<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENCHMARK LEVEL</th>
<th>TEXT TYPE</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
<th>COMPREHENSIBILITY</th>
<th>TASK COMPLETION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5               | * Connected sentences  
* Should include complex sentences most of the time | * Creates with the language  
* Noticeable increase in quantity from level 4  
* Consistent use of basic structures  
* Basic Structures may contain errors that don’t interfere with communication  
* Complex structures may include some errors that occasionally interfere with communication | * Student accurately uses a rich variety of appropriate vocabulary  
* Response includes a large quantity of vocabulary and expressions  
* English is not used | * Comprehension of responses requires almost no effort on the part of the listener | * Completion of task  
* Response includes a variety of vocabulary and language structure  
* Response is well organized and cohesive |
| 4               | * Simple sentences  
* May include some connectors | “Creates” with the language rather than relying on rephrasing of learned material  
* Consistent use of basic structures  
* Contains errors which rarely interfere with communication | * Student uses a variety of vocabulary  
* English is not used (* see next page for explanation) | * Comprehension of responses requires minimal effort on the part of the listener | * Completion of task  
* Response appropriate  
* All required elements are present  
* Responses are mostly well organized and cohesive |
| 3               | * Simple sentences most of the time  
* Occasional memorized phrases and/or sentences | * Uses correct basic structures at least half of the time  
* “Creates” with the language half the time, instead of relying only on memorized material  
* Some errors may interfere with communication | * Vocabulary is simple and appropriate  
* Rarely inserts English words or phrases | * Comprehension of responses might require some effort on the part of the listener | * Task mostly completed  
* Response relates directly to task  
* Response shows some organization  
* Sufficient information or detail |
| 2               | * Lists in context or sentence fragments  
* Includes memorized phrases and/or sentences | * Shows many errors in language structure | * Vocabulary is very simple  
* Student may frequently repeat words or expressions  
* Student response may include some English words or phrases | * Responses can be difficult to understand  
* Comprehension of responses may require significant effort on the part of the listener to be understood | * Partial completion of the task  
* Response mostly appropriate but underdeveloped |
| 1               | * Isolated words in context | * Little or no evidence of the correct use of basic language structure | * Vocabulary is very poor or inaccurate for task  
* Student response may include English | * Responses are either barely or not comprehensible | * Minimal completion of the task and/or response frequently inappropriate  
* There is almost no information related to the task |
EXPLANATION OF SPEAKING RUBRIC COMPONENTS

INTRODUCTION: This assessment, and the rubric that accompanies it, must be seen as a holistic approach to assessing speaking. A student may perform higher in some categories than in others. It is the overall performance that determines the level of performance.

The following components comprise the speaking rubric.

✓ TEXT TYPE

This component refers to the type of sentence. Text type can range from isolated words out of context to full and rich sentences.

NOTE: while some lists may sound like sentences, they may actually be a list. An example of this is: “I like to ski, I like to watch TV, I like to eat, I like to read.”

✓ LANGUAGE

This component refers to basic grammatical structures. Depending on the language the areas may include:

- Subject pronouns
- Subject-verb agreement
- Noun-adjective agreement
- Word order
- Gender
- Articles
- Negatives
- Language-specific issues

✓ VOCABULARY

This component generally refers to the type and variety of vocabulary used.

The use of an English word or phrase is a common feature in the Benchmark 3 profile. In a face-to-face (f-t-f) interview, circumlocution would be solicited but in the absence of such prompting, a Benchmark 3 level performance may include isolated words or phrases with a possible attempt at circumlocution.

English should not be used at the Benchmark 4 level. However, the use of an English word would not necessarily keep a student from attaining Benchmark 4. If a student performs at the Benchmark 4 level in all components but happens to insert an English vocabulary word or two, the SOSLA recognizes it’s limitations in not being a f-t-f interview and the English would not, in itself, keep the student from being rated at the Benchmark 4 level.

At the Benchmark 5 level the use of English is acceptable only when it is followed by an attempt at circumlocution of the word used.
✓ **COMPREHENSIBILITY**

This component refers to how well the response can be understood.

The issue of pronunciation must be addressed. The tendency to lower scoring based on poor pronunciation or raise scoring based on very good pronunciation must be avoided.

In the case of poor pronunciation, as long as the message is understandable to a sympathetic listener used to dealing with non-native speakers, pronunciation cannot be an issue. If, however, the pronunciation is so poor that even a sympathetic listener could not understand the message, then indeed the comprehensibility of the message cannot be extrapolated.

✓ **TASK COMPLETION**

This component refers to the specific task assigned. If a student chooses to address an entirely different task, even if it is successfully completed, the task has not been addressed.

**GLOSSARY**

* **Listener:** this assessment will, at times, require a sympathetic listener. We think foreign language teachers are the perfect example of a sympathetic listener. We must, however, not read into a response what is not there nor allow our understanding of “what they want to say” (in the case of poor pronunciation for example) to influence our scoring of the performance being rated.

**THE SOSLA-O RATING SHEET**

The following page contains the form that SOSLA raters use when rating the speech samples. It shows the six tasks in general terms. Also shown are the requirements for designation at Benchmarks 1 through 5. The “NR” term means that the sample was not ratable. A non-ratable sample most often indicates that the student did not complete enough tasks to rate the sample. At times, it may be the result of a technical difficulty.
# SOUTHERN OREGON SECOND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>Speaking Task 1</th>
<th>Speaking Task 2</th>
<th>Speaking Task 3</th>
<th>Questions Task 4</th>
<th>Speaking Task 5</th>
<th>Speaking Task 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduces self providing personal information</td>
<td>Provides basic information about family and family members</td>
<td>Provides information about city or town And activities in area</td>
<td>Asks appropriate questions</td>
<td>Adequately describes the picture</td>
<td>Adequately describes the pictures telling a story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PERFORMANCE | NR 1 2 3 4 5 | NR 1 2 3 4 5 | NR 1 2 3 4 5 | NR 1 2 3 4 5 | NR 1 2 3 4 5 | NR 1 2 3 4 5 |

**NOTES AND/OR COMMENTS**

**STUDENT NAME** ___________________________ **SCHOOL** ___________________________
**RATER** ___________________________

**BENCHMARK 1** **BENCHMARK 2** **BENCHMARK 3** **BENCHMARK 4** **BENCHMARK 5** **NOT RATABLE**

NR = not a ratable sample
B1 = lower than “2” in 3 speaking tasks 1 – 3 (no questions required)
B2 = “2” or higher in 3 or more speaking tasks, 1 – 6 (no questions required)
B3 = “3” in 4 speaking tasks PLUS a 3 rating in question task (at least two different questions)
B4 = “4” or higher in 4 speaking tasks PLUS a 4 in question task (at least 4 different questions)
B5 = “5” in 2 of first 3 tasks, 4 in the other, a 4 or higher in question task, LANGUAGE: (circle one) French German Spanish
5 in both picture tasks

__________________________________________ __________
Signature of Rater                      Date

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Southern Oregon University


INTRODUCTION TO THE WRITING ASSESSMENT

The writing assessment requires students to produce writing samples on demand. The samples produced are rated against a performance rubric based on the Oregon Benchmarks criteria. An online version of the test is being developed.

Students have 50 minutes to respond to four threaded/contextualized prompts related to the PASS contexts. The writing samples are rated on a holistic basis. In each task, the sample produced is rated for text-type, language structure, vocabulary, comprehensibility, and task completion.

The writing assessment is comprised of tasks related to PASS Benchmarks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Based on the samples provided, a student may place at any level between Benchmark 1 and 5.

Prompts 1-3 ask for written responses in the present tense. Prompt 4 requires a student to address a task in past tense. In order to reach Benchmark 5 a student must show some ability to narrate in past tense.

PREPARING STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN A WRITING ASSESSMENT

The writing assessment is a proficiency-based instrument. As with the speaking assessment, students must understand that their responsibility is to produce as much rich and elaborate language as possible in the time allotted. Success in an assessment like the SOSLA is often a result of teachers preparing students properly to take such an assessment.

As teachers, we must prepare our students to understand what their role is in this assessment. We must make certain that our students understand the differences between writing lists or sentence fragments and writing in sentences. A sample such as “I like to ski, I like pizza, I like school” might sound like a series of sentences but it is really a list. A sample of how a student might turn that list into a series of sentences might be “I like to ski and I ski on weekends. I like pizza and I eat pizza a lot. I like school and my favorite class is French.”

The Southern Oregon Foreign Language Articulation Project has developed a series of ideas and lessons designed to help our students perform at higher levels of writing. For information on these lessons, contact Dr. Daniel Morris at the SOU Foreign Language Department.

THE SOSLA WRITING RUBRIC

The following page contains a copy of the Writing Rubric. It is a rubric designed to give guidance to raters when reading the writing samples. The components of the rubric are Text Type, Language (which includes grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehensibility), and Task Completion/Function.

Careful review of the Writing Rubric will give teachers and students alike clues as to what performance is expected for the different Benchmarks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Text Type</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Function/Task Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Text consists of complex and simple sentences. • Some connectivity between sentences. • Response includes more than just strings of sentences.</td>
<td>Errors rarely obscure meaning; message can be easily understood by a sympathetic native speaker. • Uses a variety of vocabulary appropriate to the task. • Demonstrates control of basic grammatical structures even though errors may still be present. • Demonstrates emerging control of more complex structures. • Partial control of past tense conjugations and usage, but inconsistent.</td>
<td>Creates successfully and consistently with the language. • Completes task appropriately, providing more information than the minimum required. • Response includes a variety of sentence structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Text consists of strings of sentences with limited use of basic connectors, such as adverbs or conjunctions. • Mostly simple sentences • Demonstrates some organization, but text may not be fluid and may lack cohesiveness.</td>
<td>Errors occasionally obscure meaning, but most of message can be understood by sympathetic native speaker. • Uses vocabulary that is appropriate to the task, although range may be limited. • Demonstrates partial control of basic grammatical structures even though some errors still occur. • Very limited or no control of past narration</td>
<td>Creates successfully with the language • May occasionally rely on memorized material • Task completed appropriately with required elements, • Information or detail sufficient for task, but limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Text consists primarily of simple sentences, but may contain some sentence fragments or memorized expressions. • Strings of unconnected sentences or phrases.</td>
<td>Errors sometimes obscure meaning; most of message can be understood by sympathetic native speaker • Vocabularly is simple but appropriate • Rarely uses false cognates or English words. • Demonstrates emerging control of basic grammatical structures, but with frequent errors. • Uses basic structures accurately at least half the time</td>
<td>Creates successfully with the language more than half the time • Relies on memorized expressions or phrases. • Task mostly completed but may lack some information or detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Text consists primarily of isolated words and phrases or lists. • May contain some simple sentences, but based on memorized expressions or lists (repetitions). • Sentence fragments.</td>
<td>Errors often obscure meaning • Responses can be difficult to understand, and may require significant effort on the part of the reader • Lacks sufficient vocabulary to complete task appropriately, and may use false cognates or other English words. • Lacks consistent control of basic grammatical structures. • Frequent errors in basic structures</td>
<td>May be able to express likes/dislikes and simple descriptions. • Partial completion of the task. • Response mostly appropriate but underdeveloped • Limited or no creativity with the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited to a few isolated words. • Absence of articles or sentence structure</td>
<td>No control of grammatical structures. • Vocabulary limited to a few isolated words or memorized phrases.</td>
<td>Unable to complete task. • Produces memorized lists (colors, numbers, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLANATION OF WRITING RUBRIC COMPONENTS

INTRODUCTION: This assessment, and the rubric that accompanies it, must be seen as a holistic approach to assessing writing. A student may perform higher in some categories than in others. It is the overall performance that determines the level of performance.

The following components comprise the writing rubric.

✓ TEXT TYPE
This component refers to the type of sentence. Text type can range from isolated words out of context to full and rich sentences.

NOTE: while some lists may sound like sentences, they may actually be a list. An example of this is: “I like to ski, I like to watch TV, I like to eat, I like to read.”

✓ LANGUAGE
This component refers to basic grammatical structures and vocabulary. Depending on the language basic grammatical structures may include:
- Subject pronouns
- Subject-verb agreement
- Noun-adjective agreement
- Word order
- Gender
- Articles
- Negatives
- Language-specific issues

Vocabulary refers to the type and richness of vocabulary used.

The use of an English word or phrase is a common feature in the lower Benchmark levels, even though students are encouraged to avoid English. Benchmark 3 level performance may include an occasional isolated English word or phrase, with a possible attempt at circumlocution.

English should not be used at the Benchmark 4 level. However, the use of an English word would not necessarily keep a student from attaining Benchmark 4. If a student performs at the Benchmark 4 level in all components but happens to insert an English vocabulary word or two, an English word in itself will not necessarily keep the student from being rated at the Benchmark 4 level.

At the Benchmark 5 level the use of English is acceptable only when it is followed by an attempt at circumlocution of the word used.

The comprehensibility of the writing is also included in this component. Comprehensibility refers to how well the response can be understood. Errors in grammar, sentence structure or vocabulary which impede comprehension will lower the students’ level. To this extent, readers must be sensitive to errors that would not be understood by a sympathetic native speaker of the language.
✓ TASK COMPLETION/FUNCTION

This component refers to the specific task assigned. If a student chooses to address an entirely different task, even if it is successfully completed, the task has not been addressed. The richness of the information provided is also important in differentiating the different levels.

This component also refers to the ability of the student to create with the language.

GLOSSARY

* Reader: this assessment will, at times, require a sympathetic reader. We think foreign language teachers are the perfect example of a sympathetic reader. We must, however, not read into a response what is not there nor allow our understanding of “what they want to say” (in the case of English words, false cognates, or badly misspelled words, for example) to influence our scoring of the performance being rated.

RATING THE WRITING ASSESSMENT

In rating the writing assessment, the writing rubric is the guide. Remember, this is a holistic grading, so students must meet all of the criteria for a level in order to be rated at that level.

Each separate writing prompt should be rated according to the writing rubric. If the rating for different prompts is not the same, the following guidelines will apply for determining the overall rating:

✓ For Benchmarks 1-4, the same rating on two of the first three prompts will determine the appropriate level. For example, if a student scores a 3 on prompts 1 and 2, but a 2 on prompt 3, the overall rating will be a 3.
✓ Students at benchmark levels 1-4 do not need to complete prompt 4. Therefore, if the rating on the first three paragraphs is below 5, prompt 4 should not be taken into consideration.
✓ If the ratings for the three first three prompts are all different, the student level is determined by the average of the three prompts. For example, if a student scores a 4 on the first prompt, a 3 on the second prompt, and a 2 on the third prompt, the overall rating will be a 3.
✓ In order to achieve a Benchmark 5 rating, the student writing must be rated at level 5 for two of the first three prompts and for prompt 4. If a student performs at level five on all three of the first three prompts, but does not perform at level five on the final prompt, the overall rating will be level 4.

If a student does not respond to one or more of the first three prompts, the writing sample is considered unratable.