



Language-Only Communication Skills Test (LO-CST) Information for Candidates

Overview

The Language-Only Communication Skills Test (LO-CST) is an assessment designed to measure a person's ability to interact in a professional context using two or more languages (usually English and one or more other languages). It evaluates the ability to understand and retain information provided in a language, and the ability to clearly communicate ideas through speech. This test does not evaluate or certify your ability to interpret or translate.

Each language will be assessed separately in a series of interviews, consisting of two sections each: Language comprehension and efficacy of oral communication (speech). Candidates testing in two languages will have two interviews, first in English, and then in the target language, but at no point will they be interpreting or translating. Candidates testing in three or more languages will have additional interviews. Often times, all of the interviews will take place on the same call, one immediately after the other.

How it works

Each section of the test will begin with a practice exercise or example. While the practice questions will not hurt your score if you get them wrong, correct answers may help your overall score, or shorten the test.

The first section of each language interview will be *listening comprehension*. In this section, you will hear a series of short readings. After each reading, you will hear a few questions related to the content of the reading. Here is an example (you will not see text during test, only hear audio):

“Angela withdrew \$300 dollars from the bank this morning before she took her cat to the veterinarian for a routine checkup and vaccination. The vet bill was \$200, which she paid in cash, and she gave the rest of the money to her mother.”

“Now, some questions:”

“What two places did Angela visit?” (answers: Bank and veterinarian)

“Why did Angela take her cat to the vet?” (answer: checkup or vaccination)

“How much money did Angela give her mother?” (answer: \$100)

The second section of each interview will be *efficacy of oral communication*, or speech. In this section you will be presented with open-ended starter topics, and asked to talk for approximately 2 to 3 minutes about each topic, giving your thoughts and opinions. Keep in mind that the starter topics are just prompts to get you started, and there are no wrong answers. Your responses will be evaluated based on how clearly, coherently and fluidly you communicate, taking into account accent and pronunciation, grammar and syntax, pace, vocabulary, and overall communication. Here is an example (audio only on test):

“Some school systems have proposed limiting the amount of homework that can be assigned to elementary school children, to ensure that they are not overwhelmed and have enough time for play each day. Give your opinion about how much homework you think is appropriate for elementary students. Do you think playtime is as important as homework? Please explain.”

Taking the test

You will need to be alone and in a quiet area, and you will need a pen and 2-3 sheets of blank paper for note taking. You are not allowed to use any reference materials, such as dictionaries or computers. The test usually takes about 45 to 60 minutes, depending on your pace. **The LO-CST is administered over the phone.**

LanguageStat recommends using a landline telephone whenever possible, but cellphone use is allowed. Some sections of the test cannot be repeated, however, and cellular phone reception issues can impede your performance, so please be sure to test your signal ahead of the assessment. Also, be sure to disable any call-waiting feature you may have on your phone, to avoid unnecessary interference.

Paying for your LO-CST

In order to schedule your assessment, you must first submit your payment. This can be done in one of two ways - via our website (<http://www.languagestat.com/shop/lo-cst>), or over the phone at **678-540-6394** (8:30 am to 5:00 pm eastern, Monday-Friday).

The cost of your assessment may vary depending on the language you speak. Please, see pricing below:

- English/Spanish - \$70
- English/Core languages other than Spanish (Arabic (MSA), Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Turkish, Ukrainian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese) - \$90
- English/Rare languages (All languages not listed above) - \$115

Once purchased, our scheduling team will reach out to you to schedule your assessment (by phone, email, or both). Depending on the rarity of your language(s), you may not receive scheduling options for 48-72 hours, so do not worry if you haven't heard from LanguageStat for a few days after you have paid for your test. In any case, you will have received a confirmation email the moment you submit purchase online, and you can refer to the confirmation number therein whenever following up with us.

At any point, if you have any questions about your assessment, you are welcome to email us at info@languagestat.com, or call us at 678-540-6394, and we will gladly assist you.

You will find additional answers to frequently asked questions about the Communication Skills Test (CST) on the page below:

Frequently asked questions

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Why do I need to test in my native language?

We recommend testing all languages used on the job, including the native language (even if it is English) for three main reasons: First, to provide a reference score for comparison. Second, to avoid cultural bias. (If candidates for a bilingual position are only tested in one of the two languages, then native speakers of that language would tend to score higher, and receive hiring preference, regardless of their skill level in the other language.) Third, your employer may need to show documentation of your skill level in all languages used on the job for HR and/or regulatory purposes.

I am a (nurse/banker/physical therapist, etc.). Why are some of the questions from non-related general topics?

In real world situations you will encounter topics other than those strictly related to your field that are nonetheless necessary to complete your job. The comprehension and oral communication sections of the test evaluate your overall communication ability in the language.

When are results ready? Do I receive a copy? Who else sees my results?

Results are usually sent out within five working business days (or one week, unless there are holidays). You may receive results sooner. If you ordered through the website and paid for the test yourself, you will receive a copy, and we will also send a copy to any other parties you requested on the order form. (If you did not list any other recipients, only you will receive a copy). If your employer/school ordered and paid for the test, only they will receive a copy, which they may or may not be able to share with you, according to their own internal policy. Self-paying candidates who chose the option to enroll in the “ON-FILE” program will have their results added to a database that LanguageStat and our partner organizations may refer to when seeking talent.

Frequently Asked Questions

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Which national/regional accents are considered standard in English?

LanguageStat acknowledges several standard regional/national dialects and accents in English including: Australian, British (including Scottish*), Canadian, Caribbean*, Indian*, Irish, New Zealander, US American (Including regional accents: Southern, Northeastern, Mid-western, and Southwestern/Native American) and South African*. (*No points will be deducted for clear and easy to understand speech in these dialects/accents. However, if speech is deemed to impede understanding for listeners from other countries or regions, score may be lowered and/or include notes mentioning impact on communication as applicable, depending on the degree of severity.)

Does passing this test make me an interpreter?

No. This test shows you have demonstrated the ability to understand and orally communicate in a language, and that you know profession-specific terminology. It does not evaluate your ability to retain and accurately convert information between languages. LanguageStat offers interpreter assessments that use different exercise types to evaluate those skills.

I have been speaking this language at work for years. Why do I need to take this test?

Your employer may wish to confirm or recertify your skill level for hiring, quality, safety or regulatory reasons.

How are results provided? What is the passing score?

Candidates receive an A-F ranking in each section, and an overall A-F ranking in each language, corresponding to a standard US grading scale. LanguageStat does not provide a passing/failing score for this test, although we generally recommend a score of 80% or higher (B grade or higher). Each organization will set their own criteria according to their needs, and some may focus on specific test sections when making hiring or enrollment decisions.

How soon can I retest? How many times may I retest?

Please check with the organization (employer or school) that requested the test to see what, if any, retest guidelines they have in place. LanguageStat recommends at least 6 months before retesting in most circumstances, but does not enforce that recommendation.

Can I retest in just one language/section? Can I add an additional language?

Yes, you can retest in one language or add a third (or fourth) language. In certain circumstances partial retesting by section may also be available. Please contact testing@languagestat.com for single language additions/retests or to discuss section -specific retests. Our testing team will review your results and recommend a partial retest if indicated.