

ACTFL Writing Proficiency Guidelines & Ratings

INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Writers at the Intermediate-High level are able to meet all practical writing needs such as taking notes on familiar topics, writing uncomplicated letters, simple summaries, and compositions related to work, school experiences, and topics of current and general interest. Intermediate-High writers connect sentences into paragraphs using a limited number of cohesive devices that tend to be repeated, and with some breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced level. They can write simple descriptions and narrations of paragraph length on everyday events and situations in different time frames, although with some inaccuracies and inconsistencies. For example, they may be unsuccessful in their use of paraphrase and elaboration and/or inconsistent in the use of appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss in clarity. In those languages that use verbal markers to indicate tense and aspect, forms are not consistently accurate. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of Intermediate-High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken language. The writing of an Intermediate-High writer, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but gaps in comprehension may occur.

INTERMEDIATE MID

Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, descriptions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts that are based on personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other topics related to personal experiences and immediate surroundings. Most writing is framed in present time, with inconsistent references to other time frames. The writing style closely resembles the grammar and lexicon of oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level show evidence of control of syntax in non-complex sentences and in basic verb forms, and they may demonstrate some ability to use grammatical and stylistic cohesive elements. This writing is best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together; there is little evidence of deliberate organization. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level pay only sporadic attention to the reader of their texts; they focus their energies on the production of the writing rather than on the reception the text will receive. When Intermediate-Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear. Natives used to the writing of non-natives can understand intermediate-Mid writers readily.

INTERMEDIATE LOW

Writers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic subject-verb-object word order. They are written mostly in present time with occasional and often incorrect use of past or future time. Writing tends to be a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Vocabulary is limited to common objects and routine activities, adequate to express elementary needs. Writing is somewhat mechanistic and topics are limited to highly predictable content areas and personal information tied to limited language experience. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. When Intermediate-Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete. Natives used to the writing of non-natives understand their writing, although additional effort may be required.