



## SELF-ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING PROFICIENCY

### General Introduction

These Self-Assessments of foreign language ability are intended to serve as informal guides for people who have not taken a U.S. Government-sponsored test but would like to have a rough estimate of their proficiency in Speaking, Reading, and/or Listening comprehension of the language. The self-assessment questionnaires will produce an estimate of your current foreign language ability but are in no way intended to be a replacement for an official government test using the ILR Skill Level Descriptions.

To estimate your level of proficiency in one of the three skill modalities, start at the lowest level shown in the questionnaire and respond to each statement. For each statement, respond “yes” or “no.” A “yes” response means that you consistently perform the task or function described successfully. If a statement describes your ability only some of the time, or only in some contexts, you should answer “no.” If you can answer “yes” to every statement in the level, your ability is probably at least at that level. Move on to the descriptions at the next level. If you answer “no” to one or more statements at that level, then your ability is probably not at that level.

If you answer “yes” to all the statements at one level, and also have a majority of “yes” answers at the next higher level, then your proficiency may be at a “plus” level. For example, if you answer “yes” to all the statements at Level 1, but have a mixture of responses at Level 2 (with a majority of “yes” answers), your self-assessed ability may be at Level 1+.

The situations, tasks and functions indicated in the different statements are representative but not exhaustive of what an individual must be able to do to perform at the designated level.

### Self Assessing Foreign Language Reading Ability:

The term **read** as used in this self-assessment always means “*read and understand the meaning.*” It does not refer to the ability to read aloud without comprehension. The term **text** refers to any example of language presented in the writing system of the language, including advertisements, weather reports, news articles, letters, essays, and literary works, among many others. An **authentic text** is one that was originally written by a native speaker of the language for other native speakers to read.

It is not necessary to know all the words or understand all the details of the texts listed for a level, but it is necessary to perform the functional tasks described for the level at the indicated level of accuracy.

**Important:** The full ILR proficiency scale extends from level **Reading-0** *No functional ability* to **Reading-5** *Functionally equivalent to a well educated native speaker*. However, this self-assessment of reading ability intentionally covers only part of that scale. In the self-assessment, the first threshold considered in the scale is **R-0+**, which characterizes the ability of individuals who can read (and understand) some common individual words or very short phrases in context but cannot read most connected sentences without additional help (such as a dictionary). This level is meaningful in assessing reading because it implies having learned the basics of the language’s writing system. Similarly, the top point of the self-assessment scale is **R-4** *Advanced professional proficiency*. Because self-assessment beyond that point is unreliable, people who think they may be at or above the level of **R-4** are encouraged to arrange for a formal test of their language proficiency.

<b>SELF-ASSESSMENT OF READING PROFICIENCY</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>R-0+</b>	As appropriate for the language, I can recognize and identify all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic writing system (in, e.g., English, Spanish, Finnish, Russian, Greek, Vietnamese) or the elements of a syllable-based writing system (e.g., Japanese <i>kana</i> , Korean <i>hangul</i> , Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic, Thai, Hindi) or some commonly occurring characters in a character system (e.g., Chinese, Japanese <i>kanji</i> , Korean <i>hanja</i> .)		
<b>R-0+</b>	I can read some isolated words and phrases, such as numbers and commonplace names, that I see on signs, menus, and storefronts, and in simple everyday material, such as advertisements and timetables.		
<b>R-1</b>	I can understand the purpose and main meaning of very short, simple texts, such as printed personal notes, business advertisements, public announcements, and maps .		
<b>R-1</b>	I can understand simple instructions, such as in very straightforward street directions.		

<b>R-1</b>	I can understand very short, simple written descriptions of some familiar persons, places, and things, such as those in some tourist pamphlets.		
<b>R-2</b>	I can understand texts that consist mainly of straightforward factual language, such as short news reports of events, biographical information, descriptions, or simple technical material.		
<b>R-2</b>	I can understand the main idea and some details of clearly organized, short straightforward texts about places, people, and events that I am familiar with.		
<b>R-2</b>	I can understand very straightforward reports about current and past events.		
<b>R-2</b>	I can understand simple typed correspondence in familiar contexts, including descriptions of events, feelings, wishes and future plans.		
<b>R-2</b>	I can usually understand the main ideas of authentic prose on topics I am familiar with, because they pertain to my work experience or to topics I am interested in.		
<b>R-3</b>	I can usually read and understand all of the material in a major daily newspaper published in a city or country with which I am familiar.		
<b>R-3</b>	In reading a newspaper or magazine that contains editorial or opinion content, I can “read between the lines” and understand meanings that are not directly stated.		
<b>R-3</b>	I can understand the author’s intent and follow the line of reasoning in texts that include hypothesis, persuasion, supported opinion or argument for a position (e.g., editorials,		

	debates, and op-ed pieces) with little or no use of a dictionary.		
<b>R-3</b>	I can understand contemporary expository essays and recent literary prose with little or no use of a dictionary.		
<b>R-3</b>	I can understand the main ideas and important details of almost all written material in my particular professional field or area of primary interest (e.g., reports, analyses, letters, blogs, advocacy).		
R-4	I am able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs or personal interest, without referring to a dictionary,.		
R-4	I can understand long and complex analyses, factual reports, and literary texts.		
R-4	I can understand both the meaning and the intent of writers' uses of idioms, cultural references, word play, sarcasm, and irony in even highly abstract and culturally "loaded" texts.		
R-4	I can understand language that has been especially adjusted for different situations, audiences or purposes, such as a political essay, humorous anecdote or joke, sermon, or inflammatory broadside, and I can appreciate distinctions in style.		
R-4	I can read virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, linguistically complex texts such as specialized articles, essays and literary works, including prose works from earlier periods recognized as masterpieces.		
R-4	I can read reasonably legible handwriting without difficulty.		