

INTERAGENCY LANGUAGE ROUNDTABLE (ILR) PROFICIENCY LEVELS

	ILR PROFICIENCY LEVELS						
	0	0+	1	2	3	4	5
SPEAKING	No Proficiency	Survival Proficiency Able to satisfy immediate needs such as for lodging, meals and transportation, using memorized or rehearsed speech only. No fluency.	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple conversations on familiar or rehearsed topics. Experiences frequent misunderstandings. <i>Examples:</i> can exchange greetings, elicit predictable information and explain routine procedures in a restricted way.	Limited Functional Proficiency 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. <i>Examples:</i> can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace and receive and provide straightforward direction.	General Functional Proficiency 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 that 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. <i>Example:</i> can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, etc. Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers.	Full Functional Proficiency Able to use language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. <i>Examples:</i> understands the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally, or conceptually different from one's own. Can set the tone of interpersonal, official, semiofficial, professional and nonprofessional 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.	Educated Native Proficiency
LISTENING	No Proficiency	Survival Proficiency Able to understand short phrases based on memorized material. Slightly longer phrases must be repeated and include frequent pauses to be understood.	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to understand very simple statements, questions and face-to face conversations concerning some familiar situations and many basic needs. Repetition and slower speech are necessary for understanding.	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to understand most routine conversations spoken at a normal pace relating to social and occupational situations. Some difficulty understanding common structures and vocabulary remains; occasional repetition is still needed.	General Functional Proficiency Able to understand almost all conversations spoken at a normal pace without repetitions, including discussions within the individual's occupation; readily understands phone conversations and broadcasts, but still experiences some difficulty with very fast speech, slang and cultural references.	Full Functional Proficiency Able to understand all the discussions, no matter how complex, within the listener's experience; able to understand most cultural references as well as manipulations of the language including persuasion, negotiation, conjecture, and humor.	Educated Native Proficiency
READING	No Proficiency	Survival Proficiency Able to understand some isolated words and phrases such as personal and place names and street or store signs but not connected prose.	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to understand very simple connected printed material. Able to get a main idea of short, frequently encountered materials, such as invoices, and charts.	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to read with some misunderstanding straightforward familiar factual material. <i>Examples –</i> Descriptive or narrative writings such as routine reports, simple biographic information, standard business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader.	General Functional Proficiency 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 main idea of more sophisticated texts but may not perceive subtlety and nuance.	Full Functional Proficiency Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms or language pertinent to professional needs.	Educated Native Proficiency

This table is prepared by ICLS and is based on the ILR Proficiency Levels to help ICLS students understand the proficiency levels.