



## USAT Overall Level Descriptions

### Level 0: BEGINNING

**Speaking/Listening** – may know a few isolated words, but does not have the ability to speak or understand even simple, one-sentence utterances;

**Reading/Writing** – may recognize and be able to write the alphabet, but very little beyond that.

### Level 1: ELEMENTARY

**Speaking** – can communicate using single words or short phrases in basic "survival" situations; makes frequent grammatical mistakes even with simple structures; knows basic greetings, days of week/months, numbers, colors, simple objects;

**Listening** – understands short, simple utterances when spoken slowly and/or repeated;

**Reading** – reads only highly simplified texts designed specifically for learners at this level;

**Writing** – can write words or short sentences in response to structured exercises.

### Level 2: LOW INTERMEDIATE

**Speaking** – can communicate, with much difficulty, basic ideas having to do with everyday life and personal experience using limited vocabulary, simple structures and with frequent mistakes in grammar;

**Listening** – can understand and respond to simple "what, where, when, who, how" questions; is not able to understand most authentic English when spoken at normal speed;

**Reading** – can read simplified texts for this level and occasional, limited examples of authentic writing;

**Writing** – when given directed assignments, can write short paragraphs using simple grammatical structures.

### Level 3: INTERMEDIATE

**Speaking** – Albeit with much difficulty, can manage to express a variety of concepts by making improvisational use of the structures and vocabulary at his/her command; communicates without significant pauses but fluency is marred by frequent structural



errors and lack of precision in vocabulary; is starting to make use of some limited complex structures;

**Listening** – is beginning to understand the gist, though not the details, of native-speaker communications on general subjects;

**Reading** – when reading authentic materials, gathers some bits and pieces of information but fails in overall comprehension;

**Writing** – writes well enough to communicate his/her basic ideas, but this writing lacks most characteristics of organization and development.

#### **Level 4: HIGH INTERMEDIATE**

**Speaking** – Is beginning to communicate using more complex structures and a wider vocabulary; can use more than one approach to express a concept; is usually successful at finding strategies to "work around" expressing concepts that may at first seem beyond his/her linguistic capabilities;

**Listening** – is able to understand the greater part of "everyday" social conversations spoken at normal speed; shows ability to comprehend topics which are removed in place and time from the present;

**Reading** – is able to gather useful amounts of information from authentic written material, though with significant gaps in comprehension;

**Writing** – produces writing that begins to display elements of organization and development, along with partial success at integrating more complex grammatical structures.

#### **Level 5: LOW ADVANCED**

**Speaking** – Is able to communicate satisfactorily in most situations and contexts, making generally appropriate use of complex grammatical structures; is capable of describing moderately complex ideas and processes;

**Listening** – can grasp main ideas – though limited details – from lectures on academic topics;

**Reading** – can assimilate most written material (textbooks, manuals, magazines, etc.) if given sufficient time and with the use of bilingual and English dictionaries;

**Writing** – can write adequate personal and some business communications, as well as narrative texts with clear evidence (if uneven execution) of logical organization and development.



**Readiness for Postsecondary Study:** A strong student at this level may be capable of study at a community college (junior college) or career/vocational school where English is the medium of instruction.

### **Level 6: ADVANCED**

**Speaking** – has sufficient command of grammatical structures and vocabulary to communicate – clearly and effectively – ideas on nearly all social and academic topics encountered;

**Listening** – comprehends the overall meaning – though not every word – of academic lectures;

**Reading** – can read and understand virtually any type of text material, though not at the speed of someone with native proficiency;

**Writing** – writes academic assignments which make appropriate use of stylistic and organizational conventions to support the writer's theses.

**Readiness for Postsecondary Study:** An individual at this level should be able to perform satisfactorily at a university where English is the medium of instruction.