

Speaking and Listening Performance Levels

Level	General Description
1	A level 1 speaker has no ability whatsoever in the language. He/She cannot understand anything and can convey nothing.
2	A level 2 speaker can understand isolated words and simple expressions. He/She can convey isolated words or simple expressions and memorized sentences.
3	A level 3 person can understand and express simple sentences using subjects and verbs in the present tense. The range of vocabulary is limited to elementary needs and some basic courtesies.
4	The level 4 person can understand basic sentences around the immediate setting as well as basic questions. He/She can express simple ideas using the present tense and may occasionally use other simple tenses. He/She can convey basic information, but has difficulty even in basic conversations.
5	A person at a level 5 has the ability to participate in basic conversations. The subjects are routine in nature and tend to be repetitive, for example weather. A level 5 speaker uses primarily the present tense and cannot use advanced tenses, thus is very restricted on expressing and understanding any subject other than what is most familiar to him/her. Speech is slow, and he/she requires more rephrasing and repetition to understand a native speaker.
6	A level 6 person can use and understand the present, past and future tenses with some errors. He/She does not use advanced tenses. He/She can easily participate in a conversation on basic subjects like weather, but not in a general conversation. He/She usually cannot understand normal native rates of speech.
7	A person at a level 7 cannot easily participate in general conversations. He/She can participate in conversations that are routine or on topics that are well known to the person. He/She will have trouble with a native speaker's normal pace. He/She will use simple tenses with a few errors, but will avoid advanced tenses. A candidate at this level in a general conversation will cause misunderstandings between himself/herself and the listener based on lack of ability to convey clearly his/her message.
8	A person at a level 8 can participate in general conversations surrounding routine and topics in most social and work-related settings. He/She will have trouble with some normal speed conversations and with topics that are more advanced or specialized. He/She may lack the capability to speak at a normal speed, and will not use advanced grammatical structures or will make many mistakes. A candidate at this level will potentially cause misunderstandings between himself/herself and the listener based on some lack of ability

to convey clearly his/her message.

9 A person at a level 9 can successfully handle in-depth conversations in the target language, on a broad range of subjects and at a normal rate of speech. He/She has difficulty understanding some slang or idioms or some advanced grammatical structures, but can figure out what is said by the context of the discussion. When speaking, a person at a level 9 can express himself/herself over a broad range of topics at a normal speed. He/She may have a noticeable accent and will make grammatical errors, for example with advanced tenses, but the errors will not cause misunderstanding to a native speaker.

10 A person at a level 10 can handle all of the tasks that a level 9 can, with the addition of demonstrating skills such as selling and persuasion. He/She can successfully handle in-depth client questions, and does not require as much contextual support for understanding of slang and idioms. A person at this level is able to select vocabulary that conveys a finer shade of meaning with more precision than a level 9 and can better support his/her opinions. Errors in speech are few, are limited to advanced grammatical situations and do not affect understanding.

11 A person at a level 11 is nearly fluent. He/She can handle a wide variety of communicative tasks with finesse. His/her communication is close to that of a well-educated speaker, and only encounters difficulty if speech is highly abstract. Errors in speech are very few, are limited to advanced grammatical situations and do not affect understanding.

12 The level 12 oral skills are equivalent to well-educated native fluency. The person can understand everything said in the language and can speak with precision and finesse using the full range of grammar and vocabulary. Some weakness may occur with the use of idiomatic and colloquial expressions. A non-native or regional accent may be present.

12+ Level 12+ is a well-educated, distinguished speaker with superior native fluency. A person at this level not only speaks in a native-like manner and is perceived as native, but can express himself or herself articulately on any subject.