ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) grades English Language performance on a scale of 1 to 6:

Level 1	Pre-elementary	Level 4	Operational
Level 2	Elementary	Level 5	Extended
Level 3	Pre-Operational	Level 6	Expert

Pilots, Air Traffic Controllers and all others who use English in R/T communication on international routes must reach ICAO English Language Level 4 (Operational) by March 2008 - confirmed by successful completion of an ICAO-approved proficiency test.

Those who pass the test at Level 4 must be re-tested every three years. Those who fail may no longer be licensed to operate on international routes.

ICAO Language Proficiency RATING SCALE

LEVEL	PRONUNCIATION Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.	STRUCTURE Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.	VOCABULARY	FLUENCY	COMPREHENSION	INTERACTIONS
Expert 6	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.	and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.	on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.	Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately.
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.	patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted	accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. Paraphases consistently and successfully.	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.	Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.

			idiomatic.		events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.	
Operational 4	rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances.	Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occassional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.	topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events,	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying.
3	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete, or work-related topics, but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.	Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Fillers are sometimes distracting.	users. May fail to understand a linguistic or	Responses are sometimes immediate, appropriate, and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on familiar topics and in predictable situations. Generally inadequate when dealing with an unexpected turn of events.
2	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding.	Shows only limited control of a few simple memorized grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorized phrases.	Can produce very short, isolated, memorized utterances with frequent pausing and a distracting use of fillers to search for expressions and to articulate less familiar words.	Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorized phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.	Response time is slow and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple routine exchanges.
Pre- elementary	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.
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