED MID+**The reader can:**

Understand most moderately complex texts in less predictable by relevant social, educational, and work-related situations.

When the text is:

- Factual, descriptive, or argumentative; with opinions, explicit and implied meanings
- With a range of concrete, abstract and specialized vocabulary and idiomatic language
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, supporting details, and implied meanings as well as mood, attitude and register
- Finds, integrates, compares, contrasts, and analyzes information

- Usually guesses the meaning of unknown terms, phrases and idioms from the context, but often requires clarification of less common idioms, cultural references and figures of speech
- Comprehension is based on an understanding of an adequate range of complex sentences and structures
- Identifies a wide range of different styles and registers
- Uses a unilingual dictionary to confirm and refine interpretation of unknown terms
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Formatted texts are moderately complex and may include forms, tables, schedules, directories, course calendars, graphs and website navigation menus
- Instructions or instructional texts are clear and explicit and are for extended multistep, established procedures that are not always presented step by step
- Continuous texts are moderately complex, and may include narrative, descriptive, argumentative, persuasive and literary genres.
- Length of the continuous text is moderate (up to about 5 pages) as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Language is concrete or abstract and may be specialized.
- Topics are personally relevant but are not always familiar or predictable.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 9 – ADVANCED HIGH

The reader can:

Understand an adequate range of complex texts in some unpredictable contexts and on some unfamiliar topics.

When the text is:

- Linguistically complex and may include some idiomatic and figurative language
- With abstract, conceptual or specialized vocabulary
- Visually complex and lengthy or dense
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, supporting details, author's intent, mood, attitude and point of view from stated and implied information
- Uses knowledge of styles and registers to assist in comprehension
- Uses inference to integrate several pieces of stated information across paragraphs or sections of text
- Separates relevant from irrelevant details
- Paraphrases key points
- Uses knowledge of complex grammar and syntax to interpret nuances in texts
- Often has difficulty interpreting low-frequency idioms, cultural references and figures of speech

- Uses a unilingual dictionary to confirm and refine interpretation of unknown terms
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Texts can deal with socio-cultural, economic or political issues.
- Continuous texts are complex, may be expository, literary or persuasive (can include reports, articles, argumentative essays, problem-solution papers, research, novels, poems).
- Continuous texts may be quite long, as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Formatted texts vary in length, may be visually dense (can include tables, graphs, process flow charts, pictographs, diagrams, questionnaires, surveys, rating scales, aerial maps, blueprints, assembly and schematic drawings).
- Instructions are in clear, explicit and coherent prose, not always presented in sequential step-by-step form, but related to familiar procedures.
- Texts are linguistically complex, and are abstract, conceptual or specialized.
- Context is demanding.

CLB 10 – SUPERIOR

The reader can:

Understand an expanding range of complex, multipurpose texts in many unpredictable contexts and on many unfamiliar topics.

When the text is:

- Linguistically complex and may include some idiomatic and figurative language
- With abstract, conceptual or specialized vocabulary
- Visually complex and lengthy or dense
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Identifies purpose, main ideas, supporting details, author's intent, mood, attitude and point of view, values and assumptions from stated and implied information
- Uses knowledge of styles and registers to assist in comprehension
- Uses inference to integrate several pieces of stated and implied information throughout the text
- Separates relevant from irrelevant details
- Paraphrases and summarizes key points
- Uses knowledge of complex grammar and syntax to interpret nuances in texts
- Sometimes has difficulty interpreting low-frequency idioms, cultural references and figures of speech
- Uses a unilingual dictionary to confirm and refine interpretation of unknown terms
- Texts are paper-based or digital/online.
- Texts can deal with socio-cultural, economic or political issues.

- Continuous texts are complex, may be expository, literary or persuasive (can include reports, articles, argumentative essays, problem-solution papers, research, novels, poems).
- Continuous texts may be quite long, as dictated by the topic, purpose, genre and context.
- Formatted texts vary in length, may be visually dense (can include tables, graphs, process flow charts, pictographs, diagrams, questionnaires, surveys, rating scales, aerial maps, blueprints, assembly and schematic drawings).
- Instructions are in clear, explicit and coherent prose, not presented in sequential step-by-step form, but related to familiar procedures.
- Texts are linguistically complex, and are abstract, conceptual or specialized.
- Context is demanding.

PROFILES OF ABILITY ACROSS STAGES 1–3 **SPEAKING**: CLB AND ACTFL COMPARISON

CLB 4 – INTERMEDIATE LOW

The speaker can:

Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- May be supported by gestures and visual clues
- Informal
- With one person at a time or in a small supportive group
- Encouraged occasionally by questions and prompts from a supportive listener
- In non-demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Speaks in short sentences and some longer compound sentences, with clear evidence of connected discourse
- Fluency is adequate for simple conversations; speech rate is slow to normal with some pauses or hesitations
- Vocabulary is adequate for basic everyday, routine communication
- Adequate control over basic grammar structures and tenses
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties may impede communication
- Communication is face-to-face with one person at a time in a familiar situation, very briefly on the phone, or in a very small supportive group
- Familiar personal topics.
- Tasks require short, simple, connected discourse.
- Situation is predictable.
- Interaction is informal to somewhat formal.

- Listeners are supportive and encouraging.
- Listener may guide the speaker by asking questions.
- Context is non-demanding.

CLB 5 – INTERMEDIATE MID

The speaker can:

Communicate with some effort in short, routine social situations, and present concrete information about needs and familiar topics of personal relevance.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In familiar small groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of connected discourse
- Adequately fluent for some moderately demanding contexts; speech rate is slow to normal with some pauses and hesitations
- A range of common everyday vocabulary, which may include a limited number of idioms
- Some variety of grammatical structures, with good control of simple structures and initial control of some more complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties sometimes impede communication
- Some awareness of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- Adjusts speech to reflect some degrees of formality appropriate to the group

- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with one person at a time or in small groups.
- Familiar, mostly concrete topics.
- Tasks require connected discourse.
- Situation is somewhat predictable.
- Interaction ranges from informal to formal.
- Presentations are informal or semi-formal, up to about 5 minutes long, and supported by pictures and other visuals.
- Interaction in a small group can be a discussion with a moderator or facilitator who is encouraging and supportive meeting.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 6 – INTERMEDIATE HIGH

The speaker can:

Communicate with some confidence in routine social situations, and present concrete information in some detail about familiar topics of personal relevance.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In mostly familiar small groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of connected discourse
- Reasonably fluent for some moderately demanding contexts; speech rate is slow to normal with few hesitations
- A range of everyday vocabulary, which may include some idioms and a few common cultural references
- Some variety of grammatical structures, with developing control of more complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties may sometimes impede communication
- Developing use of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- Adjusts speech to reflect some degrees of formality appropriate to the group
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with one person at a time or in small groups.
- Familiar, mostly concrete topics.
- Tasks require connected discourse.
- Situation is somewhat predictable.
- Interaction ranges from informal to formal.
- Presentations are semi-formal or formal, up to about 7 minutes long, and supported by pictures and other visuals.
- Interaction in a group can be a small-group discussion or meeting.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 7 – ADVANCED LOW

The speaker can:

Communicate with some confidence in many daily routine social, educational, and work situations, and present concrete and some abstract information on an expanding range of familiar topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- In somewhat familiar groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of connected discourse
- Reasonably fluent for moderately demanding contexts; speech rate is slow to normal with few hesitations
- An expanding range of concrete and idiomatic language, which may include some common cultural references
- Increasing variety of grammatical structures, with developing control of complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties may occasionally impede communication
- Adequate use of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- Adjusts speech style and register to different audiences and situations
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with one person at a time or in groups.
- Familiar, concrete and some abstract topics.
- Tasks require connected discourse.
- Situation can be unpredictable.
- Interaction ranges from informal to formal.
- Presentations are semi-formal or formal, up to about 10 minutes long, and supported by pictures and other visuals.
- Interaction in a group can be a small discussion or meeting.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 8 – ADVANCED MID

The speaker can:

Communicate with confidence in most daily routine social, educational, and work situations, and present concrete and some abstract information on an expanded range of familiar topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- In unfamiliar groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of connected discourse
- Fluent for moderately demanding contexts; speech is often at a normal rate
- An expanded range of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language, which may include some common cultural references
- Adequate variety of grammatical structures with adequate control of complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties seldom impede communication
- Good use of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- Adjusts speech style and register to a range of different audiences and situations
- Communication is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with one person at a time or in groups.
- Familiar, concrete and some abstract topics.
- Tasks require connected discourse.
- Situation can be unpredictable.
- Interaction ranges from informal to formal
- Presentations are semi-formal or formal, up to about 20 minutes long and may be supported by pictures and other visuals.
- Interaction in a group can be a debate, discussion or meeting.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 9 – ADVANCED MID+**The speaker can:**

Communicate with some confidence in demanding or challenging non-routine work, educational, and social situations, and present information about complex, abstract and general topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- With peers and authority figures, one-on-one or in groups
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Speaks in coherent, connected discourse
- Fluent for some demanding contexts
- A range of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language suited to context and purpose, which may include some figures of speech and cultural references
- Good control over a variety of complex grammar structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation rarely impede communication

- Adapts language based on context, relationship and purpose
- Adjusts speech style and register to a wide range of different audiences and situations
- Interaction is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with familiar and unfamiliar people and groups.
- Topics may be conceptual or abstract, researched or related to own area of expertise
- Situation can be unpredictable.
- Presentations are semi-formal or formal, up to about 30 minutes long and given to a familiar audience.
- Interaction in a group can be a discussion or meeting.
- Context is demanding.

CLB 10 - ADVANCED HIGH**The speaker can:**

Communicate with increasing confidence in demanding or challenging non-routine work, educational, and social situations, and present information about complex, abstract and general topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- With peers and authority figures, one-on-one or in groups
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Speaks in coherent, connected discourse
- Fluent for an increasing range of demanding contexts
- An expanding range of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language suited to context and purpose, which may include some figures of speech and cultural references
- Good control over an expanded variety of complex grammar structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation very rarely impede communication
- Adapts language based on context, relationship and purpose
- Adjusts speech style and register to a wide range of different audiences and situations
- Interaction is face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media with familiar and unfamiliar people and groups.
- Topics may be conceptual or abstract, researched or related to own area of expertise
- Situation can be unpredictable.
- Presentations are semi-formal or formal, up to about 40 minutes long and given to a familiar audience.
- Interaction in a group can be a seminar, business discussion or debate.
- Context is demanding.

PROFILES OF ABILITY ACROSS STAGES 1–3 **WRITING**: CLB AND ACTFL COMPARISON**CLB 4 – INTERMEDIATE LOW****The writer can:**

Write short, simple texts about personal experience and familiar topics or situations related to daily life and experience.

When the communication is:

- Grammatically and lexically simple
- Intended for a familiar reader
- Short
- In moderately non-demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Adequate knowledge of the language for simple tasks
- Adequate range of simple, everyday vocabulary
- Adequate control of simple structures
- Conveys personal information in mostly single-clause sentences
- May use some coordinated clauses with basic tenses
- Adequate control of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Difficulty with word order and word forms may sometimes interfere with comprehensibility
- Able to communicate a simple message
- Writing style requirements are simple and informal.
- Topics are of everyday relevance.
- Audience is familiar.
- Tasks prompts or instructions are simple and call for responses of about 1 paragraph.
- Forms to complete are short (up to 20 items), simple in format, and require basic personal information and some responses to simple questions about self or experience.
- Content to copy or reproduce is from a short text (up to about 2 paragraphs) with clear layout; may be of a more specialized nature (e.g., a manual) relating to a familiar context.
- Context is non-demanding.

CLB 5 – INTERMEDIATE MID**The writer can:**

Write short, simple to moderately complex descriptions, narrations and communications about familiar, concrete topics related to daily life and experience.

When the communication is:

- On a familiar and personally relevant topic
- Intended for a familiar audience
- Relatively short
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Adequate paragraph structure, with a main idea and some supporting details
- Appropriate use of connective words and phrases
- Adequate range of vocabulary for most simple, everyday texts
- Good control of simple structures
- Difficulty with complex structures
- Adequate control of spelling, punctuation, and format
- Some awkward-sounding phrases and word combinations
- Ability to communicate some moderately complex messages
- Writing style requirements are informal to formal.
- Topics are personally relevant, familiar and concrete.
- Audience is familiar or clearly defined.
- Tasks require about 1 paragraph of writing.
- Forms are moderately complex in format requiring responses of up to about 30 items.
- Oral information to be reduced is relatively short (about 5 to 7 details).
- Print or online information to be reduced is about 1 page in length, and has clear organization and layout. It may be technical or specialized.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 6 – INTERMEDIATE HIGH**The writer can:**

Write short, moderately complex descriptions, narrations and communications about familiar, concrete topics relevant to personal interests and experience.

When the communication is:

- On a familiar and personally relevant topic
- Intended for a familiar audience
- Relatively short
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Adequate paragraph structure, with clearly expressed main ideas and some supporting details
- Appropriate use of connective words and phrases
- Good range of vocabulary for simple, everyday texts
- Good control of simple structures
- Developing control of complex structures
- Adequate control of spelling, punctuation, and format
- Some awkward-sounding phrases and word combinations
- Content and language are sometimes not appropriate for the audience

- Uses a limited range of natural idiomatic language, cultural references and figures of speech appropriate to the context
- Able to communicate an increasing range of moderately complex messages
- Writing style requirements are informal to formal.
- Topics are personally relevant, familiar and concrete.
- Audience is familiar or defined.
- Tasks require up to about 2 paragraphs of writing.
- Forms are moderately complex in format and may require responses of over 40 items.
- Oral information to be reduced is relatively short (about 7 or 8 details or up to 10 minutes) and may be specialized.
- Print or online information to be reduced or summarized is about 1.5 pages in length, and has clear organization and layout. It may be technical or specialized.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 7 - ADVANCED LOW

The writer can:

Write clear, moderately complex texts on familiar concrete topics within predictable, practical and relevant contexts of daily social, educational and work-related life experience.

When the communication is:

- On a familiar and personally relevant topic
- Intended for a familiar or clearly defined audience
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Good paragraph structure, with clearly expressed main ideas and good supporting details
- Paragraphs are developed and joined appropriately to form a coherent text
- Text contains an introduction, development of ideas, and conclusion
- Good range of vocabulary for moderately complex texts
- Adequate control of complex structures
- Good control of spelling, punctuation, and format
- Wording may still be typical of first language and seem somewhat unnatural
- Content and language, including register, are appropriate for the audience
- Uses a range of natural idiomatic language, cultural references and figures of speech appropriately
- Able to communicate moderately complex messages
- Writing style requirements are informal to formal.
- Topics relate to everyday experience and are mostly concrete, but can be somewhat abstract.
- Audience is familiar or defined.
- Tasks require up to about 3 paragraphs of writing.

- Forms are moderately complex in format and may require responses of over 40 items.
- Oral information to be reduced is moderate in length (up to about 15 minutes) and may be technical or specialized.
- Print or online information to be reduced or summarized is about 2 pages in length, and has clear organization and layout. It may be technical or specialized.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 8 - ADVANCED MID

The writer can:

Write clear, moderately complex texts on familiar concrete and some abstract topics within predictable, practical and relevant contexts of daily social, educational and work-related life experience.

When the communication is:

- On a familiar and personally relevant topic
- Intended for a familiar or clearly defined audience
- Moderate in length
- In moderately demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Good paragraph structure with clearly expressed main ideas and good supporting details
- Paragraphs are developed and joined appropriately to form a coherent text
- Text contains an introduction, development of ideas, and conclusion
- Very good range of vocabulary for moderately complex texts
- Good control of complex structures
- Good control of spelling, punctuation, and format
- Occasionally, wording may seem awkward or unnatural
- Content and language, including register and variety, are appropriate for the audience
- Uses an expanded range of natural idiomatic language, cultural references and figures of speech appropriately
- Able to communicate moderately complex messages
- Writing style requirements are informal to formal.
- Topics relate to everyday experience and can be abstract.
- Audience is familiar or defined.
- Tasks require up to about 4 paragraphs of writing.
- Forms are moderately complex in format and may require responses of over 40 items.
- Oral information to be reduced is moderate in length (up to about 20 minutes) and may be technical or specialized.
- Print or online information to be reduced or summarized is about 2 pages in length, and has clear organization and layout. It may be technical or specialized.
- Context is moderately demanding.

CLB 9 – ADVANCED MID+**The writer can:**

Write formal and informal texts of some complexity for an adequate range of purposes and tasks in routine but demanding situations.

When the communication is:

- On abstract and unfamiliar topics that may require research
- Intended for a defined audience
- Lengthy, as dictated by the requirements of the task, up to a range of about 1,500 words
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Adequate organization of ideas and development of topic
- Main ideas are clearly conveyed and adequately supported with details
- Good control of a range of complex and diverse structures
- Some errors in grammar, word combinations and word choices still occur
- Flexibility of tone and style may be limited
- Proofreads and revises own work with occasional input from others
- Able to communicate some complex messages, adjusting length to suit the requirements of the task
- A good range of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language suited to context and purpose, which may include some genre-specific expressions or jargon and cultural references
- Writing style requirements range from informal to formal.
- Topics are abstract or specialized.
- Audience is usually familiar or defined.
- Tasks may require research and citation of reference sources.
- Forms are complex and their length is determined by purpose and situation.
- Oral information to be reduced or summarized may be somewhat lengthy (about 30 minutes) and technical or specialized.
- Print or online information to be reduced or summarized is about 5 pages with clear organization and layout, and may be technical or specialized.
- Length is suited to the purpose of the task and may be up to 1,500 words.
- Context is demanding.

CLB 10 - ADVANCED HIGH**The writer can:**

Write complex formal and informal texts for a broadening range of purposes and tasks in mostly routine but demanding situations.

When the communication is:

- On abstract and unfamiliar topics that may require research
- Intended for a defined audience
- Lengthy, as dictated by the requirements of the task, up to a range of about 3,000 words
- In demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear organization of ideas and development of topic
- Main ideas are clearly conveyed and well supported with details
- Good control of a range of complex and diverse structures
- Occasional errors in grammar, word combinations and word choices still occur
- Flexibility of tone and style may be limited
- Proofreads and revises own and others' texts with occasional input from others
- Able to communicate an expanding range of complex messages, adjusting length to suit the requirements of the task
- A very good range of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language suited to context and purpose, which may include some genre-specific expressions or jargon and cultural references
- Writing style requirements range from informal to formal.
- Topics are abstract or specialized.
- Audience is usually familiar or defined.
- Tasks may require research and citation of reference sources.
- Forms are complex and their length is determined by purpose and situation.
- Oral information to be reduced or summarized may be lengthy (about 1 hour) and technical or specialized.
- Print or online information to be reduced or summarized is about 10 pages with clear organization and layout, and may be technical or specialized.
- Length is suited to the purpose of the task and may be up to 3,000 words.
- Context is demanding.



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