

## ACTFL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES FOR K-12 LEARNERS

NOVICE LEARNER RANGE	(Grade K-4 or Grade 5-8 or Grade 9-10)
INTERMEDIATE LEARNER	(Grade K-8 or Grade 7-12)
PRE-ADVANCED LEARNER	(Grade K-12)

### COMPREHENSIBILITY: How well are they understood?

#### **Interpersonal**

##### **NOVICE**

- rely primarily on memorized phrases and short sentences during highly predictable interactions on very familiar topics;
- are understood primarily by those very accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- imitate modeled words and phrases using intonation and pronunciation similar to that of the model;
- may show evidence of false starts, prolonged and unexpectedly placed pauses, and recourse to their native language as topics expand beyond the scope of immediate needs;
- are able to meet limited practical writing needs, such as short messages and notes, by recombining learned vocabulary and structures to form simple sentences on very familiar topics.

##### **INTERMEDIATE**

- express their own thoughts using sentences and strings of sentences when interacting on familiar topics in present time;
- are understood by those accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- use pronunciation and intonation patterns which can be understood by native speaker accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- make false starts and pause frequently to search for words when interacting with others;
- are able to meet practical writing needs such as short letters and notes, by recombining learned vocabulary and structures demonstrating full control of present time and evidence of some control of other time frames.

##### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- narrate and describe using connected sentences and paragraphs in present and other time frames when interacting on topics of personal, school, and community interest;
- are understood by those with whom they interact, although there may still be a range of linguistic inaccuracies, and on occasion the communication partner may need to make a special effort to understand the message;
- use pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to a native speaker unaccustomed to interacting with language learners;
- use language confidently and with ease, with few pauses;

- are able to meet practical writing needs such as letters and summaries by writing descriptions and narrations of paragraph length and organization, showing sustained control of basic structures and partial control of more complex structures and time frames.

## **Presentational**

### **NOVICE**

- use short, memorized phrases and sentences in oral and written presentations;
- are understood primarily by those who are very accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- demonstrate some accuracy in pronunciation and intonation when presenting well-rehearsed material on familiar topics;
- may show evidence of false starts, prolonged and unexpectedly placed pauses, and recourse to their native language as topics expand beyond the scope of immediate needs;
- show abilities in writing by reproducing familiar material;
- rely heavily on visuals to enhance comprehensibility in both oral and written presentations.

### **INTERMEDIATE**

- express their own thoughts, describe and narrate, using sentences and strings of sentences, in oral and written presentations on familiar topics;
- use pronunciation and intonation patterns that can be understood by those accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- make false starts and pause frequently to search for words when interacting with others;
- communicate oral and written information about familiar topics with sufficient accuracy that listeners and readers understand most of what is presented.

### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- report, narrate and describe, using connected sentences, paragraph length and longer forms of discourse, in oral and written presentations on topics of personal, school, and community interest;
- use pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understood by native users of the language, although the listener/reader may on occasion need to make a special effort to understand the message;
- use language confidently and with ease, with few pauses;
- communicate with a fairly high degree of facility when making oral and written presentations about familiar and well-researched topics.

## COMPREHENSION: How well do they understand?

### **Interpersonal**

#### NOVICE

- comprehend general information and vocabulary when the communication partner uses objects, visuals, and gestures in speaking or writing;
- generally need contextual clues, redundancy, paraphrase or restatement in order to understand the message.

#### INTERMEDIATE

- comprehend general concepts and messages about familiar and occasionally unfamiliar topics;
- may not comprehend details when dealing with unfamiliar topics;
- may have difficulty comprehending language not supported by situational context.

#### PRE-ADVANCED

- comprehend main ideas and most details on a variety of topics beyond the immediate situation;
- occasionally do not comprehend but usually are able to clarify details by asking questions;
- may encounter difficulty comprehending language dealing with abstract topics.

### **Interpretive**

#### NOVICE

- understand short, simple conversations and narratives (live or recorded material), within highly predictable and familiar contexts;
- rely on personal background experience to assist in comprehension;
- exhibit increased comprehension when constructing meaning through recognition of key words or phrases embedded in familiar contexts;
- comprehend written and spoken language better when content has been previously presented in an oral and/or visual context;
- determine meaning by recognition of cognates, prefixes, and thematic vocabulary.

#### INTERMEDIATE

- understand longer, more complex conversations and narratives as well as recorded material in familiar contexts;
- use background knowledge to comprehend simple stories, personal correspondence, and other contextualized print;
- identify main ideas and some specific information on a limited number of topics found in the products of the target culture such as those presented on TV, radio, video, or live and computer-generated presentations, although comprehension may be uneven;
- determine meaning by using contextual clues;
- are aided by the use of redundancy, paraphrase, and restatement in order to understand the message.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- use knowledge acquired in other settings and from other curricular areas to comprehend both spoken and written messages;
- understand main ideas and significant details on a variety of topics found in the products of the target culture such as those presented on TV, radio, video, or live and computer-generated presentations, although comprehension may be uneven;
- develop an awareness of tone, style, and author perspective;
- demonstrate a growing independence as a reader or listener and generally comprehend what they read and hear without relying solely on formally learned vocabulary.

## LANGUAGE CONTROL: How accurate is their language?

### **Interpersonal**

#### **NOVICE**

- comprehend messages that include predominantly familiar grammatical structures;
- are most accurate when communicating about very familiar topics using memorized oral and written phrases;
- exhibit decreased accuracy when attempting to create with the language;
- write with accuracy when copying written language but may use invented spelling when writing words or producing characters on their own;
- may exhibit frequent errors in capitalization and/or pronunciation when target language differs from native language in these areas.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- comprehend messages that include some unfamiliar grammatical structures;
- are most accurate when creating with the language about familiar topics in present time using simple sentences and/or strings of sentences;
- exhibit a decline in grammatical accuracy as creativity in language production increases;
- begin to apply familiar structures to new situations;
- evidence awareness of capitalization and/or punctuation when writing in the target language;
- recognize some of their own spelling or character production errors and make appropriate adjustments.

#### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- comprehend messages that include unfamiliar grammatical structures;
- are most accurate when narrating and describing in connected sentences and paragraphs in present time with decreasing accuracy in past and future times;
- may continue to exhibit inaccuracies as the amount and complexity of language increases; communicate successfully by applying familiar structures to new situations;
- rarely make errors in capitalization and in punctuation;
- are generally accurate in spelling or production of characters.

### **Interpretive**

#### **NOVICE**

- recognize structural patterns in target language narratives and derive meaning from these structures within familiar contexts;
- sometimes recognize previously learned structures when presented in new contexts.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- derive meaning by comparing target language structures with those of the native language;
- recognize parallels between new and familiar structures in the target language;
- understand high-frequency idiomatic expressions.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- deduce meaning in unfamiliar language passages by classifying words or concepts according to word order or grammatical use;
- apply rules of language to construct meaning from oral and written texts;
- understand idiomatic expressions;
- move beyond literal comprehension toward more critical reading and listening.

## Presentational NOVICE

- demonstrate some accuracy in oral and written presentations when reproducing memorized words, phrases and sentences in the target language;
- formulate oral and written presentations using a limited range of simple phrases and expressions based on very familiar topics;
- show inaccuracies and/or interference from the native language when attempting to communicate information which goes beyond the memorized or pre-fabricated;
- may exhibit frequent errors in capitalization and/or punctuation and/or production of characters when the writing system of the target language differs from the native language.

## INTERMEDIATE

- formulate oral and written presentations on familiar topics, using a range of sentences and strings of sentences primarily in present time but also, with preparation, in past and future time;
- may show inaccuracies as well as some interference from the native language when attempting to present less familiar material;
- exhibit fairly good accuracy in capitalization and punctuation (or production of characters) when target language differs from native language in these areas.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- accurately formulate paragraph-length and longer oral and written presentations in present time, on topics of personal, school, community and global interest;
- may show some inaccuracies and/or interference from the native language when presentations deal with multiple time frames and/or other complex structures;
- successfully communicate personal meaning by applying familiar structures to new situations and less familiar topics, and by integrating information from audio, visual, and written sources;
- exhibit awareness of need for accuracy in capitalization and/or punctuation (or production of characters) when target language differs from native language in these areas.

## VOCABULARY USE: How extensive and applicable is their vocabulary?

### **Interpersonal**

#### **NOVICE**

- comprehend and produce vocabulary that is related to everyday objects and actions on a limited number of familiar topics;
- use words and phrases primarily as lexical items without awareness of grammatical structure;
- recognize and use vocabulary from a variety of topics including those related to other curricular areas;
- may often rely on words and phrases from their native language when attempting to communicate beyond the word and/or gesture level.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- use vocabulary from a variety of thematic word groups;
- recognize and use vocabulary from a variety of topics including those related to other curricular areas;
- show some understanding and use of common idiomatic expressions;
- may use false cognates or resort to their native language when attempting to communicate beyond the scope of familiar topics.

#### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- understand and often use idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions;
- recognize and use vocabulary from a variety of topics including those related to other curricular areas;
- use more specialized and precise vocabulary terms within a limited number of topics.

### **Interpretive**

#### **NOVICE**

- recognize a variety of vocabulary words and expressions related to familiar topics embedded within relevant curricular areas;
- demonstrate increased comprehension of vocabulary in spoken passages when these are enhanced by pantomime, props, and/or visuals;
- demonstrate increased comprehension of written passages when accompanied by illustrations and other contextual clues.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- comprehend an expanded range of vocabulary;
- frequently derive meaning of unknown words by using contextual clues;
- demonstrate enhanced comprehension when listening to or reading content which has a recognizable format.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- comprehend a wide range of vocabulary in both concrete and abstract contexts;
- infer meaning of both oral and written texts by recognizing familiar words and phrases in new contexts;
- use context to deduce meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary;
- recognize and understand the cultural context of many words and phrases.

## **Presentational** NOVICE

- use a limited number of words and phrases for common objects and actions in familiar categories;
- supplement their basic vocabulary with expressions acquired from sources such as the teacher or picture dictionaries;
- rely on native language words and phrases when expressing personal meaning in less familiar categories.

## INTERMEDIATE

- demonstrate control of an expanding number of familiar words and phrases and of a limited number of idiomatic expressions;
- supplement their basic vocabulary, for both oral and written presentations, with expressions acquired from other sources such as dictionaries;
- in speech and writing, may sometimes use false cognates and incorrectly applied terms, and show only partial control of newly acquired expressions.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- demonstrate control of an extensive vocabulary, including a number of idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions, from a variety of topics;
- supplement their basic vocabulary by using resources such as textbooks and dictionaries;
- may use more specialized and precise terms when dealing with specific topics that have been researched.

## **Presentational** NOVICE

- imitate the use of culturally appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and non-verbal behaviors by the teacher.

## INTERMEDIATE

- use some culturally appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and non-verbal behaviors;
- demonstrate some cultural knowledge in oral and written presentations.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- demonstrate increased use of culturally appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and non-verbal behaviors;
- use language increasingly reflective of authentic cultural practices and perspectives.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: How do they maintain communication?

### **Interpersonal**

#### **NOVICE**

- attempt to clarify meaning by repeating words and occasionally selecting substitute words to convey their message;
- primarily use facial expressions and gestures to indicate problems with comprehension.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- may use paraphrasing, question-asking, circumlocution, and other strategies to avoid a breakdown in communication;
- attempt to self-correct primarily for meaning when communication breaks down.

#### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- are able to sustain an interaction with a native speaker by using a variety of strategies when discussion topics relate to personal experience or immediate needs;
- show evidence of attention to mechanical errors even when these may not interfere with communication.

### **Interpretive**

#### **NOVICE**

- use background experience to anticipate story direction in highly predictable oral or written texts;
- rely heavily on visuals and familiar language to assist in comprehension.

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

- identify the main idea of a written text by using reading strategies such as gleaning information from the first and last paragraphs;
- infer meaning of many unfamiliar words that are necessary in order to understand the gist of an oral or written text;
- use contextual clues to assist in comprehension.

#### **PRE-ADVANCED**

- use background knowledge to deduce meaning and to understand complex information in oral or written texts;
- identify the organizing principle(s) in oral or written texts;
- infer and interpret the intent of the writer.

### **Presentational**

#### **NOVICE**

- make corrections by repeating or rewriting when appropriate forms are routinely modeled by the teacher;
- rely heavily on repetition, non-verbal expression (gestures, facial expressions), and visuals to communicate their message.

## INTERMEDIATE

- make occasional use of reference sources and efforts at self-correction to avoid errors likely to interfere with communication;
- use circumlocution when faced with difficult syntactic structures, problematic spelling, or unfamiliar vocabulary;
- make use of memory-aids (such as notes and visuals) to facilitate presentations.

## PRE-ADVANCED

- demonstrate conscious efforts at correct formulation and self-correction by use of self-editing and of reference sources;
- sustain length and continuity of presentations by appropriate use of strategies such as simplification, reformulation, and circumlocution;
- make use of a variety of resource materials and presentation methods to enhance presentations.

## CULTURAL AWARENESS: How is their cultural understanding reflected in their communication?

### **Interpersonal**

#### NOVICE

- imitate culturally appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic expressions;
- use gestures and body language that are generally those of the student's own culture, unless they are incorporated into memorized responses.

#### INTERMEDIATE

- use some culturally appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic expressions;
- use some gestures and body language of the target culture.

#### PRE-ADVANCED

- use culturally appropriate vocabulary and idioms;
- use appropriate gestures and body language of the target culture.

### **Interpretive**

#### NOVICE

- understand both oral and written language that reflects a cultural background similar to their own;
- predict a story line or event when it reflects a cultural background similar to their own.

#### INTERMEDIATE

- use knowledge of their own culture and that of the target culture(s) to interpret oral or written texts more accurately;
- recognize target culture influences in the products and practices of their own culture;
- recognize differences and similarities in the perspectives of the target culture and their own.

### **Presentational**

#### NOVICE

- imitate the use of culturally appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and non-verbal behaviors modeled by the teacher.

#### INTERMEDIATE

- demonstrate some cultural knowledge in oral and written presentations

#### PREADVANCED

- use language increasingly reflective of authentic cultural practices and perspectives