

WORLD LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS

Students will attain communicative proficiency in language consistent with their level of study. Proficiency is the student's relative ability to function properly in the target language in specific communicative circumstances.

Proficiency is a measure of one's ability to use language and is assessed by considering:

- content/context
- function
- accuracy.

The proficiency rating generally falls into one of the broad levels of Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior. Lower levels are further divided into the categories of Low, Mid, and High. Advanced is further divided into Advanced and Advanced High.

The proficiency that students attain depends on such factors as time, level of control, and classroom activities. A description of the four major levels (from the 1986 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines) is below.

Novice	Speakers can communicate only in common, highly predictable daily situations using memorized and formulaic speech. They may be difficult to understand, even by those accustomed to interacting with non-native speakers.
Intermediate	Speakers can ask and answer questions and can maintain simple conversations on familiar topics using sentences and strings of sentences. They can usually be understood by those accustomed to non-native speakers, although some repetition may be needed.
Advanced	Speakers can converse fluently and discuss topics of personal interest. They can describe and narrate events in the past, present, and future using paragraph-like discourse. They can be understood without difficulty, even by those unaccustomed to nonnative speakers.
Superior	Speakers can participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. They can explain in detail, hypothesize, and support their opinions. At this level, errors never interfere with communication.

CONTACT HOURS

Based on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines, one year of language study is considered 120 hours of actual time on task in the classroom. Students in the Somers Elementary School program receive a total of between 90 and 100 contact hours over a five-year period. At the elementary level, students are expected to achieve the Novice level. An occasional very superior student may, of course, reach the next higher level.