

About the ACTFL OPI

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or ACTFL OPI as it is often called, is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. It is a face-to-face or telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee that determines how well a person speaks a language by comparing his or her performance of specific communication tasks with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking \(Revised 1999\)](#) [pdf format]. The ten proficiency levels are:

Superior	Intermediate Mid
Advanced High	Intermediate Low
Advanced Mid	Novice High
Advanced Low	Novice Mid
Intermediate High	Novice Low

Since the ACTFL OPI is an assessment of functional speaking ability, independent of any specific curriculum, it is irrelevant when, where, why and under what conditions the candidate acquired his/her speaking ability in the language.

The ACTFL OPI takes the form of a carefully structured conversation between a trained and certified interviewer and the person whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the speaking abilities of the individual being tested. The topics that are discussed during the interview are based on the interests and experiences of the test candidate.

Through a series of personalized questions, the interviewer elicits from the test candidate examples of his or her ability to handle the communication tasks specified for each level of proficiency in order to establish a clear 'floor' and 'ceiling' of consistent functional ability. Often candidates are asked to take part in a role-play. This task provides the opportunity for linguistic functions not easily elicited through the conversational format.

Uses of the OPI

The ACTFL OPI is currently used worldwide by academic institutions, government agencies, and private corporations for purposes such as: academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification, hiring and promotional qualification. The ACTFL OPI is recognized by the American Council on Education (ACE) for the awarding of college credit.

More than 10,000 OPIs in 37 different languages are conducted through the ACTFL Testing Program. OPI Testing is currently available in the following languages:

Arabic	Greek	Mandarin	Swedish
Cambodian	Haitian Creole	Norwegian	Tagalog
Cantonese	Hebrew	Polish	Thai
Croatian	Hindi	Portuguese	Turkish
Czech	Hmong	Punjabi	Ukrainian
Dutch	Indonesian	Russian	Urdu
Egyptian	Italian	Serbian	Vietnamese
English	Japanese	Slovak	
French	Korean	Spanish	
German	Lao	Swahili	

Testing and Rating Procedure

ACTFL OPIs are conducted and rated by ACTFL certified proficiency testers. Each interview is tape recorded and rated by one or more certified testers. Advisory OPI Ratings are assigned to those OPIs conducted within a tester's own academic institution for internal purposes. Official ACTFL OPI ratings are assigned to those OPIs conducted under the supervision of the ACTFL Testing Office. Each Official OPI is blindly rated by a second certified tester. When a final rating is assigned, and ACTFL OPI Certificate is issued. The terms 'ACTFL OPI', 'Official ACTFL OPI', and the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview protocol are the property of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and their use is restricted to those purposes intended by ACTFL.

Language Testing International - The ACTFL Testing Office

The ACTFL OPI Testing Program is administered by Language Testing International (LTI). Since 1992, LTI has been responsible for scheduling, archiving, and issuing ACTFL ratings and OPI certificates. Records of all official tests are kept permanently in the proficiency testing archive.

For more information on OPI Testing or to schedule a personal Oral Proficiency Interview, contact:

LTI

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