

## Spanish Language Assessment Instruments for Adult Spanish Speakers Learning English

This section provides names, descriptions, and availability information for language proficiency tests that are designed for adult Spanish speakers who are learning English as a second language. It describes tests of Spanish language proficiency. Adult education programs use these tests to identify students' literacy levels in their native language and the consequent possibility for skills transfer. The section includes only tests that are currently in use in programs in the United States. Tests that have fallen out of common use are not listed.

This section has two parts. Figure IV–3 in the first part lists tests of Spanish language proficiency that are used with adult learners; it does not include tests used at the university level. If test scores are aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines ([www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)), that information is provided. Figure IV–4 in the second part lists tests used in high school and postsecondary programs.

These tests are not used for accountability reporting for the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS). (See *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, beginning on page IV–25, for discussion of the assessment requirements of the National Reporting System.)

If the test is performance-based, that information is provided. The following definitions are used to describe performance-based assessments:

- "...language performance in terms of the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations" (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989).
- Language is used in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks (e.g., interacting with another individual in a conversation, writing a text, finding information in a chart or a schedule). Performance is assessed by documenting the successful completion of the task or by using a rubric to assess various dimensions of carrying out the task (e.g., listening comprehension and language complexity in responses to questions in an oral interview) (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Van Duzer and Berdán, 1999).

## References

- Alamprese, J. A., & Kay, A. (1993). *Literacy on the cafeteria line: Evaluation of skills enhancement training program*. Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates.
- Buck, K., Byrnes, H., & Thompson, I. (Eds.). (1989). *The ACTFL oral proficiency interview tester training manual*. Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Van Duzer, C., & Berdán, R. (1999). Perspectives on assessment in adult ESOL instruction. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith, (Eds.). *The annual review of adult learning and literacy*, pp. 200-242. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Figure IV–3: Tests of Spanish Language Proficiency Used With Adult Learners**

Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners	Availability
<p><b>Batería Woodcock-Muñoz: Pruebas de aprovechamiento—Revisada (Batería-R)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To measure the cognitive abilities and academic achievement of native Spanish speakers of all ages</p> <p>Adult education programs typically use the written language subtests as a measure of literacy skills.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Native Spanish speakers ages 2-90</p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> The standard battery has 7 subtests; the supplemental battery includes subtests 8-21.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> The test battery is a parallel Spanish version of the Woodcock-Johnson. The cognitive battery measures eight cognitive abilities: memory for names, memory for sentences, visual matching, incomplete words, visual closure, picture vocabulary, and analysis-synthesis. The achievement battery measures four areas of achievement: reading, mathematics, written language, and knowledge (science, social studies, humanities). Three subtests are used in some programs to assess literacy: Analisis de palabras (word analysis using pseudo words); Identificación de letras y palabras (word recognition); Comprensión de textos (reading comprehension using a cloze test)</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> Approximately 5 minutes per subtest</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> The tests battery yields scores on individual test areas and cluster scores. A comparative language index is available when part of the test has been administered in both Spanish and English.</p> <p><b>Reliability/validity:</b> No information available from publisher</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> One</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> Examiner’s manual, norm tables, test books, audio cassettes</p> <p><b>Riverside Publishing</b> (a division of Houghton-Mifflin) 425 Spring Lake Drive Itasca, IL 60143 800-323-9540 <a href="http://www.riverpub.com/products">www.riverpub.com/products</a></p>

Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners	Availability
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Los exámenes del GED en Español</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To assess the educational achievement of native-Spanish-speaking adults</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Native-Spanish-speaking adults who are seeking a high school equivalency certificate</p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> Group administered, multiple choice; writing skills Part 2 is essay</p> <p><b>Content:</b> The assessment is composed of five tests: interpreting literature and the arts (reading), writing skills part 1 (grammar, usage, mechanics), writing skills part 2 (expository essay), social studies, science, and mathematics. Questions are classified by cognitive level: comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> 45 minutes per test</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> Standard scores range from 200 to 800 for each test.</p> <p><b>Reliability/validity:</b> Information is available in the <i>Technical Manual</i>, but this manual has not been updated since 1993 (American Council on Education).</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> One</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> Current materials are available only through GED testing centers. Sample questions from the 1988 Series: International, French, Spanish are available at <a href="http://www.acenet.edu/cill/ged/sampleQ-TT.cfm">www.acenet.edu/cill/ged/sampleQ-TT.cfm</a> (the sample questions are in English). Spanish practice tests are available from Steck-Vaughn (now HarcourtAchieve), 800-531-5015, <a href="http://www.steck-vaughn.com">www.steck-vaughn.com</a></p> <p><b>GED Testing Service</b>            One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 250            Washington, DC 20036            202-939-9490  <a href="http://www.gedtest.org">www.gedtest.org</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Native Language Literacy Screening Device— Spanish</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To assess the native language literacy levels of native speakers of Spanish</p> <p>This screening device is also available for 26 other primary languages.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Native-Spanish-speaking adults in adult basic education programs</p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> Performance-based</p> <p>A loose-leaf notebook contains the introduction, protocol for administration, and six pages of assessment assignments in each language. Learners are asked to complete the first three pages without assistance. If they do so, they do the silent reading portion and write a short essay.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> First three pages address date and place of birth, number of members in the immediate family, number of years of school attendance in the country of</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> One</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> This screening device was developed for use by the New York State Department of Education, and is primarily used in that state. Training workshops are available.</p> <p><b>Hudson River Center for Program Development</b>            102 Mosher Road            Glenmont, NY 12077  <a href="http://www.hudrivctr.org/products_el.htm">www.hudrivctr.org/products_el.htm</a></p>

Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners	Availability
<p>origin, current job and interests, and previous exposure to English classes. The reading section is four short stories. In the essay, the examinee writes about him/herself.</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> (not provided)</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> The administrator scores on the basis of observation: whether the student needs help with first three pages, how long the student takes to complete the reading, how long the student takes to write the essay, the quality of handwriting, and the amount of text produced. This device provides a general indication of literacy skills, but is not precise or detailed enough to gauge achievement.</p> <p><b>Reliability and validity:</b> No information available from publisher.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Test of Adult Basic Education—Español (TABE Español)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To assess native-Spanish-speaking adults' basic reading and language skills in Spanish. According to the publisher, the one form may be used as a pre-test and post-test, <u>if</u> the two tests are administered more than 6 months apart.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Native speakers of Spanish in adult basic education programs</p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> This is a written, multiple-choice test. Examiners must read and speak both English and Spanish to administer the test.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> The language in the tests is standard Spanish common to all dialects. It measures the same skills as the TABE 7 &amp; 8. Tasks include linking sentences with pictures, word meaning in context, constructing meaning, evaluating meaning, and knowledge of sentence formation, paragraph structure, and writing conventions.</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> Information not available.</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> The test has two levels (easy: grades 1.6-3.9, and medium: grades 3.6-6.9). Scores are correlated with grade levels and also with a scale based on the ways adults use language.</p> <p><b>Reliability/validity:</b> No information available from publisher.</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> One form; Two levels</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> Locator test, examiner's manual, norms book, word list, test booklets, answer sheets, technical report</p> <p><b>CTB/McGraw-Hill</b>  20 Ryan Ranch Road  Monterey, CA 93940  800-538-9547  <a href="http://www.ctb.com/">www.ctb.com/</a></p>

**Figure IV–4: Tests Used In High School and Postsecondary Programs**

Spanish Language Tests Used in High School and Postsecondary Programs	Availability
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments (MLPA)—Spanish</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To assess the Spanish language skills of students completing high school foreign language study</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Students graduating from U.S. high schools</p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> Performance-based; group or individual administration</p> <p>The reading test is multiple choice. Writing is a situationally based contextualized task. Speaking and listening are tape-mediated contextualized tasks.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Test content is based on general interest topics. The tests assess proficiency in reading (Contextualized Reading Assessment [CoRA], 35 items); writing (Contextualized Writing Assessment [CoWA], 50 minutes); speaking (Contextualized Speaking Assessment [CoSA], 20 minutes); and listening (Contextualized Listening Assessment [CoLA], 35 items). Contextualized tasks ask students to use language in authentic contexts. Advance organizers or warm-up tasks precede each test section.</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> Approximately 2 hours total time</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> The MLPA assesses language proficiency at the Intermediate-Low level on the language proficiency scales of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CACTFL) <a href="http://www.actfl.org">www.actfl.org</a> Reading is scored on text content, organizational characteristics, and cultural content scales; writing is rated pass/fail using a holistic rubric.</p> <p><b>Reliability/validity:</b> “Reliability coefficients from data collected to date are all in the acceptable range; items and tasks have been extensively field tested and refined; tasks are authentic and varied” (publisher’s statement).</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> One</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> Pencil-and-paper and computer-adaptive versions of test; manual for rater training</p> <p><b>Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)</b>            University of Minnesota            619 Heller Hall            271 19th Ave. S.            Minneapolis, MN 55455            612-626-8600  <a href="http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/">www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/</a></p>

Spanish Language Tests Used in High School and Postsecondary Programs	Availability
<p><b>Spanish Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To assess the speaking proficiency of high school and college Spanish learners</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Students enrolled in traditional high school (grades 11 and above) and college language courses.</p> <p><i>(Note: The SOPI is designed for native speakers of English studying Spanish. All the directions, both audio and print, are in English.)</i></p> <p><b>Method and format:</b> Performance-based; simulated oral proficiency interview</p> <p>The student listens to directions on a master tape, following along in a test booklet, and then responds on a separate tape.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> An introductory warm up is followed by picture-based tasks, topic-based tasks, and situation-based tasks.</p> <p><b>Administration time:</b> 25 to 50 minutes</p> <p><b>Levels and scoring:</b> Responses are scored holistically by trained raters, according to the language proficiency scales of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) <a href="http://www.actfl.org">www.actfl.org</a>.</p> <p><b>Reliability/validity:</b> Correlation with ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has been determined for a number of languages, including Chinese, Hebrew, Hausa, and Indonesian. The correlation between the SOPI and the ACTFL OPI was <math>&gt;.89</math> in all cases. In addition, inter-rater reliability studies were conducted to determine the consistency of scores among SOPI raters. Inter-rater reliability has ranged from .91 (Hausa) to .97 (Indonesian).</p>	<p><b>Number of forms:</b> Three</p> <p><b>Materials available:</b> Master test tape, examinee response tape, test manual, examinee handbook</p> <p>Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40<sup>th</sup> Street NW Washington, DC 20016 202-362-0700 <a href="http://www.cal.org">www.cal.org</a></p>