

TEST TAKER GUIDE

Writing and Speaking

The following tables outline general skills or abilities at each level and suggest actions that will help you attain higher levels.

Novice-Low (STAMP Level 1)	Do these things to Power Up to Novice-Mid (STAMP Level 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I am able to create individual words that have no extended meaning. ■ I can share simple words which deal with the prompt/task/situation, but I tend to struggle to connect those words to create meaning. 	<p>Text Type (Novice-Mid) Phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on increasing vocabulary, including verbs that cover a variety of topics that are at the Novice level. These are topics that you generally experience each day in your every-day life: self, home, friends, school, weather, clothing, food, time, pets/animals, etc... ● Try to connect different words to a verb to create thoughts and generate simple sentences where possible. <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase vocabulary connections to verbs. This helps to create more meaning in language production.

Novice-Mid (STAMP Level 2)	Do these things to Power Up to Novice-High (STAMP Level 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I am beginning to develop the ability to create meaning as I form a connection between words. ■ Specifically, I can connect some basic subjects and verbs or verbs and objects, but I may be inconsistent at doing this. ■ I am often limited in my vocabulary to Novice level topics that I experience in my every-day life or that I have recently learned. 	<p>Text Type (Novice-High) Simple Sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on connecting words that create very simple sentences. ● Focus on creating simple meaning with the use of different verbs that deal with a wider variety of topics or that address different aspects of a task. ● Try to re-create and reorganize simple sentences using your own language. <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know what it means to create a simple sentence. What is a subject? What is a verb? What is an object? Learn these terms and know why these terms are important. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Don't be afraid of making errors! Focus on the meaning you wish to convey in your sentences and give all the language that you can. Accuracy will increase naturally as you move into the next level.

<p>Novice-High (STAMP Level 3)</p>	<p>Do these things to Power Up to Intermediate-Low (STAMP Level 4)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I can create simple sentences with very basic control and accuracy. ■ There are often errors in my responses, while at the same time I might have good control with some very simple structures and functions of the language that I have just learned or studied. ■ At the Novice levels, errors are expected as I try to create simple sentences. ■ Generally, the sentences that I am able to create are very basic and simple with few, if any, added details. 	<p>Text Type (Intermediate-Low) Strings of Sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on increasing the amount of language you add to each sentence to create greater depth of meaning and begin to string sentences together. ● Expand vocabulary beyond your every-day life to topics like: travel, occupations, health, shopping, local community, etc... <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand what constitutes Added Detail (details that add depth and clarity to the language: prepositional phrases, descriptive words, basic use of helping verbs, adverbs and more specific vocabulary...yes, learning these terms is important.) <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand how different forms of Added Detail can help create a bigger picture. Try to show variety in your sentence structure as well. ● Don't be afraid of making errors! Use all the language that you can in order to create more detail in your writing and speaking.

<p>Intermediate-Low (STAMP Level 4)</p>	<p>Do these things to Power Up to Intermediate-Mid (STAMP Level 5)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I can create simple sentences with some added detail; such sentences help create VARIETY. ■ At the Intermediate-Low level, simple sentences are enhanced by the use of prepositional phrases, helping verb usage, as well as some adverbs and a variety of adjectives. ■ I generally create independent sentences (ideas) that can be moved around without affecting the overall meaning of the response. ■ There are still a number of errors in my response, but I have fairly good control of more basic sentences. ■ I am feeling more confident in using different structures and expanding vocabulary and taking more risks with my responses. 	<p>Text Type (Intermediate-Mid) Connected Sentences basic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the amount of language you use to address different aspects of the prompt. Strive to create groupings of ideas which helps increase connectedness. ● Continue to increase the use of extended and expanding vocabulary with less common topics. <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strive to use different forms of Added Detail, creating greater clarity and richness in your sentences. ● Try to add elements of complexity to your sentence structures. There are many ways you can add complexity! Consider how you can create longer sentences using some complex structures. Increase your use of dependent and independent clauses - not just compound sentences using 'and', 'but' or 'because'. Be careful to not create run-on sentences. Use complexity to add depth of meaning. Use other tense forms that are beyond the simple "present tense". It is expected that these new skills will have errors – don't worry about the errors, just do your best. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make a point to speak or write every day using the new vocabulary intermixed with what you are more confident about. The more you use the new vocabulary, the more natural it will become for you. ● Don't be afraid of making errors! (Yes, this is a constant reminder. Errors show that you are stretching and trying new things at this level.)

<p>Intermediate-Mid (STAMP Level 5)</p>	<p>Do these things to Power Up to Intermediate-High (STAMP Level 6)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I can now create enough language to show groupings of ideas. ■ My thoughts are loosely connected and cannot be moved around without affecting meaning. ■ I can also create a few sentences with complexity and am able to use some transition words. ■ I am also able to use more than just simple present tense, but often make mistakes when I try to use other tenses. ■ My vocabulary use is expanding and I am able to use more than the usual, high frequency or most common vocabulary. ■ I feel that I am able to create new language on my own and communicate my everyday needs without too much difficulty. 	<p>Text Type (Intermediate-High) Connected Sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to work on increasing vocabulary breadth and variety. ● Increase use of complex structures in your response including, but not limited to dependent clauses. There are a variety of ways to create complexity. ● Focus on creating connections throughout your writing and speaking responses. This will generate a natural flow from beginning, to middle, to end and will bring your ideas together. ● Strive to include many details and as much descriptive language as possible to create a clear picture of the situation about which you are writing or speaking. ● Use a variety of transitional words and phrases and work on increasing these terms to help link and connect your thoughts and ideas. <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a greater variety of sentence lengths and types. ● Use more transition words and phrases to help increase connectedness throughout the response. ● Increase your ability to use a variety of verb tenses accurately. Be aware of the language that is created as you use different tenses –recognize the strength of language when you are able to switch from one time frame to the next with increased accuracy. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read novels out loud in your target language. Record unfamiliar words/phrases in your vocab-notepad and strive to use them throughout the week. ● Don't be afraid of making errors with new structures. However, at this level, errors should begin to diminish with most basic time frames. You are noticing that you do not have to translate as much in your head before speaking.

<p>Intermediate-High (STAMP Level 6)</p>	<p>Do these things to Power Up to Advanced-Low (STAMP Level 7)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At this level, I have good control of the language and feel quite confident about an increasing range of topics. ■ There are still some occasional errors in my language production, but that does not hinder my ability to communicate what I need to share. ■ I can use circumlocution (using a round-about way of saying something because of the vocabulary I lack.) to explain or describe things for which I do not know specific vocabulary or structures. ■ I can understand and use different time frames and am just beginning to develop the ability to switch most time frames (going back and forth between verb tenses) with accuracy. ■ I can use transition words and concepts with some ease to create more clear connections between ideas. ■ My language has a more natural flow, but I still may have some unnatural pauses or hesitations. 	<p>Text Type (Advanced-Low) Paragraph Structure basic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Endeavor to learn vocabulary from topics you usually do not learn in formal class settings. Expand your vocabulary breadth by reading and listening to news and other current events, or just by listening to native speakers. ● Strive to create language that is cohesive and unified with a beginning, middle and end. Clear organization of thoughts and ideas is critical to reach this level. ● Learn and use idiomatic and colloquial language. This will help make your speech and writing more natural and authentic. <p>Functions/Structures (Grammar):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strive to incorporate more complex language. This includes a wider variety of verb conjugations/time frames as well as less frequently used transition words/phrases. ● Accuracy in functions/structures is important at this level. Pay close attention to those areas where you are not confident nor sure about correct usage. At this level, use of correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, accents, tonal markers, umlauts, etc. (all language specific features) increase in importance – especially if your desire is to reach Advanced levels where business language is expected. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connect with as many native speakers as you can each day. You can use a variety of technology resources to do this. Take notes of new vocabulary you hear and try to incorporate that language in daily conversation. ● Listen to music or watch movies in the target language each day. Repeat along with the singer or actor. This will allow you to practice speaking more quickly – as well as help you acquire cultural perspectives and learn new vocabulary in fun and engaging ways. ● Teach what you are learning to a friend or relative. This is a great way to process and remember new content and concepts.

Can Do Statements

In order to get a sense of where your level is, you can use this quick self-evaluation to showcase what you are currently able to do and help direct you to move to higher levels.

Directions:

Read each **Can Do Statement** and place a check in the column titled **My Level** that best identifies your ability with that mode and domain. You may want to write the date of this evaluation and do this again in several months to monitor growth in these areas.

Interpretive Mode – Listening (Understanding Spoken Language)

ACTFL Level	My Level	Can Do Statements
Novice-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand only a few clearly spoken words.
Novice-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand familiar names, words, and very basic phrases concerning my family, my close surroundings, and myself when people speak slowly and clearly.
Novice-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand many phrases and commonly used vocabulary related to areas of personal interest (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, school etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand familiar, short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
Intermediate-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand very basic sentences with topics about my close surroundings like home, school and friends when the language is clear and slow. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand the main point in clear, simple messages and announcements. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand some basic questions.
Intermediate-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand some main points in a conversation on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand some main points of many radio or TV programs on current affairs or topics of high interest when spoken slowly and clearly.
Intermediate-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand longer presentations and discussions and follow more complex lines of argument, as long as the topic is reasonably familiar. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand most TV news and current affairs programs. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand most of the language spoken in movies and films.
Advanced-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not stated directly. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand television programs and films without too much effort.

Interpretive Mode – Reading (Understanding Written Language)

ACTFL Level	My Level	Can Do Statements
Novice-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand only a few very common words.
Novice-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand some familiar names, words, and very simple phrases. For example, I can read and understand some basic information found in simple notes, memos, emails and posters.
Novice-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can read very short, simple, sentence-length texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, menus, and schedules. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand some short, simple personal notes and email greetings.
Intermediate-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand very basic strings of sentences with topics relating to my surroundings, e.g., home, school and friends. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand the main points in short, non-complicated emails, letters, advertisements, announcements and some short stories.
Intermediate-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can understand most main points in texts regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand the main points of most daily news stories and magazine articles with areas/topics where I have an interest or some experience.
Intermediate-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can read longer texts like short stories and simple novels and understand most of the main ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> I am able to guess the meaning of many new words from context.
Advanced-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers state particular attitudes or viewpoints. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand most contemporary literary prose. <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand specialized articles and longer technical instructions.

Interpersonal Mode – Speaking (Speaking with another person)

ACTFL Level	My Level	Can Do Statements
Novice-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can say only a few common words or set phrases, like: hello, goodbye, my name is, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> I am also able to answer some very simple questions using memorized words or phrases.
Novice-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I am trying to say. <input type="checkbox"/> I can ask and answer simple questions about familiar surroundings using memorized words and some longer simple phrases.
Novice-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can communicate about routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. <input type="checkbox"/> I can ask memorized and some basic original questions. I am not able to understand enough to keep the conversation going beyond basic memorized exchanges.
Intermediate-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can communicate in some unstructured exchanges of information on familiar topics and activities. <input type="checkbox"/> I can interact in short social exchanges and keep the conversation going by asking and responding to basic questions. <input type="checkbox"/> I can ask some follow-up questions to keep the conversation going.
Intermediate-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can deal with most situations likely to arise when traveling in an area where the language is spoken. <input type="checkbox"/> I can enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are very familiar, of personal interest, or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, school, hobbies, work, travel and current events). <input type="checkbox"/> I can ask detailed follow-up questions and probe more deeply into information shared in the conversation.
Intermediate-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can communicate with an increasing degree of fluency that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible even though I still need some help formulating more complex thoughts. <input type="checkbox"/> I can use language that I know to express ideas and vocabulary unfamiliar to me (circumlocution). <input type="checkbox"/> I can take an active part in discussions in familiar contexts and ask more sophisticated questions across multiple time frames.
Advanced-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can express myself fluently and spontaneously and exchange detailed information without much difficulty. <input type="checkbox"/> I can use language flexibly and effectively for most social and academic purposes. <input type="checkbox"/> I can formulate ideas/opinions and express those skillfully to other speakers/conversation partners providing clear explanations, comparisons and can negotiate some unexpected complications.

Presentational Mode – Speaking (Speaking to another person or audience)

ACTFL Level	My Level	Can Do Statements
Novice-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can say only a few memorized, common words or set phrases.
Novice-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can use simple words and phrases to describe myself, where I live and other basic language about my close surroundings.
Novice-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can use a series of learned phrases and basic sentences to describe my family and other people, my close surroundings and general weather conditions. <input type="checkbox"/> I am also able to state simple likes and interests associated with food, beverages, and some basic activities.
Intermediate-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can use a series of basic sentences to describe themes and topics connected with my daily life experience. <input type="checkbox"/> I am also able to formulate more extended questions and use more details in my language.
Intermediate-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can connect sentences in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, including my dreams and hopes. <input type="checkbox"/> I can give short, basic reasons and explanations. <input type="checkbox"/> I can narrate a short story, relate the plot of a short story or summarize a simple story/event.
Intermediate-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects. <input type="checkbox"/> I can describe a process regarding a topic or event that I am very familiar with and include extended details. <input type="checkbox"/> I can link main ideas together using basic transition or linking words/phrases.
Advanced-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes. <input type="checkbox"/> I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context. <input type="checkbox"/> I can develop detailed, critical points and expound on those ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> I can formulate appropriate conclusions and produce paragraph length responses across major time frames.

Presentational Mode – Writing (Writing to another person or audience)

ACTFL Level	My Level	Can Do Statements
Novice-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can write only a few common words or set phrases or copy a few characters.
Novice-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can write a few short, simple phrases. <input type="checkbox"/> I can fill in forms with personal details, (e.g., entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.) <input type="checkbox"/> I can write a few common characters in a character-based language.
Novice-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can write a few short and simple sentences about things familiar to me. These sentences have little or no added detail and follow very formulaic structures. Spelling and grammar errors may occur often. <input type="checkbox"/> I can write several frequently used characters in a character-based language.
Intermediate-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can write a series of basic sentences to describe themes and topics connected with my every-day life experience. <input type="checkbox"/> I can formulate more extended questions and use more details. Errors in spelling and usage are common in my writing. <input type="checkbox"/> I can write many characters in a character-based language, using keyboard input skills to assist in the writing process.
Intermediate-Mid		<input type="checkbox"/> I can connect sentences in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events in my daily life at home, school and in my community. <input type="checkbox"/> I can give basic reasons, added details and explanations in my writing. Character-based languages can accomplish the same tasks, using keyboard input processes to assist in completing the task.
Intermediate-High		<input type="checkbox"/> I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. <input type="checkbox"/> I can write a basic single paragraph essay or report that conveys information. <input type="checkbox"/> I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences in my life. Character-based languages can accomplish the same tasks, using keyboard input processes to assist in completing the task.
Advanced-Low		<input type="checkbox"/> I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. <input type="checkbox"/> I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the key issues. <input type="checkbox"/> I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind and produce paragraph length texts across major time frames. Character-based languages can accomplish the same tasks, using keyboard input processes to assist in completing the task.

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