

FAQs for Using Proficiency-based Assessments and Rubrics

EntreCulturas is a standards-based, proficiency-driven program that provides culturally authentic contexts for language acquisition so that students understand, interact with, and present information in culturally appropriate ways.

EntreCulturas supports student growth along the proficiency continuum in the following ways:

- placing a focus on what students can do with the language;
- providing real-world situations in which to interact and perform; and,
- emphasizing self-reflection.

To understand more about the concepts of proficiency and performance as well as how they are assessed in **EntreCulturas**, consult this collection of answers to the most commonly-asked questions on the topics.

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The Path to Proficiency

What is language proficiency?

Language proficiency is defined as the ability of an individual to use culturally appropriate language to communicate spontaneously in unrehearsed contexts. Proficiency also refers to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language to understand, read, speak, and write in real-world situations. Proficiency in language develops gradually over time.

Proficiency can be measured using the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012, ACTFL)*, which identify five levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. ***EntreCulturas 1, 2, 3,*** and ***4*** target the following proficiency ranges:

- ***EntreCulturas 1*** - Novice Low to Novice High;
- ***EntreCulturas 2*** - Novice High to Intermediate Low;
- ***EntreCulturas 3*** - Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid; and,
- ***EntreCulturas 4*** - Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High.

To build proficiency, students need to understand what the proficiency levels mean, where they fall along the proficiency scale, and what they can do to progress to the next level. The Path to Proficiency Infographic on the path2proficiency website¹ illustrates the various sublevel expectations at different points along a path to proficiency. For example, a Novice-Mid learner can use memorized words, lists, and phrases in familiar contexts while an Intermediate-Mid learner can respond in a series of loosely connected sentences.

Proficiency levels tell teachers what type and quantity of language can be expected from learners based on global assessments, but can also have instructional applications. Teachers can assess students' skills and abilities, and then, support them in their growth along the proficiency scale.

How do I explain performance and proficiency² to students?

Performance is the ability to communicate in practiced, rehearsed, and familiar contexts connected to a specific curriculum. It is the use of language that has been learned in the classroom or online with an instructor and/or guided by instructional materials. To prepare for an assessment of performance, formative or summative, language learners need to practice the language functions, structures, and vocabulary they will apply on the assessment tasks, rather than memorizing exactly what will be on the assessment.

Proficiency is the ability to communicate spontaneously in real world situations in an unrehearsed context. Proficiency is what a person can do with the language in the real world. Proficiency does not mean perfection.

¹ Alyssa Villarreal (2015), "The Path to Proficiency", Retrieved from <http://www.path2proficiency.com/the-path-to-proficiency/>.

² ACTFL. (2015). ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners. Retrieved (2015). <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-descriptors-language-learners>

Performance vs. Proficiency, A Concrete Example

A Spanish teacher just completed a unit on food with his Spanish I class and decided to take the students to a local Colombian restaurant as a summative performance activity. At the restaurant, students are expected to order their food and provide opinions in Spanish using functions and vocabulary that they have rehearsed in class. That's performance!

Suddenly, a young Colombian couple comes to the table and starts interacting with the students. Their questions are not necessarily related to food. After the initial shock, the students start uttering a few words ("Yes", "No", "Sometimes") and using simple sentences ("I am 13 years old." "Yes, I like the food."), however, they have a hard time understanding native speakers. That's proficiency!

How do I assess performance?

EntreCulturas assesses student performance using tasks that allow for open-ended responses, demonstrating what students know and can do with the language. The *EntreCulturas* rubrics help teachers provide students with specific feedback about their current performance and help students set goals for the future. Refer to the section, **Performance-based Assessments**, for more information about assessing student performance.

Purpose and Use of Can-Do Statements

How does *EntreCulturas* help students monitor their progress on the path to proficiency?

The Can-Do Statements³ are like landmarks on a journey. A complete list of the Can-Do Statements for each unit is found in Appendix A of the Student and Teacher editions and in Explorer (in the Resources section and in the Language Portfolio itself). In addition, the Can-Do Statements are found in the Student and Teacher Editions next to activities with which they align. Finally, in the Language Portfolio, students upload evidence of their accomplishment of each Can-Do Statement and self-assess their progress (see **Using the Language Portfolio** as a reference on how to do this task).

Students self-assess their progress on the Can-Do Statements by rating themselves with:

- One bar: *This is still a goal.*
- Two bars: *I can do this with help.*
- Three bars: *I can do this independently.*⁴

Choose your progress level



There are two types of Can-Do Statements that represent the learning targets for the unit:

Mi progreso comunicativo and ***Mi progreso intercultural***.

- The ***Mi progreso comunicativo*** Can-Do Statements provide learners a means to focus on what they need to know and be able to do in the target language, and assess how well they can meet the learning targets for each unit.
- The ***Mi progreso intercultural*** Can-Do Statements provide learners a means to reflect on their intercultural learning in each unit by answering questions in each ***Reflexión intercultural***. The reflections guide them to identify, describe, explain, or compare what they know in their own and other cultures. ***EntreCulturas*** recommends that after students have participated in a classroom activity learning about Spanish-speaking cultures, they write the answers to the intercultural reflections outside of class. These reflections can then serve as the basis for a discussion in the following class in the target language. In Levels 1 and 2, the reflections are done in English; in Levels 3 and 4, they may be completed in Spanish, although questions asking for deep reflection should be answered in English outside of class.

³ Disclaimer: Wayside Can-Do Statements are customized for ***EntreCulturas*** and are not based on the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements Performance Indicators for Language Learners (ACTFL, 2015).

⁴ LinguaFolio®, National Council of State Supervisors for Languages. (2014). Interculturality.

Performance-based Assessments

What are performance-based assessments?

The *EntreCulturas* formative, performance-based assessments, and summative, Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), focus on communication for real-life purposes and provide information to teachers on how well students can use the language in culturally authentic contexts. In addition, teachers using *EntreCulturas 4* can access two differentiated versions of the formative assessments in Explorer so that they can empower students of all ability levels to demonstrate their progress at an appropriately rigorous and challenging task. Most importantly, these assessments also provide opportunities for students to:

- demonstrate what they can do across the communication modes;
- integrate what they know about the cultural products, practices, and perspectives; and,
- interact and behave in culturally appropriate ways.

Refer to your *EntreCulturas* Teacher Edition for a detailed description of the types of formative and summative assessments provided in *EntreCulturas* Student Edition.

Student Success on Performance Assessments: Tips and Tools

Successful completion of a performance-based assessment is the result of multiple real-life practice experiences in the target language. Students will need to understand how daily use of the language will lead to a greater proficiency level. To this end, teachers should do the following:

- Explain the difference between performance and proficiency to students.
- Use open-ended activities that allow students to show what they know across different modes of communication.
- Include scaffolding, such as graphic organizers, sentence starters, and useful expressions to support student success.
- Use the *EntreCulturas* **holistic rubrics** to provide students with feedback about their performance as they participate in the *actividades* and *pasos* that align with the *Mi progreso comunicativo* statements. The descriptions provide a clear snapshot of student performance and the document includes self-reflection about communication and learning strategies.
- Use the *EntreCulturas* **analytic growth rubrics** periodically so students reflect on their expanding proficiency. By looking at the descriptions of the next higher level of performance, they become familiar with the components of proficiency and can set goals to move up the continuum. Consider doing this prior to the unit IPA or after the *En camino* formative assessment.

What are five steps to improve students' proficiency through performance⁵?

Step 1: Involve students in breaking down the analytic growth rubric.

- a. Ask students to suggest which components of a speaking or writing task should be assessed.
- b. Come to agreement with students on which domains to assess and how they align with the rubric.

Step 2: Teach students how to apply the rubric descriptors.

- a. Explain the sublevels of performance on the rubric such as Novice Low, Novice Mid, Novice High, etc. You may want to limit the discussion to three sublevels of performance at the beginning of the year and include an additional sublevel for goal setting by the middle of the year.
- b. Begin with the targeted sublevel of proficiency that meets expectations for your students. Example: (Level 1 at the beginning of the year) Explain that Novice Mid is meets expectations, Novice Low is approaches expectations, and Novice High is exceeds expectations.
- c. Choose which domains you want to explain with the samples you have.
- d. Read each descriptor and show what it looks like or sounds like with language that students have been learning and practicing.
- e. Provide students with sample responses at different sublevels and have them practice scoring them with the rubrics. Use student responses to any performance-based task completed.

Step 3: Give the students a task to perform.

- a. State the goal of the task.
- b. Give clear instructions.
- c. Evaluate the task at a later time but do not share the score with students.

Step 4: Have students evaluate their own performance.

- a. Give students the task that they completed at a prior time and a copy of the rubric.
- b. Show and explain models or examples at each level of performance.
- c. Have student practice additional scoring models using the rubrics.

Step 5: Give students feedback on their self-evaluation.

- a. Have students compare their self-evaluation to the evaluation you provided.
- b. Have students readjust their understanding of the rubric with you.

⁵ Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools Department of World Languages, as cited by Prince William County Public Schools

What types of performance-based assessments are provided?

EntreCulturas provides both formative and summative performance-based assessments for each unit in addition to midterm and final exams.

- **¿Qué aprendiste?** formative assessments:
 - ***EntreCulturas 3 - Actividades*** in each unit conclude with a performance-based assessment in the Interpersonal or Presentational mode.
 - ***EntreCulturas 4*** - each ***Pregunta esencial*** section of each unit concludes with a performance-based assessment in the Interpersonal or Presentational mode. These assessments model the AP® tasks:
 - Read and reply to an email message;
 - Participate in a simulated conversation;
 - Write an argumentative essay; and
 - Deliver an oral presentation in which students compare a cultural feature from their own and Spanish-speaking cultures.
- ***En camino*** formative assessments:
 - ***EntreCulturas 1*** - the ***Comunica*** section of each unit concludes with a performance-based assessment in different modes.
 - ***EntreCulturas 2*** and ***3*** - both ***Comunica y Explora*** sections of each unit are followed with a performance-based assessment in different modes.
 - ***EntreCulturas 4*** - both ***Conexión*** sections of each unit conclude with a performance-based assessment in different modes.

Teachers and students can use the ***EntreCulturas*** general holistic or analytic rubrics to assess progress.

- ***Vive entre culturas (EntreCulturas 1, 2, and 3)*** and ***Evaluación integrada (EntreCulturas 4)*** summative assessments: Each unit concludes with an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) in the three modes of communication that also reflects unit intercultural goals. Specific rubrics are available for each of the assessments.
- Midterm and final exams: ***EntreCulturas*** provides IPAs that may be used at the end of a semester or term. Mid-term assessment items reflect communicative and intercultural learning targets from ***Unidades 1-3***. Final-term assessment items reflect targets from ***Unidades 4-6***. Analytic and holistic rubrics are available online for use with these assessments.

Administering Performance-based Assessments

How do I decide how much time is needed to complete each part of an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)?

The time it takes to complete each section of the *Vive entre culturas*, or *Evaluación integrada*, varies across units. Refer to the teacher notes for the IPA in the Teacher's Edition of the text. These notes provide guidance on administering the assessments as well as on preparing students for success on the summative assessments.

How do I manage the logistics of interpersonal speaking assessments?

Option 1: Use the technology available in Explorer, which allows for simultaneous recording of the simulated part of the conversation and student responses.

- The interpersonal speaking tasks in Explorer mirror those on the AP[®] Language and Culture exams. That is, a single student responds to questions in a designated quiz in your Explorer course. The student first reads the instructions and introduction, then clicks on **Start Recording**, and the conversation begins. Students have 10 to 30 seconds to respond to each question depending on the level and the task. In Explorer, you can review the recording containing the simulated part of the conversation and the student's responses, and provide written and/or recorded feedback online at any point in the recording.
- An alternative to the AP[®] task types is to have two students record an interpersonal task in an Explorer quiz or forum. The students would have to make two recordings - one in each one of their Explorer user accounts. You will need to assess each recording separately so that each student can receive feedback.

Option 2: Monitor and assess pairs or groups of students as they perform the task.

- Plan to devote one or two days of class time. You may need to plan for more time depending on your students' skills and the number of students you have.
- On the day of the assessment, post the names, e.g., student partners, and the order in which they will be assessed. Names can be randomly selected or teacher-selected.
- Provide an assignment for all students to complete during the class period. This may be another part of the assessment, such as a presentational writing or preparing for a presentational speaking.
- Create an on-deck area where each pair can have 3-4 minutes to organize their thoughts and prepare. They will not be using any prepared notes when they converse.
- When the pairs perform the task, they should face you (and each other) with their backs to the class.
- Indicate who will initiate the conversation.

- Time the assessment so everyone has 3-4 minutes to practice and the same amount of time to perform.
- Call time even if they are not finished with the assessment and mark the rubric before the next on-deck pair comes forward.
- You may want to make a back-up recording in the event that a student wants more specific feedback or a disruption occurs in the classroom that impedes your ability to make notes on the rubric immediately.

What are some presentational speaking tips for students to help them engage their audience?

Instruct students to:

- Practice by recording themselves before they have to do a presentational speaking assessment.
- Present in a clear and organized manner.
- Include a hook that captures interest and attention.
- Include visuals and provide an introduction if appropriate.
- Maintain the interest of the audience by showing enthusiasm for the topic.
- Speak with confidence; make eye contact; and, avoid reading directly from notes.
- Check their pronunciation by using speech-to-text technology.

What are some formats for presentational speaking assessments?

- Live presentations: Students may present to the whole class, in small or large groups, or in a gallery or symposium format, where students present to small groups of classmates who rotate, listening to presentations at various stations.
- Recordings: Students may record an audio or video of their presentation in the designated areas in Explorer. Teachers are able to provide precise audio and written feedback on students' presentations.

How do I keep the audience accountable during a presentational speaking assessment?

When students are presenting to the whole class, or to a small group, classmates can provide evidence of interpretive communication as they do the following:

- Fill out a Venn diagram with information from the presentation comparing it to their own or to a previous one.
- Complete a simple form to record information from the presentations.
- Write at least two questions to ask the presenters for follow-up.
- Find one similarity and one difference between this presentation and the previous one.
- Complete a 3-2-1 organizer (e.g., 3 interesting facts, 2 questions, 1 new piece of information).
- Write Padlet notes (if students have a digital device; otherwise, use sticky notes) with positive, specific feedback for the presenter(s) based on the rubric criteria (e.g., You described family members with several different adjectives in complete sentences [*EntreCulturas 1*] or Las leyendas (los subtítulos) con las fotos tienen mucha descripción [*EntreCulturas 3*]).
- Tip for the teacher: Involve the audience by having them complete a student-created feedback form or a rubric.

Feedback, Growth, and Assessment

What are some ways to provide specific feedback to students to move them along the proficiency continuum?

EntreCulturas recommends that teachers hold periodic one-on-one conferences to guide their students' reflection on their communicative skills and intercultural growth.

- Explorer, on the Wayside Publishing Learning Site, offers the ability to provide online feedback to students, which will help them move along the proficiency continuum.
 - **Automatic grading** for any multiple choice, True/False, matching, and cloze items: Online tasks allow students to review which items they completed incorrectly.
 - **Online scoring of writing:** Highlight relevant text and type comments in the pop-up note. Provide specific feedback in alignment with either the holistic or analytic rubrics provided in Explorer.
 - **Online scoring of speaking:** Oral or written comments can be inserted at any specific point(s) in the recording where students show evidence of their performance sublevel. Use language from the performance descriptors to provide feedback.
- Use the **holistic rubrics** with the Learner Self-Reflection Communication Checklist to provide feedback to students on daily language activities. The section, **How do I use the holistic rubrics?**, provides ways to incorporate these rubrics. Also, see the introduction to the Teacher Edition for a detailed description of the holistic rubrics.
- Use the **analytic growth rubrics** provided in Appendix B and in your Explorer course to familiarize students with what each performance sublevel looks like and sounds like. You can use these with formative tasks, and also to help students reflect on how their portfolio shows their progress over an entire unit or semester, and set goals for their future work. After a performance task, give specific feedback to students so that they can increase their proficiency. The section called **How do I use and interpret the analytic growth rubrics?** is a guide to how the rubrics provide feedback to students.
- There are specific **Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) Rubrics** in Appendix B and in your Explorer course for each unit, which the teacher can use to provide feedback for each of the *Vive entre culturas* or *Evaluación integrada* tasks. More information on the rubrics and how to use them is provided below in the section, **How do I determine a performance sublevel (e.g., Novice Mid) on the Unit IPA using the IPA Rubric?**

How do I use the holistic rubrics?

The **holistic rubrics** with the Learner Self-Reflection Communication Checklist are found in Appendix B of the Student and Teacher Editions and in Explorer. Each level of *EntreCultur*as has a **holistic rubric** for each mode of communication.

- At the beginning of class, choose one communicative mode for an activity or task that students will encounter in class.
- Review the rubric with students before they begin the activity/task.
- Ask students to pre-assess where they think they are on each bullet in a sublevel. Explain that they may be in more than one sublevel (e.g., Novice Mid for some bullets and Novice High for others).
- Before students begin the task, have them look at the Learner Self-reflection Communication Checklist on the holistic rubrics to remind them what they can do to help themselves understand or communicate better.
- Complete the activity and ask students to post a self-assessment using 1, 2, or 3 on the rubric.
- At the end of a specific period of time (e.g., one week), have students repeat the process with another task using the same communicative mode.
- On an exit slip, have students reflect on where they improved and what they need to work on.
- Have students submit evidence of their work to you or have them upload it to their Language Portfolio in Explorer.
- Provide additional specific feedback as needed.

This process may be time consuming in the beginning, but once it becomes a routine, students will learn to be more responsible for their learning. If you have a collaborative classroom community, students can also work with partners or in small groups. However, they must be taught to be honest, yet encouraging, in their feedback.

How do I use and interpret the analytic growth rubrics⁶?

Use the **analytic growth rubrics** frequently with your students so they can learn to self-assess, set learning goals, and chart their progress on their path to proficiency in these areas:

- Communicative skills;
- Intercultural growth; and,
- Use of communication strategies (see the holistic rubrics with the Learner Self-reflection Communication Checklist).

Each level of *EntreCulturas* has **analytic growth rubrics** for each mode of communication:

- Interpretive Reading, Listening, Audiovisual, and Viewing
- Interpersonal Communication: Speaking and Writing
- Presentational Speaking
- Presentational Writing.

⁶ Adapted from Jefferson County Public Schools World Languages: Performance Assessment Rubrics (Kentucky), Howard County Public Schools World Languages (Maryland) ACTFL. (2013).

What do the various rubric domains mean?⁷

The following charts provide general descriptors for each of the domains. Refer to the analytic growth rubrics for each sublevel to see the specific performance indicators for the targeted range of proficiency at that sublevel.

Interpretive Reading, Listening, Audiovisual, and Viewing Analytic Growth Rubric

Domain	Interpreting the rubric descriptors for reading, listening, audiovisual, and viewing tasks using authentic materials
How well do I understand? <i>Main idea and/or details</i>	Students are not expected to understand every word but rather demonstrate a general understanding. They begin with recognizing a few familiar words and basic pieces of information before they can identify the main idea and/or details.
What words and structures do I understand? <i>Vocabulary and structures in context</i>	Students recognize, understand, and decode key words and phrases to get the gist of what they hear, read, or see. Recognizing and understanding structures provides students with clues to understand the main ideas or details, but grammar only serves as a supporting tool.
How well can I understand unfamiliar language? <i>Context clues</i>	Students progress from understanding literal meaning to inferencing, beginning with recognizing visuals, high frequency words, and cognates. Then, students progress to understanding tone of voice, text organizational clues, patterns, and structures.
How well can I can infer meaning beyond what I read or hear? <i>Inferences</i>	Students are challenged to infer or deduce meaning based on organizational layout, background knowledge, and keywords to determine the author’s purpose, draw conclusions, and make predictions.
How intercultural am I? <i>Interculturality</i>	Students begin with recognition of products and practices and show some understanding of the associated perspective. As their understanding of perspectives increases as they progress through the proficiency sublevels, students demonstrate their cultural understanding by the way they react to speech or interact with a text.

⁷ Adapted from Guide to Performance-to-Proficiency Rubrics, Jefferson County Public Schools World Languages.

Interpersonal Communication: Speaking and Writing Analytic Growth Rubric

Domain	Interpreting the rubric descriptors for spontaneous and unrehearsed speaking and unedited writing tasks ⁸
<p>How well do I maintain conversation? <i>Quality of interaction</i></p>	<p>Students begin to use memorized expressions to maintain short conversations like asking and answering simple rehearsed questions. As their proficiency develops, students show the ability to initiate and close conversations, negotiate meaning, and create with language.</p>
<p>What language/ words do I use? <i>Vocabulary in context</i></p>	<p>Students begin interacting using a limited number of highly practiced words and phrases on familiar topics. As their proficiency develops, they can use a variety of words, expressions, and personalized vocabulary to interact with others on a wide range of topics.</p>
<p>How do I use language? <i>Function and text type</i></p>	<p>The <i>function</i> is the global task the student is able to perform from simple to complex, such as greeting, describing, asking for and providing information, making plans, narrating, and expressing feelings and opinions.</p> <p><i>Text type</i> is the complexity of language the student uses from simple words, phrases, sentences, and questions to more complex connected sentences in paragraph form.</p>
<p>How well am I understood? <i>Comprehensibility</i></p>	<p>Is the student understood by someone accustomed to a language learner or by a native speaker? As their proficiency develops, they are understood by a broader range of speakers from the target culture.</p>
<p>How well do I understand? <i>Comprehension</i></p>	<p>Students demonstrate their understanding by the way they react or reply to what they read or heard. At the Novice sublevels, students need repetition, visuals, and gestures to participate in a conversation. They progress to understanding the main ideas in messages and conversations on a variety of everyday topics and personal interests. To determine their proficiency sublevel, they must sustain their use of language at the sublevel indicated in the descriptors.</p>
<p>How intercultural am I? <i>Interculturality</i></p>	<p>Students interact by using gestures and making references to cultural products, practices, and perspectives. As their language proficiency develops, students show an increasing ability to interact with speakers from the target culture.</p>

Presentational Speaking Analytic Growth Rubric

Domain	Interpreting the rubric descriptors for spontaneous and unrehearsed speaking and unedited writing tasks ⁸
<p>What language/ words do I use? <i>Vocabulary in context</i></p>	<p>To deliver a message, students begin presenting prepared messages using practiced words, phrases, and expressions on familiar topics. As their speaking proficiency develops, they incorporate a variety of words, expressions, and personalized vocabulary to present on a wide range of topics.</p>
<p>How do I use language? <i>Function and text type</i></p>	<p>To deliver a prepared message, students at the initial proficiency levels perform simple <i>functions</i> or global tasks using memorized language. Then, they progress to creating with language to describe, narrate, explain, and express emotions and opinions.</p> <p>The <i>text type</i> begins with memorized phrases and simple sentences then progresses to more elaborate text including details, connector words, and paragraphs.</p>
<p>How well am I understood? <i>Comprehensibility</i></p>	<p>Students at the Novice level are understood mostly by those accustomed to language learners. As their proficiency develops, they are understood by a broader range of speakers from the target culture.</p>
<p>How accurate am I? <i>Structures</i></p>	<p>Language learning involves taking risks, which often leads to errors. Since the goal of the spoken task is to communicate a message, if students make errors that do not interfere with the comprehension of the message, then grammar errors or incorrect use of vocabulary above their proficiency sublevel should not be penalized. However, by the Intermediate Low level, the student should demonstrate better control of basic structures than the Novice level.</p>
<p>How well do I deliver my message? <i>Delivery, fluency, visuals, impact on audience</i></p>	<p>As students develop their proficiency, they gain more confidence in delivering a prepared spoken presentation. Students will become more fluent when using more creative language, but may still hesitate, pause, repeat themselves, and attempt to self-correct. The goal is to make an impact on the audience using visuals for support when possible.</p>
<p>How intercultural am I? <i>Interculturality</i></p>	<p>Students identify and reference products and practices and begin to show understanding of the associated perspectives. Their understanding of perspectives increases as they progress through the proficiency sublevels.</p> <p>They demonstrate their cultural understanding by the way they describe the culture in the oral presentation and how they react to the audience.</p>

Presentational Writing Analytic Growth Rubric

Domain	Interpreting the rubric descriptors for spontaneous and unrehearsed speaking and unedited writing tasks
<p>What language/ words do I use? <i>Vocabulary in context</i></p>	<p>When preparing a written presentation, students begin using practiced words, phrases, and expressions on familiar topics. As their written proficiency develops, they incorporate a variety of words, expressions, and personalized vocabulary to present on a wide range of topics.</p>
<p>How do I use language? <i>Function and text type</i></p>	<p>When preparing a written message, students at the initial proficiency sublevels perform simple <i>functions</i> or global tasks using memorized language. Then, they progress to creating with language to describe, narrate, explain, and express emotions and opinions.</p> <p>The <i>text type</i> begins with memorized phrases and simple sentences then progresses to more elaborate text including details, connector words, and paragraphs.</p>
<p>How well am I understood? <i>Comprehensibility</i></p>	<p>Students at the novice level are understood mostly by those accustomed to language learners. As their proficiency develops, they are understood by a broader range of speakers from the target culture.</p>
<p>How well do I use language? <i>Language control</i></p>	<p>Language learning involves taking risks, which often leads to errors. The goal of the written task is to communicate a message, so errors which do not interfere with the comprehension of the message and incorrect use of vocabulary above the student's proficiency sublevel are not penalized.</p> <p>However, by the Intermediate Low level, the student should demonstrate better control of basic structures than the Novice level.</p>
<p>How well do I complete the task? <i>Ideas and organization</i></p>	<p>Students at the lower proficiency sublevels may complete the task but struggle with organizing and expressing their ideas in the target language.</p> <p>However, as their proficiency grows, students will be able to develop and organize their ideas to complete the task with appropriate content, details, and examples.</p>
<p>How intercultural am I? <i>Interculturality</i></p>	<p>Students identify and reference products and practices and begin to show understanding of the associated perspectives. Their understanding of perspectives increases as they progress through the proficiency sublevels.</p> <p>They demonstrate their cultural understanding by the way they describe the culture in their written presentation.</p>

How do I determine a performance level (e.g., Novice Mid) on the Unit IPA using the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) Rubric?

Work with other teachers in your department to reach consensus about your expectations as you assess student performance. This practice is particularly important if your department is transitioning from discrete point assessments with one right answer to open-ended tasks assessed with a rubric. When ALL teachers in the department work together to establish performance expectations for ALL courses, even for classes they do not teach, the vertical team grows stronger.

As you plan your assessment calendar, make time to meet with other teachers and calibrate your expectations before you assess and provide students with feedback. A sample procedure for assessing the *Vive entre culturas* or *Evaluación integrada* IPA could be as follows:

1. Meet as a vertical team (teachers of all levels) to read and discuss the *Integrated Performance Assessment* rubric, clarifying any questions that arise.
2. Meet again with colleagues once students have completed the tasks. To calibrate scoring of the assessments, each teacher whose students took the assessment should present three examples of student responses: one strong, one mid, and one weak performance. Avoid the extremes; “over-the-top” performances or blank, one-word answers will not help you make fine distinctions.
3. Review the sample responses, one at a time, looking for evidence of performance as described in the rubric to define the proficiency level.
4. Work individually to assign each sample a tentative level on a separate paper.
5. Compare your observations with those of your colleagues, discussing the specific evidence in the sample that exemplifies the description on the rubric. If there is disagreement on a particular sample, go on to the next sample and come back to the first sample later.
6. Come to a consensus score after assigning a tentative level to a minimum of six responses and reviewing them once more. If one individual disagrees with the group, remember that the goal is to be consistent in order to assure that the results are fair and reliable for all students. The goal of this process is NOT to assign a grade, but to describe a performance. **Discussion of the grade that will be assigned is a separate conversation from assigning a performance level.**
7. Score your students’ performance with these clear examples of performance at each point on the rubric.
8. Provide feedback using the language of the rubric.

How do I use the rubrics to determine grades?

School grading policies may require you to convert assessments of student performance to a letter or number grade. State standards differ regarding the proficiency levels expected after one, two, or three years of study. Honors or other advanced courses may have different proficiency expectations from courses without these distinctions. For this reason, decisions about how rubric scores translate into grades must be made at a local level, in accordance with state, district, and course expectations. When all teachers collaborate in this process, the results can help all students focus on learning and progress toward achieving their proficiency goals. *EntreCulturas* does not indicate the level of expectations in the header of the holistic and analytic rubrics because teachers, students, and classrooms are unique and may not conform to specific outcomes. Therefore, decide how the rubrics best fit your students' performances and assign grades accordingly. Here are some options for determining grades from rubric scores.

Example A

To determine a percentage grade for the assessment, assign an 8 for Intermediate Mid, a 7 for Intermediate Low (target), a 6 for Novice High, and a 5 for Novice Mid. Then add up the scores in each of the four domains and divide by the total. In this case, there are four domains multiplied by eight as the highest score for a total of 32 points ($4 \times 8 = 32$). If a student scored a total of 28/32 points, that would convert to a percentage of 88%. A student scoring in the lowest level for all four domains would result in a 63% ($5 \times 4 = 20$; $20/32 = 63\%$).

For a rubric with only three levels, the points may need to be adapted. Teachers should adjust the point values so that the lowest percentage score does not drop below 60% if the student has completed the assessment.

Level 2 Unit 5	Novice Mid: Beginning 5	Novice High: Developing 6	Intermediate Low: Meeting 7	Intermediate Mid: Exceeding 8
Interpretive Audiovisual				X
Interpersonal Speaking		X		
Presentational Speaking			X	
Interculturality			X	
Score: 28/32 = 88% Meets Target		6	14	8

Example B

To encourage student motivation, create a scale on which to convert scores from points to percentages. A student with a score of 20 points is technically at the Meets Expectations level, so assign that point value a score of, say 90%, or an A. Then, create a scale that ranges from 100% to 70%, where in this particular scenario, a C is the lowest possible grade for students completing the assessment.

Target	Exceeds				Meets			Approaches	
Points	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16
%	100	97	95	93	90	85	80	75	70

Regardless of the approach, the important element is that the student's performance is not failing at the beginning of the school year. Keep in mind, too, that this score is only one indicator of what the student can do on a daily basis.

Example C

Another approach to grading student performance with a rubric is to determine which performance level corresponds to a preponderance of evidence. So, if a student's performance shows vocabulary at Intermediate Low, but all the other domains are more representative of Novice High, the performance is scored as Novice High because that is what the preponderance of evidence shows. The actual grade assigned to a Novice High performance is determined based on departmental, district, or state expectations for a performance which approaches target, meets target, or exceeds target.


Example D

Since the *Vive entre cultura* or *Evaluación integrada* Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) include an interpretive, a presentational, and an interpersonal task, you may wish to record each task as a separate grade rather than recording an overall score for the entire assessment. This action allows the students' gradebook to indicate their areas of strength and areas for growth, allowing you to easily track progress and set goals for future units.

Assessing Interpersonal Speaking

What are some classroom activities to assess students' interpersonal speaking skills?

EntreCulturas provides several options for scoring daily interpersonal speaking in the classroom.

- **Specific *Actividad* and *Paso* tasks.** Each unit has a number of structured opportunities for students to engage in interpersonal speaking. These are represented by the  icon.
- **Suggested instructional strategies.** The Instructional Strategies Appendix in the Teacher Edition and the Instructional Strategies Toolkit on Explorer suggest a number of ways to engage students in interpersonal speaking tasks. Strategies, such as Inside-Outside Circles or Speed Dating, allow for observation and assessment of students' interpersonal speaking skills.
- **Online activities in Explorer** on the Wayside Publishing Learning Site. Many of the *Actividad* and *Paso* tasks are available online. Students record their conversations on the site and submit them to the teacher for feedback. In addition, each unit has a teacher-monitored, classroom forum in which students can create audio or video recordings of themselves and respond to each other.

What are some tips or strategies for monitoring students' interpersonal speaking skills?

Here are some ideas shared by the authors of *EntreCulturas*, as well as experts in the field.

- Prepare a clipboard with students' names and the speaking functions or global tasks, e.g., extending an invitation, you are observing.
- Listen and note your observations as you overhear students speaking to each other in pairs.
- Note which students perform at a higher level of proficiency than others, then provide additional feedback and support to on struggling students. This practice provides information on how to pair and group students for future practice.
- Use an approach like Richard Donato's "*TALK Scores*" to easily assess student speaking.
- Upon completion of speaking activities, provide students with specific feedback on how to move to the next level of proficiency.

How do you monitor and evaluate partner and group interpersonal speaking activities using the “*TALK Scores*” approach?

EntreCulturas provides many daily interpersonal speaking tasks which can be assessed using TALK Scores.

What: An uncomplicated way to assess student performance during small group interpersonal activities.

When: As often as possible and as much as you can observe during a group activity.

Why: Our impressions of a student's' level of participation, cooperation and performance are often subjective. *TALK* scores allow you to compare impressions with classroom performance.

How: Each letter of *TALK* represents one PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE to observe during a small group activity. Select only ONE objective to observe during an activity. The goal is that at the end of a set period of time (one-two weeks), students have been observed for all FOUR performance objectives (a “round”).

Performance Objectives:

T - student is **TALKING** in the target language, **TRYING** to communicate, **TALK** is relevant to the **TASK**

A - student uses an **ACCEPTABLE** level of interpersonal communication⁹, regarding the objective of the lesson

L - student is **LISTENING** to his/her partner and on task

K - student is **KIND** and cooperative when working with classmates.

Procedures:

1. During an activity, circulate around the room observing ONE of the performance skills (listening, speaking) or functions to record on the *TALK CHART*. You may choose to monitor the performance objectives in random fashion so students will not know what you are evaluating.
2. Try to observe all four objectives (a round) over a set period of time. This will show you who needs more observation than others. If you see you have three objectives for Lucia and only one objective for Pedro, then provide Pedro with more attention.
3. Ideally you will have an equal number of rounds for each student by the end of six to nine weeks.
4. At the end of a round, you will have a **PROFILE** of a student's activity during pair or group work.
5. You may want to experiment with observing more than one objective per activity or per student at one time.

Option A TALK Scoring Chart (point equivalents to letter grades are suggestions)

Points + = 2 Excellent √ = 1 Good to Fair - = 0 Needs work	Talking in the Target Language	Acceptable level of Interpersonal Communication	Listening	Kind and Cooperative	Round (1,2,3)	Grade
Activity	partner practice	Peer correction	Information gap	small group discussion		7-8 = A 5-6 = B 3-4 = C 1-2 = D
Date observed	9/12/17	9/21/17	9/15/17	9/14/17		
Student 1	√	+	√	√	5	B
Student 2	-	√	√	√	3	C
Student 3	+	+	√	+	7	A

Richard Donato (2004) University of Pittsburgh. Adapted from "TALK Scores". Reproduced with permission.

Option B TALK Scoring Chart (point equivalents to percentage grades)

Targeted Skill	Talking in the Target Language	Acceptable Level of Interpersonal Communication	Listening	Kind and Cooperative	Points	Grade
Points 3 = independent 2 = with support 1 = still a goal 0 = did not participate	partner practice 9/12/17	Peer correction 9/21/17	Information gap 9/15/17	small group discussion 9/14/17	12 10 8 6 4 2 0	100 93 87 80 73 67 60*
Student 1	2	2	3	0	7	83
Student 2	3	3	3	3	12	100
Student 3	2	3	3	2	10	93
Student 4	1	2	3	2	8	87

*Student who does not participate earns the minimum score of 60% or a D.

These scoring charts can be adapted to provide students with an opportunity to record self-reflection on their interpersonal speaking tasks.

Portfolio

What is the portfolio?

The portfolio is an integral part of Explorer, allowing students to self-assess their progress and demonstrate understanding, while teachers are able to provide feedback. Both teachers and students are encouraged to reflect on their learning and artefacts at appropriate times of the learning process.

How do I use the portfolio with my students?

Set learning objectives and long-term goals.

- a. By reviewing the Can-Do Statements at the onset of a unit, you are allowing learners to set their expectations for this unit of study and you are setting their learning objectives.
- b. Reviewing the Can-Do Statements will lead to reviewing the unit goals in the textbook. The two steps do not need to appear in a particular order.
- c. The existing Can-Do Statements can be used as daily learning targets. Successful performance on the related activity can serve as the success criterion for the learning target and provide evidence for the online learning portfolio.
- d. Once students understand the learning objectives and unit goals, you can set some long-term goals similar to the unit goals. Here the point is for learners to self-determine how they will apply the learning objectives and unit goals to their personal life and experience with French.

Why should I use the portfolio with my students?

1. Foster self-assessment.

The main purpose of any language portfolio is to encourage and strengthen autonomous learning. *EntreCultur*as helps learners to:

- a. Make the learning process transparent to learners by connecting short-term, achievable goals to learning activities;
- b. Understand where they are on the proficiency continuum in each mode of communication;
- c. Set their own learning objectives based on Can-Do Statements that reflect the World Readiness Standards;
- d. Make a plan and make choices to accomplish their objectives (learning strategies are provided along the way);
- e. Produce evidence that exemplifies their achievement; and,
- f. Have ample opportunities to reflect on whether they have met their learning objectives and therefore how they will attain their long-term goals.

Do not expect students to become fully autonomous overnight. Be sure to give your learners the support they need and include opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning and use the portfolio in your lesson plans, especially in the beginning. When setting learning objectives and long-term goals, use posters or other visual representations in class. The language portfolio not only allows learners to self-assess, it also trains them how to be successful at self-assessing in the long term. Reflecting on one's own learning is a learning strategy that needs to be developed over time by fostering healthy habits in and outside of the classroom.

2. Foster reflection on performance.

Building the habit of reflecting and doing so efficiently is not an easy feat. However, *EntreCulturas* offers the following support:

- a. *EntreCulturas* allows learners to learn who they are within the context of their own culture. This is the first step in becoming a reflective and autonomous learner.
- b. *EntreCulturas* provides teachers with strategies on how to model activities and how to employ comprehensible input/output (throughout the Teacher Edition as well as the Instructional Strategies Appendix in the Teacher Edition and the Instructional Strategies Toolkit on Explorer) to help students attain their goals.
- c. *EntreCulturas'* online portfolio is private between you and individual students, allowing for a safe environment in which students can provide evidence, discover what they can do, receive specific feedback, and inquire about what they can do to improve.
- d. *EntreCulturas* allows learners to build habits leading them to efficiently continue learning beyond the classroom.

3. Foster shaping an online portfolio/presence.

Via our portfolio, learners are able to collect all of their artefacts in one single place. They will never lose access to any of the work they have done in the past for as long as they have their account credentials. Once again, this allows students to retrieve any information they may need at any point in their lives. As students progress through the *EntreCulturas* series, they and their teachers can look back at their previous work, reflect, celebrate progress, and plan for future growth. By doing so, they ensure that they will be prepared to easily demonstrate what they can do in the target language.

4. Foster understanding that learning a language is not a linear process.

Learners are expected to reflect on Can-Do Statements based on what they truly can do at that particular point in their journey toward greater proficiency. They are encouraged to go back to any Can-Do Statements (even ones they can confidently do well) and update the evidence as they build their skill set. The circular process allows and encourages learners to keep reflecting, thereby building healthy habits of continuous self-reflection not only in learning Spanish but in learning in general.

Refer to the *Language Portfolio Guide* on the Learning Site for more information regarding student self-reflection and self-assessment.

Additional Information

Where can I find more information?

For more information on any of these topics, check out the following links:

- [World-Readiness Standards for Learning Language](#)
- [NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements](#)
- [ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learning](#)
- [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#)
- [STARTALK Learning Module on Proficiency](#)