

Federal Interagency Language Roundtable (FILR)

Language Skill Level Descriptions (Condensed)

0 No Proficiency

0+ Memorized Proficiency (Survival/Courtesy)

Speaking: Able to satisfy immediate needs such as for lodging, meals, and transportation, using memorized (or rehearsed) speech only. No fluency.

Reading: Can read some isolated words and phrases such as personal/place names and street/store signs but unable to read connected prose.

1 Elementary Proficiency

Speaking: Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple conversations on familiar or rehearsed topics. Experiences frequent misunderstandings. Examples: can exchange greetings, elicit predictable information and explain routine procedures in a restricted way.

Reading: Sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected material. Can gist from short frequently- encountered materials such as invoices, forms, maps, and charts.

2 Limited Working Proficiency (Limited Functional Proficiency)

Speaking: Able to handle routine daily interactions that are limited in scope. Able to handle confidently, but not fluently, most social conversations on such topics as: current events, work, family, etc. Examples: can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace, receive and provide straightforward direction.

Reading: Able to read with some misunderstandings straightforward familiar factual material. Examples: descriptive or narrative writings such as routine reports, simple biographic information, formulaic business letters, and simple technical material for the general reader.

3 General Professional Proficiency

Speaking: Able to speak the language with sufficient fluency and accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics. However, there are noticeable linguistic and cultural imperfections which limit the individual's ability to participate in more sophisticated interactions such as high-level negotiation. Can typically discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with ease. Examples: can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions, understanding the essence of challenges, stating and defending policy, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, etc. Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers.

Reading: Able to read with almost complete comprehension a variety of prose material on familiar and unfamiliar topics. Can typically understand news stories similar to wire service reports, routine correspondence, general reports, and technical material in the reader's professional field. Can get the gist of more sophisticated texts but may not perceive subtlety and nuance.

4 Advanced Functional Proficiency

Speaking: Able to use language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. Examples: understands the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally or conceptually different from his/her own. Can set the tone of interpersonal official, semi-official, professional and non-professional verbal exchanges with a representative range of native speakers (for all audiences, purposes, tasks, and settings). Can play an effective role among native speakers in such contexts as negotiations, conferences, lectures and debates on matters of disagreement. Can advocate a position at length, both formally and in chance encounters, using sophisticated verbal strategies.

Reading: Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of language pertinent to professional needs.

5 Functionally Native Proficiency