

Student-Friendly Can Do Statements

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are a very helpful tool in the Foreign/World Language Classroom. They provide teachers and students with clear guidelines and descriptions to assess proficiency levels. They are also an effective tool for students and teachers to set achievable and concrete goals.

The ACTFL Can Do Statements provide detailed examples of what students could/should be able to do at each proficiency level. The challenge I have personally had with the Can Do Statements is using them for various age and developmental levels. There are some Can Do statements that address such things as making reservations and asking questions about particular academic subjects. While these are very applicable to older students, they are not developmentally appropriate for younger students.

For this reason I have developed, with the help of a few colleagues, Student-Friendly Can Do Statements. These statements honor the text type (individual words and phrases, discrete sentences, connected sentences, paragraphs) of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, but are more applicable to elementary, middle school and high school students. They are also more general so that they can apply to various content topics. Along with the level title (novice high, novice, mid, etc.) you will also see the text type (language produced at that level) .



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Student-Friendly Can Do Statements

Novice Low (individual words and phrases):

I can...

- ☐ repeat single words or phrases I've heard and memorized.
- ☐ greet others.
- ☐ say how I'm doing.
- ☐ say my name.
- ☐ name some objects around me.
- ☐ answer questions with "yes" or "no."
- ☐ say my address and phone number.
- ☐ respond to "and you" questions.

Novice Mid (individual words and phrases):

I can...

- ☐ introduce myself.
- ☐ greet others in different ways (formal and informal).
- ☐ name some of my likes, dislikes and preferences (objects).
- ☐ name some of my likes, dislikes and preferences (activities).
- ☐ ask simple questions.
- ☐ list words (colors, animals, food, family members, objects).

Novice High (phrases and short, chunked sentences):

I can...

- ☐ speak in phrases and short sentences (some memorized).
- ☐ talk about familiar subjects.
- ☐ describe surroundings and people.
- ☐ give time, date, and weather info.
- ☐ give opinions on things I like/dislike with clarification.
- ☐ use connecting words and prepositions.
- ☐ ask simple questions ("and you").
- ☐ respond to language that I read and hear.

Intermediate Low (chunked sentences and discrete sentences):

I can...

- ☐ speak in complete sentences.
- ☐ create with language and answer open-ended questions.
- ☐ speak in the present and occasionally in other time frames.
- ☐ understand language in a few time frames.
- ☐ describe things and people in detail and give opinions on various topics/situations.
- ☐ self-correct when I hear myself say something incorrectly.
- ☐ ask clarification questions (using question words).
- ☐ apply some circumlocution strategies.

Intermediate Mid (discrete sentences):

I can...

- ☐ spontaneously access vocabulary to speak about familiar and occasionally unfamiliar subjects.
- ☐ speak confidently about present time actions and other time frames (using adverbs).
- ☐ describe, explain and compare.
- ☐ ask pointed, relevant questions.
- ☐ confidently apply circumlocution strategies.
- ☐ confidently recognize language different time frames.

Intermediate High (discrete sentences and connected sentences):

I can...

- ☐ communicate with ease and confidence on familiar and unfamiliar topics.
- ☐ narrate and describe in all major time frames.
- ☐ understand the main idea and some supporting details or follow the storyline of a fluent speaker.
- ☐ seek clarification when I don't understand a theme or story.
- ☐ regularly apply circumlocution strategies.