

This is a revision draft of the **ILR Listening Skill Level Descriptions**. **There will be a period of time provided to the community during which time comments and suggestions may be submitted for consideration before finalization.**

Comments should be sent directly to the drafting team: ILRListening@gmail.com . They will be carefully considered for adoption in the final version. **At the end of this period, any recommended revisions will be considered for inclusion and the proposed final document will be presented to an ILR plenary meeting, where a vote will be taken to approve the revision of this set of SLDs to the existing SLDs. While anyone (either USG or non-USG personnel) may comment on the document, the vote at the ILR meeting will be limited to USG personnel.**

Preface

The ILR Listening Skill Level Descriptions describe the functional ability to comprehend spoken language. They characterize six base levels of listening proficiency on a 0 to 5 scale and are applicable to all users of the language, regardless of how the language was acquired.

Listening proficiency, defined as the ability to understand authentic spoken language, increases significantly from one level to the next. Because each base level implies control of the previous level's functions, content, context, and accuracy, an ability is no longer referenced once it has been mastered. Examples are sometimes provided for illustrative purposes only.

The base levels of 0-4 are expanded by plus levels. Plus levels are assigned when mastery of a given base level has been demonstrated and most criteria for the next higher level have been met, or when a strong base level meets some of the criteria for the next higher level, but not consistently. While plus levels represent a variety of profiles, the inability to meet consistently all criteria for the next higher base level is the defining factor.

In topic areas of special interest and expertise, listeners may exceed their level of general proficiency, but a higher level of performance in one area does not justify a higher general proficiency rating.

Listening proficiency may be participatory or non-participatory. Participatory listening allows the listener to obtain clarification, as in face-to-face interactions, but clarification is not possible in non-participatory listening. Unfavorable conditions, such as background noise or distortion, may impede understanding of spoken language in both participatory and non-participatory situations. By contrast, visual cues usually facilitate comprehension.

ILR Level 0

No practical understanding of the spoken language

Comprehension is limited to occasional isolated words.

ILR Level 0+

Comprehension of formulaic language in areas of immediate needs but insufficient for understanding of connected spoken language

Can understand short memorized words and phrases in areas of immediate needs if repeated, reworded, or accompanied by long pauses during participatory listening, and repeated or delivered at a slower than normal rate in non-participatory situations. Misunderstandings are frequent unless context strongly supports the meaning. Has no comprehension under unfavorable listening conditions.

ILR Level 1

Comprehension of spoken language dealing with most everyday needs and very familiar topics

Can understand simple statements, questions and answers that contain the highest frequency vocabulary and structural patterns. Comprehends spoken language during participatory listening if delivered at a slower rate than normal, with frequent repetitions or paraphrase. Can understand some of the intended message in non-participatory contexts when these are highly supported by redundancy, context, and/or familiarity. While topics and situations may vary widely from individual to individual, and misunderstandings may still occur, a listener at this level can typically understand the main points in contexts such as meals, lodging, transportation, time, directions, orders from customs officials, police officers, airline personnel, announcements, simple transactions, medical needs, and basic personal information. Has virtually no comprehension under unfavorable listening conditions.

ILR Level 1+

Comprehension of spoken language within some familiar contexts that go beyond everyday needs

Can understand some factual content if presented in frequently used sentence patterns. Comprehends main points and some supporting details on subjects within a familiar context, but cannot sustain understanding of coherent structures in longer statements or in unfamiliar situations. May not be able to sustain understanding of organized discourse, such as narration and description, across time frames. Still needs some repetition and clarification in participatory contexts and both repetition and redundancy in non-participatory listening.

ILR Level 2

Comprehension of spoken language on subjects within a familiar context including specific job requirements

Can understand the main points and most supporting details about matters of personal and general interest when listening to spoken language delivered at a normal rate, using both common and domain specific vocabulary, in both participatory and non-participatory situations. Topics include most high-frequency social conversations, such

as work, family, autobiographical information, and well-known current events. A listener at this level can typically understand information presented in frequently used, predictable discourse patterns, and straightforward descriptions, narrations, and instructions across time frames. Can comprehend factual content in interviews, presentations, news broadcasts, overheard conversations, telephone calls and messages, and recorded spoken language, but will typically miss inferences intended by the speaker. Comprehension is facilitated if the subject matter is related to the individual's own area of expertise, although some repetition, clarification, or rewording may still be necessary. However, misunderstandings may occur if spoken language is delivered at a fast rate, topics are unfamiliar, target language variations are used, and repetition or clarification is not possible. Comprehension under unfavorable conditions, such as overlapping speakers, background noise, and outdoor loudspeakers, may be limited, depending on the nature and extent of the disruptions.

ILR Level 2+

Comprehension of spoken language in many social and professional environments

Can understand main points, supporting details, and argumentation and is able to draw some of the inferences intended by the speaker on both familiar and unfamiliar topics. Listeners at this level often demonstrate a remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension of non-standard language, figurative speech and implications is uneven and/or inconsistent.

ILR Level 3

Comprehension of formal and informal spoken language on most casual, social, non-concrete topics and specialized professional fields

Can understand spoken language containing complex grammar and a broad range of vocabulary, including commonly used slang, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references. Can draw the inferences intended by the speaker and is able to detect figurative speech. Can follow discourse patterns such as turn-taking, pauses, and interruptions. Can readily understand argumentation expressed through supported opinion and hypothesis. A listener at this level comprehends spoken language across a variety of topics and a range of contexts such as news commentaries, speeches, briefings, panel discussions, academic presentations, and technical discussions in specialized fields. May still need clarification or paraphrase of some cultural references, proverbs, nuances, and idioms. Has limited comprehension of language variations, less commonly used slang, and very fast or slurred spoken language. Experiences some difficulty understanding spoken language in unfavorable conditions.

ILR Level 3+

Comprehension of many forms and styles of spoken language tailored to a variety of audiences

Can understand a range of complex structures in extended discourse. Understands well-known cultural and literary references embedded in commentary. Comprehension of fast spoken language, humor, target language variations and less commonly used slang is not consistent.

ILR Level 4

Comprehension of most forms and styles of spoken language tailored to a variety of audiences

Can understand extensive, precise, nuanced, and sophisticated spoken language deeply embedded in culture. Can readily follow spoken language that displays register shifts, discontinuities, lack of coherence, euphemisms, innuendos, and a wide range of verbal humor. Understands a broad range of spoken language across a wide variety of literary, philosophical, technical, aesthetic and cultural domains that encompass abstract concepts, conjecture, and both literary and popular allusions. Comprehends fast spoken language and some but not all language variations. May still have some difficulty understanding spoken language in unfavorable conditions.

ILR Level 4+

Comprehension of almost all forms and styles of spoken language

Can understand almost all highly abstract and aesthetic formulations, and a wide range of target language variations. Can not always overcome interference from ~~highly~~ unfavorable conditions.

ILR Level 5

Comprehension of virtually all forms and styles of spoken language

Can understand the widest range of target language variations and the highest creative, philosophical, and aesthetic uses of the language. Can often overcome highly unfavorable conditions.