INFORMATION BOOKLET

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATION

Oral, Reading, Writing
Language Proficiency

Linguistic Services,
Finance and Treasury Board
August 2019
PREFACE

The Linguistic Services of Finance and Treasury Board offer Oral, Reading and Writing Language Proficiency Evaluations.

These language evaluation services are available to employers (i.e. provincial government departments/agencies, organizations and institutions) and to members of the public.

Please contact us for any language evaluation needs.

Linguistic Services
E-Mail: LS-SL@gnb.ca
REQUEST FOR LANGUAGE EVALUATION

The Language Evaluation Application form is available on Service New Brunswick’s website: https://www.pxw1.snb.ca/snb9000/product.aspx?productid=A001PSN1010&l=e

If you wish to have a Language Proficiency Evaluation, you can:

- go to SNB website and complete the application form and payment
- call 1-888-762-8600
- visit a Service New-Brunswick Center.

Oral Language Proficiency evaluation

- request must be made at least five (5) business days prior to the desired evaluation date

- Linguistic Services will contact you by email to schedule an evaluation. Please note that Linguistic Services operate on Atlantic time; consequently, if you are in a different time zone you will need to adjust the time accordingly

- ensure to call at the precise scheduled time. A late call will be deemed a missed appointment for which your payment will not be returned

- at the beginning of the interview, the Evaluator will verify information for identification purposes

- Oral Language Proficiency Evaluations are recorded for quality control and are strictly confidential

- postpone an Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation date at least one (1) full business day (prior to 9:00 am Atlantic time) before the scheduled date to avoid rescheduling fees

- a request for reassessment of a recorded Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation must be received by Linguistic Services within 60 days of the evaluation date

- a new Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation may be requested at any time.

- evaluation expenses (e.g. travel expenses or telephone charges) if applicable, are the responsibility of the candidate or the employer (i.e. provincial government department/agency, organization or institution) making the evaluation request.
Fraud

If fraud is suspected, Linguistic Services reserve the right to ask the candidate to be retested in person for identification purposes.

Reading and Writing Language Proficiency

- Linguistic Services will contact the candidate by email to confirm the location, date and time of the evaluation

- confirm or postpone a Reading or Writing Language Proficiency Evaluation date at least five (5) full business days before the scheduled date

- photo identification is required at the time of the evaluation

- should the candidate come later than the scheduled time, it may affect his/her ability to be evaluated due to time constraints with the evaluation process; therefore, the candidate may not be allowed to do the evaluation and will not be reimbursed

- there is a six (6) month waiting period before you may rewrite for Reading and Writing Language Proficiency Evaluations.

Accommodations

- a Request for Accommodations for Linguistic Services and supporting documentation must be received by Linguistic Services at least two (2) weeks prior to your desired evaluation date

- if during an evaluation, a serious physical or psychological problem occurs that affects the performance, it is the candidate responsibility to inform the Evaluator or Invigilator immediately.

Fees

Language evaluation fees are as follows:

- Oral: $60 + HST
- Reading: $45 + HST
- Writing: $45 + HST
- Reassessment of the Recorded Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation: $30 + HST

Language evaluation fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
Quality Control

Evaluators and Markers are trained and certified by Linguistic Services of Finance and Treasury Board. They conduct and rate evaluations according to their standard procedures.

Quality control measures are in place to ensure quality service.

Results

Linguistic Services issue an official Certificate of Proficiency with the name, level obtained, language evaluated and date of the evaluation. It also bares the New Brunswick seal, logo and the Minister’s signature.

No certificate will be issued to a candidate with an *unrateable* level.

Linguistic Services strive to send out results (certificate and appropriate documentation) by mail *within ten (10) working days following the date of the evaluation*.

Results may be sent to a third party upon written authorization by the candidate.

Since the Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation is an assessment of your overall ability to communicate in the target language in both professional and social settings rather than assessing progress and knowledge acquisition, Linguistic Services do not provide feedback.

Period of Validity

Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation - *three (3) years*.

Reading and Writing Language Proficiency - *five (5) years*.

Please note that result at *Superior* level does not have an expiry date; however, an employer can request an evaluation at any time regardless of the previous level achieved.
ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATION

Description
The Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation is an assessment of a person’s overall ability to communicate in English or French in both professional and social settings. The Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation is carried out during a 20 to 40 minutes telephone conversation with an Evaluator.

The telephone conversation is recorded for quality control purposes and is confidential.

The evaluation focuses on functions/tasks performed in English or French, accuracy in conveying a message, and the ability to express thoughts/ideas on content.

- **Functions/Tasks** include such activities as asking questions, relating events, giving explanations, expressing opinions, justifying a position and negotiating.

- **Accuracy** refers to the acceptability, quality and precision of the message conveyed. Accuracy features associated with each major proficiency level are grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Fluency and the ability to communicate are also taken into account.

- **Content** refers to the numerous topics that have been broached during the conversation, all of which have a bearing on your professional and social life.

Remember that what is being assessed is the ability to communicate, not the ideas or opinions expressed. **The evaluation** (i.e. telephone conversation) is confidential so feel free to express thoughts, even if these conflict with the organization’s stance on a particular issue, if applicable.

**It is the candidate’s responsibility** to indicate to the Evaluator when asked about something that you find too personal to discuss; he/she will change the subject.

There are nine (9) levels for the Oral Language Proficiency: Unrateable (0), Novice (0+), Basic (1), Basic Plus (1+), Intermediate (2), Intermediate Plus (2+), Advanced (3), Advanced Plus (3+) and Superior (4). Except for the Unrateable level, the functions associated with each level include the functions of previous levels. Thus, a speaker at the Intermediate level controls all the functions at the Novice and Basic levels as well as those at the Intermediate level. A plus (+) indicates the speaker sometimes demonstrates some functions of the next level on the scale but is not able to sustain the conversation at that higher level. (See Appendix A)

For an Oral Language Proficiency Evaluation, a **landline is strongly recommended** due to its reliability and clearer connection. An Evaluator could terminate a conversation if the connection is not clear. In such a case, the candidate would have to reschedule and would be responsible for the additional fees.

The use of notes or electronic devices is **not allowed** during the evaluation.
**Tips**

*Prior to the evaluation:*

- Use the target language as often as you can: listen to radio, watch television and speak to colleagues and friends.

- Be on time for the evaluation.

*During the evaluation:*

- Be alone in a quiet room/location during the evaluation to fully concentrate on the conversation.

- Use the target language when speaking with the Evaluator right from the start to adjust more quickly to the evaluation situation.

- Do not get hung up on your mistakes. If you are stuck for a word, use another to explain what you are trying to say then forge ahead. If you realize you made a mistake and you would feel more comfortable if you corrected it then by all means do so. Simply remember that by spending too much time correcting yourself you may slow down the natural flow of the conversation.

Tell the Evaluator if a delicate topic is being broached. Remember that what is being assessed is the ability to communicate, not the ideas or opinions expressed. The evaluation (i.e. telephone conversation) is confidential, so feel free to express thoughts, even if these conflict with the organization’s stance on a particular issue, if applicable.

**It is the candidate’s responsibility** to indicate to the Evaluator when asked about something that you find too personal to discuss; he/she will change the subject.
READING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATION

Description
The Reading Language Proficiency Evaluation is an assessment of proficiency in reading comprehension in English or French. The duration of the evaluation is 90 minutes including administration time.

The evaluation contains two (2) types of questions. The first type requires indicating whether each of the statements is either True or False. The second type verifies your general comprehension of a text. You will be asked to choose among four (4) statements the one which best describes the text or best describes its purpose.

The evaluation is available in hard copy only and is administered in person in various parts of the province, upon request.

There are five (5) levels for the Reading Language Proficiency: Unrateable, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior. (See Appendix B)

Tips
Prior to the evaluation:
• Review vocabulary and grammar but, concentrate on reading and understanding texts written in the target language.

• Be on time for the evaluation since you will not be permitted to write if the others in the session have already begun answering questions.

During the evaluation:
• Read the entire question before answering.

• To maximize your score, answer as many of the easier questions as possible. Only correct answers will contribute to your score.

• Because the evaluation is used to assess all levels of proficiency, you may not have time to answer all the questions.
WRITING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATION

Description
The Writing Language Proficiency Evaluation is an assessment of proficiency in writing in English or French. The duration of the evaluation is **65 minutes** including administration time.

The evaluation contains four (4) types of questions. The first type requires completing a sentence by selecting the appropriate answer/letter. The second type requires identifying the error and writing the correct one. The third type verifies your general comprehension of a text and requires supplying the missing letters. The fourth type requires writing short essays on different topics.

The evaluation is available in hard copy only and is administered in person in various parts of the province, upon request.

There are five (5) levels for the Writing Language Proficiency: *Unrateable, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced* and *Superior*. (See Appendix C)

Tips
Prior to the evaluation:
- Review vocabulary, grammar, write short texts (for example, simple statements or short letters, memoranda or reports) and discuss them with others who are highly proficient in the target language.
- Be on time for the evaluation since you will not be permitted to write if the others in the session have already begun answering questions.

During the evaluation:
- Read the entire question before answering.
- To maximize your score, answer as many of the easier questions as possible. Only correct answers will contribute to your score.
- Because the evaluation is used to assess all levels of proficiency, you may not have time to answer all the questions.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A - ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

The Oral Language Proficiency Scale states oral communication proficiency based on a scale that describes nine (9) levels of linguistic competence: Unrateable (0), Novice (0+), Basic (1), Basic Plus (1+), Intermediate (2), Intermediate Plus (2+), Advanced (3), Advanced Plus (3+) and Superior (4). Except for the Unrateable level, the functions associated with each level include the functions of previous levels. Thus, a speaker at the Intermediate level controls all the functions at the Novice and Basic levels as well as those at the Intermediate level. A plus (+) indicates the speaker sometimes demonstrates some functions of the next level on the scale but is not able to sustain the conversation at that higher level.

UNRATEABLE
No communicative capacity
May be able on occasion to utter an isolated word or phrase.

NOVICE
Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances
No real autonomy of expression, flexibility or spontaneity. Can answer simple questions with reasonable accuracy using memorized phrases. Repetition and rephrasing of questions is often necessary. Vocabulary is insufficient for conversation.

BASIC (1)
Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements
Can ask and answer questions on simple, familiar topics. Within the scope of very limited language experience, can understand simple questions and statements, often requiring slowed speech, repetition and paraphrasing. Vocabulary is adequate to express most elementary needs. Errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent. While elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, a person at the Basic level should be able to provide simple autobiographical information on such topics as family, leisure activities, education and employment (where appropriate). Can provide a simple description of a person, place or thing.

Examples:
• A person can identify herself / himself and give a simple personal biography
• An office employee can indicate where a person, object or document is.
• A technician can ask how to obtain a specific tool.
• A manager can give simple instructions concerning a file or a task.
• A clerk can inform a visitor and give simple information on an event or a public service.
• A tourist can ask for directions.
**BASIC PLUS (1+)**

Able to satisfy survival needs and participate in informal conversations in areas of personal experience

Has difficulty participating fully in an informal conversation. Is able to offer a sequence of comprehensible sentences on a particular topic, but errors in basic structures are frequent. At times, the speaker at this level will demonstrate some functions at the *Intermediate* level, but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.

**INTERMEDIATE (2)**

Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements

Can participate fully in informal conversations on personal topics and topics of general societal interest. Can provide detailed autobiographical information and give explanations with some degree of accuracy, but language is awkward. Can express facts, provide narration, describe, report on and speak about current, past and future activities. Can give directions from one place to another. Able to provide accurate instructions in a field of personal expertise. Can express opinions and make comparisons. Can handle limited, routine work requirements, but would need help in handling any complications or difficulties. Able to use paraphrasing when vocabulary is inadequate. Uses high frequency language structures accurately, but grammatical errors do occur and may be distracting. Pronunciation, though quite often faulty, is intelligible.

**Examples:**

- A human resource agent can explain the hiring process.
- An administrative assistant can explain certain simple procedures or policies.
- An employee can describe the appearance, color and size of objects or documents.
- A security officer can describe the circumstances of a violation.
- A clerk can deal with solving technical problem.
- A citizen can explain his taste and preference regarding a public service.

**INTERMEDIATE PLUS (2+)**

Able to participate fully in general conversation

Able to participate fully in informal conversations in social and work-related contexts. Control of language structures may vary, but communication of facts and ideas is usually clear. At times, a speaker at this level will demonstrate some functions at the *Advanced* level, but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.
ADVANCED (3)

Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations in both professional and social contexts.

Control of grammar is generally good. Can discuss work-related subjects, educational pursuits and areas of particular interests with reasonable ease. Can describe and narrate with precision. Can discuss abstract topics and ideas, in addition to factual subjects. Can discuss issues unrelated to personal experience, such as current events and general societal concerns. Can justify an opinion and develop a hypothesis. Comprehension is quite complete if rate of speech is normal. Vocabulary is adequate to deal with a variety of topics. Grammatical errors occur but do not impede communication. Pronunciation does not hinder intelligibility.

Examples:
- A senior official is able to present the features of a new program and answer questions related to the program.
- An administration assistant can explain the complex procedures for handling ministerial correspondence.
- A lab technician can explain the stages of an experiment.
- A manager can explain the impact of a change on work and productivity.
- A manager can advise on the best method of handling a difficult situation or project.
- A hockey fan can defend and express his opinions regarding physical contact on the ice or the high salary of professional hockey players.

ADVANCED PLUS (3+)

Can speak the language with sufficient ease to participate in formal and informal exchanges in a variety of contexts.

Although there may be occasional errors in grammar and lapses in vocabulary, overall communication is not affected. At times, the speaker at this level will demonstrate the ability to function at the Superior level but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.
SUPERIOR (4)
Able to use the language fluently and accurately in all contexts requiring complex language structures.
Can organize extended discourse with ease and precision in social and professional discussions. The speech is formal and well organized. Can demonstrate firm command of grammar and use complex language structures. The vocabulary is rich, precise and nuanced. Can advise, persuade, negotiate and entertain different points of view.

Examples:
- A lawyer can defend his or her client.
- A director of human resources can direct a bargaining team in negotiations.
- A protocol officer can deliver a speech in front of a delegation of visiting dignitaries.
- A union official can represent his bargaining unit in acrimonious contract negotiations.
- A manager can mediate between two employees who have a conflict.
- A receptionist can deal with complaints tactfully.
- An employer can conduct a performance review of an employee.
- A communication officer can conduct a press conference, on an issue of interest.
APPENDIX B - READING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

The Reading Language Proficiency Scale states reading proficiency based on a scale that describes five (5) levels of linguistic competence: Unrateable, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior.

UNRATEABLE
Reader has no ability to understand texts.

BASIC
Reader can understand texts on topics of limited scope and very simple texts. Grasp the main idea of texts about familiar topics. Read and understand elementary points of information such as dates, numbers or names from relatively more complex texts to perform routine job-related tasks.

INTERMEDIATE
Reader can understand most descriptive or factual material on work-related subjects. Grasp the main idea of most work-related texts, locate specific details and distinguish main from subsidiary ideas.

ADVANCED
Reader can understand texts on a wide variety of work-related topics and most complex details, inferences and fine points of meanings. Read with good comprehension specialized or less familiar material.

SUPERIOR
Reader can understand texts exceeding that of Advanced Level.
APPENDIX C – WRITING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

The Writing Language Proficiency Scale states writing proficiency based on a scale that describes four (4) levels of linguistic competence: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior.

UNRATEABLE
Writer has no ability to produce/reproduce isolated words and short phrases.

BASIC
Writer can produce/reproduce isolated words and short phrases to perform very simple tasks such as making up a list, taking down a short message, etc. Very simple vocabulary. Spelling errors impede communication.

INTERMEDIATE
Writer can produce/reproduce short texts to achieve simple transactions such as reserving a meeting room, changing an appointment, providing simple instructions, etc. Frequent grammatical inaccuracies and spelling errors may confuse the reader. Limited appreciation of socio-cultural appropriateness.

ADVANCED
Writer can produce/reproduce texts to achieve a range of transactions, both informal and formal. Cohesive devices enhance readability. Sentences are generally well formulated. Although grammatical and spelling inaccuracies may be evident, they do not affect understanding.

SUPERIOR
Writer can produce well-formed texts for a wide range of purposes. Language may resemble that of a native language user. Vocabulary is broad and appropriate to purpose. Grammar and mechanics pose no difficulties. Idiomatic phrasing may be present.