

Language Assessment Task (LAT)

Speaking & Writing

Principles Applied Across These Assessments

- **Validity:** Each speaking and writing item is written to target a specific proficiency level and task type (e.g., Novice list, Intermediate personal life, Superior opinion), so that performance on the task provides evidence about the construct — oral or written proficiency — it is intended to measure. Prompts follow the GRASPS framework (Goal, Role, Audience, Situation, Product, Standards) to ensure authentic, real-world relevance, which supports content and face validity.
- **Reliability:** Administration is standardized — every item specifies exact preparation and response/writing time, and every response is scored against the same analytic rubric rather than a holistic, subjective impression. Rubrics use concrete, observable descriptors at each band to reduce rater disagreement, and are intended to be used with rater training and periodic double-scoring to monitor inter-rater reliability.
- **Test Design:** Items are sequenced from Novice to Superior within each test, mirroring a proficiency continuum, and task types are varied (description, narration, opinion, problem resolution) so the test samples a broad range of the construct rather than a single skill in isolation.

Assessment 1 — Speaking Language Assessment Task (Test Items)

A 12-item oral test that mirrors the program's Speaking LAT Specifications. Items progress from Novice to Superior and sample a range of task types (description, list, personal narrative, question formation, comparison, opinion, problem resolution, and quote interpretation) so that the test provides broad, representative evidence of a student's oral proficiency.

Q#	Level & Type	Prep Time	Recording Time	Prompt
1	Novice Warm-up	10 s	30 s	Look at the picture. What do you see? <i>[Insert an everyday-life photo showing two or more people in a familiar setting, e.g., a family at a picnic]</i>
2	Novice List	10 s	30 s	What are some foods you like to eat? Name a few.
3	Intermediate Personal Life	10 s	30 s	What do you like to do on the weekends? Tell me about it.
4	Intermediate Questions	10 s	30 s	You are a new student at an English language school. You want to know more about the school library. Ask the librarian several questions to learn about the library's hours and how to check out books.
5	Advanced Description	15 s	45 s	A friend is deciding whether to live in a big city or a small town. Compare and contrast living in a big city versus living in a small town.
6	Superior Opinion	20 s	80 s	In your sociology class, your professor asks students to share their opinion on whether social media has a positive or negative effect on society. Share your opinion and support it with reasons and examples.
7	Advanced Problem Resolution	15 s	45 s	You ordered a package online, but it arrived damaged. You call customer service to resolve the issue. Explain the problem and propose a solution.

Q#	Level & Type	Prep Time	Recording Time	Prompt
8	Superior Consequences, Advantages/Disadvantages	20 s	80 s	In your economics class, your professor lectures on the rise of remote work. She asks the class to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working from home compared to working in an office. Discuss in detail.
9	Superior Quote Interpretation	20 s	80 s	Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Discuss how accurate you think this quote is, who should learn from it, and how their actions should change.
10	Advanced Past Narration	15 s	45 s	A classmate asks about a challenge you have overcome. Tell about a specific challenge you faced in the past and how you overcame it.
11	Intermediate Routine	10 s	30 s	A new coworker asks about your typical morning routine before work or school. Describe your routine.
12	Intermediate Cool-down	10 s	30 s	A friend asks what you want to do after you finish your English program. Tell them your plans.

Assessment 2 — Speaking Rubric & Scoring Guide

This analytic rubric is used to score responses to the Speaking LAT above. Each response is rated 1–4 on five criteria, producing both a criterion-level profile (useful for feedback) and a total score (useful for placement or achievement decisions).

Criterion	1 – Novice	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced	4 – Superior
Fluency & Delivery	Speaks in isolated words with long pauses; frequent hesitation.	Speaks in short phrases/sentences with some pauses; generally understandable pace.	Speaks in connected paragraphs with occasional hesitation; pace supports comprehension.	Speaks fluidly across extended discourse; pauses are natural, not disruptive.
Pronunciation & Intonation	Frequent errors that often obscure meaning; requires listener effort.	Some errors, but meaning is usually clear; intonation is inconsistent.	Minor errors that rarely affect comprehension; intonation supports meaning.	Errors are rare; stress and intonation closely resemble native-like patterns.
Grammatical Accuracy	Little control of grammar; errors interfere with meaning.	Basic structures are mostly accurate; errors increase with complexity.	Good control of a range of structures; occasional errors don't affect meaning.	Wide range of structures used accurately and flexibly, even under time pressure.
Vocabulary Range	Relies on memorized words/phrases; very limited range.	Adequate vocabulary for familiar, everyday topics.	Vocabulary is precise and varied for personal and some academic topics.	Wide, precise vocabulary, including idiomatic and academic language.

Criterion	1 – Novice	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced	4 – Superior
Task Completion & Content	Response is minimal or only partially related to the prompt.	Response addresses the prompt with basic, relevant content.	Response fully addresses the prompt with developed, organized content.	Response fully and thoughtfully addresses all parts of the prompt with well-supported, nuanced content.

Scoring Procedures (Reliability & Validity Notes)

- Raters are trained using 3–5 benchmark recordings per proficiency level before scoring live responses, so that all raters apply the descriptors consistently.
- A minimum of 10% of responses are double-scored by a second rater; discrepancies of more than 1 point on any criterion are discussed and resolved to maintain inter-rater reliability.
- Scores are recorded by criterion (not just a single overall score) so results can be used diagnostically as well as for overall proficiency decisions, supporting both formative and summative validity.

Assessment 3 — Writing Language Assessment Task (Test Items)

A two-item writing test that mirrors the program's Writing LAT Specifications, moving from a shorter Intermediate-level personal writing task to an extended Superior-level argumentative essay.

Q#	Level & Type	Writing Time	Prompt
1	Intermediate Personal Life	10 min	You are an international student attending an English school in the USA. Your conversation partner asked you to tell them about your family. Write a paragraph describing your family: • Who is in your family? • What are they like? You have 10 minutes to write your response.
2	Superior Opinion and Consequences/ Advantages-Disadvantages	30 min	You are an international student at a university, and your professor gave a lecture about the effects of social media on mental health. Your professor wants to know everyone's thoughts and asks each student to write an essay expressing their opinion. Write an essay answering the following questions: • What are the advantages and disadvantages of social media use? • Based on your advantages and disadvantages, should social media use among teenagers increase, decrease, or stay the same? Why? You have 30 minutes to write your response.

Assessment 4 — Writing Rubric & Scoring Guide

This analytic rubric is used to score responses to the Writing LAT above, with the same 1–4 scale and criterion structure as the Speaking rubric so that results are comparable across skills.

Criterion	1 – Novice	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced	4 – Superior
Task Fulfillment & Content	Response is a list of words/phrases; minimally related to the prompt.	Response addresses the prompt with basic, relevant ideas.	Response fully addresses the prompt with developed, well-supported ideas.	Response fully and insightfully addresses all parts of the prompt with well-developed, nuanced arguments.

Criterion	1 – Novice	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced	4 – Superior
Organization	No clear organization; ideas are disconnected.	Ideas are loosely connected; limited use of linking words.	Clear paragraph structure with logical progression and transitions.	Sophisticated organization (e.g., clear thesis, topic sentences, cohesive devices) that guides the reader.
Grammar & Syntax	Little control of sentence structure; frequent errors obscure meaning.	Simple sentence structures with some errors; meaning is usually clear.	Good control of a range of structures; occasional errors don't affect meaning.	Wide range of complex structures used accurately and effectively.
Vocabulary	Very limited, repetitive vocabulary.	Adequate vocabulary for familiar, everyday topics.	Varied, precise vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	Wide-ranging, precise, and idiomatic/academic vocabulary used naturally.
Mechanics	Frequent errors in spelling/punctuation that interfere with meaning.	Some errors in spelling/punctuation; meaning is usually clear.	Minor errors that don't interfere with meaning.	Consistently accurate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Scoring Procedures (Reliability & Validity Notes)

- Writing samples are scored anonymously (student name removed/coded) to reduce rater bias, supporting reliability.
- Raters reference annotated benchmark essays at each score point for every criterion before scoring a new batch of responses.
- Because the rubric separates content/organization from grammar/mechanics, a strong writer with minor grammar errors is not penalized as heavily as one with weak content — preserving the construct validity of the writing task as a measure of communicative writing ability, not just grammatical accuracy.

Assessment 5 — Other Evaluation Project: Can-Do Self- & Peer-Assessment Checklist

This formative checklist complements the two LATs above by triangulating evidence of proficiency through student self-report and peer observation. It is administered after a unit of instruction, alongside (not instead of) the rated LATs, and gives both the student and teacher a second, independent data point on the same can-do statements the LATs are designed to measure — improving the overall validity of the proficiency picture through multiple measures.

Can-Do Statement	Self	Peer
Speaking: I can describe a picture or everyday situation using simple words and phrases.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet
Speaking: I can ask and answer questions about my daily life and routines.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet
Speaking: I can explain a problem and suggest a solution in a real-life situation.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet
Speaking: I can give and support an opinion on an academic or social topic in extended speech.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet
Writing: I can write a paragraph describing people, places, or personal experiences.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

Can-Do Statement	Self	Peer
Writing: I can write a well-organized essay that states and supports an opinion with reasons and examples.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet
Writing: I can use a range of grammar structures and vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet	☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

Use & Rationale

- Students complete the self-assessment column independently; a partner completes the peer column after listening to/reading the student's LAT response or classroom performance.
- Discrepancies between self-, peer-, and rubric-based teacher scores are discussed in a short conference, which supports reliability by surfacing rater or self-assessment bias early.
- Because the statements are written in student-friendly, concrete "I can" language directly aligned to the LAT task types, this project maintains construct validity while giving students ownership of their own progress.