

Three of the Four Major Oral Proficiency Levels

Novice

- Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words, lists, and phrases that have been encountered, memorized and recalled.
- Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic listeners that are accustomed to non-native speech.
- Speakers at the Novice level show little functional ability.

Intermediate

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to express personal meaning by creating with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They are able to combine and recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning in uncomplicated communicative tasks.

- Intermediate-level speakers can ask simple questions and can handle a straightforward survival situation. They produce sentence-level language, ranging from discrete sentences to strings of sentences, typically in present time.
- Intermediate-level speakers are understood by listeners who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language.

Advanced

Speakers at the Advanced level engage in conversation in a clearly participatory manner in order to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest. The topics are handled concretely by means of narration and description in the major time frames of past, present, and future. These speakers can also deal with a social situation with an unexpected complication.

- The language of Advanced-level speakers is abundant, the oral paragraph being the measure of Advanced-level length and discourse.
- Advanced-level speakers have sufficient control of basic structures and generic vocabulary to be understood by native speakers of the language, including those unaccustomed to non-native speech.

FACT – Functions (Global Tasks)

Functions refer to what speakers are **able to do** with the language.

The functions (or global tasks) of a **Novice-level speaker** are characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- _____ minimally with formulaic and rote utterances by using isolated words, lists, and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and/or recalled;
- _____ to simple questions on the most common features of daily life.

The functions (or global tasks) of an **Intermediate-level speaker** are characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- _____ with the language;
- _____ and _____ simple questions;
- handle a(n) _____ situation or transaction.

The functions (or global tasks) of an **Advanced-level speaker** are characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- _____ in all major time frames:
- _____ in all major time frames;
- deal effectively with an unanticipated _____.

Proficiency Level	<u>F</u>unctions	<u>A</u>ccuracy	<u>C</u>ontexts	<u>T</u>ext Type
Advanced		Can be understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Most informal and some formal settings; Topics of personal and general current interest (current events)	i. ii.
Intermediate		Can be understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations; Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities and personal environment	i. ii.
Novice		May be difficult to understand, even for speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Most common informal settings; Most common aspects of daily life.	i. ii. iii.

Creating Meaningful Opportunities to Function – Family and Friends

Novice	
Novice to Intermediate	
Intermediate	
Intermediate to Advanced	
Advanced	

What about the sub-levels of proficiency?

Due to the scope of today's 60 minute presentation, we have only considered the major levels of oral proficiency as defined by ACTFL, but the sub-levels of “-low, -mid, and –high” also are important to consider.

Our World Language Department at the Franklin Regional School District has taken this information and created a rubric with user-friendly language for the teachers, students, and families of those students.

Next, we developed “end of the year” oral proficiency goals for each course that we offer. These goals represent our expectations of how students should be able to **FUNCTION** at the end of the course so that they can continue to have success in the subsequent course. Notice that there is no “Novice-Low” category, due to the limited functional ability of that proficiency level.

Level 1 → Novice-Mid

Level 2 → Novice-High

Level 3 → Intermediate-Low

Level 4 → Continued Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid

Level 5 → Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High

We then use these rubrics to assess students' ability to function at the proficiency levels. These assessments last approximately 10-15 minutes per student and can occur multiple times throughout the year, i.e. the beginning, middle, and/or end. For level 1, the assessments are much shorter and are meant to give students a chance to start producing words and lists/phrases in those practiced, familiar contexts of the classroom.

As students move through the program, they become familiar with the language of the rubric and the expectations of the program. This allows students to self-reflect and set goals to improve their proficiency as they continue studying the language. Please see pages 7 and 8 for the rubric.

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<i>Oral Speaking Proficiency</i>	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Low	Novice-High	Novice-Mid
<p>How do I function in the language? <i>(memorization, creating with the language, describing, and narrating)</i></p> <p>What is my text type? <i>(words, sentences, paragraphs, extended discourse)</i></p>	<p>I create with the language by using strings of connected sentences consistent of paragraph form, but cannot maintain it.</p> <p>I can narrate and describe in detail, but not consistently across contexts.</p>	<p>I consistently create with the language by using strings of connected sentences, but I am not approaching paragraph form in my narration and/or description.</p>	<p>I create with the language by combining and recombining familiar structures.</p> <p>I use simple sentences and some strings of sentences that may or may not be connected.</p>	<p>I combine and recombine familiar structures and attempt to create with the language.</p> <p>I use short and simple sentences but cannot maintain sentence-level language consistently.</p>	<p>I use only memorized language or very familiar/basic language to try to communicate meaning.</p> <p>I use mainly words, phrases, chunks, and list-like language when I try to produce language.</p>
<p>How well do I organize my ideas when I speak to others? <i>(transitions and sequencing)</i></p>	<p>My ideas are well organized.</p> <p>I use seamless transitions and sequencing, which enhance my overall message.</p>	<p>My ideas are organized.</p> <p>Sequencing and transition words start to enhance my message.</p>	<p>My ideas are mostly organized.</p> <p>I may use some sequencing/transition words to help connect my ideas.</p>	<p>My ideas are partially organized.</p>	<p>I cannot effectively organize my ideas due to my lack of functional ability (above).</p>
<p>How well can others understand me when I try to communicate? <i>(sympathetic listener)</i></p>	<p>Teacher can <u>easily</u> understand <u>everything</u> I say without effort regardless of the length of my message.</p>	<p>Teacher can <u>easily</u> understand <u>most</u> of what I say with <u>minimal effort</u>. Length of message does not affect comprehension.</p>	<p>Teacher can understand <u>most</u> of what I say with <u>some effort</u>. Length of message may or may not affect comprehension.</p>	<p>Teacher can understand <u>some</u> of what I say with occasional difficulty. The more I say, the harder it is to comprehend.</p>	<p>Teacher can understand, with great effort, <u>small amounts</u> of what I say.</p>
<p>What kind of vocabulary do I use in various contexts? <i>(limited, basic, range, higher-level)</i></p>	<p>I can produce vocabulary from an expanding variety of themes/contexts.</p> <p>I use specialized and precise vocabulary needed to perform the task.</p> <p>I may use idiomatic expressions and culturally authentic expressions.</p>	<p>I use vocabulary on a wider range of everyday themes/contexts.</p> <p>I begin to use vocabulary outside of the familiar, practiced topics of the classroom.</p>	<p>I use a range of vocabulary necessary to accomplish the task.</p> <p>If I do not have the vocabulary I need, I paraphrase or explain it in a different way in the language.</p> <p>I do not use English but may use the wrong word or expression.</p>	<p>I use a range of vocabulary that addresses familiar and practiced topics.</p> <p>I may use English or simplified vocabulary when I am unable to communicate my message.</p> <p>I may use some false cognates.</p>	<p>I use basic, very common memorized vocabulary (words, lists, and phrases).</p> <p>I usually resort to English when I am unable to communicate my message.</p>

<i>Oral Speaking Proficiency</i>	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Low	Novice-High	Novice-Mid
<p>How well do I control the language when I produce it?</p> <p><i>(simple sentences for creating with the language to more complex structures for detailed narration and description in all time frames)</i></p>	<p>I consistently control the simple, necessary vocabulary and grammar.</p> <p>I am able to control most of my complex language/sentences and apply familiar structures to new contexts/situations.</p> <p>I show some control of all three time frames when narrating/describing.</p> <p>My accuracy starts to decrease when I try to narrate and describe at the paragraph level.</p>	<p>I communicate effectively using a combination of simple and some complex sentences with appropriate vocabulary and grammar.</p> <p>I have emerging control of more complex language/sentences, but at times, some errors may impede comprehension.</p>	<p>I am most accurate when I communicate simple sentences with the necessary vocabulary and grammar.</p> <p>I make mistakes when I try to create language that is more complex beyond the simple sentence level.</p> <p>My native language may influence how/what I say.</p>	<p>I am most accurate with practiced and familiar language and phrases.</p> <p>I show ability to control my vocabulary and/or grammar when producing sentence-level language, but not all of the time.</p> <p>My accuracy starts to decrease as I continue to create and express personal meaning at the sentence level.</p> <p>My native language often influences how/what I say.</p>	<p>My accuracy is limited to memorized words and phrases.</p> <p>I am unable to control vocabulary and/or grammar beyond memorized or practiced language.</p> <p>I make repeated mistakes when I try to produce at the sentence level.</p>
<p>How well do I complete the conversational task? What is the content of my overall message?</p> <p><i>(details, examples, explanations, use of questions, and a complicated situation)</i></p>	<p>I complete the conversational task in its entirety.</p> <p>I support my comments with numerous specific and relevant examples to make my point and strengthen my message.</p> <p>I ask a variety of engaging questions to effectively maintain and continue the conversation.</p> <p>I show some ability to function in a complicated situation.</p>	<p>I complete each part of the task as given.</p> <p>I support my comments by providing various details with specific and relevant examples.</p> <p>I ask various appropriate and effective questions within the context.</p> <p>When presented with a complication, my message loses meaning.</p>	<p>I complete the task in a meaningful way by providing a lot of information but simple details.</p> <p>I am able to ask a few appropriate questions within the context, but some are limited in their effectiveness.</p>	<p>I complete the task by providing basic information within the context of the conversation.</p> <p>I participate fully, but I make few attempts to add details and explain my comments.</p> <p>My overall message has some meaning.</p> <p>I try to ask questions when prompted, but they may be ineffective or inappropriate for the context.</p>	<p>I partially complete the task due to a lack of meaningful use of the language.</p> <p>I do not attempt to add additional details, mainly because I am unable to do so.</p> <p>I cannot ask questions when prompted.</p> <p>My overall message is not meaningful.</p>

