Attaining a high level of proficiency in Spanish was transformative for me. It gave me confidence, made teaching far easier and opened up whole new worlds to me. With that said, it wasn't easy – especially going through those upper levels. Below I share some descriptors of the ACTFL proficiency ranges and levels and some Spanish language proficiency practice tasks.

Checklist of Novice-Mid Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Novice-Mid learners can:

- Communicate using memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences.
- Provide basic personal information like name, age, likes, or location.
- Answer simple questions about familiar topics.
- Rely on repetition, gestures, or visuals to aid understanding.
- Produce formulaic language (not spontaneous or complex).
- May make errors, but are generally understandable in familiar contexts.

10 Sample Tasks for Novice-Mid Spanish Learners

1. Introduce Yourself with Basic Info
   Students introduce themselves with name, age, and where they are from.
2. Describe the Weather Today
   Students describe today's weather using weather expressions and temperature.
3. List Favorite Foods or Drinks
   Students share a list of 3-5 foods or drinks they like.
4. Say What You Like to Do on the Weekend
   Students state at least two activities they enjoy doing on the weekend.
5. Describe a Family Member
   Students give basic details about a family member (name, age, relationship).
6. Identify Colors of Classroom Objects
   Students pick 5 classroom items and say their color in Spanish.
7. State What You Have in Your Backpack
   Students list items they have in their backpack using "Tengo…"
8. Say What Time It Is

Students look at a clock and say the correct time.

9. Name Days of the Week in Order
   Students recite or write the days of the week in order.
10. Create a Simple Shopping List
    Students list 5 items they would buy at a grocery store.

Example Task in Spanish: List Favorite Foods or Drinks

Task Instructions:

Make a simple list in Spanish of at least three foods or drinks you like.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

- Me gusta la pizza.
- Me gusta el helado.
- Me gusta el jugo de naranja.

Checklist of Novice-High Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Novice-High learners can:

- Communicate with phrases, simple sentences, and some connected sentences.
- Handle familiar, everyday situations with rehearsed language.
- Respond to simple questions and ask memorized questions.
- Expand on familiar topics with more detail.
- Sometimes combine phrases and sentences to sound less robotic.
- Still rely on familiar structures and may struggle with unexpected topics or follow-up questions.

10 Sample Tasks for Novice-High Spanish

Learners

1. Introduce Yourself and Give 3+ Personal Details
   Students introduce themselves and include their name, age, where they live, and one hobby.
2. Describe Your Daily Routine with 4+ Actions
   Students describe at least four activities they do each day, using reflexive or regular verbs.
3. Describe Your Family with Simple Sentences
   Students describe 2-3 family members, giving details about age, appearance, or personality.
4. Give Opinions About Foods You Like and Don’t Like
   Students share foods or drinks they like and do not like, explaining why in simple terms.
5. Describe Your School Schedule
   Students describe their classes and tell which class is their favorite and why.
6. Describe What You Do in Different Seasons
   Students explain activities they do in summer, winter, etc., using weather phrases and activities.
7. Give Basic Directions to a Place in Town
   Students give simple step-by-step directions from school to a familiar place.
8. Create a Simple Invitation
   Students invite a friend to do something, stating what, when, and where.
9. Describe What You Wear in Different Weather
   Students explain what they wear when it’s cold, hot, or raining.
10. Describe a Pastime or Weekend Activity with 4+ Details
    Students describe what they do on weekends with several connected sentences.

Example Task in Spanish: Describe What You Wear in Different Weather

Task Instructions:

Use simple sentences to describe what you wear when it’s hot, cold, and raining.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

- Cuando hace calor, llevo una camiseta y pantalones cortos.
- Cuando hace frío, llevo un abrigo, una bufanda y botas.
- Cuando llueve, llevo un impermeable y uso un paraguas.

Checklist of Intermediate-Low Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Intermediate-Low learners can:

- Create with language by combining learned material in original sentences.
- Handle familiar topics in present time and some past or future references.
- Ask and answer simple questions with some follow-up details.
- Produce strings of connected sentences, though not yet full paragraphs.
- Make understandable errors, especially with verb tenses or word order.
- Rely less on memorized chunks and begin adapting language to new situations.

10 Sample Tasks for Intermediate-Low Spanish Learners

1. Describe Your Typical Weekend with 4+ Connected Sentences
   Students share what they usually do on weekends and include activities, places, and people.
2. Describe a Favorite Celebration or Holiday
   Students explain how they celebrate a holiday or birthday, mentioning who, what, where, and when.
3. Describe a Memorable Day or Past Experience
   Students describe something they did recently or in the past with at least four connected sentences.
4. Make Plans with a Friend for Next Weekend
   Students suggest an activity, include time, place, and invite their friend to join.
5. Explain Your Daily Routine with Times
   Students describe their daily routine and include times for at least four activities.

6. Give Directions from One Place to Another in Your Town
   Students describe how to get from one place to another, using landmarks and directional phrases.
7. Describe a Favorite Movie or TV Show
   Students explain the title, genre, main characters, and why they like it.
8. Talk About Your School Schedule and Preferences
   Students describe their schedule and explain which classes they like or don't like and why.
9. Explain What You Pack for a Trip to a Specific Place
   Students describe what they pack for a trip to the beach, mountains, or another place, explaining why.
10. Describe Your Ideal Day Off
    Students describe what they would like to do on a day with no school or work.

Example Task in Spanish: Describe a Memorable Day or Past Experience

Task Instructions:

Use connected sentences to describe something you did in the past. Include where you went, who you were with, and what you did.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

El sábado pasado fui al parque con mis amigos. Jugamos al fútbol por dos horas. Después, comimos pizza en un restaurante. Fue un día muy divertido porque me gusta pasar tiempo con mis amigos.

Checklist of Intermediate-Mid Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Intermediate-Mid learners can:

- Handle everyday situations in various time frames (present, past, and future).
- Produce strings of connected sentences that sometimes form simple paragraphs.

- Ask and answer questions and maintain conversations on familiar topics.
- Provide more detail, including reasons, preferences, and descriptions.
- Use transitional phrases like *porque*, *también*, *pero*, *después*.
- Communicate with some confidence, though still with occasional errors.
- Begin to self-correct or clarify when misunderstood.

10 Sample Tasks for Intermediate-Mid Spanish Learners

1. Narrate a Personal Story in the Past with 5+ Details
   Students tell a story about something that happened to them, using time markers and sequencing words.
2. Describe Your Weekly Schedule and Explain Why You Like or Dislike It
   Students explain their routine, including opinions and reasons.
3. Plan a Trip with a Friend
   Students discuss where they will go, how they will get there, what they will do, and when.
4. Compare Two Seasons or Two Cities
   Students compare and contrast two things using phrases like *es más…*, *es menos…*, *tienen…*.
5. Describe a Problem and Offer a Solution
   Students explain a simple problem (like forgetting homework) and suggest a solution.
6. Give Advice to Someone Visiting Your Country/City
   Students give suggestions about what to do, see, eat, or avoid in their area.
7. Describe a Tradition or Custom from a Spanish-Speaking Country
   Students describe how people celebrate and include comparisons to their own culture.
8. Retell the Plot of a Book, Movie, or Series
   Students summarize the story, characters, and main events in order.
9. Explain How to Do Something Step by Step
   Students give instructions, like how to prepare a simple recipe or play a game.
10. Talk About Future Plans and Hopes
    Students describe their goals or plans for the next month, year, or summer.

Example Task in Spanish: Plan a Trip with a Friend

Task Instructions:

Describe a trip you want to take with a friend. Include the place, transportation, activities, and when you want to go.

Example Learner Response in Spanish:

Quiero ir a la playa con mi amiga el próximo mes. Vamos a viajar en coche porque es más fácil. Queremos nadar en el mar, jugar en la arena y comer en restaurantes cerca de la playa. También queremos ver el atardecer en la noche porque es muy bonito.

Checklist of Intermediate-High Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Intermediate-High learners can:

- Maintain conversations on a variety of familiar topics with ease and detail.
- Narrate and describe in all three major time frames (present, past, and future).
- Produce connected, paragraph-length discourse.
- Handle unexpected questions or follow-up with some confidence.
- Clarify meaning or rephrase when needed.
- Use a range of vocabulary and transitions like *además*, *sin embargo*, *por ejemplo*, *aunque*.
- Occasionally approach Advanced, but still rely on familiar structures and may lack full control of complex grammar.

10 Sample Tasks for Intermediate-High Spanish Learners

1. Tell a Complete Story in the Past with Key Details and Emotions
   Students narrate a personal or fictional story using sequencing and emotional

reactions.

2. Compare and Contrast Two Experiences or Places in Detail
   Students provide a paragraph comparing their hometown to another city they have visited or learned about.
3. Defend an Opinion on a Familiar Topic
   Students explain their opinion on school rules, social media, or a cultural topic, giving reasons and examples.
4. Describe a Problem and How It Was Solved
   Students tell about a real or imaginary situation where they had to find a solution.
5. Create a Travel Guide for a Spanish-Speaking Country or City
   Students describe what to do, see, eat, and know before visiting.
6. Explain a Cultural Tradition, Its Importance, and Its Comparison to Their Own
   Students describe a celebration in detail and make cultural comparisons.
7. Give a Step-by-Step Process with Purpose and Outcomes
   Students explain how to make a dish, play a sport, or complete a task, including why each step matters.
8. Retell a Movie or Book Plot with Reactions and Predictions
   Students give a full summary, including their reactions and what they think could happen next.
9. Make Future Plans with Reasons and Consequences
   Students describe a future goal or trip and explain why it is important and what they hope to achieve.
10. Respond to an Unplanned Interview or Q&A
    Students answer unexpected follow-up questions based on a familiar topic with confidence and detail.

Example Task in Spanish: Defend an Opinion on a Familiar Topic

Task Instructions:

State your opinion about whether students should have homework or not. Give at least two reasons and a personal example to support your answer.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

En mi opinión, los estudiantes no deben tener mucha tarea. Primero, los estudiantes

necesitan tiempo para descansar y pasar tiempo con sus familias después de la escuela. Además, cuando hay demasiada tarea, los estudiantes se sienten estresados y no aprenden bien. Por ejemplo, ayer pasé cuatro horas haciendo tarea y no pude practicar deportes ni hablar con mi familia. Es mejor tener menos tarea y aprender más en clase.

Checklist of Advanced-Low Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Advanced-Low learners can:

- Narrate and describe in major time frames (present, past, future) with detail and paragraph-length language.
- Participate in conversations on both familiar and some unfamiliar topics.
- State and support opinions with examples, reasons, and comparisons.
- Handle unexpected turns in conversation by clarifying, expanding, or redirecting.
- Use transition words and cohesive devices to organize speech or writing clearly.
- Demonstrate control of basic grammar and structures, though errors may still appear.
- Communicate confidently and spontaneously in most social situations.

10 Sample Tasks for Advanced-Low Spanish Learners

1. Narrate a Significant Personal Experience with Reflection
   Students tell a personal story, explain why it was meaningful, and reflect on what they learned.
2. Compare Education Systems or School Experiences in Detail
   Students compare their school system with that of a Spanish-speaking country, giving examples.
3. Present an Argument on a Social Issue with Supporting Reasons
   Students take a position on a topic like technology use, environmental issues, or school policies, and defend it with details.
4. Summarize and Respond to an Article or Video

Students summarize key points of authentic material and share their reaction or opinion.

5. Describe Cultural Practices and Their Meaning in Society
   Students explain how cultural traditions reflect values or identity in a Spanish-speaking community.
6. Offer Advice or Suggestions with Justification
   Students give advice on a real-world situation (e.g., preparing for a trip, dealing with stress) and explain why their advice is helpful.
7. Discuss Future Career or Life Plans with Details and Justifications
   Students describe their goals and explain the steps they plan to take and why they are important.
8. Participate in a Simulated Interview or Role-Play
   Students respond to unplanned questions in character (as themselves or a persona) using organized, paragraph-length speech.
9. Write a Travel Blog Post Recommending a Destination
   Students describe what to do, see, and eat, and explain why someone should visit.
10. Reflect on the Benefits and Challenges of Learning Languages
    Students discuss personal experiences, benefits, and obstacles of learning languages, with examples and personal insights.

Example Task in Spanish: Present an Argument on a Social Issue

Task Instructions:

Do you think technology helps or hurts communication between people? Defend your opinion with two or more reasons and examples.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

Creo que la tecnología ayuda a la comunicación entre las personas, especialmente cuando están lejos. Por ejemplo, mis abuelos viven en otro país, pero gracias a las videollamadas podemos hablar todas las semanas y vernos por la pantalla. Además, las redes sociales permiten que las personas compartan ideas, fotos y noticias rápidamente. Aunque algunas personas piensan que la tecnología nos hace menos sociales, yo creo que depende de cómo la usamos. Si la usamos para conectarnos con otros y no solo para jugar o ver videos, puede ser muy positiva.

Checklist of Advanced-Mid Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Advanced-Mid learners can:

- Consistently narrate, describe, explain, compare, and defend across time frames in detailed, paragraph-length speech or writing.
- Sustain extended conversations or presentations on a variety of topics, both familiar and some unfamiliar.
- Organize discourse logically using transitions like *por lo tanto*, *además*, *sin embargo*, *aunque*, *de hecho*.
- Support opinions with well-developed arguments, examples, and reasoning.
- Handle unplanned situations with flexibility and clarity.
- Demonstrate strong control of grammar, though occasional errors may still appear in more complex structures.
- May begin approaching Superior, but may still struggle with abstract, highly specialized, or academic language.

10 Sample Tasks for Advanced-Mid Spanish Learners

1. Deliver a Detailed Presentation on a Global or Social Issue
   Students research and present on a complex issue like climate change, immigration, or gender equality, offering facts and personal analysis.
2. Compare Two Different Cultural Perspectives in Depth
   Students explain similarities and differences between two cultural practices or beliefs, providing insight and analysis.
3. Respond to a Hypothetical Scenario with a Persuasive Argument
   Students give a persuasive response to a situation like banning phones in school or switching to online learning, with logical support.
4. Evaluate the Impact of a Historical Event or Person
   Students describe the long-term impact of a historical figure or event and its relevance today.
5. Debate a Controversial Topic in Detail
   Students prepare and defend a position on a topic like animal rights, environmental policies, or free education.

6. Summarize and Analyze a Complex Article, Podcast, or Video
   Students summarize key ideas and provide personal or societal analysis of the message.
7. Describe the Pros and Cons of a Lifestyle Choice or Social Trend
   Students analyze something like veganism, minimalism, or social media use, presenting both sides with examples.
8. Propose a Community Improvement Project with Supporting Details
   Students describe a problem in their community and propose a realistic, well-supported solution.
9. Reflect on Personal Growth Through a Life Experience
   Students tell a detailed personal story and reflect on how it shaped their character, beliefs, or goals.
10. Analyze the Role of Technology in Society with Multiple Perspectives
    Students discuss both benefits and dangers of technological advances, giving balanced, supported views.

Example Task in Spanish: Debate a Controversial Topic in Detail

Task Instructions:

Should schools eliminate grades and move to written feedback only? Present your argument and support it with at least three reasons or examples.

Example Student Response in Spanish:

En mi opinión, las escuelas no deberían eliminar las calificaciones tradicionales. Primero, las calificaciones permiten a los estudiantes medir su progreso de manera clara y objetiva. Aunque la retroalimentación escrita es útil, muchas veces es demasiado general o subjetiva. Segundo, las calificaciones ayudan a las universidades y a los empleadores a entender el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. Además, eliminar las calificaciones podría causar confusión y falta de motivación para algunos estudiantes que necesitan metas claras. Sin embargo, creo que es importante combinar ambos métodos: calificaciones y retroalimentación, para apoyar el aprendizaje de manera más completa.

Checklist of Advanced-High Proficiency Features

According to ACTFL, Advanced-High learners can:

- Sustain complex, organized, and extended discourse on a wide range of topics.
- Present, explain, and defend ideas or viewpoints in depth with sophisticated language.
- Adapt language and register for different audiences or situations (formal, informal, professional).
- Discuss abstract or hypothetical concepts with clarity and precision.
- Use a wide range of cohesive devices (e.g., *en consecuencia*, *a pesar de eso*, *por consiguiente*).
- Demonstrate control of complex grammar with few noticeable patterns of error.
- Handle unexpected turns or challenges in interaction with ease and flexibility.
- Sometimes approach Superior, but may lack full consistency in handling highly abstract, academic, or specialized topics.

10 Sample Tasks for Advanced-High Spanish Learners

1. Lead a Panel Discussion on a Global Challenge
   Students moderate or participate in a simulated panel addressing a complex issue like climate change, global health, or human rights.
2. Write and Present a Persuasive Editorial on a Controversial Issue
   Students craft and present a persuasive opinion piece with well-developed arguments, counterarguments, and examples.
3. Debate an Abstract Concept or Social Value
   Students defend or challenge ideas such as freedom, equality, or justice with philosophical reasoning and real-world examples.
4. Analyze and Compare Media Bias in Two Sources
   Students examine two articles or reports on the same topic, discussing perspective, bias, and language choices.
5. Simulate a Professional or Academic Interview
   Students respond in detail to complex, unscripted questions on a field of

interest, showing depth and flexibility.

6. Evaluate the Impact of Technology on Human Relationships Across Cultures
   Students discuss cultural differences in the use of technology and its impact on communication and relationships.
7. Analyze a Piece of Literature, Film, or Art
   Students provide critical analysis of themes, symbols, and messages, connecting them to broader cultural or social contexts.
8. Propose and Justify a Complex Solution to a Community or Global Problem
   Students present a detailed proposal, including challenges, benefits, and implementation steps.
9. Discuss Ethical Implications of Scientific or Technological Advances
   Students explore topics like artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, or data privacy, weighing benefits and risks.
10. Reflect on Personal Identity in Relation to Multiple Cultures or Communities
    Students analyze how their identity has been shaped by cultural, linguistic, or social experiences.

Example Task in Spanish: Analyze a Piece of Literature, Film, or Art

Task Instructions:

Analyze the message of a short story, film, or artwork. Explain its themes, symbols, and how it reflects or challenges cultural or social values.

Example Learners Response in Spanish:

En la película *Coco*, se exploran temas como la importancia de la familia, la memoria y la identidad cultural. La película utiliza el símbolo del “puente de flores” para representar la conexión entre los vivos y los muertos. Además, el personaje de Miguel muestra cómo las nuevas generaciones pueden honrar las tradiciones mientras siguen sus propios sueños. *Coco* también presenta una visión positiva del Día de los Muertos, desafiando la percepción negativa que a veces existe en otras culturas. En mi opinión, la película celebra la riqueza de las tradiciones mexicanas y muestra cómo estas tradiciones pueden unir a las personas más allá del tiempo y la distancia.

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