PROFICIENCY Exam Review Topics & Tips

You must affirm that you can do the same skills as a student who finished a third-semester college language course (or the third year of a good high school class):
I can participate in conversations on a number of familiar topics using simple sentences.
I can handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions.
I can present spoken information on most familiar topics using a series of simple sentences.
I can write briefly about most familiar topics.
I can present written information using a series of simple sentences.
I can express myself in the present correctly.

If you are testing in a language such as Spanish, French or German, you must affirm:
I can participate in conversations on familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences.
I can handle short interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering a variety of questions.
I can usually say what I want to say about myself and my everyday life.
I can make oral presentations on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.
I can write on a variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.
I can express myself in the past and future with some consistency.
I am beginning to express myself in theoretical situations ("would") and for doubts, desires and emotions.

LANGUAGE SAMPLES
2. Choose your language from the list at left. If your language is not available, listen to English.
3. Click on “Speaking” or “Writing”.
4. Our Exam assesses students within the INTERMEDIATE range. Scroll to INTERMEDIATE.
5. Click the button “View Samples”. (There are usually 3-4.)
**GRAMMAR**
If you learned the language in school, or you aren’t sure about grammar and vocabulary, we recommend that you ALSO look at the PLACEMENT Exam handout that lists common topics. Note: That handout is for Spanish, so languages such as German and French apply rather directly. For languages such as Arabic, Japanese and Mandarin, grammar may go beyond what you need.

**USING LANGUAGE**
You should be able to use the below items in short but organized essays AND coherent verbal stories:

- not
- just/only
- who/what/etc.
- there is/are
- for/at/etc.
- it/he/she is
- in/on/etc.
- I was
- more/less than
- I will

You should be able to express actions such as the below in BOTH the present time AND AT LEAST one other time frame (past, future conditional, etc.):

- to be
- to have
- to know
- to make
- to like/dislike (and other opinions)
- to have (possess)
- to have to (must)
- to look at myself (and other reflexive situations)
- to talk to each other (and other reciprocal situations)

**EXAM FORMAT**
1. All instructions, questions and prompts are given in English.
2. If you don’t know the word for something, you are encouraged to speak around it. For example, if you forget the word for “pen”, you can say, “a thing you write with”.
3. You may test for up to two hours. First, we will get you set up with the recording technology for speaking. Second, oral section takes approximately 30-45 minutes. Finally, the written section takes approximately 30-60 minutes.
4. SPEAKING: You will speak into the mic and record your voice. You will be asked to answer 5-10 questions. You are encouraged to speak for up to 2 minutes per question, to give the evaluator more material to assess. You will only be allowed to pause the recording in between questions, to give yourself plenty of time to plan a reply.
5. WRITING: You will be writing by hand. You will be asked to address 3-4 prompts written in English. You are encouraged to write as much as possible, to give the evaluator lots of material to assess.
6. There is no reading or listening section.

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for Recommended Language Study Materials
Recommended Language Study Materials

TEXTBOOKS
Get a hold of some college-level textbooks that cover the first three semester of a college/university language course. At the Language Learning Center (Kellogg Library 1107), we have textbooks available for Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Arabic and American Sign Language.

For other languages, you may wish to contact and visit a local institution that offer the language that you are looking to test in. They may have materials on hand that are available to use.

INTERNET & ONLINE RESOURCES
There are many places online where you can use free language learning material to review and brush up on your language skills.

The Language Learning Center maintains a list of various websites that offer such material. You can find it by going to csusm.edu/llc. Click on Student Resources -> Language Websites in the side menu.

The University of TEXAS at Austin also maintains a list of resources for language learning materials. You can find that list by going to: coerll.utexas.edu/coerll/materials