LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAMS
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The reading exam is a 90-minute-long computer-based exam.

**Goal:** Demonstrate proficiency in reading academic or scholarly text.

Students will be given short articles and/or news passages to read. They will have to respond to questions in English about those articles or passages.

Topics range from international affairs, economics, culture, history, environment, and general knowledge referring to the region in which the test language is primarily spoken.
How To Prepare

Students should read newspapers, journals, and opinion pieces in their test language. Highlight and define words that they do not understand and then go back through the passage to improve their comprehension.

Practice checking their understanding by identifying important specific events, dates, and people mentioned.

Ask a friend or family member who understands the same language to test their understanding.
Dictionaries

German, Italian, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, and Turkish language students are permitted to bring a paperback dictionary to the exam.

Arabic students are only permitted to bring “The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic”.

Students taking the exam in languages not listed above are not permitted to use a dictionary during the exam.
The OPI is a 20-minute-long virtual or in-person interview with a faculty member who teaches the test language.

**Goal:** Demonstrate proficiency through the narration, description, or explanation of topics such as:
- Your history and studies
- Your job
- Your career goals
- Everyday transactional problems
- Current events
- How to do routine tasks
The questions will start very easy. As the OPI continues, they will become more difficult and you will be expected to demonstrate more advanced grammar and sentence structure.

It takes more vocabulary, different tenses, and advanced sentence structure to advance through the intermediate and advanced levels.

Check your program's requirement to determine the level you need!
How to Prepare

Practice speaking in clear paragraphs on a variety of topics. A key to intermediate high is the ability to speak in clear, logical, convincing paragraphs. A paragraph is more than a group of sentences. It features cohesive devices and maintains temporal integrity.

Watch news or listen to the radio in that language.

Listen to music and read the lyrics.

Watch movies with subtitles.
Tips

- Pretend you are speaking with a dignitary in that language. It does not need to be perfect grammar; however, it needs to be in formal speech.
- All speakers pause and repair their speech. You are allowed a certain amount of language roughness and hesitation as long as they do not destroy the paragraph.
- You may be asked to state personal opinions based on your own experience or concrete information provided to you. You do not need to cogently defend opinions, provide analysis, or delve into unfamiliar factual material.
- You need enough grammar to support paragraph structure in a way that they can be understood by non-sympathetic listeners on concrete topics at least 50% of the time.
Sample Questions

• Describe a typical day at your job.
• What are your main academic/free time interests?
• Imagine I know nothing about the U.S. educational system. How do you get into college?
• American politicians often talk about American exceptionalism. What do they mean by that?
• What arguments have you heard for or against ___ (gun control, abortion, the war on drugs, etc.)?
• Explain to your assistants their latest assignment: Go through the handwritten files of information on the current project. Make sure that all the data from the handwritten files have been entered into the office’s computer database. Check to see if there are any discrepancies between handwritten notes and information already written online. If there are discrepancies that look like more than explainable typos, the assistants should check with you first to find out which information is the correct version.
RESOURCES

Language Lunches
Student organizations
Duolingo
Mango
Forvo
italki
Cultural events hosted by the embassies
Cultural centers
Your classmates
WordReference.com
Please contact GSS if you have any questions.